

Domestic Child Labor – a case study of Hyderabad

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Introduction

In modern day society regardless of where you grow up in the world, there is a hidden discrimination between boys and girls and thus an agreed separation of duties as well. While the boys grow up being taught to hunt and protect, the girls are brought up to take care of the home. It is not surprising therefore that the role of domestic work should fall on the shoulders of the girl child.

In the western world we are brought up on fairytales and heroines that support this stereotype and we learn at a young age that we should strive to master the tasks of the perfect housewife. This has changed through the decades however the role of the girl child in modern day society has not.

A lot of research and investigation both academically and legally have gone into the plight of the working children of the world. Emphasis has been given to those working in what are deemed hazardous jobs as well as those children who are contributing to society on the expense of their childhood and development.

One sector that has been shamefully ignored are coined “the nowhere children”. These children are those who you will not find in the school registers or the labor department paid workforce lists. They are ignored because their work is seen as “not directly productive work”¹.

The aim of this paper is to give a voice and a face to the most “overworked, overlooked and undervalued”² girls in India, and possibly the world today – The domestic girl child laborer in the urban setting.

Much has been written about child labor in the hazardous fields, and much has been researched on the area of the rural setting. These two types of work either together or separately seem to have glamour to them, or is it just a distance from what we see in our day to day lives that we feel we can have an impact on?

It is what is under our noses that has been ignored and pushed aside for so long that I will be looking at. The work that many of us see without even thinking about twice, in a setting that is so modern and progressive no one wants to think that these horrible things could be happening there.

This paper will highlight the reality of the domestic child laborer in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India. It will tell the story of those girls who hide behind the kitchen door and the bathroom toilet. It will allow for possibly the first real dedicated research into the story of these girls and allow for their stories to not be out shunned by more horrific stories that exist in the world of child labor.

Methodology

Through a questionnaire (Appendix I) and interviewing girls at the MVF Bridge Course Camp in Chandra Gutta in Hyderabad, as well as collating previous study cases, I was able to put together a broad data base of the stories of the domestic girl child laborers in Hyderabad.

¹ Kashapthi, P. “The Plight of the Working children in India.” *Child Labour – Multi Dimensional Problem* Ed. Kamla Srinivasa and Veena Gandotra. Ajanta Publications 1993 Pg. 12-13

² Bishat, Anita, Mathew-Joseph, Molly and Segupta, Sangeeta. *Balika Grahsahayika, Girl Child domestic workers in India. Working Paper 1997/2000.* Pg. 1

The Questionnaire asked the girls about:

- Family background
- Previous formal education
- Experience at the RBC
- Future goals
- Work history
- Rescue experience

As well as talking to the girls, I was able to interview teachers at Government schools, MVF RBC and NRBC, members of legislative assembly, Labor department representatives, other NGO's, Mandal Education officers, Mandal Labor officers, MVF volunteers and Child Right's Protection Forum members.

Child Labor

There are many definitions for child labor:

“When the business of wage earning or of participation in self or family supports conflicts directly or indirectly with the business of growth and education, the result is child labor.”

Encyclopedia of Social Science

“A child falling within the 5-15 age bracket and who is at remunerative work may be paid or unpaid, and busy in any hour of the day within or outside the family.”

The Operation Research Group based in Baroda

“Child labour includes children prematurely leading adult lives, working long hours for low wages under conditions damaging to their health and to their physical and mental development, sometimes separated from their families, frequently deprived of meaningful education and training opportunities that would open up for them a better future.”

*International Labor Organization*³

“UNICEF defines child labour as work that exceeds a minimum number of hours, depending on the age of a child and on the type of work. Such work is considered harmful to the child and should therefore be eliminated.

- Age 5-11: At least one hour of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week.
- Age 12-14: At least 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week.
- Age 15-17: At least 43 hours of economic or domestic work per week.

³ Kumar, Prahlad and Singh, Vineeta. “Problem of Child Labour in urban informal sector – with special reference to Allahabad.” *Child Labour – From different perspectives*
Ed. Jain, Mehaveen and Savaswat, Saneeta 2006

UNICEF⁴

Child labor is done by any working child who is under the age specified by law. The word, “work” means full time commercial work to sustain self or add to the family income. Child labor is a hazard to a child’s mental, physical, social, educational, emotional and spiritual development. Broadly any child who is employed in activities to feed self and family is being subjected to “child labor”.

*Child Labor NGO*⁵

Child labour is work performed by a child that is likely to interfere with his or her education, or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

*Convention of the Rights of the Child, Article 32.1*⁶

Child labour is any labour that prevents a child from receiving a full time formal education.

*Stop Child Labour*⁷

One will note that many of these definitions accept the reality of child labor and instead of condemning it try to establish regulation for its existence.

Children can be found in every field of labor in the market:

- Agriculture
- Rag picking
- Industrial
- Hotel bus boys
- Mechanic shops
- Beggars
- Bangle making
- Matchsticks
- Carpet factory
- Brick factory
- Mining
- Textile
- Prostitution
- Military
- Domestic
- and much much more...

