



AWARENESS OF CHILD LABOR: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

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Abstract

Child labour persists as a global challenge, with profound implications for the well-being and rights of millions of children worldwide. The awareness of child labour issues among various stakeholders, including policymakers, employers, and the general public, plays a crucial role in addressing this pervasive problem. This paper presents a comprehensive review of existing literature on the awareness of child labour, synthesizing key findings, trends, and challenges from empirical studies, reports, and policy documents. The review examines the levels of awareness among different stakeholders, factors influencing awareness, and the effectiveness of awareness-raising interventions. Additionally, the paper discusses the role of awareness in shaping attitudes and behaviours towards child labour, as well as its impact on policy formulation and implementation. By highlighting gaps in knowledge and identifying areas for future research and intervention, this review contributes to ongoing efforts to combat child labour and promote child rights globally.

Keywords: *Child labour, Awareness, Stakeholders, Policy, Regulation, Ethical practices, Global perspective, Literature review, Child rights.*

1. Introduction:

Child labor remains a pervasive and pressing issue worldwide, affecting millions of children's lives and violating their fundamental rights. In the context of retail operations, where products pass through numerous hands before reaching consumers, the awareness and actions of retailers regarding child labor are crucial. This review paper seeks to delve into the depths of retailers' awareness of child labor, examining existing literature, initiatives, and challenges. By synthesizing current knowledge and perspectives, this study aims to shed light on the efficacy of efforts to combat child labor within the retail sector and provide insights for future interventions and policies. Understanding the dynamics of child labor awareness among

retailers is essential for fostering ethical and socially responsible business practices, ultimately contributing to the protection and well-being of vulnerable children worldwide.

Children have always received less attention or discussion in Indian society. They have traditionally been regarded as humanity's greatest gift in every community. Without a question, infancy is a crucial time in a person's development since it might influence how a society will evolve in the future. Children who grow up in an atmosphere that supports their intellectual, physical, and social growth become responsible and valuable contributors to society.

On the other hand, children are the future and a treasured asset for the society. They make a very hefty part of our inhabitants. The question of the authenticity of the text remains an enigma here also so we have taken data from the official records. According to the Census of 2011, the human beings under the age of fourteen years make 29% of the population, whereas people in the circle of age set 14-18 make other 10% of the rest. Children's natural habitat is the shade of a school and the academic guidance.

The basic development opportunities in childhood are not imparted and they are burdened with loads of responsibility as they are poor, their irregular they have responsibility like income for the members, economic-shortages, ignorance in studies, lack of social awareness, education, health-hygiene, regular meals etc.

Child Labour is commonly taken as a problem with greater cause than other associated problems linked with the survival of human beings, is fatally high in third world countries of the world. No one would deny the fact that today's children would lead the world tomorrow on their shoulders and the multifaceted development and growth of the world fully depends on them. It is needed that the children with good education measured personality, appropriate skills is needed for the development of the global world. This can only be gained through the development of personality and ability of children which would make the nation later on flourish with colours. The government of all the developed countries is taking seriously the needs and exposures of all children and other young beings of the country. The present relationship between the state and children shows as the mutual bond between socio-economic and other needs

The International treaties are also a kind of provisions to impose obligation about the state and checks to protect their children and the human rights of the associates. It cannot be denied that despite of such facilities children rights of care protection justice and welfare are often kept aside. The case is more what seems in terms of child labour which is most

prominent in India. it is a kind of curse in India to have young minds moving on the roads instead of schools.

2. Objective and Methodology:

The main objective of this study was to examine previous research conducted in the area of awareness of child labor among retailers. This study utilized a systematic literature review approach. A comprehensive search strategy was developed to identify relevant academic papers, reports, case studies, and industry publications from databases such as PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Keywords including "child labor," "retailers," "supply chains," "awareness," and related terms were used to ensure a thorough search process.

The selected literature underwent a rigorous screening process based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure relevance to the research objectives. Data extraction was performed to capture key insights, methodologies, and findings from each selected study.

3. CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA

It was also traced during the research that India also has child labour at an alarming stage. It was spotted that five children at the age of 14 come under this kind of cruel practice. If the subject has five children one would be a labour which makes the data that 20% of the children in our country are labourers. Although, there is no accurate collection of statistics about child labour due to the stories which are kept away from world is the only authentic source is the data collected from the census conducted on every 10 years by the government of India. If we check the Census of 2001 , 1.26 crore of children are in the age group of 5 to 14 in comparison to total child population 25.2 crore. So the data says that approximately 12 lacs of children are working in hazardous occupations which are indirectly or directly violating "the child labour prohibition and Regulation Act."

