



Major Causes, Working Conditions and Preventing Measures of Child Labour Problems in Rural and Urban Areas of Malda district, West Bengal (India): A Case Study

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ABSTRACT:

Child labour is one of the massive social problem in India and worldwide. In our country India child labour constitutes for 13 per cent of the workforce in India (2011 census). There are 10.1 million (5.6 million are boys and 4.5 million are girls) children engaged in work in India. Child labour is considered as exploitative for the future of children and country. Child labour is a national issue which is growing rapidly in our country. The main objective of this research paper is to know the major causes of child labour, to examine the working profiles and socio-economic condition among the child labour. The entire study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Malda district of West Bengal has been selected as the study area. The study reveals that 23.43 per cent of respondents are taking this profession due to Poverty and Low family Income which is highest percentage, 36.58 percent of the respondents are belong to 13-14 years age-group which is highest percentage, 20.00 percent of the respondents are practices domestic work where maximum girls child labour engaged, 41.72 per cent of the respondents are earning INR 3000 - 4000 monthly from their hard work in the study areas. The researcher suggested that alternative time of educations should be provides to the child labours by local Government authority and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) whenever they are free and there is an urgent need of survey to find out exact situation of child labour in the study area.

Key Words: Poverty, Childhood, Crime, Exploit, Income, Illegal, Unemployment, Child Labour

Introduction:

Life of little ones is destroyed when child labour is employed". Children are greatest gift to humanity, they are not born to work. Childhood is the most cheerful time in a person's life. Children should spend this time of their life with ease. They should play, study, eat good food, learn how to be good citizens and have a nice time without worries. Every Children of world are innocent, vulnerable and dependent. Their life should be full of enjoy and peace, playing, learning and growing. Since time immemorial child labour is the biggest obstacles for social development and serious problems in our country. Recently, the International Labour Organizations (ILO, 2022), estimated that there are around 285 million children's between the age-group five to fourteen who work worldwide. Child labour is one of the massive social problem in India and worldwide. Children usually work to contribute and provide financial support to their families. When the families won't have enough earning, they put the children of the family to work so they can have enough money to survive. Similarly, if the adults of the family are unemployed the younger ones have to work in their place. Moreover, the money-saving attitude of various industries is major cause of child labour. They hire children because they pay them lesser for the same work as an adult. As children work more than adults and also at fewer wages, so they prefer children. In our country India child labour constitutes for 13 per cent of the workforce in India (2011 census). There are 10.1 million (5.6 million are boys and 4.5 million are girls) children engaged in work in India. Child labour is considered as exploitative for the future of children and country. Child labour is a national issue which is growing rapidly in our country. The continuous tenacity of child labour and exploitation is a great threat to the national economy as well as to its dignity.

Definition of Child Labour: Child labours refers to the employment of children in any works that deprives children of their childhood, they are often mistreated and work for prolonged hours, in very bad conditions under the age groups below fourteen. This can affect their health physically, mentally and emotionally. They do not have the basic rights like access to school or health care.

Review of Literature:

The review highlights the distinction areas covered by the many researchers and academicians which may be helpful to understand the issues relating to the present study and it also helps to find out the research gap. The basic sources of literature review of my study areas are- published research papers, articles in the journal of national and international repute, books, Government reports, Research agencies reports etc.

Talib Hussian Shapoo (2018) examined that children are innocent, vulnerable and dependent on parents for foods, cloths, medicines. Their life should be full of joy, peace, playing, learning and growing. Their study reveals that 34 percent of the children belong to age-group of 13-14 years. The main reason to become as child labour due to poverty. The researcher suggested that NGOs and Government should provide education at the time of when they are free from works, wages rate of the parents should be increased so that they can manage the education of their children's. **Andleeb Rather (2021)** observed that child labour is one of the serious social issues in India. Globally 100 Millions of children's below the age of 14 years and involved in substantial economic activities. The main causes of child labour in India are poverty, unemployment, lower wages, over population, illiteracy, migration and urbanization and loopholes in labour laws. Their study reveals that most of the children's are exploited by their employees and paid lesser wages. **Ashutosh Singh (2022)** examined that more than 10 million children's in India are employed as child labour in both industrial and domestic settings. Child labour is a pernicious practice. Their study reveals that the main reason of child labours are- acute poverty, unequal distribution of income, parental attitude, orphans etc. **Sanjukta, Hemant and Ratnawali (2021)** observed that child labour is not a new issue and still exists in society. Their study reveals that poverty, lack of parental guidance, lack of awareness about programmes and schemes, dropout is the main reason of child labour in India. The researcher suggested to remove this practice there is a necessary of spread awareness among all the poor families regarding education and facilities are given by the government to the child and are family. **Shabnam Parveen (2015)** insisted that child labour is most treated labour class in India. Their study reveals that poverty, illiteracy and ignorance, insufficient income, unemployment parents, large family etc. are the major reasons of child labours in lock manufacturing industries of Aligarh City. The researcher suggested that central government as well as state government should provide financial supports, employment opportunities and education support to the parents of child labour and Government should be eliminate child labour by enforce law of free and compulsory education for 14 years of age children's. **Niti Sagar and Bindu Roy (2022)** examined that child labour can be found in both urban and rural areas, but majority of child labour have seen in rural areas due to poverty. The study reveals that child labours are works mainly domestic areas, dhabas and hotels, construction sites, automobiles shops, street vendors shop, small scale industries etc. The state like Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, West Bengal and Tamilnadu states have maximum percentage of Child labours as per census 1971-2011 in the age group of 5-14 years.

