

CHILD LABOUR IN ROOF TILE INDUSTRY

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INTRODUCTION

Child labour exists worldwide with a majority in underdeveloped and developing countries. The ILO imposed ban on child labour and global opinion decried of their poor working and service conditions. The developed nations want to link world trade with social clause on labour to contain cheap labour. In India millions of children can hardly dream of childhood. It is being realized that child labour is a 'Harsh Reality' (Umesh Ch. Sahu, 1990). In India, the employment of children is banned by the Indian constitution. The intellectuals, leaders and public deplored their employment. In spite of this, the child labour persists in India. The labour investigation committee has rightly pointed out the plight of children as one black spot of labour conditions in India (Report).

Present Study

This paper critically examines the existing policy to eradicate child labour after analyzing the working and service conditions of child labour in Jaggampet Industrial Belt Area in East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh. The working conditions are found to be hazardous with long working hours and informal service conditions. This paper concludes that establishing vocational schools might help in (1) eradicating child labour and (2) educating them for better employment in future.

Child labour, the disgusted lot with innocent looks lending their tender hands to build national economy for a pittance, is a thorn in the national flower, on the occasion of the 64th Anniversary of India's Independence. This has historical connection to family oriented business system and poverty. Ammu Joseph (1990) narrates the plight of child labour and stated that "Most of the children work long hours under inhuman conditions, on starvation wages, almost certain to be burn out in more ways than one by the time they reach adulthood". Child labour lowers production cost but in the long run the quality of such human resource is adversely affected; childhood is protected by Indian constitution which guarantees free and compulsory primary education under the Article 21 A of Fundamental Rights.

Child labour is a global phenomenon and several United Nations conventions have deliberated on the deteriorating conditions of the child labour and brought out several resolutions to protect the rights of the child.

Concept of Child Labour

Child labour is usually defined as participation in gainful activity by children between the ages 5 to 14 years (Ramesh Kanbargi, 1991). This definition of child labour is not sufficient to narrate the extent of the child labour. The Gurupadaswami committee (1979) defined child labour as that segment of the child population which participates in work either paid or unpaid. Elaborating the above two definitions, Singh (1992) pointed out that the term child labour is commonly interpreted in two different ways. Firstly, as an economic practice, and secondly as a social evil. In the first context it signifies employment of children in gainful occupations with a view to adding to the income of the family. It is in the second context that the term child labour is no more generally used.

According to ILO, any employee below the age of 14 could be called child labour in India, any employee below 18 years under the Mines Act, 1952; below 14 years under the Factories Act, 1948 and below 12 years under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 comes under child labour.

This has been extended according to ILO (2004) as: "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 and 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;
 - by obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
 - by requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.
 - In its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illness and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities- often at a very young age."

Child Labour at the Global Level

The existence of child labour is a symptom of under development. However, the developed nations are not free from child labour though appropriate social security and education schemes existed. According to the National State Workplace Institute of Chicago the American agriculture industry employs about 2 million children A survey conducted by ILO (2003) suggested that there are 246 million child labourers (aged 14 years or less) in the world and that as many as 180 million of them are engaged in hazardous activities that put them at direct physical risk. Child labour is most rampant in Asia with 44.6 million of its children doing commercial work followed by Africa at 23.3 million and Latin America at 5.1 million.

In India 14.4 percent children between 10 and 14 years of age are employed as child labour. In Bangladesh 30.1 percent, in China 11.6 percent, in Pakistan 17, 7 %, in Turkey 24 % in Egypt 11.2%, in Kenya 41.3 %, in Nigeria 25.8%, in Argentina 4.5%, in Brazil 16.1%, in Mexico 16.7%, in Italy 0.4% and in Portugal 1.8%. The above figures only give part of

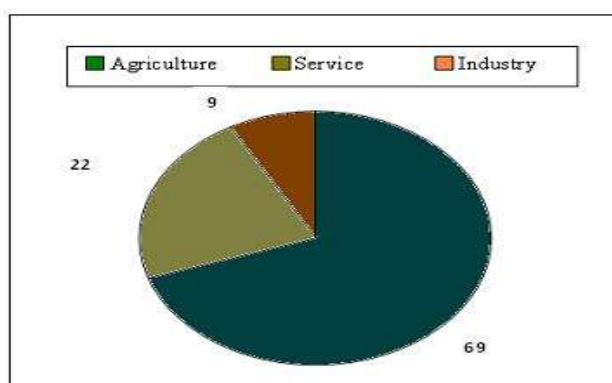
the picture. No reliable figures of child workers below ten years of age are available, though they comprise a significant amount. The same is true of children in the former age group on whom no official data is available. If it was possible to account the number of child workers properly and the number of young girls occupied in domestic labour taken into account – the figure will emerge as hundreds of millions. The problem grows unabated. The International Labour Organization, Non – Governmental Organizations (NGO’s) and research bodies conducted extensive studies and programs on various facets and dimensions of this problem.

