

Child Labour : A Social Evil In India and The Efforts To Eliminate It

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Abstract

It is all known that child labour is a social evil. It is one of the most significant problems of Indian society. India has been facing this problem since pre-independence to till the date. Britishers used to employ a large number of children into labour due to the increasing need of cheap labour to produce a large number of goods for them. The companies preferred recruiting children as they could be employed for less pay, better utilized in factory environment, lacked knowledge of their basic rights and possessed higher trust levels. Post-Independence, child labour system kept to be existed rather it began to grow in India due to poverty, illiteracy and supplement incomes to the family or in some cases they, are the only wage earners in the family; After all child labour is an alarming social problem which has let the children away from enjoying their childhood, freedom, development, education etc. Right from very starting of Indian Independence, Government has tried to abolish their system from Indian society. Government has made provisions in the constitution for discouraging the child labour. Indian Government passed many Acts time to time for the elimination of child labour from India. Some of the Acts are the factories Act, 1948, The Minimum wages Act, 1948, The Schools and Establishment, Acts, 1961, The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulations) Act, 1986, etc. In other side many NGOs like Bachpan Bachao Andolan, Child Fund, CARE India and awareness programmes have given better efforts to decline the child labour in India.

Keywords: Significant, poverty, illiteracy, supplement, alarming, social problem, childhood freedom, development, prohibition, efforts etc

Introduction

Child Labour is a crucial problem of India. It is a barrier in the socio-economic development of our country. It is proved to be a big challenge for the Government. India, being an agricultural country where 70% of its population engaged in farming. Most of the farmers are poor who have large size of their family. Their children work in agriculture and other related activities for their livelihood. They cannot go to school for study. They are growing up illiterate because they have been working for their survival and supplementing their parents' income. They are not enjoying freedom their childhood and the opportunities of physical and mental development. As the children are the future of India and this part of our assets becoming weaker and weaker instead, they are quite strangers to the joys and innocence of the formative years of their lives. They are deprived of enjoying their early steps on their life's journey, they are forced to work under slavery conditions. God has blessed equally all the children on the land of India but their poverty, unawareness and exploitation are spoiling them. Good Teachers, artists, doctors, officers, engineers, leaders and army can come out of this part of our population but they have been made child labour. Children are the important components in social structure and potential future carries to the culture. If they are protected and are cared properly then they can be effective and productive contributors for socio-economic development of India. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), there are tremendous economic benefits for developing nation by sending children to school instead of work. Without education, children do not gain the necessary skills such as English literacy and technical aptitude that will increase their productivity to enable them to secure higher skilled jobs in future with higher wages that will lift them out of poverty.

Child labour is not the problem of our country only but almost all developing countries are suffering badly from this problem. It needs to be solved necessarily to make our country stronger and developed. Indian Government have been making efforts to get rid of this problem since its independence. It has laid down the provisions in our constitution under the Articles 23, 24 and 45. The central Government and The State Government have been trying to recognise the children for the full and harmonious development of their personality, their growth in a family environment in

Nitu Upadhyay
Assistant Professor,
Department of Education
Maa Vindhyavashini
College of Education,
Karmatand, Padma,
Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, India

an atmosphere of happiness, love and affection. India Government, NGOs and other machineries are considering that the children should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society. They should be guaranteed with the spirit of peace, dignity tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity. Researchers have found that the Government of India has passed many laws and acts time to time to check the child labour in our country. The employment of children at regular and sustained labour have been considered exploitative and illegal practice. Children who are below 14 years cannot take out a livelihood. If they are found working in an establishment, the employer is charged under labour laws that prohibit employment of any child until they attain adulthood. The laws and acts of India against child labour ensure children's rights as the perceived human rights of children with particular attention to the rights of special protection and care afforded to the young, including their right to association with both biological parent's human identity as well as the basic needs for food, universal state paid education, health care and criminal laws appropriate for the age and development of the child. The compulsory education law (RTE) says children up to age of 14 years are entitled to free education in India.

Review of Literature

A review of literature is related with a brief review of previous studies on the problem and crucial findings on the under study. Presently this review gives a summary of present position of knowledge in the investigation, to understand the concepts relating to the present study on child labour. It also helps to explore the research gaps exist and how this present study is an attempt to fill that gaps are highlighted in this research work.

Naidu (2002) endeavoured to focus light on various social and cultural factors influencing the existence of child labour. He observed that "child labour largely depend upon normative attitude towards children in society the culturally determined rules and functions of children, the value by which the activities of the children are judged and the nature of socialisation process. In industrialized countries, there is general disapproval of participation of school age children in the formal labour force. The participation of children in homework is approved, by parents at least. In many countries, participation in various type of economic activities from an early age is considered as an essential part of socialisation.