⁴ http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_childlabour.html

⁵ <http://www.childlabor.in/what-is-child-labour.htm>

⁶ <http://www.stopchildlabour.eu/stopchildlabour/English/About-Child-Labour/FAQ#faq1>

⁷ <http://www.stopchildlabour.eu/stopchildlabour/English/About-Child-Labour/FAQ#faq1>

Children are considered profitable employees by their employers because they are small, docile, cheap, loyal and hard working. Children can easily be exploited because they are naïve, unaware of their rights, and usually uneducated.

In many cases children start to work at a very young age and do not know any other reality than the work environment they are subjected to and would not be aware that there are alternatives to their situation.

Child labor is a concrete manifestation of denial of almost all basic rights to children. Working children are denied their rights to survival and development, education, leisure and play, opportunity for them developing their physical and mental talents, and protection from abuse and neglect.⁸

Some major causes for child labor are:

1. Poverty – many have argued that parents send their children to work because they need the added income. In some cases this is true. However this is not the sole case, and many times it is just an added factor to a number of more prevailing issues. I will argue that poverty as a state of mind is a cause of child labor and not necessarily as a physical matter.
2. Unemployment – Many employers are in the market for child labor because they are cheaper. This is a cause for unemployment of many adults and so they are forced to send their children to work to allow for a family allowance.
3. Social history – For many families child labor is part of their history. They are comfortable with the processes and bureaucracy around the employment of the child. An alternative is alien to them and much more intimidating.
4. Invisibility – Many of the children working today are unseen by many. They are hidden in locations that are not accessible to the law.
5. Acceptance and Excuses – Many people find ways of excusing the need/reality of child labor which in returns strengthens the grip of the employers.
6. No Implementation of laws – Laws exist on International and National levels however they are not implemented in a satisfactory fashion which allows the continued existence of illegal actions.
7. Schools – School systems are not equipped to include children who have not attended or are returning to the school system. Discrimination is rampant and pushed the children out the school doors.

Domestic Child Labor

The world has been hearing the cries of those fighting against child labor for many years. The emphasis however has always been on the work that is deemed hazardous by the ILO. The conditions and realities of those working in these hazardous fields is appalling and should be eradicated, however the focus

⁸ Srivastara, Sheelu. “Child Labor as a Socio-Economic Problem in India.” *Child Labour – From different perspectives*. Ed. Jain, Mehaveen and Savaswat, Saneeta. 2006

on these specific jobs has given an indirect green light to any other form of child labor.

A cry that has not been given enough attention is the plight of the domestic child laborer. Not much has been studied focusing specifically on the female child as a domestic worker, which deserves to be studied in depth.⁹ The circumstances in which they work has not allowed for a real investigation. The fact that they work in residential homes means they are in private domains which keeps it hidden from the eyes of the law. These girls can be treated as badly as seen fit by the employer and no one would ever know.

There are two types of domestic child labor:

1. Economic work – those girls who leave their homes to work in the household of another for payment or promise of pay
2. Household tasks – those girls who stay in their own homes and are in charge of keeping up the house and care of younger siblings.

The first is one that has been investigated a bit more since a ban was placed in India in 2006. However the second category is hidden behind the closed door of family/social norms no one will ever know the real number of those working.

Of the first category there are different types:

Types of Girl child Domestic worker:

- Full time residential (often migrant)
- Day time local (often living in the slum areas or resettlement colonies nearby)
- Part time accompanying their sister or mothers as young as five years. They are potential trainee and some at the age of 12-13 become workers.

Who employs them:

- Middle or upper middle class who have small children to look after
- Middle income group people who are professionals and have children to be taken care of. This group may be desirous of undertaking their own work but is unable to do so.
- Higher or middle class families who due to religious belief consider menial work as inferior to their caste or status.¹⁰

Magnitude of child labour

International Level

⁹ Dass, Asha V. "A Study of female child domestic workers in Baroda City." *Child Labour – Multi Dimensional Problem*. Ed. Srinivasa, Kamla and Gandotra, Veena. Ajanta Publications 1993. pg. 114

¹⁰ Bishat, Anita, Mathew-Joseph, Molly and Segupta, Sangeeta. *Balika Grahsahayika, Girl Child domestic workers in India*. Working Paper 1997/2000. Pg. 9

According to the International Labor Organization over 200 million children in the world today are involved in child labor, doing work that is damaging to his or her mental, physical and emotional development.¹¹ This is despite prohibiting bans and legislation on a global and local level.

SUMMARY INDICATORS	Child labour (5–14 years) 1999–2008*					
	Total		male		female	
Africa [#]	29	n	30	n	28	n
Sub-Saharan Africa [#]	33	n	34	n	32	n
Eastern and Southern Africa	34		36		32	
West and Central Africa	35	n	34	n	35	n
Middle East and North Africa	10		11		9	
Asia [#]	12	**	13	**	12	**
South Asia	13		13		12	
East Asia and Pacific	10	**	10	**	10	**
Latin America and Caribbean	10		11		10	
CEE/CIS	6		6		6	
Industrialized countries [§]	–		–		–	
Developing countries [§]	16	***	17	***	16	***
Least developed countries [§]	30		31		28	
World	–		–		–	
§ Includes territories within each country category or regional group.						
Definitions of the Indicators						
Child labour – Percentage of children 5-14 years old involved in child labour at the moment of the survey.						

