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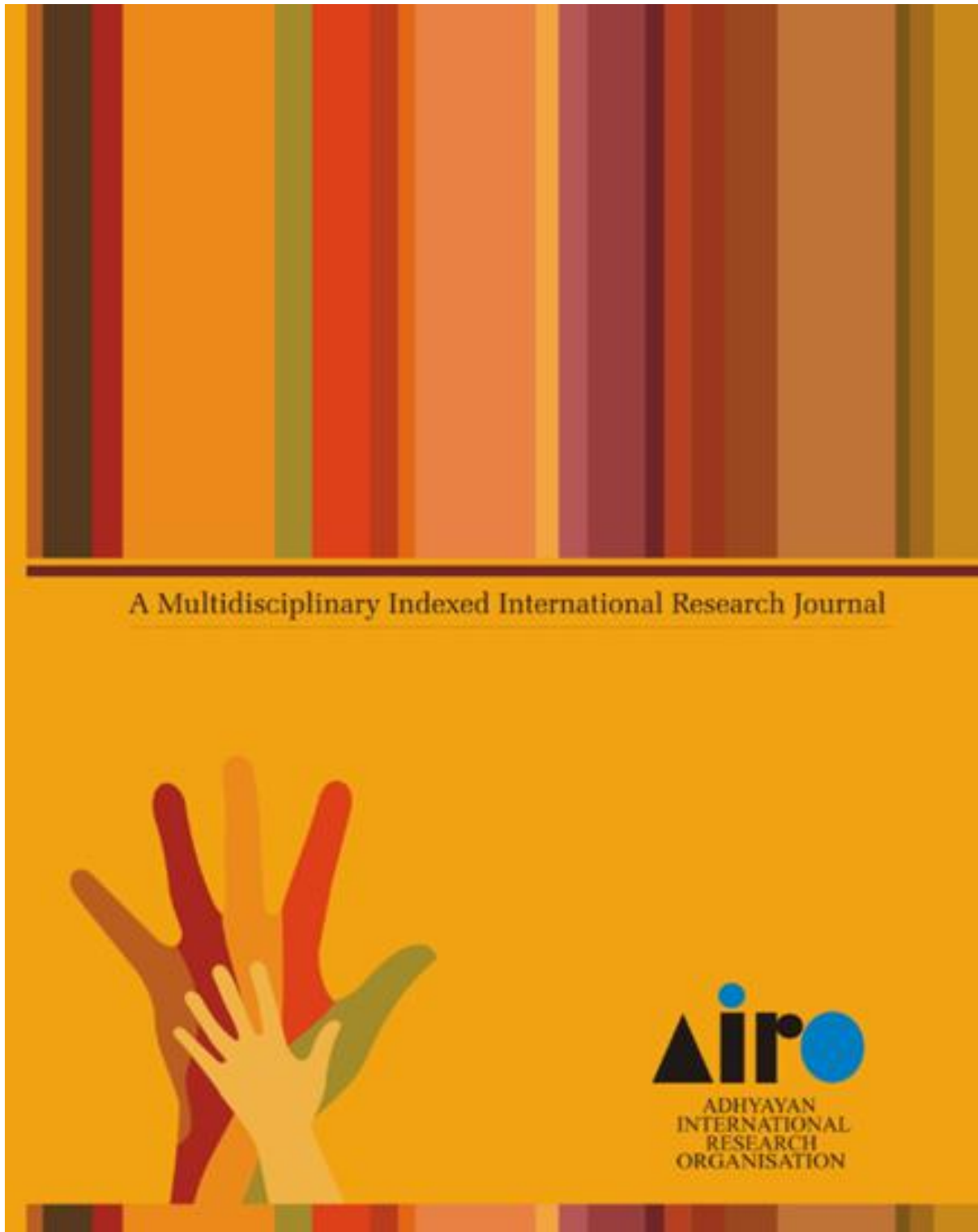
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## IMPACT OF CHILD LABOUR ON THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN

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### ABSTRACT

*Child labor is supposed to be the dark side of modernization and industrialization in India. As child labor is very cheap and easily available; hence, the trend of child labor is found in India. Poverty is the main reason of child labor as the poor people have no enough money and resources to survive. Due to bad condition of the home, the poor children have no other options besides to work here and there to survive. It encourages the merchants to hire these poor children and make them work at the cheaper rates.*

*There are many rules, regulation and laws imposed by Indian government against child labor. But, still this evil of child labor is found in many regions. Many children are seen working in restaurants, guest houses, hotels and private factories. This is against law as child labor is a crime in India. Also, this child labor is very harmful for the children as they might be facing a lot of health related issues due to working in the short age. It certainly affects them mentally as well as physically. The current paper highlights the impact of child labor on their health.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Child, Labor, Society, Health*

### INTRODUCTION

The scenario of child labor is very bad as some children are found working in the dangerous factories like fireworks, match works, lead mining and stone cutting etc. This may cause many diseases among them. The steam coming from the coal and fireworks factories can damage their lungs. Also, there is every possibility of explosion in match stick and firework factories which may cause to their death at the spot.

