



PROFILE OF CHILD LABOUR IN CARPET INDUSTRY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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Abstract

In this paper the focus is on general characteristics of child labour. The tables illustrated in this paper include age composition of child labour, sex, religion, social profile, wage rate, age at the time of joining labour force etc. The information tabulated in this paper has been gathered through a schedule for child labour and is related to the earlier studies and literature available. The analysis of the data is based on the sample consists of 200 child labourers in the age group up to 14 years.

INTRODUCTION

Social systems undergo transformation continuously. The pace and the nature of transformation is determined by the social and historical conditions of the system that is transforming. The transformation experience is of a different kind for third world countries. Most of the countries have freed themselves from yokes of colonial powers soon after the end of World War II. Such states were proactive in initiating changes towards transformation of their economies and societies. However social changes including development do not take place in a vacuum. The process of changes is a complex interplay of the preexisting social structure and the new forces that are unleashed in the attempt to 'develop' and 'change'. The consequences of such interplay have different dimensions, some are intended and very many are unintended. Different sections of the society are affected variedly by this transformation process (Jayaranjan, J. 2002).

The strategy of transformation adopted by nation's results multi-dimensional social and economic problems. One among such problem is prevalence of child labour. Child labour was an accepted part of the economic and cultural traditions of developed world till the 19th century. However, in developing countries, the phenomenon still persists. Hundreds of millions of children in developing countries start working at a very young age. These children are vulnerable to various forms of exploitation and abuse. They are exposed to risk at work and are more prone than adults to the effects of various pollutants in the working environment. Millions of children in India are forced to surrender their fundamental rights without protest- including the right to life without any agency to protect them from appealing abuses. The children have been languishing in the quagmire of apathy and alienation for long (Sekar, R.H. 1997).

The term, child labour, has been defined differently by different organizations, agencies and countries. Even within the country, the definition of child labour may vary from state to state depending upon the interpretation of the acts related to children. According to the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (1979), "When the business of wage earning or of participation in itself or family support conflicts directly or indirectly with the business of growth and education, the result is child labour."

The state of Jammu and Kashmir in many respects has problems of isolation, backward and inaccessible areas, and lack of an industrial base and employment opportunities. However, the state is vested with a substantial water resource, mineral base, and is famous the world over for its exquisite handicrafts, handloom products, tourism, horticulture produce and cottage industry. While the state has enormous potential for the flourishing of various industries, it has lagged behind in the field of industrialization. The public sector units have generally failed to perform and the private sector has not flourished. Although the state has made sustained efforts, based on its industrial potential, to develop industry and elevate its economic standard, it has still to go a long way to find a place in the industrial map of the country.



The State of Jammu and Kashmir has child population of 2825826 Lakhs in the age group of 5-14 years according to the 2011 census. Out of these 114923 are workers forming 4.07 per cent of child population and 2.65 percent of total work force in the State. Further exploration of Census data shows that incidence of child labour in Jammu and Kashmir is higher for age group 10-14 years than the age group of 5-9 years. It can also be observed that rural areas have higher percentage of child workers than urban areas. According to Census 2011, 4.18 percent of total child population in rural areas and 3.64 percent of total child population in urban areas are working. The proportion of working children to total child population has decreased from 6.61 in 2001 to 4.07 in 2011.

As the study is mainly concerned with carpet industry of Jammu and Kashmir. We divide the study area in two strata's namely Kashmir and Ladakh. Jammu region was skipped from the analysis because of the fact that there is no production of carpets in Jammu region.

For the purpose of sampling data on number of looms published in a report entitled *District wise skill gap study for the State of Jammu and Kashmir (2013)* by National Skill Development Corporation was utilized. The said Report shows that highest number of carpet looms in Kashmir region is in District Budgam, and District Kargil in Ladakh region. Thus District Budgam and District Kargil was selected for primary study. Due to inadequacy of data on number of looms in different block, Literacy rate of different blocks was used for selection of blocks. The data related to block level literacy was taken from Census 2011. From the selected Districts, two blocks in each district was selected on the basis of lower literacy rate. The selection of villages was made randomly. Thus the whole study area was divided in two strata's, from each stratum two blocks were selected and selection of child labourers and villages were made randomly. Size of sample was restricted to 200 child labourers, out of these 100 samples were taken from each selected District. Primary data was collected with the help of survey schedule by personally visiting and interacting with the child labourers and their parents.

Child labour is social evil and it must be eradicated sooner than later. Child labour is speeded and a wide growing phenomenon in most parts of the world¹ (T. Prabha, 2002). The population explosion and industrialization have considerably increased the incidence of child labour especially in developing countries. As per National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) survey 2009-10, the estimated working children in India were 4.98 millions. Like other states of India, child labour also prevails in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The child labour is to found in all economic activities and carpet weaving industry is one among them.

