

A Case Study of the Prevalence of Child Labour in Ranaghat Municipality

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Structured Abstract:

Purpose: The problem of child labour is a global phenomenon. This paper tries to give due importance on the general view of the child labour, causes and their socio economic condition in the Ranaghat municipal area.

Design/Methodology/Approach: As per the case study purpose 65 child labours are selected. Personal interview of the child labours were taken by a structured questionnaire and the government data and the secondary data has been collected and manipulated where it necessary.

Findings: The study reveals that the child labours of Ranaghat Municipal area are suffering from proper education, treatment, growth and development, inadequate leisure, and doing job under unhygienic condition.

Originality/Value: It is a first time attempt to know about the child labours, on the basis of community to community survey, low and high income groups and socio economic aspects of child labours at Ranaghat municipal area.

Key words: Child labour, Global phenomenon, Population, Education, Enrollment.

Paper Type: Case Study.

Introduction

In the Third Millennium of 2011, child labour continues to be a universal problem challenging human rights. It is a serious social problem, especially in the Third World countries. However, the developed countries too face this problem though to a lesser extent. Children are the future citizens of a society. So it is the prime duty of parents to look after them, protect them and provide them with good care for their physical and mental development. In a welfare state, it is an important duty of the Government to promote children's welfare through different schemes and policies so that they are not exposed to hazards which may damage their growth and ultimately damage the social, economic and political development of the society.

There are many vulnerable sections in the society and the vulnerable sections are further divided into some most vulnerable segments. One of such segment is constituted by child labour. Child labour existed in the past- in the remote past as well. They worked almost in every sphere of economic activities- be it in domestic or in the world of work outside. Sometimes they worked to supplement family livelihood resources, sometimes for their own survival and sometimes for learning. In all cases, the child was directed by force and need. The child's decision was nowhere in the process of initiation into the world of work. Hence, child is a weak agency (Sharma, 1993).

Review of Literature

Highlights of few past research works on the present topic are being incorporated in this section of the work:

- Giri, V. (1958) opined the concept of Child Labour in two ways in *Labour problems in India Industry*:
 - a. Employment of children in gainful occupations with a view to add an income to their families.
 - b. Purposeful oppression and exploitation of working children leading to deprivation of their legitimate opportunities of growth.
- Weiner (1980) in his book entitled *The Child and the State in India* expresses his view that historically in our country child labour has been seen as an economic phenomenon. As per his study the relationship between children and work is dictated to a great extent by the state of economic development or the system of production prevalent in the country. Another survey conducted by Vemuri and Anand (1998), reveals that child labour contributes to over 20 percent in India.
- Singh.B (1999) in his article *The Child Labour Problems and Prospects* discussed that it is the duty of the State to protect children's right by legislative and other means because the needs and requirements of the child is the prime ground norm of this universe.
- Gangrade K. D (1998) book entitled —*The Child Labour in India Department of Social Work* expresses his views on Child Labour. Child Labour is a product of such factors as customs, traditional attitudes, lack of school or reluctance of parents to send their children to school, urbanization, industrialization, migration.
- Most of the studies on child labour point out that poverty are the-main cause of this problem. A report on Socio-economic conditions of labour in India by the Labour

Investigation Committee (1946)', a study on child labour by Khandekar and Mandakini (1970) a study of working children in urban Delhi by the ICCW (1977) a report on child Labour in Indian Industries(1981), and child labour studies by Savithri (1985), Parveen Nangia (1987), Singh (1990), Sushila Srivastava and Bhanumathi (1990)8, Mir (1991), Ramesh Kanbargi (1991), Nazir Ahamed Shah (1992)11, Geeta Lal (1997), Ojha (1997)', and Dinamalar, a Tamil daily (2000)' clearly mention that the poor economic condition of parents leads the children to various types of work for the family even at their tender age.

