

Bolsa Familia: A Prototype for India's Child Labor Eradication Policy

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Abstract: India will receive its demographic dividend only when socio-economic condition improves. According to UNICEF, India has largest number of child labor in spite of a number of legal provisions, policies and programmes against child labor, introduced since independence. The paper gives an overview of problem of child labor and policies adopted to reduce the problem in India over the period of time. Research over the period has brought in all the reasons behind child labor. More need to be done in the area of finding feasible solution to the problem. This paper discusses Brazilian policy 'Bolsa Familia' which was the programme introduced to eradicate poverty and inequality. It has not only reduced poverty and inequality in Brazil but also has brought down child labor effectively. This paper makes an attempt to locate best possible practices of Bolsa Familia so that a new and most practical policy can be formulated that will improve socio-economic situation in India.

Keywords; Bolsa Familia, Child labour, Demographic Dividend, Conditional Cash Transfer, Positive Incentives

I. Introduction

More population that too more 'young' population can be 'a Demographic Dividend' for an economy where, people are skilled and healthier. It means a country has huge amount of better quality human resource that produces, earns and spends more. It provides a large market for domestic as well as international goods, services and financial assets. Within few years' time such economy can emerge as one of the most powerful economies of the world.

This can be the 'future of India', which currently is young and populous country. However currently it seems more like a 'dream that may not become true' since India's population is certainly not skilled and healthy, with literacy rate at 71.2% and Life expectancy at just 68.13 years (CIA, 2015[1]). After studying data annually published by UNICEF (2015, [2]) as 'State of World's Children 2015- country India', future of the country doesn't look brighter since the country

- Ranks 47 in case of under 5 mortality rate (2013)
- Has infant mortality rate (under 1) as 12 (2013)
- Neo- natal mortality rate 29 (2013)
- Number of out-of-school children of primary school age (2009-2013) 13, 87,000
- Has child labor at 8% (2005-2013)

India can see its future in present status of its children (CSO, 2012[3]). Under economic distress children are forced to stay out of school and work in more exploitative and hazardous job conditions. Child labor not only becomes a curse to their present welfare but also reduces their future productive capacities. Such kind of population certainly becomes liability for the economy. India can receive its demographic dividend only when problem of child labor is drastically reduced or completely abolished.

1.1. Statement of Problem:

India has introduced various measures to combat the problem of child labor. However as reported by Indian Labor Journal (November 2013[4]), India contributes more than 2% share in world's child labor almost equal to its present contribution in world's GDP (1.67%). Thus measured introduced so far doesn't seem to have desirable effect. However comparative analysis of policies adopted by India and other countries may help developing better policies to address the problem of child labour in India in future. One Brazilian programme, *Bolsa Familia*, which involves conditional cash transfer has played a key role in the reduction of child labour both in rural and urban areas (Lindert K.2013,[5]). This paper studies various positive aspects of 'Bolsa Familia Policy' of Brazil and tries to access feasibility of such type of policy in Indian context.

1.2. Objectives of the study:

Broad objectives of this study are

- 1) To study extent of socio-economic problems of India
- 2) To understand nature of policies adopted by India so far to reduce child labor
- 3) To study Bolsa Familia Policy
- 4) To understand feasibility of policy similar to Bolsa Familia in India.

1.3. Methodology:

The study is entirely based on secondary data that is compiled and published by National and International Organization like NSSO, ILO, UNICEF, WORLD BANK etc.

1.4. Limitations of the study:

Though 'child labor' had always been one of the important points of concern for Indian policy makers, besides Census and NSSO, there is no platform that compiles detailed data on various aspects of child labor. Lack of comprehensive data is limitation of this study.

1.5. Significance of the study:

Child labor is a problem faced world over and economies are trying to eliminate the problem through forming various policies. A comparative analysis of the problem and causes is done by researchers. Comparative analysis of policy measures and its implementation too need to be done. Such comparison may help policy makers to form policies that are more effective.

II. Condition of child population in India – a cause of concern:

According to CIA (2015[1]), by July 2015, children comprise of 28.09% of total population which is almost one third of country's population. A large number of children live in deprived and vulnerable conditions. As recorded by CSO (Sept 2012[3]), while an absolute increase of 181 million in the country's population has been recorded during the decade 2001-2011, there is a reduction of 5.05 millions in the population of children aged 0-6 years during this period. The decline in male children is 2.06 million and in female children is 2.99 millions. Between the period of 2009-2013, 1387000 children were recorded as out-of-school at primary school age. The Census found an increase in the number of child laborers from 11.28 million in 1991 to 12.66 million in 2001. The major occupations engaging child labor are Pan, Bidi & Cigarettes (21%), Construction (17%), Domestic workers (15%) and Spinning & weaving (11%). Child labor restricts the right of children to access and benefit from education and denies the fundamental opportunity to attend school. Child labor, thus, prejudices children's education and adversely affects their health and safety (Lok Sabha, 2013[6]).

III. Legal Provisions, policies and programmes

Government had been taking various pro-active measures to tackle the problem of child labor (Agarwal, 2013[7]).

3.1. Legal provisions:

Several provisions in the Constitution of India impose on the State the primary responsibility of ensuring that all the needs of children are met and that their basic human rights are fully protected with the help of a large number of acts. For example -

- The prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
- The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986

3.2. Policies:

The country is implementing a number of Child centric policies addressing the issues of Child Survival, Child Development and Child Protection. For example -

- National Policy on Education, 1986
- National Policy on child Labor, 1987

3.3. Programmes

The various Schemes / Programmes are implemented by different Central Ministries, following the guidance of the national policies. For example -

- Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

India has adopted two types of policies and programs to reduce child labor-

- 1) Direct policies that target prevention of child labor
- 2) Indirect policies that encourage better education, income and health which ultimately reduces child labor.

