

# Child Labour: Determinants, Dimensions and Policies in India

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## Abstract

Child labour, protection of child rights and development of children has been a significant issue among the policy makers and all social scientists at national and international levels. Child labour is a socio-economic problem alive in every country of the world, but it varies in nature and scale depending on the existing socio-economic structure of society. Though, it is difficult to estimate accurately the overall magnitude of child labour in India, it is important to study its trends, issues and policies in India. At present there are 215 million child labourers in the world, out of which 23.08 million are working in south Asian countries. India continues to host the largest number of child labour in the world but there is a large variation of child labour both state-wise and sector-wise. Agriculture and allied activities in India and the rest of the world report for largest child labour. The most child labour concentrated state in India is Uttar Pradesh. It is observed that the main reason of child labour is poverty, and the relationship between these two create a circle. This circle shows that child labour is a cause as well as result of poverty. The other reasons which give rise to child labour are unemployment, underemployment, and population explosion, lack of educational facilities, illiteracy and ignorance of parents. The government of India have been taking a variety of steps from time to time for development of children and elimination of child labour from the country. Child education is a very effective instrument for the elimination of child labour.

**Keywords:** Working children, child labour policy, education, unorganised sector and poverty.

## Introduction

Child labour is a global phenomenon. It exists both in the developed and developing countries of the world though with a difference in cause and magnitude. However, its prevalence is more in the developing countries as compared to developed countries, because the families, to which the working children belong, are in an urgent need of income of child labour for their subsistence, whereas children in the developed countries are often working for pocket money. Unorganised sector of the developing countries is an important provider of employment for major portion of labour force particularly child and women labour. While the sectoral distribution of working children differs from country to country yet the child labour is mainly confined to agricultural sector followed by service and industry.

The term Child Labour is used for employment of children below a certain age, which is considered illegal by law and custom. The stipulated age varies from country to country. Child labour is made 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. Broadly any child who is employed in activities to feed self and family is being subjected to child labour. Child labour represents a fundamental abuse of child rights and a violation of various laws. Many working children are engaged in occupations that negatively affect their physical and mental development. Child labour is a hazard to a Child’s mental, physical, social, educational, emotional and spiritual development. According to some researchers and organizations any child out of school is a child labour. This definition of child labour therefore encompasses every non-school going child irrespective of whether the child is engaged in non-wage or wage work or whether he or she is working for the family or others, employed in non-hazardous or hazardous occupations, employed on a day wage or on a contract basis is a child labour. In India the Factories Act 1948 defines that any physical labour undertaken by a child below age of 14 years either under compulsion or voluntarily in an organized or unorganized sector is called as child labour.

Across the world, it is mandatory for all countries to set a minimum age for employment. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) the stipulated age for employment should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling, which is 15 years. Developing countries are allowed to set the minimum age at 14 years in accordance with their socio-economic circumstances. ILO has also made provisions for flexibility for certain countries, setting the minimum age of 12 years and 13 years for their children but only for contribution to light work. Light work can be defined as children’s participation in only those economic activities which do not damage their health and development.

### **Research Methodology**

The child labour continues to be a reality in almost all parts of the world, although the actual number of children working throughout the world is unknown. In recent years the child labour problem and its impact have received more attention. Undoubtedly, this more attention is due to the fact that child labour often has serious social, economic, moral, and demographic implications for children, households, communities, societies and the world. Therefore, the eradication of child labour has been the aim of every country of the world. Though, it is difficult to estimate accurately the overall magnitude of child labour in India, it is important to study its trends, issues and policies in India. The objective of the present study is to analyse the trends, issues and policies of child labour in India and suggests suitable measures to overcome this problem. The present study is based on secondary data collected from various surveys (rounds) of the NSSO, Census of India and ILO publications. In this study, child labour is defined as “Children in the age group of 5-14 years engaged in economic activity, whether paid or unpaid”, and the terms child labour and child worker are used interchangeably.

