

Role of Facilities available in Schools to mitigate the problem of Child labour in District North 24 Parganas : An Enquiry into parents' Attitude towards their Children's Education.

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Abstract :

Down the ages, poverty remains a major social problem which produces many others. Child labour is such a problem rooted into the poverty stricken social realities of India. In order to address this menace, the government has adopted many schemes and passed various laws. But still, there are occurrence of drop out of schools and engagement as child labour. In such context, the present study aims to evaluate the role of those provisions facilities and financial support given through schools to promote education of children to prevent the engagement of children under 14 year of age. Therefore, a cross-sectional survey study was under taken and data were obtained from 216 parents regarding their perception of effectiveness of such amenities to reduce and eliminate child labour problem the researchers used a questionnaire with both open and close ended questions to have both quantitative and qualitative data. Based on the analysis and synthesis of assembled data it was found that through there is no direct relationship between these two variables yet the importance of such facilities can be denied which was established which was determined by the parents views drawn as the answer of the open ended question put to them.

Key words : Child labours, Facilities, Education, Education facilities, Parents' Attitude .

Introduction :

Childhood is one of the most important stages of human life because this stage lays the foundation of one's whole life. What he/She will become or how he/She will come up as a whole human being, is mostly set during this stage. Therefore, this stage claims allround development in terms of physical, psychological, social and motor development. All such development can be achieved by providing them nutritious food, mental support, pollution free and friendly natural and social atmosphere. Besides, education plays significant role to promote children's allround development. But unfortunately in our country, it is seen that large part of children community are forced to drop out of education system due to the financial needs of their family. As per UNICEF Global report (2024) 70% children aged under 14 years are compelled to work as child labours. They are forced to work as domestic help, daily wage-earner, unskilled labours in factories and

small industries, particularly in cottage industry, novice or apprentice to motor mechanics and professional works. Such labours tend risk of their physical and psychological injury. They are being denied their right to life and education their childhood needs in terms of enjoying games and sports and participating in such activities, enjoying pollution-free natural environment and free and secure social environment, free association with others children achievement of love and care from the elders. The children try to support their family financially but in turn such sacrifice makes their foundation of life vulnerable because of the fact that while being engaged in such labour, they are not getting enough scope of education, nutrition, well-environment and so on. Rather, engagement in child labour may lead them to get in touch with such activities which do not suit them. Many of them take up substance abuse and mal practice as a way of getting relief from their work load and mental stress. In view of such grieving condition of the children of our country the union government of India passed Bonded labour system (Abolition) Act, 1976 to stop forceful work. In 1986, the govt. of India introduced child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act prohibiting employment of any child under 14 years of age to a dangerous work or to such work having risk of danger. In the year 2016, the govt. of India amended this bill and banned any type of labour done by children under age 14 and engagement of children from 14 to 18 years of age in dangerous work. The govt. did not limit its effort to eliminate child labour from the society as well as the nation, only by adopting some laws, rather it has launched social scheme and acts to promote children's actual welfare and elimination of such course namely child labour. The govt. of India duly passed Right to education Act 2010 which ensures free and compulsory elementary education for every child in the age group 6 to 14 years. It is further supported by the introduction of Mid-Day -Meal project ensuring nutrition to every child. Besides, the govt. of West Bengal also introduced different social welfare schemes to be provided to the children through schools. These schemes include free books and exercise books, bag and shoes, uniforms etc. It is clear that if a needy family wishes to avail these facilities, they should send their children to schools. Further more, when they are grown up, they are given bicycle under sabuj sathi project and a sum of money under kanyashree project (to the girls from class -viii to higher education level). At the same time, many others stipended and scholarships namely Oikyoshree, pre-matric and post – matric stipended are provided to the students. There is logic that if the financial burden of child rearing is reduced, poverty stricken parents would be motivated to send their children to school. Besides, various stipended and scholarships provided to only students would be able to motivate the parents to send their children to school offering them some financial relief. Thus, if students are drawn into the boundaries of educational institution, there would be little scope or little for the parents as well as the children to get into the area of child labour. Now it has become a matter of great concern how far these facilities are able to eradicate or reduce the menace of child labours. The present study tried to investigate the effectiveness of these provisions/facilities to eliminate child labour as a social problem.

Objectives :

The researchers have identified some objectives for this particular study, which are given below :

- To examine the role of facilities available in Government Aided schools in mitigating the problem of child labour in West Bengal.
- To analyze the relationship between school facilities and the prevalence of child labour.
- To study parents' attitude towards their children's education in relation to the facilities provided by schools.

