



Economic Implications and Societal Impact of Child Labour in Agriculture: A Study of Uttar Pradesh

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ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

Child labor in agriculture remains a critical issue in Uttar Pradesh, significantly affecting both the economy and society. This study examines the economic implications and societal impact of child labor within the agricultural sector of the state. Despite legal frameworks aimed at eradicating child labor, a substantial number of children are engaged in farming activities due to poverty, lack of educational opportunities, and socio-economic pressures. Economically, child labor contributes to a cycle of low productivity, as unskilled labor limits technological advancement and innovation in agriculture. It also suppresses wage levels, affecting adult employment opportunities and perpetuating income inequality. From a societal perspective, child labor hinders educational attainment, leading to long-term skill deficits and limiting social mobility. It exacerbates intergenerational poverty and negatively impacts the physical and mental well-being of children, undermining human capital development. This study highlights the urgent need for integrated policies focusing on poverty reduction, access to quality education, and community awareness to address the root causes of child labor in agriculture and promote sustainable development in Uttar Pradesh.

Keyword-Child, Labour, Problems, humanity, unemployment, Cause, Poverty, Education.

Introduction:

Child labor in agriculture is a persistent issue in Uttar Pradesh, one of India's most populous and agriculturally significant states. Despite various legislative measures such as the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, the practice continues to thrive, particularly in rural areas where poverty, illiteracy, and socio-economic disparities are deeply entrenched. Agriculture, being labor-intensive, often relies on cheap, easily accessible labor, making children vulnerable to exploitation. Factors such as family indebtedness, lack of access to quality education, and cultural norms that normalize child labor further perpetuate the problem. Children engaged in agricultural activities are often exposed to hazardous conditions, including handling of pesticides, operating dangerous machinery, and working long hours under harsh weather conditions, which severely affect their physical and mental well-being. These conditions not only violate their fundamental rights but also deprive them of opportunities for education and personal development, limiting their future prospects.

Economically, the prevalence of child labor in agriculture has far-reaching consequences. While it may provide short-term economic relief to impoverished families and reduce labor costs for farm owners, it contributes to long-term economic stagnation. Child labor undermines the development of a skilled workforce, as children miss out on education and skill-building opportunities essential for modern agricultural practices and technological advancements. This, in turn, hampers productivity, innovation, and the overall growth potential of the agricultural sector. Moreover, the reliance on child labor suppresses adult wages and reduces job opportunities for skilled laborers, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and inequality. From a societal perspective, child labor in agriculture reinforces intergenerational poverty, limits social mobility, and weakens human capital development. This study aims to explore the economic implications and societal impact of child labor in agriculture in Uttar Pradesh, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies that address the root causes and promote sustainable socio-economic development.

Definition of Child Labour

The worldwide issue of child labour is extreme and multifaceted. Continuity in child labour is attributable to several specific reasons. There are a variety of functional problems in the development and enforcement of laws. There are many differences in the way children's schooling is perceived, the way children act, the way sexual abuse is treated. Control of child labour is still a problem and policy programs have been designed to eliminate child labour from hazardous workplaces quickly and phase out non-hazardous workplaces. These were embodied in the Child Labour Act of 1986 and the National Child Labour Policy of 1987. The exact ingredients that actually exist in a controlled setting for the "incremental process" of child labour removal are unclear. While the criteria for evaluating the success of "progressive measures" have hardly been attempted, the global issue of child labour is serious and multifaceted.

Before describing the status of child labour issues comprehensively, we must first be clear on the definition of child and child labour. Age limit is very important for the definition of a child as it determines when a child is a child and becomes an adult.

Child labour refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives them of their childhood. Their regular school attendance is denied and ability to do anything which is dangerous or harmful mentally, physically, socially or morally.

Defining child labour is not as simple and straightforward as it seems since it encompasses three difficult-to-define concepts "child", "work" and "labour".

In the context of child labour, a working definition of "child" may be anyone below the general limit of fifteen years, or in special circumstances by a minimum age limit of fourteen years, as prescribed by the 1973 (No. 138) Act.

According to ILO (1983), "Child labour involves children being brought to adulthood at an early age, working long hours for low wages under conditions detrimental to their health and to their physical and mental development, sometimes separated from the family, often deprived of opportunities for meaningful education and training, etc."

The phrase "child labor" describes any employment in which children are involved that poses a risk to their health or interferes with their education, according to Suda (2011).

According to Moi (2011) child labour refers to low wages, long hours, physical and dwarf exploitation.