In order to protect the interest of the children's there are certain reports, these are:

- Report of the National Commission on Labour, 1969
- Report of the Child Labour in Indian Industries Labour Bureau, 1995
- Report of the Committee of the State Labour Ministers (Sanat Mehta Committee) Government of India, New Delhi, 1984

Location and Selection of the Study Area

Ranaghat is an urban area of Nadia district. It is situated beside river Churni which is flowing at western side of the municipality. The Municipal Area is located at a short distance from Krishnagar. The municipal area is surrounded by Hanger Khal, Baska Khal. Hanger Khal is flowing by southern to eastern side and Baska Khal is flowing by northern side of ranaghat municipal area. The national highway 34, is running through the Ranaghat Municipal area. The eastern railway track of India is passing through this municipal area. Ranaghat is eastern railway junction station which links with Kolkata/Sealdaha to Krishnagar, Shantipur, Gede and Bongaon etc. (see fig.1)

Objectives of the Study

By this study we can highlight the economic condition of child labours, why the little children are forced to laboring instead of sending to school? Why we see at many child labours in Ranaghat Municipal area? This study is on this problem to realize their real condition also the aim of the study is to give suggestions to evaluate the nature of child labour problem in Ranaghat Municipal area.

As the scope of earning is became limited for livelihood, the addition of child labour rapidly increased to meet the demand of low cost service sector. In this paper it is focused on the

nature and causes of child labour in various sectors. How this type of economic activity is increased rapidly at Ranaghat; in dealing with the subject, proportion of population category, age group and their economic activities, education and school enrollment are the major subjects, related to my study. This paper is tries to give due importance on the general view of the variations from community to community, low and high income groups and socio economic aspects within the Ranaghat urban area. The most important factor in this specific low economic standard of the hinter lands and its role to generate child labour in the urban locality of Ranaghat is the ideal place or opportunity for the generating of child labour in all respects.

Limitations of the Study

Some of the difficulties faced in studying the situation of child labourers can be highlighted as inadequacy and insufficient of available data. The present data available may not only insufficient but also inadequate to providing a more or less accurate description of the situation of child labourers in the Ranaghat Municipal area. There were no previous records about this child labour scenario in this study area. As a result the generalizations arrived at by using the available data may not applicable to all social categories of child labourers families.

Methodology

During the field survey, also to know about the child labour's problem of Ranaghat, personal interview of child labour were held at various places. Total 130 child labours were found in this study time. But for the case study purpose 65 child labour is taken into consideration. During the profiled study, different sorts of numeric data and non-numeric data have been collected from the different institution. Various data like census and the map of municipality area have been collected from various sources. Also various reports of the problem on child labour have collected from internet to understand and to know more about this problem on respect of other countries. The government data and the secondary data has been collected and manipulated where it necessary.

Data sources

1. Primary data from the govt. offices.
2. Dropout data from local and district education department.
3. Sample survey from local primary schools.

4. Collection of reporting from news paper.
5. Report from local NGOs.
6. Reports of shops and establishments from local municipality.

Work Done

This Paper has done with the following work in connection with this case study different libraries were visited to collect literature required for this study are:

- Central Library, Krishnagar government college, Krishnanagar nadia
- National library, Kolkata
- Basanta smriti pathagar, Chakdaha, Nadia
- Rishi bankim Chandra pathagar, Naihati
- Kendriya gronthagar, Krishnagar, Nadia
- Ranaghat National library, Ranaghat Nadia

Questionnaire has been prepared for interviewed the child labours working in different sectors like hotels, Shops, Garages, Street Vendors, etc. The children who participated in the survey are aged between 4 to 14 years of the age. The survey was conducted in and around Majestic with the post field study organization, computation, representation and analysis of collected data from the field are been calculated and manipulated very carefully.

