



Community Perception about Risk Associated with the Child Occupations: A Case of Bangalore City-India*

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Abstract

Recent World Bank report (2009) has revealed that approximately more than Fifteen million children are working in India in various sectors, which is largest in terms of any country in the world. In every nation, the welfare of the entire community depends on the health and welfare of the child. The child welfare policy should acknowledge the fact that the personality of a human being is built up in the formative years of the child. Physical, social and cultural health of the nation can be determined by the manner in which the life of the child is shaped in early stages. Child welfare includes the total well-being of the child. It not only includes care of the malnourished child, delinquent and the disabled child, but also the development of the normal child's physical, mental, emotional and social faculties. Risk in any child worker is a common phenomenon. Different risks involved in child work will leads to more impact on her/his future life. Risks involved in the any child work has not yet effectively revealed by any studies so far. This study has been conducted in Bangalore city-India to find out how community evaluates the risk associated with various child occupations using focus group study technique. This study concludes that community has partially aware that risks associated with various child's work.

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Introduction

The term 'Child Labour' has different meaning in different societies. A universally accepted definition of child labour is not available. A distinction is often made between child work and child labour. 'Child Work' refers to occasional light work done by the children, which in most of the societies is considered to be an integral part of child's socialization process. While helping parents at home and in family farms, children learn to take responsibilities and pride in their own activities acquire certain skills and prepare themselves for the tasks of adulthood. 'Child Labour' implies something different in which young people are being employed to have economic benefits or overworked or deprived of their rights to health, education or just to enjoy childhood. It impairs their health, overall physical, and mental and social growth

Child labour has remained both an economic and a social problem in our country for a long time. Legislative and welfare measures taken by Government and various NGOs have proved to be ineffective in fighting with the problem of the child labour. In this regard, it should be recognized that employers' role is very crucial because they are the real people who are behind the screen. Researchers have yet to pay adequate attention on this aspect. However, one of the objectives of this study is to find out crucial views of the employers on child labour issue. The issue of child labour has drawn increasing attention both at the national and international forms. Criticism has been focused on inhuman working condition in both unorganized and organised sectors, the impact of which is observed on physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual health of the children (Weiner, 1991).

Since 1990, the ILO is emphasizing to remove children from both unorganized and hazardous sectors as soon as possible. (Kar,2001). If so, social scientists research have to concentrate on how community evaluates the risk associated with the employments of the children and age as being appropriate to each kinds of work. So, the objective of the present study also includes to reveal how particularly the community evaluates the risk associated with different types of works and age as being appropriate to each type of work?.

Now a day the community is very sensitive regarding the working condition of the children in both organised and unorganized sectors. Facilities like wage structure, working atmosphere, and employer's attitude, child abuses are some of the issues currently being under discussion among the community members. Even International Labour Organization (ILO) has raised its voice against

inhuman working condition in both the sectors. So present study enlighten the working conditions of the children working in both organized and unorganized sectors in the city.

The analysis of the problem demands a deeper socio anthropological insight into the century. Old traditional norms and values prevailing among Indian societies, the involvement of children during their early ages in various works as a part of socialization and acceptance in to the society as a member. As the process of taking person as an acceptable human being in to the society is of anthropological significances. Experts felt any theoretical research on child labour must to find out the social and cultural factors responsible for the issues related to the child labour and how parents/ community opines about risk involved in the job. This kind of analysis of the value system leads to the understanding of the conflict between the traditional and modern values accepted by the society.

Recent studies (Patrons, and Hearry;2003) have revealed that the concept of children's work must be geographically, temporally, and ethically deconstructed and historically situated giving attention to place, era, generation and social class. Critics have further asserted that given the socio economic real times of most developing countries even if children were prohibited from working they would be unable to experiences the kind of child hood envisioned as appropriate in developed countries. To succeed in the short term in removing children from the most hazardous forms of the work will require culturally and geographically specific data concerning how community classify the particular type of work as being appropriate for different age groups, how they judge the degree of risk associated with each type of work, and how community social economic resources can be mobilized for remediation campaigns. The objective of this paper is to find out community perception about risk associated with various child work.

As society was constituted by unequal the posed and dispossessed. The child who had to work to supplement or survive belongs to the dispossessed. The dispossessed being economically depended on the owner of means of production lived always in want and deprivation. Such situation had existed in past, perhaps in most ruthless manner, and the conditionality of the existence and continuation was socio-politically sanctioned by that time.



