

## Impact of Child Labour on the Nutritional Level and Developmental 9-12 Years

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### Abstract

This study is conducted with the objective of depicting the relationship between child labour and childhood development. This paper addresses only behavioural, mental, physical development and nutritional problems related to child labour. The study is done on children between 9 and 12 years of age, and children below this age had difficulty in understanding the concepts of the survey questionnaires. Childhood is the critical time for safe and healthy human development. This finding leads strong support to the statement, that poverty is the root cause of child labour. Child labourers are at a high risk of illness and injury, cause due to severe emotional distress, had symptoms of withdrawal and regression, and were prematurely ageing, as well as experiencing depression and low self-esteem. Most of these children are observed to have sleep problems; behavioural problems, heavy consumption of cigarettes, alcohol, infection with sexually transmitted diseases; some criminal activities, unwanted pregnancy and abortion, physical and emotional illness, severe nutritional deficiency and even death due to a wide variety of machinery, biological, physical, chemical, ergonomic and psychosocial hazards as well as from long hours of work and poor living conditions.

**Keywords:** Child labour; Education; Household surveys; Poverty; Nutritional deficiency; Physical; Mental health aspects

### Introduction

Childhood is the most innocent stage in human life. It is the phase where a child is free from all the tensions. He is fun loving, playful with tendency to discover new things, and is the sweet heart of all family members. But this is only one side of the story. The other side is full of tension and burdens, here the innocent child is not the sweetheart of the family members. You must have observed that poor families have more number of children, so it becomes very difficult for them to survive on the income of only one family member which is also quite less. So they make their small children their source of income. They make their children work in factories, shops, even they sell items on streets. Many poor families are unable to provide proper food, school fees, and other necessities and they see no value in education, children are sending to work, rather than to school. The family may depend on the contribution that a working child makes to the household income. Child labour includes working children below a certain minimum age. This practice is going on since long and is one of the worst forms of child exploitation. Child labour not only causes damage to a child's physical and mental health but also deprives him of his basic right to education, development and freedom [1].

According to statistics provided by UNICEF It is estimated that about 250 million children aged 5-14 years old are employed in child labour world-wide and this figure is continuously increasing. The ILO (International Labour Organization) has esteemed that some 165 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 years old are involved in child labour. Many of these children work for long hours, and are often in dangerous conditions [2].

There are various organizations, fighting against child labour by helping children and imparting education among that part of society from where majority of the child labour comes. Poor families should be given knowledge about family planning so that children may not suffer due to societal pressures. Our society is badly affected by the increasing child labourers. The working condition of these child labourers is highly miserable; they can remain neither safe nor healthy. They are at a greater risk as children at different age level are at different stages of

development and may have long-term effects. Factors that may increase the healthy, society and developmental risk factor for children include – According to International Organization survey (ILO).

- Rapid abnormal skeletal, organs and tissues growth
- Greater risk of hearing loss
- Developing ability to excess risks
- Higher chemical absorption rates

Each year, nearly 2-7 million healthy year of life are lost due to child labour, especially in agricultural and industrial areas.

- Unskilled child labour – Intensive ions exposure may be risky
- Training and supervision may be inadequate
- Work may be illegal and inappropriate
- Later experience at work can increase the risk of accidents

**According to ILO defining child labour:** The term “Child labour is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and that is harmful to physical and mental development.”

There are many causes of child labour where a child has to work against the repayment of loan which was taken by his father who was unable to pay it off. This is called as “Bonded Child Labour.”

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- Is mentally, physically, socially as morally dangerous and harmful to children'
- Interferes with their schooling
- Depriving them of the opportunity to attend school
- Obliging them to leave school prematurely
- Requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance excessively long and heavy work

### Methodology

This study was conducted on different locations of working child labours. The total sample of 50 respondents was selected by random sampling method. The data were collected through personal interview, health survey, and questionnaire schedule method and statistic analysis was done using percentage, mean and deviation [3,4].

