

# MEANING AND MAGNITUDE OF CHILD LABOUR: A BRICK KILN STUDY OF MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL, INDIA

Dr. Md Hasan Ali\*

\* *Technical Assistant (Grade-I), Department of Geography, Aliah University, Kolkata & Project Director, ICSSR, New Delhi. Email: [hasan.ali88@rediffmail.com](mailto:hasan.ali88@rediffmail.com)*

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**Abstract:** The term 'Child Labour' is contextual. According to the ILO's World Report on Child Labour 2015, approximately 168 million children (aged 5-14 years) in India are trapped in child labour. As per the Census of India 2011, the total child population (aged 5-14 years) was 259.6 million and out of these nearly 10.1 million (3.9 percent), children were working as child labour (Census of India 2011). The state of West Bengal contains 4.5 percent share of child workers (aged 5-14 years) in the year of 2001. It is noted that the average proportion of child workers is 5.1 percent in all India level. The present empirical study has incorporated 513 child labourers (aged 5-14 years) to assess their psycho-economic condition working particularly in the brick kiln industry in Murshidabad District of West Bengal. The present study attempts to analyse the magnitude of child labour in the brick kilns industries in Murshidabad District. This study also identifies the proximate determinants of child labour in the brick kilns industry.

**Keywords:** Child Labour, Brick Kiln Industry, Murshidabad District.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is a well-known fact that child labour is a 'global phenomenon' (Srivastava 2017). It is widespread in both developed and developing countries of the world. But, the problem is more severe in developing countries than developed. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that approximately 13.8 percent of children between the ages of 5-17 years engaged in employment in the world of which 9.4 percent of the children were in child labour and only 4.6 percent children were in hazardous works (ILO 2017). The most striking feature was nearly 179 million children doing 'difficult, dangerous and unsuitable' jobs (ILO 2002; Stearman 2004).

However, the magnitude of child labour in the developing country like India is alarming, gigantic and the most challenging issue. But, the problem of child labour in India is identified as 'rural phenomenon than urban' (Prakash Yadav 2017). For instance, the state of Uttar Pradesh accounted the highest (15.3%) share of child labour, followed by Andhra Pradesh (10.83%), Rajasthan (10.3%), and Bihar (8.89%) (Prakash Yadav 2017).

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to UNICEF (1989), Child labour is defined as the percentage of children aged 5 to 14 years of age involved in child labour activities at the moment of the survey. According to Fernandes (1992), high incidence of child labour is in the agricultural sector followed by the unorganized sector and service of employment which includes cottage industries, handicrafts, handloom works, small scale industries, wires, and switches. Joelle Saad-Lessler (2010) in his paper entitled, "A Cross-National Study of Child Labor and its Determinants" argues that the incidence of child labour is a result of the

intersection of demand and supply. According to Joelle Saad-Lessler, the demand for child labour generally comes from employers who hire the children. According to Shandilya et al. (2006), the prevalence of child labour is a bolt on the conscience of society. It harms not only the present generation but also the future. It hampers their physical and mental development (Shandilya et al. 2006).

### 3. DEFINITION, RATIONALE, AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The term “child labour” is often used synonymously with “child work”. But the two terms are not synonymous with each other. According to Stein and Davis (1940), any work by children that interferes with their full physical development, the opportunities for a desirable minimum of education and their need recreation is called child labour (Stein and Davis 1940; Shandilya et al. 2006). In this context, V.V. Giri argued that the term child labour can be interpreted in two ways, viz. as an economic practice and as a social evil (Giri 1956). For example, the Gurupadaswamy Committee (1979) observed that child labour is an absolute evil practice in the case of children when they have to work beyond their physical capacity (Shandilya et al. 2006).

### 4. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the present study are as given below:

1. To understand the concept of child labour and its magnitude in the world with special reference to India.
2. To analyze spatio-temporal dimensions of child labour of Murshidabad District;
3. To examine the factors and circumstances responsible for child labour in the district;
4. To explore the implications of child labour on morbidity, physical as well as mental health of the child workers.

### 5. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- India has recorded the highest number of child labour in the world. The problem of child labour is higher in rural India than urban India. Poverty is the root cause of child labour in India in general and in Murshidabad District in particular. Besides poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, less job opportunity, wages, awareness, etc. are some important factors are responsible for the high rate of child labour in the district.
- In Murshidabad District, children engaged in brick kiln industries due to poverty and socio-economic backwardness. It damages their physical, mental and psychological development and impacts ultimate on their life expectancy. Therefore, it is now a high time to implement constitutional rights to protect children from different kind of exploitations and to provide a healthy life.

### 6. RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

The present study is based on both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative study includes a critical examination of interviews of child labours, their parents and owners of the brick kiln factories from Murshidabad District to understand the actual causes of Child labour and its impact on the physical and mental health of the child workers.

It is noteworthy that the study is also based on both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data sources have been collected from door to door and face to face interview process of the study region with a suitable questionnaire. It has been collected through two questionnaire schedules, i.e. household child labour and brick kilns. In the first stage, the present study purposively selected five CD Blocks with a sample of 513 households and in the second stage, 80 brick kilns from each (5 CD Blocks) selected CD Blocks to understand the child labour and their wages, health and living conditions.

### 7. STUDY AREA

Murshidabad District, the oldest capital of Bengal, is located in the middle part of West Bengal. Its central location is significant as it connects North Bengal with South Bengal. It is noted that Murshidabad district is surrounded by Malda district in the north, Burdwan district in the south, Nadia district in the south-east and Birbhum district in the west. The district lies between 23°45'30"N and 24°50'20"N latitudes and 87°49'17"E and 88°46'00"E longitudes. With a total area of 5316.11 sq. km. It receives on an average of 1400mm of rainfall with the temperature range varying between 38.6°C during summers and 7.8°C during winters (Dasgupta 2016). In addition, the district occupies the fourth position in terms

of total population (7103807) and fifth ranks in case of the density of population (1334 person per sq. km) in the state. The district has recorded a higher sex ratio (958 females per 1000 males) than the state's average sex ratio (950 females per 1000). It is noteworthy that the district ranks sixteenth and fifteenth positions in the state in terms of literacy (66.59%) and work participation rate (36%) respectively. The work participation rate (36%) of the district is more or less equal to the state's average (38%) and mainly governed by male workers (Census of India 2011).

