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Facts and Magnitude of Child Labour -Case Study is in Nagaon District, Assam

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Abstract

The unequal distribution of economic resources among the citizens of the country always creates two classes as 'Haves and Have not'. It is the prime cause of poverty. Child labour is due to poverty along with some other causes like shortage of educational institution, environment, parental loss, ignorance of parents about child potentiality, unbearable cost of education. In fact, child labour is revolving among the poor destitute family who are living in interior places. Child labour depletion always requires the abolition of poverty and then on others. This paper highlights on facts and magnitude of child labour. The rise in income of the household changes the standard of living of the people and enable to feel them the usefulness of education. It impacts on the knowledge of skilled labour and unskilled labour.

Keywords: child labour, poverty, environment.

INTRODUCTION

Child is the future of the nation (Bhatty, 1998). Today child is the citizen of tomorrow. Human capital index of a country determines the growth trend of the economy. The base of human capital is the proper development of children (Hassan, 1998). So, the adequate facilities regarding education, nutrition and playing towards children necessary to develop the potentiality are vital attributes.

Unfortunately, the fundamental barrier to child development is the child labour. It hijacks the child development from right tracks by depriving school education, social touch, games and sports. The most important fact is the economic crisis of the parent/guardians (UNICEF, 1997). In Zambia, the children are working not because of poverty but because of inadequate school facility, ignorance of parent, school

expenses and environment (Nielson, 1998). In Consequence, skill labour is inadequate in the rapid growth rate of the economy.

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD LABOUR

Various study groups defined child labour differently. Singh (1998) defined that child labour are school deprived children and recruiting them in abysmal situation in an early days of life. 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva (2008) defined child labour as employed in three different activities -

- a) Hazardous activities affect the mental and physical calibre of child (long work, night work, unhealthy environment, unsafe equipment, heavy load, dangerous locations and abuse are the examples.)
- b) Social evil and moral degraded activities like slavery, used for prostitution, pornography, forced begging and stealing.
- c) Age and time related activities like absence of school attendance.

Article – 24 (Indian Constitution) directed to prohibit the employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories, mines or any other hazardous employment. Moreover, Article-21(A) state about the free and compulsory education in between the age group of 6-14 years.

FACTS AND MAGNITUDE OF CHILD LABOUR

Trade liberalization in industrial transition, immigration and flow of migration in USA makes the child labour and trade off the adult employment [Emerson and Andre Portela Souza (2003), Caselli and Coleman (2006), Wahba Jackline (2006), Diana Kruger (2007), Krisztina Kis-Katos and Robert Sparrow (2011), Richard Hornbeck and Suresh Naidu (2014)].

In developing countries, child labour is still prevalent due to high poverty and poor schooling opportunity. Sub Saharan Africa witnessing the highest incidence rates of child labour in the age group 5–14 (Loretta Bass, 2004).

Helen Sekar (2001) stated the important facts of child labour in India as: poverty, parental illiteracy and ignorance, tradition of making children learn the family skills, absence of universal compulsory primary education, non-availability of and non-accessibility to schools, irrelevant and non-attractive school curriculum, social and cultural environment, in formalization of production, employment's preference to children for their cheap labour and inability to organize against exploitation, family work, level of technology, apathy of trade unions.

The facts of child labour in Assam for Subash Koul, former director of SOS (Save Our Soul) (2014) Children's Village, Guwahati are poverty, parental illiteracy, social apathy, lack of education and growing population (Assam Tribune, 2014).

The following tables focus the magnitude of child labour in the World, India and regional level.

Table 1: World Level Child Labour: Children Involvement in Child Labour and Hazardous Work (2000-16)

Age		2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
5-17 years	Child labour	245,500,000	222,294,000	215,209,000	167,956,000	151,622,000
	Hazardous work	170,500,000	128,381,000	115,314,000	85,344,000	72,525,000

Source: Global Estimates of Child Labour Results and Trends, 2012-2016

Following table: 2 and 3 depict the child labour in Indian context. In census report reflects the good symptom that child labour is in declining trend.

Table 2. Working Children in India
Working children in National level (5-14 years old)

Country	Census				
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
All India	10753985	13640870	11285349	12666377	4353247

Source: Indian Census on Working Children.

Table 3. Child Labour (5-14 years old), 2009-10

Country	Male	Female	Total
All India	3057998	1925873	4983871

Source: NSSO (66th round Survey), 2009-10.

Following Table: 4 and 5 represents the magnitude of child labour in North-East States of India.

