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Child Labour In Nagaland: A Case Study Of Child Rag Pickers Of Dimapur City

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Abstract: Child labour is a dehumanizing phenomenon that harms children's bodies, minds, spirits and future. It is a prison that withers both capabilities and potential. Under acute economic difficulty, children are compelled to forsake educational possibilities and take up professions which are largely exploiting them and it affects a number of their rights, most notably the right to health and protection from ill-treatment and abuse and the right to education when the work prevents them from attending school or compels them to drop out. As per the national and international laws every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting their lives. This study is carried out in Dimapur, Nagaland, considered as the 'Gate Way of Nagaland and Manipur' and attempts to closely assess the socio-economic parameters including place of origin, caste and religion, parental occupation and causes as to why these child rag-pickers are engaging in the unhealthful occupation and their conditions as they roam in search of rags across the garbage dumping areas in this glittering world of globalization. Thus, by using both the qualitative and quantitative methods this study assesses the impact of the human rights on child labour abolition and perspectives of working children about child labour and also attempts to seek answer how children justify choices they have made regarding work and whether they were forced to work, or did so, on their own choice out of a sense of moral responsibility.

Key Words: *Child Labour, Globalization, Migration, Rag Pickers, Human Rights.*

Introduction

Children are the assets for the healthy nation. They also regarded as the future of the country and play a vital role in nation building. Thus, the responsibility of providing healthy atmosphere to the children for their fullest physical, mental and moral development rests on the nation. But seeing the present situation of our society we can say that children are neglected by the society. The brutal reality of the child labour arise is poverty due to which parents send their children to work in order to supplement their income to sustain the family. The other important reasons which also give rise to child labour are unemployment and underemployment among adult workers, larger families, lack of educational facilities, illiteracy and ignorance of parents about the importance of education as well (Sandeep, 2022). Children continue to work in numerous occupations and processes which are blatantly dangerous and hazardous and it is difficult to figure out the actual number of working children in these occupations and processes. As per Prohibition and Regulation Act (1986), children are prohibited to work as rag pickers who have not completed 14 years of age. According to Charles Darwin theory, “Survival of the fittest”, in case of poor children, razing picking becomes the source of earning and way of their survival (Chatterjee, P., 2015). However, protection of children is possible only when we eradicate the problems attached to children. Amongst these many problems the problem of rag picking is a significant one.

According to Lakher, rag pickers are the people who look for the various sources like garbage bins and the garbage dumping grounds, shops, industrial areas, homes to pick up the 'rags' or anything of value in their assessment (Lakhera 2011). India is home to the highest number of children in the world. Over a million people find livelihood opportunities through waste picking, in India (UNICEF, 2011). Today, more than half population of world lives in cities and in developing countries will rise to 80 per cent world's urban population by 2030. In urban India more than 60 millions of people live in urban slum and such population account for more than 20 per cent of total urban population. There is scarcity of housing, water sanitation, health care providers and education due to rapid and unplanned urbanization in the developing countries including India (Uplap and Bhate, 2014).

This 21st century is better known for population explosion and rapidly growing urbanization with increasing migration from rural areas and disintegration of the traditional family and community structure. As a result, these problems have given birth to a vulnerable group called children. As per 2011 census, every eight child in the world is Indian, representing over 40% of the total population of our country (Hello Child line, 2014, p. 10). Thus, most of the children grow up in a state of neglect, deprivation, often without proper education and care that they deserve. They live and work for their survival. During these struggle and family financial crisis mostly children leave school at a tender age and start working or join their hands with the parent or guardians to pickup rags from the dustbins or other sources to earn their livelihood. These children are not taking the benefits of the government policies (Sekar. March, 2015) and in such a situation government is also not being able to help them effectively.

In some cases the children are compelled to migrate temporarily to the closest cities or the urban areas of bordering states to earn the necessary subsistence. In the developing country, dependence on children increases and in many cases the working children are the main or the only support for the family livelihood. In this way, children of the poor family are economically valuable to their parents as a source of labour contributing to household income and social security in their old age as well (Suresh & Chary, 2006).

Rag pickers today have adopted rag picking as a profession to earn money, because there is no requirement of money or capital. However, in reality, the situation is not that pleasing. They are exposed to such a polluted environment that they are prone to numerous diseases. Once a child gets into the profession of rag picking, it is almost impossible to bring them back to the society. Children get attracted to work because of the monetary attraction which provides them psychological satisfaction and sense of economic independence.

