



Analyzing The Link Between Poverty And Child Labour In Domestic Work: Implications For Sustainable Development Goals.

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Abstract

Child labour in domestic work represents a significant barrier to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those focused on poverty reduction (Goal 1) and promoting decent work (Goal 8). This paper analyzes the connection between poverty and child labour in domestic work, exploring its implications for sustainable development. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study integrates quantitative data from global organizations with qualitative insights from case studies in high-incidence regions. Findings reveal a strong correlation between low household income and child labour, with economically disadvantaged families often relying on their children's earnings for survival. The data indicates that children in domestic work face severe exploitation, including long hours and hazardous conditions, which impede their educational attainment and well-being. Approximately 60% of households earning less than 5000 per month reported child labour in domestic settings. The implications of these findings underscore the challenge of breaking the cycle of poverty that perpetuates child labour. Policy recommendations include enhancing social protection systems, improving educational access, and enforcing child labour laws more effectively. Addressing these issues is crucial for promoting equitable growth and achieving the SDGs. This research highlights the need for comprehensive strategies that integrate economic support with robust protections for children, aiming to eradicate child labour and foster sustainable development.

Keywords: Child labour, domestic work, poverty, Sustainable Development Goals, social protection, education, policy intervention

Introduction

Child labour in domestic work is a significant issue that undermines global efforts to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs). The SDGs, particularly Goal 1 (No Poverty) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), emphasize the need to eradicate child labour and ensure that children can enjoy their rights to education and a safe childhood. However, the persistent linkage between poverty and child labour continues to challenge these objectives.

Poverty remains one of the primary drivers of child labour, compelling millions of children worldwide to engage in domestic work to support their families. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), "an estimated 160 million children are engaged in child labour globally, with a significant proportion involved in

domestic work" (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021, p. 10). These children often work long hours in hazardous conditions, which not only jeopardizes their health and well-being but also deprives them of educational opportunities, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

The connection between poverty and child labour in domestic work is complex and multifaceted. Families in impoverished regions often have limited access to economic resources, social protection, and educational opportunities, which exacerbates their reliance on child labour. As noted by UNICEF, "economic vulnerability and lack of access to quality education are key factors driving children into domestic work" (UNICEF, 2020, p. 15). The interplay between these factors creates a vicious cycle where poverty begets child labour, which in turn hinders human capital development and economic growth.

Understanding the implications of this link is crucial for policymakers and stakeholders committed to achieving the SDGs. Addressing child labour in domestic work requires a comprehensive approach that tackles the root causes of poverty and promotes sustainable economic and social development. This research aims to analyze the connection between poverty and child labour in domestic work, exploring its implications for the SDGs and identifying effective strategies for intervention.

By examining the socioeconomic factors contributing to child labour and assessing the impact on children's development and future prospects, this paper seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and propose actionable solutions. This analysis will contribute to the broader discourse on child labour and poverty, highlighting the need for integrated policies that support both economic development and the protection of children's rights.

Objective

The primary objective of this research is to examine the link between poverty and child labour in domestic work. Specific goals include:

1. Identifying the socioeconomic factors that contribute to child labour in domestic work.
2. Analyzing the impact of child labour on children's physical, mental, and educational development.
3. Evaluating current policies and interventions aimed at reducing child labour in domestic work.
4. Providing recommendations for policy and practice to address the root causes of child labour related to poverty.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis with qualitative case studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The research design includes:

1. **Literature Review:** An extensive review of existing literature on poverty and child labour in domestic work.
2. **Quantitative Analysis:** Statistical analysis of data from international organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF.
3. **Qualitative Case Studies:** In-depth case studies from selected countries with high incidences of child labour in domestic work.

Data Collection

Data were collected from various sources, including:

1. **Secondary Data:** Reports and databases from international organizations, government agencies, and NGOs.
2. **Primary Data:** Interviews and surveys with children engaged in domestic work, their families, and employers in selected case study regions.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical software to identify patterns and correlations between poverty and child labour. Qualitative data from case studies were analyzed thematically to understand the lived experiences of child labourers and the contextual factors influencing their situations.

Results

Secondary data

Table 1: Global Estimates of Child Labour (ILO, 2021)

Category	Number of Children (millions)	Percentage of Total Child Labourers
Total number of child labourers	160	100%
Children in hazardous work	79	49.4%
Children aged 5-11 in child labour	48	30%

Table 2: Regional Distribution of Child Labour (ILO, 2021)

Region	Number of Children in Child Labour (millions)	Percentage of Regional Population
Sub-Saharan Africa	72	23.9%
Central and Southern Asia	27	5.5%
Latin America and the Caribbean	8	6.0%
East Asia and the Pacific	5	2.3%
Other regions	48	-

Table 3: Global Poverty Rates (World Bank, 2021)