The present study has been divided into four sections. The first section highlights the importance of study, research methodology of study and review of literature. The second section deals with the magnitude of child labour, causes and consequences of child labour in south Asian countries in general and India in particular. The third section explains the child labour policies of India and the last section concludes the study with some important conclusion and suggestions.

### **Review of literature**

Child labour, protection of child rights and development of children have been a significant issue among the policy makers and all social scientists at national and international levels. Therefore, there is a widespread literature on these issues. It would be fruitful to acquaint the findings of the existing studies undertaken by

researchers on child labour. These studies throw light on the importance of eradication of child labour at national and international levels.

Kulshreshtha (1978) observed that poverty, unemployment, large size of family, absence of provision for compulsory education and illiteracy and ignorance of parents are the main causes of child labour in India. Gurupadaswamy Committee (1979) studied the child labour of India and suggested measures to tackle it. The committee observed that as long as poverty continued, it would be difficult to totally eliminate child labour and hence, any attempt to abolish it through legal recourse would not be a practical proposition. It felt that in the circumstance, the only alternative left was to ban child labour in hazardous areas and to regulate and improve the conditions of work in the other areas. Singh (1980) revealed in his study on working children in Bombay that most of the working children belonged to low income groups in urban centres who generally reside in slums and depressed areas.

Singh (1990) observed that the reasons for employment of children varies from culture to culture or from group to group in the same culture or society. The employment practice is affected by several factors such as education, standard of living, social conditions and prevailing occupational traditions. However, it is seen that the child workers do accept jobs to get ready for adulthood and equip themselves for future vocations. They are trained in their family occupations. Tripathy (1996) observed the working conditions of child labour are very bad and making of child labour law is not a total solution to remove child labour in the country. There is a need of multiple approaches for such purpose. Hemmer *et al.* (1997) studied the child labour in the light of recent economic development trends and revealed that due to stabilization policies, labour supply shifts from formal to informal sector and the wage rates of adults and children are likely to reduce. There may be a substitution effect of adults replacing child labour. Grote *et al.* (1998) show that increase in skilled wages would reduce child labour because the demand for education will increase. On the other hand, demand for education can decline (and increase in child labour) if unemployment increases for the educated due to liberalization. Basu and Van (1998) show that there can be multiple equilibria in the labour market such that one equilibrium has child labour with low wage rates while the other has higher wages but no child labour. Liberalization can also lead to multiple equilibria in the case of child labour. Basu (1999) provides an outstanding summary of theoretical and analytical issues on child labour. His study reviews early theoretical thoughts, bargaining models and models with multiples equilibrium.

Sharma (2001) shows that due to urbanization and increasing poverty, families are moving from rural to urban areas. The children belonging to these families started taking up work as assistants in shops, restaurants and a variety of other occupations, some of the children also got self employed as vendors, shoe-shiners, newspaper sellers, hawkers and rag-pickers etc. Ravi (2001) analyses the “Rugmark” a social labelling initiative that seeks to stop employing children in the carpet industry of India. This study is based on field research in the Mirzapur and Bhadohi district of Uttar Pradesh and shows that it has made no contribution in reducing child labour but just produces awareness and constitutes first step in combating child labour in carpet industry. Liteten (2002) analyses the changing definition of child labour in the context of the Labour Commission Report 2001. His study observed that with a redefinition of child labour, the number of working children is set at more than ten times the official figures available from census and NSSO reports. Sharma (2002) analyses the four social labelling programmes to eliminate the exploitation of child labour in carpet industry in India. He analyses in terms of their mechanisms, approaches, objectives and their effectiveness over thirty five villages spread over nine districts in three states of India namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan. His study concludes that there is no coordination among these four labelling initiatives; on the contrary these programmes are creating unfair competition rather than coordination and fail to eliminate child labour in carpet industry of India. Aggarwal (2004) analysis the magnitude of child labour and household characteristics in Madhya

Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh using estimates from NSS 55<sup>th</sup> round. The analysis shows, among other things, that poverty and illiteracy have a bearing on child labour. A policy is needed to make education more meaningful and rewarding so that households are incentivised to send their children to school and keep them there. Social infrastructure development may also help to reduce child labour in the country. Ghose (2004) shows that most child workers work as self-employed and casual labourers mainly in agriculture and allied activities. In 2000, nearly 94 percent of employed children were working either as self-employed or casual labours and 75 percent of them were in agriculture. The remaining six percent who worked as regular employees were mainly in service sector.

