

CHAPTER - 2

Literature Review

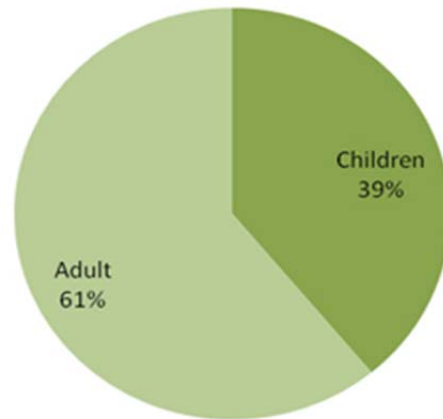
2. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of child labour has attracted the attention of academicians, literary people, researchers, the international community and policy makers for a long times . Over the years, literature concerning this subject has accumulated. While many studies have been conducted but nothing have had concern with automobile servicing sector in Saharsa district. This chapter therefore presents an in-depth review of a study of child labour in automobile servicing sector in Saharsa district of Bihar during 2000-2010. Although great emphasis was placed on the challenges faced by children working in the Auto -mobile Servicing sector in Saharsa District of Bihar, it must be stressed that the information that has been generated is of great importance with regard to the general characteristics, scope and magnitude of the child labour problem, causes and effects of child labour, etc. worldwide.

From the studies that have been reviewed in this regard, an important observation that has been made is that child labour is a characteristic of almost all economic systems at some stage when children were employed in large numbers, in industries, commercial undertakings including; street trades and agriculture to an extent may be similar to what is happening in the developing countries at the turn of the 21st century. For instance children as young as 6 years old worked long hours with only an hour break in horrible conditions coupled with meagre payments. The children used large, heavy and dangerous equipment that sometimes injured or killed them on the job.

Bihar is India's third most populated state and almost 90 per cent of its people live in rural areas. The male literacy rate is almost double (59.7 per cent) the female literacy rate (33.1 per cent).

**TABLE 2.1: Districtwise Demographic Profile of Bihar
New District after 2001 Census**



Source : Census 2001 and 2011

Bihar has the third largest population of Scheduled Castes (SC) among all states and their literacy rate is at 28.5 per cent. Katihar has a literacy rate of 35.1, much lower than the state average. A large number of drop-out children belong to the SC groups like Dom, Mehtar and Mushars. Sitamarhi has 38.5 per cent literacy. The female literacy stands at 26.1 per cent. Children are engaged in traditional jobs like tailoring, garage mechanics and as casual labour in agriculture.

2.1 Magnitude Of Child Labour In India

India with 1.21 billion people constitutes as the second most populous country in the world, while children represents 39% of total population of the country.

TABLE 2.2: PHYSICAL FEATURES OF BIHAR

Latitude	24°-20'-10" to 27°-31'-15" North
Longitude	83°-19'-50" to 88°-17'-40" East
Rural Area	92358.40 sq. kms
Urban Area	1804.60 sq. kms
Total Area	94,163.00 sq. kms
Height above Sea-Level	173 Feet
Main Soil	Clay Soil, Sandy Soil, Loamy Soil
Temperature	Varies from a maximum of 44°C in Summer to a minimum of around 5°C in the Winters
Normal Rainfall	1176.4 mm

TABLE 2.3: ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS OF BIHAR

Number of Divisions	9
Number of Districts	38
Number of Sub-Divisions	101
Number of CD Blocks	534
Number of Panchayat Samiti	531

Number of Gram Panchayats	8,463
Number of Revenue Villages	45,103
Number of Urban Agglomerations	9
Number of Towns	130
Number of Statutory Towns	125
Number of Non-Statutory Towns	5
Number of Police Stations	853
Number of Civil Police Stations	813
Number of Railway Police Stations	40
Number of Police Districts	43
Number of Civil Police District	39
Number of Railway Police District	4

2.2 Causes of Child Labour

Child labour is a socio-economic problem. Parents for the reason of poverty have to send their children in order to supplement their income derived from child labour, however meagre are essential to sustain the family. The major reason that creates the circumstances for a child to work as a child labour includes the following.