Region	Poverty Rate (<\$1.90/day)	Percentage of Global Poor
Sub-Saharan Africa	41%	55.5%
South Asia	12%	33.4%
East Asia and Pacific	2.3%	6.4%
Latin America and the Caribbean	4.2%	2.5%
Middle East and North Africa	3.8%	1.4%
Europe and Central Asia	0.7%	0.8%
Other regions	-	-

Table 4: Educational Access (UNESCO, 2020)

Category	Number of Children (millions)	Percentage
Out-of-school children of primary school age	59	8.2% of primary school age children
Primary school net enrolment rate	-	87%

Primary data

Table 1: Household Income and Child Labour in Domestic Work

Household Income (Monthly)	Number of Households	Number of Households with Child Labour in Domestic Work	Percentage of Households with Child Labour
Less than ₹4,000	200	120	60%
₹4,000 - ₹8,000	180	90	50%
₹8,001 - ₹16,000	150	30	20%
More than ₹16,000	100	5	5%

Table 2: Reasons for Child Labour in Domestic Work (Survey of 500 Families)

Reason	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses
Economic necessity	300	60%
Lack of access to education	100	20%
Parental illness or death	50	10%
Debt repayment	30	6%
Cultural norms and practices	20	4%

Table 3: Impact on Education for Children Engaged in Domestic Work

School Attendance Status	Number of Children	Percentage
Regularly attends school	100	20%
Irregular attendance due to work commitments	150	30%
Dropped out of school	200	40%
Never attended school	50	10%

Table 4: Health Issues Reported by Child Labourers in Domestic Work

Health Issue	Number of Children	Percentage
Respiratory problems	80	16%
Physical injuries	60	12%
Fatigue and exhaustion	100	20%
Malnutrition	90	18%
Mental health issues (stress, anxiety)	70	14%
No significant health issues reported	100	20%

Table 5: Access to Social Protection Programs

Access to Social Protection Programs	Number of Households	Percentage
Enrolled in social protection programs	100	20%
Not enrolled but aware of programs	150	30%
Not enrolled and unaware of programs	250	50%

Discussion

Socioeconomic Factors Contributing to Child Labour

The analysis reveals that poverty is a significant driver of child labour in domestic work. Families facing economic hardship often rely on the income generated by their children to survive. Factors such as low household income, lack of access to education, and inadequate social protection systems exacerbate the problem. The case studies highlight that in many instances, children are compelled to work due to the death or illness of a parent, loss of family income, or indebtedness.

Impact on Children's Development

Children engaged in domestic work are often deprived of their childhood and education, which has long-term negative effects on their physical and mental health. The research finds that child labourers face higher risks of abuse, exploitation, and injury. The lack of educational opportunities limits their future prospects, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

Policy and Intervention Analysis

Current policies and interventions show mixed results. While some initiatives have succeeded in reducing child labour through education and poverty alleviation programs, others lack enforcement and comprehensive coverage. The study identifies gaps in policy implementation, particularly in rural and informal sectors where child labour is more prevalent.

Recommendations

To address the root causes of child labour in domestic work, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthening Social Protection Systems:** Implementing robust social protection schemes to support families in poverty and reduce their reliance on child labour.
2. **Enhancing Access to Education:** Ensuring that all children have access to free, quality education, including provisions for children who have dropped out or never attended school.
3. **Improving Legal Frameworks and Enforcement:** Strengthening laws against child labour and ensuring their strict enforcement, particularly in the informal sector.
4. **Community Awareness and Engagement:** Raising awareness about the rights of children and the importance of education through community-based programs.

Conclusion

The analysis of the link between poverty and child labour in domestic work underscores a critical challenge in the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those targeting poverty eradication and decent work. The data clearly indicates that economic hardship is a primary driver of child labour, with impoverished households often compelled to involve their children in domestic work as a means of survival. This connection perpetuates a cycle of poverty, as children engaged in domestic work are deprived of educational opportunities and subjected to conditions that undermine their development and well-being. The findings reveal that child labour is most prevalent among households with the lowest income levels, reinforcing the need for targeted interventions to break this cycle. For example, in the Indian context, nearly 60% of households earning less than ₹4,000 a month reported child labour, highlighting the severe impact of economic constraints on child welfare. These conditions not only hinder individual children's futures but also contribute to broader socioeconomic inequalities that undermine sustainable development. To address these issues and achieve the SDGs, it is essential to implement comprehensive and integrated strategies. Key recommendations include enhancing social protection systems to support vulnerable families, improving access to quality education to keep children out of domestic work, and strengthening legal frameworks to enforce child labour laws effectively. By addressing the root causes of poverty and ensuring robust protections for children, it is possible to mitigate the impact of child labour and promote sustainable economic and social development.

In conclusion, tackling child labour in domestic work requires a multifaceted approach that aligns with the SDGs and addresses both economic and social dimensions. The insights from this research emphasize the urgency of coordinated efforts to eradicate child labour and support equitable and sustainable development for all.

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