Objective

1. To find out how community evaluates the risks involved in various sectors where children are working in different sectors
2. To extend the policy suggestions

Methodology

The data of this section is largely depending on the community norm study. The community norm study had as many as 15 focus groups which having 10 members each from randomly selected pockets of Bangalore city India. Totally 150 community members were selected to elicit the data. Data focused on 1. Hotel 2. Garage, 3 Construction 4. Domestic 5 Factory .6. Commercial establishment. Community members were from different sections of the society like teachers, community leaders, politicians, Government servants, religious leaders, administrators, advocates, media, trade, trade -etc. Data analyzed using simple Minitab software.

Result

Table 1: How Community Evaluates Risk in Case of Risky Part in Hotel Work

Risky aspects	Numbers	Percentages	X²	p
Always children works with water	71	47.3	12.789	0.000
Has to carry hot food items always	50	33.3		
Some time children have to carry heavy things	15	10.0		
Chances of skin and nervous problems	14	9.3		
Total	150	100		



Table 2: How Community Evaluate the risk in Case of Garage Work

Risky aspects	Numbers	Percentages	X ²	p
Working always with sharp tools	73	48.6	21.330	0.000
Chances of burning and deep cuttings are more	65	43.3		
Working always with oil and grease	05	3.3		
Have to carry heavy things	03	2.0		
Dirty smoke and cloth	03	2.0		
Other	01	1.0		
Total	150	100		

Table 3: How Community Evaluates the Risk in Case of Construction Work

Risky aspects	Numbers	Percentages	X ²	p
Has to carry heavy things to many floors	72	48.0	15.819	0.000
Working on scaffold is dangers	61	40.6		
Rashes on palm and foot.	13	8.6		
Mixing of cement is dangers	4	2.6		
Total	150	100		

Table 4: How Community Evaluations Risk in Case of Domestic Work

Risky aspects	Number	Percentage	X ²	p
Always children have to work with water	61	40.6	11.980	0.000
Washing cloth and utensils is beyond the physical Capacity of the children	57	38.0		
Chances of child abuse is more	29	19.3		
Long hours of work/harassment	3	2		
Total	150	100		



Table 5: How Community Evaluates the Risk in Case of Factory Work

Risky aspects	Numbers	percentages	X ²	p
Working with sharp and dangers machines	51	34.0	20.981	0.000
Chance of getting severe occupational injures	48	32.0		
Working without any protective measurements	46	30.6		
Chances of child abuse is more	5	3.3		
Total	150	100		

Table 6: How Community Evaluates the Risk in Case of Shops Commercial Establishments

Risky aspects	Numbers	Percentages	X ²	p
Always have to carry heavy things	57	38.0	17.091	0.00
Long working hours	48	32.0		
More chances of learning bad habits	31	20.6		
Chances of child abuse	14	9.3		
Total	150	100		

Table 7: Community Opinion about Stopping Child labor

Suggestions	Numbers	Percentages	X ²	p
Promote vocational education	45	30.0	23.912	0.00
Alternative livelihood strategy for families	34	22.6		
Banning child depending industry	26	17.3		
Other	45	30.0		
Total	150	100		

DISCUSSION

From the Table (1) it is clear that more than 47% of community members say working with water is the most risky part of this job. 33% community members have asserted that carrying prepared hot food items is second risky aspects of the hotel work for children while 12% feels that carrying heavy things seems to be very crucial for children in case of hotel work. Another 12% feels that hotel work may causes some health related problems in the future. Also majority of the community members feels children should be at least 12-13 years old to work in hotels. Hence community mainly feels to work with water and carrying hot food items are the most risky aspects in hotel jobs. From the Table (2) it is quite revealed that majority of the community members (48%) unanimously admitted that working with sharp tools is the most crucial aspects of the garage work. Next, 43% of community members say chances of having deep cuttings and burning second most risky aspects in case of garage work for children. 3.3% members said always working with oil and greases are danger aspects in case of garage work. 2 % of members felt bad smoke and cloth causes acute health problems in the future Negligible quantity of members said test raiding is also risky aspects in case of garage work. Majority of the community members said children should be at least 15 years old to work in garages. Hence this table proves that working with sharp tools and chances of having deep cuttings and burning is the most crucial and risky aspects in case of garage work for the children.

From the Table (3) it is found that in case of construction work community has unanimous opinion that (54%) carrying heavy things like bricks, mixed cements to many floors is the riskiest aspects for children. More than 40% community members said working on scaffold is second dangerous part in case of construction work. Next 8% community members has an opinion that it causes severe palm and foot problems among the working children. Further 2% community members feel mixing of powered cements leads to acute lungs problems in case of children working in construction sites. Majority of the community members expressed that children should be at least 17-18 years old to work in construction sites. Hence it is revealed that majority (88%) of the community members feel that carrying heavy things to many floors and working on scaffold are the most risky aspects in case of construction work to the children.

