

Child Labour in The Fishery Sector in Visakhapatnam: A Pilot Study

Bandlamudi Murali Krishna^{1*}, Munjam Vinod Kumar², Prof. P.D. Raju³

Department of HRM, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India.

bm.krishna28@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT - Child labour is one of the major problems in contract farming, and this is the case throughout the developing world. Visakhapatnam is known as City of Destiny but child labour is recalcitrant in the fishing sector. The aim of the present study was to highlight the problem of exploitation of child labour in fishery sector of Visakhapatnam. The informative study is carried out based on quantitative and qualitative analyzed are under taken. Besides study includes interviews with boat owners, contractors, employers, children and their connected an adult colleague involved in fishing process. The present study noted that the children aged between 9 to 14 years are exploited as contract labours for sorting, unloading, transporting, processing and selling of fishery resources, repairing nets, vessels and to guard the fishing vessels. However the present study observed that children were attracted by better earning potential offered by fishing and as a result often dropped out of school to become fishers. The prevailing unemployment situation in India was an important factor that favoured fishing over schooling particularly in fishing community.

Keywords: *Exploitation, Fishery Sector, Child Labour, Fishing Community, Visakhapatnam*

I. INTRODUCTION

In a traditional society though the child is considered as a gift of god, child labour continues to exist as a social evil. In any society children are an essential component of human resource required for economic development, yet child labour is widespread. This is more so in India where in a multi-class social structure exists and a complex of traditional and pre-capitalistic production relation operative. Still, in 21st century child labour is one of the major problems in contract farming, and this is the case throughout the developing world (Porter and Phillips-Howard, 1997; Torres, 1997; Reynolds, 2002). However, no data on its global or regional magnitude are available because contract farming is practised in small pockets in each developing country. Similarly, there are no estimates of the magnitude of child labour in contract farming in India. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated there were 250 million working children in the world in the age group of 5-14 years in 1996 (Nielsen and Dubey, 2002). The work participation rate of children between the ages of 10 and 14 years was as high as 14%, and in some parts of the world, such as central Africa, it

was more than 32%. India is one of the main users of child labour in the Asian region.

The 1991 Census of India reported that there were 12.6 million full time and 10.4 million marginal child workers in India, with Andhra Pradesh having the highest number of child workers (15% of the total child workers in India (Kar, 2002). In the 1990s, about half the child labour in rural India was concentrated in the five states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Tamilnadu (Lieten, 2002). Any kind of work by children under the age of 18 is often considered exploitation in developed countries. In India, however, the term 'child labour' applies only to children aged between 5 and 14. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 states that no child below the age of 14 shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or in any other hazardous employment (Mishra, 2000).

The disaggregation of child labour into different occupational categories reveals that almost 80% of working children are in the agricultural sector (Gayatri and Chaudhri, 2002). Since child labour tends to be

concentrated in agriculture, it may be reasonable to expect that the incidence of child labour will be higher in agriculturally less developed regions. But, that is not the case; Bihar state, usually referred to as an underdeveloped state, has one of the lowest child labour ratios in the country. On the other hand, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh, more advanced agriculturally, have the highest incidences of child labour.

II. SOURCES OF THE RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Keeping in the mind the advantages of the study of related literature, the present researcher reads all the available materials. The dissertations and extracts from journals and periodicals related to the present investigation are summarized in the following pages. These will highlight the sample, tools and findings arrived at in the researchers conducted in Indian and global context.

Villavarayen.C., (1980) did a study, “Socio economic conditions of fishermen in Tuticorin”. To assess the income distribution of the mechanized boat owners, vallam owner and mechanized boat coolies and vallam coolies, To assess the infrastructure facilities namely education, health, housing, transportation etc, and to analyse the measures taken by the government to help the fishermen community and to offer suggestions, if any emerging out of this study were the objectives of the study. The sample of 130 fishermen ie. 80 in Tuticorin, 25 in Tharuvaikulam and 25 in Ratchanyapuram were taken.

The gross monthly income per household was the highest in mechanized boat owner group followed by the vallam owner group. The income distribution among the fishermen revealed inequality. When owner and worker groups of fishermen were analyzed separately, it disclosed that the inequality among them was comparatively less. The estimated per capital savings among the different types of fishermen house holds showed positive savings for mechanized boat owners and negative savings for all the other three – groups. The analysis of indebtedness among the sample villages revealed that the per capital borrowing was higher in Tharuvaikulam at Rs.20,120 and Rs.8,071.63 in Tuticorin and Rs.287 only in

Ratchanyapuram. This was due to the increased use of mechanized boat fishing in these villages.

