



# Prevalence and impacts of child labour in agriculture

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## Abstract

The present study entitled “Prevalence and impacts of child labour in agriculture- A Sociological Study” seeks to probe empirically into the realities pertaining to the socio-economic and political aspects of Agriculture. It is the major occupation in India form which a significant part of the national income is assured. In spite of industrialization, a major chunk of the national population for its income and livelihood depends on agriculture. Hence, in India there has been an organic link between the farmers and the farm. In the sense, throughout the country, it has been noticed that a large number of farmers of farming community permanently live on the farms. In spite of the fact that agriculture has been the major source of income and livelihood for the major part of the India’s population, but it has been an irony that this sector has been significantly ignored by the governmental apathy, agricultural communities have been suffering many inconveniences.

*Key words:* Agriculture, child labour, poverty,

## Introduction

The problems like rural poverty, unemployment, lack of transport and communication facilities, market facilities, lack of irrigational facilities, seeds and fertilizers, lack of availability of loans to the lower- and middle-class farmers, agriculture child labour, suicide by the lower- and middle-class farmers. Agriculture child labour, suicide by the farmers, bonded labour, exploitation of private money lenders and many such problems have failed to attract the attention of the government as well as the social scientists. Despite of the fact that India is land of villages, even scant attention has not been paid by the social scientists particularly the sociologists to the study of various rural problems in India. Therefore, the empirical studies on various aspects and problems of rural life the agriculture child labour, female illiteracy, rural dowry deaths, farmer’s suicide, rural urban migration, rural infrastructure facilities, and rural debt are scarce. Therefore, there is an urgent need for conducting empirical studies on different aspects of rural life by the sociologists. In consonance with the aforementioned paragraph, in this study an empirical effort has been made for investigating the problems of Agriculture child labour in rural agricultural sector. Article 24 of the Indian constitution clearly states that, "No

child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or employed in any hazardous employment."<sup>1</sup>

### **Child Labour in India and Worldwide:<sup>2</sup>**

- Worldwide 218 million children between 5 and 17 years are in employment. Among them, 152 million are victims of child labour; almost half of them, 73 million, work in hazardous child labour.
- In absolute terms, almost half of child labour (72.1 million) is to be found in Africa; 62.1 million in the Asia and the Pacific; 10.7 million in the Americas; 1.2 million in the Arab States and 5.5 million in Europe and Central Asia.
- In terms of prevalence, 1 in 5 children in Africa (19.6%) are in child labour, whilst prevalence in other regions is between 3% and 7%: 2.9% in the Arab States (1 in 35 children); 4.1% in Europe and Central Asia (1 in 25); 5.3% in the Americas (1 in 19) and 7.4% in Asia and the Pacific region (1 in 14).
- Almost half of all 152 million children victims of child labour are aged 5-11 years. 42 million (28%) are 12-14 years old; and 37 million (24%) are 15-17 years old.
- Hazardous child labour is most prevalent among the 15-17 years old. Nevertheless, up to a fourth of all hazardous child labour (19 million) is done by children less than 12 years old.
- Among 152 million children in child labour, 88 million are boys and 64 million are girls.
- 58% of all children in child labour and 62% of all children in hazardous work are boys. Boys appear to face a greater risk of child labour than girls, but this may also reflect an under-reporting of girls' work, particularly in domestic child labour.
- Child labour is concentrated primarily in agriculture (71%), which includes fishing, forestry, livestock herding and aquaculture, and comprises both subsistence and commercial farming; 17% in Services; and 12% in the Industrial sector, including mining.

### **Causes of child labour<sup>3</sup>**

The main reason for child labour in India is poverty. Most of the country's population suffers from poverty. Due to poverty, parents cannot afford the studies of their children and make them earn their wages from a tender age.

Even after so many years of our country's independence, there are instances where children are deprived of their fundamental right to education. There are thousands of villages in our country where there are no proper facilities of education. And if there is any, it is miles away. Such administrative laxity is also responsible for child labour in India. The worst sufferers are the poor families for whom getting their children educated is a dream

<sup>1</sup>Article 24, Constitution of India

<sup>2</sup>Retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/child-labour/lang-en/index.htm>

<sup>3</sup>Retrieved from <https://www.indiacelebrating.com/social-issues/child-labour-in-india/>

Social and economic backwardness is also the main reason for child labour in India. Socially backward parents do not send their children to receive education. Consequently, their children are trapped in child labour.

