

Child Labour in Brick Kiln Industry: A Case Study of Moradabad

Mohd Jafar

PhD Scholar, Center for Studies in Society and Development
Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, India
Email - mohd.jafar@cug.ac.in

Abstract: This paper will analyze the problem of child labour in unorganized sector of the economy. Unorganized sector consist of 94 percent of informal economy and consist mostly of the workers who are either contract workers or daily wagers. Child labour comes mainly in domain of informal sector in which large number of children involves in different industries in hazardous work. Children work in match making industry in shivakasi lock making industry in Aligarh, bronze making industry in Moradabad, carpet making industry in Kashmir, brick making industry and so on. The children in different industries work from day to night without proper facilities, working environment and at nominal wages. The definition of child work and child labour has been defined by many law makers, sociologist, economist and experts on the subject of labour. Child labour can be defined where children are employed in any work which deprived their childhood, mental ability to think and overall growth and development of mind and body. Child work refers to positive participation of children in economic activity, which is not detrimental to their health or mental and physical development as it is beneficial for the development of child. The problem of child labour is deep rooted in developing and under developed world and if we look to the problem of child labour in India and particularly in the state of Utter Pradesh then it is becoming menace to the society. According to the Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported the number of child labour population is 60 to 115 million in India and the state of Uttar Pradesh is considered to be the largest number of child labour in India. To curb the problem of child labour International Labour Organization (ILO) has taken initiative for the elimination of child labour in different part of the world and India is also one of the signatories for the elimination of child labour. This empirical paper will understand the socio-economic condition of children working in brick kiln industry in Moradabad.

Keywords: Brick kiln; child labour; child work; informal sector; working environment.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Children constitute an important section of any society. They are at a particular stage of human development and their well-being is closely connected to the broader holistic development of any society. The environment in which children are brought up, the ways in which they are socialised, and the kind of education they receive have a bearing on their personality development. Throughout the world, any well-reasoned steps or planning for the development of children underline the importance of bringing up children in an environment that is conducive to their intellectual, physical and social health. Their holistic development and well-being constitutes the key to ensuring that children grow up as a responsible and productive member of the society. As Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first Prime Minister, says, "A healthy child gives birth to a healthy nation" (quoted in Gangrade and Gathia 1983: 1). For a nation to progress, the benefits or the importance of investing in children and underlining their welfare can never be overstated. Every nation in the world by and large links its future with the conditions and well-being of its children. Children, by engaging in activities and work when they are not yet ready for it, not only hamper their present welfare but also hamper their future chances of becoming productive members of the society (Agarwal & Pathak 2015: 17). Given the poverty situation of the parents and their inability to augment income to sustain their families, parents usually send their children to engage in a job to tide over their economic hardships and to make both ends meet. This is the context that explains why low income or poor households usually send their children to work in such early stages of life. The most unfortunate part of child labour is that children are made to take up job at the cost of education. Childhood as a stage of life wherein they have to spend their time pursuing education is taking a backstage. Child labour has strong adverse implications for children. The duration of a child's work day hampers his or her capacity to attend school. The menace of child labour deprives the children of their right to have access to education and also deprives them of the opportunity to engage in a learning process in a formal classroom setting. Child labour is thus seen as prejudicial to a child's overall growth and development and restricts a child's capacity to have a secure future life. The problem of child labour is therefore a curse and matter of disgrace for a civilised society. It is also a threat to the economic well-being of a society. It is one of the significant impediments that stand in the way of human development. It is a blot on the face of humanity and is a human rights issue as the practice