Notes

- Data not available
- n Excludes Nigeria
- ** Excludes China
- *** Excludes China and Nigeria
- # For a complete list of countries and territories in the regions and sub regions, see page 44.¹²

¹¹ http://www.ilo.org/global/Themes/Child_Labour/lang--en/index.htm

¹² http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/sowc/pdfs/statistics/SOWC_Spec_Ed_CRC_TABLE%209.%20CHILD%20PROTECTION_EN_111309.pdf

National Level - INDIA

It is estimated that there are over 447 million children in India today, according to UNICEF State of the World's Children 2009¹³. There are several laws and policies that are in place in the legal system in India to protect the rights of children:

The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 – An Act to provide for the abolition of bonded labour system with a view to preventing the economic and physical exploitation of the weaker sections of the people and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 – An Act to prohibit the engagement of children in certain employments and to regulate the conditions of work of children in certain other employments.

Ban of domestic child labour (Amendment to the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986) – The ban on the employment of children below the age of 14 as domestic help in dhabas, restaurants, hotels and the hospitality sectors.

However, it is found rampant across India in every state. Although these laws are in place, implementation and enforcement is a problem.

In India today the figures for child labour vary depending on the source that you use and the definition used for child labour. It is estimated that there are about 2 million children working in the so-called hazardous industries. This number is shocking, but can easily allow for the cause of the abolition of the working children of India to be pushed to the periphery of any government agenda. If one were to define child labor as wage earning work alone the official estimates are around 17 million. Independent estimates, working on roughly the same definition have put the figures at around 40 million. However, if one were to define all children out of school as child labor the figure would be closer to 100 million¹⁴ (nearly half the working child force of the world).

In India, Children of any age may be employed, provided employers adhere to restrictions, including a maximum 6-hour workday with a 1-hour rest period, at least 1 day off per week, and no night work or overtime work. Indian law prohibits the employment of children under 14 years in any factory or mine or in 16 hazardous occupations and 66 hazardous processes, including the manufacture or handling of pesticides, carpet weaving, diving, stone grinding, trash (rag)

¹³ http://savethechildren.in/files/Child_Labour_Position_Paper_2009.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.mvfindia.in/faqs.htm>

picking, and work in slaughterhouses, roadside eateries and restaurants, hotels, tea shops and other recreational establishments.¹⁵

Bonded labor is illegal in India ... Persons found using bonded labor may be fined and imprisoned for up to 3 years.¹⁶

A clear link has been developed between child labor and education. Many have found that the best solution and preventative tool against the reality of child labor is enforced required education for children up until the age of 14.

The belief is that education will place the children in an environment that is safe and suitable for children, while also educating society (community, family, and children) about the rightful place and treatment of children.

One organization that works with the principle that 'No child must work and that every child has the right to education, is MV Foundation.

Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation (MVF)

MV Foundation was established in 1981 and works towards the abolishment of child labor through the enforcement of the right of every child to an education.

MVF works on a holistic system and is creating an environment that will allow for every child to get an education. The strategies adopted include:

- motivating the children and the family member, the community and leaders of the importance of an education
- working with the Head Master and teachers of government run schools and hostels to improve the environment of education
- creating Child Rights Protection Forums in each community to act as "the soldiers of children's rights"
- working with the government officials to implement the laws and acts in place
- working with the police and labor department
- creating bridge schools (residential and non residential) to help integrate older children and those who have never received an education into the school system

MVF works on a set of non-negotiables:

- All children must attend full-time formal-day schools
- Any child out of school is a child laborer
- All labor is hazardous, and harms the overall growth and development of the child
- There must be total abolition of child labor
- Any justification perpetuating the existence of child labor must be condemned

¹⁵ Ibid. pg. 182

¹⁶ Ibid. pg. 183

MVF, so far has successfully mobilized 600 thousand children out of labor and into fulltime formal government day schools, 50 thousand out of which graduated the MVF Bridge Course Camps.

MVF has innovated the concept of the Bridge Course Camp. These camps, either residential or non-residential allow a safe and supportive space for children to be introduced or re-introduced into the educational system.

At these camps the children are evaluated for their level of education and understanding and start a process of catching them up with the level of education that would be considered customary for their age.

MVF started out focusing its work on releasing bonded child labor in the rural area in 1991. It has since expanded its work on mainstreaming any child that is out of school, particularly those who are part of the work force. It started to work in the urban setting from 2004.

MVF in Hyderabad

The focus of this paper has been in the urban setting. This is because there is very little known about the working profile of the girl children working in the cities as most of the focus has been on the rural setting.

Since the ban of domestic labor in 2006, a lot more emphasis has been placed on this form of labor, and since MVF started working in the urban setting in 2004 more is known about these girls.

Hyderabad is the capital of Andhra Pradesh and along with the adjoining twin city of Secunderabad is the largest metropolitan in the state, and the sixth largest in India. The city's population has reached over 4 million in 2009, while the population of the metropolitan area is estimated at above 6.3 million. It is a thriving cosmopolitan city rich in culture and history. The official language is Telugu however you will frequently hear Urdu, Hindi and English.