- To assess parents' opinions regarding the importance and adequacy of facilities available in Government Aided schools.
- To evaluate whether educational materials(Books, notebooks, bags,etc) provided by schools are sufficient to meet students' needs.
- To examine the effectiveness of education in Government aided school in developing students' ability to solve real-Life problems.
- To identify the role of the present education system in shaping children's personal development and future readiness.
- To explore how parental attitudes and socio economic conditions contribute to the persistence of child labour.
- To understand the general perception and attitude of people towards child labour.
- To suggest measures for improving school facilities and parental awareness in order to reduce child labour.

Hypotheses :

The major hypotheses formulated for this study up-

1. There is no significant relationship between facilities available in Govt. aided schools and child labour problem.
2. There is no significant difference of parents' opinion between Rural and Urban areas, regarding the facilities provided to their children by the school and their conception of present Education system at large.

Research Questions :

In order to investigate the problem of the study following research questions were raised by the researchers.

- How effective are the facilities provided in schools in preventing child labour and shaping parents' attitudes towards their children's education ?
- Are the educational material such as books , notebooks,bags, etc. received from the school sufficient to meet the child's educational needs ?
- Is the education given to students in govt. Aided schools, suitable enough to make them capable of solving their own problem in future ?
- Do government education facilities have a significant impact on children's financial and educational development ?
- What should be the goals and objectives of present education system and is relevant to children's personal life ?
- How is child labour created by parents/ people ?
What is the attitude of people towards child labour ?
- Can government aid play an effective role in reducing child labour, and to what extent can parental attitudes bring change in this regard ?

Methodology :

In this study cross-sectional survey method was conducted to have reliable and valid data.

Population : All parents of children studying in government and government aided schools in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal : were taken as the population of this study.

Sample :

For the purpose of assessing reliable and valid data the present researchers applied Random sampling technique and collected feedback from parents Randomly

Tools :

In order to obtain representative, reliable and valid data a teacher made questionnaire was developed with both close-ended and open- ended questions . These yielded simultaneously quantitative and qualitative data which helped the researchers to have the present scene of school education system with a deeper insight into the thought and outlook towards education by the parents as they were aware of their children’s education. Here, the questionnaire was composed of 21 items among which 20 were made up with three dimensions while the last one was only an open- ended one. Among the others questions all were close ended while some were made up with both close-ended and open-ended questions. The reliability of the questionnaire was established by using test-retest and its was tested by having expert opinion.

Analysis :

For the purpose of having factual data of the present state of child labour problem in the context of facility available in government aided schools in West Bengal and having a deeper inside into the problem concerned. The researchers conducted both quantitative and qualitative analysis in terms of statistical analysis and thematic analysis. The result was tabulated item by item and expressed in other form which are described below.

Table No 1 : Numerical distribution of parental views on the supply of nutrition by mid- day- meal.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	44	80	12
Urban	16	56	08

In response to the query “ Do you think the Mid-Day -Meal scheme is able to provide adequate nutrition to your child “?. Out of 136 people rural, only 44 People expressed Yes, and 12 people comment No, while other 80 people remained undecided. Again out of 80 urban people, only 16 people expressed Yes, and 08 person comment No, while other 56 people remained undecided.

Table No 2 : Numerical distribution of parental views on Mid-Day-Meal projects’ Role on reducing food expenditure of the family.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	12	64	60
Urban	24	32	24

In response to the question “Do you think that the Mid-Day-Meal Scheme, by providing you with lunch , help alleviate your family’s ovarall food expense or reduces your food costs” out of 136 Rural people, only 12 Persons replied yes, and 60 person replied No, while other 40 people remained undecided. Again out of 80 urban people, only 24 people replied Yes, and 32 people expressed No, while other 32 people remained undecided.

Table No : 3 Numerical distribution of parental opinion regarding food expenditure of children while being absent from school.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	04	20	112
Urban	00	08	72

Regarding the quarry “ Do you think that if your child did not attend school, it would not have been possible for you to cover the cost of their food” out of total 136 rural people, only 4 Persons replied Yes, and 112 Persons replied No, while other 20 Persons remained undecided. Again out of 80 Persons urban only 72 persons replied No , while other 4 Persons stood undecided.