Child rag picking is a violation of all rights of children. They are denied the right to decent living; right to education; right to protection against exploitation, etc. (Sekar, March, 2015). The main vision of the Indian Constitution to provide protection and provisions for development of children and nurture and educate them because children are the future of the nation. The Preamble of the constitution clearly mentioned that no one should be deprived of Justice Social, Economic and Political and Equality of Status and Opportunities to develop their socio-economic and political status. Articles 15 (3) provides special power to the Indian State to

make special provisions to protect women and children. Article 45 promotes Free and Compulsory Education to children. Article 24 prohibits the employment of Children. Article 39 (e) and (f) provide special power to Indian State to safeguard health of children and offered opportunities and education of children. Thus, child labour has been an important area of social concern both nationally and internationally.

The city of Dimapur is situated on the extreme eastern part of India and has significance due to the largest city and the gateway to Nagaland and Manipur. Dimapur is becoming an important place in many aspects and known as a hive of modern education and business for Nagaland. It is located in the Western part of Nagaland. During the last three decades the small city existing within a radius of five kms. has spread to a radius of thirty kms. Lot of construction work is taking place both public and private sector. This has attracted a number of workers (labourers) to take up a job in construction work. Thus, these migration has resulted in the growth of street children in the city. These children resort to varied odd jobs like rag pickers, shoe shine boys, washing utensils or serving tea in dhabas or hotels and working as fitters, etc., on workshops or small mechanic shops. These people exist in clusters in developing colonies at the construction site housed in jhuggis, totally lacking in habitation facilities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kshitij E. (2015) in his study reveals that rag pickers are sizable proportion among the poorest workers in the urban informal economy. Many a time found that the traditional beggars have opted for rag picking. Most of the rag pickers are extremely poor, illiterate and belong to immigrant families. Their families need supplementary income. Due to lack of education, training and skill, a large chunk of the children of these poor families resorted to the work of rag picking. During the last few decades, especially with the advent of New Economic Policy of globalization, liberalization and privatization. India has made tremendous progress in industrialization. And this industrialization developed a skewed mode of the society i.e. bourgeoisie and proletariats (working class). The bourgeoisie modes of society gave rise to urbanization, a higher standard of living and conspicuous consumption. As a result of increased of consumption there was a huge increase in waste generation (Bhojar Titus, Bhide and Khanna, 1996).

In the developing countries, the economic growth is more or less attributed to the growth in the informal sectors. Rag pickers, for instance, are informal workers, especially child labor, who collect recyclable materials to earn a small wage on a daily basis. Their life and working conditions are extremely wretched and difficult. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), lack of jobs in the formal sectors and unskilled labor forces have resulted in the growth of a large informal sectors, where most workers are employed at low-wage, poor, and unregulated working conditions. Ultimately the informal sector finds no other way than to rely on cheap labour including child labour in order to extract more profit. The state always claims that child labour is a "harsh reality" resulting from poverty as a result of which many families are forced to send their children to work to ensure survival. The state remains by and large a silent spectator, occasionally formulating a few legislations to prohibit child labour.

According to the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour 1999, No. 182 and 190 gives special attention to cases of the worst forms of child labour and provides a new framework to analyse child labour and can be applied to rag pickers as it targets those forms of children's work considered to be the most exploitative (ILO, 1999). According to UNICEF, rag picking is one of the worst forms of child labour, and falls under the street children category (UNICEF, 1997:40). The concept of street children and the definition of the term *rag pickers* appear to have undergone modifications over time. This study includes both cases, whether they belong to the "of the street" or "on the street" category. Rag pickers, also known as 'garbage pickers,' live on the street, in slums or shanty areas, and he/she makes a living from sorting, collecting, and selling waste metal, rags, containers to the local junkyards or garbage collection centres (CWIN, 1989:13).

Dogra B (2015) has written an article titled "Helping Rural Children Gain Access to Education". Article stated that scrap collection is considered socially relevant, economically productive and environmentally beneficial activity. According to the estimates by World Bank one per cent of the urban population in developing countries earns a living through waste picking and recycling. In country like India, more than one million waste pickers, who, armed with large plastic sacks, search the city streets and garbage bins for recyclable waste to earn a few bucks.

