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REHABILITATION OF CHILD LABOUR: A CHALLENGE BEFORE THE
NATION

Dr. Makarand S. Wazal

Principal, Sinhgad College of Commerce, Pune
Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India
E-mail:principal.scoc@sinhgad.edu



ABSTRACT

In India, the problem of child labour is well recognized. Children are engaged in various types of work including those that are classified as 'hazardous'. Although there are inter-state and inter-regional variations in India, the factors that generate child labour in general, and hazardous child labour in particular, are basically similar and revolve around poverty, lack of access to quality education, demographic pressure, social exclusion etc. Child labour is a serious evil for the developing countries like India. The majority of child labours in India work in industries such as cracker manufacturing, diamond polishing, carpet weaving, brassware industry, glass and bangle making, and mica cutting. The employers hire child labor by paying less pay in sub-human conditions with long working hours. Government of India has taken major initiatives to eradicate the child labour by passing special legislations and punishing the offenders. Not only government authorities, but also other social rehabilitated centers are playing an important role in rescuing the child labour at the central and state level. Providing education to all the children is a long-term answer to this social menace. The problem of child labour continues to pose a challenge before the nation. Government has been taking various pro-active measures to tackle this problem. However, considering the magnitude and extent of the problem and that it is essentially a socio-economic problem inextricably linked to poverty and illiteracy, it requires concerted efforts from all sections of the society to make a dent in the problem. This paper is an attempt in analytical look at the official sources of information on the scale of child labour in India.

Key Words: Hazardous, Demographic Pressure, Social Exclusion, government authorities

I. INTRODUCTION

The term "Child Labour" is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical-mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, and interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 is one the most debated acts regarding children in India. It outlines where and how children can work and where they cannot it is decided. The provisions of the act are meant to be acted upon immediately after the publication of the act, except for part III that discusses the conditions in which a child may work. Part III can only come into effect as per a date appointed by the Central Government (which was decided as 26th of May, 1993). After independence from colonial rule, India has passed a number of constitutional protections and laws on child labour. Government has developed the law in the Child Labour in various ways. The major national legislative developments include the following:

The Factories Act of 1948: The Act prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years in any factory. The law also placed rules on who, when and how long can pre-adults aged 15-18 years be employed in any factory.

The Mines Act of 1952: The Act prohibits the employment of children below 18 years of age in a mine. The Child Labour Act of 1986: The Act prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years in hazardous occupations identified in a list by the law.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of Children Act of 2000: This law made it a crime, punishable with a prison term, for anyone to procure or employ a child in any hazardous employment or in bondage.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2009: The law mandates free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14 years. This legislation also mandated that 25 percent of seats in every private school must be allocated for children from disadvantaged groups and physically challenged children. India is home to more than 12.6 million children who are forced to work in order to survive. These children are working as domestic help, on streets, in factories and farmlands silently suffering abuse. Child labour is the practice of having children engages in economic activity, on part or full-time basis. The practice deprives children of their childhood, and is harmful to their physical and mental development. Poverty, lack of good schools and growth of informal economy are considered as the important causes of child labour in India.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the organizational structure and impact of NCLP programme
2. To assess the conditions of the child labours working in different sectors
3. To analyze the improvement or detriment in the living conditions of rescued children
4. To study the existing gap between the facilities as stated provide by central & state government
5. To study the convergence aspects of various Government Programmes