Discussion

The Real Situation about Child Labour in Study Area

It has been observed in Ranaghat that the practice of child labour is a socio-economic problem. It's created by many appalling realities like poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, low wages, ignorance, social prejudices, poor standard of living, back word nests, superstition etc. Table no 1 shows us that the different categories or the nature of the child labours in the study area:

❖ Child Labour in Sweet Shops

Sweet shops are notorious for profiting from child labour which is tantamount to slavery in these study area. These shops also profit from illegal retail activities and use small children in the manufacturing process. Children are young as eleven and thirteen toil in these shops for hours. They have no fixed working hours. Sometimes they have to work for 10 hours. The sweet shops function quietly and illegally as house hold industries making little children toil

for long hours with a very low wages. They mainly came from near village like Ramnager, Kalitala, Hubibpur, Subhaspally.

❖ **Child Labour in Tea Shops**

Tea shops are a great notable working place of child. Children as young as ten and element toil in these shops for hours. They have to work for about eight hours. They are not paid more than 300 to 500 rupees in a month.

❖ **Child Labour in Motels / Restaurants**

Ranaghat municipal area is a highly populated area. The child labour is a main component at many small motels, restaurant and fast food center of this area. These make good profit from little children. This study shows that children are as young as twelve to fourteen, toil in these sectors. They are suffering from exertion and fatigue.

❖ **Child Labour as a Hawker**

Hawker is a very common sector of child labours. Here the study shows that the child hawkers are seasonal workers some times. Also sometimes they work in this sector as their occupation. They sell incense sticks, various foods etc. Their incomes are sometimes more than 1500 rupees in a month.

❖ **Child Labour as Maid Servant**

Study shows that girls as young as eleven to below fourteen work in various houses. They work for long hours. But they get very low salary. Some time the house owners give them some food, which is not enough for their health. Most of the girls, working in this sector are not paid more than 300 to 500 rupees in a month. Most of the cases they work for 2 or 3 houses. They are coming from very poor families of rural areas; Out of 65 child labours, it has been observed that there 10.77% (7female children as maid servant) are working as servant in Ranaghat municipal area.

❖ **Child Labour in Grocery Shops**

Grocery shops are notorious for profiting from child labours. These shops use small children as labour. Children, younger than thirteen years toil in these shops. They have no fined working hours. Sometimes they work for more than 12 hours. The little children work for

long hours on very low wages. Most of the children in this sector are not paid more than 1000 rupees in a month.

❖ **Child Labour in Garments Shops**

The garments shops are also use the little children. They gave them very little wage. The little children are not paid more than 700 to 900 rupees in a month.

❖ **Child Labour in Construction Works**

In construction sector, the little children are used as helper. They get very little salary. Here the children are injured very much.

❖ **Child Labour in Garage As Mechanic**

Garages are notorious for profiting from child labour. Children as age of twelve, thirteen plus are working in these sectors. They work very hard. (See table 1). They work a long time with a very low wage. As a salary they get only 1200 to 1400 rupees per month. They get a very little break for meals. They cannot enjoy in holidays, because they don't get any leisure time. They stay in their working place. They eat in any roadside motel. So their food is not good for health. (Plate-1)

Prevalence Nature of Child Labours

The total population of Ranaghat Municipal Area according to census of 2011 was 75344 people living on the area of 7.7259 sq. km. In this year the population density was 9760 per sq km. Through analyzing for the various ratios of child labours, It has seen that one child per 1000 people is working as a child labour at Ranaghat.

Age Structure

Table 2 shows us that most of the children are above 13 years old but not more than 16 years. This age is most important for any child to growing and in this time they need leisure. Instead of their growing they are forced to go for work in various sectors.

Literacy Status

Literacy is one of the most important indicators of economic and social development. Table 3 shows that out of 65 children 22 children are literate and 43 children are illiterate. It has been observed from the survey (Fig. 3) that Child labours are coming from very low income

group of family who are generally scheduled caste. Very few of them are from general caste category.