AGE COMPOSITION

Age composition has a significant implication on economic development of a country. The obstacle to economic development in most of the countries is rapid growth of population. The rapid growth of population gives rise to poverty and poverty is one of the important reason for the existence of child labour. Analysis of age of sampled child labour presented in table No. 1 reveals that 65 percent of sampled child workers were in the age group of 12-14 years, 31 percent of respondents are found to be in the age group of 8-12 years and only 4 percent of sampled child workers below the age of 8 years.

The present study is also in line with the study conducted by S. K. Tripathy(1989), S.S Dhillion and A.Arora (2001). The study conducted by them reveals that majority of child labours fall in the age group of 12-14 years, very few are below 8 years.

On the basis of present survey and as well as some other studies conducted on child labour it can be seen that majority of child labourers fall in the age group of 8-14 years. There is evidence to show that children (although a little proportion) started working at a very young age i.e. below 8 years especially in developing countries like

¹ T. Prabha (2002), "Influence of child labour on fertility decisions in farm families of Tamil Nadu", Economics of Child Labour, Deep and Deep Publications, New Dehli.



in India 29 percent (World Bank 2013) of population consists of children below 14 years² and no records were maintained by the employers regarding their age. Some of the children who are working in the looms owned by their own parents feel hesitated to disclose their age.

The work done by the children at such a tender age is hazardous and damages their physical and mental health. The study conducted by Ambeddkar et.al (1999) on the title “Effects of child labour on growth of children” found that there were significant variations in height, weight and mental level of child laborers and school going children. They conclude that making children work at such a young age has deleterious effects on the health as well as overall development of children.

Table No. 1, Distribution of Child Labour according to their Age

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 8 years	8	4
8-12	62	31
12-14	130	65
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey.

SEX WISE DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOUR

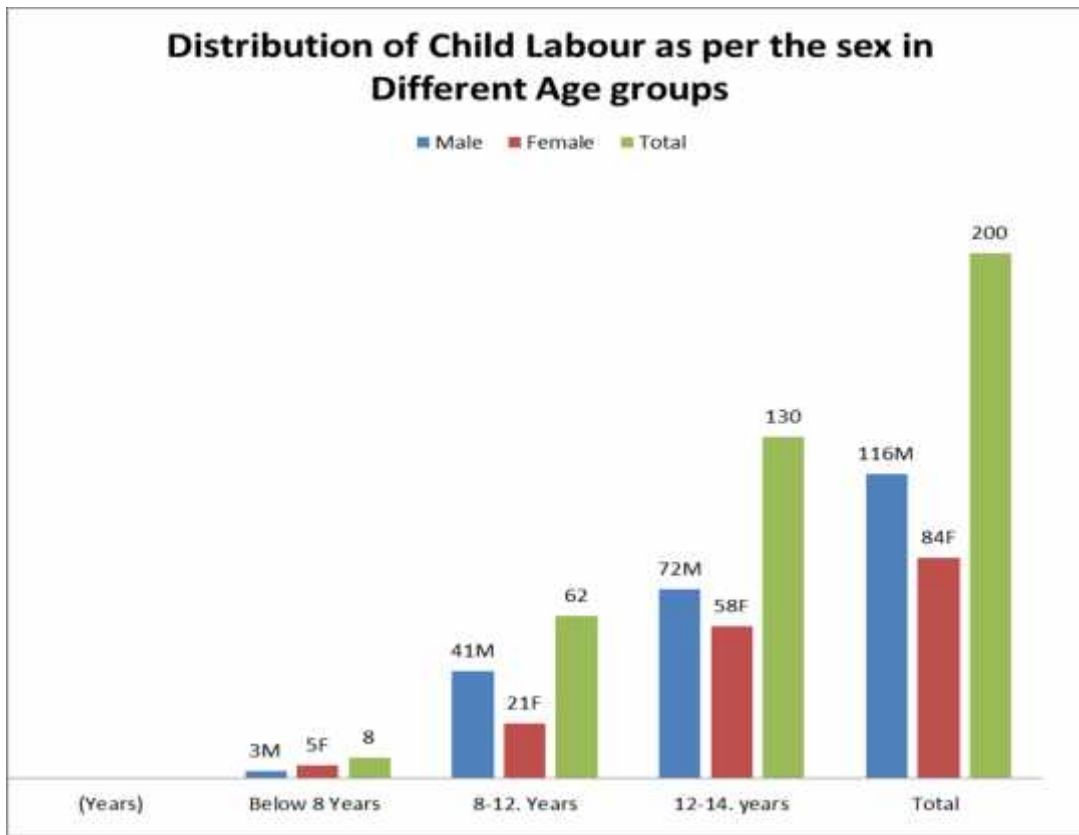
The data on child labour reveals that carpet weaving industry is mostly dominated by male child labour. The data presented in Table No. 2 shows that out of 200 sampled child labour 116 (58 %) are male and 84 (42 %) are females. While analyzing the concentration of male and female in different age groups it was found that the age group below 8 years is dominated by female child labourers and in the remaining age groups 10-12 and 12-14 concentration is of male child labourers. Different studies conducted by researchers on child labours like S.K Tripathy (1989), Manimekala and Kunjammal (1999) shows that child labour is dominated by male and shows wide variations between the two. In our study there is not much variation because of the fact that employer in most cases provide carpet looms near to their home or at home where the child labour jointly work with adult members of the family or some maternal or paternal relative. Thus location provides a favorable environment for working of the girl.