Hyderabad is the financial, economic, and political capital of the state of Andhra Pradesh. With the rise of development in the city a huge force of workers have been migrating to the city from all over the state of Andhra Pradesh as well as other neighboring and distant states. This has caused an increase of slums and confusion in the city.

The MV Foundation has been working in urban areas since 2004. It started its program in Addagutta slum in West Maredpally in Secunderabad. Presently it has been covering eight mandals:

- Secunderabad
- West Maredpally
- Musherabad
- Asif Nagar
- Amberpet
- Bandlashda

- Lingampally

According to the District Collector in Hyderabad, about 1.2 lakh children are working as domestic laborers. And in Hyderabad alone there are 40,000 of such children.¹⁷

There are many difficulties for MVF to conduct its work in the urban setting in comparison to the rural area.

1. The teachers give witness that the children that are found and come to the schools are less respectful.
2. In the city parents and employers are strong willed and do not take into community pressure to release working children.
3. There is no feeling of community and communal responsibility so motivation is difficult
4. The employers themselves many times are high profile members of society who are hard to reach.
5. Rallies and spreading of information is lost in the masses of the city.
6. Some communities (in particular the Muslim community) do not adhere to state legislation.
7. Migration brings children from all over India who do not speak the local language which prevents them from attending school.

Case Studies

To interact with domestic child laborers I visited the Girls Residential Bridge Camp in Chandra Gutta in Hyderabad. The camp is an innovation of MVF which allows for girls (and boys) who were once a part of the working force in the city (or simply wandering the streets aimlessly) to get reintegrated into the education system by catching them up to their age appropriate level of education and motivate them to continue their formal education afterwards.

I spoke to 5 girls who were former Domestic Child Laborers in the City. Each girl shared her story through answering my questions.

These stories highlight the horrible conditions these girls had to work in, the reasons they started to work and how they stopped. The majority of the girls had been going to school prior to working and all of the girls, with no exception, were highly motivated to acquire a full education.

Through these stories and those acquired by other MVF interns (in Appendix II) my goal has been to give a face and voice to the invisible children that are so often forgotten and neglected.

Each story is unique and different, but together they draw a grim picture of the situation in the city of Hyderabad today, which can be seen as a warning of the situation of the urban setting in general.

¹⁷ Internship report: Domestic Child laborers – a critical analysis of legal instruments in their protection
By S. Sri Ruma

Case Study I

Name	Age	Class	Religion	From	Mother Tongue	Marital status
Kumari	13	7 th class	Hindu	Vizag district, AP	Telugu	Never been engaged

Relation	Age	Marital status	Occupation	Education
Father		Married	Rice/Jowar farmer	Can sign name
Mother		Married	Rice/Jowar farmer	2 nd class drop out
Brother	18+	Married	Agriculture	attended
Brother	15	Single	Unemployed	10 th class graduate
Sister	8	Single	Student	3 rd class ¹⁸

School¹⁹

Teachers	Corporal Punishment	Mid day meal	Quality	Bathroom	Water
Good	Yes	Yes**	Ok	No***	yes

Reason dropped out of school: Kumari dropped out of the school at 4th class because of financial difficulties. Her family had people working the cattle and land, but when they fell into financial difficulties they let them go and got Kumari to stay at home and work at home grazing cattle and working the farm. After she left they sold the cattle.

Acquiring work: Kumari really wanted to get back into school and when an aunt of a friend came to village promising to take her niece and her to the city and provide them with an education she went willingly and knowingly to Hyderabad. Her parents were unaware that she was going to be made to work.

She was made to be a maid (bonded labor) for a family of 5 for 7 months.

She was made to sleep in the toilet and was fed rotten food by the wife and mother-in-law, while the husband was a little nicer.

¹⁸ It is clear that this family was interested in providing an education to their children as all the children have attended school.

¹⁹ *Note: School only up to 7th Class

**Note: Egg served on Wed and Sun. Food provided even when school is closed (Sun)

***Note: If she needed to relieve herself she would have to go home.

She worked from 04:30am until midnight 7 days a week. Her responsibilities consisted of:

- Cleaning utensils
- Bring vegetables to house
- Cutting vegetables
- Wash clothes
- Get things for the boys

She found standing on her feet the most difficult. Her feet hurt her all the time. The hardest task was going out of the house to fetch things for the boys.

Payment: There was a one year contract and the promise was to be paid at the end of the year. She was taken after 7 months and the owner refused to pay for the duration of time she worked.

Brakes/Time off: She had no holiday time during the 7 months she worked. She asked many times for time off but they didn't give her. They provided one phone call to her parents

She was allowed 1 hour to watch tv on the weekend, but no other kinds of breaks. Even when the family would leave the house they would dictate a list of chores for her to do until they returned.

Attempts to escape: She never tried to run away. She never got to the point where she thought it was so awful that she would want to.

Rescue: After 7 months of working she was sent to buy medicine. Labor Department clerks had been observing her and caught her. Labor Department clerks brought her to the camp. She didn't know where she was going and cried because she was scared.

Owner had told her to tell everyone she was being treated well, and being educated. They threatened to send her parents to jail for breaking the contract if she told the truth. When she arrived at the MVF camp she spilled the beans.