Sex Wise Distribution

Here the study shows that most of the child labours are male and the number of female child labours is less. So, we can say that most of the poor parents are sending their little boys than the little girls to laboring. (See table 4)

Cast Type of Child Labour

Table 5 shows that the schedule caste population in the study area is more prevalent more than 45 percent. This shows that child labour's most of them are coming from lower economic class people who are mainly scheduled caste background. This tendency shows us that this region has plenty of population from the schedule class background. Nearly 30 percent children are general castes who are mainly coming from the low income category families.

Working Hours of Child Labour

Study shows that (table 6) almost 59 (58.46) percent of workers are engaged with 4-8 hours of strenuous hard work. More than 29 percent of workers engaged more than eight hours of daily work. They did not manage any shorts of holidays.

Family Economic Background

The little children are coming from very poor families. (see table 8)Some child has lost their father in very little age. The children's family economic background is very bad. Above this discussion we can realize that most of the families have very low income. (See fig.3)

Gross Monthly Income

Table 9 shows that the little children work in various sectors with very low wages. The study shows that there are most of children earn 600 to 1000 rupees in a month. Some children earn above 1500 rupees in a month. (See fig. 4)

House Condition

Home is a basic need of everyone. So it is very important for anyone, but there are variations in house types with economic condition.

The study on child labour problem in Ranaghat municipal area shows the house conditions of the poor children. From this discussion we can understand their condition.

According to their statement, houses have been classified as kuchcha and pakka in relation to the types of material used in the construction of walls and roofs of the houses.(See table 10)

Health Condition

Most of times they suffer from malnutrition or unhygienic problems and some diseases like cough cold, fever, fatigue etc. They mostly depend on govt. hospital. Near 30% of the child labours use allopathic medicine and 7% of child labours consult homeopathy privately. More than 61% of children take medical care from govt. hospital at the time of major diseases or accident.

Causes of Child Labour

Poverty and over population have been identified as the two main causes of child labour problem. There are very low monthly incomes of the parents of poor child labours in Ranaghat municipal area. They cannot give the basic needs like food, cloths to their children. So they send their children to working sector.

➤ Besides Ranaghat town there are various villages, where the people's economic condition is very low. So they send their children at Ranaghat town to earn money. As their have the only source of income by agriculture, is not available sufficient. Thus the villagers send their little children to working sectors in Ranaghat Municipal Area.

➤ Ranaghat municipal area is a density populated area. There are 753644 populations in Ranaghat municipal area. There is big marketplace in Ranaghat municipal area. That also helps to make the child labours.

➤ Here a study is done with 65 children, out of whom 25 are coming from very poor families, whose monthly income is very low, less than 2000 rupees. Parents sacrifice their children's education for earning more. Parents are forced to send little children into hazardous jobs for reasons of survival, even when they know 'it is wrong'.

➤ Illiterate and ignorant parents do not understand the needs of wholesome proper physical and emotional development for their child. They are themselves uneducated and unexposed, so they can not realize the importance of education for their children.

- Some literate parents want to send their children to school, but they cannot able to success their wishes. Monetary constrains and the need of food, shelter and clothing drives their children in the trap of premature labour.
- Absence of compulsory education at the primary level, parental ignorance regarding the bad effects of child labour, the ineffectiveness of child labour law in terms of implementation, non availability and non-accessibility of school and cheap child labour are some other factor which encourages the phenomenon of child labour.
- Cunning rich societies procure the child labour for small sums at exorbitant interest rates.
- Untouchable are denied to access land, forced to working.
- Rural urban migration is another cause of child labour. In rural areas appalling with poverty, low and uncertain wages, uneconomic land holdings and poor facilities for education push little children to hard work.
- Children, who are born out of wedlock, are especially vulnerable to exploitation. They are forced to work for survival when there are no relatives to support them. Livelihood considerations can also drive a child into the working sector.

Conclusion

Child labour is a very complicated development issue, effecting human society all over the world. It is a matter of great concern that children are not receiving the education, which is important for any children.

