



An analysis on Prevalence of Child Domestic Labour: The Global Scenario

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Abstract:

An attempt is made in this paper to present the extent of child domestic labour at the global level. Child domestic workers were for long an invisible group of working children. Today, they are recognized as among the most numerous of all child workers, and certainly the overwhelming category as far as girls are concerned. It is estimated that 17.2 million children aged 5-17 years were engaged in domestic work in the world, representing 6.5 per cent of all children in economic activity in this age group.⁴ Of this, the number of child domestic workers between 5-14 years old is estimated to be 11.2 million, accounting for approximately 7.8 per cent of all children in employment in that age group. A marked difference in the incidence of child domestic work can be observed as one crosses the international benchmark minimum age to work of 15 years. The estimated number of child domestic workers in the 15-17 year old age category was 6 million, approximately 5 per cent of all children in economic activity in that age category. Further it is estimated that 74 percent of child domestic workers in India are between the ages of 12 and 16.

Key words: child domestic workers, administrators, scientist, rulers, judges, teachers, legislators, politicians, engineers

Introduction

An attempt is made in this paper to present the extent of child domestic labour at the global level. Everybody can accept that the today's child bears the torch of future. He is also destined to be the future leader of the country. They are the future custodian of the aspirations of the Constitution of our country. They shall in this regard protect the sovereignty of the country. They shall be the true custodians of the rule of law, justice, liberty and fraternity. They shall be responsible in future to maintain peace and provide security. They shall form the part of development of the ¹. Meanwhile, millions of children are becoming child labour and working in various occupations. **Behind the walls**

country in the form administrators, scientist, rulers, judges, teachers, legislators, politicians, engineers, workers and all those that would contribute in the development of the country. They will be the real cause for the prosperity of the country. Thus the future of any country depends on how its children grow and develop. Many psychologists believed that childhood is the critical period for later development of personality and the exploitative situations of child labour exert strong influence on the child's self-concept and self-esteem (Maqil, 1996)

of Indian middle class- houses, intellectual sections, bureaucracy, political elite, business sector are



employing children as domestic workers. **They constantly producing and reproduce in the way employers treat their domestic help.** Children who are in risky job fields have no opportunity to build their natural psychological health. Long working hours breed their feeling of frustration and inadequacy. Their involvement in risky work resists eventually in building their emotional cognitive skills and they become withdrawn, introvert and uncommunicative (Uddin et. al. 2009)².

Concept of Child domestic work and labour'

Domestic work means work performed in or for a household or households and "domestic worker" means any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship (ILO,2011)³. The term "domestic work" covers a wide range of tasks and services that vary from country to country and that can be different depending on the age, gender, ethnic background and migration status of the workers concerned, as well as the cultural and economic context in which they work. This means that a definition of domestic work and the workers involved on the basis only of the tasks being performed, risks being perpetually incomplete. Rather, the Convention No. 189 draws on the common and distinctive characteristic that domestic workers are employed by, and provide services for, third party private households.

(Anderson 2000)⁴. Domestic work is viewed as reproductive work that creates not only labour units but also people and social relations. Anderson further draws attention to domestic work being rooted in the community: by 'the doing of domestic work we literally reproduce our

communities and our place within them". In this context, it is important to note who does the domestic work as this reflects the relation between genders, race and class. Apart from the 'wife' or the 'mother', it is often paid domestic workers who reproduce social relationships and social beings.

In the Indian context, domestic work is generally defined in terms of types of work performed and the time spent at work, i.e., in the employer's home. Live out and live-in are two distinct categories of domestic work. Live-out work is primarily of two types: first, those who work in one house for the whole day and go back to their homes in the evening and; secondly, those who work in different houses, moving from one to the other, performing one or more tasks in each household. They may clean in one house, chop vegetables in another and wash clothes in the third, while some others may only perform a task, such as cooking. They often visit these households twice a day though the requirements in some families may be limited to only once a day. Another form of part-time live-out work is in terms of piece-rate. It is often applied to washing clothes and wages are calculated on the basis of buckets of clothes (Palriwala and Neetha (2009)⁵.

Child domestic labour'

In In the view of ILO, 'child domestic labour' refers to situations where children perform domestic tasks in the home of a third party or employer under exploitative conditions. Where exploitation is extreme, work hazardous, or conditions are akin to slavery, it is seen as a worst form of child labour. Where a child 'helps about the house' performing light tasks in his or her



home, the work undertaken is seen by ILO not as 'labour' but as part of a positive learning process. In this view, the question of whether child domestics of accepted working age can be employed in others' households in non-exploitative conditions is left open. Hence, the more common use of 'child domestic workers' - a less loaded term than 'child domestic labour' - in this publication.