## 8. CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA

Child labour is one of the most serious and challenging problems in India (Kulshrestha 1978; Banerjee 1979). According to the ILO's World Report on Child Labour 2015, approximately 168 million children (aged 5-14) in India are trapped in child labour, around 75 million young persons (aged 15-24) are unemployed, and many more children are in various jobs that fail to provide fair income, health security in the working place, social protection and basic amenities and decent work attributes (ILO 2015).

### Incidence and Magnitude of Child Labour in India

The magnitude of child labour in India is alarming. For example, as per the Census of India 2011, the total child population (aged 5-14 years) in India is 259.6 million and out of these nearly 10.1 million (3.9 percent) children are working as child labour. In addition, around 42.7 million (16 percent) children in India are away from school (Census of India 2011).

**Table 1: Child Workers in India, 2001-2011**

Year	Working Children (5-14) in %			Working Children (5-14) in millions		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
2001	5.9	2.1	5	11.4	1.3	12.7
2011	4.3	2.9	3.9	8.1	2	10.1

**Source:** Census of India 2011

Table 1 shows that child labour decreased both in terms of magnitude and incidence between 2001 and 2011. The magnitude of child workers (age group of 5-14 years) declined from 12.7 million in 2001 to 10.1 million in 2011. Similarly, the incidence of the child workers in the same age-group also decreased between the two decades, from 5.0 percent in 2001 to 3.9 percent in 2011 (Census of India 2011).

## 9. CHILD LABOURS IN BRICK KILNS IN MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT

The present study attempts to present details profile of the child workers based on an empirical study in the brick kilns industry of Murshidabad District. It shows that among all the districts of West Bengal, Malda has recorded the highest incidence of child labour (9.5 percent) in 2001. This is followed by Uttar Dinajpur (7.5 percent), Bankura (6.9 percent), Purulia (6.5 percent), Dakshin Dinajpur (5.4 percent), and Murshidabad (5.37 percent).

### Background Characteristics of Children

The data depicts that there were 478 male child labourers (93.18 percent) and only 35 female child participants (6.82 percent). The socio-demographic characteristics demonstrate (Table 3) that out of total of 513 participants 20 were married (3.90 percent) and 493 were unmarried (96.10 percent).

**Table 2: Distribution of Child Workers by Sex**

Sl. No.	Sex	No. of Child Workers	Child Workers in %
1	Male	478	93.18
2	Female	35	6.82
	Total	513	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

**Table 3: Marital Status of Child Workers**

Sl. No.	Marital Status	No. of Child Workers	Child Workers in %
1	Married	20	3.90
2	Unmarried	493	96.10
	Total	513	100

Source: Primary Data Collection

➤ *The religion of the Children*

The study region is predominantly inhabited by the Muslim community. The survey collected information shown Table 4 that 358 child labours belonged to that community accounting for 69.79 percent of the total number of participants. On the hand, there were 146 Hindu adolescents that constitute 28.46 percent of the participants followed by Christian constituting 0.97 percent and other community child labourers accounting for 0.78 percent.

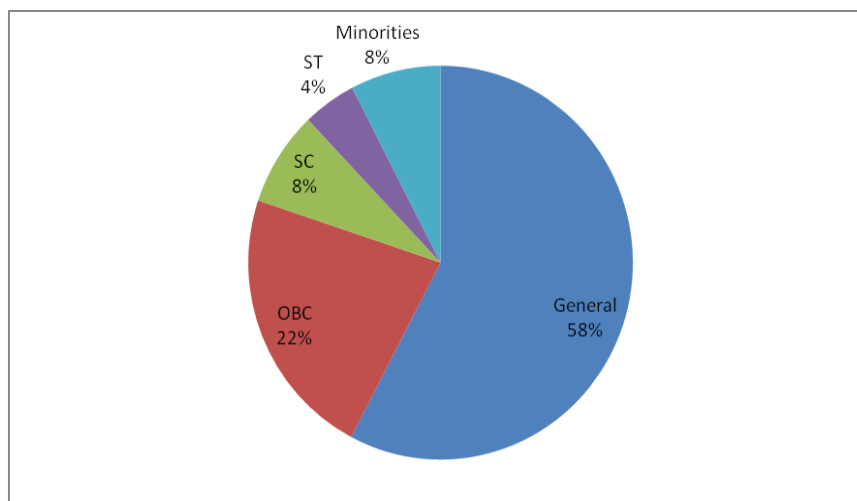
**Table 4: Distribution of Child Workers by Religion**

Sl. No.	Religion	No. of Child Workers	Child Worker in %
1	Hindu	146	28.46
2	Muslim	358	69.79
3	Christian	5	0.97
4	Others	4	0.78
	Total	513	100.00

Source: Primary Data Collection

➤ *Caste of the Children*

Since Caste is an integral social variable determining the socio-economic condition in so deep-rooted, deep-seated patriarchal society in India, it is paramount to take into consideration in the study. Fig. 1 shows that most of the participants belonged to the General category (57.70 percent) followed by OBCs (22.42 percent), SC (7.80 percent), and ST (4.48 percent).