of child labour denies the dignity of human being and deprives the children of their liberty and freedom (Fyfe 2009:149). Child labour, though found to be higher in underdeveloped and developing countries, is a global phenomenon. It has been in existence in all periods of history, though it varies in its nature and dimension, depending upon the nature of social structure and the stages of a society's economic development. India too has its own share of the problem of child labour. According to the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (2014), as per the 2011 census, the total number of child labour in India (calculating till the age of 14 years) is more than 8 million. The state of Uttar Pradesh, with more than 1.8 million child labour population, accounts for the largest number of child labour population in the country. The figure if calculated till the age of 18 years is at a whopping 35 million. India is considered to be the country with the largest child labour population in the world with Human Rights Watch (HRW) putting the number of labour population in Indian between 60 to 115 million (Human Rights Watch 1996: 1). Child labour is used in varied sectors of the Indian economy – carpet industry, lock making, brass making industry, brick kiln industry, glass making industry, match making industry, zari industry, bronze industry and so on. Many children work in these sectors which include both hazardous and non-hazardous sector making them vulnerable to disease and other forms of fatalities. To tame or mitigate the problem of child labour, the Indian state has formulated several policies and programmes, including constitutional measures, such as universal primary education. However, despite all these proactive measures, the menace of child labour continues to remain unabated in India.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Weiner (1989) seeks to identify the reasons behind the persistence of child labour. Weiner seeks to locate the reason why the Indian state has not made education compulsory or banned the menace of child labour. The common view that is appealing to the government officials, educationists and politicians, trade union leaders and social activists is that the government has not banned child labour simply because of the practical necessity of sustaining families with poor income. The argument is that families augment their income through child labour and their early entry into labour forces is crucial for the survival and the sustenance of their families. Children are seen as a source of sustenance and having them work in diverse sectors of income generating industries are seen as invaluable to them rather than education. It is not simply a refusal or reluctance to pursue education but because of the economic necessity of sustaining themselves. For these reasons, it is argued, parents should exercise their liberty to send their children to work, and employers should be allowed to employ children. Weiner found that the problem of Child labour in worse in rural areas, among girls than boys, and among the lower castes. Larger participation of child labour in the economy means more number of children out of classrooms and thereby fostering illiteracy in the country. As children engaged in labour activities do not have time for education, they are largely illiterate. He therefore argues that making education compulsory is the first step towards solving the problem of child labour. His argument is that despite a country being an economically poor country it should not hesitate to make education a compulsory one as that would make the country move towards solving the problem of child labour.

Maurya (2001) argues that child labour is a larger social problem than other social problems connected with the development of human being. He argues that child labour is abnormally high in underdeveloped countries of the world. He underlines the importance of ending child labour as the well-being of a country is dependent upon their shoulders. Children require wholehearted support from the family, society and the government. He cited the protection measures for children contained under the Indian constitution and calls for the proper and effective implementation of these protection measures for the welfare of children. The problem of child labour in the country is seen as alarmingly high and this calls for targeted state intervention to solve the issue. He outlined the important constitutional provisions that the Indian state has undertaken towards solving the problem of child labour in the country and highlights the alarming gap between the laws that exists and their implementations.

Burra (1986) seeks to locate the preponderance of child labour on the preference of the owner for children over adults. The economic reasons behind child labour is that children's wages are lesser to adults and therefore economically more profitable. Further, children are also not found to engage in strikes demanding better wages and other working conditions. Citing a case study of children working Lock factories in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, Burra argues that children can continue to toil in terrible working conditions without access to protective gears, gloves and long working hours, the children are subject to all forms of exploitations. In another study, Burra (1986) points out how employers of child labour are justifying the continued engagement of child labour in their industries. The common argument and justification for the employers is that by giving employment to the children, they are in fact helping them to sustain their lives and in augmenting their parental income rather than exploitations. Further, by engaging in productive work at an early age, they are able to get the required skills which better prepare them for future livelihoods.

Lieten (2006) examines the advocacy efforts towards the abolition of child labour and argue that activism around the issue has generated a lot of confusion. He connects the issue with the ambiguity in which child labour is defined and understood in scholarly circles and among the activists. According to him, if child labour is to include all types of work done by children, even children who otherwise ought to be in school and giving household assistance,

then the problem would be really a massive one. He explains that child labour has cropped up as an issue of wide spread concern in the last quarter of 20th century. He also examines the working conditions of child labour. He argues that the common forms of harsh working conditions of children are: long hour a day, severe punishment, low wages, and affliction with diverse forms of diseases, among others. He specifically cited the inhumane working conditions of children in the mining sector wherein they are made to crawl in narrow trenches making themselves constantly vulnerable the hazards of life. He also argues for a proper definition and conceptualisation of child labour in order to ensure that statistics on child labour is accurate and reliable.

Jha (2008) examines the complexities of defining child labour and brings out the contentious and ambiguous nature of the meaning of child labour and what constitutes child labour, the sectors in which child labour is employed, and the reasons why child labour is engaged and outlines the important positions taken by the Indian state with regard to international legal regimes on the issue of child labour and related problems. He points out that contemporary world has a uniform recognition of the importance of eradicating child labour in whatever forms. He points out the need to make a distinction between child labour and child work.