Edmunds and Pavcnik (2005) define child labor as the misuse of children working in risky jobs and substandard conditions. "All cases in which children are exposed to harm at work whether or not the child is under 14 years of age" is the common interpretation of the phrase "child labor" (UNICEF, 2005, p. 10).¹

The social, cultural, and economic circumstances as well as the goals, tactics, and mission of any operating organization have a significant impact on the definition and consequences of child labor (Post and Sakurai, 2001; Post, 2001a).

Instead of using "working children," trade unions, consumer advocacy organizations, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) frequently use "child labor" and "child workers," suggesting that children should be kept out of the workforce until they are at least the minimum working age.

The idea that "children's economic independence should be curtailed in order to protect the economic well-being of adults" is expressly reinforced in many kinds of child labor legislation, indicating that the ILO's major goal was to protect adult employment and pay. On the other hand, UNICEF and organizations connected to UNICEF use the term "child labour" in line with Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines child labour as any economic activity that prevents a child from reaching their full potential or receiving an education. This tradition is carried on by UNICEF, which frequently refers to child labor as "working children" (www.unicef.org).

According to the ILO, work that harms a child's physical or mental development and robs them of their youth, potential, or dignity should be classified as "child labor." It refers to work that is hazardous and detrimental to children's mental, physical, social, or moral development; work whose schedule prevents children from attending regular school; or work that in any way impairs their ability to focus in class and at clubs and causes them to feel anxious about their jobs.

There is a need for an impartial assessment of the socio-legal system to determine whether these are sufficient to protect children from physical and economic abuse, to address the issue of child labour and to understand the nature of the situation at the grassroots level. But it is necessary to conduct empirical research, so that this issue can be dealt with on the basis of actual and practical knowledge of the existing facts.

The Magnitude of The Problem In India

In the context of the 2011 Census, the nation is extremely dense, with a population of 259.6 million children aged 5 to 14. Of these, 10.1 million work as 'primary workers' or 'marginal jobs' (3.9 percent of the total child population). It is estimated that more than 42.7 million children in India are deprived of education. The positive news is that the incidence of child labour in India declined by 2.6 million between 2001 and 2011. In comparison, the decline was more in rural areas, while the number of child labour in urban areas is at an alarming rate.

About fifty-five percent of all working children in India are from the states of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar,

Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. State-wise, child labor rates are 7.2% in Maharashtra, 21.5% in Uttar Pradesh, 6.9% in Madhya Pradesh, 8.4% in Rajasthan, and 10.7% in Bihar, according to the 2011 Census of India

Child labor accounts for 5.2% of the workforce in India. With 80% of working children involved in agriculture and related fields, children in rural areas outnumber those in urban areas. Merely 6% of young laborers engaged in activities that were forbidden by the 1986 young Labor Act. The majority of working children are exempt from the law since their jobs are either not dangerous or involve child labor as part of a family company.

The prevalence and persistence of child labour is the most important factor for persistent poverty, as claimed by Gurupadaswamy in his report. Almost half of the Indians are working below the poverty line. Since their appearance in the household, children have been given an economic mandate in this regard. Socio-economic considerations and pressures place such a heavy burden on the poor parent that they have little sympathy with the employer of the child in danger of violating the law and inhumane work. Child poverty also gives rise to each other.

The International Labour Organization believes that children are not exploited solely because of poverty. Poor schooling should also be considered. For instance, unpaid labor in domestic businesses is classified as child labor and child economic activity in the World Bank's 2007 report. youngsters who work as youngsters miss school and are more likely to be sexually abused, particularly girls. Children are involved in child labor and child economic activities in Canada. "Child labor refers to the practice where a child's right to education and a proper childhood is taken away. A child involved in labor is deprived of these fundamental rights

For child labour, the global number is estimated to be 168 million (2012). Asia and the Pacific remain the world's largest child labour force (about 78 million or 9.3%), but sub-Saharan Africa is also the region with the highest child labour rates (59 million and 20%, respectively). Agriculture is by far the most influential sector in the world with detectable child labour (98 million), but no significant barriers to education (54 million) and manufacturing (12 million). This is especially seen in informal economies. The protection and defense of the civil rights of children were governed by various international conventions regulating child labour. In 1948, infants were recognized as entitled to due rights and care in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 6 of the 1989 General Assembly of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides for a child's right to life, and it is the duty of Member States to protect the rights of such children. In compliance with Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the parties concerned are required to acknowledge the rights of a child to "protect against economic misconduct, work which may be harmful, interfere with childcare or which may result in health can affect the child's physical, emotional, spiritual, moral and social development. This is a great insult to human rights.