**Fig.1: Distribution of Child Labour by Caste**

Source: Primary Data Collection

➤ *Education Level of the Children*

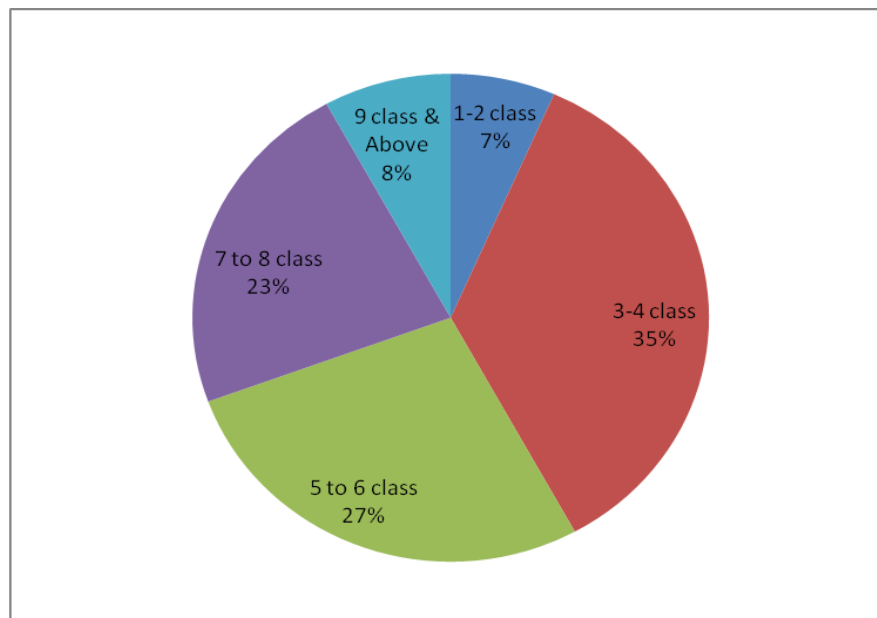
During the survey, children were asked about their education level, whether they can read, write or not. Table 5 shows that majority of child labourers are literate (68.23 percent) and only 31.77 percent of the children are illiterate who cannot read, write and understand minimum arithmetic calculation as prescribed in the Census of India 2011.

**Table 5: Education Status of the Child Labour in Brick Kilns**

Sl. No.	Whether Literate	No. of Child Labour	Total	Child labour in %
1	Yes	350	513	68.23
2	No	163	513	31.77
		513	513	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

Figure 2 unveils that the percentage of children decreases with the increase in the level of schooling. It shows that 35.43 percent had studied of class 3 to 4<sup>th</sup>, 27.43 percent had reported of class 5 to 6<sup>th</sup>, 22.57 percent had studies of class 7 to 8<sup>th</sup>, and only 8 percent had studied upto class 9<sup>th</sup>. Table 2.16 also shows that only 6.57 percent had completed their studies of class 1 to 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Fig. 2: Education Level of the Children**

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

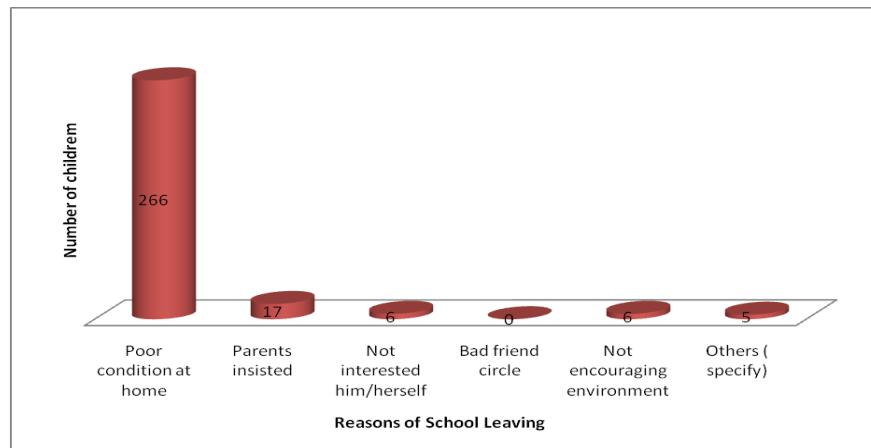
It is also noteworthy that during the survey, children were asked whether they left their school permanently or not. Table 6 reveals that the majority of the children (85.71 percent) left their school permanently and only 14.29 percent of children were not yet leaving their school.

**Table 6: Status of School left of the Child Labour in the Brick Kilns**

Sl. No.	Whether Left School	No. of child labour	Total	Child Labour in %
1	Yes	300	350	85.71
2	No	50	350	14.29

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

However, currently, none of the children are attending any kind of formal or informal schooling. The present study attempted to find out the reasons for discontinuing attending school from the survey children. Fig. 3 reveals that 88.67 percent of the children discontinue to attend their school due to poor conditions at home, followed by parents insisted (5.67 percent), poor environment and loss their interest in studies (2.0 percent) and others unknown reasons (1.67 percent).

**Fig. 3: Different Reasons for Discontinue School by the Children**

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

In fact, all the surveyed children are now working in the brick kilns factories of Murshidabad District. During the survey, the children were asked whether they would like to continue their study if an attempt is made to provide an opportunity to assess their sensibility to attending school. Table 7 indicates that 29.04 percent of the children would like to go back to school.

**Table 7: Number of the Children still wants to go to School**

S. No.	Still, want to go School	No. of child labour	Total	Child labour in %
1	Yes	149	513	29.04
2	No	364	513	70.96
	Total	513	513	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

### Background Characteristics of the Children's Family

Along with the child's basic information such as sex, religion, caste, education level, etc. the present survey also collected information related to their family information. As Table 8 shows that out of a total sample of 513 child workers 496 participants (96.69 percent) have lived their own houses and only 17 children (3.31 percent) have no proper house for shelter.

**Table 8: Living Arrangements of the Child Workers**

Own House	No. of Child Workers	Child Workers in %
Yes	496	96.69
No	17	3.31

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

Table 9 unveils the family size of the surveyed children. It clearly indicates that around 90 percent of children have 4 to 6 family members, whereas about 8 percent of children have 1 to 3 family members. This data also shows that 15 child labourers constituting about 3 percent have more than 6 family members.