III. THE FACT AND FIGURES

The 2001 national census of India estimated the total number of child labour, aged 5-14, to be at 12.6 million, out of a total child population of 253 million in 5-14 age group. A 2009-2010 nationwide survey found child labour prevalence had reduced to 4.98 million children (or less than 2% of children in 5-14 age group). The 2011 national census of India found the total number of child labour, aged 5-14, to be at 4.35 million. According to the Census 2001 figures there are 1.26 crore working children in the age group of 5-14 as compared to the total child population of 25.2 crore. There are approximately 12 lacs children working in the hazardous occupations/processes which are covered

under the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act i.e. 18 occupations and 65 processes. However, as per survey conducted by National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in 2004-05, the number of working children is estimated at 90.75 lakh. It shows that the efforts of the Government have borne the desired fruits. Child labour is a serious problem but it is not a new problem. Macroeconomic causes encouraged widespread child labour across the world, over most of human history. The causes for child labour include both the demand and the supply side. While poverty and unavailability of good schools explain the child labour supply side, the growth of low paying informal economy rather than higher paying formal economy is amongst the causes of the demand side. Inflexible labour market, size of informal economy, inability of industries to scale up and lack of modern manufacturing technologies are major macroeconomic factors affecting demand and acceptability of child labour. It is observed that the Child Labour in the age 5 to 14 are consistently highest in rural area as compare to Urban area in India. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Bachpan Bachao Andolan, CARE India, Child Rights and You, Global March against child labour, RIDE India etc. have been working to exterminate child labour in India. Pratham is India's largest non-governmental organization with the mission 'every child in school and learning well.' Founded in 1994, Pratham has aimed to reduce child labour and offer schooling to children irrespective of their gender, religion and social background. It has grown by introducing low cost education models that are sustainable and reproducible. Child labour has also been a subject of public interest litigations in Indian courts. Still a big challenge Despite a law in force in India, prohibiting child labour, millions of children to be employed in homes, at roadside restaurants and in factories across the country. These young kids are also subjected to exploitation in various other ways, including sexual and mental abuse. With June 12 being observed as anti- child labour day, activists alleged that lack of enforcement of the Child Labour Act and no rehabilitation has been fueling child labour.

In 2007 the Indian Government published the results of one of the world's largest and most sophisticated studies on child abuse, carried out in conjunction with Unicef and Save the Children. This detailed research on over 12,000 children produced some shocking conclusions:

- Two thirds of children are victims of physical abuse. The majority is beaten in school, and over half have to work seven days a week.
- Over 50% have faced some kind of sexual abuse, and over 20% of them severe abuse.
- Half of children also face emotional abuse.

So this is some of the context from which so many children choose, or are forced, to leave their home or village and end up in a city.

State wise details of working children in the age group of 5-14 years as per Census 2001 and Census 2011 are as under:

Table 1: Census Data on Child Labour

Sr	Name of State/UT	No. of working children in the age group of 5-14 years	
		Census 2001	Census 2011
1	Andaman & Nicobar Island	1960	999
2	Andhra Pradesh	1363339	404851
3	Arunachal Pradesh	18482	5766
4	Assam	351416	99512
5	Bihar	1117500	451590
6	Chandigarh (UT)	3779	3135
7	Chhattisgarh	364572	63884
8	Dadara & Nagar H.	4274	1054
9	Daman & Diu (UT)	729	774
10	Delhi (UT)	41899	26473
11	Goa	4138	6920

12	Gujarat	485530	250318
13	Hararyana	253491	53492
14	Himachal Pradesh	107774	15001
15	Jammu & Kashmir	175630	25528
16	Jharkhand	407200	90996
17	Karnataka	822615	249432
18	Kerala	26156	21757
19	Lakshadweep (UT)	27	28
20	Madhya Pradesh	1065259	286310
21	Maharashtra	764075	496916
22	Manipur	28836	11805
23	Meghalaya	53940	18839
24	Mizoram	26265	2793
25	Nagaland	45874	11062
26	Odisha	377594	92087
27	Pondicherry (UT)	1904	1421
28	Punjab	177268	90353
29	Rajasthan	1262570	252338
30	Sikkim	16457	2704
31	Tamilnadu	418801	151437
32	Tripura	21756	4998
33	Uttar Pradesh	2127997	896301
34	Uttarakhand	70183	28098
35	West Bengal	857087	234275
	Total	12666377	4353247

Source : Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt. of India

IV. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Various Research activities are carried out for various purposes like:

1. Study of organizational structure and impact of NCLP programme launched for rehabilitating child labour in selected districts of seven states and to analyze the impact on the living conditions of rescued children.
2. Assessed the conditions of the child labours working in different sectors like industry, agriculture, domestic work, services- hotels, shops, automobile repair shops, fire crackers factory, etc in the selected states.
3. Analyzed the improvement or detriment in the living conditions of rescued children in rehabilitation centers over a period of time under consideration.
4. Existing gap between the facilities as stated provide by central & state government and the actual scenario in terms of terms of physical and financial achievements.
5. Reliability and sufficiency of the database covered in the survey has been examined, which is undertaken twice during a plan period for the selection of child labour prevalent districts by the M/O of labour.

Also, Pedagogical content of the teaching in NCLP Schools has been evaluated, more so, when they would be working as special schools under the Provisions of Right to Education (RTE) for preparation of children for admission to age appropriate classes within a Limited span of 2 years. A comparison of learning / rehabilitation outcomes in NCLP Schools vis-à-vis residential schools has studied.

Convergence aspects of various Government Programmes and their impact on child labours have been studied and the root cause of child labour is examined.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the study consisted of two-stage sampling i.e.

Stage 1) The Project Societies for evaluation were selected based on age of the projects, Pockets of concentration of child labour in certain occupations and processes and spatial spread.

Stage 2) Samples of schools were identified. Structured and well defined Questionnaires, in depth interviews and case studies are the prime tools for data collection in this study. In depth interviews were conducted with the respondent groups consisted of Project Directors, Society members, teachers, students, parents and community members.

VI. FINDINGS

It is observed that child labour takes place more in the rural areas, underdeveloped countries. Child labour takes place due to poverty. It is also observed that child labour is more in uttar-pradesh. In India due to poverty, poor government facilities more small hands work for their daily bread.

Researcher has some findings based on the study which are as follows:

1. The largest number of child labours work in places like textile factories, Dhabas (roadside restaurants) and hotels as well as domestic workers. Much of the work like working in firecracker or matchstick factories can be hazardous.
2. Official figures indicate that there are over 4.3 million child workers in India, but many NGOs reckon the real figure more. The number of girls involved is not much lower than the boys.
3. The majority of children are enrolled in school, but up to half don't attend regularly. Many are pressured to work and earn money for their families.
4. After five years of classes, fewer than 60% can read a short story or do simple arithmetic.
5. Over exploitation of population is there

VII. SUGGESTIONS

There are some suggestions which will help to reduce child labours in India. Following are some important Schemes for Well- being of Children which can be implemented seriously:

1. Integrated Child Development Service Scheme
2. Integrated Child Protection Scheme
3. National awards for child Welfare
4. National Child Awards for Exceptional Achievements
5. Nutrition Programme For Adolescent Girls
6. Welfare of working children in need of Care and Protection
7. Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation
8. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights



An initiative by CHILDLINE India Foundation



VIII. CONCLUSION

The reasons for the incidence of child labour in India are complex and deeply rooted into the society. Child labour has been a complex rural problem, as well with children helping out in the farm with their families. The problem of child labour appears in severe form and various factors are involved. It has been one of the biggest obstacles to social development. It is a challenge and long-term goal in

many countries to abolish all forms of child labour. Especially in developing countries like India, it is considered as a serious issue these days. It refers to children who miss their childhood and are not able to have the basic amenities which a child should have. The Indian government has established various proactive policies towards elimination of child labour. India has a number of child labour projects which have been implemented to help children from hazardous occupations and provide them an education. Each and every citizen should be aware of their responsibilities and should take corrective measures to stop child labour so that we can have a better and developed India. Child labour can be controlled if the government functions effectively with the support of the public. Not only because the laws themselves have drawbacks, but also because of the human factors, and usually an international organizations and NGOs cannot fix the problem on their own, what they need is to intensify the cooperation with the governments who has the right of making laws. In a word, the key of the reduction of child labour is to unshackle children.

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