Table 4. Child Working in North-East States of India in the age group of 5-14:

State	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Assam	239349	-----	327598	351416	99512
Arunachal Pradesh	17925	17950	12395	18482	5766
Manipur	16380	20217	16493	28836	11805
Meghalaya	30440	44916	34633	53940	18839
Mizoram	-----	6314	16411	26265	2793
Nagaland	13726	16235	16467	45874	11062
Sikkim	15661	8561	5598	16457	2704
Tripura	17490	24204	16478	21756	4998
All India	10753985	13640870	11285349	12666377	4353247

Source: Census Report on child labour (N.B. In Assam 1981 census could not be conducted and in 1971 census Mizoram was in Assam.)

Table 5. Child Labour in Assam (2009-10)

State	Male	Female	Total	% Share of Child Labour
Assam	156488	32666	189154	3.80

Source: NSSO (66th Round of Survey)

As per this report of census, the magnitudes of working children are falling due to implementation of Government Schemes like Sarva Siksha Aviyam and establishment of Schools for free and compulsory Elementary Education in between 6-14 years old.

Objective of the Study

- 1) To find out the facts and figures of child labour in the study area.
- 2) To state the solutions of child labour problem

METHODOLOGY

It is an explorative study. It follows both quantitative and qualitative data. Field survey in the study area has been done in terms of schedule questionnaire. Secondary sources of data are getting from census report, NSS report, statistics hand book, journals, books and websites.

Facts and figures of child labour in the study area

Nagaon (initially spelled by Nowgong) is one of the largest districts of central Assam. It has 18th Block Development Office as per census, 2011. Agriculture is the backbone of the inhabitants of Nagaon District. About 78% population are engaged in this sector. Table: 6, focus the population of Nagaon District as per census, 2011.

Table 6. Population of Nagaon District

District	Population			Rural	Urban
	Total	Male	Female		
Nagaon	2826006	2457906	368100	1440307	1385699

Source: Census, 2011

As per census 2011, Nagaon District has 18th numbers of Development Blocks. The study considers 30% of the development blocks, namely- Pakhimuria Block, Khagorijan Block, Kaliabor Block, Juria Block and Bajiagaon Block. From each block, 15 numbers of child labours are interviewed as sample in between the age group 6-14 years and interpreted in the following tables. Total sample of child labour is 75.

Table 7. Distribution of child labour

Age	Pakhimuria		Khagorijan		Kaliabor		Juria		Bajiagaon		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
6-8	2	-	-	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	5	2
9-11	4	3	5	2	3	1	5	4	6	4	23	14
12-14	2	4	3	4	5	4	3	1	3	2	16	15
Total	8	7	8	7	9	6	10	5	9	6	44	31

Source: Field Survey during the year 2016. (Note: 'M' for Male and 'F' for Female)

In table: 7, total male child labour is 44 and female child labour is 31 in five development blocks. 58.6% are the male child labour and 41.3% are the female child labour found in the study area. Male child labour is highest in the age group of 9-11. Female child labour is highest in the age group 12-14 years. Table: 8 represents the percentage of child labour in five development blocks. Male child labour is more than female child labour. Male can come out easily to the economic field while female could not.

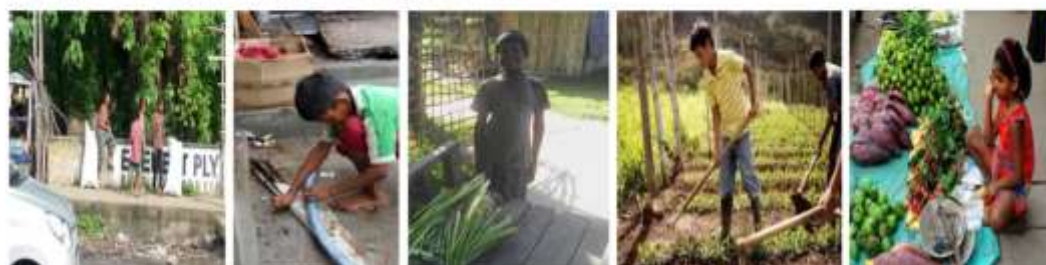
Table 8. The Percentage Of Child Labour In Five Development Blocks.

Gender	Pakhimuria	%	Khagorijan	%	Kaliabor	%	Juria	%	Bajiagaon	%	Total
Male	8	18.1	8	18.1	9	20.4	10	22.7	9	20.4	44
Female	7	22.5	7	22.5	6	19.3	5	16.1	6	19.3	31

Source: Field Survey during the year 2016.

