

Terms of Reference: Research Assistant – Gujarat
& Research Assistant – Andhra Pradesh

Title of the project: Assessing business efforts to reduce child labour in developing countries: the case of adolescent girls in India’s garment industry

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We are looking for two project-based research assistants, one research assistant based in Gujarat and another research assistant based in Andhra Pradesh to take on a temporary assignment. These terms of reference provide the details of the project, resources, the timeline, documentation, the scope of work/assignment, qualification, value/duration of assignment, and – finally – the application process and selection process. Longer terms of reference will be shared with the successful candidate to structure their work.

1. Introduction: about the research project

The research project entitled “Assessing business efforts to reduce child labour in India” is a one-year (2021-2022) mixed-methods research project. The project explores how both public and private (business) institutions affect adolescent girls aged 15 to 17 in employment in the cotton value chain. This research investigates the employment practices of business enterprises in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, where the public policy context demonstrates variance from one state to another state.

This research seeks to contribute to the academic literature, and policy and practice by generating empirical evidence on the impact of CSR on child labour in support of UN Sustainable Development Goals on eliminating child labour and ending violence against children.

This research is conducted by the School of International Development and Global Studies at the University of Ottawa in Canada using virtual/remote methods. It is conducted in affiliation with the Gujarat Institute of Development Research (GIDR) in Ahmedabad, India, which is providing local supervision. Local research assistants in Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh will assist with the data collection. As a result of COVID, this research does not include the PI’s travel to India to conduct the fieldwork.

Research objectives

This research project aims to generate new evidence on what works to increase the impact of certification schemes on child labour, to improve the lives of children, particularly adolescent girls and their families whose households experience the effect of child labour. The objectives of this research include: (a) to analyze the incentives that drive business organizations to change their behaviour to avoid and mitigate child labour risks experienced by adolescent girls working in the cotton industry, through both the multidisciplinary perspective of a political economy approach and the socio-cultural approach, and (b) to prototype a tool for tracking performance indicators on child labour – consistent with norms in national and international laws – which could be used by organizations and human rights

impact assessment practitioners to analyze and compare employment practices of corporation organizations with or without certification.

Research methods

This research uses a mixed methods approach (quantitative and qualitative). The design is primarily a comparative case study design, which relies on process tracing methods and set-theoretic methods, specifically qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). The data is collected through desk review, Delphi methods (questionnaires and interviews). In addition to QCA and process tracing, the data analysis benefits from textual analysis. Prototyping methods will be used to develop a dashboard for analyzing, reporting and displaying the data.

Ethics and risks, including safety

Due to circumstances arising from COVID-19, the external funders of this research project decided to contract virtual research only. Conducting remote research activities whenever possible is also the recommendation of the Tri-Agency Secretariat for the Responsible Conduct of Research and the Panel on Research Ethics. As a result, this research regrettably does not include the principal investigator (PI) travelling to India to conduct the fieldwork. It is a priority as part of this research to ensure that local public health guidelines and requirements are met.

All research will be undertaken using virtual/remote methods. This means that the work will be fully home-based with data collection undertaken digitally and using the phone, integrating online questionnaires, mobile phone surveys, and telephone and online interviews. If it is impossible to achieve sufficient research participation, then fieldwork outside the city may be considered; however, a Safe Research Plan would have to be approved by the University of Ottawa before these research activities occur as in-person research.

This research was approved by the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board in March 2021. Respect for human dignity, including concern for social justice, is at the forefront of this research, consistent with the Tri-Council Policy Statement. Given the sensitivity of research involving children below the age of 18, special attention was given to ethical considerations throughout the study (Canada et al., 2018; Edmonds, 2005; Graham et al., 2013). The approach taken to deal with research ethics recognizes that child labour is an area of research that may reveal diverse perspectives.

Benefits to the Research Assistant

The research provides research assistantships to be completed by Indian students holding a master's degree in a related field. Through this research, there will be opportunities for additional training, including, for example, on qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) and Canada's standards for research ethics, including the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.