In India, human rights, and state policy directives that lead to the abolition of child labour are set out in Part III and Part IV of the Constitution. Article 23 of the Constitution, through the 86th Amendment Act, Article 21-A in 2002, states that school education shall as a constitutional rule 'no child below the age of 14 years in any factory, mine or other unsafe will not be employed'. The constitution guarantees that it is mandatory for the state to provide free and elementary education to all children. Political philosophy compels the state to guarantee that all children under the age of 6 will receive health and education. In 1986, under the law, Parliament passed the Child Labour Act, which allows child employment at certain places of work and regulates the conditions of child labour at certain other workplaces.

The three aspects of child welfare were the first priority of the National Child Protection Program of 1987. First, prohibiting child labour; second, to make arrangements for the provision of education and health services to the families of working children; and third, introducing measures to cut child labour. The Government of India amended the Child Labour Act 1986 of 1 August 2006, which prohibited children below the age of 14 from engaging in domestic labour and child labour on 10 October 2006.

In case of violation of the Act, there is a provision of imprisonment for three months and a fine of Rs 10,000 to 20,000. In 2002, the Constitution of India was amended by the 86th Amendment and the right to education was placed under the fundamental rights of human beings. In pursuance of this Act, Parliament enacted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 in August 2009, which makes access to education a fundamental right with effect from 1 April 2010 and the state government enrolls every child in kindergarten. Obligated to do. The Commission for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, 2005 was passed by the Parliament, and suggested the establishment of a National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights and a State Commission and Children's Court by the Commission. Which will provide for speedy trial of offenses against children or violation of the rights of children and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Thus, as opposed to the theoretical analysis of the material, we need good quality of work for practical solution of the problem and for formulating appropriate strategy for eradication of child labour.

Factors Responsible for Child Labour

Child labour continues despite existing laws and guidelines to prevent it. Poverty in jobs, limited exposure to schooling and family migration from rural to urban areas are major factors contributing to child labour.

Poverty

Poor children and their parents may depend on child labour to increase their chances of getting basic needs. One of the most pressing and divisive reasons children's work uncovers is in security. Child labour has received considerable consideration on the role of poverty. It is also generally accepted that lack of money, unequal wealth, is the leading cause of child labour in a very poor world, with universal enslavement and rule over all human beings of all genders, physicians, lawyers, professors and. In general, the middle class is not considered to be employed (Basu and Tzanatos, 2002). As long as there is poverty, child labour cannot be completely eradicated.

Migration of rural population to urban area is often seen in underdeveloped and developing countries. Either the children move with their parents or are left behind in the countryside. Many poor rural families are striving for a better life in urban areas. It motivates families to work to increase family income and guarantee survival. According to Hans van de Glind, 2010: Migration serves as a common economic management or survival strategy for the home in many parts of the world, and can provide new opportunities for children and their families.

Effects of Child Labour

Child labour deprives an infant of its rightful childhood. The child is also a victim of intimate, physical and mental abuse. It punishes a child for a life of unskilled, badly paid jobs. Physical "health injury"

Child labour has serious physical health problems that adversely affect the physical development of children, especially when a large proportion of child labour comes from poor families and poverty is not suitable to cope with the burden of working life.

Depends primarily on the amount of work done and the number of hours employed (Well, 2005)

22. "Children are often vulnerable to physical immaturity and in appropriate access to the workplace. In addition, an unhealthy workplace environment can cause more physical harm. Almost all child laborers are affected by physical discomfort before or during work hours. To make matters worse, child workers who get hurt during working hours are not given adequate care for their health issues. The immaturity of children is not taken into account when they are engaged in operating machine techniques, heavy equipment. The possibility of life and injuries increases in case of failure of these equipment's, hence the engagement of children in such in dustiest should be restricted. The physical consequences of child labour, such as disability and malnutrition induced illness, stress and open exposure to harmful environments make them physically disabled and this restricts the overall development of young children. Human wellbeing and healthy working practices may not be suitable for children due to physical differences. At certain stages of development, the risks to children are greater and can have long-term effects. (David Parker), "Is a healthy job safe for parents and good for children as well?" They observed that while children are weaker than adults, they have less resistance than adults, partly because their sweat glands are expanding. Ventilation in the workplace that is adequate for adults can cause thermal stress in children.

Psychologist

The explanation is that children lack the physical strength and authority to do their jobs, their work is often not viewed as effective, and they are at the lowest grades and levels of the workforce. 'One study found that working children are more prone to psychological problems than non-working children. The study indicated that child labour is dangerous for the development of children, so it is the responsibility of the government and society to make efforts to eliminate child labour. "They have a poor adaptive ability,

There is low physical health and excessive social behavior. The psychological and social risks of child labour have been highlighted in this context (Woodhead, 2004), social isolation and poor interpersonal relationships with risky behavior, eg violence, drug and drug use (Taroni, 2002), of children. are physically abused and sexually abused and they are the victims of discriminatory behavior. (Stegmann, K., 2003).