Table No.2, Sex Wise distribution of Child Labour

Age Group (Years)	Male	Female	Total	Percentage of M/F to Total sample in the same age group		Age Groups And Percentage to total sampled Child Labour
				Male	Female	
Below 8	3	5	8	37.5	62.5	4
8-12	41	21	62	66.13	33.87	31
12-14	72	58	130	55.38	44.61	65
Total	116	84	200	58	42	100

Source: Field survey.

² World Bank, URL <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO.ZS>.



AGE OF CHILD LABOUR AT THE TIME OF JOINING LABOUR FORCE

Analysis of age at the time of joining labour force was also undertaken. The age at which children start working in carpet looms is presented in Table No.3. Information collected from the field reveals that 115 out of 200 children (57.5 %) start working at the age of 12-14 years, 70 out of 200 (35 %) start working at the age of 8-12 years and the remain 15 children (7.5 %) start working below the age of 8 years. It is a well-known fact that children beginning work at such a young age have a longer period of exposure to cumulative hazards. A study entitled *Health Status of School Age children Employed in Carpet weaving in Ganderbal Block* conducted by Matoo (1984)³ reveals that school going children have better hemoglobin than carpet weaving children. Majority of children complained symptoms like headache, blurring of vision, backache and abdominal pain and most of these children complained of more than one problem.

Table No. 3, Distribution of Child Labour as per the Age they start working

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 8 years	15	7.5
8-12	70	35
12-14	115	57.5
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey.

³ Matoo, G.M(1984), "Health Status of School Age children Employed in Carpet weaving in Ganderbal Block" Unpublished Ph. D thesis submitted to the University of Kashmir.



DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOUR ACROSS DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

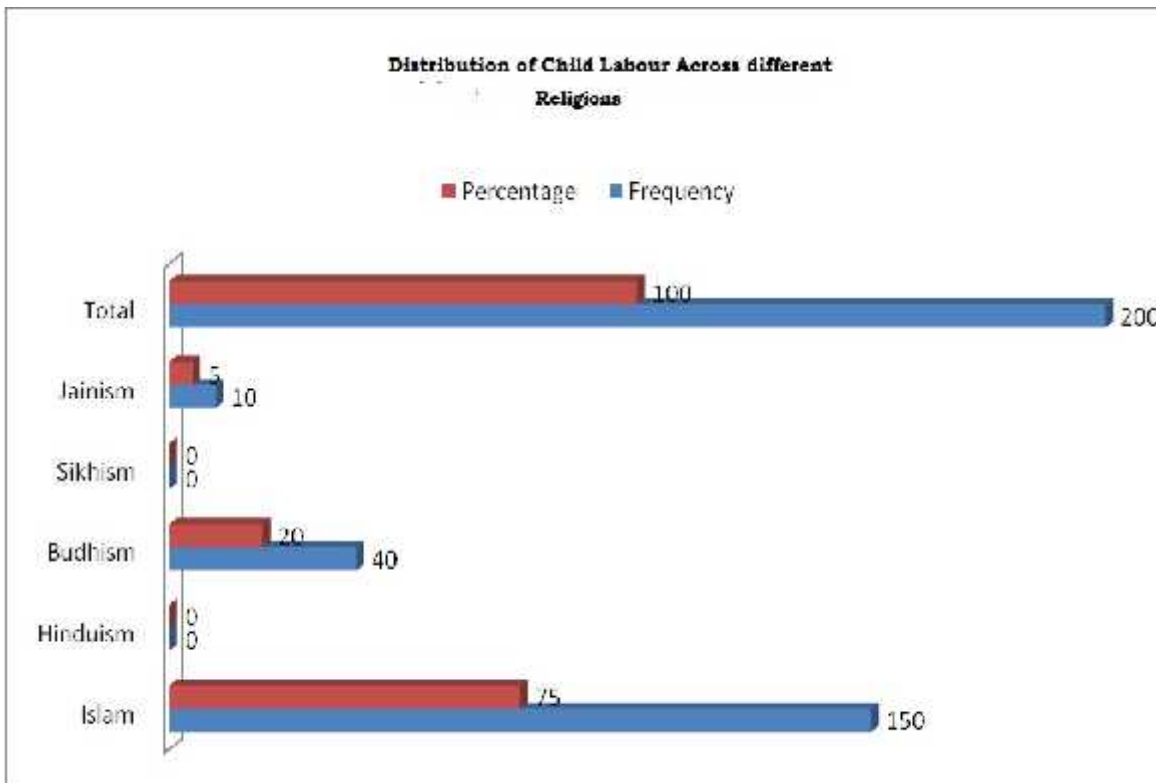
Religion is the most important factor in moulding the behavior and rational patterns in our society and has been continuing for centuries. Religion plays a dominant role in the life style and behavior of the people and It is interesting to note that Jammu and Kashmir has a multi-religious society. According to 2001 Census, Islam is the predominant religion in Jammu and Kashmir because 66.97 percent of population of Jammu and Kashmir is bracketed under the religion of Islam. Besides Islam, other religions are Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Christianity and Jainism. The religious classification of child labourers shown in Table No. 4 indicates that 150 out of 200 i.e. 75 percent are Muslims, while 40 i.e. 20 percent are Buddhists and the remaining 5 percent are Janis.