Burra (2005) argues that the distinction at the conceptual level between child labour and child worker is essentially flawed. It revisits some of the empirical questions around this distinction and concludes that such a division may be abandoned both at the level of theory and practice. Sinha (2005) showed that it is accepted that the primary activity of child is that of a student and not a worker. Therefore, any programme to increase literacy levels among children must necessarily also be a programme to decrease the number of child labourers. The two objectives are contingent on each other. Naidu and Ramaiah (2006) revealed that the main reason which gives rise to child labour is the widespread unemployment and underemployment among the adult poor strata of the population and agricultural child labour constitutes the core of the problem. They suggested that compulsory education will be one of the most effective instruments for eliminating child labour in practice. Satpath *et al.*, (2010) evaluated the “National Child Labour Project” and revealed that the child workforce in the age group of 5-9 years had recorded a sharp decline than in the 10-14 years group the latter concentrated in agriculture and allied activities. The study also observes that at the district level there has been under utilization of funds. There is a need to emphasise some of the basic components of the programmes such a child labour survey, awareness generation and convergence. This study gives some important recommendations along with the financial implications which may be useful for the successful functioning of this project.

## Section-II

### Magnitude of Child labour

The prevalence of child labour is more or less seen in all periods of time, it varies in nature and dimension depending on the existing socio-economic structure of society. The accurate estimate of child labour, either from a qualitative or quantitative point of view is not easily available. According to UNICEF (1997), child labour being a universal phenomenon, its estimates generated by different national and international organization differ significantly. While it is impossible to quote a single figure for the extent of child labour in the world, it is clear that the number of children working worldwide runs into hundreds of millions.

The ILO's most recent estimates (2012) is that some 215 million children across the world are still trapped in child labour, 115 million of them in the worst form. Among different regions the largest number of child labour is concentrated in the Asia and Pacific followed by Sub-Saharan Africa, other regions and Latin America and Caribbean. Further among the different sectors, the largest number of child labour in the world is concentrated in agriculture sector (60 percent) followed by service (26 percent), industry (7 percent) and other sectors (7 percent) respectively. The ILO set the target for elimination of the worst forms of child labour by 2016. The worst forms of child labour include all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, offering of a child for prostitution, the use or procuring of offering of a child for illicit activities and work which harm the health, safety or morals of children.

### Child labour in South Asian Countries

ILO's estimates on the child labour and total children in the age group of 5-14 years in South Asian countries have been presented in the Table 1. It is observed from the same table that out of 337.46 million children in the age group of 5-14 years in South Asian countries, 23.08 million children are working. Among all these countries the number of child labour is maximum in India (54.59 percent), followed by Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. But in the case of total number children in the age group of 5-14 years, India (74.97 percent) is again first followed by Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. It is true that India holds 12.6 million child labour out of its 253 million children. But in the case of working children the percentage of total children in the age group of 5-14 years among all these countries, Nepal stood first with 26.68 percent, whereas in India it is only 4.98 percent. However, there is only 10.73 percent of world child labour concentrated in South Asian countries.

