



EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF CHILD LABOUR IN HOWRAH CITY

Alik Kumar Mondal

M.Phil. Scholar, Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira,

Abstract

Child labour refers to children who miss their childhood and are not able to have the basic amenities which a child should have. The problem of child labour is huge and is faced by many countries in the world. In India many children who belong to poor family, are not able to complete their elementary level of education because their parents force them into the working sector in order to supplement their family income, usually when their age is in between ten to fifteen. In the different working sectors of Howrah city child labour have been found to be working in unhealthy, insanitary and huge work load only for few money. This situation would not only exploits their childhood but also restrict them to make bright career through education. Major objectives of the study explored the educational and socioeconomic status of child labour in Howrah. And the findings analyzed the educational and present socioeconomic status of the child labour of Howrah city.

Keywords: *Elementary Level of Education, Dropout Child Labour.*



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1. INTRODUCTION:

Child labour refers to children who miss their childhood and are not able to have the basic amenities which a child should have. The problem of child labour is huge and is faced by many countries in the world. It becomes a challenge and long-term goal for many countries to abolish all forms of child labour. Especially in developing countries, it is considered as a serious issue these days. Recently the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2013) estimated there are around 215 million children between the ages five to fourteen who work worldwide. They are often mistreated and work for prolonged hours, in very bad conditions. This can affect their health physically, mentally and emotionally. These children do not have the basic rights like access to school or health care.

Children of course constitute wealth, but if they are too many this wealth stinks. And this is exactly what is happening in developing countries, including India. Like all other developing nations, in India many children who belong to poor family they are not able to

complete their elementary level of education because their parents forced them into the working sector in order to supplement their family income, where their children are not only work under unhealthy, insanitary working condition but also they exploited through working long hours for low wages. It has reported that 1 in 4 children of school-going age is out of school in our country and 99 million children in total have dropped out of school (Census 2011) in which 10.13 million are child labourers between 5-14 years and 33 million are working children between the ages of 5-18 years (Census 2011).

In this article we describe and examine the conditions of educational and socioeconomic status of child workers who are working in different working sectors of Howrah and make some suggestions about how to eradicate this problem.

2. Objectives of the Study:

1. To explore the educational status of child workers.
2. To explore the present livelihood condition of the child workers in their working sector.
3. To focus on their earning level.
4. To suggest some recommendations that would solve their problems in future.

3. Research Questions:

1. What is the level of education of child workers?
2. What is the nature of present livelihood condition of the child workers in the unorganized sector?
3. What is level of income of child workers?
4. How would the socio-economic and educational problem of child labour be solved?

4. Methodology:

The purpose of this study is to analyze the educational and socioeconomic status of the child laborers engaged in unorganized sectors of Howrah city. A case study research has been conducted for this purpose. At first we adopted Purposive Random sampling techniques to choose 100 dropout child workers from different unorganized sectors in Howrah under the age of 16 years. Feedback from child workers will be collected through interview and semi-structured questionnaire which will be carefully reviewed by use of suitable and sophisticated statistical techniques to represent. The questions were sometimes be true/false, multiple choice, and free response. Surveys included both open and closed ended questions. Collected and reviewed data are then described, analyzed and interpreted by quantitative and qualitative approach. For systematic analyze of the collected data the researcher adopted percentage wise

calculation for each category i.e. educational status, working hours, monthly income of child workers etc.

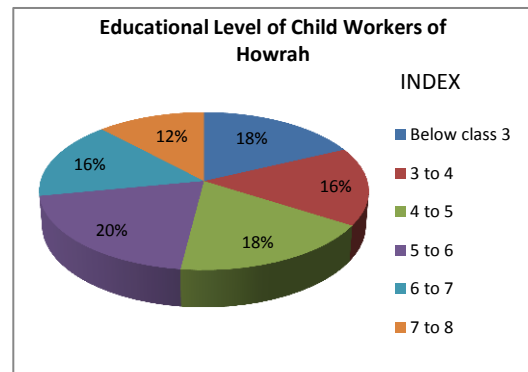
5. Analysis and Findings:

Following are the findings based on the objectives of the study referring from the sources of Primary data:

5.1 Educational Status:

Table: 1 Educational level

Educational Level	Respondents of Howrah	
	Number	Percentage
Below class 3	18	18
Class 3 to 4	16	16
Class 4 to 5	18	18
Class 5 to 6	20	20
Class 6 to 7	16	16
Class 7 to 8	12	12
	50	100



From the above table we found that some of the child workers were left their school education before completing lower primary level and some of them before completing upper primary level of school education. We found majorities (66%) of surveyed child workers were dropped out at upper primary level who were found to be working in the hotels, hosiery, garage, shops etc. And left 34% were dropped out from lower primary level who were found to be working in hosiery and hotel sector.