Statement of Research Problems:

Child- labour is a socio-economic problem in rural and urban areas of Malda district of West Bengal. The prime causes of child labours in Malda district of West Bengal are- Parents Poverty and low income, Indebtness among child parents, Illiteracy, Unemployment, Ignorance of parents about the importance of education, Government Apathy, death of parents, a big gap among the rich vs poor in terms of income etc. Most of the child labours at working place physically assaulted, sexually abuses, mentally assaulted. Moreover, many of child labourers are involved in risky and hazardous occupations. So, the researchers are very much keen interested to taken up this study particularly. The outcomes or findings from this study will be very helpful for administrators, policymakers, economists, sociologists, researchers, academicians, Journalists, NGO workers, and the Ministry of Childs and Womens development, Government of India as well as Government of West Bengal for their various policies making.

Table 1.1: Top 10 states of India having maximum percentage of Child Labour Practices as per Census 2011 in age group 5 - 14 years

Sl. No.	Sates	Number of Child labour (In Million)	% of Total Working Children
1.	Uttar Pradesh	2.1 Million	21 %
2.	Maharashtra	1.15 Million	11 %
3.	Bihar	1.05 Million	10 %
4.	Andhra Pradesh	0.94 Million	9 %
5.	Madhya Pradesh	0.67 Million	7 %
6.	Rajasthan	0.61 Million	6 %
7.	Gujarat	0.53 Million	6 %
8.	Karnataka	0.46 Million	6 %
9.	West Bengal	0.35 Million	5 %
10.	Tamil Nadu	0.21 Million	3 %

Source: Census of India, 2011

Table 1. 2: List of NGOs and Organizations works for Preventing Child Labour in India

Sl. No.	NGOs and Organizations works for Preventing Child Labour
1.	Kailash Satyarthi Children Foundation (KSCF) (Bachpan Bachao Andolan)
2.	Child Fund
3.	CARE India

4.	Talaash Association
5.	RIDE India
6.	Child Rights and You
7.	Global March Against Child Labour
8.	Child Line
9.	CRY (Child Rights and You)
10.	Child Help Foundation (CHF)
11.	Pratham
12.	Salaam Baalak Trust
13.	Smile Foundation
14.	Snehalaya
15.	World Vision India

Source: Satyarthi Foundation, 2022

Objectives of the Research:

Keeping in the view of the prevalence of child labour problems in Malda district of West Bengal in particular, the following objectives have been taken into consideration:

1. To know the major causes of child labour in Malda district of West Bengal.
2. To examine the working conditions, socio-economic profiles, and Quality of Life among the child labours in the study area.
3. To give valuable suggestion for eradicating child labour problems in rural and urban areas of Malda district of West Bengal.

Database and Research Methodology:

The entire research work is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. This research work is an analytical, descriptive and empirical type. For the collection of primary data a total 175 respondents has been selected based on purposive random sampling and face to face interview was conducted based on well structured questionnaire with regard to objectives in mind. The survey was conducted during the month of April 2022 to June 2022. The survey has been conducted at different villages of 15 community development block of Malda district of West Bengal.

The secondary data has been collected from International Labour Organizations (ILO), Census of India, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistic Government of West Bengal, District Statistical Handbook, Malda Collectorate, Books, Research Paper, Journals, Newspaper, Researchgate, Google Scholar etc. After the collection of data for showing the result Simple Percentage Method, and Computer Cartography has been used.

