



## VARIOUS CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF THE GIRL CHILD WORKERS ON THE FAMILY LIFE IN SOLAPUR CITY.

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### **Abstract**

*This research paper based on empirical study. The researcher has focused the causes and effects of the girl child workers on the family life in Solapur city. Researcher also found that various relationship between causes and effects of the girl child workers on the family life. It is seen that how the girl child gets physically, mentally and emotionally disturbed along with the family members. Here the girl child suffers much more with the health problem, abused and sexually exploited. This article totally based on primary data of research study which was conducted in Solapur city.*

**Key Word – Girl, Child , Workers, Family, Relation, Etc.**

### **Introduction**

Despite India's fast economic growth since the 1990s, many challenges remain for youth at risk, particularly the girl child. The Indian Girl Child who faces gender discrimination on various levels. Due to her lower status in the society, a girl child worker is even more deprived. Child labour is still a prevalent issue in India. This article addresses a few general points of the issues of girl child workers.

### **Definitions: Child, Child Labour, Child Work**

In order to speak about child labour, one should look at its different definitions. Before doing so, it is also essential to give a definition of a child. By worldwide agreement, the younger a child, the more vulnerable he or she is and the less the child is able to defend herself / himself, gives a basis for a definition of a child. Nonetheless the age limit for a child differs in various countries, institutions, organizations and societies. The child's age limit should formally regulate her/his activities, but the reality in the case of India is different. In his book *Child Rights in India. Law, Policy, and Practice* Asha Bajpai has given some examples in which activities of a child are normally regulated by age: when a child can leave school, when s/he can marry, when s/he can vote, when s/he can work, when s/he can be condemned by the law and when he can join the army. Article 24 of the Constitution of India defines a child as anyone below the age of 14. However, Article I of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by India, defines a child as anyone below the age of 18. These two different definitions of a child within the same country show the difficulty in finding a consensus on this issue.

Children and child labourers are a heterogeneous social group. Therefore, a girl child labourer in rural Andhra Pradesh, Southern India, who is working in the household, cannot be compared with a male street child in New Delhi. In a broader sense, an Indian child labourer cannot be compared with a Peruvian or Ethiopian child labourer, may it be female or male. Although they all face the daily fight against their exploitative situation, one should make a differentiation rather than defining them as a homogenous social group. Different cultures, different sexes, different living conditions and standards and different daily working lives separate them. The wide range of literature, campaigns, organisations and governments offers different definitions of the term child labourer. The Indian network of around



700 organizations, called the Campaign Against Child Labour, has committed itself to the eradication of child labour in all sectors and has defined a working child as such:

Child Labour may be defined to include children prematurely leading adult lives, working with or without wages, under conditions damaging to their physical, social, emotional and spiritual development, denying them their basic rights to Access to Education, health and development. This includes children working in any sector, occupation or process, including the formal and non-formal, organised and unorganized, within or outside the family. The organisation Free the Children defines child labour as a work done by children below the age of 14 “which restricts or damages their physical, emotional, intellectual, social or spiritual growth as children.” United Nations ILO describes child labour as “one of the clearest and worst manifestations of how poverty has a child’s face”.

When speaking of definitions, one should also draw a distinction between child labour and child work. The difference is seen in the outcome for the child. Child work can be beneficial and can enhance a child’s social, physical, mental, spiritual and moral development without interfering with schooling and leisure time. The activities of child work include helping the parents in their households and businesses after school. In contrast to child work, child labour hampers the “normal” development of a child, not only in a physical, but also psychological way. In general, child labour includes work done by young children, who have long working hours, no or insufficient access to health and education, or a lack of ability to attend school and who receive abusive treatment by their employers.

The distinction between child labour and child work is therefore essential. If one leaves out the economical thought of work, work can have four other different aspects: playful, gainful, specific on relations and identity, as well as the double function of survival and socialisation. It is an interaction between the personality and the surrounding of a child and implies an activity which aims for material goods, but also for relationships and the honour of oneself and one’s identity. Work can indeed be a very subjective act, depending on how a child sees her/his work.