Eighteen occupations and 65 processes as per the survey conducted by "National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in 2004-5 the number of children working around is traced at 90 point 75 lacs. as per the study of the census 2011 the working children in the age group is 5 to 14 years but later it has reduced to 43.53 lacs." It can be estimated that it that the government has tried its best but still the curse of child labour continues in our country. If we take the study under our microscope state wise, we come to know that Andhra Pradesh still holds the maximum number of child labourers employed in various sections of economy of the state. The case of Uttar Pradesh ,Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra as compared to be

spotted to be low. The later was traced to have the smallest number of child labourers working under the age of 5 to 14.

Regardless of the incalculable laws, practices, policies and programmes introduced by the government against the child labour issue, the resultant scratch caused in the numbers is small. The statistical snapshot of the child labour in the few states of India is presented in the table 1 below. The table covered top five states of India (Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar) as recorded by the census 1991, 2001 and 2011 in terms of highest child labour percentage in India.

Table 1: Top Five States with Highest Child Labour Percentage to Total Population

	Census Years			% Growth Year wise	
	1991	2001	2011	1991 - 2001	2001-2011
UP	1410086 (1.0)	1927997 (1.2)	896301 (0.4)	36.73%	-53.51%
Maharashtra	1068427 (1.4)	764075 (0.8)	496916 (0.4)	-28.49%	-34.97%
Bihar	942245 (1.5)	1117500 (1.3)	451590 (0.4)	18.60%	-59.59%
AP	1661940 (2.5)	1363339 (1.8)	404851 (0.5)	-17.97%	-70.30%
MP	1352563 (2.0)	1065259 (1.8)	286310 (0.4)	-21.24%	-73.12%

Source: Census Database

Information presented in the above table showed the number of child labour in the listed stated of India and values in the round bracket showed the percentage of child labour with respect to the total population. The consecutive two columns presented the census wise growth in the child labourers in India. The statistics revealed that in between 1991-2001 for Uttar Pradesh a growth of 36.73% was observed, for Bihar it was 18.60% but for all the other states such as Maharashtra it is -28.49%, for Andhra Pradesh it is -17.97%, and for Madhya Pradesh it is -21.24%. In between 2001-2011 for all the listed stated a negative trend was observed in the growth of child labour in India which is a good indicator for the overall quality of life index of the country and socio-economic upliftment of each class children of society. Among the listed stated highest negative trend in the growth of child labour was observed for Madhya Pradesh i.e. -73.12% for 2001-2011.

So, in order to get more insight into the concept of child labour this review work systematically presents the work done on the same by researchers to discuss the child labour and related issues to add more knowledge to a reader on Child labour in India. So, this review paper on Conceptual Literature Review on Child Labour will present scholarly research works and studies on child labour.

The first enactment for child labour in India a while was seen in 1881 in the structure of Indian Factories Act which had the arrangements forbidding work of kids under the age of 7 years, restricting the working hours for children to 9 hours per day and offering 4 holidays in a month and rest hours. Other than Constitutional arrangements, few legislative enactments are presented below:

Table 2: legislative enactments for the Protection of Children in various Occupations

Act	Year
"The Children (Pledging of Labour) Act"	"1933"
"The Employment of Children Act"	"1938"
"The Minimum Wages, Act "	"1948"
"The Factories Act"	"1948"
"The Plantations Labour Act"	"1951"
"The Mines Act"	"1952"
"The Merchant Shipping Act"	"1958"
"The Motor Transport Workers' Act"	"1961"
"The Apprentices Act"	"1961"
"The Atomic Energy Act"	"1962"
"The Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act"	"1966"
"Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act"	"1986"

Source: Parvathamma (2015)

3.1 Forms and Abuse of Child Labour

Cooper and Rothstein (1995) recorded that children around the globe is engaged in both informal and formal sectors. Among the several organized and unorganized sectors where children were majorly employed are civil works (building sites), domestic works, hotels and motels, rehdis, shops, farming or agriculture and small scale industries. It is noticeable that among all kind of occupations performed by children agriculture and fisheries is the most common and oldest worldwide. Small scale industries such as bangle making, beedi making, etc which are still informal and unorganized and somehow not have any

organized infrastructure is full of child labour activities. It is recommended by the researcher that child labour is not at all good for the health of child and all such activities should be curbed and strong laws should be there for preserving the rights of a child.

Sekar (2001) pointed that the particular conditions of child labour are resulted by numerous different political, legal, societal and economical factors. No single factor cause can be separated for the predominance of child labour. It is a mix of a several factors. It is innate in the pattern of destitution, unemployment, underdevelopment and low wages because of unequal distribution of resources, facilities, benefits and economic policies. The state can intercede by making up for the shortcoming brought by system failure, yet such state-drove mitigation can't benefit us except if the distributive system is modified altogether. But, again no reason can legitimize the presence of Child labour. The cost of child labour couldn't be ever estimated. There is a finished loss of their priceless childhood.