Table 1. 3: Selection of Child Labours in different areas of Malda district, West Bengal

Sl. No.	Areas	Total Number
1.	Kaliachak Bus stand Market areas	30
2.	Motabari Taxi stand and Market Areas	25
3.	Sujapur Bus stand and Market areas	30
4.	Rathbari and 420 More Market areas	30
5.	Malda Town Railway Station Areas	30
6.	Chanchal Bus Stand and Market Areas	30
Total		175

Source: Computed by Researcher from Field Survey Data, April – June Month, 2022

A Geographical Profile of Study Area:

Malda district of West Bengal has been selected as research study area. Malda district is entirely located in North Bengal, it is also known as “**Gateway of North Bengal**”. It lies in North Bengal on lower Indo-Gangetic plain. The latitudinal range of Malda lies between 24°40'20" North and 25°32'08" North, and the longitudinal range is 87°45'50" East and 88°28'10" East. For administrative purpose the district has been divided into 15 Community Development Block and two sub-division namely Malda Sadar and Chanchal Sadar. The district is very much famous for Mango Production, Litchi

production, Jute Production and Sericulture activity (Raw Silk production), school educational sectors. This district is also known as “Valley of Mango”. Majority of the male population of this district are migrants labour, agricultural labour and Hawkers due none availability of any large scale, medium scale industries, majority of female population in rural are engaged in bidi making household industries. According to 2011 Census of India still 86.14 per cent population are belong to rural area.

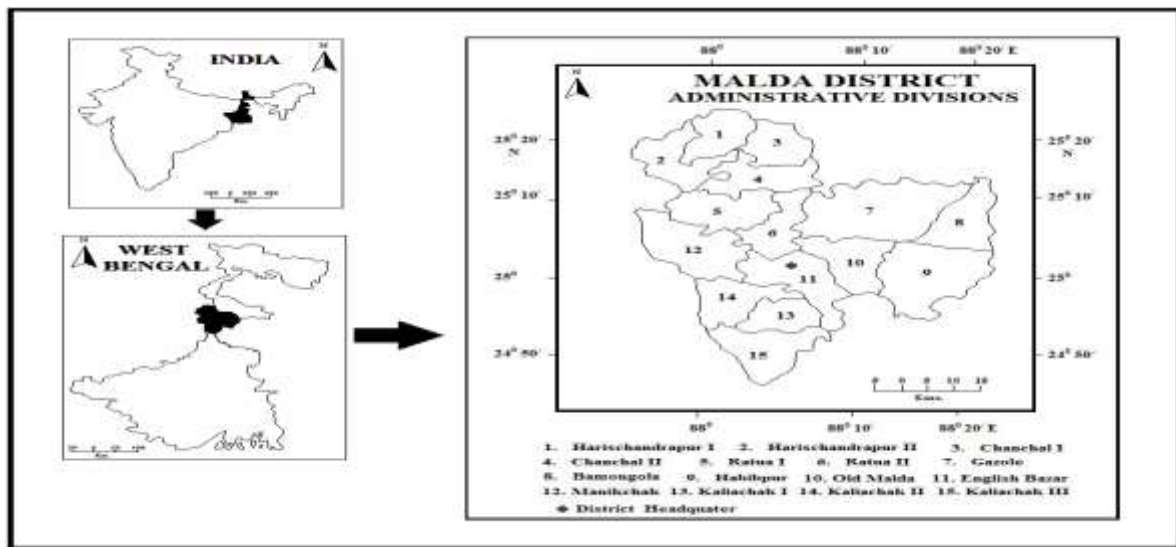


Figure 1: Location map of the Study Area

Result and Analysis:

Table 1. 4: Major Causes of Child Labours in Malda district, West Bengal

Sl. No.	Major Causes	Total number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Poverty and Low family Income	41	23.43
2.	Death of Parents / Orphans	22	12.57
3.	Parents Migration	18	10.28
4.	Socio-Economic backwardness	27	15.42
5.	Lack of Education / Parents are not interested to sending school / Droup Out	23	13.14
6.	Indebtedness of family	14	8.00
7.	Lack of interest in study	19	10.86
8.	Any Other Reason / Family Problems	11	6.29
Total		175	100.00

Source: Computed by Researcher from Field Survey Data, April - June Month, 2022

Table 1. 4 shows that 23.43 percent of respondents are taking this profession due to Poverty and Low family Income which is highest percentage, and 6.29 percent of the respondents are taken due to any other reason.

Table 1. 5 : Gender Status among the Child labour in Malda district of West Bengal

Sl. No.	Gender	Total No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	135	77.14
2.	Females	40	22.86
Total		175	100.00

Source: Computed by Researcher from Field Survey Data, April - June Month, 2022

Table 1. 5 shows that 77.14 percent of the respondents are male and 22.86 percent of the respondents are females in the study area.