From the table (4) it is found that since it is expected that children have to work with water in case of domestic work most of the community members (40%) said it is the riskiest aspects for children.



Next, 38% community members felt that washing cloth and utensils is beyond physical capacity of the children, and it seems to be the second most risky aspects for children in case of domestic work. Since female children have to work inside the house, 19% community members said chances of child abuses are more in case of domestic work. 2% members said long working hours in case of domestic work effects on physical and mental development of the children. Majority of the community members feel that children should be at least 16 years old to work in any domestic sectors except house hold industry. Hence it is noteworthy to reveal that working with water and washing cloth and utensils are the risky aspects in case of domestic work to the children.

From the table (5) it is found that in case of factory community, they are not completely aware of organized and unorganized factories. In general 34% community members feel working with sharp and dangerous machines are the most risky aspects in case of factory work. 32% community members' feel carrying heavy things is the second risky in case of factory work, which is common in both the type of the factories. Next 30% community members feel that working without having any protective measurement is also a risky part in case of factory. 3% of member said chance of child abuse is more in case of factory work. Hence community feels working with sharp and dangerous machines, carrying heavy stuffs and working without any protective measurement are the most risky part in case of factory work.

Few members also feel that working with different chemicals also dangerous to the children. Community members said children should be at least 18 years old to work in any kind of factory. Table (6) established that carrying heavy stuffs by the children is most risky aspects in case of shops and commercial establishments, as felt by 38% of community members. 32% community members said that long working hours even until late at night are the second risky aspects for children in case of shop and commercial establishment work. 20% of community members fear that chances of learning bad habits are more in case of shops and commercial establishment work. More than 8% community members feel more chances of child abuse in this kind of work. Majority of community members express their opinion that children must be 17 years old to work in shops and commercial establishments. In case of this sector community was not absolutely sure about risky part to the children. However they have expressed some general opinion about the risk.

From these fact it is revealed that community is just aware of only physical risks in the occupations. Community is not thinking about the mental risks involved in the jobs of the children. Community is not exactly assessing the risks involved in child work. It proves that the community is thinking about only short-term effects on health related risks involved among the working children. Community is not properly evaluating risks from the prospective of long-term vision regarding children. It means, community is not bothering about how this work will effect on the normal growth and development of the child and how it badly effects on his/her mental development in the future?

As few communities open that it does not appear to be broad relationship between poverty and child labour. However it is reinforced as well as offset by the economic and social differentiation of the poor. Factors like caste, religion, and ethnicity and gender act in conjunction with poverty as well as independently of it, to explain variations in the incidence of child labour as well as children absence, or irregular presence, in the educational system. One of the more interesting aspects is that. This research found that community is not in favor of early socialization of children by sending them to work only. Community asserted that children could effectively be socialized by sending them to the school and by allowing them to mingle with their peer age group friends. Also it is found that some of the other cultural factors are independently variables with family structure and sex role.

Recent studies have revealed that the concept of children's work must be geographically, temporally, and ethically deconstructed and historically situated giving attention to place, era, generation and social class. Critics have further asserted that, given the socio economic realities of most developing countries even though children are prohibited from working they can't experience the kind of childhood envisioned as appropriate in developed countries. To succeed in the short term to removing children from the most hazardous forms of the work will require culturally and geographically specific data concerning how community classify the particular type of work as being appropriate for different age groups, how they evaluates the risk associated with each type of work, and how community resources can be mobilized for remediation campaigns (White, 1999).

Each day, number of children is exposed to dangers that hamper their normal growth and development. They are often victims of gender and communal discrimination, aggression, neglect, cruelty and exploitation. A child being the last major subgroup of the family has drawn the attention of the social scientists with regard to their protection and rights. (Heart, 1991). India is also one of the



signatories of the International Convention for Child Rights (CRC). Hence, this is the right time to focus on community perception about child labors, rights of children including how rights of the children can be operationalized within the existing culturally diverse social settings.

Conclusion

Experts opined factors like caste, religion, and ethnicity and gender act in conjunction with poverty as well as independently of it, to explain variations in the incidence of child labour as well as children absence, or irregular presence, in the educational system. One of the more interesting aspects is that. This research found that community is not in favor of early socialization of children by sending them to work only. Community asserted that children could effectively be socialized by sending them to the school and by allowing them to mingle with their peer age group friends. Also it is found that some of the other cultural factors are independently variables with family structure and sex role. Finally it is revealed that the community has felt, risk factor among child labours should be examined especially in the Indian context based on of different types of typology of hazardous occupations.

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