Weiner (1999) in his study revealed that how economic, socialisation and the role of parents like cultural objectives causes child labour. According to him "The value by which the activities of children are judged and the nature of socialisation process, the process of socialisation and the cultural are clearly inter dependent with the structural economic as system within which socialisation occur." the nature of child's socialisation is associated with the class position of his parents.

Hypothesis

The researchers have set the target before conducting the study in the form of hypothesis. It will

be central idea for the fruitful investigation of their problem. Their predication is as under :-

HO : The Child labour exist in Indian Society.

H1 :The Child labour does not exist in Indian Society.

HO : Efforts have been made to eradicate child labour in India.

H1 : Efforts have not been made to eradicate child labour in India.

Child Labour

It is not difficult to define the term child labour. It is very common amongst academicians, researches, law makers, NGOs etc. It is meant by any work which deprives the children of their childhood, potential and dignity and makes barrier in the ways of their physical and mental development. Child labour origins when children are compelled to work at an age of their study and enjoy in the phases of innocence. It leads towards the lost of childhood that causes the exploitation of children in several forms of mental, physical social, sexual and so on. As per the child labour Act, 1986- "A Child is defined as any person below the age of 14 and the CLPR prohibits employment of child".

Child Labour In India

The history of India witnesses the existence of child labour in India since ancient time. India has been principally an agriculture country and most of the economic activities were carried out in the cottage industries. Both the sectors- cottage industries and agriculture needed a large number of man power because both are labour intensive working sectors. Though Indian farmers were poor, illiterate and unaware they used to employ their children in agricultural works and in making the marketing goods. They had lack of schools in rural areas. Some of the school were having no facilities. So they did not send their children to school for education. Later, foreign companies came to India and began to hire the children as workers in their farms and industries. Profiteers began to exploit the children by paying less and taking work for 10-12 hours in a day. Child labour kept increasing in India till independence. After Independence, our poverty caused for child labours and still it is existing in India.

Most of the children in our country are bad luck to enjoy their childhood. They are compelled to work under inhuman conditions where their miseries know no end. children are employed illegally in various industries. unfortunately, the actual number of child labours in India goes undetected. But agriculture is the largest sector where children work at early ages to contribute to their family income. Rural area employ 85 Percent of the child labour in India. They are forced to work at young ages due to factors such as poverty, unemployment, a large family size and lack of proper education in completely unregulated condition without adequate food, proper wages and rest. They are being harassed physically, sexually and emotionally.

The National census of India 2011 tells the total population of child is 259.64 million out of which 10.1 million children are working as labourers. UNICEF estimates that India with its larger population, has the highest number of labourers in the world

under 14 year of age, while Sub-Saharan African countries have the highest percentage of children who are deployed as child labourers. Researchers have surveyed that rural areas employ the largest number of child labour. In urban areas, they work in dhabas, tea-stalls and restaurants and households. They are shamelessly exploited in the unorganized sectors as domestic servants, hawkers, rag-pickers, paper vendors, agricultural labourers and as workers in industrial concerns.

During the research, It came to the notice of researchers that prevalence of child labour in Indian Society has been due to the high poverty and poor schooling opportunities. Child labour is found in rural as well as urban area. Researchers have studied that the increasing trend of child labour in India kept existing up to 2001. In 1991 there was 11.28 million child labour and 12.59 million child labour was found in 2001. But the laws, policies and awareness programmes of Government of India have discouraged child labour and the result is pleasing that the child labour is declining in India.

Causes Of Child Labour In India

There are several reasons of child labour in India but poverty, illiteracy and unawareness are important reasons. Lack of social security, the increasing gap between the rich and poor have adversely affected children more than any other group. Researchers have found that the Indians have failed to provide universal education which results in children dropping out of school and entering the labour force. Loss of jobs of parents in recession, farmers' suicide, refugees culture and high costs of healthcare and living are also important, causes of child labour in India. Child labour in some communities in India are badly caused by poverty, uneducation and unawareness like Muslims, Tribals, Dalit, etc. overall study of researchers reflect that the extreme poverty where 40 percent of the population were below poverty line in India has been major cause for child labour because children were supplementing their parents' income and in some family children were only wages earners. Researchers have studied another reasons creating child labourer to get cheap labour as a factory hand, a domestic servant and a shop assistant.