Senthil Athiban ,R.(1985) did a study, “Economic analysis of employment income and consumption of fishermen households in Tirunelveli district”. To analyse the levels and patterns of employment of fishermen households, to estimate the levels and pattern of income of fishermen house holds, and to work out the net worth of fishermen households were the objectives of the study. The size of sample of fishermen households was fixed as 85 selected from the six villages by probability proportional sampling technique. Size of household in adult units, household net income per annum and the net worth of household and the size of the fishermen households were large due to non-adoption of family planning. Though the level of literacy was high, 54.11 percent of the members of fishermen households had received only elementary education. The gross annual income earned per craft was the highest in mechanized boats followed by vallam without board engines, vallam and catamarans.

Thomas, Jessy (1989) did a study on Socio economic factors influencing educational standards of marine fisherfolk in Kerala. To analyze the possible relationship that exists between education and economic development of fisherfolk and to identify the influence of the social and economic factors within the village and the incentives and facilities provided by the state government and voluntary organizations on the educational standards of fisherfolk were the objectives of the study.

Three villages and twenty five households were selected from each village by random sampling method. Education did not have any direct influence on the skills of those engaged in fishing and related activities. Among active fishermen, youngsters were found to be more educated. A minority of those educated got employment outside the fisheries sector. Social deprivation was the major factor that hindered the educational attainments of fishermen.

Vidyasagar, R. (1995). gave, “status report on child labour in Tamil Nadu”. The report provided an overview on the incidence and regional distribution of child labour based on the 1981 Census data as district wise data for

1991 Census was not available at the time. An annotated bibliography has been prepared after reviewing different studies/surveys conducted on child labour in Tamil Nadu by various institutions, research divisions of universities and NGOs. There were 9,75,055 child workers in Tamil Nadu in 1981 (871,313 main workers and 103,742 marginal workers). This accounted for nearly 6 per cent of all the children below 15 years and for about 5 per cent of the total work force in Tamil Nadu. The report identified the occupations/industries with high prevalence of child labour under bondage and hazardous conditions. The key industries which accounted for a sizeable child work force were beedi manufacture, match and fireworks, tanneries, synthetic gem polishing industry, hosiery industry, handlooms, silver work and steel and aluminium industry, etc. The districts which had the highest proportion of child workers were Madurai (11.42%), Salem (10.93%), North Arcot (10.31%), Ramanathapuram (8.33%), Thirunelveli (8.18%), South Arcot (7.75%), Dharmapuri (7.65%), and Coimbatore (7.59%). The other districts had below 5 per cent child workers, the lowest being Nilgiris (0.51%), Kanyakumari (0.87%) and Madras (1.34%). Girls outnumbered boys in Tirunelveli, Ramanathapuram, Madurai, Coimbatore and Periyar districts. The study suggested recommendations like creating awareness among parents, educational intervention for elimination of child labour, legal measures, and changes in the educational system to deal with the issue.

Lieten, G.K. (2000). did a study “Children, work and education I and II : field study in UP”. The study discussed various parameters associated with child labour, namely poverty, illiteracy and high fertility levels. The simultaneous prevalence of both features necessitated and stimulated the participation of children in the labour force. In the second part of the study, the view that schooling and family planning were restrained by limited choice rather than by cultural factors traced during the course of field work in two villages in Faizabad district of U.P. Socio-economic profile of two villages revealed low literacy rate among females, discrimination in land ownership among castes, poverty and prevalence of high fertility rate. In spite of the fact that access to education was a general wish among parents and children, the access remained

limited due to ill-equipped and poor functioning of government schools. It was generally approved that children should go to school, but dissatisfaction with the functioning of schools induced the children and parents to forego education and poverty forced them to start earning.

Narayana Kumar.R, Panikkar. K.K.P, Sehara. D.B.S and Sathiadhas.R (2000) studied Socio-economic analysis of marine fishermen in India. The socio-economic conditions of the marine fishermen and their attitude towards development schemes will serve as background information which is vital for implementing new technologies and policies. With this view in focus, the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute has been continuously monitoring the socio-economic conditions of the traditional fishermen and conducted several studies along the coastal belt to assess the existing socio-economic status and to evaluate the socio-economic impact of innovations on them. In this paper, the socio-economic parameters such as family size, age structure, educational and occupational pattern, customs, beliefs and the standard of living of the coastal fishermen household have been analysed. In the socio-economic impact evaluation studies, the changes that have been brought about by the mechanisation of fishing industry in terms of income and employment generation and investment on fishing equipments have been discussed. The recommendations to improve the socio- economic conditions of the marine fishermen, based on the studies, have been proposed.