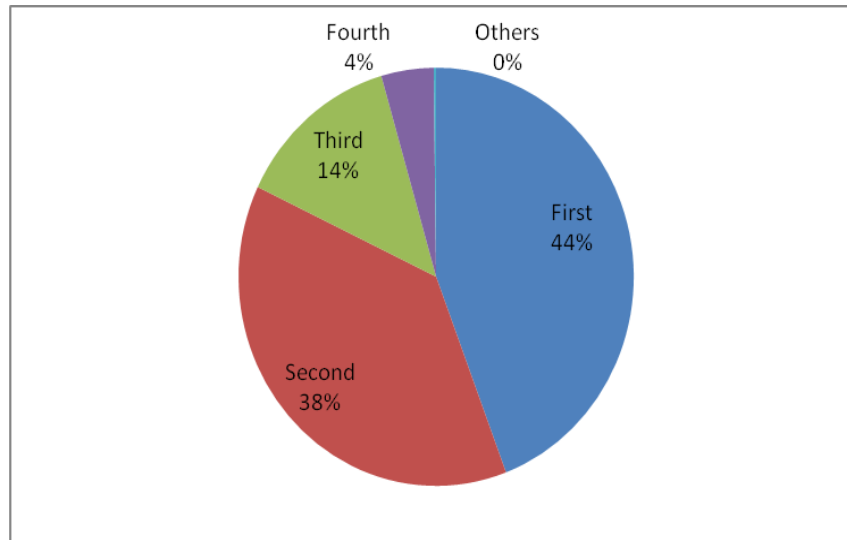
**Table 9: Total Members in a Family of the Child Workers**

No. of Family Member	No. of Child Workers	Child Workers in %
01-3 Members	41	7.99
4-6 Members	457	89.08
Above 6 Members	15	2.92
Total	513	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

In addition, it has also been observed that majority of the respondents (44.25 percent) are the first child of the family. Fig. 4 also reflects that a fair share (37.86 percent) of labourers is the second birth number of child in the family. It is followed by the third birth number of child (13.45 percent), fourth birth number of child (4.29 percent) and others (0.19 percent).

**Fig. 4: Birth Number of the Children in Brick Kilns**



**Source:** Primary Data Collection

While looking into the main sources of family income of the respondents it has been found (Table 10) that majority of self-employed parents are engaged as a regular worker (68.42 percent), whereas 115 respondents replied that they are involved as non-agricultural activities in the self-employed group. Table 10 also shows that among casual labourer category majority (82.49 percent) of the respondents' family members are involved in non-agricultural activities, followed by agriculture (17.51 percent).

**Table 10: Main Sources of Family Income of the Child Workers**

Source	No. of Child Workers	Child Workers in %
<b>Self Employed in</b>		
Agriculture	47	9.16
Non-Agriculture	115	22.42
Regular Worker	351	68.42
<b>Casual Labour in</b>		
Agriculture	59	17.51
Non-Agriculture	278	82.49

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

Table 11 highlights another expected result is that more than half (53.8 percent) of the respondents do not have farmland, whereas 46.2 percent of child labourers have family farmland. In this context, it is necessary to mention (Table 12) that majority (64.14 percent) of the respondents have less than 2 bigha<sup>1</sup> of farmland, whereas 81 respondents, representing (34.18 percent), have 2-4 Bigha of farmland; only 4 participants responded that they have more than 1 acre of farmland.

**Table 11: Farm Land Distribution of the Family of the Child Labour**

Farm Land Own	No. of Child Labour	Child Labour in %
Yes	237	46.20
No	276	53.80
Total	513	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

**Table 12: Size of the Farm Land of the Family of the Child Labour**

Size of land	No. of Child Labour	Child Labour in %
Below 2 Bigha	152	64.14
2 -4 Bigha	81	34.18
Above 4 Bigha	4	1.69
Total	237	100.00

Source: Primary Data Collection

Moreover, Table 13 shows that more than 10 percent of respondents' parents are indebted, whereas 47.17 percent of respondents do not know whether their parents are indebted or not. However, Table 14 further shows that the majority of the indebted parents (62.96 percent) borrow money from formal sectors, whereas 37.04 percent of indebted parents loaned out money from informal sectors.

**Table 13: Distribution of indebted Family of the Child Labour**

Indebt	No. of Child Labour	Share in %
Yes	54	10.53
No	217	42.30
Don't Know	242	47.17

Source: Primary Data Collection

**Table 14: Sources of Debts taken by the family of the Child Labour**

Source	No. of Child Labour	Child Labour in %
Formal Sector	34	62.96
Informal Sector	20	37.04

Source: Primary Data Collection

Children were also asked during the survey that whether their parents know about their working in the brick kilns industries. In this context, Table 15 unveils an interestingly thing that more than 98 percent of the surveyed children (503 respondents) have replied that they get support from parents, whereas remaining only 2.0 percent of the children (10 respondents) do not get parents' support while working in brick kiln industries in different parts of the District.

**Table 15: Parental Support to the Child Labour**

Parental Support	No. of Child Labour	Child Labour in %
Yes	503	98.05
No	10	1.95

Source: Primary Data Collection

### Working Pattern of Child Workers

At the time of the survey all the children were working in the brick kilns factory. The survey attempts to understand the nature of work in which the children were engaged. Table 16 shows that the child labourers in brick kiln industry involved in different segments like majority of the surveyed children (32.94 percent) are involved in transporting raw bricks followed by making raw bricks (20.27 percent), preparing raw material (16.76 percent), raw material transport (15.40 percent), drying the bricks (13.65 percent), and others brick related specified activities (0.97 percent).

