

The Intersection Of COVID-19 Pandemic on Child Labour and Education

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Abstract: Child labour is a serious hazard for lower socioeconomic and resourceful countries all over the world. Poverty, emergency condition, educational inequality, lack of social and moral security are forced children to involve in child labour situation. It is the barrier to the growth and development of child, and enjoyment of childhood experience. According to recent report, 160million children where 63million girls and 97million boys are estimated as child labour all over the world. In India, there are 10.1million working children between the ages of 5-14 years as per 2011 census report. Currently the COVID-19 pandemic crisis affects significantly on economic, social and work field. As per the report estimates 42-66million children are acknowledged in situation of poverty and 386million children are in the extreme poverty in 2019. Unfortunately, poor families and their children are suffering badly which may push them into child labour. It is noted that 1% poverty rise is associated with 0.7% increase of child labour. The paper focuses on the issues of child labour and their education at the time of COVID-19 pandemic and after. ILO, UNICFF and different government and non-government agencies draw a framework to eradicate child labour through educational interventions.

Keywords: Child Labour, Education, COVID-19 Pandemic

I. INTRODUCTION:

Future world has hidden into the present child. So, children are very worthy treasure for our society. They have the right to development their potentiality and dignity. They have the right to experience their childhood growth and development, getting food, wearing clean cloth, play with friends and living in a safe environment. In every culture, with in a family context where children are adopted many adult skill and responsibilities to maintain household work in their tender age. Working to help their families which are neither harmful nor exploitative may be a reasonable for which it is not considered as child labour. Child labour refers to any type of work that is harmful and exploitative for children running their childhood; injurious for their development and health, and make them school dropouts. It is found that the lower socioeconomic countries have most of the child labour all over the world [2]. In the last couple of years ago, number of child labourers had been reduced under 100million but Covid-19 pandemic has spoiled the reduction plan about child labourers [1]. Covid-19 pandemic highly affected society and economic condition around the world. According to the latest news 160million children all over the world are engaging in child labour which is almost 1 in 10 of all children worldwide [4].

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization reported that at the end of 2021 more than a quarter of billion people will be suffering from severe hunger for Covid-19. Children have started work for verity of reasons like poverty, hunger, shelter, emergency conditions, migration, human trafficking, income insecurity, conflicts extreme weather, and complete shutdown in schools for a long period etc. Nowadays child labour appeared in different sectors such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, industries, tourism and construction etc [1]. According to the child labour report, forced labour and human trafficking provides the first ever calculates of child labour in global supply chains. The new analysis suggests almost 8.9 million children will be increased the child labour by the end of 2022. A joint reported by the ILO and United Nations Children's Fund estimates that a 1% point rise in poverty lads to at least a 0.7% point increase in child labour [4]. India is more prevalent countries that other in the case of child labour. Across the entire country a total 464 number of cases were register under the child labour (prohibition and regulation) Amendment act 2016, 810 child victims in 2018, as per national crime records bureau's yearly publication crime in India 2018. In this country where is approximately one in three children under the age of 15 years being 'economically active' [2].

The pandemic situation has deeply hit the children mental, physical and nutritional health. Schools had been shutting down for longest time and stop to provide mid-day meal which was negatively affect child's health. Online and distance education were started but poor parents could not support their child for education and still dropout rate are going to increase. According to UNICEF due to Covid-19 pandemic more than 1.5billion children are missed out their schooling [4]. For this pandemic period Sustainable Development target 8.7 about child labourers have been broken down. Inequality, lack of educational opportunity, lack of education quality, lack of teacher and govt. institutions are decrease interest among child and increase tendency toward child labour.

II. CHILD LABOUR:

According to ILO, the term 'child labour' is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and which is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that:

- Mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children.
- Intervene with their schooling by prematurely leave school, depriving them of the opportunity to attend school and requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

Particular from of 'work' can be called 'child labour' which is depends on the child's age, type and hours of work performed, condition of performance and different condition depend on country to country [12].

Child labour (prohibition and regulation) Act (1986) prohibited the engagement of children up to 14 years in certain hazardous occupations and processes, and employment of children below 14 years (prohibition and regulation) Amendment Act in 2016 covering complete prohibition in all occupation and process [9].