### Result and Discussion

#### Major factors promoting child labour

From the following table we can conclude the poverty is responsible up to 44% and deviation increased -24 compared to average mean and family responsibilities up to 28% and deviation -8. They are the second responsible factor for promoting child labour (Figure 1 and Table 1).

#### Effect of child labour on different developmental areas of between 9 and 12 years children

Above the table, no.1.2 makes it clear that Physical development affected was 36% and deviation -16 highest to average mean and mental development affected up to 26% and deviation was -6 second highest (Figure 2 and Table 2).

#### Effects of child labour on physical growth of 9-12 years children

On studying the different aspects of physical growth skeleton

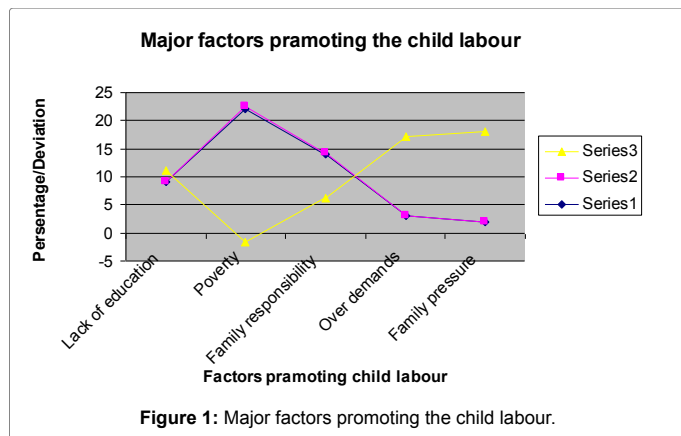


Figure 1: Major factors promoting the child labour.

S.no	Factors promoting child labour	No. of Respondents	In percentage	Deviation(d)
		-50		
1	Lack of education	9	18%	2
2	Poverty	22	44%	-24
3	Family responsibility	14	28%	-8
4	Over demands	3	6%	14
5	Family pressure	2	4%	16

Table 1: Major factors promoting child labour.

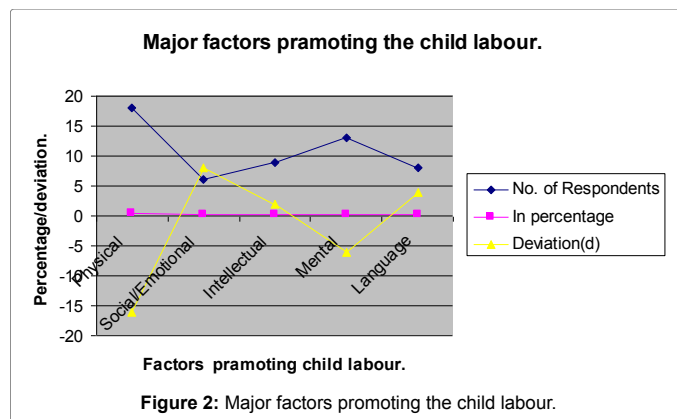


Figure 2: Major factors promoting the child labour.

S.no	Developmental areas	No. of Respondents	In percentage	Deviation(d)
1	Physical	18	36%	-16
2	Social/Emotional	6	12%	8
3	Intellectual	9	18%	2
4	Mental	13	26%	-6
5	Language	8	16%	4

Table 2: Effect of child labour on different developmental areas of between 9-12 years children.