In many families, due to addiction, disease or disability, there is no earning, and the child's wages are the sole means of family's sustenance. Population growth is also increasing unemployment, which has adverse impact on child labour prevention. So, parents, instead of sending their children to school, are willing to send them to work to increase family income.

In modern society, laws stipulate that citizens have the right to receive good education, avail good health services and take care of their health. Every citizen has the right to play the game he enjoys, and enjoy all the means of entertainment, and when he grows, to obtain employment where he can earn well and contribute to society and nation. But in the absence of proper compliance of the laws, child labour in India is continuing.

In the greed of cheap labour, some shopkeepers, companies and factory owners employ children so that they have to pay less to them and it amounts to employing cheap labour.

It is a shocking but a bitter truth that in our society it is very easy to give child labor the name of tradition or custom in many families. Cultural and traditional family values play a role in increasing child labor problem at voluntary level in India.

## **Review of Literature:**

### **Child labour in India: problems<sup>4</sup>**

“Jinesh Chandra Kulshrestha (1978)” has attempted not only to analyze the problem of child labour but also to suggest measures of eradication of this problem. He has dealt with the concept, nature and magnitude of the same. While exploring the causes of child labour found that poverty and unemployment of adult bread earners, absence of scheme for family allowance, large family, cheap labour and the absence of provisions for compulsory education, illiteracy and ignorance of parents were the main causes. The author has also discussed about the protective legislations in different countries of the world like England, America, USSR and India. The shortage of public funds, the difficulty of administration and enforcement and poverty are considered as the main obstacles in the way of abolition of child labour in developing countries. J.C. Kulshrestha has suggested to strengthening and administrative machinery, in addition to establishment of night classes, making curricula and school environment attractive, adjustment in school timings, and vacations, providing adequate health services for children at schools. The provision of family planning, provision of living wage for adult wage earners. Awareness among parents are thought to be the best ways to abolish child labour

### **Health of child labours<sup>5</sup>**

Seventy percent of child laborers—more than 150 million girls and boys under 18—are agricultural workers. They are harshly exploited, toiling in poor to appalling conditions, performing dangerous jobs with little or no pay, and are deprived of an education. Because children's bodies and minds are still growing and developing, exposure to workplace hazards and risks can be more devastating and long-lasting for them. The line between what is acceptable work and what is not is easily crossed. However, not all work that children

<sup>4</sup>KulShrestha, Jinesh Chandra (1978), “Child labour in India”, Ashish publication.

<sup>5</sup>Hurst, Peter (2007), “Health and Child Labour in Agriculture”, Food and nutrition Bulletin.

undertake in agriculture is bad for them. Age-appropriate, lower-risk tasks that do not interfere with schooling and leisure time are not at issue here. The goal of this paper is to examine the links between health and child labor in agriculture. It aims to explain why the International Labour Organization's goal of eliminating all of the worst forms of child labor by 2016 will only be possible if more work is done in agriculture. Children who work in agriculture are exposed to a large number of health hazards, and yet the problem is particularly difficult to tackle because of the large numbers involved, the young age at which children start to work, the hazardous nature of the work, lack of regulation, invisibility of child laborers, denial of education, the effects of poverty, and ingrained attitudes and perceptions about the roles of children in rural areas. Policies for preventing and reducing agricultural child labor should mainstream and integrate child labor issues at the national and international levels with increasing emphasis on poverty alleviation and expanding and improving institutional mechanisms for education, law enforcement, health, and so forth. Cooperation between the International Labour Organization and international agricultural organizations is needed to ensure that child labor in agriculture is a thing of the past.

### **Difference between child labour and child work<sup>6</sup>**

The terms 'work' and 'labour' have been used synonymously and interchangeably. But Ivy George has made a clear - cut distinction between these two terms. She has rightly said that children should be allowed to work in environments and conditions, which foster their growth and development but should not be allowed to labour. She conducted a study in a south Indian village called Channallipath to examine the exploitative nature of handloom cotton and silk weaving industries. Ivy George has expressed the view that the participation of children in work has been beneficial to their physical, psychological, social and 57 intellectual growth. Proper coordination of learning (education) and work has been an accepted social process. She has stressed the importance and benefit of work for the children who otherwise might have turned into deviants. Therefore, the author has suggested the transformation of labour settings to work settings and for this she has suggested that there is the need for an appropriate change in the existing educational system to suit urban and rural situations. Based on the conceptual distinction between work and labour, Ivy George supported the view that the problem of child labour could not be eradicated at the present economic conditions, and the working conditions should be improved.