Important facts of child labour are: poverty (45%); ignorance of parent/guardian about child development (24%); shortage of food (15%); social apathy/environment (4%); parental loss (2%); migration (4%); indebtedness (6%). Economic crisis is the prime cause of child labour. Child labours are found in Muslim community 45 (60%), Tribal community 22 (29.3%) and Hindu community 8 (10.6%).

The area of child labour is found in paddy field 41%, small tea garden used for tea plantation 23%, domestic slavery 5%, street business 7%, picked up plastic materials from garbage/street without safety measures 13%, factory 6% and hotel 5%. Some of the spot verification pictures are given below:



MEASURES

Following are the measures need to be followed to make awareness to the people against the practice of child labour:

- a) Administrative machinery should have positive role to prevent child labour. Migrated people should be established with fair income so as to fulfil their basic necessities. Abolition of poverty measures (welfare schemes) should cover the needy sections of the society so as to remove the problem of survival.
- b) Child care agencies should find out the source of child labour and awareness programme should be organised so as to motivate the parent/guardian of destitute children.
- c) Adequate fund should be released to NGO for smooth functioning and makes proper guidance about government welfare scheme necessary to the livelihood of the parents/guardian of children.
- d) A special care should be taken for school education of child labour by providing incentives like scholarship. A noble close relationship between teacher and guardian is to be set up so as to understand the potentiality of the children.

CONCLUSION

Child labour is the World-wide problem and prevents the economic growth rate of the country. Child labour problem can be reduced only when people realize the child potentiality. It is necessary to take preventive measures by public and government agencies together against the practice of child labour. The slogan should be work together to ban child labour from the economy.

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INSIDE

Editorial	
Helsinki Summit	5
<i>B.K.</i>	
UN Peacekeeping Operations in Middle & Northern Africa	7
<i>Shivani Seth</i>	
Trafficking in Human Beings: How Companies can Make a Difference	12
<i>Carlos López-Veraza Pérez</i>	
Tricameral Legislature–Key to solve Women Reservation Bill’s Imbroglio	19
<i>Dr. Pooran Koli</i>	
Contextualizing Ambedkar in 21st Century	28
<i>Keerthiraj</i>	
Need for Ethical Studies in Higher Education in India	32
<i>Dr. S. Ramakrishnan</i>	
Perspectives on Rural Healthcare in Udupi, Karnataka	36
<i>Dr. Duggappa Kajekar</i>	
Determinants of Voting Behaviour in Tamil Nadu Elections	44
<i>K. Saravana Rajasena</i>	
Causes of Child Labour among Tea-Tribes of Nagaon, Assam	54
<i>Dr. Anuradha Singha & Prafulla Saikia</i>	

Causes of Child Labour among Tea-Tribes of Nagaon, Assam

Dr. Anuradha Singha* & Prafulla Saikia**

[It is absolutely accepted that child labour is the curse for economic growth of the country. The communities which have the realisation about the development of the potentialities of children are sure to be developed because they are dedicated to their aim of child development. In a developing country, the responsibilities of the parent/guardian to their child is quite less. The socio-economic factors play an important role in this regard. The gap between income and poverty generally creates the child labour. Where there is the child labour, there is the lack of human capital accumulation. So, this article highlights on socio-economic factors (like occupation, income, education) responsible for child labour among tea tribes.]

Child is the base for the growth of the nation. As such child is the asset of the country. Human capital determines the directions of the utilisation of idle and under-used scarce economic resources of the country. It is, therefore, allowed to grow in an environment which is essential for making eligible and skilful on social, emotional and educational needs. It is, thus, necessary to offer specific efforts to create facilities for the child as future citizens and human capital of the country (M. Gautam-2006).

Child labour is the great challenge for the most economically deprived population. Child development is the negligible part of such economically challenged people. Their prime motive is the survival rather than personal development (Shandilya et. al. 2006). Economic activities degrade the physical, moral and social development of the children and affect the rapid economic growth of the country. The employment of the children in an early age is said as child labour which is the obstacle to attend school.

International Labour Organisation (2010) states that born to parents who themselves were

uneducated at their childhood force their children to work as labour, thereby, continue nurture child labour from generation to generation that is chained to a life of poverty.

Child labour is the world-wide problem that calls for serious attempts to ban the magnitude of the problems on the part of policy makers, researchers and society, political groups in international, national and regional level. However, child labour problem is still found at all levels, but the magnitude of child labour varied country to country.

Definitions of Child Labour

Burra (1999) stated that a child labour was inclined with a child who was deprived of the right to education and childhood. In her definition, it is clear that the working child either at home or outside home is absent from school attendance and hence, skilled human resource is inadequate for rapid growth rate of the economy.