- i. Socio-economic backwardness
- ii. Poverty and Illiteracy
- iii. Unemployment
- iv. Over population
- v. Lack of education facilities
- vi. Ignorance of parents about the importance of education.
- vii. Ignorance of impact on children of labour.
- viii. Government apathy

Gangrade (1978) believes that child labour is a product of such factors as customs, traditional attitude, and lack of school or reluctance of parents to

send their children to school, urbanization, industrialization, migration and so on. In addition to the above mentioned factors responsible for child labour, there are several other causes too. Firstly, the provisions of the protective labour legislations are lopsided and do not cover agriculture and small-scale industries. Secondly, the enforcing machineries, which are provided by the state governments, are inadequate almost everywhere and fail to check up on child labour. The children are mostly silent listeners or non-listeners of the policies and programmes meant for them and hence, their problems are not properly realized, for which nobody pays serious attention to their plights and the safeguards extended for the prevention of child labour are not implemented effectively. Economic Globalization is equally responsible for the growth of child labour.

2.3 Socioeconomic Aspects

Modern socio-economic developments have diminished the traditional role and power of women. This change in status has brought about strains in family life and decreased the value of children, resulting into more frequent occurrences of child abuse and neglect. Today, more than ever before, the socio-economic problems are impinging on the parents and are making them lose child rearing self-confidence as they can hardly sustain the family. The role of bread winners has shifted from men to wives and children hence a call for working to survive.

2.4 Social-cultural Aspects

These have played a vital role in contributing to the increasing rate of child labour in India today. Traditionally, children have been viewed as personal

property and were generally expected to work. There was maximum division of labour where the girls were expected to do all the house chores and the boys went hunting.

Gender and education of children is another old cultural practice that has been carried on to date. Traditionally, education of females was not considered important. While their male counterparts were left to go to school, the females stayed home doing house chores. Educating boys was seen as old age insurance and one that had higher future investment returns. Educating a girl on the other hand was seen as a waste of income since many would get married off and therefore have no economic contribution to the bonafide family. At puberty, girls were prepared for marital roles and eventually an early marriage where the family acquired bridal wealth.

Gender biases and stereotypes deprive the discriminated sex their rights as children. All individuals according to Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are entitled to all rights set forth in the declaration. Rights are not only limited to education, but also freedom from discrimination, slavery, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. The Constitution of India and the Education Act also provide for compulsory education, therefore children should not be denied an education on grounds of sex. Household activities that include digging, cooking and cleaning can still be learnt from school. For example home economics and agriculture practices if handled seriously in all schools, they can be of benefit to many children in the learning process.

2.5 Community Variables

At community level, societal transformation and challenges therein act as a stressor on families and diminishes the capability of families to look after their children properly. The rampant slum developments, which are a manifestation of poor socio-economic conditions and overcrowding, represent a bigger challenge to the life of a child than the society itself. Households in informal settlements lack the basics of life like good nutrition, health care and utmost education. Slums have been indicated as sprouting places for juvenile delinquents especially the boys and represent a high breeding place of children in the worst forms of child labour to include; child prostitution and pornography, drug trafficking and child crime.

The community on the other hand also provided employment opportunities to children. Children are often preferred for their age and the cheap labour they provide. As per the study, the community's perception on child labour was seen more as a positive investment than negative. This embracement has only increased child labour cases.

2.6 Effects of Child Labour

Child labour has both negative and positive implications on the child and these include;

2.6.1 Negative

Effects The number and proportion of children affected is not the only indicator of the prevalence of child labour, but also the type of work children do, the conditions under which they work and abuses the children

face are significant factors of input. The study significantly noted that the challenges faced by children in this country are uniform, and thus the data collected represented the general situation regarding child labour in this country. Some of the challenges that were spot-on included: exploitation, meagre payments, sexual harassment, psychological and physical ineptness, dropout from school and health risks. Such challenges were tailored to specific activities in the informal sector that were highly detrimental to the children's health. Children who for instance worked as young mechanics were exposed to accidents and dangerous chemical substances, while those who engaged in child domestic service were often sexually harassed, beaten and sometimes not paid.

Contrary to Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the UN CRC and Section 8 of the Children's Act, which provides that no child shall be employed in any activity that may be harmful to his or her health, education, or mental, physical, or moral development, these children were exposed to most, if not all risks that hindered them from having a harmless childhood life.

2.6.2 Health and Safety Hazards

This is basically related to the nature of work that the children engage in and the conditions under which they work. Children who engage in work are exposed to chemical, physical, biological and psychological hazards, which are often found in combination in the work place. Often too, their adverse effects are not only cumulative but magnified through their synergic interaction. According to WHO, occupational health and safety

hazards cause not only immediate health implications – injuries and skin reactions – but they too have long-term effects that will mostly become evident in adulthood. Long-term implications of child labour include; cases of cancer, IQ reduction, infertility and chronic back pain.