### **Hazardous child labor in agriculture<sup>7</sup>**

Irrespective of age, agriculture, along with mining and construction, is one of the three most hazardous sectors in terms of fatalities, accidents, and ill health. According to ILO statistics, half of all fatal accidents occur in agriculture [14]. The potential hazards are numerous and the levels of risk high, as described in greater detail below. When speaking of child laborers, it is important to go beyond the concepts of work hazard and risk as applied to adult workers and to expand them to include the developmental aspects of childhood. Because children are still growing, they have special characteristics and needs that must be taken into consideration when determining workplace hazards and the risks associated with them, in terms of physical, cognitive, and behavioral development and emotional growth. The World Health Organization's definition of "child health" is complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing of a child and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Malnutrition is also often a significant factor in the case of child labor. In a well-nourished child, both susceptibility to infection and severity of illness are significantly lower than in a malnourished child. Poor health in childhood affects later occurrence of illness (morbidity) and can result in reduced life expectancy. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of agricultural work is that it is

<sup>6</sup>Georg, Ivy (1990), "Child labour and Child work", Ashish Publication House.

<sup>7</sup>Hurst, Peter (2007), "Health and Child Labour in Agriculture", Food and nutrition Bulletin.

carried out in a rural environment where there is no clear boundary between working and living conditions. As a result, agricultural workers and their families and other child workers face extra dangers, such as exposure to pesticides from spray drift, as well as pesticide-contaminated water and food. Frequently, lack of clean drinking water, decent washing facilities, and toilets contributes to poor general health conditions and makes personal hygiene and laundering difficult. Farm or plantation accommodations for workers are often extremely basic and makeshift, built of pieces of plastic, wood, or cardboard, and lack heating and other amenities.

### **Child labour in India as per census 2011<sup>8</sup>**

As per Census 2011, the total child population in India in the age group (5-14) years is 259.6 million. Of these, 10.1 million (3.9% of total child population) are working, either as 'main worker' or as 'marginal worker'. In addition, more than 42.7 million children in India are out of school. However, the good news is that the incidence of child labour has decreased in India by 2.6 million between 2001 and 2011. However, the decline was more visible in rural areas, while the number of child workers has increased in urban areas, indicating the growing demand for child workers in menial jobs. Child labour has different ramifications in both rural and urban India.

### **Child labour in agriculture (ILO)<sup>9</sup>**

In many countries' child labour is mainly an agricultural issue. Worldwide 60 percent of all child labourers in the age group 5-17 years' work in agriculture, including farming, fishing, aquaculture, forestry, and livestock. This amounts to over 98 million girls and boys. The majority (67.5%) of child labourers are unpaid family members. In agriculture this percentage is higher, and is combined with very early entry into work, sometimes between 5 and 7 years of age. Agriculture is one of the three most dangerous sectors in terms of work-related fatalities, non-fatal accidents and occupational diseases. About 59 percent of all children in hazardous work aged 5–17 are in agriculture.

### **Laws related to child labour in India**

The problem of child labour in India had become an issue of concern for one and all post-Independence. The drafting committee of the India constitution wanted to formulate laws on their own without seeking recommendations from other countries with this regard. Since, India had been under the exploitative regime of the British, it only made sense that the provisions were devised keeping in mind the forms of exploitative labour that India had witnessed under the atrocious regime. The primitive laws that were formed to prohibit child labour in India were when the Employment of Children Act, 1938 was passed. But this act failed miserably because it failed to address the cause of poverty as it is poverty that drives children into forced labour. The Indian Parliament time and again has passed Laws and Acts to ensure the protection of children from child labour in India. The Fundamental Rights enshrined in our Constitution prohibit child labour below the age of 14 years in any factor or mine or engaged in any hazardous employment under Article 24. Apart from this, it is also provided under Article 21-A that State shall provide infrastructure and resources for free and compulsory education for children of the age six up to 14 years. There exists a set of laws which under the Constitution govern the protection of children from child labour. The Factories Act of 1948 prevents the employment of children below 14 years in any factory. The Mines Act of 1952 prohibits the

<sup>8</sup>Retrieved from [https://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/whatwedo/publications/WCMS\\_557089/lang--en/index.html](https://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_557089/lang--en/index.html)

