

A Study on Profile of Child Labourers Engaged in Farm Activities

Today, India has the largest share of child labour in the world. According to the official estimates based on a sample survey conducted in 1983; there were 17.36 million working children below 14 years. At present, world's child labour population is 200 million, of which India constitutes 50 million. Thus, although the contribution of child labourers to the total labour force is considerable in India, their problems and needs have been neglected since long. In view of constantly increasing attention of nation towards this social evil, it was considered imperative to study this aspect. Hence, the present study was taken up to ascertain the -

1. Socio-economic characteristics of child labourer's family.
2. To know the extent of income contributed by child labourers and
3. To know the problems of child labourers and their suggestions for improvement.

The study was conducted in Humnabad taluka of Bidar district during 1993-94. The selection of villages was based on total population of villages. The first 10 villages having highest population were selected which formed the population for the study. Thus 200 respondents were randomly selected. The data were collected by using structured and pre-tested schedule by personal interview method.

Majority (84.50%) of child labourers were in the age group of above 10 years. This finding is in line with the study of Satish Chander and Lalidevi (1980). About 48.00 percent of child respondents were illiterates. Majority of parents of child were also illiterates, this study got support by Dhillon *et al.* (1988).

Highest percentage (45%) of child labourers belonged to schedule caste. This study is in line with the study of Kaur *et al.* (1988). It could be noticed from table 1 that most of the child labourers (85.50%) were males and remaining were females. Majority (86%) of respondents families did not possess any land. Results in respect of annual income indicate that majority of the respondent's families had an annual income of upto Rs.11,000.

Almost all (98%), child labourers were from large families. Most (93%) of the child labourers belong to a nuclear type of family. The findings are in line with the studies conducted by Satishchander and Lalidevi (1980), Dhillon *et al.* (1988). Most of the child labourers occupy second order of birth followed by first.

Majority of daily wage earners who work for half a day and full day for 3 days and 4 days per week contributed upto Rs.1500 per year.

Considerable percent of daily wage earners who work half a day for 4 days per week and majority of daily wage and contract workers who work full time for 4 days per week and one year, contributed up to Rs. 2000/- to their total family income. Same results were reported by Dhillon *et al.* (1988) and Satishchander and Lalidevi (1980). The main reason for this fluctuation in wages might be that owners always prefer to engage younger age group of children because they are cheap.

Majority of child labourers were having problem of more work for less pay, followed by no timely payment of wage, no adequate food to eat, bad habits of father and ill health of parents.

Further, majority of child labourers suggested that their wages should be enhanced. The reason for this could be that, if they get more wages naturally, they will be able to improve their standard of living. While the second highest per cent of respondents suggested that the minimum wage and working hours should be fixed, followed by timely payment of wages.

Social factors such as mass literacy, large family size and caste values were closely associated with this social evil. These social situations did not allow families to come out from the vicious circle of social and economic maladies. Therefore, it is imperative to break their ignorance and provide elementary education so that they may come out of the vicious circle and perhaps leads better life.

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