The owner of factories know that how harmful it can be for the health of children due to working in these kind of places; but still they engage them at their work-places because the expenditure on the child labor is much less as compared to the adult labor.

These children are forced to work for ten to twelve hours daily. They have to work in very bad situations. Sometimes, they are beaten at

the work-places if they don't do the work properly or try to leave the job. They are mentally tortured which can be harmful for their health.

In many cases, it is found that when a child starts working at the small age then he/she is likely influenced by the work environment and the bad habits of other persons. For this reason, it is noticed that the working children start smoking and drinking which consequently lead them to liver and lungs damage at the upper age of their lives.



The most of the child labor is found due to the migration of rural people to the urban cities. When poor rural people migrate to urban regions then they have nothing to survive in tough situations of urban cities. They force their children to work in shops or factories so that they can earn something and survive.

Government has launched many programs to stop child labor. Also, there are many NGOs in the country which show their protest against child labor and try to rehabilitate the children working in various workplaces. They arrange for their basic needs like education, food and living place so that they don't chose the option of child labor at small age.

Child labor has become the serious issue for the country. Child labor is largely found in agriculture sector. It is reported that almost 85% of the child labor is found in the rural regions of India as the small children start working in fields to help their family members for income. Some of the children migrate to the urban cities and start working there to get the resource of income in the earlier stage of their lives.

### **IMPACT OF CHILD LABOUR ON THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN**

It is estimated that about 168 million children have to do work as their families are not financially strong enough to spend money on their education. These children have to give-up the joy of childhood as they have to work hard in this little age instead of playing and studying like other children.

Most of these children do the work in dangerous environment where there are higher probability of infected by the vital diseases. Some children work in 'Beedi' factories where they have to work under steam which is very harmful for their lungs.

Some children are found working in 'Tabacco' factories and some are even work in wine factories. The side-effect of working in these kinds of work places is that these children start smoking and drinking at the small age and thus, they become the habitant of these things which causes diseases like cancer among them.

Some children work in extremely unhealthy work places like fishing and mining. They have to live a miserable life due to higher work load there. Sometimes, they have to work for longer hours from day to night to earn money.

The bad picture behind this scenario is that the factory owners show their interest in child labor because of the fact that child labor is easier to find and they don't have to pay much to them as compared to the adult labor.

The environment of these work places may lead to the diseases like Asthma where the children are not able to get fresh air. In many cases, it is observed that the children have to face physical violence on showing resistant to work there.

To start working from the small age does not affect the body in the initial stages. But, when the children grow and their age increases; all the side-effects start showing. These side-effects may include back pain, head pain or even paralysis.

These children are unable to connect themselves socially and cut themselves from the society. In some cases, it is found that they become static and their mental growth stops and consequently their thinking power affects.

Due to child labor, the psychological growth of children tends to fall and their decision taking power also affects. Some children are allowed to work in homes as servant and it is



observed that in many houses, these children are hurted physically.

Overall, it can be said that due to child labor, the mental and physical growth of the children tends to lower down as these kinds of children don't get the enough opportunities to grow themselves psychologically and mentally.

Some children work in small and medium enterprises where the working environment is not in favor of their health and they have to work in really bad conditions by compromising their childhood as they don't get any time to enjoy their lives.

Due to long hours of duty in such a small age, they may get stress and depression which may cause some serious problems at the younger age thereafter. Also, these children start abusing as they find this kind of environment everywhere.

They don't get any kind of respect at work places and they have to lead their lives themselves. These things help in raising the level of loneliness among them as there is no one there to motivate them and they start blaming themselves for this miserable situation.

We can assume that what is hazardous for adults will also be hazardous for children. However, children are more vulnerable since they are in physical and mental development. Children are often "achievers", they want to perform well and are inexperienced and untrained in dealing with hazards. Tools and machines are not made for them, and thus pose more hazards.