**Table 16: Types of Works done by the Child Labour**

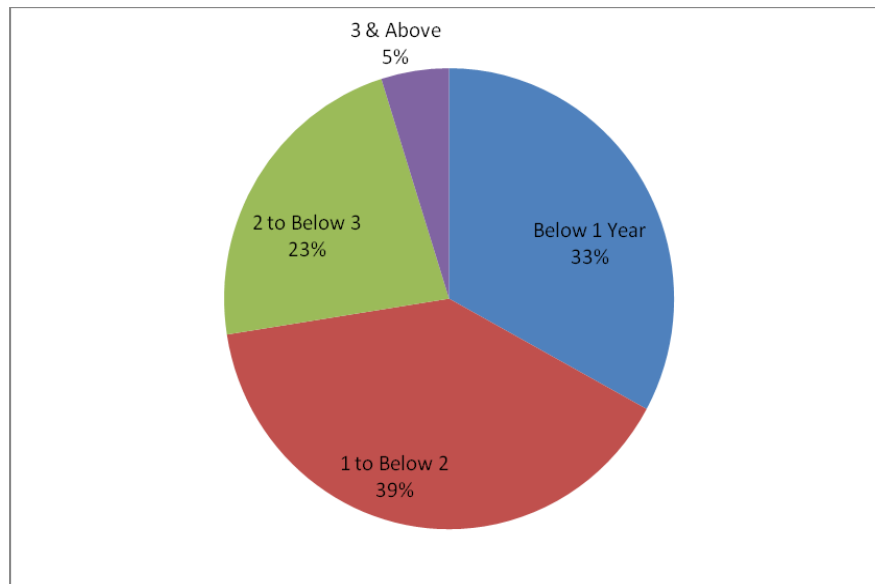
Sl. No.	Types of works	No. of Child Labour	share in %
1	Prepare Raw Material	86	16.76
2	Making Raw Bricks	104	20.27
3	Drying the Bricks	70	13.65
4	Transporting Raw Bricks	169	32.94
5	Raw Material Transport	79	15.40
6	Other (Specify)	5	0.97

Source: Primary Data Collection



In addition, fig. 5 shows that majority of the respondent (46.98 percent) are presently working in the brick kiln industry for at least 1 to 2 years, whereas there was 33.53 percent of the surveyed children were working in the present brick kilns for more than 2 to 3 years. Table 2.32 also highlights that 10.33 percent of the children were involved here for more than 3 years and only 9.16 percent of children were involved in the brick kiln industry for less than 1 year.

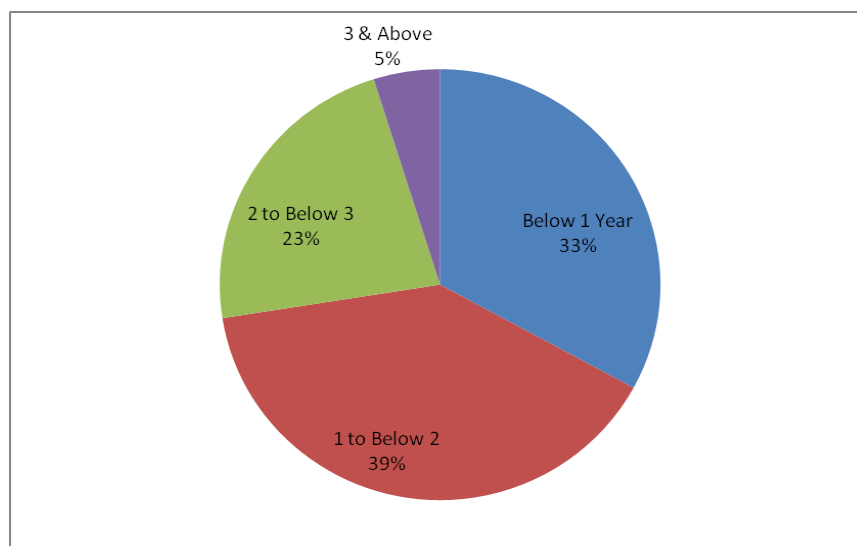
**Fig. 5: Duration of Works by the Children in Brick Kilns**



**Source:** Primary Data Collection

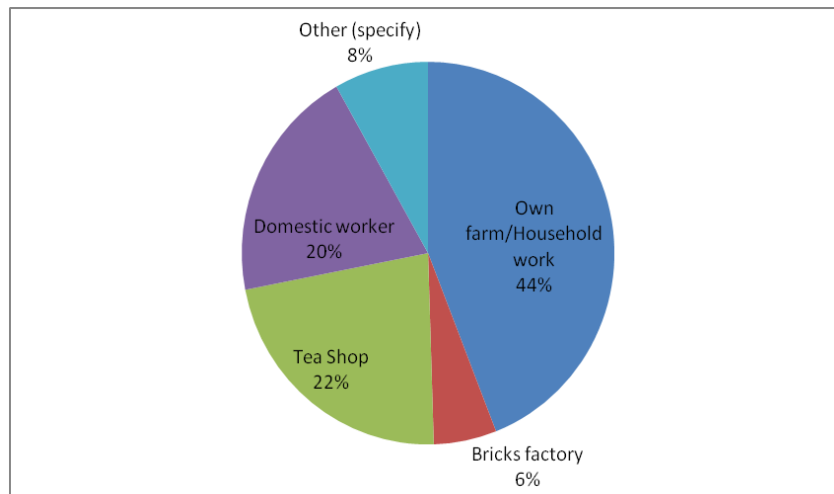
The data further shows the total duration of the child workers engaged in brick kilns industry. Fig. 6 shows that 39.57 percent of the surveyed children engaged in brick kilns industry for 1 to 2 years. It is followed by 32.94 percent for less than one year, 22.61 percent for 2 to 3 years and 4.87 percent of the children engaged in brick kilns industry for more than 3 years.

**Fig. 6: Total Duration of Workers Engaged in Brick Kilns Industry**



**Source:** Primary Data Collection

The present study has also conducted a survey to unveil the status of their previous jobs before coming into brick kiln industry. Fig. 7 shows that majority of the surveyed children (44.05 percent) were involved in own farm/household work. It is followed by their working in tea stalls (22.42 percent), domestic workers (19.88 percent), bricks factory (5.46 percent) and the remaining 8.19 percent were involved in 'other' activities.

**Fig. 7: Distribution of Previous Works done by the Children**

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

Table 17 unveils the main reason behind involving the children in the brick kiln industry. The data shows that the majority of the surveyed children (66.47 percent) have joined in brick kilns industry is because of better wage. Table 2.35 further unveils that 21.83 percent of respondents have replied that they are in this industry because they didn't get any alternative occupation.