- There are special schools for child labour in Krishnagar; but the child labours of Ranaghat do not get the facility of special school. The study shows there are no facility of night school for the child labour at surrounding area of Ranaghat.
- Sometimes the child labours do not get any other provision than drop out. Sometimes, the authorities do not concern for the drop out child. They do not try to make them returned into educational life.
- The study shows that sometimes the children work for long hours in unhygienic condition. They have no friend at working place. The little children get very low wages.
- The children work very hard, but they get only a small break for meals. That's mean the children are not receiving the leisure, which is most important for the working child.

- The working children get a little food as the meal, are also frugal and the children become ill. The children do not get proper treatment at illness, as they are poor.
- Parents are not concerning about their children growth and development. They just think that their children are an income generating resource. So they depend on their children's income.
- It has been researched and proved that the brain of a child develops till the age of ten, muscles till the age of seventeen and their lungs till the age of fourteen. Hard work acts as a hazard for the natural growth and enhancement of these vital organs. It can be considered harmful for natural human growth and development.

Suggestions

- To save little humans from abuse at a tender age, the government should be compelled to provide compulsory primary education to all children up to the age of fourteen years. The government should also provide free education to the child labour. There are also need special school for child labour in Ranaghat. As well as, there are needs the facilities of night school.
- Children shall be given opportunities and facilities to develop in a health manner and in condition of freedom and dignity and against moral and material abandonment.
- The children's health is an important thing. The government should be careful about the children and should be provide free medical checkup.
- This is urgently required to save children from the murderous, clutches of social injustice and educational deprivation. And ensure that they are given opportunities for health and normal growth.

Projects related with human resource development, dedicated to the child welfare issue, must be given top priority by the central and state governments to stop the menace of child labour. Child labour laws need to be strictly implemented at the central and state levels.

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Table 1

Child Labour in Different Types of Work (on 130 child)

SERIAL NO.	WORK TYPES	NO. OF CHILDREN	% OF CHILDREN
1	SWEET SHOP	10	7.69
2	TEA SHOP	8	6.15
3	RESTAURANT	20	15.38
4	HAWKER	16	12.31
5	MAID SERVANT	14	10.77
6	GROCERY SHOP	10	7.69
7	HAND CRAFT	16	12.31
8	SHOWROOM	6	4.63
9	CONSTRUCTION	10	7.69
10	VEGETABLE MARKET	10	7.69
11	GARAGE	10	7.69

Table 2

Age Structure (on 65 child labours)

SERIAL NO.	AGE	NO. OF WORKER	% OF WORKER
1	<10	5	7.69
2	10-11	7	10.77
3	11-12	11	16.92
4	12-13	14	21.54
5	>13	28	43.08

Table 3

Education Scenario of the Child Labours

	LITERATE		ILLITERATE	
	NO. OF WORKER	% OF WORKER	NO. OF WORKER	% OF WORKER
SEX WISE				
MALE	14	21.55	36	55.38
FEMALE	8	12.3	7	10.77
CAST WISE				
GENERAL	12	18.46	8	12.3
S.C.	8	12.3	22	33.85
OTHER	2	3.09	13	20
EDUCATION STATUS			CAUSE	

CLASS <III	12	18.46	Didn't have money for nursery level book; illiterate parents made them drop out.
CLASS III-V	6	9.21	
CLASS V-VII	2	3.09	
CLASS >VII	2	3.09	Orphan; born out of wedlock.