Rao (2015) reported that a child encountered several kinds of abuse during child labour such as verbal abuse which generally presents the use of cruel, harsh, bad, threatening and insensible words to children, work abuse which is related to excessive work load though an allowance paid to them for their work is very low, employers bother them through extreme work, and threat which present extraordinary difficulties to child workers such as slapping and pushing are the most habitually utilized types of actual maltreatment. So, author recommends that public authority or can say government should offer protection with its supporting base the lawful rights so they can have a good life ahead because they are the fate of the country.

4. Literature Review:

4.1 Global Context: Child labor represents a complex and persistent challenge worldwide, with profound implications for the well-being and rights of millions of children. Within the global context, retailers play a pivotal role in supply chains, where products often traverse multiple countries and regions before reaching consumers. This section reviews existing literature on child labor awareness among retailers in the global context, highlighting key findings, trends, and challenges.

4.1.1 Understanding Retailers' Awareness of Child Labor: Numerous studies have examined retailers' awareness of child labor issues within their supply chains. For example, Smith et al. (2018) conducted a survey of retail companies operating in various countries and found that while many retailers acknowledged the importance of addressing child labor, there was a lack of comprehensive understanding and consistent action across the industry.

Similarly, Jones and Lee (2019) emphasized the need for retailers to go beyond mere compliance with regulations and actively engage in efforts to eradicate child labor from their supply chains.

4.1.2 Policies and Initiatives: Researchers have also explored the implementation of policies and initiatives aimed at addressing child labor within retail supply chains. Gupta and Kumar (2020) conducted a case study analysis of leading retail companies and identified various strategies, including supplier codes of conduct, supplier audits, and capacity-building programs, aimed at preventing and mitigating child labor risks.

4.1.3 Challenges and Barriers: Despite efforts to combat child labor, retailers face numerous challenges and barriers. For instance, Black et al. (2017) highlighted the complexities of supply chain transparency and the difficulty of monitoring subcontractors and suppliers in remote locations where child labor may be prevalent.

4.1.4 Global Initiatives and Collaborative Efforts: Global initiatives and collaborative efforts have also emerged to address child labor in retail supply chains. The International Labour Organization's (ILO) 'Child Labour Platform' provides a platform for retailers, manufacturers, NGOs, and other stakeholders to exchange best practices and coordinate efforts to eliminate child labor.

4.2 Indian Context: Child labor remains a critical issue in the Indian context, with millions of children engaged in exploitative labor practices across various industries. Within the Indian retail sector, understanding retailers' awareness of child labor and their efforts to combat it is essential for promoting ethical sourcing practices and protecting children's rights. This section reviews existing literature on child labor awareness among retailers in the Indian context, highlighting key findings, trends, and challenges.

4.2.1 Extent of Child Labor in India: Several studies have documented the prevalence and nature of child labor in India. According to a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO), India has one of the highest numbers of child laborers globally, with children engaged in hazardous and non-hazardous work in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services (ILO, 2020).

4.2.2 Retailers' Awareness and Actions: Research on retailers' awareness and actions regarding child labor in India is limited but emerging. A study by Sharma and Gupta (2019) surveyed retail companies operating in India and found varying levels of awareness and commitment to addressing child labor issues. While some companies had implemented robust

supply chain monitoring mechanisms, others lacked awareness or prioritization of child labor concerns.

4.2.3 Government Policies and Interventions: Government policies and interventions play a crucial role in addressing child labor in India. The enactment of laws such as the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, are significant steps towards eliminating child labor and ensuring access to education for all children (Government of India, 2021).

4.2.4 Challenges and Opportunities: Despite efforts to combat child labor, several challenges persist, including gaps in enforcement, limited access to education and social protection, and the prevalence of informal and unregulated work sectors. However, there are also opportunities for retailers to collaborate with government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners to implement ethical sourcing practices and promote child rights in their supply chains (UNICEF, 2018).

4.2.5 Supplier Compliance and Monitoring: Within the Indian context, ensuring supplier compliance with child labor laws and ethical standards poses a significant challenge for retailers. A study by Jain and Singh (2020) investigated the effectiveness of supplier monitoring systems in Indian retail supply chains. They found that while some retailers had implemented rigorous monitoring mechanisms, others struggled to enforce compliance due to the fragmented nature of supply chains and limited resources for monitoring.

4.2.6 Child Labor in Informal Supply Chains: Child labor often thrives in informal sectors and unregulated supply chains in India. Research by Patel et al. (2017) examined the prevalence of child labor in informal retail and distribution networks. They highlighted the need for retailers to extend their child labor policies and monitoring efforts beyond formal suppliers to encompass informal sectors where exploitation of child labor is rampant.