Work or begging are different categories of children’s activities that give them an identity through their communication with costumers and other working children. As the author Antonella Invernizzi puts it, child work has three functions:

- The function of support: The child brings home some money with which s/he supports the family income or with which the family can finance her/his education.
- The function of socialization: The child learns new abilities and learns to appreciate the value of work. Furthermore s/he learns to appreciate the solidarity within the family.
- The function of continuation: With the learned abilities the child is able to support the family with her/his earnings and can be autonomous if the parents die.

The United Nations definition is a bit different from the others: They the definitions range from normative ones based on specifications of minimum age for employment, to education-oriented definitions which define any child out of school as a child labourer or a potential child labourer; to rights-oriented definitions which consider any work that deprives children of any part of their fundamental childhood rights as constituting child labour. Depending on which definition is adopted, the resulting estimates of child labour vary greatly.



There is one more distinction to note when speaking about child labour: bonded child labour or the work carried out by a child which is the result of the debts of the family. This is considered the worst of all forms of child labour. Parents sell their young children to employers in order to be able to pay back loans they have borrowed. Depending on how big the loans were, these children are made to work for many hours a day for several years. Working as house servants and in the carpet industry is the most common form of bonded child labour.

### **Situation of Girl Child Labourers – Facts and Figures**

There is little documentation on girl child labour, which can also be seen as an evidence of the invisibility of her labour though it contributes so widely to the family, community and the society at large. Worldwide domestic and household work is very often not seen as work as such. Also, if a girl helps her mother in the household, it is in most parts unrecognized because home-based work is seen as an unskilled nature with low status. Their lack of educational or vocational training, due to the preference given to boys, blocks their ability to move upward. Because she lacks education, she has less possibility on the labour market and is only relegated to low-paid and unskilled jobs. This vicious cycle is hard to break because the exploited young girl becomes the exploited adult woman who often does not see her work as an economic activity but as under-valued.

The fact sheet of the Andhra Pradesh Child Rights Advocacy Foundation (A.P. CRAF) on girl child labour recorded that 246 million children are engaged in child labour worldwide. To say it in other words, one in every six children around the world is doing some kind of work. This number can be broken down into two categories. The first one includes children between the ages of five and fourteen years. 186 million of them are working, often exposed to the worst forms of child labour. 49% of them are girls. Children between the ages of 14 and 18 form the second category and make up 59.2 million child labourers. Out of them, 42% are girls.

The online news channel [www.infochangeindia.org](http://www.infochangeindia.org) gives daily information on news, views, perspectives and debates on the Indian social sector. It also focuses on the nationwide problem of child labour and gives an overview of its figures, which all have a different source and therefore different statistical data. The 1971 census of India reported that 10.7 million children were domestic workers or 4.7% of the total child population and 5.9% of the total labour force. According to the census of the year 1991, India had 11.28 million child labourers, whereas the International Labour Organisation counted 23.2 million working children in the same year. Unofficial sources estimate that there are even 100 million children in India who are working in hazardous conditions. The National Labour Institute indicates that 74.4 million children are neither enrolled in schools nor accounted for as child labourers. Its opinion is that these children are all potential child labourers.

### **Causes for Girl Child Labour**

The situation of the girl child labourer is particularly alarming due to the gender discrimination in large parts of Indian societies. Throughout Indian history there has been a strong sex typing of roles concerning work done by male or female children. This applies to work in the field of agriculture, household, unorganized sector and industries of silk, tobacco, gem polishing, and brassware. The following statement of the author NeeraBurra illustrates the sex typing of roles: when one notices how *bindaikakaam* (the piercing of holes in beads) in the gem polishing industry of Jaipur, which was always considered a female job, suddenly becomes a male preserve when the operation becomes mechanized and ultrasonic machines are made available. The process is exactly the same except where



women work by hand and earn not more than Rs 4 or 5 a day, men can earn more than Rs 25 a day. In her conclusion she writes: whichever industry one looks at, the pattern is repeated – boys go to work in skill-based industries and girls in unskilled low wage work. Wherever mechanization is introduced, leading to higher wages, boys take over the work girls were doing earlier.