Case Study II

Name	Age	Class	Religion	From	Mother Tongue	Marital status
Ramjun (Rajini – working name)	14	7 th class	(Muslim)Dudekula	Mangalagiri, Guntur district AP	Telugu	Never been engaged

Relation	Age	Marital status	Occupation	Education
Father		Married	Cook in factory	College graduate
Mother		Died	Run over on way from work	
Brother	11	Single	student	Destitute Hostel

School: none

Acquiring work: Once her mom died she was looked after by her paternal grandmothers. Father received insurance money from wife's accident and ran away. He came back after one year. Grandmother found it difficult to support her so at the age of 7 she was sent to Hyderabad to an uncle to be taken care of. Her uncle had her work for a couple of days and then started to work in a house as a bonded laborer with the promise that they would help get married.

Ramjun worked for this family for 7 years. She worked from 4 am till midnight.

Her responsibilities consisted of:

- From 4-5 am operated washing machine
- 5:30-6 am hung up clothes to dry
- Make breakfast
- Keeping home (cleaning)
- Afternoon – clean the house
- Press dough for chapatti

She was only fed one meal a day. She was paid but someone else took the money. Ramjun was treated like dirt and beaten frequently with one incident finishing with stitches on her forehead in the hospital. During the 7 years of work she never went home and never saw her family. She wanted to stop working but felt too committed to try to escape.

Rescue: There was a Government office opposite her house. They observed her and brought her to MVF RBC. The government clerk went to the house with police and media to retrieve her from the house. She was locked in the house. She called owner's husband who came to open the door. The clerk packed her stuff and took her to the camp. There was no resistance from owner because of presence of police and media. The presence of the media frightened her and she thought she was being kidnapped to worse circumstances.²⁰

²⁰ *Note: From my time with Ramjun I was highly impressed at how she has motivated herself to get an education. She wants to become a doctor and would like to attend a government hostel.

**Note: She said there are many girls still working in that area. And MVF should go back and rescue them.

Case Study III

Name	Age	Class	Religion	From	Mother Tongue	Marital status
Anusha²¹	10		Hindu	Kakinada, Coastal Andhra, AP	Telugu	Never been engaged

Relation	Age	Marital status	Occupation	Education
Father		Married	Lorry Driver	No education
Mother		Married	Housewife	5 th class dropout
Sister	Died			

School:

Teachers	Corporal Punishment	Mid day meal	Quality	Bathroom	Water	Distance from Home
Good	Yes	Yes	Good	No	yes	1 KM

Reason dropped out of school: Anusha dropped out of school at 4th class when her guardian died.

Acquiring work: One of the relatives brought her to the city promising to educate her.

But instead they sold her to a watchman and his wife to work as their maid. She lived with them for a year and worked in their home and 5 other homes. She earned Rs. 1000 a month which was collected by the watchman. Her day started at 7am and would finish around 10pm.

Her responsibilities consisted of:

- Washing clothes
- cleaning utensils
- court yard
- turn off elevator switch before going to bed

The watchman's family would harass and tease her and one of the families burnt her arms because she arrived at work weak and faint. Even with all the bad treatment Anusha never thought of escaping because she was too scared.

²¹ Note: Parents gave her up for adoption when she was an infant. She maintains contact with her parents.

Rescue: A man from the apartment building observed her and filed a complaint with the Labor Department. Labour officers found her and brought her to the MVF RBC. She understood from the people who came to take her that she was being taken to study – this made her very happy.

The watchman was fine with her being released, but the rest of the family were unhappy and made up stories that she stole so as to get her into trouble.²²

Anusha is very happy to be back in school and wants to be a doctor to help the poor.

²² *Note: After burn incident she started to work in one household as babysitter and took care of two infants (2-3 years).

**Note: Anusha is very motivated to continue her education. She wants to be a doctor to help the poor.

Case Study IV

Name	Age	Class	Religion	From	Mother Tongue	Community	Marital status
Sarada	12	7 th	Hindu	Falknuma (Hyderabad suburb), AP	Telugu	ST	Never engaged

Relation	Age	Marital status	Occupation	Education
Father		Married	Agriculture farmer (land they own) vegetable crops	He can write
Mother		Married	Housewife	Uneducated
Sister	18+	Married		Educated
Sister	18+	Getting married		Educated
Brother	18+	Married	Taxi driver	Educated
Brother	About 10	Single	Student	Educated
Sister	About 9	Single	Student	educated

School²³

Teachers	Corporal Punishment	Mid day meal	Quality	Bathroom	Water
Ok		Hostel*	Bad**	Not tidy	yes

Reason dropped out of school: Sarada did not like the hostels and would rarely attend. She preferred to go back home. Because of this she was not confident in her studies and she stopped going.

Acquiring Work: When Sarada was nine and in 3rd class, a neighbor approached Sarada's mom and persuaded her to get Sarada to work with her children in the market. They worked in the market yard cleaning the grains and

²³ *Note: As part of the ST caste she is allowed to attend Government hostels close to her house. One of the hostels she attended was Phadi Sheriff Hostel. It is common that if parents can afford they will send their children to the hostel.

**Note: She changed hostels because the quality of the food was so horrible.

making them higher grade quality grain. She was paid Rs. 100 per kilo. The money would go to her mother.