Table No 4 : Numerical distribution of parental perception of difficulties when the school is closed.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	00	16	120
Urban	04	20	20

Regarding the question “ Do you face any particular difficulties when the school is closed “ Out of 136 Rural people, only 120 Persons replies No, and 16 Persons stood undecided. Again out of 80 Urban people, only 4 Persons expressed yes and 20 Persons expressed No, while other 20 people remained undecided.

Table No : 5 Numerical distribution of students liking of Mid-Day-Meal.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	32	64	40
Urban	40	20	20

Regarding the question “ Does your child likes eating the Mid-Day-Meal?.” Out of total 136 Rural, only 32 People replied Yes, 40 Persons replied no , while other 64 Persons comment undecided. Again out of 80 Urban people, only 40 replied Yes, and 20 people replied No, while other 20 people stood undecided.

Table No : 6. Numerical distribution of receive items from the school.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	112	24	00
Urban	68	08	04

Regarding the question “ Whether they receive items such as books, notebook, bags, clothing, etc,from the school ?”. Out of total 136 Rural parents, only 112 conveyed Yes and 24 People appeared undecided. Again out of total 80 Urban people, only 68 replied Yes, 04 Persons No, while other 08 people remained undecided.

Table No : 7 Numerical distribution of Parental opinions regarding children’s Engagement in Income-Generating activities during school closures.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	12	16	108
urban	04	08	64

Regarding the question “ Do you think your child should earn money or engage in income generating activities while school is closed ?”. Out of total 136 Rural people, only 12 Persons yes, and 16 People undecided, while others 108 people comment No. Again out of 80 urban, only 04 Persons yes, and 08 Peoples undecided, while others 64 Persons comment No.

Table No : 8 Numerical distribution of additional expenses.

Shows:-

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	60	40	36
Urban	52	20	08

In response to the question “ Is it necessary to incur additional expenses to purchase all

The items ?” Out of total 136 rural ,only 60 Persons replied Yes, 36 Persons people replied No, while other 40 person remained undecided. Again out of total 80 urban people, only 52 people replied Yes, 08 Persons expressed no, while others 20 Persons undecided.

Table No : 9 Numerical distribution of childrens regular taking of medicine provided by schools.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	40	84	12
Urban	32	24	24

Regarding the question “ Whether the medicines supplied by the school are taken regularly ?” out of total 136 rural people, only 40 people expressed yes, and 12 person replied No, while other 84 people remained undecided.

Out of total 80 People urban, only 32 people replied Yes, and 24 person replied No, while other 24 people remained undecided.

Table No : 10 Numerical distribution of convenience expenditure.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	32	08	96
Urban	60	12	08

In response to the question “ Whether one has to incur separate expenses for the child’ s commute to school?” Out of total 136 Rural people only 32 Persons expressed yes, 96 People replied No, while others 08 Person stood undecided. Again out of total 80 Urban only 60 replied Yes, 08 people replied No , and others 12 People remained undecided.

Table No :11 Numerical distribution of the quality of the things provided to student by the schools.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	24	112	00
Urban	12	68	00

In response to the question “What is the quality of the government provided supplies received from the school ?”. Out of total 136 Rural only 24 Persons expressed yes, while other 112 People replied undecided. Again out of total 20 Urban people, only 12 Yes, while others 68 People undecided.

Table No : 12 Numerical distribution of economic benefit received by the students.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	68	20	48
Urban	20	08	52

Regarding the question “Whether the receive any financial assistance from the school?” Out of total 136 Rural people, only 68 people replied Yes, and 48 People opposed it, while other 20 Persons undecided. Again out of total 80 Urban people, only 20 Persons replied yes, 52 people expressed No, while other 08 Persons stood undecided.

Table No : 13 Numerical distribution parental satisfaction regarding their childrens education.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	72	60	04
Urban	36	40	04

Regarding the question “ Are you satisfied with the education your child receives from the school ?”.Out of total 136 Rural people, only 72 replied yes, 4 Persons comment no, while others 60 people undecided. Again out of 80 People, only 36 person Yes, 04 people replied No, while other 40 people remained undecided.

Table No : 14 Numerical distribution views on the effectiveness of education to make the childrens self-dependent.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	88	28	20
Urban	36	36	08

In response the question “ Is the education provided by the school sufficient to enable the child to stand on their own feet in future?”. Out of total 136 Rural people, only 88 people expressed Yes, 20 people replied No, while other 28 person remained Undecided. Again out of total 80 Urban people only 36 Persons replied yes, 8 Peoples replied No ,while other 36 People stood undecided.