**Table 17: Reasons for Working of the Child Worker in Brick Kilns**

S. No.	Reasons for Working	No. of child labour	Total	Child labour in %
1	Better wage	341	513	66.47
2	Expertise (Interest)	3	513	0.58
3	Parent's Advice	31	513	6.04
4	Friend's Advice	11	513	2.14
5	Proximity to home	15	513	2.92
6	No alternative occupation	112	513	21.83
	<b>Total</b>	513	513	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

Table 18 shows that nearly 78 percent of children live in their own homes but 19.10 percent of children compel to stay in mater's house. Only 7 children responded that they live in a rented house since their homes are far away from the brick kiln factories.

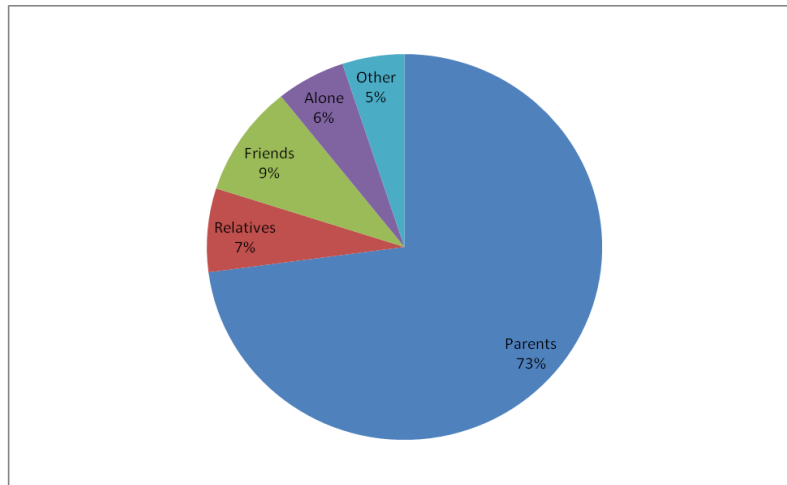
**Table 18: Place of Living of the Child Labour in Brick Kilns**

S. No.	Place of living	No. of Child Labour	Total	Child Labour in %
1	Master's House	98	513	19.10
2	Rented House	7	513	1.36
3	Own House	399	513	77.78
4	With Friends	1	513	0.19
5	Other	8	513	1.56
	<b>Total</b>	513	513	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

Fig. 8 also expresses that 72.90 percent of children live with their parents whereas 9.36 percent of children have replied that they live with their friends. Moreover, there were about 7 percent of children who lived with their relatives near the brick factory.

**Fig. 8: The Children Living with Different Persons in Brick Kilns**



**Source:** Primary Data Collection

However, Table 19 indicates that 36.26 percent (186) children responded that there were other family members who were also working in the same factory. Table 19 further indicates that 63.74 percent of the survey children have not any other family members in the brick kilns industry.

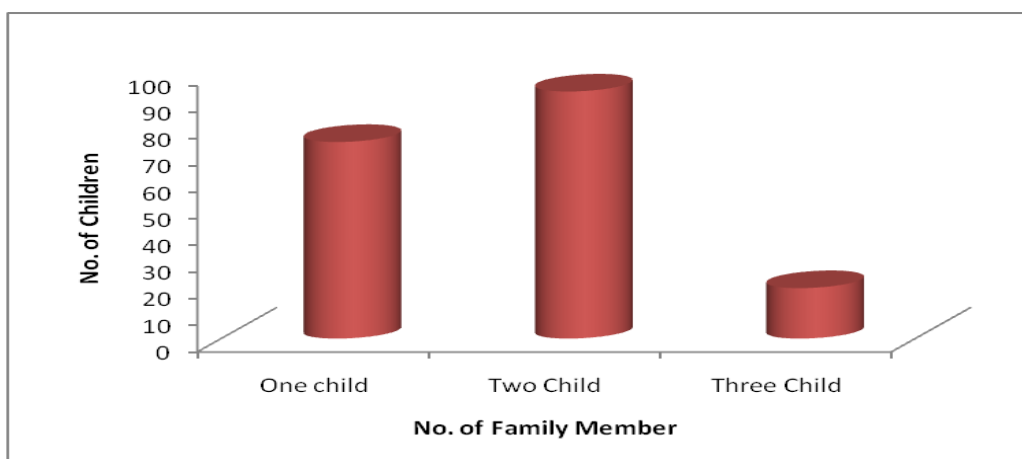
**Table 19: Any other Family Members of the children working in the Brick Kilns**

S. No.	Family member below 18	No. of children	Total	Child Labour in %
1	Yes	186	513	36.26
2	No	327	513	63.74
	Total	513	513	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

In addition, fig. 9 shows that 50 percent (93 children) of the children have only 2 members (below 18 years age) from the same family working in the brick kilns industry. This is followed by 39.8 percent of the children have one child and 10.2 percent of the children have three children from the same family in the brick kilns industry.

**Fig. 9: No. of Family Members (below 18 years) of the Children in Brick Kilns**



**Source:** Primary Data Collection

Table 20 also displays that the majority of brick kilns factories (46.59 percent) have 5 to 8 child labourers working at a time. This is followed by 39.18 percent factories have 9 to 12, 6.24 percent of factories have 13 to 17, 5.07 percent of the factories have up to 4, and 2.92 percent of brick kilns have more than 18 child workers working at a time.

**Table 20: Distribution of Child Labour in Brick Kilns Industry**

S. No.	Workers in a factory	No. of child labour	Total	share in %
1	Up to 4	26	513	5.07
2	5 to 8	239	513	46.59
3	9 to 12	201	513	39.18
4	13 to 17	32	513	6.24
5	18 & Above	15	513	2.92
	Total	513	513	100.00

Source: Primary Data Collection

### Duration and Shifting of Work

Among the total 513 children interviewed at their current workplace for the study, most of the child labourers do not know anything about labour rights, hours of working and minimum wages. Table 21 shows that 76.22 percent children start their works between 6 A.M. and 8 A.M. Besides, more than one-fifth children (22.22 percent) have replied that they start working even before 6 A.M. Only 1.56 percent surveyed children start their work after 8 A.M.