Child labour means those children working in between the age group of 6 and 15 years who are not attending school and like to toil under an employer for learning some trade as an apprentice (Singh, 1998).

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18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva (2008) stated the composition of child labour in three different activities as-

- a) Hazardous work (including long work, night work, unhealthy environment, unsafe equipment, heavy load, dangerous locations and abuse).
- b) Worst forms of child labour (including slavery, used for prostitution, pornography, forced begging and stealing). Morally degraded anti-social activities of the children are the worst forms of child labour.
- c) Other forms of child labour (depending on school age 5-14 years of child and weekly hours worked). Age and time related activities of children that create the problem to expose child potentiality.

From the above study, the term Child Labour is interpreted in two different ways: Firstly, as an economic practice, secondly, as a social evil. In the first context, it signifies employment of children in gainful occupations to support family income. Economic crisis and indebtedness are the root cause of such type of child labour. The second sense of child labour is generally used. In assessing the nature and extent of social evil, it is necessary to take into account the character of the jobs on which children dedicated for the owner. The danger is that they are denied.

Profile of Kaliabor Subdivision

Kaliabor subdivision is in Nagaon district situated at a distance of 48 km. from Nagaon Town. Kaliabor was the head quarter of Borphukans during the Ahom era. The Nagaon District (spelled by British as Nowgong) is one of the largest districts of central Assam which is demarcated by three sub-divisions as Nagaon, Hojai and Kaliabor till December, 2015. At present it has two sub divisions as Nagaon and Kaliabor since January, 2016, declared by Assam Government.

Block Development Offices and tea tribe household in Tea Estates of Kaliabor subdivision are given below:

Block	No.of Tea Tribe Households in T.E
Kaliabor Block	2768
Pachim Kaliabor Block	6531
Segment of Bajigaon Block	1476
Segment of Lawkhowa Block	X
Total	10775

Source: 2011 Census

Tea tribes who are well known as Adivasi people (i.e. indigenous people in South-Asia) were brought by the British East India Company from various parts of the country for the purpose of doing service in the tea estates which at present occupies a predominant place in the economy of the State [Singh, (1998); Sarma, Gadapani, (2013); Kurmi, Suchil, (2015)].

Since the 1860s, when the first batch of indentured labour were brought into Assam from present day Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh. There were occasional clashes between the management and the tea garden labour in Assam (Sanjay Barbora, July, 1999).

Objective of the Study:

1. To find out the socio-economic factors of child labour prevalence in the study area.
2. To find out the area of child labour among tea tribes.
3. To study consequences of child labour.

Methodology

It is an explorative study. It follows both qualitative and quantitative method of data collection. A schedule questionnaire is used to collect the primary data collection in the study area. The sample size is 620 households out of

10775 households based on confidence interval (for sample size is large) at 99% and margin error at 0.05. The respondents are the parent/guardian of the children. In the analysis part tabulation, average and percentage is used.

Interpretation

Table-1 represents the family composition of the respondents. Total number of adult (age group 18-60) is 1701, children (age group 6-14) are 809, infant (age group 0-5) is 405, elderly people (age group above 60years) is 92 found from 620 respondents.

Table 1:

Distribution Family Members (in Average)

Family Member		Bajiagaon		Kaliabor		Pachim Kaliabor		Total	
		Average	Total	Average	Total	Average	Total	Average	Total
Adults (Age:18-60)	Total	2.9	572	2.7	534	2.7	595	2.7	1701
	Male	1.6	325	1.3	265	1.4	311	1.5	901
	Female	1.2	247	1.3	269	1.3	284	1.3	800
Children (Age: 6-14 Years)	Total	1.4	286	1.4	287	1.1	236	1.3	809
	Male	.9	171	.9	180	.7	148	.8	499
	Female	.6	115	.5	107	.4	88	.5	310
Infant (Age: 0-5 years).	Total	.5	105	.7	141	.7	159	.7	405
	Male	.2	42	.3	60	.4	77	.3	179
	Female	.3	63	.4	81	.4	82	.4	226
Elderly People: (Age: 61- above).	Total	.3	62	.1	22	.0	8	.1	92
	Male	.2	31	.1	10	.0	3	.1	44
	Female	.2	31	.1	12	.0	5	.1	48
Total family member		5.1	1025	4.9	984	4.5	998	4.9	3007

Source: *Field Investigation during 2016- 2017*

Table:2 explain the occupational status of the household. Workable people in the family are adults and children. As per field investigation, total number of occupied adults is 1458 out of 1701 and total number of occupied children is

494 out of 809. It means, total numbers of child labour is 494, i.e. 61%.