**Table 1:** Children and working Children (age group of 5-14 years) in South Asian Countries (In Million)

Countries	Working children	Total number of children	Working children as the percentage of total number of children
Bangladesh	5.05 (21.88)	35.06(10.39)	14.40 %
India	12.6 (54.59)	253.00(74.97 )	4.98 %
Nepal	1.66(7.19)	6.22( 1.84)	26.68 %
Pakistan	3.3 (14.29)	40.00(11.85 )	8.25 %
Sri Lanka	0.47(2.04)	3.18( 0.94)	14.78 %
Total	23.08	337.46	6.84 %

Sources: ILO, (2009) Child Labour and Responses in South Asia

Note: figure in brackets are percentage of total

The major causes that contribute to child labour in South Asia countries consist of parental poverty and illiteracy; social and economic conditions; lack of awareness; lack of access to basic and meaningful quality education and skills, migration and trafficking and high rates of adult unemployment and under-employment. Attitudes towards child labour also play a significant role. In South Asia, children are perceived as adults at an early stage. Children are expected to perform physical work equivalent to an adult as early as ten years old in some countries. There is a great deal of commonality across the South Asian countries in the forms of child labour, especially in the areas of Child domestic labour; Children in hazardous child labour; Children in export oriented industries, much of it is home-based industries; Child trafficking and migration (both internally and across borders); Child bonded labour particularly in agriculture; and Child labour in the informal economy, particular in urban areas.

### Measurement of Child Labour in India

In India, various social scientists, government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have estimated their own child labour figures depending upon their methodology and definition of child labour. Thus, the estimates of child labour are not exact and vary from source to source. However, according to the ILO, India contributes to about one third of Asia's child labour and one fourth of world's child labour. Moreover, there is a great variation of child labour both state-wise and sector-wise in India. Agriculture and allied activities account for more than 80 per cent of the total working children, half of them are working as agricultural labourers and the other half engaged as cultivators and in plantations, livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting etc. The remaining 20 per cent are engaged in manufacturing, processing, servicing and communications activities (ILO).

The NSSO estimates on child labour of India during 1993-94, 1999-00, 2004-05 and 2009-10 have been presented in table 2. It is observed from the table that the child labour has declined from 13.86 million in 1993-94 to 10.13 million in 1999-00, 9.07 million in 2004-05 and 4.98 million in 2009-10. Further in this urban child labour has declined from 1.64 million in 1993-94 to only 0.74 million in 2009-10. While in the case of rural areas it declined from 12.16 million in 1993-94 to 4.24 million in 2009-10. Thus, there is 64 percent decline in child labour from 1993-94 to 2004-05. But during the same period, it is only 58.88 percent in urban areas and 65.13 percent in rural areas. Although on the whole, around 85 percent of child labour is concentrated in rural India whereas it is around 15 percent in urban areas.

**Table 2:** Estimates of Child Labour in India during 1993-94, 1999-00, 2004-05 and 2009-10 (In millions)

Year	Rural	Urban	Total
1993-94	12.16	1.64	13.86
1999-00	8.65	1.39	10.13
2004-05	7.44	1.52	9.07
2009-10	4.24	.74	4.98

Source: NSS 50<sup>th</sup> round, 55<sup>th</sup> round, 61<sup>st</sup> round and 66<sup>th</sup> round.

**Table 3:** Gender-wise Distribution of Child Labour in India during 1993-94, 1999-00, 2004-05 and 2009-10 (In millions)

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1993-94	7.35	6.51	13.86
1999-00	5.37	4.76	10.13
2004-05	4.76	4.31	9.07
2009-10	3.06	1.92	4.98

Source: NSS 50<sup>th</sup> round, 55<sup>th</sup> round, 61<sup>st</sup> round and 66<sup>th</sup> round.

It is interesting to observe (Table-3) a considerable fall in child labour among girls than boys. The consequent fall in boys and girls employed as labour from 1993-94 to 2009-10 is observed to have decreased from 7.35 million to 3.06 million and 6.51 million to 1.92 million respectively. Further, there is 58.37 percent child labour decline in the case of boys while it is 70.50 percent in girls.

Sector wise distribution of child labour has been presented in Table-4. The same table show that agriculture is the single largest sector of the concentration of child labour in India. This is followed by manufacturing (16.55 percent), trade and hotel (8.45 percent), community and social service (3.41 percent), construction (1.95 percent) and other sectors (1.5 percent).