Desai, Kiran & Raj, Nikhil. (2001). did a study, “Child labour in the home based industries in the wake of legislation : the case of diamond industry of Surat”. Surat is a highly industrialized urban centre of the country in which textile and diamond are two prominent industries attracting large sections of migrant work seekers. Employers find it convenient to employ child labour as they are easy to handle, and are paid low wages which gives scope for higher margins of profit. This study is a part of an all India study commissioned by V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, NOIDA and tries to understand the issue of child labour in the diamond industry of Surat city. The study observed the demographic and socio-economic profiles of 525 child workers engaged in the diamond industry of Surat city. Data revealed that 94% of

the child workers were migrants and belonged to poor nuclear families. 45% fathers of child workers were working as diamond workers, 25% as labourers, 10% were cultivating land, and the rest were petty traders selling milk, vegetables, fish, etc. Female child workers were barely 5% in comparison to male child workers. 80% of the child workers started work when they were 11 to 12 years of age and were mainly engaged in bottom polishing (32%), facet polishing (25%), table (17%) and top (13%). The wage packet depended on the speed and accuracy of the child workers and ranged from Rs.1000-3000 per month. They worked for 8-10 hours a day and were not entitled to any sick/casual leave, etc. Schooling facilities in the diamond zone were satisfactory, but 47% of the total school age children were not getting formal education due to their poor family background. Measures such as land redistribution, substantial increase in minimum wages, delegating powers to local level self-governing bodies, and involvement of community leaders should be implemented with full political will to combat child labour.

Sheela Immanuel & G. Syda Rao (2012): their study main aims to document the socio economic profile of the fisherfolk involved in hook and line fishing. The study was conducted among a sample of 100 fishermen involved in hook and line fishing in Pedajalaripeta village in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. Field survey method was adopted for data collection. Only single day fishing trips were operated in the study area. In 28% of the families, the fisherwomen were involved in fish marketing

and their monthly income ranged from Rs. 3 000 to Rs. 7 500. The study conclude that poor implementation of regulations and excess fishing capacity were reported as major constraints.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The present study covers the socio-economic status, working condition, health, education and future prospects of child labours working in fisheries and aqua culture.

The study report is useful for concern individual, researcher, policy makers, fishing boat owners, sociologist. This is also useful to the government, NGOs and others who are working on the problems of child labour. Children working in fishery sector are vulnerable in terms of social, economic, health conditions and educational status. It is the ignored area of child labour, therefore, this study can expose the situation of child labours working in fishery sector

III. METHODOLOGY

A preliminary study was conducted to bring to light the child labour with causes and its consequences in the fishery sector of Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. Initially, a sample of 120 child labourers and an equal number of their parents are selected randomly and interviewed using separate schedules. As per the central and state pollution control board Visakhapatnam is one of the problematic area in the country due to its vast industrial activities with available harbour facilities and other infrastructure. As well as harbour, a semi-enclosed water body on the east coast of India is subject to a high degree of pollution caused by industrial and urban wastes.

Children are working in various hazard tasks of fishing at harbour of Visakhapatnam



Children are collecting crabs on shore



Boy loading ice from a truck



Boy holding a ray



Boy is getting ready for diving



Boy is going for fishing

IV. FINDINGS OF INVESTIGATION

Child labours are there across the country, including in Visakhapatnam where rampant unrecognised child labour

chiefly in fishery sector. On the basis of investigation that the children aged between 5 to 14 years are exploited as contract labours for sorting, unloading, transporting, processing and selling of fishery resources, repairing nets,

vessels and to guard the fishing vessels. Agonizing, some children are forced to diving in harbour waters for scraping the rust or bio fouling organisms on the bottom part of the boats.

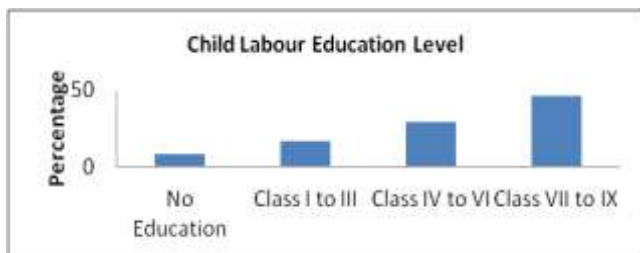
4.1. EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN

The present study observed that most of the children neglected right to education. It was the lack of financial security to withstand the distress. No one ever interest to education that resulted illiteracy in them, as they could not wait for the benefits of the highest education. Since the ages, fishery is the source of their livelihood. They are not worried about of education. They concern is ensuring food for their children. They make a living by selling fishes to consumers and petty hotels. Children started working at the age of 5 as collecting crabs by pouring water in the beach sand wholes where crabs are occurred. The present education system seems irrelevant to the fisher folk. They say that education is a burden on them which offers no benefit. This is because of the fact that the educated children are reluctant to adopt family occupation. It is necessary to restructure educational system in accordance with the local situations. Awareness has to be created for education and motivate fisher folk against child labour.