Table 4

Sex Wise Distribution Scenario of Child Labour

SERIAL NO.	SEX TYPE	NO. OF WORKER	% OF WORKER
1	MALE	50	76.92
2	FEMALE	15	23.08

Table 5

Caste wise distribution

SERIAL NO.	TYPE OF CAST	NO. OF WORKER	% OF WORKER
1	GENERAL	20	30.77
2	S.C.	30	46.15
3	OTHER	15	23.08

Table 6

Working Hours of the Child Labours

SERIAL NO.	DURATION OF WORK	NO. OF WORKER	% OF WORKER
1	< 4 HOURS	8	12.31
2	4-8 HOURS	38	58.46
3	> 8 HOURS	19	29.23

Table 7

Home Distance from the Work Place

SERIAL NO.	DISTANCE IN KM.	NO. OF WORKER	% OF WORKER
1	< 2	40	61.54
2	2-4	15	23.08
3	> 4	10	15.38

Table 8

Economic Background of the Child Labours

SERIAL NO.	FAMILY INCOME	NO. OF FAMILY	% OF COUNT
1	< 1500	10	15.38
2	1500-2500	15	23.08
3	2500-3500	30	46.15
4	> 3500	10	15.38

Table 9

Gross Monthly Income of the Child Labours

SERIAL NO.	MONTHLY INCOME	NO. OF WORKER	% OF WORKER
1	< 600	14	21.54
2	600-1000	25	38.46
3	1000-1500	11	16.92
4	> 1500	10	23.08

Table 10

Building Materials

SERIAL NO.	TYPE OF WALL/ROOF	NO. OF HOUSE	% OF HOUSE
WALL			
1	BAMBOO	18	27.59
2	MUD	19	29.23
3	BRICK	28	43.08
ROOF			
1	METAL	30	46.16
2	TILES	23	35.38
3	ASBESTOS	12	18.46

Plate 1

Different Kinds of Child Labours in the Study Area



Fig. 1:

Location Map of Study Area

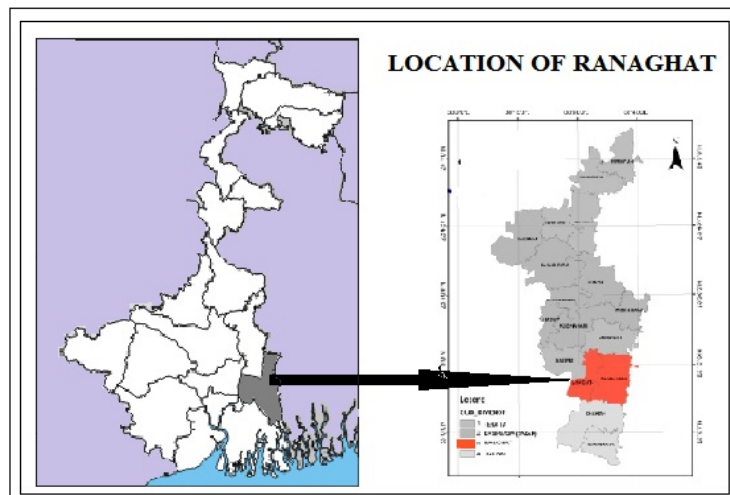


Fig.2: Education Scenario of the Child Labours

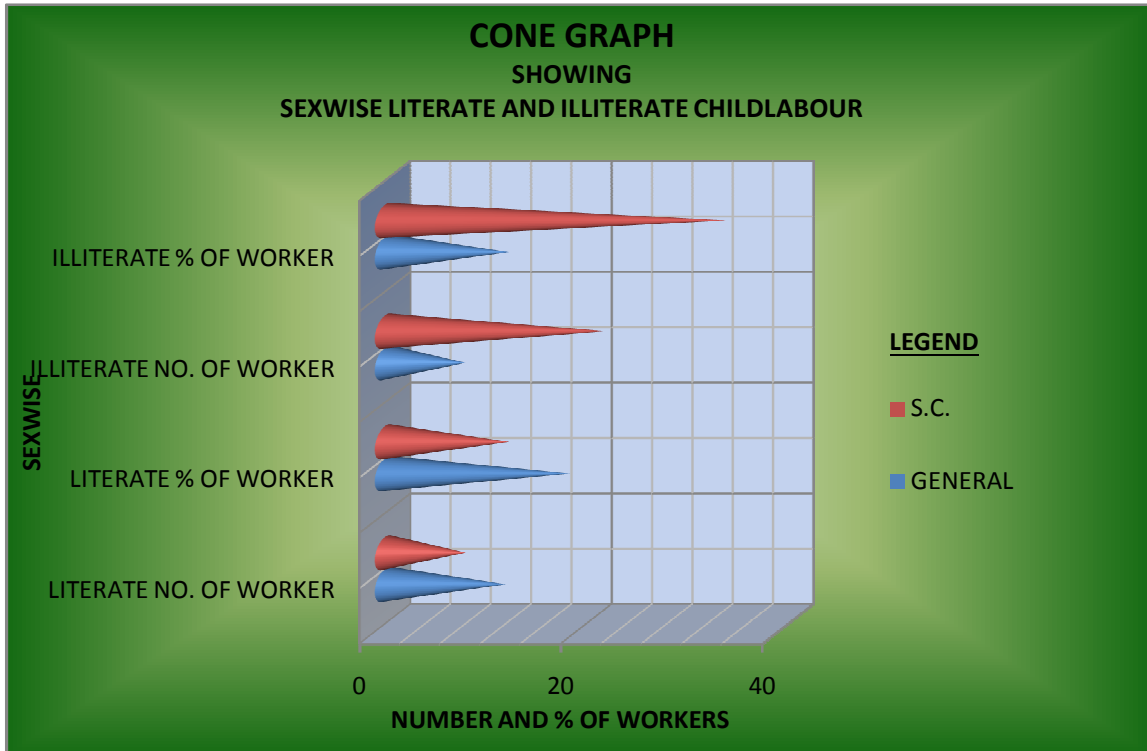


Fig.3: Family Income Scenario of the Child Labours

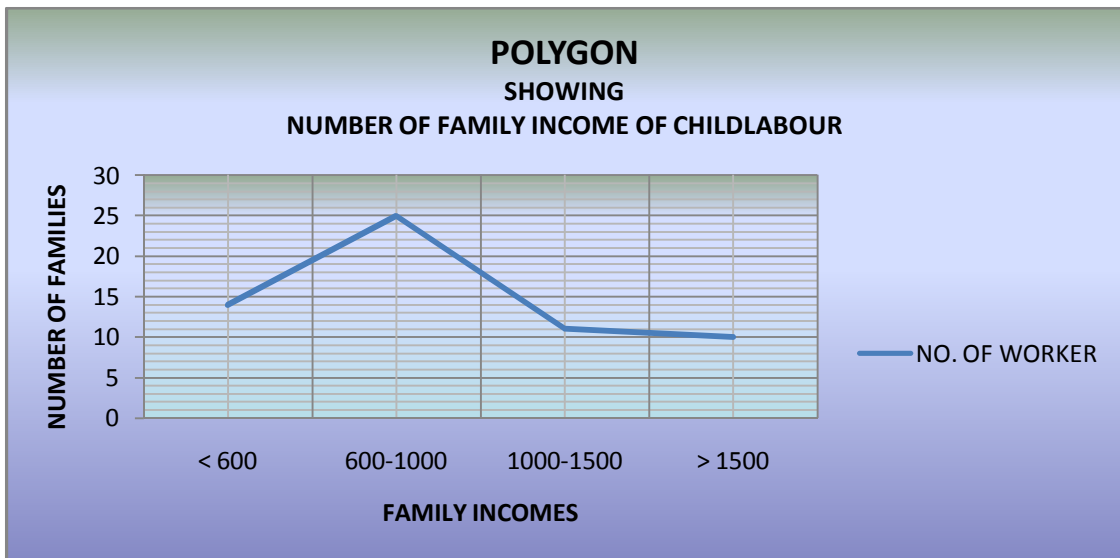


Fig. 4:

Monthly Income Scenario of the Child Labour