Table No : 15 Numerical Distribution of parental views on the priority Aspect of thing children education or employment in childhood.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	08	12	116
Urban	08	08	64

In response the question “ It would have been better to engage the child in some work on profession rather than sending them to school ?” Out of total 136 Rural people only 08 people yes, and 116 person replied No , while other 12 People remained undecided. Again out of 80 Urban people, only 08 Persons replied Yes, 64 persons c replied No, others 08 People stood undecided.

Table No : 16 Numerical distribution parental views on the starting of work education from childhood.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	08	00	128
Urban	00	00	80

Regarding the question “ Do you think children should be taught income generating skills from an early age ?”. Out of total 136 Rural people,only 08 Yes, and 128 People replied No. Again out of total 80 Urban people, only 80 People replied No.

Table No :17 Numerical distribution of parental views on the effectiveness of financial Aid to child rearing expenditure.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	08	116	12
Urban	12	28	40

In response to the question “ Whether all government assistance provided by school offers truly substantial support for child rearing ?”. Out of total 136 Rural people, only 8 Persons expressed yes, and 12 Persons replied No, while other 116 People stood undecided. Again out of total 80 Urban people, only 12 person replied yes, and 40 People expressed no, while other 28 persons remained undecided.

Table No : 18 Numerical distribution of parental views on the practical Implication of education in the life of their wards.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	72	64	00
Urban	72	08	00

In response of applicability of education to solve personal problem in future, out of total 136 total rural people only 72 persons thought that present education would help they are children to solve their personal problem while 64 stood undecided. Again out of total 80 Urban people only 72 person replied 72 People thought that present education would help they are children to solve their personal problem, while other 08 people remained undecided.

Those who answered affirmatively, expressed their views regarding the reason of such comment from their comment following reasons across-

- They thought that these education will enable a child to make the right decision .
- This children will be able to utilize it for earning purposes .
- Their children can spend prudently.
- They thought that the learners can resolve common problem , operate a mobile phone and handle grocery shopping .

Table No :19 Numerical distribution of fulfilment of students need of educational materials.

	Yes	undecided	No
Rural	08	52	76
Urban	12	16	52

Regarding the query “Do the books, notebook, bags, and other items provided by the school fully meet your child’s needs ?”. out of total 136 rural people, only 8 person people replied agreed and 76 person replied disagreed , while other 52 person remained undecided . Again out of total 80 urban people, only 12 person replied agreed and 5 person replied disagreed, while other 16 persons remained undecided.

Those who answered negatively expressed their views regarding the reason of such common from their comment following reasons across –

- Because the supply of books and notebook is insufficient .
- The school provides a one -time limited allowance that is insufficient to cover expenses throughout the entire year.
- The assistance received is insufficient to meet the entire demand .

Table No : 20 Numerical distribution of views on child labour as legal offense.

	Yes	Undecided	No
Rural	60	60	16
Urban	20	48	12

Regarding the question “ Do you know that child labour is a legal offense ?”. Out of total 136 Rural people, only 60 people replied yes, and 16 Persons comment No, while other 60 people remained undecided. Again out of total 80 Urban people ,only 20 Persons replied yes, and 12 People comment No, while others 48 person remained undecided.

In this case , those who said yes, expressed their view regarding the comment following across-

- The fundamental right of a child is to receive education.
- Constitution states that child labour is a punishable offense .
- Children are the future of the nation; it is their responsibility to ensure education provide opportunities for sports, and raise them properly. Therefore, no child under the age of 18 should be employed.

Table No :21 Item number 21 Telled with and only an open- ended question the major responses of which are given below :

Regarding the question “ what should be the objective of modern education.” – In light of this question , most respondents emphasized on becoming good human being some said that children should become responsible citizen while few conveyed that the goal of education should be to become self-dependent . Those expressed their views regarding comment following across-

- The purpose of education should be to help a child grow up to become a true human being.
- Stabliishing one self in society.
- To become a good citizen responsible and established.

Table No 22. Numerical distribution of views of given by both rural and urban parents.