Possible Solutions To Get Rid of Child Labour

It is not possible for us to truly stop or completely eliminate child labour. All we need to do is not to nurture it and prevent it from spoiling. Child labour is a criminal misconduct and stringent laws have been made against it, but these laws need to be strictly enforced and every person needs to follow them sincerely. Education will play an important role in preventing child labour and making people aware about the benefits of child labour education.

Increase in family income

The family should have the resources to earn the minimum wage. Most families have to work as teenagers, or put their teens on the streets or sell them off to survive. While we can help these families escape poverty and have a steady income from jobs, many children do not need to live in these conditions. However, we have to

bear in mind that this program must be funded by the government, and they may not be eager to support it. You will not be able to do this especially if your area developing nation. Families should not hesitate to give work to relatives of adult children, as adult income is usually much higher than child wages. The economic status of the parents is related to child labour. When all parents are employed, families are expected to consider solutions by stopping their children from work and sending them to school. So for all the families, fathers and mothers who do not have any physical illness should give their support to deal with this issue. Child labour, and operations in the universal welfare system must include a social assistance program. Without a welfare system and a clear government agenda, not all children will be rolled in school. Financial intervention should be emphasized in any national program, as these children come from poor backgrounds and their families are financially supported. In addition, legislation and community services to help women find work in which an alternative to child labour can be provided.

Declaration of free compulsory education for all children

Child-specific characteristics are the determinants of child labour and school enrolment. "Children's age and gender can affect their work and their education. Beyond a certain age, the older the child, the more likely he or she is to work and school no matter what, 'Parents The education of children often affects a boy's labour and school. Parents' education has a positive effect on their level of pay, their attitudes towards education, and schooling can also make a complementary contribution to their development. All indicators show that higher parenting education improves school enrolment and reduces child labour. Training encourages children to adapt and become competent. In other words, it helps children to meet their needs. Equips you with the information to make a living in your world.

In collaboration with the international organization, the government will provide children with the right to education and establish priorities to ensure the education of all children. The goal here is to Increase the literacy degree of the country's productivity. According to Doftori, 2004

Good education is considered as a tool for the education of child labour, because educated people will be engaged in white collar services and they will increase the prosperity of the nation by their services. For education policies to achieve their ultimate goal of reducing child labour, it is necessary that the policies should be introduced with genuine efforts to empower the people. Mid-day meal facility in school will increase the enrolment of children in school and it will be good to maintain the health of poor children; by providing the facility of home ration to poor students we can help the weaker section in their struggle. Otherwise, they would be more inclined to send their children to the work place than to send them to school.

As a general education, early childhood education, primary and secondary education and adult education are related. The goals of the curriculum for all services are: Every child receives early childhood care and education; To ensure that all children have access to a high standard of affordable and compulsory primary education.

Birth Control/Family Planning

Family planning risk is modelled as a fall in value for infants because it reduces the total cost of parenting, independent of their child's level of education (Baker,1991).Differences in duration and nature The family planning system within the care and control areas creates variation among villager sand thus differences in the net worth of birth. The Family Planning Program Project is an extension system in which trained personnel provide contraception and information during home visits., Over the past 50 years, the birth management system among women from different parts of the world has improved. Women who prevent premature or unwanted births as are sult of population policy are more likely to spend more on human resources for each of their children and minimize poverty in the next generation.

CONCLUSION

India still has the highest number of youngsters working illegally in a variety of industrial sectors as of 2022. In India, the major industry, agriculture, employs a large number of young people to help support their families. Due to a combination of familial circumstances, including unemployment, a large family size, poverty, and parents' lack of education, many of these youngsters are compelled to work at an early age. This is frequently the main cause of India's high child labor rate. Numerous Indian social scientists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have conducted in-depth studies on the numerical statistics of child labor in India and have concluded that the country is responsible for roughly one-third of child labor in Asia and a quarter of child labor worldwide. The Indian government took significant steps to decrease the number of children working and placed a strong emphasis on promoting children's healthy growth and development in response to the high number of youngsters engaged in illicit employment. Since 2011, child labor has decreased by almost 55% as a result of stricter laws and regulations. To ensure that all government programs for child welfare can reach the actual poor, corruption must be reduced before child labor can be stopped. Additionally, eradicating unemployment will decrease child labor.

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