Efforts To Eliminate Child Labour In India

Indian has been entrapped by the problem of child labour since the period of Pre-Independence. It kept increasing even after the independence of our country. Child labour in India is a human right issue for the whole world. India is standing second highest number of child labourers. It has become a serious and extensive problem with many children under the age of 14 years. The researchers have found during the study that the Government of Independent India has made many laws and policies to abolish this evil from our society. A brief study of the Government's efforts to control over child labour in India is presented as under :

1. The factories Act, 1948.
2. The Minimum Wages Act, 1948.
3. Plantation Labour Act, 1951.

4. The Mines Act, 1952.
5. The Merchant Shipping Act, 1958.
6. The Motor Transport Worker Act, 1961.
7. The Apprentice Act, 1961.
8. The School and Establishment Act, 1961.
9. The Beedi Cigar Worker (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966.
10. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.
11. Right of Children to Free and compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009.

All above acts and laws were passed under the constitutional provisions provided in articles 23, 24, 39(f), 45 etc. Besides the above said acts the Governments have made several schemes and policies to check the child labour e.g. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Mid-day Meal, Child rehabilitation, boarding schools, healthy environment of schools, facilities of books copies, dress cycles etc.

Efforts to solve the child labour by the Supreme court of India has also come to the light through its judgement dated 10th December 1996 in Writ Petition (Civil) Number 465/1986 in which certain directions regarding the manner of working by children in the hazardous occupations are to be withdrawn from work and rehabilitation and the manner in which the working conditions of children working in non-hazardous occupation are to be regulated and improved.

Efforts have been also made significantly by the non-governmental organisations like Bachpan Bachao Andolm, Child Fund, CARE India, Talash Association, Child Rights and you, Bundelkhand Matra Bhumi Samaj Sevi Sansthan, RIDE India, Childline etc. to eradicate child labour in India. They have worked at national level as well as at local level to protect the rights of child as well as to solve the problem of child labour with the help of funding agencies and with the help of government machinery.

Objectives Of The Study

Researchers have kept the following objectives in their mind while conducting the study :-

1. To Know the nature of child labour.
2. To know the prevalence of child labour in India.
3. To know the number of child labour in India.
4. To know the works/sectors where the children are employed as workers.
5. To know the factors responsible for child labour in India.
6. To know the efforts made Government (Central/State) to check the child labour in India.
7. To know the constitutional provision to check the child labour.
8. To know the laws and Acts made to eliminate the child labour in India.
9. To know the NGOs and other machinery are making efforts to remove child labour culture from India, etc.

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis has been tested by appropriate method and technique of testing; Chi-square test method has helped to test the hypothesis which results that child labour is existing in India and has

became chronic disease for the Indian Society. India has Second highest number of Child labour which has grabbed all castes and communities. But it is also tested that not only Government but also NGOs, Judiciary Civil Societies, etc are making proper efforts to eradicate problem of child labour.

Research Methodology

Under research methodology, Data collection method has been applied for the collection of information and facts regarding the problems presented here. To get the solution of the problem, primary data and secondary data are required.

Primary data

Researchers have gone to the field and conducted the survey. They have gone to states, districts, blocks towns and some villages on sampling basis. They have studied the different families, industries, hotels, shops agricultural farm etc. and have found that children are working who are below the age of 14 years having bad conditions of their life. Mostly children are from poor families are working for the assistance of their families.

Secondary data

Secondary data have been proved more helpful in conducting the research work. Newspapers, Magazines, Articles, Journals, Books, Internet, Published and unpublished THESIS have been studied for the collection of data regarding the present problem.

Conclusion and Suggestions

It is concluded saying this that the problem of child labour is existing in Indian society since ancient time. It has increased in the post independence period. Now It has become the serious problems of our country. It is making a barrier in the economic development of India. Although Government has made several laws and policies under constitutional provision and agenda of National Programmes. Despite that child labour has not come to end. NGOs and other machinery are working to eradicate child labour from the society but it is proved to be insufficient. The laws must be applied rigorously and strictly against the culprits of child labour. A collective efforts are needed on the part of society and the government to put an end to the practice of child labour. There should be a national campaign where every citizen should take an oath to never employ child labour, rather check other to from doing so. We should create awareness in the society where parents should send their children to school but not for work. Only making laws is not enough but it needs to be implemented very well. The violators of laws should be punished rigorously. Government also should make efforts to increase the incomes of parents by bringing various development policies. Efforts should be made toward poverty elimination jointly with educational reforms to provide or affordable access of quality education. Employment generating programmes, use of improved technology among the poor, promotion of the informal sector and creation of cooperatives and social security as the comprehensive steps should be taken by the

government so that the hope can be met to eliminate child labour from Indian Society by 2020.

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