**Table 4:** Sector-wise Distribution of Child Labour in India during 2009-10 (In percentage)

Sectors	2009-10
Agriculture	68.14
Manufacturing	16.55
Trade and hotel	8.45
Communities and social services	3.41
Construction	1.95
Others	1.50

Source: NSS 66<sup>th</sup> round.

Distribution of child labour in India is not uniform across different states, between urban and rural areas and gender wise. During the 2009-10 child labour in major Indian states has been presented in table-5. It is observed from the table that the most child labour concentrated state is Uttar Pradesh followed by West Bengal, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh and Assam.

**Table 5:** Child Labour in Major Indian States in 2009-10

Sr. No.	States	Male	Female	All	% Share Of Child Labour
1.	Andhra Pradesh	108923	125739	234662	4.71
2.	Assam	156488	32666	189154	3.80
3.	Bihar	235309	41213	276522	5.55
4.	Chhattisgarh	4305	7321	11626	0.23
5.	Delhi	18576	0	18576	0.37
6.	Gujarat	166432	224255	390687	7.84
7.	Haryana	50737	21459	72196	1.45
8.	Himachal Pradesh	4456	2942	7398	0.15
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	12413	16872	29285	0.59
10.	Jharkhand	67807	14661	82468	1.65
11.	Karnataka	110589	115908	226497	4.54
12.	Kerala	1182	1583	2765	0.06
13.	Madhya Pradesh	149142	41875	191017	3.83
14.	Maharashtra	120600	140073	260673	5.23
15.	Orissa	90912	43651	134563	2.70
16.	Punjab	32466	16370	48836	0.98
17.	Rajasthan	136239	269697	405936	8.14
18.	Tamil Nadu	3471	13880	17351	0.35
19.	Uttarakhand	18029	9342	27371	0.55
20.	Uttar Pradesh	1160114	615219	1775333	35.62
21.	West Bengal	389211	162373	551584	11.07
	All India	30557998	1925873	49,83,871	100.00

Source: NSS 66<sup>th</sup> round.

However NSSO estimates on child labour are something different from census of India. According to the Census 2001, there were 12.66 million child labour. It was 11.28 million in Census 1991, which shows an increase of 10.74 percent. The state wise number of child labour as per Census 1981, 1991 and 2001 is given in table-6. State-wise distribution of child labour during census 2001 reveal that Uttar Pradesh topped the first followed by, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

**Table 6:** State-wise Number of Child Labour as per Census 1981, 1991 and 2001

Sl. No	Name of the State/UT	1981	1991	2001
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1951315	1661940	1363339
2.	Assam	NA	327598	351416
3.	Bihar	1101764	942245	1117500
4.	Gujarat	616913	523585	485530
5.	Haryana	194189	109691	253491
6.	Himachal Pradesh	99624	56438	107774
7.	Jammu & Kashmir	258437	NA	175630
8.	Karnataka	1131530	976242	822615
9.	Kerala	92854	34800	26156
10.	Madhya Pradesh	1698597	1352563	1065259
11.	Maharashtra	157756	1068418	764075
12.	Chhattisgarh	NA	NA	364572
13.	Manipur	20217	16493	28836
14.	Meghalaya	44916	34633	53940
15.	Jharkhand	NA	NA	407200
16.	Uttaranchal	NA	NA	70183
17.	Nagaland	16235	16476	45874
18.	Orissa	702293	452394	377594
19.	Punjab	216939	142868	177268
20.	Rajasthan	819605	774199	1262570
21.	Sikkim	8661	5898	16457
22.	Tamil Nadu	975055	578889	418801
23.	Tripura	24204	16478	21756
24.	Uttar Pradesh	1434675	1410086	1927997
25.	West Bengal	605263	711691	857087
26.	Andaman & Nicobar Island	1309	1265	1960
27.	Arunachal Pradesh	17960	12396	18482
28.	Chandigarh	1986	1870	3779
29.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	3615	4416	4274
30.	Delhi	25717	27351	41899
31.	Daman and Diu	9378	941	729
32.	Goa	718	4656	4138
33.	Lakshadweep	56	34	27
34.	Mizoram	6314	16411	26265
35.	Pondicherry	3606	2680	1904
	Total	13640870	11285349	12666377

