

# Executive Summary

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Over 168 million children across the world are trapped in the vicious cycle of child labour. Deprived of their basic right to survival, protection, development and participation, these children, between the age group of 5 to 17 years, account for 11% of the world's total child population (International Labour Organisation – International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, 2013).

Despite the decrease in child labour at a global level, Asia and the Pacific region continue to top the chart with 77.7 million child labourers, of which 34 million are reported to be engaged in hazardous occupations (ILO-IPEC, 2013).

India is home to the largest number of child labourers in the world. The Census of India Survey 2011, Government of India (GoI) estimated 11.7 million children aged 5-14 years (4.5% of total children in this age group) to be working under hazardous occupations and processes as main and marginal workers (Census Survey of India, Government of India).

The census data reflects 7% reduction in child labour in India from 2001 to 2011. Similarly, the total number of child labourers in Delhi has also fallen by 7%, from 42,000 in 2001 to 39,000 in 2011. However, it is important to note the simultaneous rise in the work force of the unorganised sector from a mere 8413 in 2001 to 12,466 in 2011. The decadal rise in the number of marginal workers aged 5-14 years in Delhi is almost seven times the decrease in the overall number of child labourers. (Census Survey of India, Government of India, 2011). Despite the reduction in child labour over the past decade, it is difficult to discount the comparative growth of the child labour in the informal sector.

## Child Labour in Garment Industry in India

Garment industry is one of the largest employers in the country, generating 1/5th of the total export earnings and contributing to 4% of the country's total GDP. The Economic Survey of India, 2013-14 noted an overall increase of 4,19,000 people in employment from 2012 to 2013 with the highest increase recorded in textiles (including the apparels sector) at the increase of 2,90,000 people.

This study adopts the five tier structure of the garment industry illustrated by a previous study on the garment industry in Delhi undertaken by University of Manchester and Institute of Human Development (IHD) (Phillips, Bhaskaran, Nathan, & Upendranadh, 2011). Amongst the five tier structure, Tier 1, 2 and 3 units comprise the factory units and organised sector of the garment industry. While Tier 1 units cater exclusively to the international market, Tier 2 units cater to both the international and the domestic market. Tier 3 units usually cater to Indian brands and Tier 1 and 2 units. Tier 3 units are usually found in locations adjacent to major export clusters. Tier 4 and 5 units comprise the non-factory and unorganised sector of the garment industry. Tier 4 and 5 units are micro-enterprises and owner operating units, usually unregistered and focusing on a particular outsourced activity such as printing, dyeing, embellishment, tailoring, machine embroidery and button stitching and button hole making.

Child labour in the garment industry is mostly found in the last two tiers, 4 and 5 where children are engaged in primarily two broad categories of work:

1. **Embroidery and embellishment:** Intricate embroidery on handlooms undertaken in *Addas* and home based embellishment work of pasting stones on pieces of readymade garments.
2. **Finishing:** Finishing tasks of a readymade garment before it is shelved in a showroom or clothes shop, like cutting threads from a pair of jeans, children's readymade garments, etc.

## Save the Children's Study on Child labour in the Garment Industry

Child labour in the garment industry is one of the rapidly growing unorganised workforces in cities such as the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD), also known as the hub of garment export industry in India. Save the Children's experience of working on child labour in the garment industry has shed light on the emerging phenomenon of informalisation under manufacturing garments units,<sup>1</sup> owing to sub-contracting and outsourcing of work. In addition, poor regulatory framework of the outsourced work has led to children being employed for many economic activities (Watson & Olsen, 2011). Thus, as part of Save the Children's on-going intervention on protecting the rights of children working in the garment industry in Delhi, this research study has been undertaken. The core objectives of the study have been specified as under.

### Objectives of the Study

The objective of this research study was to:

- Estimate the number of children working in the garment industry in Delhi
- Understand the working and living conditions of children in the garment industry in Delhi
- Understand the nature of garment industry and its supply chain in Delhi and also to analyse the reasons of child labour perpetuating in the supply chain of the industry
- Suggest a remedial model for withdrawing children from labour in garment industry

### Geographical Coverage of the Study

Using a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods, a study has been conducted across 5 districts and 14 locations in Delhi.

S.No.	14 Location	5 Districts
1	Gandhi Nagar	East Delhi
2	Geeta Colony	
3	Kailash Nagar	
4	Usmanpur/Seelampur	North-East Delhi
5	Chandni Chowk	Central Delhi
6	Pratapnagar	
7	Chandni Mahal	
8	Khirki	South Delhi
9	Shahpur Jat	
10	Batla House	South-East Delhi
11	Tuglaqabad Extension	
12	Okhla	
13	Sangam Vihar	
14	Madanpur Khadar	

<sup>1</sup> See Olsen, Wendy, et. al., "Informality and Institutional Change in Child Labour: An Indian Case Study"; University of Manchester, 2011.

## Study Approach

The study adopted a mixed method approach involving both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection.

1. Quantitative Household Survey
2. Focused Group Discussions
3. Key Informant Interviews
4. Participant Observation
5. Desk Review

## Study Sample

**Quantitative data collection:** A two stage sampling process was followed for quantitative data collection, listing of households and in-depth interviews with child labourers and their parents/guardians. The initial target of quantitative study was 7 children from 30 clusters across the state, i.e., 210 child labourers. In the absence of any existing house listing or household data, the sampling technique was modified and the targeted was revised to 170 child labourers across 14 locations in 5 districts mentioned above.