Table 1. 6: Age-Group among the Child Labour in Malda district of West Bengal

Sl. No.	Age-Group	Total No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	8- 9 Years	12	6.86
2.	9 -10 Years	55	31.42

3.	11 – 12 Years	44	25.14
4.	13 -14 Years	64	36.58
Total		175	100.00

Source: Computed by Researcher from Field Survey Data, April - June Month, 2022

Table 1.6 shows that 36.58 percent of the respondents are belong to 13-14 years age-group which is highest percentage and only 6.86 percent of the respondents are belong to age- group 8-9 years which is lowest percentage.

Table 1.7 : Types of Works Performed by Child Labours in Malda district of West Bengal

Sl. No.	Types of Works Performed by Child Labour	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Hotel / Restaurant/ Dhaba / Motels Work	18	10.28
2.	Brick-Kilns Making Industry	22	12.57
3.	Domestic Work	35	20.00
4.	Street Vendors Shop / Tea Stalls	14	8.00
5.	Rag pickers & Crackers making factory	19	10.85
6.	Automobile Repairing Shop / Garage	17	9.71
7.	Beedi Making Industry	11	6.28
8.	Plastic Recycling Industry	10	5.71
9.	Embroidery factory / Garments Industry	16	9.14
10.	General Store	13	7.42
Total		175	100.00

Source: Computed by Researcher from Field Survey Data, April - June Month, 2022

Table 1.7 shows that 20.00 percent of the respondents are practices domestic work where maximum girls child labour engaged, whereas only 5.71 per cent of the respondents are engaged in plastic recycling industry.

Table 1.8: Monthly Income Level by Child Labours in Malda district of West Bengal

Sl. No.	Income Level (Monthly)	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	INR 500-1900	28	16.00
2.	INR 2000- 2900	42	24.00
3.	INR 3000- 4000	73	41.72
4.	Above INR 5000	32	18.28
Total		175	100.00

Source: Computed by Researcher from Field Survey Data, April - June Month, 2022

Table 1.8 shows that 41.72 per cent of the respondents are earning INR 3000 - 4000 monthly from their hard work and only 16.00 percent of the respondents are earning INR 500 -1900 monthly from their work.

Table 1.9: Working Hours among Child labours in Malda district of West Bengal

Sl. No.	Working Hours	Total Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	4 - 6 Hours	15	8.58
2.	7 - 8 Hours	92	52.57
3.	9- 10 Hours	47	26.85
4.	12 Hours	21	12.00
Total		175	100.00

Source: Computed by Researcher from Field Survey Data, April - June Month, 2022

Table 1.9 shows that 52.57 per cent of the respondents are daily work 7-8 Hours at the working places and only 8.58 percent of the respondents are daily work 4-6 hours at the working place.

Suggestion and Policy Implications:

1. Alternative time of educations should be provides to the child labours by local Government authority and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) whenever they are free.
2. Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should organize awareness programme regarding the consequence of child labour and motive the common peoples, Village Pradhan and members, teachers and social workers, Self Help Groups (SHGs) to short out the problems in the study area.

3. Wage rate of the parents should be increased so that they can manage the education of their children.
4. Government as well as Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) may distribute soft loans to parents for empowering their skills in the study area.
5. Central Government as well as state government should eliminate child labour by enforce law of free and compulsory education for 14 years of age children.
6. There is an urgent need of survey to find out exact situation of child labour in the study area.

Conclusion:

Child labour is an inhuman crime and its illegal. According to law of land, child labour is prohibited. Our constitution does not allow the system of child labour. But the rich people do not respect it. The Supreme Court is also against it. Current, research describes that due to financial ups and downs and political instability enforce the parents to push their underage beloved in child labour. Children's are the future of nation their all round development is responsibility of the society. It is multi- dimensional and complex issue of our society. A nation full of poverty-ridden children cannot make progress. It should be the collective responsibility of society and the government to provide these impoverished children with a healthy and conducive environment. Children belong in schools not workplaces. Child labour deprives children of their right to go school and reinforces intergenerational cycles of poverty. Child labour acts as a major barrier to education, affecting both attendance and performance in school. Most of the children's are exploited by their employers and paid lesser wages. Children are the foundation of our nation. Every child is an adorable future face of India. Stopping child labour is the responsibility of our whole nation. So, stop blaming government and authorities. So it is the duty of government and citizens to come forward to help the children and remove this practice from our country India. I would therefore like to declare. Make our future bright, shape our future right. Child labour is child abuse. Say no to child labour. **STOP CHILD LABOUR !**

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