5.2 Interest of Child workers to Education:

Majority of surveyed child workers are not interested to continue normal school education and like to work in which they has engaged now, but some of them are interested to continue school education if Government or other organizations provide assistance to them. Numbers of those respondents are listed below.

Table : 2 Percentage of Child workers Wants to Continue Education

Interest	Respondents of Howrah	
	Number	Percentage
Want to continue education with work	16	16
want to continue education by leaving work	6	6
Don't want to continue education	78	78
Total	100	100

From the above table it is found that 78% respondents of Howrah were not interested to continue school education. We also found only 22% of total respondents were wanted to continue education in which some of them want to continue education with work and some of them without work. In case of Howrah 16% of respondents wanted to continue education with work and only 6% of respondents wanted to continue school education by leaving the work.

5.3 Expected School Timing :

Those respondents who are interested to continue education with work or without work, they have also give preferences on school timings. Responses of child workers are given in the following table on the three preferable school timing options morning, afternoon and evening.

Table : 3 Percentage of responses on favorable school timings of Child workers

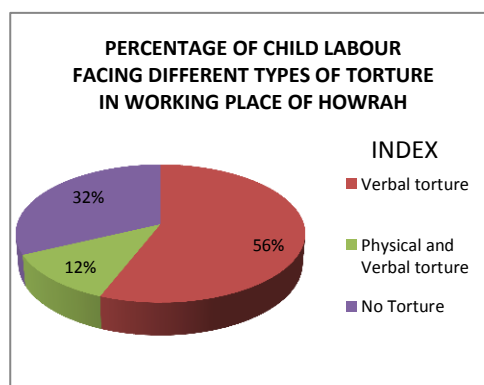
Preferred Timing	School	Respondents of Kolkata	
		Number	Percentage (out of 16)
Morning		2	9.1
Afternoon		4	18.2
Evening		16	72.7
Total		22	100

In this study we found only 22 respondents who are want to continue education. Depending upon their preferences of school timing it is find that majority of them will want to continue education at evening time which also indicate that they want to continue education with work. Out of 22 respondents we find 72.7 % respondents will prefer evening time for schooling and 18.2% and 9.1% respondents will prefer morning and afternoon time for schooling.

5.4 Physical and verbal torture:

Table: 3 Percentage of Child Labour who faced different types of torture in their working sector:

Type of torture	Respondents of Howrah	
	Number	percentage
Physical torture	0	0
Verbal torture	56	56
Physical and Verbal torture	12	12
No torture	32	32

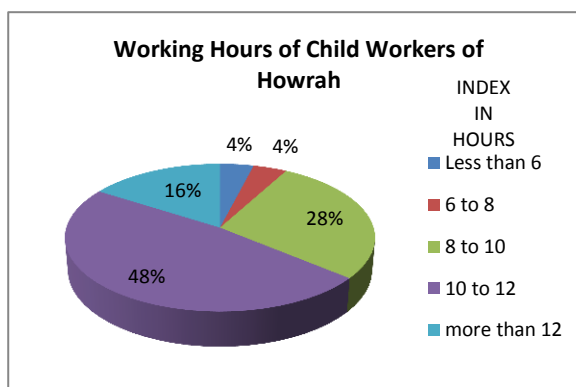


Physical and verbal torture on child labour is very common in every working sectors of Howrah and. It's found that most of the surveyed child labourers (56%) have experienced verbal torture in their working sectors, majority of them are working in hosiery and hotel sectors. 12% child labourers have experienced both physical and verbal torture, they were found in garages and hotels and 32% child labour have said they didn't experience any kind of torture at their working place, but after observation of real situation, it can be said that maximum number of child labour found working in hotels, hosiery, shops and garages were victims of both verbal and physical torture.