Sources: Census of India 1981, 1991 and 2001

### Causes of Child Labour

Children are the valuable asset of a nation and they constitute a hidden treasure of potential development of a growing nation. Childhood has been considered as a most important period of life. During this period molding and shaping of life take place and the behavior, conduct and sentiments are developed. But most of the children's life is lost due to poverty, destitution, malnutrition and poor and unhygienic conditions. A large number of studies were conducted in India and abroad to look into the working conditions of child labour and to determine the causes which compel the various household to send their children to work.



Although multifarious causes are responsible for wide spread of child labour in the developing and developed countries, extreme poverty of the household is the main cause. Thus, poverty is generally the first answer for why children work at inappropriate jobs for their ages. But there are other reasons as well such as population explosion, cheap child labour, insufficiency of compulsory education at the primary level, parental ignorance regarding the bad effects of child labour, the ineffectiveness of child labour laws in terms of implementation, non availability and non accessibility of schools, boring and unpractical school curriculum which encourages the phenomenon of child labour. The family practice to inculcate traditional skills in children also pulls little ones inexorably in the trap of child labour, as they never get the opportunity to learn anything else.

It is also very difficult for immature minds and undeveloped bodies to understand and organize themselves against exploitation in the absence of adult guidance. Parents are forced to send little children into hazardous jobs for reasons of survival, even when they know it is wrong. Monetary constraints and the need for food, shelter and clothing drives their children in the trap of premature labour. Illiterate and ignorant parents do not understand the need for wholesome proper physical, cognitive and emotional development of their child. They are themselves uneducated and unexposed, so they don't realize the importance of education for their children. Adult unemployment and urbanization are also the causes of child labour. Adults often find it difficult to get jobs because factory owners find it more beneficial to employ children at cheap wage rates.

Further, there are some factors due to which employers favour child labourers. The industrial revolution has also had a negative effect by giving rise to circumstances which encourage child labour. Sometimes multinationals prefer to employ child workers in the developing countries. This is because they can be recruited for less pay; more work can be extracted from them. Children are easier to manage because they are less aware of their rights, less troublesome, less prone to complaints, more trustworthy, less likely to absent themselves from work and no problem of unions. This attitude also makes it difficult for adults to find jobs in factories, forcing them to drive their little ones to work to keep the fire burning at their homes.

### **Employer's views on Child Labour**

Here it is important to discuss employer's views on child labour. Those who are in favour of child labour say and believe that the children who go to work in the very early age become habitual to be productive and labourious which is profitable for them because they become well trained workers even in their early age. Many employers say with pride that the child started his work in his very early age and knows the value of money which is responsible for his success; it keeps children away from mischief. The employers often advance their argument that by employing the children they increase the income of children's families and they save them from being lazy and vagabonds and anti social persons. Thus, they argue that it is the feeling of sympathy rather than the desire to exploit children, which plays dominant part in employing children. However, these argument advanced by employers are shocking. No nation can take risk of destroying its children's life that is the future possibilities of the country's prosperity and development.

### **Consequences of Child Labour**

Work by children reduces their potential for educational and intellectual development. It also affects school performance as well as school attendance. It often leaves children so exhausted that they lack the energy to attend school or cannot learn effectively when in class. In the case of seasonal agricultural work children generally miss many days of class even though they are enrolled in school. According to ILO not all work is harmful for children. Some type of activities under regulated conditions can have positive effects for the child and society. However, the work, that places too much burden on the child, endangers his safety, health and welfare is immoral.