The new Convention No. 189 compliments the provisions of the ILO Child Labour Conventions: Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age and Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour⁶. Convention No. 189 explicitly states that member States of the ILO shall set a minimum age for domestic workers consistent with the provisions of Convention No. 138 and Convention No. 182, and not lower than the minimum age established by national laws and regulations for workers, in general. Recommendation No. 201 reinforces this by calling for the identification, prohibition and elimination of hazardous domestic work by children, and for the implementation of mechanisms to monitor the situation of children in domestic work. Children trapped in child labour in domestic work from a very young age are likely to have had no or insufficient access to education. At the same time, child domestic workers above the legal minimum age have a reduced chance of continuing with education. Convention No. 189 calls on member States to take measures to ensure that work performed by domestic workers under the age of 18 and above the minimum age of employment does not deprive them of compulsory education, or interfere with opportunities to participate in further education or vocational training.

Child domestic workers were for long an invisible group of working children. Today, they are recognized as among the most numerous of all child workers, and certainly the overwhelming category as far as girls are concerned.

Characteristics of child domestic workers

Evidence indicates that children begin their working lives in response to economic need, although a number of other context-driven 'triggers' often provide a more immediate impetus to work. These triggers are many and varied, including 'push' factors such as gender and ethnic discrimination, social exclusion, lack of educational opportunities, alcoholism, domestic violence, indebtedness, rural to urban migration, and the loss of close family members as a result of conflict and disease. Children 'pulled' into domestic work not only as a result of economic uncertainty, but because of the widespread belief that it will offer an opportunity for better living conditions, including the pursuit of an education. Employers also persistently demand younger workers because they are cheaper and considered to be more compliant⁷.

Within the framework of the global estimates on child labour recently published⁸, the ILO-IPEC, for the second time, has produced global estimates of children in domestic work. This effort built on detailed information from national household surveys, which contain a valuable source of data on child domestic work. The 2012 estimates on child domestic work and child labour in domestic work are based on the industry-approach when measuring domestic work. The industry-based approach was



recently recommended by the ILO⁹. Despite a number of limitations to fully capturing all hidden work situations, a number of household surveys among those used in the 2012 ILO's global estimates on child labour, provide important quantitative information on child domestic work – allowing for global estimates on child domestic workers to be made. All estimates are for the benchmark year 2012¹⁰. These estimates are based on established ILO statistical methodologies.

Children in domestic work by age group at the global

Table 1 present the estimates of children in domestic work by age and sex. It is estimated that 17.2 million children aged 5-17 years were

engaged in domestic work in the world, representing 6.5 per cent of all children in economic activity in this age group.⁴ Of this, the number of child domestic workers between 5-14 years old is estimated to be 11.2 million, accounting for approximately 7.8 per cent of all children in employment in that age group. A marked difference in the incidence of child domestic work can be observed as one crosses the international benchmark minimum age to work of 15 years. The estimated number of child domestic workers in the 15-17 year old age category was 6 million, approximately 5 per cent of all children in economic activity in that age category.

Table 1: Estimates of children in domestic work by age and sex at the global

Age group and sex	Children in employment (CE)	Children in domestic work (CDW)	CDW as % of CE
5-11 years	7 3, 072,000	7,424,000	10.2
Boys	36,317,000	2,934,000	8.1
Girls	36,755,000	4,490,000	12.2
12-14 years	70,994,000	3,784,000	5.3
Boys	39,621,000	1,417,000	3.6
Girls	31,373,000	2,367,000	7.5
Total 5-14 years	144,066,000	11,208,000	7.8
Boys	75,959,000	4,350,000	5.7
Girls	68,107,000	6,858,000	10.1
Total 15-17 years	120,362,000	5,991,000	5.0
Boys	72,368,000	1,306,000	1.8
Girls	47,994,000	4,685,000	9.8
Total 5-17 years	264,427,000	17,199,000	6.5
Boys	148,306,000	5,657,000	3.8
Girls	116,120,000	11,542,000	9.9

Source: ILO latest estimates on child domestic work, 2012

Table 2 show that in 2012 there were an estimated 11.5 million children in child labour in domestic work in the world, of which 82.6 per cent (9.5 million) were in

the age group 5-14 years old. Almost two-thirds of all children in child labour in domestic work were younger than 12 (7.4 million).