<sup>9</sup>Retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Agriculture/lang--en/index.htm>



employment of children below the age of 18 years. The Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986 prevents the employment of children below the age of 14 years in life-threatening occupations identified in a list by the law. Further, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of children Act of 2000 made the employment of children a punishable offence. Ironically, despite this huge array of laws, there seems to be no improvement in the working conditions of the child labourers and employers also freely flout the provisions of the Act covering the prohibition of child labour in India. It needs to be highlighted that the violation of these provisions means a deprivation of the basic human rights and demeaning the childhood of the children. The law also isn't very clear as to how where can the children work. The Acts covers only 10 percent of the total working children and thus not applicable to the unorganized sector. The Act also exempts the family of the child labourer from its purview if they all are working with the same employee as that of the child. Although the Act prohibits the employment of children in certain hazardous industries and processes, it does not define what constitutes hazardous work. It only provides a list of hazardous occupations.

### **Field of Study:**

The two villages Kalau and Budkiya in Jodhpur district of Rajasthan taken as field of study because it has abundant agricultural resources but scarcity of skilled labourers.

### **Sampling:**

To find out the objective of our study, we use Homogeneous purposive sampling technique. To study the nature, extent and factors of child labour in agriculture, we selected the area for the present study. For the present study 240 respondents were analyzed in the present study. The study was carried out in Kalau and Budkiya. 120-120 respondent were taken from both the villages in Kalau and Budkiya.

### **Objectives**

The present study entitled "Child Labour in Agriculture" to seeks the problem and cause of child labour in agriculture.

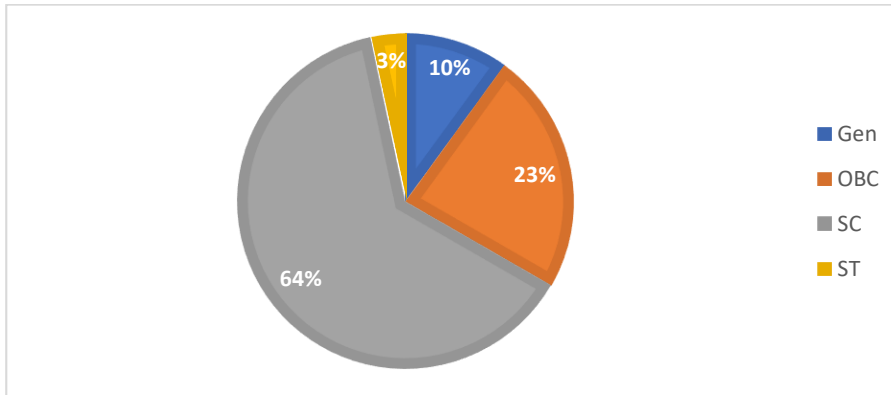
1. To study the actual positions and sufferings of the agriculture child labour.
2. To investigate the socio-economic backgrounds of agriculture child labour
3. To study the impact of work on their studies.
4. To study the effect on their health due to work in agriculture.

### **Hypothesis**

1. Poverty and child labour in agriculture are directly co-related.
2. Education among children and child labour in agriculture are direct co-related.
3. There is direct relation between family size and child labour in agriculture.

## Data analysis and findings

### Distribution of children across category



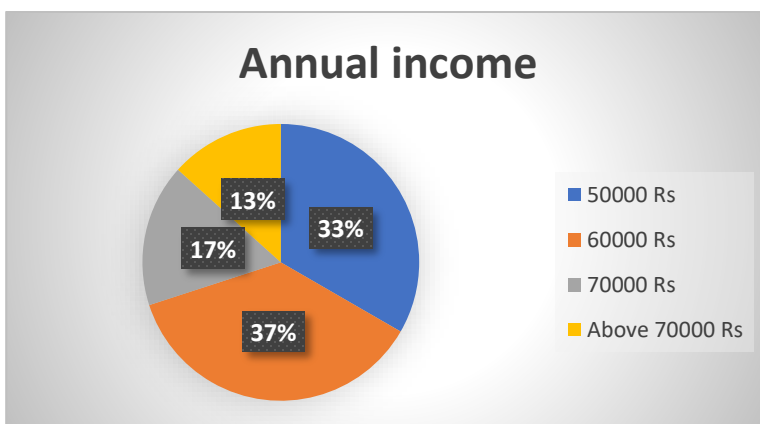
As per Figure the majority of children are from lower caste, 66.7%, children are from SC, ST class. In 1<sup>st</sup> category 10%, children are from Gen. In which 3.3%, are from village Kalau and 6.7%, are from village Budkiya. In 2<sup>nd</sup> category 23.3%, children are from OBC. In which 13.3%, are from village Kalau and 10%, are from village Budkiya. In 3<sup>rd</sup> category 63.3%, children are from SC. In which 33.3%, are from village Kalau and 30%, are from village Budkiya. In 4<sup>th</sup> category 3.3%, child is from village Budkiya is in ST.