Table No. 1 Education Level of Children’s

Education	No. of Children’s	Percentage (%)
No Education	10	8.33
I to III Class	20	16.66
IV to VI	35	29.166
VII to IX	55	45.83
Total	120	100

Picture No. 1



Out of the total sample of 120, the majority of children’s, 55 (48.3%) belong to VII to IX Class, 35 (29.166%) Children’s belong to the Class IV to VI. It is also observed

that, 20 (16.66%) of Children’s are belongs to I to III Class, and least Children’s have no any Education.

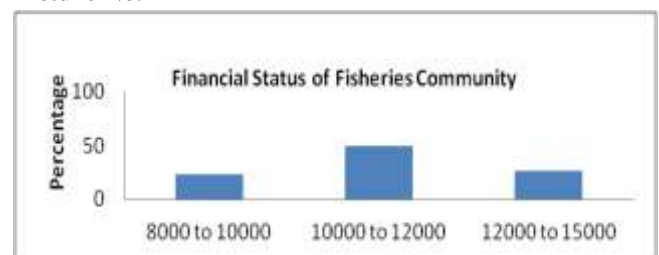
4.2. FINANCIAL STATUS OF FISHING COMMUNITY

Poverty is not the sole factor but also deep rooted social bias forces families to push their children to work in the fishery despite hazards. Since the ages fishing community own nothing as assets except fishery resources. That is why the occupational distribution and mobility presents socio-economic processes whereby the households supplying child labour continue to do so from one generation to another without gap. The heads of households who had worked as fishery labourers in their childhood have initiated their children, who constitute into the same job. According to the recent reports the children from fishing communities of Andhra Pradesh are sent out to sea ports such as Kandla, Surat and Porbandar where they are employed as bonded labourers as deck hands, kitchen help and errand boys. The wages offered by the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) for able-bodied workers are just not enough to keep these kids home and in school, so the payment of Rs 7000 per month offered by child labour contractors, plus a lump sum advance of Rs 40,000 for a one-year contract, is an irresistible proposition for most families. 800 hundred children are sent out from Andhra Pradesh to work as labourers in Gujarat’s sea ports every season (The Hindu news paper, 2015).

Table No. 2 Finishing Community Financial Status

Income (Per Month)	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
8000 to 10000	28	23.33
10000 to 12000	60	50
12000 to 15000	32	26.33
Total	120	100

Picture No. 2



Out of the total sample of 120, half of the fishing communities are earning RS10000 to 12000 per a month

which is 50 percent of the total, 32 fishing community families are earning 12000 to 15000 per a month which is 26.66 percent of the total, and 28 fishing community families are earning only RS 8000 to 10000 per a month which is 23.33 percent of the total sample.

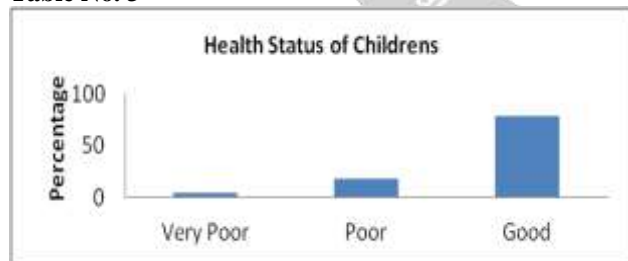
4.3. HEALTH STATUS OF FISHING COMMUNITY

According to reports, rising levels of pollution in the city of Visakhapatnam while harbour 10 times polluted more than city. Under these adversely circumstances some of the children diving in the harbour waters for scrapping the rust or bio fouling organisms which are attaching on bottom part of the boat. Undoubtedly they are doing a great dangerous job without proper safety measures which is incomparable to any occupation and are more at risk to their health as well as life. Most of fishery related works are unhealthy environment that could result in a child being made ill. Children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems appear to be at greater risk. a variety of health problems including gastroenteritis, flu-like illnesses, dermatitis, ear, nose and throat infections, sinusitis and deep tissue or blood infections through open wounds.

Table No.3 Health Status of Children’s

Health	No. of Children’s	Percentage (%)
Very Poor	05	4.166
Poor	21	17.50
Good	94	78.33
Total	120	100

Table No. 3



Out of the total sample of 120, the majority of children’s, 94 (78.33%) have good health condition, 21 (17.50%) have poor health condition and 5 (4.166%) have very poor condition of health.

V. CONCLUSION

There is an urgent necessitate and to extent of child labour in fishing community needs an in-depth study as to know the status and intensity of the problem as well to explore

strategies to restrain the confrontation of child labour in fishery community. Ever since they are battling physical, psychological, emotional and financial disturbances lacked the support from government. Hence, government should bear enormous responsibilities in ensuring the promotion and protection of child rights and also for the family of children. A special child rights commission may be established with necessary enforcement powers to check child labour. NGOs have to be pay attention in this direction. Government needs to address the root causes of child labour by supporting access to relevant quality education and training, and to safer and adequate technology.

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