

# A Study on The Working Conditions of Scheduled Caste Child Labour

## Abstract

Child labour can be defined here as any work undertaken by children below 14 years in such works which are injurious to their health, and harmful to their proper development. The present study is an attempt to understand the socio economic profile, working conditions and problems faced by the scheduled caste child labour in their working place. This paper is based on primary data. Researcher has selected 100 scheduled caste child labours as a sample from Sardhana town of Meerut district in Uttar Pradesh. Findings of the study reveal that Majority of the scheduled caste child labour belongs to the age group of 10-13 years are illiterate male, belongs to Jatav caste and belong to medium size nuclear family of medium income group Rs. 5001-10000 and their parents are engaged in labour work. Most of the scheduled caste child labourers are more than two child worker in the household who works in dhabas, sweet & tea shops and works 8 – 10 hours daily. They face the problem of bad behaviour of the employers.

**Keywords:** Scheduled Caste, Child Labour, Social Problem.

## Introduction

The term 'Child Labour', suggests ILO, is best defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, or work whose schedule interferes with their ability to attend regular school, or work that affects in any manner their ability to focus during war and clubs and Boutros, school or experience a healthy childhood.

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child\\_labour\\_in\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_labour_in_India))

In the constitution of India there are some provisions for children which are as follow:

Article 24 mandates that "No child below age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment".

Article 39(f) lays down that "children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment".

Article 45 mandates that "The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years." (Ram Ahuja 2018: 211)

## Review of Literature

In this study researcher presents a review of literature related to different aspects of child labour which includes problems, reasons, consequences of child labour etc.

Shrimali, Rajeshwari and Farmer, Dr. Mayuri (2015) in their study "A Study on Child Labour in Gujarat State (Considering 2 Blocks of Gujarat State)" found that these children work under very hard conditions. They work for long hours without adequate rest intervals. Besides, they are also paid very low amount without any regular increments in the income. Moreover, mostly these children are not aware of existing laws regarding child labour. Any law to prohibit child labour and the programmes to eradicate child labour must be accompanied with poverty eradication programmes. There must be emphasis on compulsory primary education and the education of the girl children. K. Devi, Roy, Gautam (2008) conducted a study "Study of Child Labour among School Children in Urban and Rural Areas of Pondicherry" to highlight the problems and factors

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related to child labour. They find out that the low family income was the main reason for child labour. The main problem of the child labours is that their employer scolded them at the work place. Sekar, Helen R. (2007) conducted a study "Impact of Technological change on the Demand for Child Labour in Brassware Industry of Mooradabad". He found the reasons of child labour leaving school and joining work related to supplementing faculty income, absence of adequate number of government schools and bad quality of teaching. Paniker, Rita and Nangia, Praveen (1992) In their book "Working and Street Children of Delhi". They have agreed that, child labour is a socio-economic demographic phenomenon, which can be reduced and eliminated by a multiplicity of actions both by government and public at social as well as individual levels. Singh and Verma (1988) conducted a study "Child labour in Agriculture" in 14 villages of Nainital district (U.P.). They noted that child labour comes from the poor families and poor class. Child labourer belongs to the age group 13 to 18 years, illiterate, belongs to large sizes nuclear families. Their average monthly income is Rs. 60 which is very low and is far below the prescribed minimum wages.

In recent time, the phenomenon of child labour draws the attention of social scientists at the international level. Hence, in the present social context, an empirical study is needed.

#### Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the socio-economic profile of the respondents.
2. To explore the working conditions and problems faced by the respondents in their working place.

#### Material and Methods

In this research study, descriptive research design is used for the fulfilment of the objectives. Area of the study is Sardhana town in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh. Universe of the study is 100 scheduled caste child labours.

#### Results and Outcome

The socio-economic profile of the selected scheduled caste child labours are shown in the following tables:-

**Table: 1-Age of the Respondents**

| S.No. | Age Group    | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|--------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | 6 – 9        | 12                 | 12%            |
| 2.    | 10 – 13      | 52                 | 52%            |
| 3.    | 14 – 18      | 36                 | 36%            |
|       | <b>Total</b> | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus the facts reveals that more than half (52%) of the respondents belongs to the 10-13 age group and least no. (12%) of the respondents belongs to the age group of 6-9 age group.

**Table: 2-Sex of the Respondents**

| S.No. | Sex          | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|--------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | Male         | 84                 | 84%            |
| 2.    | Female       | 16                 | 16%            |
|       | <b>Total</b> | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus the facts reveals that majority (84%) of the respondents are male and least no. (16%) of the respondents are female.

**Table: 3-Caste of the Respondents**

| S.No. | Caste        | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|--------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | Jatav        | 78                 | 78%            |
| 2.    | Balmiki      | 16                 | 16%            |
| 3.    | Khatik       | 04                 | 04%            |
| 4.    | Dhobi        | 02                 | 02%            |
|       | <b>Total</b> | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus the facts reveals that majority (78%) of the respondents belongs to Jatav caste and least no. (02%) of the respondents belongs to Dhobi caste.

**Table: 4-Education of the Respondents**

| S.No. | Educational Status | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | Illiterate         | 58                 | 58%            |
| 2.    | Literate           | 42                 | 42%            |
|       | <b>Total</b>       | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus the facts reveal that majority (58%) of the respondents are illiterate and minority (42%) of the respondents are literate.