Schedule:

5am - wake up

7am - reach market yard

11am - Brunch

5pm - finish and go home

9pm - dinner

10pm - bedtime

She then moved to work with Muslim family as a babysitter. While doing this she continued to live at her home. They would provide lunch that consisted of stale leftovers. She didn't feel they treated her badly, but the family constantly seemed to be angry at her.

Her responsibilities consisted of the care of one infant from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm. She was paid Rs. 1000 per month which her father collected.

Work Continued: She then worked for a Hindi family taking care of their infant as well. She worked the same hours and was paid the same amount. Her father also collected this amount.

She got another job at another house cleaning utensils and clothes for an additional Rs. 500.

When the children were enrolled into Kindergarten she asked to stop working for the family. They suspected she robbed something and they complained to the police. She didn't like that atmosphere so she wanted to runaway.

She ran away and approached her uncle who was a rag picker in Hyderabad with her cousins.

Rescue: One of the MVF volunteers (Vinod) was well known to the children in that area as someone who took children to attend school. She got interested in this and approached her and asked her to try out the RBC so that she can become a teacher.

Her parents were reluctant and she's afraid that if she goes back home they will put her back to work, that is why she prefers to go to a hostel when she finishes the camp.

Motivating Parents: Her parents were not sure about her education, however she has gone home on occasion (her sister visits once in a while and takes her home for 3-4 days and then brings her back) and has motivated her parents that school is good.

During her last visit home her older sister asked her to talk to her father about school to see he is a changed man to possibly get her to come back home.

Case Study V

Name	Age	Class	Religion	From	Mother Tongue	Marital status
Nandini	14		Hindu	Chilakalaguda, Hyderabad, AP	Telugu	Never engaged

Relation	Age	Marital status	Occupation	Education
Father	Died			
Mother	Died			
Sister	Died			

Brought up by maternal grandmother

School²⁴

Teachers	Corporal Punishment	Mid day meal	Quality	Bathroom	Water	Distance
Good		Yes	ok	No*	Yes**	500 m

Reason for dropping out of school: She had to stop going to school for 4 months (reason unknown) and then she found it difficult to return.

Acquiring work: Nandini dropped out of school in 3rd class and started to work with her grandfather at the stone quarry (manual labor) but grandmother wanted her to do other type of work. Grandmother got Nandini her first job at the age of 12. She worked as domestic labour for 20 days at first house (paid Rs. 1000/month). They were not good to her (fed her rotten food). So she went to her aunt's house.

Her aunt found her a job as a domestic help but only stayed for 10 days because again she was treated badly and given rotten leftovers to eat. One of the tasks she had at that house was to water the plants.

Eventually she returned to her grandparent's house and she began to accompany her grandmother to the houses she worked at. She did this for 2 years.

During this time she would help her grandmother clean 4 homes as well as maintain her grandparent's household.

²⁴ *Note: There were no toilet facilities in the school and the children would use the open road to take care of any needs.

**Note: There was a water tank available at the school, but the water was only used to clean the plates after the mid day meal scheme. Instead she would bring a bottle of water with her from home.

Her responsibilities consisted of:

- rinsing the clothes (after her grandmother would wash them)
- drying utensils (after her grandmother would wash them)
- etc.

Her day schedule was:

- First shift: 07:00-12:00
- Second shift: go home and do the chores while her grandmother rested
- Final shift: 16:00-18:00

Rescue: Her cousin (aunt's son) had been removed from work by an MVF volunteer (Yadagiri) and went to an RBC. The same volunteer found out about Nandini and approached her while she was playing in the evening with her cousins. He talked to her aunt and uncle and motivated her and her grandparents to send her to the MVF RBC.

Conclusion

In the city one can get lost. This is one factor that makes child labor in domestic work so easily ignorable. It is behind closed doors and no one is the wiser. Where in the rural setting everyone knows everyone and nothing is secret, this is not the case in the city.

The desire for an education is apparent in all these girls. They wanted to go to school and for many of them this was what brought them to the city in the first place – a promise of furthering their education.

The real nowhere girls:

The focus of this paper is the domestic child laborers in Hyderabad. The more I read and talked to people about this issue, the more I realized that the term itself was in question. Domestic child labor can mean one of two things: Either those children being hired out to work in homes of others. The other kind, the one that is less spoken about is where the children are left in their homes to take care of the chores and take care of siblings. These girls have no opportunity to educate themselves or develop themselves as they are constantly burdened with the task of keeping a household.

This second definition is one that is ingrained in society around the world that no one sees it as being something that is wrong, how could it be wrong if it's in their own household?

Girls are brought up all over the world with the understanding that their duties lie within the borders of their home. Therefore it is only natural that they should take up the responsibility of the house chores. But when this comes in expense of their ability to go to school and have a proper childhood it's no better than being hired out to be a servant in any other household.

This issue is a societal one and can only be eradicated with the enforcement of the right to an education to all children. If the structures could be put in place to allow for these girls to leave the confines of their home, and there was an understanding that every child had a right to a childhood without having to take on the responsibility of adulthood prematurely then the future of these girls will be guaranteed.

