

A STUDY ON CHILD LABOUR ACCORDING TO THEIR OCCUPATIONAL CONDITION AND REMUNERATION ASPECTS IN BIKANER

SOHEL MOHAMMAD¹, ASHUTOSH SINGH², VINOD SINGH³ & S. M. QURESHI⁴

¹Department of Geography, Government Dungar College, Bikaner, Rajasthan, India

²Department of Geography, Government Dungar College, Bikaner, Rajasthan, India

³Lecturer, Government Dungar College, Bikaner, Rajasthan, India

⁴Associate Professor, Department of Veterinary and Animal Surgery, College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences,
Navania RAJUVAS, Bikaner, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT

Some of the children- especially in urban areas are not fortunate enough to have a tension free childhood, with fair opportunities for all around development. Instead of being able to enjoy the benefits of economic protection, provided by the family elders, they are forced by their circumstances to work for and contribute towards the economic well being of their families. In order to get a more detailed understanding of various aspects of the problem of child labour in Bikaner city, a field survey was carried out amongst 150 child labourers in different occupations and localities of the city.

KEYWORDS: Child Labour

INTRODUCTION

Urban areas are marked by concentration of people at high densities. These are centers of secondary or tertiary activities, which act as beacon lights and attract poor, as well as other people, aspiring for better economic conditions. In developing countries, this entails a large in-migration from hinterlands of the cities, and a burgeoning informal sector of economy characterized by 'spurious' urbanization. The survival strategy of the poor urbanites is based on the earning by all family members, including children. Thus, child labour which may remain hidden as domestic work in the primary rural economy is quite conspicuous in urban areas. Horn (1994) opines that the number of children working as early as pre-industrial era was probably greater than during the Industrial Revolution. Children mostly worked in agricultural societies then they were exposed to harsh and brutal treatment by the employers and to some extent by their own parents (Shahrokhi, 1996). In non-agricultural employment they were made to work for long hours in unhealthy, dark and often cramped work places (Pettitt, 1998).

Objective

- To study the patterns, characteristics and problems of child labour in Bikaner city.

Methodology

A purposive sample of 150 child workers was taken for the study.

Data Collection

A questionnaire was developed to collect data through face-to-face interview with the respondents.

Result

The result of the study has been presented under the heads occupational conditions, remuneration aspects.

Occupational Conditions

Out of 150 child labourers included in the study, about 2/5th were found to be engaged in hotels/dhabas and shops. Those working in hotels and dhabas formed the biggest chunk at 20 percent, followed closely by those working at shop, and factory workers. child worker in cottage industries and shoe shiners (cobblers) form one-tenth of the total workers (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1: Occupational Typology of Child Labour in Bikaner City

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Cottage Industries	15	10
Dhabas And Hotels	30	20
Labour	9	6
Factory	27	18
Shoe Shining	15	10
Agriculture	9	6
Working At Shop	28	18.66
Other	17	11.33
Total	150	