Sharma (2002) dwells on the impact of the social labelling in carpet industry and argues that the primary purpose of social labelling is to eliminate child labour in the carpet weaving industry. The main reason why millions of children are working in the carpet industry is the need to support their families and poverty situation. Child labour is seen to be even more serious for they work in hazardous industries. He talks about the importance of implementing in letter and spirit the Child Labour Prohibition Act, 1986, which talks about the prohibition of employing children below the age of 14 years. The carpet industry sold and exported their products to the foreign countries and the certifying that child labour has not been used in the making of carpets. While conducting their business, it is essential that the state scrutinises their conduct and keep a close watch on whether child labour has been used in the production of their goods. Through close monitoring of the carpet industries, the state can ensure that the industry does not employ child labour in their production of goods.

Saravanan (2002) talks about women employment and reduction of child labour of beedi workers in rural Tamil Nadu. His argument is that with the increase in income of women, the menace of child labour can be reduced. There is a strong linkage between the empowerment of women and the reduction in child labour. In the Beedi making industry, in particular, the wages paid to the employees are very low and both the mothers and their children are found working in big numbers in the industry. Given the low wages, mothers ensure that their incomes are higher by putting their children in the industry to work as wage earners. The kind of child labour in Beedi industry is even worst. Parents usually take advance loans in the hope of paying later. Yet, when they do not have enough money to pay back in time, they have to give their labour services to the industry until their debts are paid. In this way a system of debt bondage or bondage labour is preponderant. Many a times, they borrow money not only from the employers but also from the outsiders or moneylenders. Thus, the main reason behind the use of child labour in such industries is due to due to insufficient income and to sustain themselves child labour is used through the consent of their parents.

Ray (2000) provides a comparative analysis of the problem of child labour in Peru and Pakistan. He argues that the problem of child labour has lately caught the attention of international organisations and there is heightened awareness and concerns about the menace of child labour. International focus on the problem of child labour has increased mainly due to a host of initiatives and programmes undertaken by the international organisations, such as the declaration of the year 1979 as international year of the child. This was the first significant initiative that has been made to put child labour problem in the agenda of the international community. The reason why child labour persists in developing or poor countries is that it remains economically important and that since it remains outside the western developed world, it has conveniently escaped the attention of the developed western world. According to him, the children employed as child labour leave their schools to pave the way for engaging in labour activities. But the children in Peru generally combine their studies with child labour. With regard to steps undertaken to mitigate the problem of child labour, he argues that in both the countries the increase in adult women education has led to decrease in child labour. This policy initiative is worth replicating in other countries as increased concerns and emphasis on female education, provision of basis infrastructures, and basic amenities are crucial in reducing families' dependence on child labour for economic benefits.

Bhatty (1996) is of the opinion that so long as child labour is seen as having economic basis to it, the problem of child labour would continue to persist. This, according to Bhatty, is evident in the persistence of arguments and theories that argues that child labour is economically productive. He argues that resolving the problem of child labour requires moving away from the economic argument towards social arguments. There is a need to view child labour as more of a problem of social attitudes and values. By addressing the social attitudes and values first, the developed countries had managed to tackle the problem of child labour before their economies came to be considered as 'developed.' He further argues that there are some countries among developing countries that have little or no child labour. This explains the fact that economic argument is a misleading argument but emphasis on change in social attitudes and values are more important in addressing the problem of child labour. In the context of India, he argues that solution towards child labour should involve first acceptance of the problem and then efforts should be directed

towards combating it. The second important step is to recognise the centrality of education in weaning away children from child labour. Strengthening school education and infrastructural facilities for it are crucial towards resolving the problem of child labour.

3. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY:

- To understand the socio-economic condition of child labourers in brick kiln industry.
- To understand the factors responsible for child labour in the brick kiln industry.
- To understand the effectiveness of the various government policies on eradication of the problem of child labour.