The working children are generally compelled to remain in low paid jobs for the rest of life. Child labours seek to maintain low wages for the labour force as a whole. The children, thus, neither gain both training and education nor can they earn higher income in their adult life. The child labour, in fact perpetuates poverty and not reduces it. The households of child labour remain in vicious circle of poverty from one generation to other. Children by engaging themselves at low wages attempt to displace a large number of adult workers from the labour market. Thus, child labour not only creates unemployment among adults but also depresses the adult wage rate while doing the same type of work. The economic effects of child labour also have their social implications. The adult unemployment and poverty result in unequal distribution of income and wealth, which in turn is responsible for labour displacement, migration the break-up of family. Children who work at an early age sometimes become addicted to smoking, drinking, drugs and gambling etc. The working condition of child labour is very bad and these children face many occupational risks and health hazards. Some industries in India show the health hazards for child labour associated, with these industries. Glass industry, handloom industry and pottery industry cause Asthma, Bronchitis, T.B, eye problems while rag picking generates tetanus and skin diseases. Actually the case is not limited only to these health hazards, the industrial child labourers is not covered by any social security measures nor any safety measures provided by any employer. Compensation against accident is a remote possibility in occupations where children are employed.

### **Section -III**

#### **Child Labour Policies in India**

The efforts to eradicate child labour often assume two different paths; (1) Collaborative measures and (2) Coercive measures (Basu and Zafiris, 2003). The collaborative measures include child labour rehabilitation programmes while coercive measures include the form of punitive action, particularly against those who hire child labour. These two types of measure, however, are not always mutually exclusive, as many effective policy measures are usually a combination of these two. It is observed that all over the world both measures are applied for eradication of child labour.

A number of initiatives and programmes have been started at national and international levels for child development and elimination of child labour. At the international level, the "Geneva declaration of the Rights of Child" (1924) was the first convention of League of Nations to discuss the rights of a child. "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights" as adopted by the United Nations in 1948 incorporated the basic rights of children for growth and education. An independent "Declaration on the Rights of Child" was made by United Nations in 1959. This emphasized on special protection and care for child to develop in a normal and healthy manner in an atmosphere of freedom and dignity. The year 1979 was declared as International Year of Child by United Nations, which gave importance on the co-operation of the nations in common task of meeting the basic needs of children. The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) is a global programme launched by ILO in December 1991 and India was among the first countries to join it in 1992. The long term objective of IPEC is to contribute to the effective eradication of child labour in the world.

The government of India have been taking various steps from time to time in the form of several laws and policies for proper growth and development of children, protection of children from a variety of exploitation and elimination of child labour from the country. On the basis of the recommendations of Gurupadaswamy committee (1979), the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act was enacted in 1986. The act prohibits employment of children in certain specified hazardous 15 occupations and 65 processes and regulates the working conditions in other. In consonance with the above approach, a National Policy on Child Labour was prepared in 1987. The policy sets out objectives and priorities to eradicate child labour, protect all children

from exploitation and focuses on rehabilitation of child labour. The three main components stated in this policy are: (a) Legislative action plan emphasizing strict and effective enforcement of legal provisions relating to child labour. (b) General development programmes for benefiting children and their families and (c) Project-based plan of action focusing on areas with high concentration of child labour through implementation of the National Child Labour Project (NCLP).

The National Policy on child labour is implemented through four different but horizontally integrated projects at the central level. These projects are as follows: (1) National Child Labour Project (NCLP): under the National Child labour policy, the NCLP was started in 1988 to rehabilitate child labour. The main trust of the NCLP has been to reduce the incidence of child labour in the high-concentration pockets. At present this project is working in more than 250 district and so far 3,74,255 children are benefited from this project. Under the NCLP, working children are identified through child labour survey, withdrawn from work and put into the special schools, so as to provide them with enabling environment to join mainstream education system. In these Special Schools, besides formal education, they are provided stipend per month, nutritious food, vocational training and regular health checkups. In addition, efforts are also made to target the families of these children so as to cover them under various developmental and income/employment generation programmes of the Government. The Scheme also envisages awareness generation campaigns against the evils of child labour and enforcement of child labour laws. (2) Indo-US Child Labour Project (INDUS): this project is developed by Government of India and US Department of Labour under ILO's IPEC for prevention and elimination of child labour in identified hazardous sector of India. (3) Grants-in-Aid Scheme: funds under this scheme are sanctioned directly to NGOs for elimination of child labour in district not covered by the above two projects and (4) Strengthening of child labour cell for implementation of child elimination.