What we have here is a deeply rooted issue in the Indian society. In the journey of a girl's life, marriage is one of the most important moments. In most cases girls leave their natal homes and live with their in-laws. This fact induces parents to value their daughters less than sons, because they will not be of an economical support when the parents become old. This is once again linked to the fact that the probability of girls being sent to school is less likely than boys being sent to school. If a girl child is kept away from an educational process she is likely to be working.

Generally speaking, the reasons for girl child labour can be as true for girls as for boys: family circumstances (illiteracy of the parents, alcohol problems within the family, single parent), rural poverty, migration into the bigger cities, bonded labour, caste and ethnicity, non-implementation of legislature, inadequacies in the school system, profit motive of the industry and the neo-liberal system. The following list gives possible reasons why employers prefer female child labourer to male child labourers: they are seen as more domestic able, timid, compliant, loyal, responsible and stable. they do not waste time chatting, nor do they take frequent breaks, as they usually have no addictions or vices. They are able to sit quietly in one place and are more hardworking and obedient than boys. There is thus a tremendous pressure for girls to conform to stereotypical norms of being a 'good girl'. The girl child makes huge sacrifices for others on the family keeping aside her own dreams and aspirations. The informal sector can also be a home-based industry, which is mainly carried out by girls. Typical home-based works for girls are beedi (thin cigarette) rolling, carpet waving and handicrafts. Performing these tasks, they are most often under the care and watch of their parents who involve them in their work. The parents are also the ones who receive the wages for the work done. Another typical girl child work is the stitching of perforated panels of leather which will be used for making footballs, but the final stitching of the football will be done by males.

#### **Summarizing the significant characteristics of the girl child labourer, they include:**

- invisible work which is not recognized as an economic activity and which is not under the purview of law
- no identifiable employer
- home-based work
- long working hours
- poor conditions that prevent them from attending school
- no skill formation
- low pay and low status
- physical abuse and Sexual Harassment

#### **Working Areas of Girl Child Labourers in India**

As data show, over 80% of child labourers are found in the rural sector, whereas only less than 20% are found in the urban sector. The degree of urbanisation in India is 27,57%. The rural girl child labourer is generally engaged in agriculture and in household activities as compared to a female urban child labourer, who also works in the informal and unorganised sector, which includes small scale cottage industries and factories. The girl child labourer is also found in the domestic work and prostitution, in urban and rural areas. Generally girl child labourers work in:



- Dangerous industries, such as glass making, mining, beedi making and carpet weaving,
- Domestic service, which may subject them to physical and sexual abuse, isolation and extremely long working hours,
- The agricultural area, doing heavy work and being exposed to the hazardous conditions of modern machinery and chemicals,
- The streets, working as rack pickers, vendors and as sex workers,
- The export industry of carpets, textiles, clothing and footwear,
- Home, which is generally seen as hidden child labour, not obvious to society, and includes taking care of the younger siblings, doing the household and preparing the food.

### Discussion

The girl child is considered as liability for the parents who are influenced by the tradition, values, societal norms and social institutions like family, kinship and marriage. Girl child workers are not only deprived of their education and recreation but they are exposed to the risk of sexual harassment and their moral and psychological development is at the stake. The researcher has made an attempt in this chapter to bring out the meaning and concept, prevailing myths of the child labour, types of the child workers, rights of the girl child workers, role of government in child labour abolition, child abuse and the situational analysis of child labour.

Definitions of child labour vary. They range from normative ones based on specifications of minimum age for employment; to education-oriented definitions which define any child out of school as child labourer or as a potential child labourer; to rights-oriented definitions which consider any work that deprives children of their fundamental childhood rights as constituting child labour (UN, 1998). Indian Penal Code, As per the Indian Penal Code, a child is he who has not yet attained the ability to understand what crime is or what its consequences might be. That is to say, if a child is under seven years of age and he commits a crime, I.P.C. does not hold him responsible for the Commission of the Crime. It can be raised up to 12 years. In case of sexual Consent and marriages, a girl should be of 16.