Therefore it can be said from the above analysis that majority of the child labourers in the study are Muslims. There are various reasons for this. The main reason is that Jammu and Kashmir State is mostly dominated by Islam religion. Another point which is to be mentioned here is that a majority of Hindus have migrated from carpet industry which is mainly dominated in Kashmir valley.

Table No.4, Distribution of Child Labour across different Religions

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Islam	150	75
Hinduism	00	00
Budhism	40	20
Sikhism	00	00
Jainism	10	05
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey.





CASTE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOURERS

Caste plays an important in Indian social structure. Like in other parts of India, the population of Jammu and Kashmir is also classified in different categories like scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward categories. Table No.5 gives a detailed picture of communities included in category of schedule castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes in the State of Jammu and Kashmir according to 2001 census. Caste wise distribution of child labourers shown in Table No.6 reveals that 62.5 percent child labourers belong to one or other backward class of the society, and out of these 82 workers (41 %) belong to scheduled tribe community, 40 i.e. 20 % to other backward classes and 1.5 percent to social caste. 37.5 percent of respondents belong to general category.

Table No.5, Communities Included in Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes (OBC) in Jammu and Kashmir

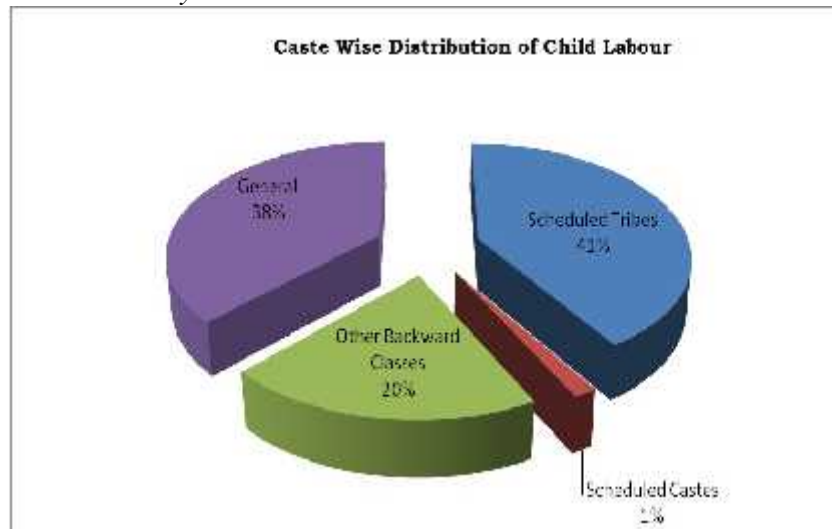
Scheduled Tribes	Scheduled Castes	Other Backward Classes (OBCs)
Gujjar	Barwala	Abdal, ,Kasab (Kasai) Kalandar, Gaddi
Bot	Basith, Saryara	Chik, Churihar
Bakarwal	Batwal, Watal	Dafali, Teli,
Brokpa	Chamar, Rattal	Dhobi, Dhunia
Balti	Chura, Megh	Nat, Nalband
Purigpa	Dhyar, Jolaha	Pamaria, Bhathiara
Gaddi	Doom, Gardi	Madari, Mehtar, Lal Begi, Halalkhor

Source: <http://www.censusindia.gov.in>.

Table No.6, Caste wise Distribution of Child Labour

Caste Composition	Frequency	Percentage
Scheduled Tribes	82	41
Scheduled Castes	03	1.5
Other Backward Classes	40	20
General	75	37.5
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey.



EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF CHILD LABOUR

The Indian constitution adopted in 1950, declares that the State shall endeavor to provide within a period of ten years from its commencement free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14

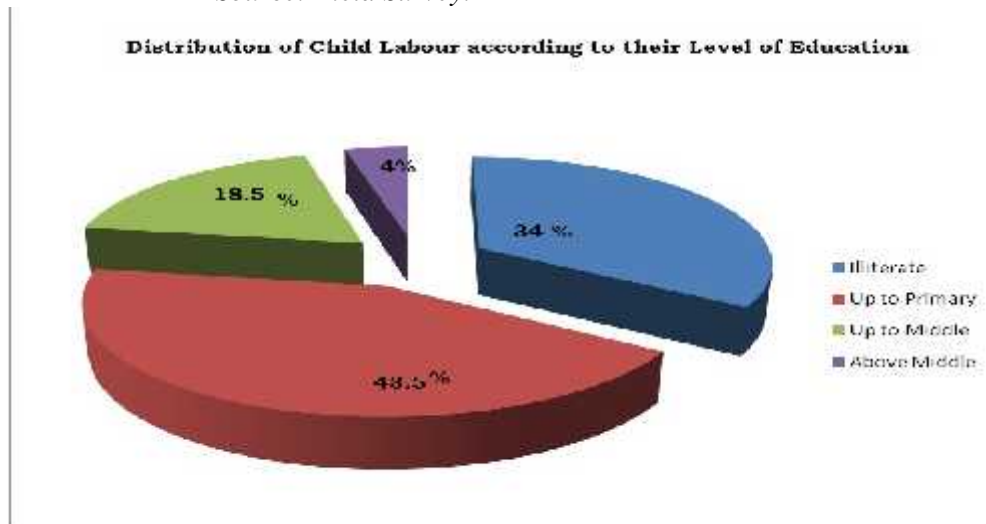


years. A number of measures have been taken by the Government for achieving these considerable provisions. Based on these measures almost all the states in India have passed the compulsory Education Act. Primary education is not only free but also carries educational attractions like free food, free uniform, text books etc. In spite of all efforts we have not achieved the goal of universalisation of primary education. Although there is an overall increase in the literacy level, but improvement in the level of literacy had never been uniform in all the states⁴. The profile of educational attainments that emerges from the data collected shows that out of the total respondents 34 percent are totally illiterate who don't know how to read and write, another 43.5 percent respondents have education up to 5th, 18.5 percent of respondents have attended the school till middle and only 4 percent of respondents have passed the middle class examination. To conclude we can say that mostly child labour is illiterate. Lack of proper education and illiteracy are the main causes of child labour. During field visit it was also observed that in spite of many other reasons child labour is prevalent because of improper parental guidance. It is important to know why these children do not join school or why they leave. The maximum number of child weavers i.e. 70 percent has mentioned poverty as a major cause that forces them to seek some extra income, however small to supplement the family budget. The eagerness of the parents for teaching their children some craft which may in future make a living both at a young age and at a later stage has been reported to be a reason in some cases. The second main reason is the lack of interest of children in studies. When parents feel that their children are befouling themselves in the streets instead of attending the schools, they induct them in to carpet weaving, best suited to their age. It has also been observed that unemployment in Kashmir valley acts as a strong notion among some of the parents that there is no reinforcement after the completion of education and as such they are tempted to direct their children to various trades which yields them immediate results. The carpet industry being essentially a household activity and less capital intensive attracts a large number of children because it provides income at a young age.

Table No.7, Distribution of Child Labour according to their Level of Education

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	68	34
Up to Primary	87	43.5
Up to Middle	37	18.5
Above Middle	8	4
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey.



⁴ Sen. R(1987), " Child Rag Pickers of Calcutta" Young Hands at Work: Child Labour in India, Atma Ram and Sons, Dehli.



Table No.8, Distribution of Child Labour according to the cause of Joining Labour Force

Cause	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	140	70
Children not interested	35	17.5
Parents not interested	10	5
Any other reason	15	7.5
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey.