### Distribution of children across their Parents education

majority of parents are illiterate. The education of parents is directly related to child labour.

In 1<sup>st</sup> category the number of fathers those who studied under 5<sup>th</sup> class are 16.7% and the number of mothers is, 26.7%. In 2<sup>nd</sup> category the number of fathers those who studied 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> class is 13.3% and the number of mothers is 20%. In 3<sup>rd</sup> category the number of fathers those who studied 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> class is 33.3% and the number of mothers is 6.7%. In 4<sup>th</sup> category the number of fathers those who illiterate is, 36.7% and the number of mothers is 46.7%.

### Distribution of children across their Parents education



As per figure the majority of the family's annual income is under 60000 Rs. 70%, family's income under 60000 Rs. In 1<sup>st</sup> category 33%, family's annual income is 50000 Rs. In 2<sup>nd</sup> category 37%, family's annual income is 60000 Rs. In 3<sup>rd</sup> category 17%, family's annual income is 70000 Rs. In 4<sup>th</sup> category 13%, family's annual income is more than 70000 Rs. This is a main reason of child labour because most of the children doing work

due to the poor economic condition of their family. They doing work so they can support their family economically.

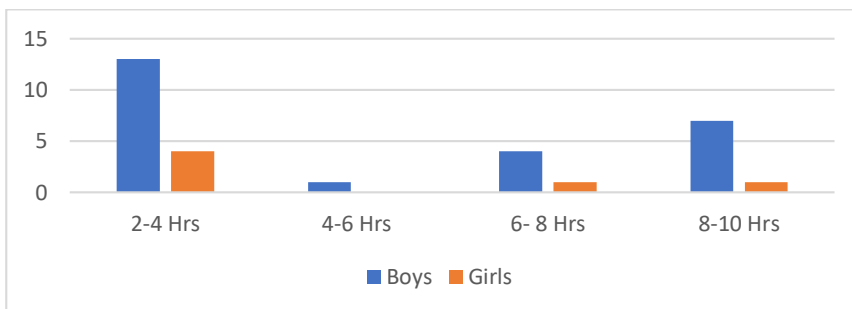
### Distribution of children across education

majority of the children 60%, are going to school. They also do work along with their study. In category 1<sup>st</sup> 60%, are going to school. In which 46.7%, are boys and 13.3% are girls. In category 2<sup>nd</sup> 40%, are not going to school they drop their study. In which 33.3%, are boys and 6.7% are girls.

### Reason for their work

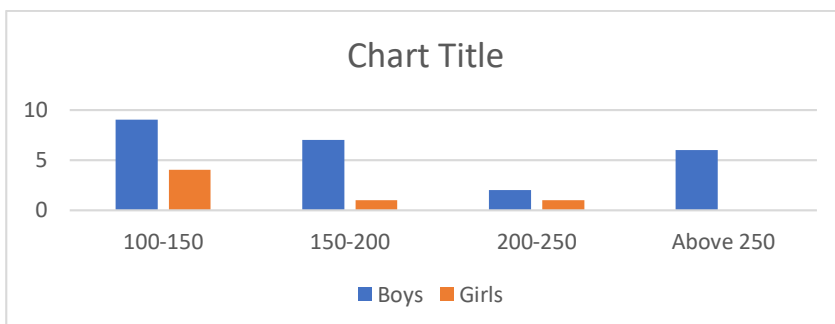
According to the data the main reason is that they started working to help their family economically. The economic condition of all families is not so god. According to data 90%, children says that they work to help their families economically. 33.3% children also say that they work for their studies. Because their parents cannot afford their studies. 10 children started working after the death of their father.

### Distribution of children across their working time



As per figure shows that majority of children work 2-4 hours per day. Most of the children went to school so they work after the school time, so they have only 2-5 hours for work. In 1<sup>st</sup> category 56.7% children work 2-4 hours per day. In which 43.3 are boys and 13.3% are girl child. In 2<sup>nd</sup> category only 3.33%, boy child work 4-6 hours per day. There is no girl child who work 4-6 hours per day. In 3<sup>rd</sup> category 16.7%, children work 6-8 hours per day. In which 13.3%, are boys and 3.33% is girl child. In 4<sup>th</sup> category 66.7% children work 8-10 hours per day. In which 23.3%, are boys and 3.33% is girl child.