Prevailing myths of the child labour, almost all sections of the society contend that unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and population explosion are the four prime reasons for child servitude/labour. A closer analysis of the so called contributory factors would dispel all these misconceptions. Based on the primary data collected for the purpose of the study, various discussions have been made on the causes and effects of the child labour to have some strong solutions to this problem.

**Table No. 01: Working Conditions by Diseases of Girl Child Workers**

Diseases	Working Conditions				Total
	Good	Bad	Very Bad	Not So Good	
<b>Skin</b>	05 (01.59)	07 (02.22)	07 (02.22)	–	<b>19</b> <b>(06.05)</b>
<b>Asthma</b>	03 (0.96)	08 (02.54)	05 (01.59)	06 (01.91)	<b>22</b> <b>(07.00)</b>
<b>Body ache</b>	11 (03.50)	51 (16.24)	38 (12.10)	08 (02.54)	<b>104</b> <b>(33.12)</b>
<b>Tuberculosis</b>	16 (05.09)	09 (02.86)	02 (0.63)	08 (02.54)	<b>35</b> <b>(11.14)</b>
<b>No Diseases</b>	15	95	13	11	<b>134</b>





	(04.77)	(30.25)	(04.14)	(03.50)	<b>(42.67)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b> <b>(15.92)</b>	<b>170</b> <b>(54.45)</b>	<b>65</b> <b>(20.17)</b>	<b>29</b> <b>(09.23)</b>	<b>314</b> <b>(100)</b>

Diseases and working conditions go hand in hand. Better working conditions provide pleasure to workmen which help to improve the stamina. The above table shows the relationship between the diseases and working conditions.

It is clearly seen that, a majority i.e. near about 84 percent Girl Child Workers were working with bad working conditions and almost more than 58 percent Girl Child Workers were the victims of various diseases out of which more than 33 percent of Girl Child Worker were the body ache sufferers. Tuberculosis, Asthma and skin diseases were also representing in some little percentage. Hence it is concluded that, bad working conditions definitely effect on the health of the Girl Child Workers. It is noted that the body ache is the major problem. It is also concluded that employer cannot provide better working conditions to the Girl Child Workers.

**Table No. 02 Factors responsible for taking up present job by age of the girl child workers**

Factors for Taking up Present Job	Age			Total
	7 – 9 years	10- 12 years	13 years & above	
<b>Poverty</b>	50 (15.92)	161 (51.27)	57 (18.47)	<b>269</b> <b>(85.66)</b>
<b>Absconded from Home</b>	22 (07.0)	13 (04.14)	10 (03.18)	<b>45</b> <b>(14.33)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b> <b>(22.92)</b>	<b>174</b> <b>(55.73)</b>	<b>68</b> <b>(21.65)</b>	<b>314</b> <b>(100)</b>

The table focuses upon age wise the factors responsible for taking the present job.

It is clearly seen that, a majority i.e. more than 55 percent Girl Child Worker respondents were belonging to the age group between 10 to 12 years. The table also clears that, more than 85 percent Girl Child Worker respondents accepted the present job due to poverty and a majority i.e. more than 51 percent Girl Child Workers were representing in the age group between 10 to 12 years. It is found that more than 21 percent each from the age group of 7 to 9 years and above 13 years were absconded from the home and as they were not having any alternative in front of them. It became mandatory for them to accept the present job to meet their livelihood needs.

Hence it is concluded that, poverty was the main cause for Girl Child Worker respondents to accept the present work and poverty the main root cause compelled the Girl Child Worker respondents to leave their home.