They are also not organized and powerless. All those factors contribute to the fact that the same task carried out by children can be more hazardous for children than for adults. The effects of hazardous child labor vary from skin

disease to asthma to (in the worst case) fatal injuries. Not only physical, but also mental and behavioral problems can be the result of hazardous child labor.

## DISCUSSION

Child laborers have to toil long hours to eke out a living for themselves and support their families. Exploitation becomes a way of life for them and becomes very harmful to their physical and mental development. They are forced to inhabit an adult world, shoulder adult responsibilities, and suffer extreme exploitation.

Concern about the health consequences of child labor derives primarily from the belief that work increases the child's exposure to health hazards that threaten to subject the child to illness or injury. The hazards may be obvious and threaten immediate damage to health, such as those risks arising in construction, manufacturing and mining from the use of dangerous tools and machinery and exposure to high temperatures and falling objects.

Alternatively, the hazards may be less perceptible and hold longer-term consequences for health such as risks from contact with dust, toxins, chemicals and pesticides, the lifting of heavy loads and the forced adoption of poor posture. Hazards may also threaten psychological health through exposure to abusive relationships with employers, supervisors or clients.

A number of factors raise the health risks which children face from work relative to adults. First, child labor tends to be concentrated in particularly dangerous industries. Globally, agriculture is by far the dominant sector of child employment, accounting for 70 percent of all child workers, and is an industry with a very poor record of



safety, with 1 in 8 child workers suffering illness or injury.

A second factor raising the health risks faced by child laborers relative to adults derives from the fact that children often work in informal, small scale and illegal settings which, by their very nature, are difficult to regulate. The substantial number of children worldwide working in domestic services and the sex industry are left particularly vulnerable to physical and psychological abuse.

Children working in small scale farming and manufacturing are often not given the protection promised by health and safety regulation. Even when this protection is available, it is likely to be much less effective for children since the measures are usually designed for adult, and not child, workers.

Given their physiological and psychological immaturity and the biological process of growth, children may be more vulnerable than adults to abuse and to given health risks. Children are more prone to injury through accidents and have been found to be more sensitive to noise, heat, lead and silica toxicity, and ionizing radiation.

Despite legislation banning child labor, it has not been possible to completely stop the practice of hiring children as labor across the world. India is no exception to employment of children as labor; rather the country employs the largest number of child laborers in the world.

Poverty, social inequality and lack of education are among is the main cause of child labor. According to a UNICEF report, in rural and impoverished parts of the world, children have no real and meaningful alternative as schools and teachers are not available. Many communities, particularly rural areas do not

have adequate school facilities, even the availability and quality of schools is very low.

Child labor inflicts damage to a child's physical and mental health. A child laborer has no basic rights to education, development, and freedom. Children employed as laborers work in unsafe environments where there is a constant danger of fatal accidents. They are forced to lead a life of poverty, illiteracy, and deprivation. They are required to perform gruelling and physically demanding tasks and in return receive only meagre wages.

Poor working conditions cause severe health problems to such children. A child laborer not just suffers physical and mental torture but also becomes mentally and emotionally mature too fast which is never a good sign.

Collective efforts are needed on the part of society and the government to put an end to the practice of child labor. In fact, every citizen should take a pledge to never employ child laborer, rather discourage others too from doing so.

We should create awareness amongst people employing child laborers and the parents sending their children to work. We need to provide our children a happy childhood where they are able to enjoy the best period of their lives with a merry and carefree attitude.

The government should make efforts to increase the incomes of parents by launching various development schemes. Efforts should be made towards poverty eradication combined with educational reforms to provide free or affordable access to quality education. Only by taking comprehensive steps, the Government can hope to eliminate all forms of child labor by 2020.

Child laborers have to toil long hours to eke out a living for themselves and support their



families. Exploitation becomes a way of life for them and becomes very harmful to their physical and mental development. They are forced to inhabit an adult world, shoulder adult responsibilities, and suffer extreme exploitation.

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## CONCLUSION

According to a UNICEF report, in rural and impoverished parts of the world, children have no real and meaningful alternative as schools and teachers are not available. Many communities, particularly rural areas do not have adequate school facilities, even the availability and quality of schools is very low.

Also, the low paying informal economy thrives upon the low cost, easy to hire, easy to dismiss labor in the form of child labor. After the unorganized agriculture sector which employs 60% of child labor, children are

employed in unorganized trade, unorganized assembly and unorganized retail work. Other contributory factors to child labor include inflexibility and structure of India's labor market, size of informal economy, inability of industries to scale up and lack of modern manufacturing technologies.

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