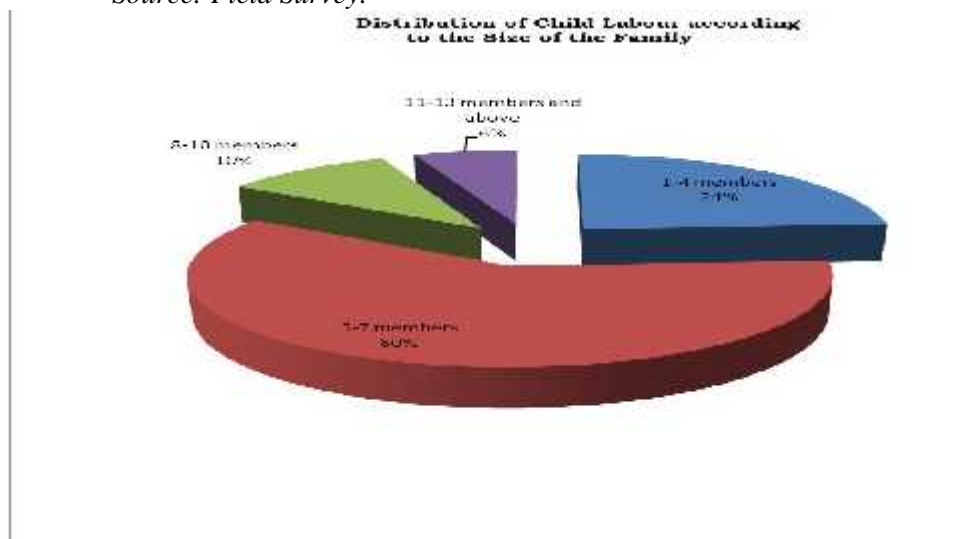
The economic value of the child and the size of the family are interrelated phenomena. The findings of micro and macro level studies on economic values of children are contradictory. The macro level studies have shown that the economic value of an additional child in India is negative or in other words the value of an additional child in India is high and positive⁵ (Sankangoudar, V. 2002), On the other hand working in this area have argued that at micro level the majority of people living in rural areas, the economic value of children is positive. The micro level study conducted by Cain, M (1977)⁶ in Bangladesh shows that a high fertility and large number of surviving children are economically a rational proposition for rural couples of Bangladesh due to their significant contribution to the household income.

The data reveals that out of 200 child labourers 120 i.e. 60 percent belong to the families which have 5-7 family members. and next is of 1-4 member families i.e. 48 respondents constituting 24 percent of the total sample. Other way we sav can that 74 percent of child labourers belong to the families with 7 or less than 7 family members. The remaining 32 child labourers come from the families which have 8-13 family members, and out of these 32 labourers 20 belong to the medium size families and the remaining 12 belong to large size families.

Table No.9, Distribution of Child Labour according to the Size of the Family

Family size	Frequency	Percentage
1-4 members	48	24
5-7 members	120	60
8-10 members	20	10
11-13 members and above	12	06
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey.



⁵ Sankangoudar, V. (2002), " child Labour in Kalkatta: a sociological study", PhD thesis submitted to Dept. of sociology, Karnataka university,Dharwad.

⁶ Cain, M, (1977) , The economic activities of children in a village in Bangladesh, *Population and Development Review*, Vol 3, issue 3,



WORKING HOURS OF THE CHILDREN

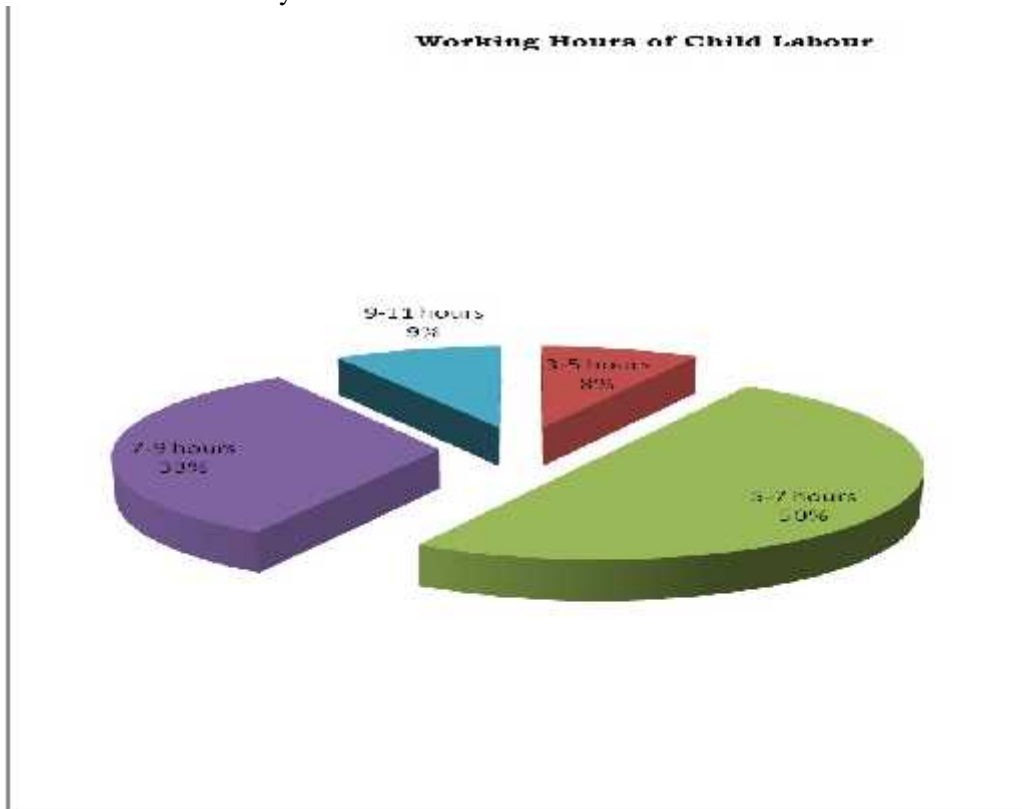
Many evils are associated with child labour. Making a child work at a tender age damages his physical and mental health which is an act against God. Many social organizations have boycotted products where child labour is employed. Children working in carpet looms are completely denied of childhood; they are deprived of many things which child requires for growth and development. They are forced to compete with an adult almost at birth and are bonded labour as soon as they learn to work and “yet the courage, dignity and self-assurance that these children possess is startling”(Ahmad, A.2000),⁷