Source: Fieldwork, 2012-13

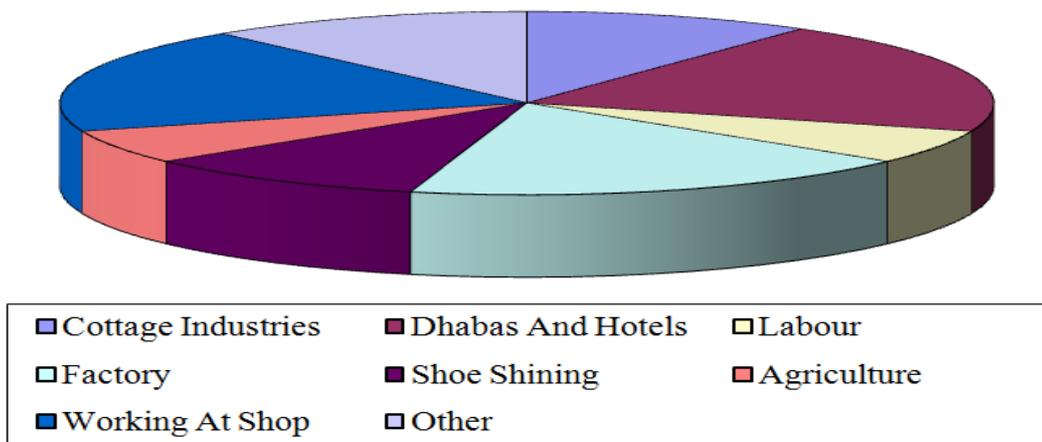


Figure 1: Occupations amongst Child Labourers in Bikaner

As regards the nature of job, slightly more than half of the children (about 53 percent) were employed regularly by their employers. Another one-fifth was working as temporary employees only. A big proportion of 18 percent children were working on casual basis, and one half of that (about 9 percent) were seasonal workers only (Table 2).

Table 2: Nature of Work in the Child Labour

Nature of Work	Frequency	Percentage
Regularly	79	52.6
Temporary	30	20
Casual	27	18
Seasonal	14	9.33
Total	150	

Source: Fieldwork, 2012-13

The phenomenon of child labour is supposed to be the result of compulsions related to family conditions. Such compulsions are mostly economic in nature. In the survey of Bikaner city, the most cogent reason given by child labourers for working was poor economic conditions of their families (47 percent). Another two fifth child workers cited “forced by family” as the reason for their working status. However, there were around 13 percent child workers who reported their own interest as the reason behind working (Table 3)

Table 3: Reason for Work in Child Labour of Bikaner City

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Family Forced	32	21.33
Poverty	71	47.33
Self Interest	20	13.33
Others	27	18
Total	150	

Source : Fieldwork, 2012-13.

Table 4.4 shows the distribution of child labourers according to number of hours worked during a day. The results reveal that the average number of hours worked by more than half during one day is 5 to 8 hours. About 35.33 percent children worked above 8 hours per day. Those working less than 5 hours were just about 13 percent of the total.

Table 4: Working Hours of Child Labourers

Working Hours	Frequency	Percentage
Less Than 5 Hours	19	12.6
5 To 8	78	52
Above 8 Hours	53	35.3
Total	150	

Source: Fieldwork, 2012-13

A cross tabulation of educational level and nature of occupation of child labourers in Bikaner city has been presented in Table 5. It shows that illiterate children tend to work in dhabas/restaurants and factories. Those educated up to primary levels tend to work at shops and cottage industries. Those children having higher than primary qualification were found to work at shops, factories and cottage industries. Thus, those having higher education were found to work at shops, while those having no education were found to do menial jobs at dhabas and restaurants.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation of Education and Occupation of Child Labourers in Bikaner City

Educational Level	Cottage Industries	Dhabas and Hotels	Labour	Factory	Shoe Shining	Agri-Culture	Working at Shop	Others	Totals
Higher than primary	8 (12.90)	6 (9.67)	6 (9.67)	9 (14.51)	5 (8.06)	2 (3.22)	19 (30.64)	7 (11.29)	62 (41.33)
Primary	3 (16.66)	2 (11.11)	0	2 (11.11)	1 (5.55)	0	7 (38.88)	3 (16.66)	18 (12.0)
Illiterate	4 (5.71)	22 (31.42)	3 (4.28)	16 (22.85)	9 (12.85)	7 (10.0)	2 (2.85)	7 (10.0)	70 (46.66)
Total	15 (10.0)	30 (20.0)	9 (6.0)	27 (18)	15 (10.0)	9 (6.0)	28 (18.66)	17 (11.33)	150

Note: Figures in parenthesis are in percentage.

Source: Fieldwork, 2012-13.

Remunerational Aspects

It can be said that objective of working children is to enhance the household income level. Hence, the remuneration received by the working children is of prime importance. A majority of child labourers (43 percent) are

getting a monthly income of Rs 1500 to 3000, i.e. Rs 50 to 100 per day. Slightly more than one third children had monthly income of less than Rs 1000, i.e., less thirty three per day. There was around a fifth of the total earning children, who earned more than Rs 3000 per month, or more than Rs. 100 per day (Table 6).