### Reason to Work by Education of Girl Child Workers

Reason to Work	Total
To Supplement the Family income	116 (36.24)
To have independent income of once own	24 (07.64)
To achieve a position or status of one's own	13 (04.14)
Livelihood	158 (50.32)
To escape from domestic work and get freedom to mix with people	03 (00.96)
Any other reason ( specify)	00.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>314 (100)</b>

The above table explains the reason to work. It is seen that various reasons were given by the Girl Child Worker respondents to accept the present job like to supplement the family income, independent income, for status, livelihood, and to escape from binding of domestic work. A majority i.e. more than 50 percent stated that livelihood is the basic need for the survival and hence the work was accepted. While more than 36 percent expressed their views that the family was not up to the mark to meet the daily needs and to support the family income it became mandatory upon them to accept the job.

Very few percent were of the opinion that they should have their independent income and independent status in the society. Hence it is concluded that a great majority i.e. more than 81 percent accepted the job to support the family income and their survival.

**Table No. 04: Feeling towards Health by Psychological Conditions**

Feelings	Positive -Yes	Negative - No	Total
<b>Inferior to Others</b>	168 (53.50)	146 (46.49)	<b>314 (100)</b>
<b>Feeling of Social Ridicule</b>	163 (51.91)	151 (48.08)	<b>314 (100)</b>
<b>Can you Compete With Normal People</b>	176 (56.05)	138 (43.94)	<b>314 (100)</b>
<b>Confident of family Life and Work</b>	166 (52.86)	148 (47.38)	<b>314 (100)</b>
<b>Participation in Social Activities</b>	202 (64.33)	112 (35.66)	<b>314 (100)</b>
<b>Adjustment With Others</b>	214 (68.15)	100 (31.84)	<b>314 (100)</b>
<b>Relations with Family are Good</b>	<b>181 (57.64)</b>	<b>33 (10.50)</b>	<b>314 (100)</b>

The above table depicts the feelings of the Girl Child Workers respondents towards health and psychological conditions.

It is seen that a majority i.e. more than 53 percent Girl Child Workers respondents were feeling inferior to others. A majority of the Girl Child Worker respondents had the feelings of social ridicule. A majority of Girl Child Worker respondents felt themselves to be incompetent and they were confined to their family life and work only. A majority of the Girl Child Workers respondents were hesitating to participate in social activities due to their inferiority complex. It is found that a majority of the Girl



Child Worker respondents stated that they can adjust with others and their family relations were very good.

It is found that a majority of the Girl Child Workers were having negative feelings regarding their personality, while a majority of the Girl Child Workers had positive feelings regarding competency, family life, participation in social activities and relation with family. Hence it is concluded that the inferiority complex was the main cause, which compelled them to tend themselves towards the negative feelings, still majority of the Girl Child Workers respondents had the tendency to adjust with others. This attitude can be cashed.

### **Major Findings**

Following are some major finding in whole study, there are varies reason and cases of Girl child Worker in Solapur, Very bad working conditions definitely effect on the health of the Girl Child Workers. It is noted that the body ache is the major problem. It is also concluded that employer cannot provide better working conditions to the Girl Child Workers.

One of the main reasons of Girl child worker is essential, Poverty was the main cause for Girl Child Worker respondents to accept the present work and poverty the main root cause compelled the Girl Child Worker respondents to leave their home.

The researcher finding in study, Very few percent were of the opinion that they should have their independent income and independent status in the society. Hence it is concluded that a great majority i.e. more than 81 percent accepted the job to support the family income and their survival.

The Girl Child Workers were not getting any satisfaction or pleasure from their work because the nature of work itself was hectic hazardous and tensional as compared to their tender age.

The researcher observed in study, Hence it is concluded that, no doubt money was the main cause but other reasons must be searched out with due care. Therefore the Govt. Organizations like civil hospital and Z.P. health centers were lagging behind in creating health awareness programmes and its machinery was not working in proper direction.

Lastly, the majority of the Girl Child Worker respondents' co-workers were co-operative and behaving friendly. But the percentage of Girl Child Worker respondents, who stated that their co-workers were not behaving properly with them, this compels them to think about this attitude of their co-workers.

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