Appendix I

Questionnaire for Children in RBC

Basic:

Name _____

Age _____

Place of Origin _____

Religion _____

Community _____

Mother tongue _____

Family _____

Mother Occupation _____

Father Occupation _____

Siblings _____

Marriage Status _____

Age of Marriage _____

Family Situation:

What do your parents think about you working _____

What did your parents think about you not working _____

Do your other siblings work _____

Does your family visit you_____

Do you want to go to a Government Hostel or Home after the RBC_____

Did either of your parents go to school_____

Formal Education:

Level of Schooling_____

How far is school from home_____

Siblings that go to school_____

How were the teachers_____

What subjects did you like_____

Why did you drop out_____

Did you get your meal at school_____

How was the food_____

Were there toilets in your school_____

Was there drinking water in your school_____

how do your parents feel about you getting an education_____

RBC:

Do you like it here_____

What could be improved_____

What subjects do you like_____

What are you finding difficult_____

What do you want to get out of going to school_____

Work:

Where did you work_____

Did you live at home or at work_____

How old were you when you started to work_____

Did you get paid_____

How much_____

Who kept the money_____

How did you get the job_____

What time did you wake up _____

What time did you go to sleep _____

What tasks did you do_____

Can you describe a typical day at work_____

Were there dangers at work?_____ If yes, describe_____

Did you have any accidents_____

Did you get vacation_____

How were you treated_____

Did you get fed at work_____

What did you eat at work_____

Describe the working place_____

Did you want to work_____

Do you think children should work_____

What did you learn from working_____

Do you want to go back to work_____

Did you do anything other than work_____

Did you ever want to stop working before coming to RBC_____

If yes, Why didn't you/how did you?_____

General:

What do you want to do after RBC_____

What do you want to be when you grow up_____

How will you achieve that_____

Do you want your future children to work_____

Do you want to help other children who are currently working_____

What would you tell other working children_____

Rescue:

Why did you leave work?_____

How did you leave work?_____

Did anyone help you?_____

How did they find you_____

Were you happy when they came_____

Why did you come to the RBC_____

Who brought you to the RBC _____

How did you hear about the RBC _____

Did you want to come to the RBC _____

Were you sad when you first came to the RBC _____

Do you know where you're going after the RBC _____

What will you do if you don't like it there _____

Appendix II

MVF case studies

(From Mudfort Slum Intern paper)

Shankaramma Age: 10 years

Father's name: Hanumanthaiyy – Rickshaw Puller

Mother: Late. Ramulamma

Step Mother: Manni – Brick laborer

Mudfort Slum, East Marredpally, Secunderabad

She has started working since the last month and is earning Rs. 300/- per month. She does domestic work. The timing of her work is 6:00am to 9:30am and 6:00pm to 8:00pm. After she returns from work, she has to look after her step mother's children. When she goes to work, her step mother's children go to the Angavivadi Centre.

After one month she is planning to work under a maistry. She wanted to study but her step mother is refusing to send her to school as their will not be anyone to look after her children. Unfortunately her father has left the decision whether to send her to school or to work to this 2nd wife.²⁵

Sabita Age: 13 years

Home Town: Champapet, Hyderabad

Family Background: Sabita's family settled in Champapet. Her family consisted of 4 members. Her father works in fields. Tragically, her mother and sister expired.

The story of Sabita: Sabita never had the opportunity to go to a school. She was sent to Hyderabad from her village to work as a domestic labourer. She was involved in washing vessels, washing clothes, cleaning the house and other miscellaneous work. She used to work in 3 houses. With such long working hours, she could earn Rs. 1000 per month. She worked in Hyderabad for 2 years. The work environment was not all that bad for her.

One day, a MV Foundation Volunteer came to her house and asked if her dad would send Sabita to the camp operated by MV Foundation. Her dad refused to send her as the monthly source of income would reduce if she attends the camp. Sabita, who had an urge to study pleaded her father if she can go to the camp. When there was nothing positive on her side, she decided to run away from her house.

²⁵ From Mudfort Slum Intern paper

Sabita was very happy with this decision of hers as she could finally get the taste of childhood which was lacking in her life. Sabita took this extreme step of running away from her house because she feels school not only provides education to children, but also a safe and secure environment for them to live in.

Ramana Age: 12 years

Home town: Vizag, AP

Family Background: Ramana's family was a very poor one. Her father worked as a coolie and mother worked as a daily wage worker. Unable to support the family, her parents sent her to Hyderabad to work as domestic labour in the house of Mr. Krishna Rao and Pramila.