Table 6: Income from Child Labour in Bikaner City

Monthly Income Level (Rs.)	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1000	52	34.6
1500-3000	65	43.3
Above 3000	33	22
Total	150	

Source: Fieldwork, 2012-13.

Since child workers, in general are employed due to economic compulsions of their families, a pertinent question arises as to who receives the payment earned by children. Table 4.8 indicates the recipients. The large majority of the child labourers themselves received their earning. At the same time, payment in around 23 percent of cases was received by the parents, in the case of another 19 percent workers, it was received by their guardians (Table 7).

Table 7: Mode of Payment to the Child Labourers

Payment Time	Frequency	Percentage
Given To Me	87	58
Collected By Parents	34	22.6
Others	29	19.3
Total	150	

Source: Fieldwork, 2012-13.

There is no uniformity with regard to the time of payment of wages. It varies according to the nature and type of establishment. Table 8 shows the time of payment in Bikaner city, which also determines the quality of working conditions. Majority of the child workers receive their payment monthly (58.66 percent), while 25 percent of the respondents receive their payment weekly. Nearly 17 percent at of the respondents are receiving their payment on daily basis.

Table 8: Time of Payment to Child Labourers

Payment Time	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	25	16.6
Weekly	37	24.6
Monthly	88	58.6
Total	150	

Source: Fieldwork, 2012-13

The child workers were asked whether they thought that they were being paid fair payment in comparison with what is being paid to adult workers. About 43 percent respondents replied in affirmation, 18 percent replied in negation, even as 45 percent reported having 'no idea' about the issue.

Table 9: Sufficiency of Remuneration to the Children in Bikaner City

Sufficient	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	65	43.3
No	27	18
No Idea	68	45.3
Total	150	

Source: Fieldwork, 2012-13.

Table 10 and Figure 2 show the significance of income earned for the family. Majority of the child workers 49.33 percent said they were satisfied from income for their family, followed by 28 percent respondents who considered it as non-significant. The remaining 22.66 percent said that their income helped themselves but not the families as such.

Table 10: Significance of Income from Child Labour to the Families in Bikaner

Significant / Insignificant	Frequency	Percentage
Significant	74	49.3
Non-Significant	42	28.0
Helps Us Only	34	22.6
Total	150	

Source : Fieldwork, 2012-13.

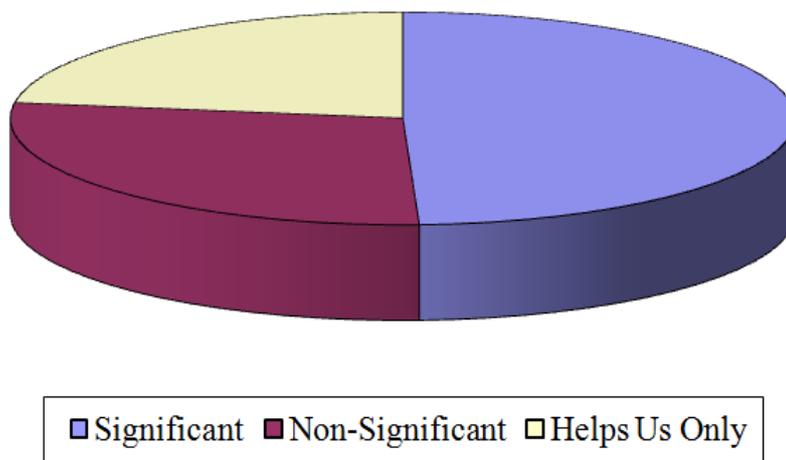


Figure 2: Significance of Income from Child Labour to the Families

CONCLUSIONS

Child labourers in Bikaner city were mainly found to work in hotels, dhabas and shops. More than a quarter worked in small industries, or as shoe shiners. Poverty and familial circumstances were cited as main reasons for this phenomenon. More than a third of child labourers worked for more than 8 hours/day. Most of child labourers are illiterate or primary educated only. The average remuneration for three-quarters of them was less than or equal to Rs. 3000/- per month. Only half of them felt that income was significant for their families.

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