### Distribution of children across their earning per day



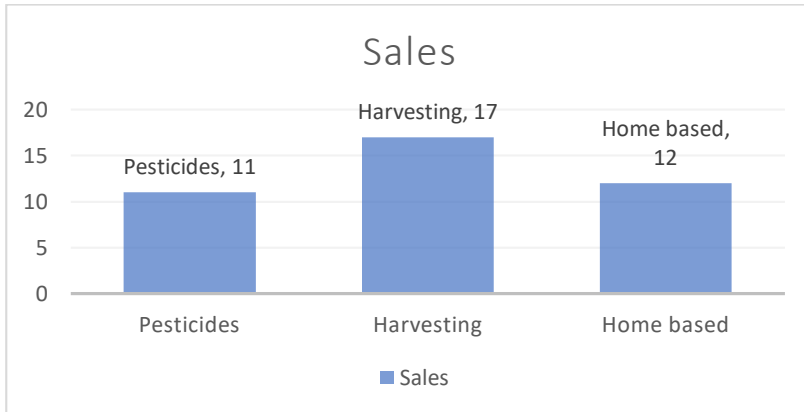
As per figure we show the earning of children per day. Majority of children paid 100-150 Rs per day. We show in figure that the majority of children work 2-4 hours so they get only 100-150 Rs per day.



## Use of their earning

According to the data we found that most of the children work to help their families economically. All of the children give their money to their family member. But some children also use their money for their study. They give their school fee and also buy their study material with this money. 10%, children use their money for their study.

## Distribution of children across their nature of work



This is the multi variant Figure in which we show that the majority 56.7% of children work in harvesting work. In 1<sup>st</sup> category 36.7%, of children work in pesticides. In 2<sup>nd</sup> category 56.7%, of children work in harvesting. In 3<sup>rd</sup> category 40% of children work in home based.

## Problems

According to data we classify their problem into 3 categories. Headache, body pain, breathing problem. In 1<sup>st</sup> category 6.7%, children facing headache problem due to their work. In 2<sup>nd</sup> category 20%, children facing problem of body pain due to some work life lifting weight. In 3<sup>rd</sup> category 13.3%, children facing problem of breathing due to work in pesticides.

## Conclusion

Children are backbone of the nation. The progress and the future of the country depend upon how the child of today develops and taken care. Despite of all this, the children have been subjected to many hardships to earn their livelihood. In India, millions of children are working in different occupations are over the country. The reasons are being they can be hired for less money. The study has been conducted in two villages Kalau and Budkiya of Dechu district of Jodhpur.

As per that the child labourer working in agriculture field have been selected as respondents. Most of the are illiterate and belonged to the age group of 10-14 years. When we analyze the caste of the respondents, it shows that majority of them are from schedule caste followed by backward class respondents. A large majority of our respondents belonged to nuclear family. It is pertinent from the table that a large majority of our respondents having their parents alive. Regarding main occupation of the family, majority of our respondents are engaged as labourer in pesticide and harvesting work. It is further evident from the table that a vast majority of our respondents belonged to the income group less than 60000/- per annum. An overwhelming large majority of them are unmarried. When we analyze the age of respondents when they start working, majority of them started their work as child labour in the age group between 11-14 years.

As per it shows that majority of respondents are not facing any type of health problem due to their field work. The main problem that respondent facing due to work in field is body pain, those children who work more than 5 hours per day facing this problem. A large majority of respondents have impact on their study due to work. They have less time to study or some of them drop their study. The respondents are not only working within the boundary of their village, but approx. half of the respondents goes outside of village for work. Most of them are goes only in another village but some of them goes out of district or state.

It has been officially stated that child labour is no longer a medium of economic exploitation but necessitated by the parents and in many cases that of the child itself. Analysis also revealed that an overwhelming majority of respondents having insufficient parental income was most important factor for labor work, followed by respondents having labour as their family occupation, while a significant number of them are encouraged by parents and near about half of the respondents are not interested in acquiring education. On the other hand, for near about half of the respondents' main factor is large family size. So, it can also easily be inferred that evil of child labour is born of poverty and other economic reasons.

As per that most of the respondents does not know about child labour. They even do not know about any government police regarding child labour. These policies made for the children who work hard, but in reality, at ground level no one knows about them.

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