There are several constitutional and legislative measures guaranteeing welfare measures prohibiting their employment in hazardous occupations. Unfortunately negligence prevails in enforcement of these provisions in most areas of our society due to various reasons. Although the new economic policies boast highly of economic development and growth, yet this particular section of the social structure is miles away from even getting a decent opportunity to earn their livelihoods. For instance Article 24 of the Indian Constitution has introduced the 'Right to Education' that "No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment". Likewise Article 45 (Directive Principle of State Policy) states that "the state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years" (Badiwala, M., 2014).

Dimapur is one of the fastest growing townships in the north east region of India. Lot of developmental and construction work is taking place both public and private sector. This has attracted a number of workers (labourers) from the neighbouring state. These migrated peoples live in clusters in different colonies, slum areas, construction sites, rented house, or on the river banks and totally lacking in habitation facilities. These migrated families cannot access any Government schemes or facilities that provided for the poor rural families. Their earning is not sufficient to run the family due to large family size. Thus, their children resort to varied odd jobs like rag picking, shoe shine boys, washing utensils or serving tea in dhabas or working as fitters in workshops or small mechanic shops, etc. Such practices has been recognized as jeopardizing children's potential to become productive adults, by excluding them from health, education and other basic rights.

In light of these observations, a survey research was undertaken with a focus on understanding the following objectives to find out the causes as to why these child rag-pickers engage in this line of work and to examine the activities and their working conditions. It will also seek to answer how these children justify choices they have made regarding work; whether they were forced to work or choose to do so, on their own accord out of a sense of moral or economic responsibility. The insights that this study provide may help to raise important implications for rag-pickers, as they form a major bulk of the child labour statistics, in terms of policies on child labour and also contribute to the efforts of tackling this problem. A modest attempt has therefore, been

made to take up the problems of rag picking children in Dimapur and study the same from various angles with a view to suggest future action. Thus, in this background the present study focused on children who work as rag pickers in the Dimapur City in the state of Nagaland.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To examine the socio-economic-cultural background of the rag pickers
- 2) To assess the perspectives of child rag pickers on their reasons for engaging in rag picking.
- 3) To determine how children justify choices they have made regarding work.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted over a span of 40 days in Dimapur city of Nagaland to determine the situation of rag pickers and the factors that lead them to a life on the street and is based on fieldwork. The research method of this study was purposive sampling method. The sample size was 60 and with children aged 5-17 years of age who have been working as rag pickers for their survival. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were applied in the study. A semi-structured open-ended questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the study participants after obtaining assent from the study subjects. Qualitative data was collected by using interview schedule and carrying out short-term participant observations.

IV. RESULT

Socio-Economic Status of Child Rag Pickers in Dimapur:

In order to examine the socio-economic conditions of child rag pickers primary data was collected from the rag pickers themselves. This occupation is not an officially recognized occupation and no legal and official statistical data is available on the rag pickers in Dimapur city. There is no census providing any insight into the number of children involved in rag picking. Despite the horrendous working conditions, rag picking exposes these children to health hazards—respiratory and other infectious diseases. They do not have any kind of fixed place of work and it is not an area bounded activity. This study also examined the working conditions, and reasons for engaging in this type of work.

Age and Gender:

The most noticeable feature of rag pickers, which indeed presents a dark side of our civilized society, is age. Majority of the children begin working as rag pickers at the young age of six to nine years and among them, majority belongs to the male gender. We discuss below these two important features on the basis of the tabulated information.

Table-1: Gender and Age Distribution of Rag Pickers (N=60)

Age (Years)	Gender					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
7 - 9	7	11.6	5	9	12	20
10 -14	23	38.3	9	15	32	53.33
15 -17	13	21.6	3	5	16	26.66
Total	43	71.5	17	28.5	60	100

Table 1 reveals the fact that majority of the rag pickers are male 43 (71.5%) and 17 (28.5%) females. 44 (74%) of the rag pickers are below the age of fourteen. As per the Child Labour Act, employment of children below the age of 14 years is prohibited in notified hazardous occupations and processes (India, 2016).

Table-2: Religion and Native Place Distribution of Rag Pickers

Religion	Native place (N=60)					
	Assam	%	Others State	%	Total	%
Muslim	58	97	0	0	58	97
Hindu	0	0	2	3	2	3
Total	58	97	2	3	60	100

Table 2 depicts that the predominant religion in the study population was Muslim that comprised of 58 (97%) and 2 (3%) were from Hindu religion. Among the total respondents who participated in the study, the majority was from Assam 58 (97%) and while a small minority i.e., 2 (3%) respondents were from other state.

