



A study on child labourers of tea garden people and their socio-economic status with special reference to ‘Demow sub-division of Sivasagar district.’

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Abstract

The most innocent phase of human life is childhood. It is this stage of life when the human foundation is laid to a successful life. Child labour refers to the employment of children as regular and sustained labour. This practice is considered exploitative by many International organizations and a illegal practice by many countries. Child labour is generally speaking work for children that harms them or exploits them in some ways, physical and mental. But some kinds of work may be completely unobjectionable. For example, a child who delivers s news paper before school or helping a shop after school is not a bad practice. The child will learn how to work, gaining responsibilities and a little bit of money. But what the child will not paid. Then that type of work is exploitative. Millions of child in today’s world undergo the worst forms of child labour which includes the child slavery, child prostitution, child trafficking. In 2000 the ILO estimates 246 million child workers aged 5 and 17 were engaged into called “unconditional” worst forms of child labour. It includes use in armed conflicting, trafficking in children and commercial sexual exploitation.

Keywords: tea labour, child labour, Demow

Introduction

In India the basic minimum age for work is 14 years as stated by Indian Constitution. The child labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act), 1986 defines a ‘child’ as a person who has not completed his fourteenth years of age.” It may be mentioned here that there has been a lasting confusion regarding minimum age of entry in to employment in legislative definition given by different acts that have been erected in India relating to child labours. Tea is a large



scale organization and labour intensive industry in Assam. This sector employ about 6.62 lakhs person in a day. Since the inception of tea industry quite a large proportion of child labours has been employed in tea garden of Assam. In tea industry child are used to do certain type of works such as soil feeling in the polythene sleeves for seedling, removing weeds from young plants, spraying insecticide for tea and even in plucking of green tea leaves. It is observed that tealabour in Assam is alarming. It is interesting to note that the data on employment of child labour in Assam have been shown by tea statistics only till the year 1992 and thereafter no data regarding child labour in tea gardens have been presented.

Socio economic profile of Sivasagar and Demow

The climate of Sivasagar districts carries a pleasant weather throughout the year. The temperature ranges from 8 in winter to 35 during summer. The district is characterized by highly humid atmosphere and abundant rains. The regular rains of the summer generally prevent the relevance of the hot weather. After the rainy season the autumn starts from October and cold weather prevails from the end of November and continues till the middle of May. The temperature begins to rise from the beginning of June and in July and August it reaches the maximum. The whole district is influenced by the south-west monsoon.

Demow is a town in the Sivasagar districts of Assam. It is located 22 km towards north from district head quarters Sivasagar. Demow is surrounded by many nearest villages. There are many tea gardens also High school, college, hospital, police station are available here. There are many tea gardens in Demow. The transport and communication system of Demow are well developed. Demow has historical importance also.

Statement of the problem

The problem of the present study is stated as given below-“A study on child labourers of tea garden people and their socio-economic status with special reference to ‘Demow sub-division of Sivasagar district.’”



Objective of the study

The objective of the present study are stated as below-

1. To investigate the incidence and extent of child labourers in the tea garden of Demow.
2. To explore the causes of child labourers in the tea garden o Demow.
3. To study the socio-economic and educational condition of them.
4. To provide valuable suggestions for improving the condition of child labourers of tea gaden of Demow.

Hypothesis

Hollowing hypothesis has been set up which will become the basis of verification-

H1- In tea garden of Demow huge numbers of children are working as child labourers.

H2- In tea garden of Demow child labourers prevalent mainly because of inadequate family income, large family size, school dropout, family traditions, lack of vocational training and illiteracy among parents etc.

Delimitations of the study

The researcher delimits the study as follows

1. Only company managed tea garden has been used in the study.
2. Purposive random sampling has been used.

Methodology and procedures

For study descriptive survey method was found more suitable as this method of research can be used to deal with behavioral aspects and solution of practical aspects which are the major concern of the study.

Population

The population of the study comprises all the child labourers(up to age of 14) working in all the tea garden of Demow and their parents, The small private tea gardens had not included in the study.