Besides this, the Supreme Court of India has also given some direction to prohibit child labour. The Factories Act-1948 prohibits the employment of children less than 14 years of age. Apart from these initiatives at the central level, many state governments have joined hands with central government and some international agencies and have launched their own different schemes for elimination of child labour. India has recently introduced Right to Education Act (RTEA) 2009, which ensures free and compulsory education to all children in India in the age group of 6-14 years. It is observed that now RTEA is in budding stage. Proper implementation of RTEA will prove a significant step to eradicate child labour in the country, because one main reason for child labour is lack of widespread facilities for child education in the country. For abolition and rehabilitation of child labour we need more education opportunities for these children. Moreover, the Government of India is taking various steps for eradication of this social and economic problem in various five years plan. The strategy for dealing with this problem during the 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan period has been formulated based on the suggestions given by the member of the working group. The main suggestions are: the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act should be strengthened and amended; the NCLP scheme should be expanded further to a large geographical coverage; the convergence approach should be followed to enhance social protection and welfare measures for working children and the NCLP scheme should be realigned in the RTEA.

## **Section-IV**

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

Child labour is a socio-economic problem alive in every country of the world, but it varies in nature and scale depending on the existing socio-economic structure of society. At present, India continues to host the largest number of child labourers in the world but there is a large variation both state-wise and sector-wise. Agriculture and allied activities in India and the rest of the world report the largest sector for child labour. The most child

labour concentrated state in India is Uttar Pradesh. NSSO's 61<sup>st</sup> round shows that in 2004-05 there are 9.07 million child labourers in India; while census 2001 show it is 12.66 million. Whereas during 2009-10 in NSSO's 66<sup>th</sup> round it is 4.98 million. Further, NSSO's rounds prove that there is about thirty five percent decline in child labour from 1993-94 to 2004-05, while census 2001 shows that there is about eleven percent increase in this as compared to census 1991. It is observed from the review of the existing literatures that the main reason of child labour is poverty, and the relationship between these two create a circle. This circle shows that child labour is a cause as well as result of poverty. The other reasons which give rise to child labour are unemployment, underemployment, and population explosion, lack of educational facilities, illiteracy and ignorance of parents. The child labour is a hazard to a child's mental, physical, social, educational, emotional and spiritual development. The Government of India has been taking a variety of steps from time to time for development of children and elimination of child labour from the country, for this series of schemes and programmes have been started by the Government of India.

After studying the important issues of child labour some effective steps should be taken for its elimination which are as follows: The schemes and programmes which are running for the development of children and elimination of child labour should be implemented effectively so that maximum benefits can be drawn from these programmes, because this socio-economic problem cannot be eliminated just by framing the child labour laws. The drawbacks in these programmes should be removed and from time to time their proper inspection should be done. Child education is a very effective instrument for elimination of child labour. Therefore, child education in our country should be spread speedily and the education system has to be shaped in such a way which is easily accessible to everyone. For children involved in the child labour more special schools have to be set up. The importance of education is to be told to the poor parents and the parents living in remote areas in particular. Moreover they should be motivated to send their children to schools. Entrepreneurial Development Programmes should be conducted and training should be given to parents of child labours to get employment. Rigorous punishment should be given to employers who violate the law. Periodical review of the child status vis-à-vis his/her education and counseling for parents should be taken up through government and non-government organizations. Efforts have to be created to reduce the poverty and unemployment in our country because both of these problems are the cause as well the result of the child labour. There should be a proper coordination among various programmes and agencies running in this direction. Besides all these, public awareness against this social evil is very important and for this NGOs, media, Governments at various levels, parents, trade union and employers can be helpful for working towards gradual elimination of this problem.

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