Table-3: Reasons for migration:

Sl. No	Reason for migration	Total no. of respondents = 60	
		No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Poverty	30	50
2.	Parents' migration	22	36
3.	Better life	8	14
	Total	60	100

Table 3 reveals that the majority of the respondents, i.e., 30 (50%), migrated from Assam because of poverty; 22 (36%) due to parent's migration and 8 (14%) in search of a better life.

Table-4: Literacy Level of the Respondents and Parents:

Literacy level	Respondents	%	Father	%	Mother	%
Illiterate	25	41.67	37	61.67	45	75
1 st - 5 th standard	31	51.66	16	26.67	10	16.66
6 - 8 th standard	4	6.67	0	0	0	0
Total	60	100	53	-	60	-

The above table no.4 reveals that it is a matter of pity to note that out of 60 rag pickers who were interviewed, 25 respondents (41.67%), 37 fathers (61.67%) and 45 mothers (75%) had not even enrolled in primary education at all. A large majority of the children, 31 (51.66%) had only completed between 1-5th standard education and discontinued their studies.

Table-5: Status of parents

Parent's status	Father only	%	Mother only	%	Both	%
Dead	7	11.66	5	8.33	5	8.33
Alive	42	70	55	91.66	42	70
Abandoned family	11	18.33	0	0	0	0
Total	60	100	60	100		

Table 5 depicts the status of parents in terms of their being alive or dead. It is found that in 42 (70%) of the respondents' families, both the parents were alive. However, in 11(18.33%) cases, the father had abandoned the family and in 7 (11.66%), the father had died, leaving the children behind with the mother.

Table-6: Parent's Occupation

Parent's occupation	Father	%	Mother	%
Labourer/daily wager	23	38.3	32	53.3
Rag picker	12	20	8	13.3
Farming	1	1.66	3	5
Unemployment	6	10	0	0
Housewife	0	0	12	20
Total	42	70	55	91.66

Table 6 shows that the majority of the parents (fathers 38.33%, mothers 53.33%) of the rag pickers were laborers or daily wager. A few were rag pickers (fathers 12 (20%), mothers 8 (13.33%) and farmers (fathers 1 (1.66%) and mothers 3 (5%). A few fathers were unemployed 6 (10%) and mothers housewives 12 (20%).

Table-7: Others Socio Demographic Data:

Sl. no	Socio-demographic variables	Total no. of participants = 60	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	No. of family members		
	1-5 members (medium)	22	36.66
	6 -10 members (large)	38	63.33
2	Parents monthly income (N=42)		
	Nil	6	14.28
	<Rs. 3000	2	4.76
	Rs. 3001-5000	33	78.57
	>Rs. 5001	1	2.38
3	Rental /month (N=40)		
	< Rs. 1000	16	26.6
	Rs. 1001-2000	39	65
	Nil	5	8.3

Table 7 reveals that the majority 38 (63.33%) respondents belong to large family, while 22 (36.66%) of the respondents belong to a medium family. The inference that may be drawn from the above data is that larger the family, the greater is the possibility of having street children. It may be due to the reason that parents are not able to care, feed and bring them up properly due to their meager income. It culminates in the transmission of children who are compelled to do such jobs in order to sustain themselves and their parents. This is also evident in the data that the maximum monthly income of the parents is between Rs. 3001-5000 (78.57%), with most of the families (65%) spending Rs. 1001 to 2000 just for house rent. This would mean that the family will have to manage the rest of the expenses with the remaining amount which may be highly insufficient.

Table-8: Distribution of rag pickers based on their work experience, income per day and number of hours of work per day

Sl. No	Work related data	No. of respondents N=60	Percentage
1.	Type of rag picker		
	Free roaming rag pickers	47	78.3
	Rag pickers linked to a scrap dealer	13	21.6
2.	Work experience		
	≤1 year	9	15
	1 -3 years	36	60
	>4 years	15	25
3.	Income/day		
	0 - Rs. 100	17	28.3
	Rs. 100-200	34	56.6
	Rs. 200-300	7	11.6
	>Rs. 300	2	3.3
4.	No. of hours of work/day		
	5-6 hours	20	33.3
	7-8 hours	38	63.3
	9-10 hours	2	3.3

As shown in table 8, the majority 47 (78.3%) respondents were free roaming rag and small minorities of them were linked to fixed scrap dealers who provide them pulling carts, weighing scales, money to purchase waste from the household and take the waster collected by them at the end of the day. In regards to work experience, the majority of the respondents 36 (60%) had 1-3 years of experience. More than half of them i.e., 34 (56.6%) had a daily income of Rs.100-200 and the majority of them 38 (63.3%) were working for 7-8 hours per day.