Sample

There are many tea garden in Demow. But the investigator selected only en tea garden for data collection which is managed by the company. There are total of 500 child labourers,



300 parents and twenty employees were selected by using purposive random sampling method.

Tools using in the study

To collect required data four tools were used for the study. They are-

1. An interview schedule meant for the officers who employ the child labourers.
2. An interview schedule meant for the child labour.
3. An interview schedule meant for the parents of child labour.
4. A Socio-economic status scale.

Major findings of the study

Major finding of the study are-

1. The surveyed tea gardens refused to show the records of child labourers in the tea gardens. Most of the managers of tea garden did not allow interviewing the children and the parents. This proves that there are enormous child labourers in the tea gardens.
2. Surveyed tea gardens have adequately employed both male and female childlabourer. The surveyed tea gardens wereemployed highest number of child labourersn the age of 10 to 14 years. Female child labour were highest than male labourer. This proves those male child labourers were engaged in other sector.
3. The surveyed tea garden have primary school facilities and the jurisdiction of SarvaSikhaAbhijan. So the child labour is under the age of 1 is low.
4. The main reason of drop out of the surveyed tea garden are-
 - A. Lack of adequate facilities of school and teacher.
 - B.Poor economic condition.
 - C. Family problem.
 - D. Lost interest for study.
5. Most of the tea labourers in tea gardens are employes as temporary or casual labourers.
6. The working condition was found disappointing. They had to work in summer and rain. They have to use chemical fertilizer and chemical inside in the field.
7. In some tea gardens they had to work for six hours per day. But some work on contractual



basis. So, the hours of work for children in tea garden are as longer against legislative provision.

8.It is found that some child labourer did not know about satisfaction and dissatisfaction. They just work for work only.

9.They get one thousand rupees in 12 days. Actually it is a exploitation. The rate is too low. They reported that they are doing same work like permanent labourer but they do not get the other facilities like adult worker.

10. There are some labourers who used to spend their wages for the study. They went to school at day and work in the factory at night.

11. The nature of work the child labour had performed are as follows-

- a. in tea factory
- b. Soil filling in the polythene for seedling.
- c. removing the weeds from young plants.
- d.Spraying insecticide for tea nursery.
- e. Plucking of green young leaves.

12. The child labour opined that they are engaged in the different job because of inadequate income of the parents, absent of adult wage earner in the family and family tension.

13. 57% child laborers are school dropout. So they are not interested in study.

14. The child labourerlike to play. I all the tea gardens facilities are available for playing. They like to play cricket and football.

15.The medical facilities are available in all tea garden. It is found that there are ten tea gardens where the doctor works as a part time basis.

16. 27% of the tea labourer lives in their own houses and 73% lives in their parents houses provided by the company.

17. New technological facilities like TV, radio, mobile phone and other household equipments are available in their houses.

18. The medical facilities are free of costs. It is found that lake of knowledge of hygiene practices they fall sick.



19. There are both nuclear and joint families. 76% are nuclear and 24% are joint families. The range of the family size was found from 4-12.
20. It is found that the children of 15% families are studying at higher secondary and degree level. They earn their own educational expenses.
21. The parents of the child have the desire to send their children to the school. But because of poverty they are bound to send their children to work.
22. About 67% parents feel that child labour is essential within a limit. They opined that without work their children will be idle and they will not be appreciating dignity of manual labour.
23. Their original language is Oriya. Besides their own dialogue they can speak Hindi and Assamese also.
24. Very few of them can read and write English.
26. They belong to Hindu religion and recently under the influence of Christianity.
27. They worship mainly goddess Durga, Lakshmi, Shiv and Ganesh. Christianity worships Jesus.
28. The major religious festival is Durgapuja, Laxmi puja, Deepawali, Karampuja, and Tsu Puja etc.
29. Jhumur dance and Jhumur song are their own folk song and folk dance.
30. They work 4 to 6 hours per day in peak seasons.
31. No adult educational institution is found in the studied area.

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