The researcher observed that the children who worked in garages, salons as well as those who engaged in rubbish collecting were given no protective gear like gloves, boots, and eye wear to reduce the risk of these dangerous substances. The children were therefore highly exposed to these hazards which were detrimental to their health.

Similar studies by UNICEF and ILO indicate that children are more vulnerable to harm in many work places since they have not developed so well, as quoted; A growing body of research indicates that, because of anatomical, physiological and psychological differences between children and adults, child workers are considerably more vulnerable to work place health hazards. Age seems to be an important factor in the effect of toxic chemicals, and children who are exposed to them early tend to become ill or disabled much more quickly than the adults do with similar exposure. Children are more susceptible to thermal stress and environmental temperature changes, and are more sensitive to ionizing radiation. They are also more vulnerable to carcinogens, and if exposed to them, the probability of them developing cancer is greater than that of adults having equal exposure. Further more, children who work are more likely than adults to suffer occupational injuries owing to inattention, fatigue, poor judgment,

insufficient knowledge of work processes and the fact that equipment, machinery and tools used are designed for adults.

A child basically develops through four stages including; Physical development which is the very first stage for child development. Cognitive development being the second, this is followed by emotional development and finally social and moral development. These developments are categorized into physical and psychological development. Any threat of these developments of the child will hinder or be critical to the future of the child.

2.6.3 Physical Work Hazards

This is typical to children who undertake heavy workloads and their spines and the pelvis are usually affected leading to skeletal damage and impaired growth. A child who engages in heavy work hinders his/her physical and mental development. The study observed that children who carried heavily engaged in Saharsa and Simri-Bakhtiyarpur subdivision had problems ranging from backaches to permanent disabilities or deformities and retarded growth. Working in mines, quarries and construction sites also put children directly at physical risks.

2.6.4 School Dropouts

There is also a strong relationship between child labour and school attendance. Children who engaged in child labour activities had few hours of study which subsequently led to poor performance and eventually dropping out of school. Above a certain threshold, which varies according to age and type of activity, work has a detrimental effect on children's

ability to learn. According to a research in the United States, school performance of persons between the ages of 12 and 17 can be negatively affected after long hours of work between 15 and 20 hours per week. Children worked long hours in order to meet their fees, scholastic materials and lunch upkeep basically attributed to the lack of them, the urge to work and refusal by parents to educate their children.

Children who engaged in several work activities made significant contribution to the household economy since they had to supplement meagre family incomes. Education of the girl child was not a priority. Educating a girl was seen as wastage of resources since she would get married and therefore not contribute to the bonafide family. Thus, the Child labour not only affects the future wellbeing of the child, but also has an extreme damage to the society as a whole. Parents therefore have a cardinal role to play in bringing up the children.

2.6.5 Psychological Work Hazards

When the work becomes burdensome or abusive, or is divorced from the links to the family, it can have serious negative effects in the psychological development of children. If work occupies so much time that the children involved do not have an opportunity to play or socialize with other children, their social and psychological development can be intensely stunted. The most salient characteristics of much exploitive child work is its repetitive dullness and sameness, in a nutshell, it lacks stimulating variety and creativity. It has been for instance noted that in different cultural settings, children confined to some sort of work, or who are isolated from free and

spontaneous contact with others, especially children, show unmistakable symptoms of stunted psychological development.

A study of psychological characteristics of child rag pickers was described as follows; Barred from entering into large social life and deprived of a congenial environment, the rag pickers develop a strong sense of insecurity which makes their personality weak, incapable and withdrawing. This sense of insecurity creates in them a sense of persecution, which manifests itself in rebellious, aggressive, violent outbursts against individuals and institutions. The world around them exhibits active hostility and rag pickers seldom receive love and affection. Hence, their response to love is totally unnatural and mechanical. They do not believe in love or being loved. The cold, callous and unsympathetic attitude, the lack of parental communication, and the absence of any provision for school life, creates a deep sense of psychological and social insecurity, which in turn hampers the natural growth of their personality.

A study by the WHO on social and psychological problems of children at work reported that children employed as domestic servants suffer serious symptoms of withdrawal; regressive behaviour, premature ageing, depression, inferior status identity and resistance. Children in domestic service are not necessarily engaged in hard work but the activity jeopardises a child's psychological and social growth more than physical growth.