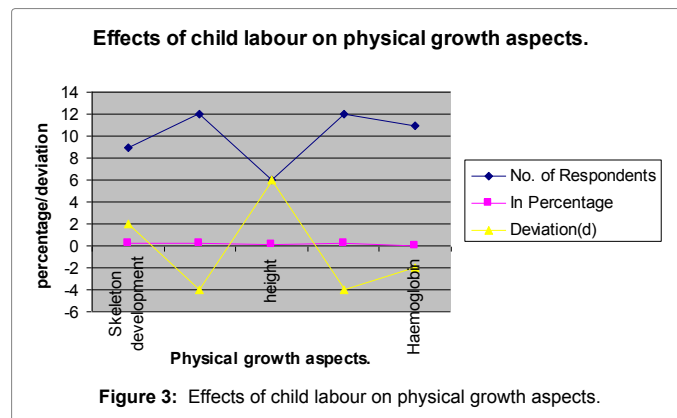


Figure 3: Effects of child labour on physical growth aspects.

S.no	Growth Aspects	No. of Respondents	In Percentage	Deviation(d)
1	Skeleton development	9	18%	2
2	Digestive system function	12	24%	-4
3	height	6	12%	6
4	Weight	12	24%	-4
5	Haemoglobin	11	2%	-2

Table 3: Effects of child labour on physical growth of 9-12 years children.

development, digestive system function, height, weight, haemoglobin in the group of child labourers were observed that they are more prone to digestive disorders, low weight and decreased haemoglobin. There was a deviation of -4 from the standard mean. They were found to be under weight and subjected to digestive disorders. As a result weakness, malnutrition, anaemia weight loss, weaknesses etc. was found in nearly 24% of child labourers (Figure 3 and Table 3).

#### Effects of child labour on mental growth of 9-12 years children

The study of mental growth of the group of child labourers between 9-12 years of age was conducted. On analysing their behaviour, habits

and interviews the data were collected which is shown in table no 1.4. It is clearly evident from the table that there is a negative impact of labouring condition on the mental growth of these children. They mostly suffer from sleep problems which is -6 deviations from the standard mean. Enuresis and elimination problems have a deviation of -4 from the standard mean. Therefore it can be concluded from the above result that there is a negative impact of child labour on physical as well as mental growth of children between 9 and 12 years of age (Table 4 and Figure 4).

### Deficiency of major nutrients in child labours between 9-12 years children

Data from the table no 1.5 indicates, that the deficiency of Vitamin B-complex is 28% and deviation -8 highest to average mean. Iron and Protein deficiency also occur in 24% and deviation -4 highest to average mean in 9-12 years child labour children (Table 5).

There is deficiency of Vitamin B-complex, Iron, and protein in-between 9 and 12 years' child labourers. There is negative effect on their physical growth, mental and intellectual development, cause of disorders in biochemical functions and irregular secretion of hormones (Adrenal, Corticoid, Sex hormones, and growth hormones). Maximum child labourers suffer from disabilities, emotional imbalance, behavioural problems, night blindness, emaciated pale appearance, stunted growth, cracked lips and mouth corners, malnutrition, anaemia, growth failure etc. (Figure 5).

S.no	Mental growth aspects	No. Of Respondents	In percentage	Deviation(d)
1	Speech problem	6	12%	6
2	Sleep problem	13	26%	-6
3	Stealing	11	22%	-2
4	Enuresis	8	16%	-4
5	Elimination problem	12	24%	-4

Table 4: Effects of child labour on mental growth of 9-12 years children.

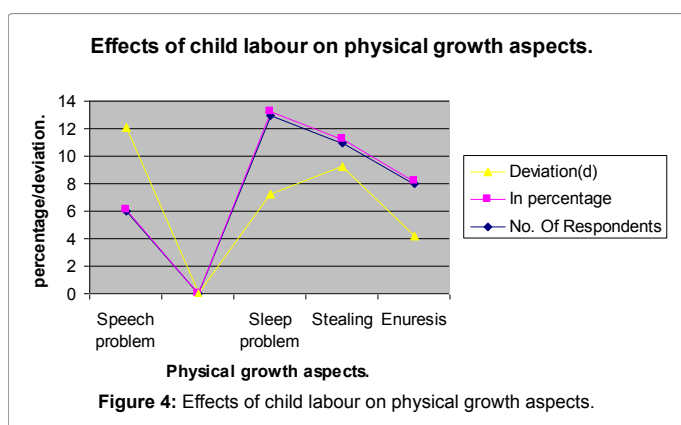


Figure 4: Effects of child labour on physical growth aspects.