**Table 21: Time to Start Work in the Morning**

S. No.	Starting Time	No. of child labour	Total	Child Labour in %
1	Before 6 am.	114	513	22.22
2	6 am to 8 am	391	513	76.22
3	After 8 am	8	513	1.56
	Total	513	513	100.00

Source: Primary Data Collection

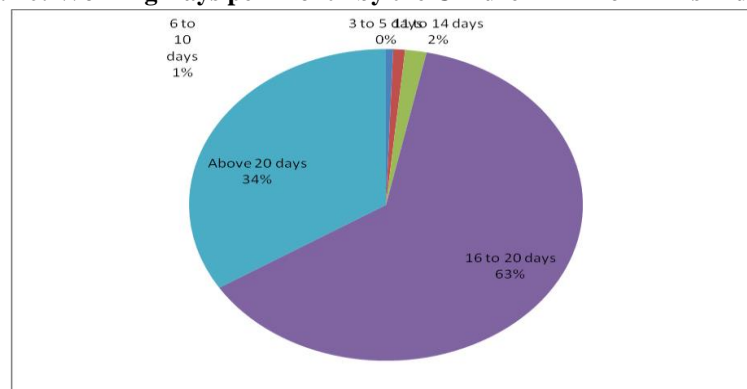
While looking into the duration of work, Table 22 reveals that 48.53 percent children have responded that they work for 4 to 5 hours in a day, 37.42 percent children work for 2 to 3 hours and about 14 percent children work for more than 6 to 8 hours in a day.

**Table 22: Duration of Work (Hours/Day) in Brick Kiln Factory**

S. No.	Duration of Work	No. of child Labour	Total	Child Labour in %
1	2 - 3 hrs./Day	192	513	37.43
2	4 - 5 hrs./Day	249	513	48.54
3	6 - 8 hrs./Day	72	513	14.04
	Total	513	513	100

Source: Primary Data Collection

But in the unorganized sector like brick kiln factories, the proper timing of work is not fixed; so the children are sometimes pressurized to work for longer than the normal time period. Fig. 10 shows that majority of the children (62.77 percent) worked for 16 to 20 days in a month. This is followed by 33.92 percent children for more than 20 days, 1.75 percent children for 11 to 14 days, 0.97 percent children for 6 to 10 days, and only 0.58 percent children working in the brick kiln factory for more than 3 to 5 days in a month.

**Fig. 10: Working Days per Month by the Children in Brick Kilns Industry**

Source: Primary Data Collection

In addition, in term of working months in a year, the surveyed children revealed (Table 23) that most of them (40.94 percent) are engaged in brick kiln factories for last 6 to 7 months; on the other hand 197 children, constituting 38.40 percent, are involved in this industry for last 4 to 5 months. However, there were 90 child labourers who were working in brick factories for more than 7 months.

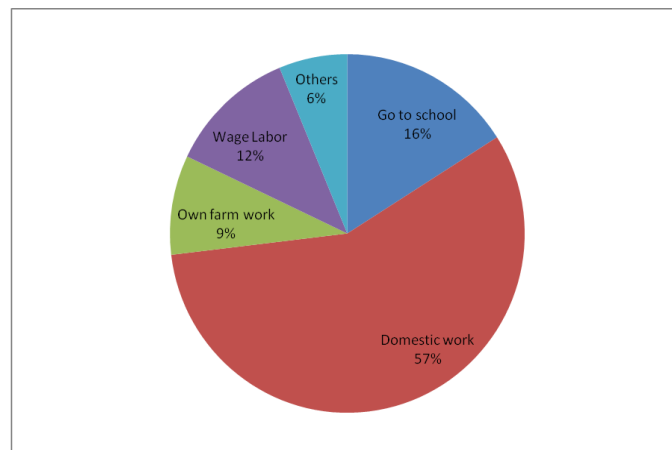
**Table 23: Working Months/Year by the Child Labour in Brick Kilns**

S. No.	Months/Year	No. of Child Labour	Total	Child Labour in %
1	1 to 3 months	16	513	3.12
2	4 to 5 months	197	513	38.40
3	6 to 7 months	210	513	40.94
4	Above 7 months	90	513	17.54
	Total	513	513	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

The present study also looks at the activities done by the surveyed children in the remaining months of the years. Fig. 11 reveals that majority of the surveyed children (57.12 percent) get involved in domestic works. The data further unveils that 15.98 percent go to school, 11.70 percent children working as a wage labourer, 8.97 percent working in own farms, and only 6.24 percent of children engaged in other activities.

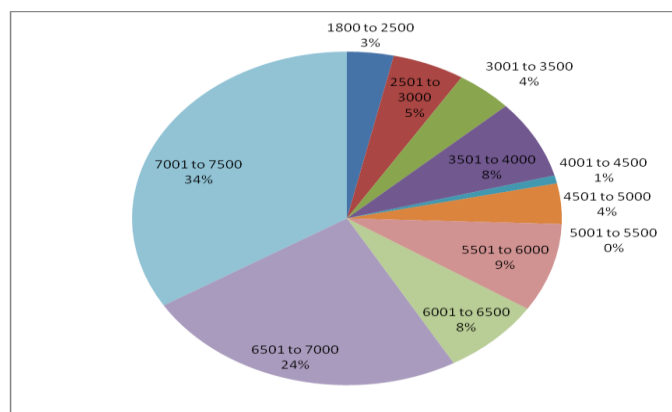
**Fig. 11: Other Activities are done by the Children in Spare Time**



**Source:** Primary Data Collection

The study also made an attempt to estimate the monthly income earned by these children. Mostly the child labourers have the meager income to support their families. Fig. 12 shows that 58.28 percent of children get Rs. 6500 to 7500/- per month; whereas 16.18 percent of children have wage between Rs. 5500 to 6500/- per month. More pathetically about 9 percent of children earn only Rs. 1800 to 3000 per month for their livelihoods. The amount mentioned is obviously much less than what is set for a minimum daily wage.