Table No. 10 reveals that 9 percent the children of children work for 9-11 hours a day, 32.5 percent work for 7-9 hours a day, 100 i.e. 50 percent work 5-7 hours a day and 17 i.e. 8.5 percent for 3-5 hours a day. These children work continuously and are hardly given half an hours lunch time. The hours of work are excessive and certainly beyond the capacity of a child. They have to sit and work continuously for such long period. The long duration of work hampers their growth and impedes their education.

Table No.10, Working hours of Child Labour

Working Hours	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 3 hours	00	00
3-5 hours	17	8.5
5-7 hours	100	50
7-9 hours	65	32.5
9-11 hours	18	9
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey



⁷ Ahmad, A.(2000), “child Labour and Legal Controle: A socio Legal study”, Knowledge Line Publishers, srinager



HEALTH CONDITIONS

Children employed in carpet weaving are exposed to different types of pollutants like fiber, dust, dyes which affect their health. They are exposed to different stresses, and are made sit in an uncomfortable posture for long hours, and they are confined to one room. Their eyes bear strain looking at the same object constantly. The ventilation is very poor in these rooms especially during winter, when windows and doors of the working rooms are kept closed because of chill. This crowded atmosphere, poor ventilation and inadequate lighting facilities affect the health of the child badly⁸ (Ahmad, A.2000). Table No.11 illustrates that out of 200 child labourers more than 50 percent reported one or more than one type of health problem. When we look in to the type of problems reported by the child labourers we find that 35 out 200 child labourers reported headache problem, 30 blurring of vision, 27 backaches and 18 pain in limbs. Some of the respondents reported more than one problem at the same time which is given in Table No.). The finding of our study is also in line with the study conducted by Nangia, S.(1993)⁹ in carpet industry of Kashmir which reveals that among the children working in carpet industry headache, vision problem , joint pains are the common problems reported by the respondents. Ali,s¹⁰ study also finds that the carpet weaving children are exposed to several diseases and health hazards. The clinical examination in the said study reveals that majority of carpet weaving children reported backache, abdomen pain, and respiratory problems.

Table No.11, Health Conditions of the Child Labour

Health conditions	Frequency	Percentage
a) Headache	35	17.5
b) Blurring of vision	30	15
c) Backache	27	13.5
d) Pain in limbs	18	09
e) Both A and B	22	11
f) Both C and D	13	6.5
Having no problem	90	45

Source: Field Survey.

WAGE STRUCTURE

The State of Jammu and Kashmir has been facing the problem of unemployment for long and became a major cause of concern for the government as per the findings of 62nd round of NSSO (July 2005-June 2006) report, unemployment rate in respect of Jammu and Kashmir State has been worked out at 5.2% (5.4% for males and 3.5% for females) which is on a higher side as compared to all India figures of 3.1% (3.1% for males and 3.0% for females) as per Usual Principal Status. It was observed during the survey that the unemployment problem prevailing in the State is also one of the factors responsible to force the children to work. It is because the children on reaching the age of maturity have very little chance of gainful employment. Parents try to induct their children in carpet centers from a very young age to learn the craft so that they may not face any difficulty in getting employment and earning a livelihood in future. Thus unemployment factor acts as a catalyst for employers to employ children at low wage rates. Table No. 12 reveals out of 200 sampled child labourers 90 i.e. 45 percent received the wage rate between Rs.1500-2000, while 30 percent received monthly wage rate below Rs.1500. It was observed from the field that wages were paid as per the quality of work, expertise and experience. Respondents who received wages below Rs. 1500 were mostly beginners in the field. Another 25 percent who received Rs. 2000-3000 were more experienced and were able to read scripts, which is possible only after three to four years. Not a single child reported his/her monthly wage above Rs. 3000. The picture of wage structure is given in Table No.12. This low wage rate not only affects the life standard of child labour and his family but also

⁸ Ahmad, A.(2000), "child Labour and Legal Controle: A socio Legal study", Knowledge Line Publishers, srinager

⁹ Nangia, s., (1993), Child workers in Carpet weaving industry of Jammu and Kashmir, National Labour Institute Noida.