Key sources

- Summary of Research proposal – to follow
- Ethics File for the project – to follow
- Panel on Research Ethics (2018). *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.
- ILO (2016). Child labour in Cotton. Retrieved from:
https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_29655/lang--en/index.htm
- ILO C138 Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1973)

- ILO C182 Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- ILO (n.d.). Child Labour website. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/child-labour/lang-en/index.htm>
- UNICEF (n.d.). Child labour website. Retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-labour> and <https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/child-labour-exploitation>

Timetable

| <i>Month #</i> | <i>Milestone</i> |
|----------------|---|
| 0 | Recruit research assistants |
| 1 | Collection of data: Delphi Round 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review of industry standards • Interviews with partners • Translation of materials to Gujarati and Telugu • Pilot questionnaire and mock the interviews • Set up participant lists for other Delphi Rounds • Confirm site selection |
| 2 | Analysis of data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data coding and analysis • Write up the report of group findings • Refine and iterate |
| 3 | Collection of data: Delphi Round 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection for AP/GJ case studies using Delphi process questionnaires and interviews (transcription, analyze results, document interpretations, refine/iterate questionnaires to local contexts) Analysis of data |
| 4 | Collection of data: Delphi Round 3 Analysis of data |
| 5 | Finalize report from Delphi process |
| 5 | Debrief with stakeholders |

The anticipated start date (i.e. month 1) is June or July 2021, depending on recruitment schedules.

Documentation

It is essential for researchers to document sources throughout this research and to safeguard entrusted information through best practices for data safety.

- Confidentiality of data will be ensured as part of this research by storing this data in a password-protected cloud location (using Dropbox software) and physically separating the code sheet.
- All confidential documents will be immediately scanned and stored electronically in a password-protected cloud location (Dropbox) to improve security in the field.

- When research findings are published, confidentiality will be maintained by referring to participants only by the alpha-numeric code and date, unless consent for attribution has been explicitly obtained from the research participant.

Ownership of and access to the data and other additional material by the Principal Investigator is a condition of the contract with the research (e.g., field notes and audio recordings, questionnaire data and interview data).

Research assistants will document their work and provide feedback on the research through electronic journaling methods to offer a reflection on the study, including the methodology and creative methods to collect and analyze data (see value and duration of assignment).

Primary sources must be used wherever possible over secondary sources (for example, the research assistant should provide documentary evidence of a fact or statistic as written in their original report, not as cited by a newspaper). If internet sources have been used, a printed page from the website showing the cited facts and statistics must be submitted. The research assistant must ensure that the date on which it was printed out is written on the page. If the Principal Investigator discovers any discrepancies with the figures or facts, the research assistant will work with the PI to resolve the discrepancies.

2. Scope of work/assignment

The research assistant will work under the technical supervision of the principal investigator from the University of Ottawa School of International Development and Global Studies and work in local supervision of the Gujarat Institute of Development Research.

The topics of the research work are corporate social responsibility, business and human rights (BHR), development and political economy, with a focus on child labour. Specifically, the research assistant will:

1. Primary duties and responsibilities:
 - a) Support the (i) Gujarat or (ii) Andhra Pradesh case studies with research and administration tasks through virtual research undertaken with the principal investigator based in Canada.
 - b) Work in collaboration with the research team to support both case studies' overall quality and comparability.
2. Research tasks:
 - a) Help with identifying the respondents to the research, using direct and indirect contact methods, as set out in the ethics application, including to meet quotas.
 - b) Help to review public records to reach other potential participants in the cotton industry in either (i) Gujarat or (ii) Andhra Pradesh.
 - c) Collaborate with the translator and the team on the quality assurance of the translation from (i) Hindi/Gujarati to English and vice-versa or (ii) Hindi/Telugu to English and vice versa.
 - d) Support the piloting of the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews in (i) Gujarat or (ii) Andhra Pradesh.
 - e) Support ongoing production of the coding book.
 - f) Data collection: motivate participation by research participants in the Delphi questionnaire (two rounds expected, although three rounds are possible).
 - g) Data collection: conduct follow-up semi-structured interviews.
 - h) Prepare reports of the group findings after each Delphi round, which compile information on the questionnaires and interviews, according to the agreed outline.
 - i) Support coding of data, and analysis of data, using qualitative comparative analysis (QCA).
 - j) Provide feedback on the research through the use of electronic journaling methods.