**Table: 5- Parent's Occupation of the Respondents**

| S.No. | Parent's Occupation | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | Labour Work         | 96                 | 96%            |
| 2.    | Private Job         | 00                 | 00%            |
| 3.    | Odd Work            | 04                 | 04%            |
|       | <b>Total</b>        | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus the above facts reveal that majority (96%) of the respondent's parents engaged in labour work while minority (04%) of the respondent's parents engaged in odd work.

**Table: 6-Family Income of the Respondents**

| S.No. | Family Income (Per month) | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | 1000 – 5000               | 05                 | 05%            |
| 2.    | 5001 – 10000              | 58                 | 58%            |
| 3.    | 10001 and above           | 37                 | 37%            |
|       | <b>Total</b>              | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus, the largest number (58%) of the respondents belong to family income group of Rs. 5001-10000 per month and least (05%) of the respondents belong to the family income group of Rs. 1000-5000 per month.

**Table: 7-Family Size of the Respondents**

| S.No. | Size of Family               | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | Large (10 and above members) | 08                 | 08%            |
| 2.    | Medium (05-09 members)       | 58                 | 58%            |
| 3.    | Small (01-04 members)        | 34                 | 34%            |
|       | <b>Total</b>                 | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus the above facts reveal that largest no. (58%) of the respondents belongs to middle size (7-9 members) family and least (08%) of the respondents belongs to small size (4-6 members) family.

**Table: 8-Type of the Family of the Respondents**

| S.No. | Type of Family | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | Joint Family   | 14                 | 14%            |
| 2.    | Nuclear Family | 86                 | 86%            |
|       | <b>Total</b>   | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus, the above facts reveal that the majority (86%) of the respondents belongs to nuclear family and minority (14%) of the respondents belongs to joint family.

**Table: 9- Residence Condition of the Respondents**

| S.No. | Residence Condition | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | Old Pattern House   | 86                 | 86%            |
| 2.    | New Pattern House   | 14                 | 14%            |
|       | <b>Total</b>        | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus, the above facts reveal that majority (86%) of the respondents live in old pattern house whereas minority (14%) of the respondents lives in new pattern house.

**Working Conditions****Table-11: Type of Work of the respondents**

| S.No. | Type of Work   | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|--|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | Dhabas, Sweet & Tea Shops                              | 48                 | 48%            |
| 2.    | Provisional Stores or Shops                            | 20                 | 20%            |
| 3.    | Household Jobs   | 14                 | 14%            |
| 4.    | Hawkers, Selling of Fruits, bike & cycle puncture shop | 18                 | 18%            |
|       | <b>Total</b>   | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus, the above facts reveal that approximately half (48%) of the respondents are working at Dhabas, Sweet & Tea Shops whereas minority (14%) of the respondents are working at Household Jobs.

**Table-12: Daily Work-Time of the respondents**

| S.No. | Daily Work Time (in Hours) | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | Less than 6 hours          | 12                 | 12%            |
| 2.    | 6 – 8 hours                | 28                 | 28%            |
| 3.    | 8 – 10 hours               | 52                 | 52%            |
| 4.    | 10 – 12 hours              | 08                 | 08%            |
|       | <b>Total</b>               | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus, the above facts reveal that more than half (52%) of the respondents works 8-10 hours daily whereas minority (08%) of the respondents works 10-12 hours daily.

**Table: 10- Number of Total Child Earners in the Household of the Respondents**

| S.No. | Number of Total Child Earners in the Household     | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|--|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | Only one child worker in the Household             | 17                 | 17%            |
| 2.    | Two or more than two child worker in the Household | 83                 | 83%            |
|       | <b>Total</b>                                       | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus, the above facts reveal that majority (83%) of the respondents are two or more than two child worker in the household whereas minority (17%) of the respondents are only one child worker in the household.

The working conditions and problems faced by the respondents in their working place are shown in the following tables:-

**Problems Faced by the Respondents in Their Working Place****Table-13: Types of Problems of the respondents**

| S.No. | Types of Problems              | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | Dirty and tiresome             | 51                 | 51%            |
| 2.    | Risky/ health hazardous        | 14                 | 14%            |
| 3.    | Bad behaviour of the employers | 22                 | 22%            |
| 4.    | No problem                     | 13                 | 13%            |
|       | <b>Total</b>                   | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus the largest segments (51%) of the respondents face the problem of Dirty and tiresome and the least segment (13%) of the respondent face No problem at their working place.

**Table-14: Behaviour of the Employers of the respondents**

| S. No. | Behaviour of the Employers | No. of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|--------|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.     | Very Good                  | 13                 | 13%            |
| 2.     | Good                       | 35                 | 35%            |
| 3.     | Bad                        | 52                 | 52%            |
|        | <b>Total</b>               | <b>100</b>         | <b>100%</b>    |

Thus, the above facts reveal that more than half (52%) of the respondents says that behaviour of the employers is bad whereas minority (13%) of the respondents says that behaviour of the employers is very good.

**Conclusion**

Majority of the respondents belongs to the age group of 10-13 years are illiterate male belongs to Jatav caste and belong to medium size nuclear family of medium income group Rs. 5001-10000 and their parents are engaged in labour work. Most of the respondents are more than two child worker in the household who works in dhabas, sweet & tea shops and works 8 – 10 hours daily. They face the problem of bad behaviour of the employers.

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