**Fig. 12: Monthly Income of the Children in Brick Kilns**



**Source:** Primary Data Collection

However, Table 24 unveils that around 80 percent of the surveyed children collect wages by themselves. The data further reveals that 17.74 percent of the surveyed children send their parents to collect their wages and the remaining 2.92 percent send others to collect their wages.

**Table 24: Responsible Persons for collecting wages of the Child Labour**

S. No.	Wage Collector	No. of child labour	Total	Child labour in %
1	Yourself	407	513	79.34
2	Parents	91	513	17.74
3	Others	15	513	2.92
	Total	513	513	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

Regarding satisfaction in working in brick kiln factories, the survey collected information from the children from their own perception. In this context, Table 25 reveals that 56.73 percent of children have replied that they are satisfied with the present wages; whereas 7.21 percent of children are not satisfied with the present wages. The data further reveals that 36.06 percent of the surveyed children do not know whether present wages satisfied them or not.

**Table 25: Status of Satisfaction of the Child labour regarding their wages**

S. No.	Wage Satisfaction	No. of child labour	Total	Child labour in %
1	Yes	291	513	56.73
2	No	37	513	7.21
3	Do not know	185	513	36.06
	Total	513	513	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

Table 26, however, unveils that the children want their wages to be raised to 250 to 300 per day; some of them expect their wages to be 350 to 400 per day. However, 185 children, constituting 36.06 percent, do not know whether they are satisfied with their wages or not.

**Table 26: Expected wages (Rs.) of the child labour in Brick Kilns**

S. No.	Expected Wage	No. of child labour	Total	Child labour in %
1	250 to 300	22	37	59.46
2	350 to 400	13	37	35.14
3	450 to 500	2	37	5.41
	Total	37	37	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

While looking into their satisfaction with works it has been found (Table 27) that 47.95 percent children are satisfied with their works, whereas 27.88 percent children are not satisfied with their works, and remaining 24.17 percent children do not know about their satisfaction of work.

**Table 27: Status of Satisfaction of the child labour with their works**

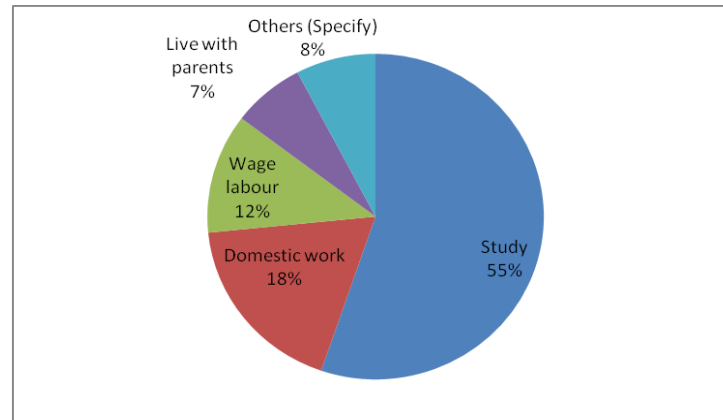
S. No.	Work Satisfaction	No. of child labour	Total	Child labour in %
1	Yes	246	513	47.95
2	No	143	513	27.88
3	Do not know	124	513	24.17
	Total	513	513	100.00

**Source:** Primary Data Collection

The children who were dissatisfied with their works wanted to have alternative works; fig. 13 shows that 55.24 percent of children wanted to continue their study, whereas 18.18 percent of children wanted to involve in domestic works. Besides,

11.89 percent of children responded that they wanted to engage as a wage labourer and only 7 percent of children wanted to stay their parents.

**Fig. 13: Other Expected Works like to do by the Children**



**Source:** Primary Data Collection

## 10. CONCLUSIONS

In the concluding remarks, it can be said that the problem of child labour is a widespread phenomenon in the world. The magnitude of child labour is more alarming in developing countries than the developed. The majority of child labours (approximately 98 percent) live in the developing countries of Asia, Africa, Latin Americas, and the Middle East and the remaining proportion (around 2 percent) live in the developed countries of North America, Europe, and Australia. However, the problem of child labour in India is one of the most viable and challenging issues in recent decades. Presently, in India, around 10.1 million children are trapped in child labour.

In this context, it is very important to analyse the situation of child labour in West Bengal. It is argued that the situation of child labour in West Bengal is not a pleasing one. The incidence of child labour in West Bengal recorded around 4.5 percent child labour (aged 5-14 years), whereas the average Indian State accounting 5.1 percent in 2001.

On the basis of a primary survey of the total 513 numbers of children (aged 5-14 years), nearly 93 percent of the male children and around 7.0 percent of the female children of Murshidabad District were engaged as child workers in brick kilns factories. The data displays that most of the children (88.67 percent) just discontinued their school education after completed only 2<sup>nd</sup> standard. The main reason for the discontinued school education of the children was related to poor economic condition at their home. The most positive thing is that nearly 30 percent of the surveyed children would like to go to school to continue further education if a suitable educational environment could be provided to them. It is found that poverty, low level of parental education, unemployment, and burden of debts are the main responsible factors for the higher incidence of child labour in brick kilns of Murshidabad District.

## 11. SUGGESTIONS

Firstly, it is very significant to find out the determinants of child labour and solve their problems accordingly with strong laws and implementing various child alleviation programmes like the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), JGSY, PEEY, CMEY, etc. The study also shows unemployment and underemployment is another cause of child labour in India in general and in Murshidabad District in particular. So, new job strategies and self-employment schemes should be intensified at the ground level. Low attainment of education of the parents is also one of the most responsible factors in determining the problem of child labour. This needs to motivate them to become literate and to launch mass awareness programmes for the parent to understand the significance of education in daily life. The problem of child labour can be stopped, controlled and eliminated by concentrating on socio-economically vulnerable groups.

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