S.no	Deficiency of Nutrient	No. of Respondents	In Percentage	Deviation(d)
1	Carbohydrate	9	18%	2
2	Fat	3	6%	14
3	Protein	12	24%	-4
4	Vit.B-Complex	14	28%	-8
5	Iron	12	24%	-4

Table 5: Deficiency of major nutrients in child labours between 9-12 years childrens.

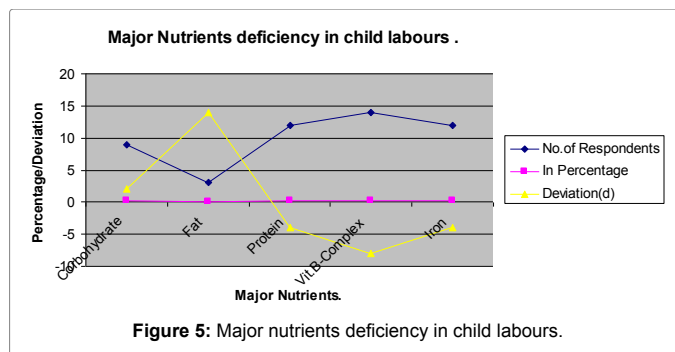


Figure 5: Major nutrients deficiency in child labours.

### Psychosocial effects of child labour

On interviewing the child labourers of 9-12 years age, and asking them psychological questions. The following result was observed:

- Poverty related health problems malnutrition, fatigue; anaemia increases the risk and consequences of work related hazards and may lead to permanent disabilities and premature death.
  - Long hours of work on a regular basis can harm the social and educational development of the children.
  - More problematic behaviours were developed such as aggression, misconduct, substance use, sleep deprivation, and related problems –falling asleep in school etc.
  - The unconditional worst forms of child labour are slavery, soldiering, prostitution, drug, trafficking, may have traumatic effects, including long-term health and socioeconomic effects.
- Several conditions causing the relatively high rate of injuries, health problems, and fatalities among agricultural child labourers are:
- Exposure to pesticides
  - Working with machinery and sharp tools
  - Lack of clean water, hand washing facilities, and toilets
  - Beginning to work at very early age often between 5 and 7 years of age
  - Less respective standards for agricultural work

### Conclusion/Summary

This finding lends a strong support to the study that poverty is the root cause of child labour. The paper concludes with the recommendation that we shall understand health as not only being free from diseases, but as the determining factor of physical, mental and social well-being, the optimum health is also a human right. In our work on health, we prioritise preventative healthcare, using social education to develop habits of personal care, and promote good hygiene at personal, family and community level, to avoid illness and the spread of infection. We pay special attention to fight for removing child labour problem, promoting nutrition, rest, physical activity, affection and emotional stability, all of which abolishing contributes to making a strong and healthy society and environment.

The work hazards and risks can effect child labourers even more strongly – Physical strain, especially when combined with repetitive moments, on growing bones and joints can cause stunting, special injury and other life long deformation and disabilities. Children often suffer psychological damage from working and living in an

environment where they are exposed to harassment or violence and abuse. In addition, child labour has a profound effect on a Child's future denied the right to a quality education, and escaping the cycle of poverty and exploitation.

Its main reason is poverty due to which 96% of children involved in child labour. As a result in the developing age the children are forced to hard labour and work more than their working capacity. It leaves a negative impact on their physical growth and development and leads to the deficiency of essential nutrients of CHO, protein, iron and B-complex vitamins.

The children are rendered unhealthy and become victim of different

diseases. It is the need of the hour to put a check on child labour so as to have a healthy society and developing country.

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