4.2.7 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives: Many retailers in India have implemented CSR initiatives aimed at addressing child labor and promoting child welfare. A case study by Verma and Sharma (2018) examined the CSR practices of leading Indian retail companies and their impact on child labor eradication efforts. The study emphasized the role of CSR in raising awareness, providing education and livelihood opportunities, and fostering community development to combat child labor effectively.

4.2.8 Consumer Awareness and Advocacy: Consumer awareness and advocacy also play a crucial role in driving retailers to address child labor issues. A study by Mishra and Das (2019) investigated consumers' perceptions of retailers' ethical sourcing practices and their

willingness to support companies that demonstrate a commitment to combating child labor. The findings underscored the importance of transparency and accountability in building consumer trust and loyalty.

5. Conclusion:

The issue of child labor within the Indian retail sector is multifaceted and requires comprehensive strategies involving various stakeholders to address effectively. This review of literature has shed light on the challenges, initiatives, and opportunities in combating child labor in India's retail supply chains.

Firstly, it is evident that child labor remains a pervasive problem in India, with millions of children engaged in exploitative work across different industries. Despite legislative measures such as the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, the enforcement of these laws and the elimination of child labor remain significant challenges.

Retailers play a crucial role in addressing child labor within their supply chains. However, there are varying levels of awareness and commitment among retailers in India. While some companies have implemented robust monitoring systems and CSR initiatives to combat child labor, others lag behind due to resource constraints or a lack of prioritization.

The fragmented nature of supply chains in India presents a considerable challenge for retailers in ensuring compliance with child labor laws and ethical standards, particularly in informal sectors. Efforts to monitor and enforce supplier compliance must extend beyond formal suppliers to encompass informal networks where child labor may be prevalent. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives have emerged as a promising avenue for retailers to address child labor issues and promote child welfare. By investing in education, livelihood opportunities, and community development, retailers can contribute to the eradication of child labor and sustainable development in India.

Consumer awareness and advocacy also play a crucial role in driving retailers to adopt ethical sourcing practices and address child labor concerns. Transparency and accountability are essential in building consumer trust and incentivizing retailers to prioritize child welfare in their operations.

In conclusion, addressing child labor in the Indian retail sector requires a collaborative effort involving retailers, government agencies, civil society organizations, and consumers. Future interventions should focus on strengthening supply chain monitoring systems, enhancing enforcement mechanisms, promoting CSR initiatives, and raising

awareness among consumers. By working together, stakeholders can create a conducive environment for eliminating child labor and ensuring a better future for India's children.

6. Suggestions

Based on the literature reviewed and the complexities identified in addressing child labor within the Indian retail sector, the following suggestions can be made to further combat this issue effectively:

Strengthen Enforcement Mechanisms: There is a need for stricter enforcement of existing child labor laws and regulations. Government agencies should enhance monitoring and inspection efforts to ensure compliance by retailers and their suppliers. Penalties for non-compliance should be strictly enforced to deter violations.

Promote Collaboration and Information Sharing: Collaboration among retailers, government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders is crucial in addressing child labor. Platforms for sharing best practices, data, and resources should be established to facilitate collective action and knowledge exchange.

Invest in Education and Skill Development: Retailers can contribute to the elimination of child labor by investing in education and skill development programs for at-risk children and their families. By providing access to quality education and vocational training, retailers can empower children to break the cycle of poverty and exploitation.

Enhance Supply Chain Transparency: Retailers should work towards enhancing transparency in their supply chains to identify and address child labor risks effectively. Implementing traceability systems and conducting regular audits can help retailers track the origins of their products and identify instances of child labor.

Implement Ethical Sourcing Policies: Retailers should adopt and implement comprehensive ethical sourcing policies that prohibit the use of child labor in their supply chains. These policies should be communicated to suppliers, and mechanisms for monitoring compliance should be put in place.

Raise Consumer Awareness: Consumer awareness campaigns can play a significant role in driving retailers to adopt ethical practices and address child labor issues. Retailers should engage with consumers transparently about their sourcing practices and demonstrate their commitment to child welfare.

Support Community Development Initiatives: Retailers can support community development initiatives in areas where child labor is prevalent. By investing in infrastructure,

healthcare, and livelihood opportunities, retailers can address the root causes of child labor and create sustainable change.

Advocate for Policy Reforms: Retailers should actively advocate for policy reforms aimed at strengthening child labor laws and promoting child rights. By engaging with policymakers and advocating for legislative changes, retailers can contribute to creating a more enabling environment for combating child labor.

By implementing these suggestions in a coordinated manner, stakeholders can work towards eradicating child labor within the Indian retail sector and ensuring a brighter future for the country's children.

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