¹⁰ Ali, N.(1987), " child Labour in Carpet industry of Kashmir" Young Hands at work, Atma Ram Publications, New Dehli

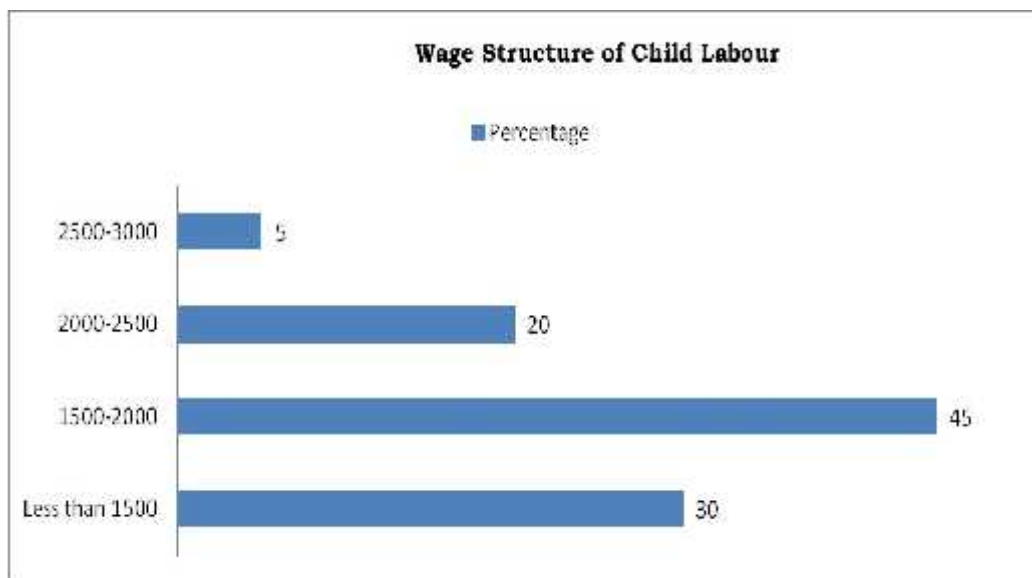


affects the adult wages. Khan and Rao (1985)¹¹ have rightly observed. “As the employer offers jobs at low wages, a tendency among adult workers to accept those increases. This is simply because of fear of unemployment for them. Thus, child labour brings down the wages and keeps adult at highly insecure employment”.

Table No.12, Wage Structure of Child Labour

Monthly wage rate	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1500	60	30
1500-2000	90	45
2000-2500	40	20
2500-3000	10	05
3000 and above	00	00
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey.



CONCLUSION

Child is the father of man and today’s children is tomorrow’s citizen. Well nourished, educated and socialized child can prove to be a strong foundation of a nation. It is our duty to look after them, protect them, and provide them better care for their physical and mental growth. In a welfare state it also becomes a duty of the government to promote child welfare through different schemes and policies, so that they will not be exposed to any sort of hazards, which may damage their growth and ultimately damage political, social, and economic growth of the society. The sample survey of child labour in carpet industry of Jammu and Kashmir shows that the number of male child workers is more than the female child workers in 5-14 and 12-14 age groups. In the case of 8-12 age group the maximum number of child labourers were females. The caste wise data shows that more than 50 percent of child labour in carpet industry belongs to one or other backward classes. Considering religion a majority of child labourers in the carpet industry was found to be Muslim. It was also found that a majority of the child labourers have started working in the age of 12-14 years. Regarding their educational attainments, it was found that 34 percent of child labourers are totally illiterate and 43.5 percent have somehow managed to study up to 5th standard. While questioning about the cause of joining the labour force, 70 percent of them mentioned poverty as the main reason. Taking into account the size of the family, it was 5-7 members. In terms of working hours there

¹¹ Khan, T. and Rao, (1985) “Working Children in India” *National Labour institute Bulletin*, Vol. Xi, No. 2, P.42



was totally a violation of laws. It was found that 50 percent of child workers work for 5-7 hours a day and 32.5 percent 7-9 hours a day. None of the Act passed by Parliament in India has permitted the working hours of children in any activity to more than six hours a day. The health status of working children was also enquired during survey and it was found that majority of child labourers are suffering from headache, blurring of vision, pain in limbs or more than one problem at a time. The wage rate of children was also disappointing, none of children whether experienced or not was getting the wage rate of above Rs. 3000 per month.

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