However the above mentioned data shows, though appropriate, these policies have limited success. A lot still need to be done in this area. Study of policies adopted by other countries of the world to reduce problem of child labor may help Indian policy makers to introduce better and more effective policies. With this objective this paper analyses Brazilian programme '*Bolsa Familia*' that has played a key role in the reduction of child labor both in rural and urban areas.

IV. Bolsa Familia: reducing child labor through conditional cash transfers:

In 2003, the government of Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva launched a comprehensive program called as '*Bolsa Familia*' as its flagship social programme (Lindert, 2013[5]). The programme had dual objectives – Eradication of poverty and inequality in the country. The Bolsa Familia Program (BFP) integrated four cash transfer programs that were redundant into a single program under the umbrella of a new Ministry of Social Development.

- a. Bolsa Escola (Ministry of Education) – promoting schooling
- b. Bolsa Alimentação (Ministry of Health) – Improving health care
- c. Cartão Alimentação (FomeZero) – improving food consumption
- d. Auxílio Gas (Ministry of Mines/Energy) - compensation for fewer government subsidies

Bolsa Familia integrated all four programmes and thus reduced huge cost Brazil used to incur to administer all these programmes. Another important feature of this programme is, all cash transfers are conditional which provided positive incentives to people. Cash was transferred to mother of each family -

- That comes under the net of extremely poor and moderately poor family, for which a 'Unified Household Registry' is maintained and strengthened through technical improvement to locate all beneficiaries.
- That sends children to school, for health checkups and vaccinations regularly, and seeks other complementary social services.

Through condition cash transfers, Bolsa familia achieved-

- 1) Eradication of current poverty and inequality
- 2) Control future poverty and inequality by providing incentives to families to build their own human capital.

As reported by Kathy Lindert, The World Bank's project to support the Bolsa Familia Program was conceptualized within a results-based management framework, of which there are two key aspects.

- 1) Mechanisms were developed to pace loan disbursements in phases only after given targets are achieved. So loan disbursement percentage was dependant on performance shown.
- 2) The project includes a monitoring and evaluation system that is focused on results and thus intrinsic to both the architecture and the implementation of the program.

V. Achievements of Bolsa Familia:

According to the World Bank, *Bolsa Familia* is not only the largest but also the best targeted CCT scheme in Latin America, with 73 per cent of benefits reaching the poorest 20 per cent of the population, and 94 per cent falling within the lowest two quintiles. Though the programme has its own limitations, it seems to have reduced child labor of rural as well as urban Brazil (Hall, 2008[8]). Since the paper tries to study feasibility of Bolsa Familia like programme to address socio-economic problems of India, comparative analysis of socio-economic conditions of Brazil and India need to be done.

VI. Brazil vs. India, socio-economic factors:

Comparative analysis of socio-economic indicators of India and Brazil shown below clearly indicate that in case of all ten indicators given below, India still has a long way to go as compared to Brazil. Bolsa Familia seems to have improved socio-economic conditions in Brazil.

TABLE 1:socio-economic indicators of India and Brazil

No	Indicator	India	Brazil
1	Under 5 Mortality Rank	47	118
2	Under 5 Mortality Rate 1990 2013	126 53	62 14
3	Under 5 mortality by sex Male Female	51 55	15 12
4	Infant Mortality Rate (under 1) 1990 2013	88 41	51 12
5	Life Expectancy at birth (years) 2013	66	73
6	GNI per capital (US \$) 2013	1570	11690
7	Total Adult Literacy Rate (%) (2009-13)	62	91
8	Poverty line of US \$ 1.25 per day (%) 2009-2012	32.7	6.1
9	Public Spending as % of GDP (2008-2012) to Health Education Military	1.33 3.35 2.49	4.23 5.82 1.58
10	Child Labor (%) (2005-2013) Total Male Female	11.8 11.6 11.9	8.3 10.6 6

VII. Feasibility of policy similar to Bolsa Familia:

India too had introduced direct, indirect policies for social improvement which has some programmes of cash transfer. However none of those seem to have brought good results the way Brazilian programme has. Thus a new and more practical policy can be formulated by adding all positive features of Bolsa Familia listed below.

7.1. Useful aspects of Bolsa Familia:

- 1) Integration of various policies into one single country wide policy to reduce administrative costs and delays in India that will ensure optimum utilization of resources. Already existing systems like Aadhar card, pan cards may be upgraded and used to locate target beneficiaries.
- 2) Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) seems to be an attractive system even for India which is based on positive incentives for people.
- 3) Conditional Cash Transfer to family as a unit where mothers gets cash as a head of family unit. Mothers even in India are considered to be more careful in using finance for betterment of children.
- 4) Result based phased credit programme will ensure less misuse of funds. It makes the civic body responsible and answerable to success as well as failure of the policy which in a way ensures effective implementation of the policy.

VIII. Conclusion

Child labor is a serious socio economic problem that needs to be solved by introducing a single policy that is incentive oriented to ensure better results in a democratic set up of India. Bolsa Familia can be considered as a basic model to be followed. However problems of Bolsa Familia too need to be analyzed in a way that Indian model avoids all negative factors and adopts all positive aspect of the model which in fact can be the topic of further research.

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