Table:2: Working Family Member Distribution of Surveyed Sample

Working Family Member		Bajiagaon			Kaliabor			Pachim Kaliabor			Total		
		Mean	Total	%	Mean	Total	%	Mean	Total	%	Mean	Total	%
Adult age:18-60	Male	1.6	325	64	1.3	265	54	1.4	308	67	1.4	898	62
	Female	.9	183	36	1.1	222	46	.7	155	33	.9	560	38
	Total	2.5	508	100	2.4	487	100	2.1	463	100	2.4	1458	100
Children Age:6-14	Male	.7	136	63	.5	90	70	.4	95	63	.5	321	65
	Female	.4	79	37	.2	38	30	.3	56	37	.3	173	35
	Total	1.1	215	100	.6	128	100	.7	151	100	.8	494	100

Source: *Field Investigation during 2016- 2017*

Table:3 shows the literacy rate of the parent/guardian of the children. The illiteracy percentage of parent/guardian is 47.7% and the literacy rate is 52.3% in the study area. In the female category of study, two respondents refused to cooperate. Female literacy has positive impact on child development.

Table:3: Educational Level of Parent/Guardian

Educational Level	F/M	%	M/F	%
Literacy	352	56.7	294	47.8
Illiteracy	268	43.3	324	52.2
Total	620	100	618	100

Source: *Field Investigation during 2016- 2017*

Explains the monthly income of the respondents. 16.9% respondents have less than Rs. 1500 monthly income and in this category Bajiagaon Block is in the highest percentage. 51.3% respondents earn between Rs.2000- 4999. In this category Kaliabor Block has the highest percentage (76.5%) and the lowest in Bajiagaon Block (9.0%).

Area of Child Labour

Major areas of child labour working are: Small Tea Garden (30.2%), domestic work as slavery

(25.7%), working in Private Unorganised sector (3.8%), agricultural field particularly at the time of harvesting and plantation of crops (14.8%), quarry (12.6%), hotel (0.6%), brick kiln (0.2%), street business (2.2%), dairy/cattle/poultry farm (9.3%) and factory (0.6%). The highest percentage of child labour is found in small tea garden because most of them are adjacent to tea estates. They employ them for tea plantation work.

Reasons of child Labour

Important reasons of child labour in this study area are the gap between wealth and poverty. Child labour is primarily based on income of the family. The size of family member also impacts on child labour. Child labour is found highest (215) in Bajiagaon Block due to less income earned by the family. The other reasons are: parental loss (12.6%), parental separation (6.9%), shortage of food (8.3%), anti-environment (16.6%), abuse from Family Member (1.4%) and working for indebtedness of parents (8.5%). Child labour is highest (65.8%) due to poverty.

Consequences of Child Labour

1. Child labour deprives the children to attend school. In the field investigation it is obtained that the drop-out rate is very high (45.1%) in class IV. In this stage, the employer likes to

recruit the child. The illiteracy percentage of child labour is least. It is the good symptom of child development in front of illiterate and ignorant poor parents/guardians. It affects the human capital formation since, educational qualification is least. They are eligible for handling traditional apparatus.

2. Children being the child labour are suffering from health disorder. 57.3% child labour are swamping in health disorder by various diseases like malaria, diarrhea, anemia, skin disease, respiratory problem and eyesight problem. Highest percentage 39.6% of child labour is suffering from malaria.
3. Child labour is consecutive process in the study area. If one generation is interested to work from early age (below 14 years) without knowing the immense potentiality of child then the growth of the community will be affected. They thought that return on education is less than earnings. The tea tribe community confirmed to get service in the garden having no preference in educational qualification. Ultimately, it affects the community as a whole.

Remarks

It is undoubtedly said that child labour is a socio-economic crime where a child is compelled to invest his childhood to earn bread for himself and family, depriving from playground, school and healthcare. Child labour has no union and hence, no way of demanding facilities and wage hike. In consequence, they are lowest paid ceaseless workers in a labour market. In such a situation, there are limited opportunities for acquiring skilled workers and return to education.

Plantation Labour Act, 1951 enables to ban completely the child labour in the tea estates of study area. However, in the field works, it is found that children are toiling in and outside the tea estate as mentioned in the analysis of area of child labour.

The present children are the future of the nation. The government is urged to implement the poverty alleviation programme among tea tribe community so as to ban the unnecessary employment of children. The NGOs and social activists should work together against the practice of child labour.

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