Table 2:

Estimates of children in child labour in domestic work by age and sex at the global

Age group and sex	Children in employment(CE)	Child labour in domestic work(CL in DW)	CL in DW as % of CE
5-11 years	73,072,000	7,424,000	10.2
Boys	36,317,000	2,934,000	8.1
Girls	36,755,000	4,490,000	12.2
12-14 years	70,994,000	2,097,000	3.0
Boys	39,621,000	677,000	1.7
Girls	31,373,000	1,420,000	4.5
Total 5-14 years	144,066,000	9,521,000	6.6
Boys	75,959,000	3,611,000	4.8
Girls	68,107,000	5,910,000	8.7
Total 15-17 years	120,362,000	2,007,000	1.7
Boys	72,368,000	422,000	0.6
Girls	47,994,000	1,585,000	3.3
Total 5-17 years	264,427,000	11,528,000	4.4
Boys	148,306,000	4,033,000	2.7
Girls	116,120,000	7,495,000	6.5

Source: ILO, latest estimates on child domestic work, 2012

The Magnitude of Child Domestic Labour in India

In India, labour statistics is maintained quintessentially by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), a sample based statistics, and by the Office of Registrar General of India (ORGI) through population census. Statistics based on processes and occupations carried out by child labourers is not provided by any of these two agencies. Any statistics on child labour in domestic work is merely estimation.

India takes the credit of hosting the largest number of child labourers in the world but it is an irony that there is no updated (latest) and reliable figure of the total number child labourers in the country. As per Census 2001, 2,52,000 children were engaged in *beedi* manufacturing and 2,08,833 in the construction sector. An estimated 185,595 children were employed as domestic helpers and in dhabas; 49,893 children work in auto-repair workshops. The Census of India, 2011 puts the figure of working children in the age-group of 5-14 years at 4353247 against 12666377 as



per the Census 2001. But the real picture is different as a large number of children working in different sectors—organised and unorganised go unnoticed due to the laxity of the enumerators and the apathy of the parents and the employers, the latter putting them out of sight of the surveyors in the fear of punishment by law. Further, a good number of NGOs have conducted surveys on enumerating the child labour. In consideration of their findings, it can be said that the latest figure of the child labourers in India could be more than 55 lakhs.

It is noted that during 2010-11, over 87 percent of child labourers are located in farm activities in states like Himachal Pradesh and Chattisgarh, while this accounted for 82 percent Madhya Pradesh and Maharastra. So far the magnitude and other aspects of child labour in India are analyzed to look at the changes that are taking place over a period of time. The following section devoted to look at what is missing in the official data with regard to child labour.

Further it is estimated that 74 percent of child domestic workers in India are between the ages of 12 and 16.

Conclusion

This paper covers the theoretical part on factors effecting child labour. There are many economic and social factors are influencing the child labour. No doubt to say that there are various statutory and non-statutory provisions was made to eliminate the child labour from pre independence and post-independence periods in India. Articles 14, 15, 21, 21a, 23, 24, and 39 of constitution of India is providing various rights to the children. Right to education, right to expression, right to information, right to Nutrition, right to health & care, right to protection from abuse;, right to protection from exploitation, right to protection from neglect right to recreation, right to survival have the children. The national Policy on child labour seeks to adopt a gradual & sequential approach with a focus on rehabilitation of children working in hazardous occupations & processes in the first instance.

¹ Maqil, Frank N (1996), *International Encyclopedia of psychology*, Vol. 1, Routledge, Delhi

² Uddin, Mohammad Nashir, Mohammad Hamiduzzaman and Bernhard G. Gunter (2009), "Physical and Psychological Implications of Risky Child Labour: A Study in Sylhet City, Bangladesh", *Bangladesh Development Research Series*, No. 8, July.

³ ILO (2011), Convention No. 189, The Domestic Workers Convention, accessed on 2/5/2016



⁴ Anderson, Bridget. 2000. *Doing the Dirty Work? The Global Politics of Domestic Labour*. London, New York: Zed Books

⁵ Palriwala, Rajni and Neetha Pillai (2009) 'Paid Care Workers in India: Domestic workers and Anganwadi workers', unpublished report, Geneva: UNRISD

⁶ <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Childdomesticlabour/lang--en/index.htm>, accessed on 2/6/2016

⁷ Anti-Slavery International: *Home Truths: Wellbeing and vulnerabilities of child domestic workers*. (London, Anti-Slavery International, 2013). Available to download from www.antislavery.org

ILO-IPEC. *Marking progress against child labour - Global estimates and trends 2000-2012*. International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) (Geneva, ILO, 2013). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/ipec/ Information resources/WCMS_221513/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_221513/lang--en/index.htm).

⁹ ILO. *Domestic workers across the world: global and regional statistics and the extent of legal protection* (Geneva, 2013). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/travail/ Whatsnew/WCMS_173363/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/travail/Whatsnew/WCMS_173363/lang--en/index.htm).

¹⁰ For further explanation on the definitions and methodology used, please refer to ILO-IPEC. *Global child labour trends 2008 to 2012*. International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2013). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/ WCMS_IPEC_PUB_23015/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_23015/lang--en/index.htm).