5.5 Working Hour:

Table: 4 Different lengths of working hour of child labour

Working Hours	Respondents of Howrah	
	Number	percentage
Below 6	2	4
6 to 8	2	4
8 to 10	14	28
10 to 12	24	48
More than 12	8	16

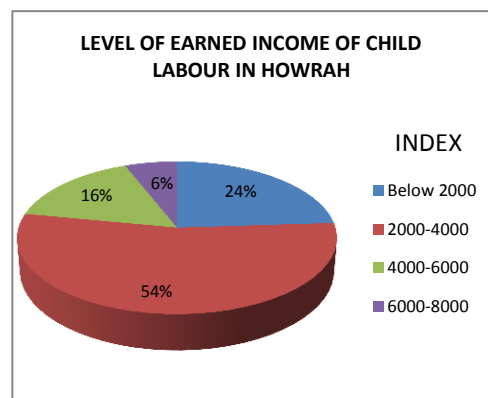


Child labourers are generally non-violent in nature. That's why they have been exploited at their working sector in terms of long working duration. Majority of surveyed child labour (92%) who were working in Hotels and Hosiery sector have been working more than 8 hours. And left 8% child labourers working in shop and garages have works less than 8 hours due to have fixed timing of work.

5.6 Level of Earning:

Table : 5 Percentage of Child Labour in Different Income Level

Monthly income (in R.s)	Respondents of Howrah	
	Number	Percentage (out of 50)
Below 2000	24	24
2000-4000	54	54
4000-6000	16	16
6000-8000	6	6
Total	100	100



Child labourers are available as very cheap than adult workers. Because of this, most owners of the working sectors want to maximize their profit by paying as low salary to their workers. We found that 78% of surveyed child labour who are working in hosiery, hotel, shop, food factories, garage and mobile repairing centers have earned below 4000 rupees salary per month. Some of the total surveyed child labour (22%) who have engaged into the working sectors for more than 2 years and doing embroidering work in hosiery sector have earned 4000 to 8000 rupees salary per month.

6. Discussion:

The study was conducted to explore the educational and the present socioeconomic status of the child workers of Howrah. The whole analysis of this study was done systematically and findings were drawn on the basis of objectives wise analysis.

In case of educational status of child workers, it was found that majority of child workers were dropout before completing the upper primary level of education. The reason might be that the children under the age of 10 years are not considered as efficient workers, that's why their parents have shown some interest to send them to school but whenever their children became able for employment they send them to the working sectors. This results majority of children labourers who have completed lower primary level of education under 10 years of age but they were not able to complete upper primary level of education. Some of the child workers were found who still wanted to continue education if financial support provided by govt. or any other organizations. It's also found from this study that almost all surveyed child labour were unaware about the facilities provided by the govt. for them e.g. educational facilities of NCLP schools, stipend of 150 rupees for continuing school education in NCLP School and other facilities of NGO's.

In case of the present socioeconomic status of the child workers in their working sector, it was found that majority of child workers were working under dirty working environment, experienced verbal and physical torture, work more than 8 hours, fooding and lodging facilities are not up to the mark and earned below 2000 rupees per month. This picture is mostly found in the hosiery and hotel sectors where child workers were exploited in terms of working long hours, huge work load etc. This occurs due to child workers were non violent in nature and easily accessible by their owners.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations:

It is to be noted that in spite of having various governmental initiatives, schemes and interventions of NGO's, number of child workers were still persistent in the urban areas who are being dropped out from school, enter into the different working sector in urban areas. It's

like a cycle which starts from poor economic condition of family – parents compel to give more priorities on employment of their children than education - children dropout from school – and at ends they are engaged into the working sector. So here are some suggestions given below to compete with these problems:

1. More importance should be given on spreading of universal, free and compulsory education so that the parents do not have any difficulty or inconvenience to send their children to the school. The essential ancillary benefits like need of food and garments must also be covered under the arrangements.

2. Government should take a bottom-up approach in which first a district wise or block wise list of those families who are live under poor economic condition, give initiatives to local NGOs and government officials to visit those families and make conscious about the importance of education to those parents that's in future they don't send their children for employment in childhood by dropping him out from school.

3. NGO's should have employed more workers in NCLP schools with the help of government to improve the follow up program that real underprivileged children can get scope of learning as well as no children leave the school without completing their elementary level of education.

4. NGOs should need to expand their services through establishing shelter home and NCLP schools with the help of Govt. at those places where child workers are found in present like salkia, belur bazaar and its surrounding, dasnagar etc. areas in Howrah .

5. Due to insufficient number of NCLP schools in comparison with the number of dropout child labourers, the government should make a provision by which the normal schools will also manage an education system for child workers besides of NCLP schools.

6. If the NCLP schools may organise vocational training for the child workers, simultaneously with their academic training, the child workers may be interested because this type of vocational training may help them in their future financial support and in this way the dropout may be controlled.

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