Table-9: Mode of Employment:

Sl. No	Employment	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Through own effort	3	5
2.	Through parents	41	68.3
3.	Through relatives	6	10
4.	Through others	10	16.6
	Total	60	100

As shown in table 9, the majority of the rag pickers were introduced into the occupation by their parents 41(68.3%), followed by others like friends 10 (16.6%) and a few through relatives 6 (10%).

Table -10: Reasons for engaging in Waste Picking Occupation

Sl No.	Reasons to Engage in Waste Picking Occupation	No. of respondents	%
1	Earn for family	42	70
2	Easy income	14	23.3
3	Daily income	16	26.6
4	Family traditional occupation	15	25
5	No other work eligibility	3	5
6	No educational qualification	2	3.3

Table 10 depicts that the most children i.e., 42 (70%) were working because their family income was insufficient and parents were not able to afford the cost of schooling. 16 (26.6%) respondents had joined this work due to need to daily income and 14 (23.3%) respondents were engaged in this occupation since income for survival was easy without having any capital. One quarter of them i.e., 15 (25%) respondents were

continuing their family's traditional occupation of rag picking to support their parents. A few of them were engaged because of lack of other work eligibility 3 (5%) and educational qualification 2 (3.3%).

Table No. 11. Sources of waste:

Sl. No	Waste sources	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Roadside dumps	37	62
2.	Market and commercial areas	44	73
3.	Landfills	33	55
4.	Households	19	32

Waste collection is a primary stage of solid waste management. Rag pickers in Dimapur pickup waste from different sources like roadside dumps, market and commercial areas, railway station, landfills, households, etc. across the city. Thus, it is evident from the above given table 11 that the majority 44 (73%) of rag pickers collected wasted recyclables from the market and commercial establishments or areas and 37 (62%) from market and commercial establishments, 33 (55%) from landfills areas and the least 19 (32%) rag pickers sources of waste is from households. .

Table-12: Perceptions about working conditions:

Sl. No	Working condition	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Good	3	5
2	Bad	46	77
3	Harsh	11	18
	Total	60	100

Based on the study analysis of working conditions with the concern of indicators such as sources of waste raw materials, accessibility of sources, vehicle availabilities, kilo metres travelling to access waste, working hours, precautionary measures and satisfactory levels the study has given perceived working conditions. It is evident from the given table 12 that the majority i.e., 46 (77%) of the total rag pickers perceived their working conditions to be bad, while 11(18%) perceived it to be harsh and the minority i.e., 3 (7.5%) as good.

Table-13: Reasons for Dissatisfaction with work

Reason for dissatisfaction with work	No. of respondents	%
Long hours and low pay	46	77
Heavy labour	30	50
Sees no future	17	28
No social recognition	5	8

Table 13 depicts that long hours and low pay was the most common reason for dissatisfaction with their work, cited by 46 (77%) of the respondents followed by heavy labour by 30 (50%) of the respondents. 17 (28%) respondents sees no future for them in such type of work and the least 5 (8%) respondents finds no social recognitions.

Table no. 14. Reasons for working:

Sl. No	Reasons for working	No. of respondents	%
1	Basic need of food		
	Family income is insufficient	41	68
	To support family	8	14
	To save family from starvation	6	10
	No body to feed family	5	8
2	Safety and security need		
	Father left or remarried	5	8
	Repay parents' loan	8	14
	Because of father's sickness	10	17
	Because of father's death	5	8
3	Love and Belonging need		

	Because friends are also working	20	34
	To support family member's education	26	44
4	Self esteem need		
	Sense of responsibility	44	74
5	Self actualization need		
	To save money for self/ to start own business	12	20