3. General administration tasks:
 - a) Ensure that privacy and confidentiality requirements are respected, as set out in the ethics application, including safeguarding the identify of research participants.
 - b) Take an active role in maintaining free, informed and ongoing consent to build and maintain participants' trust in the research process.
 - c) Audio-record interviews with the participants' permission (using online technology over the phone, e.g., WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, MS Team, etc.
 - d) Maintain appropriate physical and technical safeguards during the data collection and analysis, as outlined in the ethics application.
 - e) Scan and store confidential documents electronically in a password-protected cloud location (Dropbox) to improve security in the field.
 - f) Share letters of information to interviewees and collect consent forms (which will be signed by the research assistant in the interviewee's presence as a symbol of our commitment to ethical research.
 - g) Support other work related to gender, human rights and social inclusion as needed/requested by the Principal Investigator.
 - h) Participate in weekly face-to-face meetings to provide feedback (using Zoom, Skype, MS Team) supported with a What's App group.
 - i) Regularly complete a well-being scale to be developed and used with the team to ensure that the research takes a pause when required to reconsider what is crucial to achieving objectives.
4. The expected deliverables are:
 - a) List of research participants created.
 - b) Survey Monkey questionnaire updated, to add Hindi and (i) Gujarati or (ii) Telugu translations (two or maximum three rounds).
 - c) Guidance book/coding book/training package updated as the research rolls out.
 - d) A report of the group findings written after each Delphi round on assessing business efforts to reduce child labour risks among adolescent girls, in accordance with the agreed outline.
 - e) Contributions made to research findings, including written reports, policy briefs, and one-page posters in English, Hindi and (i) Gujarati or (ii) Telugu.

The work is expected to be carried out mostly home-based.

3. Qualifications

The research provides research assistantships to be completed by Indian students holding a master's degree in a related field.

Interested candidates should have at least the following required qualifications:

- Master's in a relevant field (e.g., development, political science, economics, sociology).
- Experience in conducting field surveys/interviews and writing skills
- One to three years working experience preferable.
- Excellent command of English (spoken, read and written).
- **For the Research Assistant – Gujarat:** Language abilities in Hindi and Gujarati required so that research participants can participate in their language. There is a preference for the research assistant to be based in Ahmedabad.
- **For the Research Assistant – Andhra Pradesh:** Language abilities in Telugu required so that research participants can participate in their language.

- NB: Only locally hired in-country research assistants based in India can be recruited for this research, as a condition of funding.

Desirable asset criteria:

- Relevant experience of labour standards, human rights, gender equality or child labour.
- Relevant experience with mixed methods approach (quantitative and qualitative) including comparative case study design and set-theoretic methods.
- Relevant research experience using workspaces such as Google Docs and Dropbox.
- Experience with Survey Monkey, including creating a multilingual survey by providing their own translations.

Additional required qualifications for senior research assistants:

- Relevant experience of labour standards and child labour in the cotton value chain.
- Experience managing a team in a complex work environment.

4. Value and duration of the assignment

The assignment's duration is expected to be full-time working days over a period of five (5) months from the contract signature date. The two selected scholars have to join the research project on the date stipulated for the contract, under the technical supervision of the principal investigator from the University of Ottawa School of International Development and Global Studies, and local supervision of the Gujarat Institute of Development Research. The selected research assistant will be paid Rs. 30,000/- per month. Senior research assistants with relevant experience of labour standards and child labour in the cotton value chain, and experience managing a team in a complex work environment are encouraged to apply and will be paid Rs. 45,000/per month. Daily allowances of Rs 250 extra, plus lodging and travel expenses using bus or train applicable when travelling outside Ahmedabad or Hyderabad. This research project is a full-time research job; hence, any other professional engagement during the research project may lead to the cancellation of the candidature. The selected scholars will be paid a bonus for submitting their electronic journals as part of this research, with the format to be determined by the PI (the bonus not to exceed 10% of the value of the assignment, with the bonus amount to be established based on the impact/magnitude, complexity, and time committed).

Budget: Research Assistants will be reimbursed for expenses particularly telephone, fax, email costs for internal and external communications related to the research budget. Moreover, some supplies/materials/ equipment required by the Research Assistants may also be covered through the research budget if approved before incurring costs.

5. Application procedures & selection process

Application procedures: Interested candidates should submit their CV and cover letter, along with their availability to akhan298@uottawa.ca before 5:00 pm India Standard Time on 24 May 2021, with either the subject title “Research Assistant – Gujarat” or “Research Assistant – Andhra Pradesh”.

The cover letter should include:

- Information on why they are suited and interested in this role by including information on their relevant experience and achievements, and two references (including one academic reference).

Selection process: Research Assistants will be selected by the Principal Investigator at the University of Ottawa, collaborating with the Gujarat Institute of Development Research and Global Research.