	Yes	Undecided	No	Total
Rural	1184(42.89%)	936(33.91%)	640(23.18%)	2760
Urban	616(38.79%)	472(29.72%)	500(31.48 %)	1588
Total	1800(45.59%)	1408(35.66%)	1140(28.87%)	3948

Table no : 22 demonstrates numerical distribution of views given by both rural and urban parents regarding the effect of facilities to cradicate or diminish child labour problem in the society .It is seen that our of total reaction provided by 216 Parents 2760 and 1588 responses from rural and urban parents respectively . Again among total responses of rural people , 1184 agreed that the facilities provided through the schools can take

positive role to diminish child labour problem while 936 responses should confusion of parents and 640 responses denied influence of such facilities to mitigate this problem.

Again among total responses of urban people ,616 agreed that the facilities provided through the schools can take positive role to diminish child labour problem while 472 responsive should confusion of parents and 500 responses denied influence of such facilities to mitigate this problem .

- The researchers verified hypothesis that is that “There exists no significant relationship between the facilities available in schools and child labour problem” using z- test. The result of the Z- test come up as 0.611 which is lesser than the critical value of Z at 0.05 and 0.01 confidence level as 1.96 and 2.58 respectively . the hypothesis was accepted and it was established that there is no significant relationship between the facilities available in schools and child labour problem.
- Regarding the verification of hypothesis 2, also Z- test was administered. The result showed that calculated value of Z -test was 0.213 Which was also smaller than 1.96 and 2.58 critical value of Z- test at 0.05 and 0.01 confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted and thus it was proved that there exist no difference of parents’ perception regarding their children education and child labour problem in the context of different facilities provided to their children by the schools.

Findings:

The authors made thorough scrutiny of all the assembled data and analyzed them using descriptive statistics and interpreted and drew inference using parametric test. All those activities yielded following finding :-

- 42.89 % rural people admitted the importance of available facilities to eliminate child labour .
- 23.18% people were confused to accept significant role of available facilities to eradicate child labour problem .
- 38.79% people residing in urban areas found important role of facilities provided by schools.
- 31.48% people living in urban areas identified the importance of facilities available in schools to reduce child labour problem.
- Administering Z- test the authenticity of hypothesis 1 was verified. In this test it was found that the Null hypothesis was accepted which means that there existed no significant relationship between available facilities in school and child labour problem .
- The verification of hypothesis 2 , proved that there existed no significant difference of perceptions of rural and urban parents regarding their childrens’ education and child labour problem.
- The facilities and financial aid given through the schools are not sufficient.
- These facilities fail to meet the need of students.
- Parents are to spend extra expenses on educational materials .

Parents identified the importance of education over child labours. They opined that accurate education would help their children to develop themselves, improve their behaviour make them conscious and ultimately become practical and self depended.

- Asked about the effectiveness of today’s education which the children are getting from their schools, most parents expressed that they relied on the present education and expected that after getting proper education, their children would be able to solve personal problem, make successful bank transaction, calculate expenditure and thus, would become self depended.
- Through this study, three goals of present education have arrived-

to become a perfect human being, to become a good citizen and to become self depended, worthy of taking decision by himself or herself and earning by himself or herself for livelihood.

Conclusion :

Based on the findings of the study it is clear that there is no direct relationship between the facilities the government furnishes for its future citizen (children) in order to promote their all round development and thus strengthen their foundation of life and to solve child labour problem in the society as well as in this nation. But at the same time, the implications of such amenities were not rejected rather the people (Parents) emphasized more on the insufficiency of such relief. It is thus, apparently proved that such amenities can make the parents think again before sending their children to work under any employer. Moreover, it is a good sign that inspite of the insufficient material and financial help, more and more parents are coming forward to get their children educated as education seems to be the most important facilities given to the students. They are preriortising education of their children to sending them earn for the family. They have understood the importance of getting their children educated than immediate financial support by their children. It is evident when they would understant the importance to send their children to schools, supported by others facilities given to their children, they would automatically be demotivated to make the children drop out of school and join any enterprise or job to earn for their family. Thus, the child labour problem could be eliminated gradually from the society. Therefore, all the state holders namely the school authorities, gov.and non- gov. organization, educated well wider and experienced people of the society should come forward to stop to child labour in the society and the government and the concerned authority might adopt necessary steps to make people aware of the global implication of education and make adequate arrangement so that all the student can access quality education supported by financial and others facilities. It must be kept in mind that if students fail to achieve the goal of education, their parents' expectation and dream would go in astray. The instance of which may demotivate the parents of younger generation to send their children to school and they would be attracted more by immediate financial benefit their children may give them by being engaged as child labouror.

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