Table no. 14 shows the reasons commonly cited by respondents why they were illiterate and choose to work at such young ages. Applying Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of basic human needs, the major reason emerging were basic need for food, safety and security need, love and belonging need, self esteem need and self-actualization need. The most commonly cited reason which was driven by their basic need for food was family income being insufficient 41 (68%) for which 44 (74%) felt the need to support the family to meet its basic needs. The safety and security needs of the family 28 (47%) respondents join such kind of work. For the need to satisfy love and sense of belonging, 20 (34%) were working because their friends were also working and 26 (44%) to support their family member's education. For the self esteem need, 44 (74%) expressed the sense of responsibility they experienced from working as a driving force while 12 (20%) also wanted to be self sufficient (self-actualization) by saving money for self or to start their own business.

Table 15-Role of Government in helping improve their living and working conditions:

Government's role in improving conditions	How the Government can help improve their working condition?		
	By giving support-providing ration cards, medical aids, etc.	By making laws for child workers- fixing minimum wages	No idea
Yes	38 (64%)	17 (28%)	5 (8%)
Total	38	17	5

Table 15 depicts that the 38 (64%) rag pickers' perceived that only government can help to improve their family condition by giving support like providing ration cards, medical aids, etc, and 20 (33%) believes that making laws for child workers like fixing minimum wages. They believe that if their family condition improves then they do not need to do such work. However, 5 (8%) respondents did not have any idea how the government may help them which may be a reflection of their immaturity due to their young ages.

DISCUSSION

There is lack of accurate data on waste pickers in Dimapur, and recognition of their contribution to the waste management in the city. The study findings revealed the following responsible factors that leading rag pickers in Dimapur such as poverty, illiteracy, large family size, unemployment, psychological factors, school infrastructure, population growth, etc. The study findings revealed that out of 60 rag pickers from different areas of Dimapur city in Nagaland, who participated in the study, majority of the rag pickers were males (71.5%) and were below 14 years of age (74%) and accompanied their parents who had migrated from Assam to Dimapur, mainly due to poverty. By focusing upon the family background, it was found that majority 38 (63.5%) of the children belonged to large sized families of 6-10 members, usually residing as clusters in small slums in and around Dimapur city which indicates number of dependents on the earning member of the family. Many poor parents bear children in order to enhance family income. Children are viewed as economic assets,

not as economic liabilities. Since modern education has been expensive these days, those who cannot afford to educate their children indirectly encourage them to go for a job instead of sitting idle (Kumar S.T and Khan S A, 2006).

It was found that majority of the children 42 (70%) are the sole bread earner in the family. Majority of the respondents (78.3%) in the study were free roaming waste pickers who walked great distances daily from one place to another for a maximum of 8 hours per day to pick any recyclable and reusable items which were then sold off to factories or dealers earning themselves a maximum of Rs. 300/day, though it varies mainly depending on their age. The child rag pickers are under terrible stress and strain as for them it is a question of day-to-day survival. They are compelled to make adjustments with the social conditions to varied circumstances, which change, almost every day. Hence, adjustments with the social conditions become one important condition of survival on the streets. These findings are consistent with what Salam A. (2013) had reported in his study entitled “Living and Educational Conditions of Child Rag Pickers on Base of Solid Waste of Guwahati City in Assam”.

The findings of this study also revealed the dark reality of the lives of these rag pickers, all of who were out of school with majority having to discontinue their studies after completing only 1st -5th standards (51.5%). The major reason cited was to support their family 42 (70%) because income was insufficient to support their education. The need for food and survival becomes the driving force for the children entering the rag picking occupation which also acts as a hindrance to their education. The sense of independence and responsibility they experience from earning money, meager though the amount may be, also ensured their continual engagement in rag picking. The other interesting factor is parents' illiteracy (father, 62% and mother 75%) and the low value attributed to education by the parents and family members which leaves the children with no other alternative but to work, in some cases, follow their parents around in rag picking, thereby getting absorbed into the practice and being caught in its web, with increased likelihood of them continuing even throughout their adulthood. Almost 95% children do not like rag picking, and consider their work conditions as bad or harsh, mainly because of heavy work and low pay, still they continue to engage in this work as envisage no other

viable alternatives. However, several children expressed their feelings saying that they would change their occupation if given the opportunity. It is a common tendency among all the rag pickers who have networking with NOGs working in the field of child rights. It shows that NGOs in some extent able to sensitize about the dangers of their occupation and to alternate means of livelihood. Sekar H R (2006) also agrees that the phenomenon of children resorting to rag picking is mostly due to their instinct to survive in hard life conditions.