The latest global estimates indicates that 160 million children (63million girls and 97million boys) were engaged in child labour, among them 79million (5 to 17 year age child) were performing hazardous work over worldwide at the beginning of 2020. In the last four year, 8.4million children were forced to work, while around nine million children are at risk of being made child labours [4]. The ILO simulation model predicted that in the absence of social protection coverage, 46million child labour could increase for pandemic [3]. The percentage in global supply chains varies across regions:

- 26% in Eastern and South -Eastern Asia
- 22% in Latin America and the Caribbean
- 12% in Central and Southern Asia
- 12% in sub-Saharan Africa
- 9% in Northern Africa and Western Asia [2]

ILO report titled 'Child labour in South Asia', "Substantial variation in child labour estimates exists across the South Asian countries. In absolute terms, child labour in 5-17 age group is highest in India (5.8million), followed by Bangladesh (5million), Pakistan (3.4million) and Nepal 92million)" [3]. As per 2011 census report, There are 10.1 million working children between the age of 5-14 year, 3.9% among the total child population in India as a 'main worker' or 'marginal worker' [9], [5]. High incidences of child labour states in India are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh (census 2011). According to Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation report, in the last four decades total child labour population in the country will reach 81.2lakh by 2021 and 74.31 lakh by 2025 [3].

Causes of child labour :

According to international year for the elimination of child labour, inequality, lack of educational opportunities, lack of decent work and social protection, stow demographic transition, traditions and cultural expectations all contribute to the persistence of child labour in India [13]. Other factors like poverty, over population, lack of resources, escaping abuse at home, parental education and occupation, family structure, lost family etc. stoke to child for work.

Occupation Sectors of children:

Child labour is observed in many more sectors in India. The WFCL are largely reported in specific sectors and occupations as shown in the table below:

Table 1: WFCL reported specific sectors and occupation. [7]

Sector	Agriculture	Industry	Service
Activity	Farming, including hybrid seed production, commercial cotton, chili sugar cane harvesting.	Carpet weaving, beedirolling, brick making, leather goods, cotton ginning and spinning, garment production, agarbatti, match and fireworks, bangles, diamond polishing, natural stone quarrying and polishing, mining.	Domestic work, working in hotels, food service and tourism.

More than 65% of the girl child work force in hybrid cotton and vegetable seed production and 90% of children involved in bee di rolling. In the 12-17 age groups, 90% child labours involve in hazardous work. More the 80% child among ST, SC, OBC are involved in hazardous work and 40% of child in hybrid [7].

III. CHILD LABOUR DURING COVID-19:

The COVID-19 crisis and its impact are unfolding differently across worldwide. It is hit children economically and socially. As per the report estimated 42-66 million children are acknowledge the situation of poverty and 386 million children already in extreme poverty in 2019. It is pushed millions more children into child labour. This crisis threatens to further erode global progress against child labour unless urgent mitigation measures are taken. As per 2020 global estimates that boys are higher than girls at all ages to involve in child labour. There are 122.7 million rural child labours and 37.3 million urban child labours world wide [4]. When whole world suffering from COVID-19, school were officially closed and it forced the child out of school and starting work. "In March (the national India lockdown came into effect on 25 March 2020) there were 2473 interventions related to child labour, dipping steeply to 446 in April, but starting to increase as lock down restrictions eased, reaching 734 in May". In the year of 2022, labour and civil society organizations and government stand at a critical juncture- only three year remain to achieve the sustainable development goal 8.7 (to take immediate measures to eradicate force labour) of eliminating all forms of child labour by 2025 [2].

❖ The ILO's policy framework to respond to COVID-19-

ILO has four policy pillars to respond to the COVID-19 crisis on the basis of international standers.

1. Stimulate the economy and employment.
2. Support enterprises, jobs and incomes.
3. Protect workers in the workplace.

4. Rely on social dialogue for solutions.

Urging a whole-of-society approach, the ILO calls for governments, employers and workers organizations to work together on effective policies to respond to all health, social and economic dimensions of the crisis. Some policy actions, such as social protection, cut across the four pillars, meaning they should be part of advancing policies in each [5].

