

ABSTRACT

CHILD LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION: A CASE STUDY OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS IN KANCHANABURI PROVINCE

by

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In many less developed societies, children at young ages participate in the labor force. Although the extent of that participation has not been well documented, it is widely known that the number is quite significantly large and the most important determinant of this phenomenon is poverty.

The objectives of this dissertation are to: (1) estimate the future trends of child labor participation both at national and Kanchanaburi provincial levels, (2) investigate the influence of various household factors such as demography, economy, sociology and psychology toward the working status of child labor force participation in rural Kanchanaburi province, and (3) develop the patterns of child labor force participation. The first objective used secondary data while the others were studied from 389 selected sample households.

The sample survey covered a sample of 389 rural households selected by multi-stage sampling techniques. In the survey, child labor force participation refers to young people aged 13 to 17 years who do not attend school. Data were collected by interviewing household heads or representatives.

In studying trends of child labor force participation, secondary data used were (1) the number of children not pursuing secondary education at the first year of lower secondary school level (Mathayomsuksa 1 or M.1) and the first year of upper

secondary school level (Mathayomsuksa 4 or M.4), and (2) GDP, GPP and CPI from both the national and provincial levels. As expected the study indicates that child labor force participation will tend to decrease; this is confirmed by the short range projection for 1995-1999.

Projections are an attempt to estimate the number of 13-17-year-olds who are outside the school system. These include children who did not continue into secondary school in levels of M.1 and M.4, or dropped out during the school year as two of four important groups. The other two groups are the number of child labor force participation at present time and the number of labor who are no longer considered children. Data for the first two groups were taken from the Ministry of Education. To derive for the projection on child labor force participation from those children who were out of school resulting from inclusive of not pursuing M.1 and M.4 used the Manpower Requirement Approach. And the projection on those who dropped out of school during academic year used cubic regression. The estimation arrived at child labor force participation in Thailand and Kanchanaburi province gradually decreased, which is reasonable considering the educational development that has occurred.

However, this study did not bring migration, and number of working children who were in school system into consideration. If these were included in the estimation, the number of child labor force participation obtained from this study would be underestimated.

Study of factors affecting the working status of child labor force participation disclosed that the variables which had significance on the working of child labor at a .05 statistical level were education of household head and information about child's job.

In conclusion it was found that household head who completed only Pratomsuksa 4 will push their children into the employed status at a rate of 96.51

percent which is higher than the other group which had higher education. As for household data about the labor market, it was found that households with more information about the labor market were more likely to send their children into the labor market more effectively. Households without knowledge about the labor market were less likely to be efficient in sending their children to work: only 67.84 percent compared to households who had the most information 98.11 percent.

Study of patterns of child labor force participation considered the relationship among household and selected characteristics such as occupation, household establishment, level of household development and wage rate of child labor. The researcher found various patterns called 'hopeless,' 'survival,' 'struggle,' 'flow,' 'absorbed,' 'flight,' 'root,' 'group,' 'adventure,' 'general,' and 'caravan,' child labor force participation. All of these patterns existed because of poverty.

In conclusion the analysis of sample data shows that producers of child labor were typically living in poverty and were agricultural households. It was also found that generally children made their own decision to enter the labor force. They were assisted most in entering the employment by relatives. Most children worked in manufacturing and in Bangkok.

Eliminating child labor is very difficult. Therefore it is important to develop these child laborers into quality workers. The government must have short and long term plans for child labor development, beginning with rural households, the major producers of child labor. Providing education or extending compulsory education might be long-term solutions to the problem. Adults in these households should be informed in order to have information and understanding about these problems. Providing data about the labor market might be another method to ease the situation over the short term.