As per the Convention on the Rights of the child, ratified by the Government of India on November 12, 1992, the Government of India is committed to ensuring four of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of every child namely, the Right to Survival, the Right to Protection, the Right to Development and the Right to Participation. That bring us to the discussion as to whether these rag pickers are enjoying these provisions of the Convention which is due to them. As far as the study findings point of view, the children have to basically **fund** for themselves and families in order to survive, on the other hands, they cannot access any provisions such as registration numbers, ration cards, other important schemes facilities, etc. because they currently not living to their native state, that could have ensured their basic need and they have to even sacrifice their right to development through education in the process as well. As far as their right to participate is concerned, as rag picking is not considered a formally organized sector and the total number of child rag pickers unknown, their voices concerning their rights and wellbeing is unheard of. It is also disheartening that most of the rag pickers also have no idea how the government could improve their welfare.

Recommendations:

This study presents the findings of this rapid assessment on child rag pickers in some selected urban areas of Dimapur city.

Government of India has many laws for the protection of the Child that no other new law is required. But what is required is the application of the existing laws in strict ways for the benefit of the poor children. Rag picking and Scavenging has been included in Part-B of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 as one

of the Prohibited processes for employment of children who have not completed 14 years of age to protect children from exploitation.

The researcher is in agreement with Pravina GS and Prasad D (2015) that the Government can do a lot for uplifting these children's conditions and protect these children from exploitations by taking such measures as:

1. National, State and Local governmental agencies should ensure strict implementation of laws to enforce the minimum age of the rag-pickers to enter this activity, ensure that no child below 14 years of age is employed.
2. Provision of identity cards to the rag pickers through the corporations which could also help prevents underage children from possible hazardous child labor.
3. Provision of ration cards or BPL cards and housing facilities to the migrated labourers so that impoverished families can meet their basic need for food and shelter allowing the children to be freed from the responsibility of contributing economically to the family and instead, get access to at least the basic education up to age 14.
4. Public education initiatives on family planning methods to reduce family sizes and the number of children who are malnourished, underprivileged and impoverished, since growing population is also one of the main causes for the increase of the poverty which perpetuates child labour.
5. Local governmental agencies or urban development bodies should also employ or sanction authorized scrap dealers at the dump yards to reduce the exploitation of the rag-pickers from unscrupulous agents.
6. Educational facilities should be provided to rag picker children. Different Government schemes can be applied to the exploited poor people so that they can be uplifted.
7. Provide medical facilities to the rag pickers and their family members living at the slums.
8. Women should be provided with infrastructure facilities like a supply of water, gas stove, electricity, etc., so that they can save time and concentrate on children and family earnings or needs.
9. As a moral responsibility if anybody find any children working as a child labour should immediately call the "child help line" number (1098) for the protection of the children.

10. Families living in slums should be informed about the various schemes of the government with the NGOs and media.

Conclusion:

In the field survey, it has found that the socio-economic conditions and the need for survival is what drive the impoverished households to choose any means available to earn and feed their families. In this study most of the parents depend on their children and consider them economically valuable to the family. Rag picking may not be their primary goal, but rather it is a search for easy work for survival. In such a context, efforts to ensure the rights of the child become secondary for the family whose sole purpose is survival. It is evident from the findings of this study that majority of the rag pickers are children and that too are minors below 14 years and also deprived of their basic rights. This problem is further compounded by illiteracy, lack of other job skills, large family size and a general apathy towards education. Majority of child rag pickers developed bad habits such as consumption of alcohol, tobacco, gutka, etc, and more these children spend on the street, more difficult it will be to take them away from such habits.

The majority of the child rag pickers had expressed a common problem that their desire and interest was ignored by their parents. They said that they were encouraged or pushed to work and earn for the family. The rag picking exposes these children to health hazards and involve them in number of social evils which is a shame for our society and also affects the sustainable development of a nation. So, it is the need of the hour that a sincere effort from all sections of the society should be made to meet the basic needs to this sections of the society. Thus, the decisive resolution to this problem is by bringing social awareness through (counseling, informal talks, befriending, etc.) and keenness from government agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs) also needed to work sincerely in this context. Government also should focus on non-formal education and skill based training to change their life for better.

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