The story of Ramana: Ramana who was sent as domestic labour to Hyderabad is a classic example of domestic violence. Ramana was made to do all the household chores like cooking, cleaning the house, taking care of her employer's children, dressing them up for school and so on. She was given minimum food and there were many times when she was starved for days together. She was beaten up regularly by her employer for no fault of hers. Ramana was beaten mercilessly for things like not cleaning the house properly or not doing an assigned work quickly. Her day started off as early as 6 in the morning and went on till late in the night. The bruises on her body were testimony to the torture she was being subjected to by her employer. As she talks to her Ramana tells us about how she was starved for 10 days at a stretch and beaten up. She could not contact her parents because her employer would not allow her to go out anywhere and would lock her up in a room out of fear that she will run away. Even her parents' calls were not given to her. As she tells further, she reveals that, frustrated with life, she attempted to commit suicide once but was unsuccessful. Finally one day as her employers were watching television, Ramana who was locked up in a room escaped out and jumped from the second floor terrace. She sustained injuries. An old couple who found her unconscious fed her and gave her some money and advised her to lodge a complaint against her employers for harassment. Swift action was taken against her employers who were arrested. Ramana was consequently adopted by MV Foundation, which gave her a new lease of life. The media went berserk, telecasting her story, the plight of a poor girl harassed and abused by her employers. Her case is a classic example of child abuse. It is deprivation of a child of her childhood. Ramana's life was a misery and was clouded with a violent tomorrow all through her employment. Her case highlights the need to enforce stringent measures against domestic violence and child abuse.

Aim: Ramana is presently residing in the bridge course camp conducted by MV Foundation in Aloor. Her dream of studying and becoming a Lawyer is shaping up under the sincere efforts of this foundation. When asked about what she wants to become in life, after a thoughtful silence, Ramana says "I was abused and exploited. My poverty and circumstances around me led to this. I don't want

anyone else to be in the same plight as I was in. So I want to become a Lawyer and protect those innocent people like me who are abused and beaten up day in and day out. I want to protect all children. I want them to be able to enjoy their childhood and pursue their education. Ramana like many other children of her age at the camp we visited wishes to put the past behind her and move on for a brighter and educated future.

Sunita Age: 13 years

Home Town: Sitarampur (Ranga Reddy District)

Family background: Sunita's parents were agricultural workers who worked in their fields. Her siblings were 2 sister and a brother all of whom were going to school To supplement the family income and her siblings expenses, Sunita was sent to Hyderabad to work as domestic help.

The story of Sunita: Sunita worked as domestic help for a family in Hyderabad. Though she was treated well, Sunita was not happy as she wanted to study. Her thirst to educate herself and architect a better life for herself made her go back to her hometown. She was paid Rs. 66 per month. Sunita was beaten up by her parents for refusing to go back for work after she came back to her hometown. Sunita didn't want to work as she wanted to study. Her parents didn't agree to this as they wanted her to work and supplement the family income. Finally Sunita's dream became a reality as MVF Foundation counseled her parents to educate her. The foundation's sincere and unrelenting efforts paved the way for Sunita to join the MVF camp being conducted in Aloor.

Aim: As we spoke to Sunita, we learnt that she is undergoing the bridge course specially devised by MVF for such children. Sunita aims to become a doctor. Her dream to study and lead a dignified life is an appreciative one and her attitude towards life seems very positive. Such cases just go to prove how many people crave for an educated livelihood.²⁶

M. Sunitha Age: 13 years

Sarada Nagar, Sabad, Ranga Reddy, AP

Family details: Sunitha's family was four members. Her father (Yadayya) passed away, her mother worked in a few houses (domestic labor?), and her brother went to daily wage work. Her brother studied first class, however her mother refused to permit him to study and father insisted that he should go to work.

Work: Thirteen year old Sunitha, one of many children in the residential camps run by MVF had been working as a bonded labour from the age of 10. She was

²⁶ From "Recent Petitions filed by M.V. Foundation – A detailed report" by Roshni Sinha, Pujitha Gorantla, Pratyusha, Supriya Dubey – Gujarat National University interns

working in the house of a Doctor doing the chores in the house. Her working day would last from sunrise to sunset and her duties were cleaning pots, washing etc. Her salary was Rs. 500/- per month

She is happy in the camp where she is being prepared to “B” group. She is ready to go to 7th Class examinations. She says she will never go back to work and take more education and her desire is to be a police officer.

R. Ganga Age: 14 years

Lafepalli, Beginepalli, Mahbubnagar, AP

Family background. Ganga a 14 year old child belonging to humbada community. Before joining the camp gage was a bonded labour in the lawyer house possession in Hyderabad. There her basic work is to take care of the house and children of her lawyer.

Her parents are migrated from the village. Her parents went to Codi. She was bonded at the rate of Rs. 500.

According to Ganga the volunteer of MVF persuaded and convinced her lawyer and telling them the importance of education as well as the evil effects of child labour.

Ganga is now enjoying the camp (“B” group) and her studies there and does not want to go back in order to work as a labour inside the house of others. She wants to continue her studies up to 10th class and wants to become a teacher in Government school.

M.D. Rajani Age: Unknown

Mangalgi, Guntoor, AP

Family background: Before joining the camp Rajini was a bonded labour in the possession of her master in Hyderabad. There her basic work is to take care of the house and the children of her master. Her mother passed away, her father (Krimulla) migrated from the village. She was bonded at the rate of Rs. 500/- per month.

According to Rajini the volunteer of MVF persuaded and convinced her master and told them the importance of education as well as the evil effects of child labor.

Her master was not convinced about this argument so they called the police and released her.

Rajani is now enjoying the camp and her studies there and does not want to go back in order to work as a labor inside the house of others.²⁷

²⁷ From Summer Training Project Report” submitted by Sri Krishnadevaraya University MSW Students, Anantapur - 2008