4. METHODOLOGY:

The nature of study is based on qualitative and quantitative. Both primary and secondary data are collected to better understand the problem of the study. A combination of primary and secondary data is crucial in order to better understand the problem of child labour in the study area. Primary data provides originality in research and is important in providing real data on the ground. Secondary data are important in formulating research questions and for comparative studies. Secondary data is collected from the books, articles and reports on child labour in unorganized sector, social security, labour problems articles published in journals and news-paper, reports of NGOs and governmental institutions, among others. Primary data was collected through an interview technique. Child labourers and Brick Kiln owners were interviewed. As children (who do not have proper education) are the respondents, interview is considered to be appropriate as it facilitates direct face to face interactions and clarifications of any doubts during the course of the interviews. Interview is a systematic method by which a researcher could enter insightfully in to the life of another person (respondent). An in-depth interview is also considered appropriate because it facilitates the gathering of data that contains insightful information from the children's' perspectives. As Cargan says: "Interviews are more appropriate for complex situations that may need in-depth information or that contain study sensitive areas" (Cargan 2007: 118).The interviews were conducted with the help of a carefully drawn-up "interview guide" to facilitate timely completion of the interviews and also to ensure that all the relevant topics are covered and not missed out. In other words, interview guide provides the general guidelines of the interview.

5. ANALYSIS:

The present study will look in the socio economic conditions of the child labourers working in brick kiln industry in Moradabad and look in to the matters that what are the reason and causes that push/force the parents to bring their children in the manifold of child labour. In the present study four kilns has been surveyed by researcher and total sample size of the study is fifty (50) child respondents. To get the precise information about the kilns, owners of kilns has also been interviewed. Table 1 is showing the age composition of the children working in different brick kiln in Moradabad.

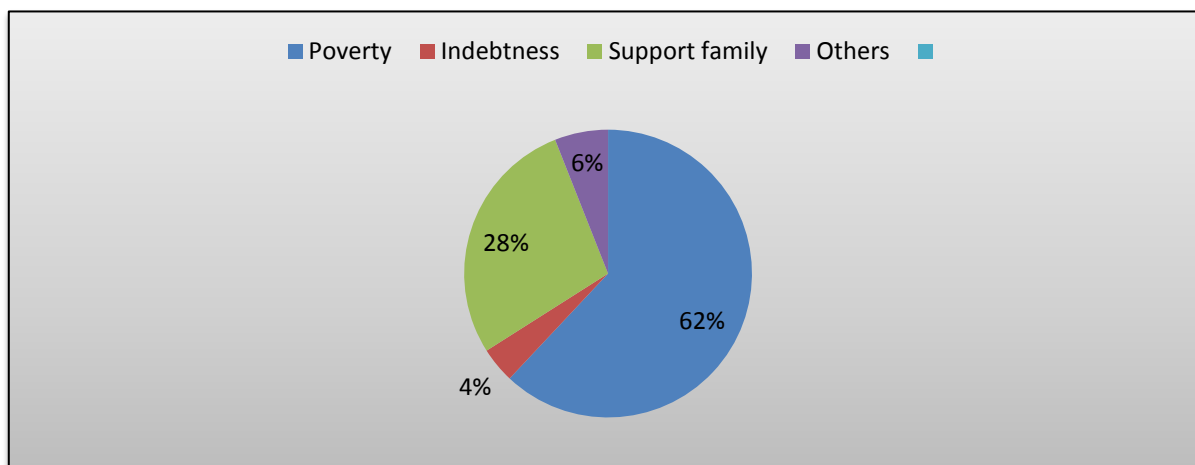
Table1. Age Composition of the Children Working in the Brick Kiln

Age group (year)	Number of Working Child	Percentage
05-10 years	11	22 %
11-14 years	30	60 %
15-17 years	09	18 %

Source: Field Survey, 2016

From the above table it has been found that most of the children comes from the age group of 11 to 14 years as it comprise 60% of the total population of the children working in the four brick kiln, 22% of the children comes from the age group of 05 to 10 years of age and the remaining 18% of the children comes in to the category of 15 to 17 years of age. From the very young age children started working in the brick kiln to support and sustain their families as poverty is one among the important reasons behind children working in the kiln. Figure 1.2 will dwells on the reasons behind the child labour working in the brick kiln

Figure 1.2 Showing the reason behind Child labour in Brick Kiln Industry



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

There are varied reasons behind joining the brick kiln industry. Based on my survey and analysis (See Figure 1.2), Sixty two percent (62%) of the children has given the reason that poverty as important reason for working in the Brick Kiln industry. About twenty eight (28%) percent of the children who are working in the brick kiln said that they come here to support their family expenses because of the large family. To augment family income, they entered into the labour force. Around four percent (4%) of the children cited indebtedness as the reason behind their entry into the labour sector. Their parents usually take money as loan from the contractors or employers and due to their inability to pay back the loan, they ended up working as bondage labourers. Under such circumstances, they are forced to let their children work as child labourers in the Brick kilns. Remaining of the children has given the reason that they wanted to be self earners that’s why come in to brick kiln.