❖ UNICEF's agenda for action on COVID-19-

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) calls for global coordination to prevent a health crisis from becoming a child-rights crisis [5]. It advocates action to:

- Keep children healthy and well nourished
- Reach vulnerable children with water, sanitation and hygiene
- Keep children learning
- Support families to cover their needs and care for their children
- Protect children from violence, exploitation and abuse
- Protect refugee and migrant children, and those affected by conflict

IV. CHILD LABOUR AND EDUCATION

More than one third of all children in child labour are out of school. Hazardous child labour builds greater barrier to school attendance. Approximately 28% of 5 to 11 year olds and 35% of 12 to 14 year olds in child labour are excluded from school. Boys and urban children in child labour are slightly more to be excluded from school, but on the basis of sex and residence are not largely different. Every child in child labour is out of school without complete their level of compulsory education. Another they struggle to balance the demands of school and work. As a result they compromise their education. Children who are not compete with their non- working peers in grade progression and learning achievement, they are more likely to dropout prematurely. Socio-economic factors, such as female literacy, adult wages, family size, quality of education, female work participation rates and economic diversification etc. have been identified as child labour determination.

Causes for child leaving school:

- Poverty and gender related social pressures
- Distance to school
- Decayed school building
- Absence of drinking water/ toilet facilities
- Lack of teachers and trainer
- Overlapped timing of the school day with other activity
- Lack of incentive to continue schooling
- Insufficient vocational training institution and courses
- Decision to leave school is mostly taken by parents
- Excluded from school because education is not considered necessary in rural area for girls as per PLFS report
- Supplement house hold income
- Participation of girls in domestic duties
- Crisis of COVID-19 pandemic
- Demand so much time and energy for work
- Lack of access to quality full and free school

Education Interventions:

The influence of various educational interventions on child labour is a complex effort after COVID-19 crisis. Elimination of child labour from worldwide is possible through educational interventions. ILO, UNICEF and different type of educational policy and programs are concluding some educational interventions to eradicate child labour. Categorize interventions based on the level which are directly impact on child labour. Discuss below [8], [7]–

Children

- Merit based scholarship
- School feeding and school based health
- Increasing awareness on child right
- Challenging social norms
- Improving soft skills
- Free mid-day meals
- Free text books distribution
- Bicycle distribution schemes
- Conditional cash transfer for unmarried girls

Family and Households

- Cash or in-kind transfers
- Access to childcare and ECD
- Skills building (e.g. training on alternative live hood opportunities)
- Awareness about benefits of education and child right
- Challenging social norms

- Awareness about child development and health

School and Teachers

- School infrastructure and gender sensitive amenities (e.g. safety measures, sanitary products, accessibility for children with disabilities)
- Early childhood education and care facilities
- Residential schools for children
- Free transportation
- Free school and instructional material
- Technology and adaptation for distance learning
- Improvement to pedagogy and lesson delivery
- Remedial and special education opportunities (targeted programs for out-of-school children, migrants and street-connected children)
- Teacher training, hiring and incentives
- Bridge programs

Communities and System

- Compulsory universal education laws
- Removal of school fees
- Full-time schooling
- For efficient management of schools establish school based governance
- Public-private partnership for universal education, shared decision making on educational policy making
- Child and social protection systems, including birth registration mechanisms
- Community based monitoring of child labour programs linked to know community level vulnerabilities
- Adopted different approach by NGO

V. CONCLUSION

The UN, ILO, and individual countries such as India in recent years take significant initiatives for eradication of child labour. The elimination of child labour is a necessary step for our society which never fulfill without co-operation of all sections of society and law enforcement agencies and NGO. NGO plays a vital role to eliminate of child labour. Sustainable development goal 8.7 has to eliminate of child labour in 2025 and set up different plan to execute.

The COVID-19 pandemic effected society's economic condition and impact on people lives and livelihood. In this economic condition many more children are stated to work. As noted, a 1% rise in poverty associated with increase 0.7% children to work. According to newspaper articles children in India removed from their homes, trafficked for illegal labour and forced marriage following the nationwide lockdown. The crisis of Covid-19 is creating a gap in India's child protection service. It has to need for a collaborative approach. Educational interventions are a great way to eradicate child labour. Awareness about child labour into parents and child are organized by government and privet sector.

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