**Modification for quantitative study sample:** The census enumeration blocks from the census sample frame were listed. 5% sample from the total number of census enumeration blocks (918) was chosen and the samples were distributed across locations based on the Probability Proportionate to Size to arrive at the total number of sample blocks. In each of these blocks (sampling unit), house listing of all households ranging from 100 to 150 was undertaken. Amongst these blocks, those areas were identified through field visits and support from local NGOs where garment industry work was practically non-existent to be excluded from the sample.

**Qualitative data collection:** A purposive sampling process was followed for qualitative data collection including 9 focused group discussions with children and parents, 17 key informant interviews with owners of garment units and 25 discussions with key stakeholders such as Childline, Child Welfare Committees, civil society representatives and academicians working on child labour.

## Key Findings

Some of the key findings from the study are as follows:

- **Number of children working in the garment industry in Delhi**
  - It is estimated that a total of **8044** children are engaged in garment related activities, spread over five districts

Okhla Ward, South-East District	1922	Highest number of children
Tuglaqabad Ward	241	Least number of children
Chandni Chowk, Chandni Mahal and Pratapnagar in Central Delhi district	0	Units from these locations have been moved out

- **Profile of Child Labour in Garment Industry**
  - Child labour in the garment industry is found in two locales in the unorganised sector (Tier 4 and 5) of the garment industry:

- **Households** – Unskilled work is undertaken by children along with women and other family members to supplement the family income (e.g., thread cutting).
- **Addas** – Small household based units, where a group of workers, children and adults unrelated to each other worked together (e.g., embellishment, embroidery etc.)
- A significantly higher number of children seem to be engaged in household level work with 87% children working in households while 13% working in *Addas*.
- 64% children stated to have lived in the city since birth. However, their families were noted to have earlier migrated to Delhi from states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. 36 percent children reported to have migrated from these four states.

Children in Delhi since birth	64%	Families migrated from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal
Migrant children	36%	Children migrated from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal

- Within the household level, 69% children working with their family members were girls.
- 92% of children, who worked in their families, were presently enrolled in formal and/or non-formal education; and 45% of those working in small units had attended school at some point in their lives.
- **Reasons for child labour perpetuating in the supply chain of the garment industry**
  - Supplementing the household income was the major reason for their engagement in child labour in this sector. 61% of children working at home and 50% of those working at *Addas* stated economic factors.
  - While children mostly denied being forced to work, the financial circumstances prevailing in the family seemed to passively exert pressure on them to contribute in the family.
  - Lack of interest in education was another reason for children to work. 50% of those working at *Addas* and 22% of those working at home reported working due to lack of interest in education; 82% said that given an opportunity, they would not like to attend school.
- **Working and living conditions of children in the garment industry in Delhi**
  - Almost all children live and work in poor conditions in terms of exposure to risks and hazards like loud noise, poor lighting, poor ventilation and sharp tools.
  - Some children complained of back pain, having to work long hours, poor posture and deteriorating eye sight were a few health problems faced during work. Very few reported issues of abuse; just 11% of the respondents said that they ‘rarely’ faced verbal or physical abuse.
  - Most of the children were poorly paid and received no benefits; 36% of those working at home were not paid at all. Of the 64% who were paid, 36% were paid less than Rs. 100 a month. For those working at *Addas*, the monthly income varied from Rs. 1000 to 5000.
  - 80% of the respondents reported that they themselves decided to undertake work, given the poor economic conditions of the family; just one reported to be forced into work. In fact 92 % respondents reported that they were ‘happy’ about the work they were doing.
  - Awareness on issues of child labour and Right to Education (RtE) was high among all respondents; with more than 78% respondents being aware of the Right to Education and that it is illegal for children below the age of 14 years to be employed.

## Recommendations

Based on the study, a **five pronged remedial model** is recommended to address issues of children in the garment industry:

### 1. Addressing Knowledge and Skills of Children

- 1.1 Learning centers for child labourers
- 1.2 Diversification of income generating opportunities towards decent work through vocational training and skill building
- 1.3 Knowledge on child rights, life skills and legal entitlements
- 1.4 Enhancing quality of education in elementary school

### 2. Community based approach

- 2.1 Creating women and youth groups
- 2.2 Large scale awareness campaign
- 2.3 Establishing contact/nodal points in hot-spots

### 3. Addressing issues of child labour

- 3.1 Rehabilitation, tracking and monitoring of children in source locations
- 3.2 Convergent approach towards child labour

### 4. Advocacy

- 4.1 With National and state governments towards better implementation of child labour legislations, livelihood schemes and skill development programmes in rural areas to curb child labour
- 4.2 With Corporate sector and key stakeholders in garment industry towards zero tolerance on child rights violation in the garment industry supply chain and adherence to child rights and business principles

### 5. Addressing the larger environment leading towards child labour

- 5.1 Establishment of women self help groups
- 5.2 Systems for child protection
- 5.3 Avenues for urban employment
- 5.4 Linking families to schemes for social entitlements