The study noted that children in domestic service worked long hours and were subject to physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Internationally, studies that have been conducted in India show that on average children in

domestic service work for twenty hours a day with minimal intervals. Similar studies by UNICEF indicate that approximately 90 percent of the employers preferred children aged between 12 and 15 years because they can be easily dominated and therefore obliged to work long hours with minimal payments.

2.6.6 Moral Hazards

These are generally dangers arising from the illegal activities in which children engage. These activities are morally repulsive in themselves and affect the sense of uprightness of the children. Such activities include; drug trafficking, commercial sex (child prostitution) and production of pornographic materials. The study indicated that children who engaged in commercial sexual activities and those who were sexually abused in domestic service were highly exposed to the risks of catching HIV/AIDS, STD's and early pregnancies. For the children who engaged in drug trafficking, they were highly exposed to crime (child crime) and were no exception to drug use.

2.7 Positive Effects of Child Labour

The family being the first stage of development of the child, participation of children in economically productive activities within the context of the family, is traditionally one of the most common and useful ways in which children are socialized into particular social and cultural milieu. When for instance parents appportion and oversee the children's work with affection and sensitivity to the needs of their children, this builds a sense of efficacy and high self esteem in the child who performs it. Children feel that they are

needed, useful and contributing to the family in a way. This is supported by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which provides inter alia; The child subject to his age and ability and such limitations as may be contained in the charter shall have the duty: To work for the cohesion of the family to respect his parents and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need.

Children also contribute to family income especially in poor families. Many children worked to supplement the small family earnings to meet the basics of life like; food, clothing and shelter. The combined effort of the family members was a contribution to at least a better living lifestyle and hence not living in abject poverty. Part of the earnings by the children was used to buy scholastic materials for those who went to school.

Child labour as a whole was seen as a positive implication to society as the children's involvement in work did reduce petty crimes and improved on the children's discipline. When children worked to earn a living and in a way kept busy, they were able to meet their basic necessities through hard work and not petty crimes. The children also benefited as they learnt many aspects of life that would enable them to survive in society. A child who has always struggled to survive will always stand on his/her own even when they lose their parents, or guardians. Although child labour was considered positive to the development of the child and society as a whole, it's to a large extent that it was disadvantageous to the child's proper growth and development both physiologically and psychologically as per the negative effects. The proper development of a child in all dimensions – physical,

morally, psychologically and physically – is therefore only possible when s(he) is handled correctly and in observation of their rights. Children each day around the world are exposed to dangers that hamper their growth and development. They suffer immensely as casualties of war and violence, as victims of racial segregation, apartheid, aggression, foreign occupation and annexation, as refugees and displaced children, forced to abandon their homes and their roots, as disabled or as victims of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.

It is important however to note that in the future to come, the effects of child labour will become more noticeable. By the year 2020, 730 million new workers will have joined the adult workforce, 90% from developing countries, where child labour is most common. Some of these new workers who will then be the new builders of the world's society will have been child labourers growing up. This will render them crippled, unhealthy, and most importantly uneducated.

It has further been noted that many child labourers will have died before reaching the age of 18, and not even have made an impact on the world's future. Therefore while child labourers may not have an effect now on the world's economy, they will play a role in shaping the world when they grow up. This is a key reason why we should try to solve child labour now. Entrusting the world to uneducated and crippled people has never been desirable. In order to have educated, healthy, contributing members to the world's economy later, it is necessary to eliminate child labour now, before the economic effects start to show up.

2.8 Research Questions

1. What is the impact on health, safety, working hours and education of child labour who engaged in automobile servicing sector of Saharsa district of Bihar ?
2. Are the existing strategies regarding child labour implemented ethically and effectively?
3. What measures may be recommended to address the problem of child labour in automobile servicing sector in Saharsa district of Bihar ?

2.9 Conclusion

The issue of poverty is certainly front and center when discussing the causes of child labor and attempts to eliminate it. The fact that many families are barely subsisting means that they must draw on every possible resource to acquire the basic necessities such as food. There are additional factors at play such as "lack of awareness; lack of access to basic and meaningful quality education and skills; high rates of adult unemployment and underemployment, and cultural values of the family and society." When examining child labor through the lens of economic development, some see it as a natural occurrence in poor nations lacking social programs to assist families.

