



## Education Works as an Effective Strategy for Elimination of the Problem of child Labour

### KEYWORDS

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**ABSTRACT** *There is need to bring about wide spread public awareness towards initiating community action in promoting school enrolment. Education helps a child to develop cognitively, emotionally and socially, and needless to say, education is often gravely reduced by child labour. We need to create a conducive climate in which community people at large would not tolerate the child labour in any form any more. There is need to bring about awareness among the poor parents so that they will develop a willingness to make any sacrifice to get their children educated. It is possible only when they are convinced about the significance of education. This should be accompanied with vocational training depending upon their own choice. Preparation should also be made for sustaining education outside of formal school buildings, using community facilities and strengthening alternative education through a variety of community channels. In passing the 86th Amendment to the Constitution of India, education is a fundamental right. This has implications for fulfilment of the obligation of the State to ensure that every child is in school. Since most children who do not attend schools are engaged in some form of work or another, it is essential that there is a comprehensive plan to withdraw children from work and mainstream them into schools. In other words the labour department has a crucial role to abolish child labour in all its forms and ensure that children enjoy their right to education. This is indeed a challenging task, but can be attained with concerted effort and a clear perspective.*

### Child labour as an important global issue

Child labour is associated with poverty, inadequate educational opportunities, gender inequality and a range of health risk. Child labour hampers the normal physical, intellectual, emotional and moral development of a child. Children who are in the growing process can permanently distort or disable their bodies when they carry heavy loads or are forced to adopt unnatural positions at work for long hours. Children are more vulnerable because they are less resistant to diseases and suffer more readily from chemical hazards and radiation than adults.

### Concept of child labour

International Labor Organization (ILO) states that child labour may be defined in a number of different ways, and a different definition yields a different estimate of child labour in India as well as other countries. According to ILO, children or adolescents who participate in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling, is not child labour; rather it may generally be regarded as being something positive. Such harmless work includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting family or earning pocket money outside school hours and over holidays. These kinds of activities, suggests ILO, may contribute to children's development by providing them with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life.

Child labour in India is the practice where children engage in economic activity, on part-time 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 most important causes of child labour in India. The 2001 national census of India estimated the total number of child labour, aged 5–14, to be at 12.6 million. Child labor problem is not unique to India; worldwide, about 215 million children work, many full-time.

In 2001, out of a 12.6 million, about 0.12 million children in India were in a hazardous job. UNICEF estimates that India with its larger population, has the highest number of labourers in the world less than 14 years of age, while sub-saharan African countries have the highest percentage of children who are deployed as child labour. International Labour Organization estimates that agriculture at 60 percent is the

largest employer of child labor in India, while United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization estimates 70 percent of child labour is deployed in agriculture and related activities. Outside of agriculture, child labour is observed in almost all informal sectors of the Indian economy.

India's Census 2001 office defines child labor as participation of a child less than 17 years of age in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit. Such participation could be physical or mental or both. This work includes part-time help or unpaid work on the farm, family enterprise or in any other economic activity such as cultivation and milk production for sale or domestic consumption. Indian government classifies child labourers into two groups: Main workers are those who work 6 months or more per year. And marginal child workers are those who work at any time during the year but less than 6 months in a year

### Magnitude of Child Labour across States

There is across the board decline in the incidence of child labour in the Southern and Western Indian States and UTs between 1991 and 2001. However, there has been an increasing trend in the Eastern and North Indian States and UTs. While the Kerala and Tamil Nadu stories are well known, it is heartening to see that the state of Andhra Pradesh, that had a dubious distinction of having the largest child labour force in the country, shows very remarkable reduction in work-force participation, along with a dramatic increase in the enrolment of children in school. Surprising is the case of Himachal Pradesh, which has shown significant increases in school attendance and in literacy levels.

### Effect of child labour

The presence of a large number of child labourers is regarded as a serious issue in terms of economic welfare. Children who work fail to get necessary education. They do not get the opportunity to develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and psychologically. Children in hazardous working conditions are in worse condition. Children who work, instead of going to school, remain illiterate which limits their ability to contribute to their own well being as well as to community they live in. Child labor has long term adverse effects for India.

### Recommendations for abolition of child labour

In most societies where child labour has been eradicated, multi-pronged strategies were used. Stringent laws were

passed which made child labour illegal. In addition the educational system was strengthened so that children removed from work could go to school.

To keep an economy prospering, a vital criteria is to have an educated workforce equipped with relevant skills for the needs of the industries. The young labourers today, will be part of India's human capital tomorrow. Child labour undoubtedly results in a trade-off with human capital accumulation. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), there are tremendous economic benefits for developing nations 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 an integral part of labour force, especially in poor countries. These children are the most deprived section of population forced to enter labour market at tender age to earn a pittance or to contribute to family work, sacrificing personal development. Poverty coupled with rapidly growing population, ignorance and increasing dependency load are behind the grim incidence of children employment in the villages and towns of developing countries.

#### **The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986**

It prohibits child labour in certain occupations and processes alone and their conditions of work are regulated in the rest. The law does not prohibit child labour if rendered for one's own family in those areas of occupation that has been considered as hazardous. Likewise, it has no purview over regulating the conditions of work if children are engaged to work by the family. The law has also completely left out children working in agriculture. The first step is to clearly enunciate a policy that 'no child must work and every child attends a full time formal school' is not negotiable and that it is a goal that is possible to achieve.

#### **NCLP programme**

It is a consequence of the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 focuses on the release and rehabilitation of only such children who are employed in those industries as notified in the Act. It has so far been able to mainstream only about 3.75 lakh children. If there has to be an end to child labour then the focus must be on total abolition of child labour and in addressing the rights of the universe of children who are out of school.

Children are preferred as they are not unionized, can be easily controlled, tortured, and exploited without any fear of backlash. Moreover, children are better suited to jobs like brick making, carpet weaving, and silk spinning etc. Their cheapness and remote possibility of collective bargaining on their part makes them vulnerable and induced producers to employ and exploit the child labour. There are still many people in the world who are so poor that they often don't have enough to eat each day and suffer from hunger.

The importance of education is neglected for the child and replaced with necessity of providing food and shelter i.e. children work to supplement meager family several national policies and programmes initiated in the last few decades to address the varied needs of children, and is the policy frame for this plan. The policy laid down that the State shall provide adequate services towards children, both before and after birth and during the growing stages for their full physical, mental and social development. The policy emphasized the need for the measures of the balanced growth of children; children shall be protected against neglect, cruelty and exploitation. Many organizations are focusing on eradicating child labour by mobilizing community participation for universal primary education, there is a common attitude prevailing in our country to accept child labour as an unavoidable consequence of poverty.

There is a need to formulate a holistic, multi-pronged and concerted effort to tackle this problem. The problem of child labour can be best addressed by adopting various strategies ranging from enrolment and retaining children in the school, income generation avenues for adults, poverty eradication programmes simultaneously. Awareness generation in the society towards universalisation of primary education. The need of the hour is that the Government should ensure all measures and an enabling environment for survival, growth, development and protection of all children, so that each child can realize his or her inherent potential and grow up to be a healthy and productive citizen. An integrated approach involving various strategies like poverty eradication programmes, campaigns, budget advocacy, community action, engaging institutions of governance for the ultimate attainment of the desired goal. All these strategies can be fulfilled by educational strategies. Illiterate person can never know, understand and utilization of legislative rules and regulation. No one can get the advantages about one's right. Therefore education is only one strategy to eliminate the problem of child labor from the society of every country.

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