Table: 1.1
Educational Qualification of the working children in brick kiln

Educational Qualification of children working in brick kiln.	Number	Percentage
Lower Primary (Age 6-10)	15	30%
Upper Primary (Age 11-12)	02	04%
No Education at all	33	66%

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Their families’ poor economic condition, social attitudes that do not encourage education of the children and the need to enter the labour market to meet their bare survival needs are found to be the reason why they have these poor educational standards. They have all dropped out of their schools because of poverty and engagement in labour. The problem is compounded by the absence of schools for poor children in and around the brick kilns. Even if those available are beyond reach for children. As the parents have to bear the burden of payment of fees, uniform and purchase of books and articles required for school going children, they cannot afford to send their children to schools. This is despite the right to education becoming a fundamental right. Poor implementation of this right to education provision and governmental apathy are quite responsible for keeping these children out of school.

From my study of child labour in brick kiln industry in Moradabad it has been found that children who are working comes from lower castes of society despite the fact that area is dominated by Muslim communities.

Muslim communities as largely a community who are historically converted from Hinduism are not immune from caste system again. Historical and cultural circumstances shape the existence and nature of castes systems among Indian Muslims (Momin 2004: 99). From my study of child labourers in brick kiln industries in Moradabad it has been found that significant numbers of the child labourers are from the Muslim community. Out of the fifty (50) children interviewed, Twenty three (23) child labourers belong to the Muslim Other Backward Caste (OBC) communities. They are from largely poor income and poverty stricken families. Child labourers from the Hindu community are entirely from the lower castes, i.e., the Dalits or the Scheduled Caste (SC) background. Table 1.2 shows the religion wise distribution of children according to their caste.

Table 1.2 Religion wise percentages of the working children in brick kiln

Social Background (Community Background)	Population	Percentage of different religion of children working in brick kilns

Number of Muslim Other Backward Caste (OBC) Children working in brick kilns.	23	46%
Number of Hindu Schedule Caste (SC) children working in brick kilns	27	54%

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The child labourers in Brick Kilns industries in Moradabad are also found to have a very poor health. Few Childrens are suffering from cough and pain problems because of the daily inhale of smoke and dust from the kilns and long working hours there are no required amenities like proper housing, drinking water, and health care centers available in the vicinity of the brick kiln industries. The people are largely dependent on hand-pumps as a source of water. My observation during field work is that they have a very poor access to these resources and their general health is very poor. Their food, dwelling areas, and hard labour and working conditions make them particularly vulnerable to diseases and other health ailments. The Brick Kiln industries which are covered by researcher provide no provision of even basic health care facilities or cover for the children or labourers. Only certain emergency first aid medical resources are available. For any serious ailments, labourers have to be taken to better health care centers at the cost of the victims. There is no such thing as health insurance provided to the labourers, including children.

6. CONCLUSION:

The current paper will look out the problem of child labour within the context of Moradabad. It has examined the problem of child labour by situating them in the context of the thriving Brick Kiln industry in Moradabad. As per the preceding discussion, it is evident that child labour is a global phenomenon and is found more acutely in developing and under developed countries, particularly in south Asia and Latin American part of the countries. India is also one of the largest producers of child labour in the world. The reason behind the entry of child labour in labour market is due to poverty and indebtedness and large families. Children continues to engage in labour which deprives them of opportunities for attending schools and better education and thereby unable to work for betterment of their future conditions. The Brick kiln industry is the sector where children work with their parents work involving themselves in several processes of kiln like baking of mud for making of the bricks, burning, loading and unloading of the bricks and so on. Generally it involves risks and hazards which children are constantly subjected to. Given the problems of poverty, indifference from the brick kiln owners, and poor housing and dwelling conditions, the child labourers are vulnerable and suffer from many health ailments, diseases and physical deformities. They are mostly from the poor income and marginally weaker sections of the society. This paper will looks out the socio-economic conditions of the children and their problem working in the brick kiln industry in Moradabad and other reasons and causes of the children working in unorganized sector.

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