Table 1. Estimates of Various Forms of Children Work, 2000 and 2004

| | Age Group | Child Population | | Working Children | | Child Labourers | | Children in Hazardous Work | |
|-------|-------------------------------------|------------------|--------|------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| | | 2000 | 2004 | 2000 | 2004 | 2000 | 2004 | 2000 | 2004 |
| 5-17 | No. (millions) | 1531.4 | 1566.3 | 351.9 | 317.4 | 25.5 | 217.7 | 170.5 | 126.3 |
| | Incidence (Percentage of age group) | 100 | 100 | 23 | 20.3 | 16 | 13.9 | 11.1 | 8.1 |
| | Percentage change from 2000 to 2004 | - | 2.3 | -- | -9.8 | -- | -11.3 | -- | -25.9 |
| 5-14 | No. (millions) | 1199.4 | 1206.5 | 211 | 190.7 | 186.3 | 165.8 | 111.3 | 74.4 |
| | Incidence (Percentage of age group) | 100 | 100 | 17.6 | 15.8 | 15.5 | 13.7 | 9.3 | 6.2 |
| | Percentage change from 2000 to 2004 | -- | 0.6 | -- | -9.6 | -- | -11 | -- | -33.2 |
| 15-17 | No. (millions) | 332 | 359.8 | 140.9 | 126.7 | 59.2 | 51.9 | 59.2 | 51.9 |
| | Incidence (Percentage of age group) | 100 | 100 | 42.4 | 35.2 | 17.8 | 14.4 | 17.8 | 14.4 |
| | Percentage change from 2000 to 2004 | -- | 8.4 | -- | -10.1 | -- | -12.3 | -- | -12.3 |

Source: International Labour Office, 2006, Global Child Trends 2000 to 2004, Geneva: ILO

Chart. 1 : Working Children Ages 5-14 by Sector



Source: Global Child Labour Trends 2000 to 2004. International Labour Office 2006. Geneva ILO.

The sectoral employment of child labour has presented in table no.3 shows that a majority of 69 % are employed in agriculture operations, where as 22% of the child labour are absorbed in service sector and the rest of 9% are engaged with industry sector, these statistics based on the International Labour Office statistics published in 2006 with regard to global child labour trends 2000 to 2004.

The service sector consisting of wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels, transport, storage, communications, finance, insurance, real estate, and business services. The industry sector comprises mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction and public utilities (electricity, gas and water).

Table 2. Regional Trends in Children’s Work, 2000-2004. (5 to 14 Years Olds)

| Region | Child Population (Million) | | Economically Active Children (Million) | | Activity Rate % | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|--|-------|-----------------|------|
| | 2000 | 2004 | 2000 | 2004 | 2000 | 2004 |
| Asia and the Pacific | 655.1 | 650 | 127.3 | 122.3 | 19.4 | 18.8 |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 108.1 | 111 | 17.4 | 5.7 | 16.1 | 5.1 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 166.8 | 186.8 | 48 | 49.3 | 28.8 | 26.4 |
| Other regions | 269.3 | 258.8 | 18.3 | 13.4 | 6.8 | 5.2 |
| World | 1,199.30 | 1206.6 | 211 | 190.7 | 17.6 | 15.8 |

Source: International Labour Office.2006. Global Child Labour Trends 2000 to 2004. Geneva: ILO

Estimates on Child Labour in India

The accurate figures on child labour are yet not available even after the Supreme Court had issued directions to all States to enumerate the extent of child labour in their respective States and submit the same latest by 31st May, 1997. The enumerated figures of each State

were preposterous. A committee on Child Welfare (Gurupadaswamy Committee) has estimated child labour as 20 million in organized sector. According to one estimate, child labour is growing in India at the rate of 3 per cent per year and it is 60 million (includes all occupations) in 1997. The Census Survey 1991 has estimated the child labour as 36 million which is nearly 10% of the total child population. According to the Census 2001, there were 12.7 million economically active children in the age group of 5 to 14 years. According to the Ministry of labour and other NGO's estimate, there are 55 million children in labour force at present other than those working directly for their parents. Out of these there are 25 million children employed in agricultural sector, 20 million in service jobs and 5 million in the handloom, carpet making, gum cutting and match making industries. The trend shows 91% of child labour in India is in rural area while 9% is in urban areas.

Table 3. State wise distribution of Working Children according to 1991 and 2001 Census in Age Group 5-15 years

| State/Union Territory | Census | Census | Census | Census |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 1627492 | 1591312 | 1,661,940 | 1,363,339 |
| Assam | 239349 | . | 327,598 | 351,416 |
| Bihar | 1059359 | 1101764 | 942,245 | 1,117,500 |
| Chhattisgarh | -- | -- | -- | 364,572 |
| Gujarat | 518061 | 616913 | 523,585 | 485,530 |
| Haryana | 137826 | 194189 | 109,691 | 253,491 |
| J&K | 70489 | 258437 | -- | 175,630 |
| Karnataka | 808719 | 1131530 | 976,247 | 822,615 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 1112319 | 1698597 | 1,352,563 | 1,065,259 |
| Maharashtra | 988357 | 1557756 | 1,068,418 | 764,075 |
| Manipur | 16380 | 20217 | 16,493 | 28,836 |
| Jharkhand | -- | -- | -- | 407,200 |
| Uttaranchal | -- | -- | -- | 70,183 |
| Orissa | 492477 | 702293 | 45,239 | 377,594 |
| Punjab | 232774 | 216939 | 142,868 | 177,268 |
| Rajasthan | 587389 | 819605 | 774,199 | 1,262,570 |
| Tamil Nadu | 713305 | 975055 | 578,889 | 418,801 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 1326726 | 1434675 | 1,410,086 | 1,927,997 |
| West Bengal | 511443 | 605263 | 711,691 | 857,087 |
| Delhi | 17120 | 25717 | 27,351 | 41,899 |
| Goa | -- | -- | 4,656 | 4,138 |

Source: The Indian Child: A Profile, 2002, Department of Women and Child, Ministry of HRD, Government of India.* Census figures 1971, 1981, and 1991.

Magnitude of Child Labour across States

There is across the board decline in the incidents of child labour in the southern and western states and union territories between 1991 and 2001. However there has been an increasing trend in the eastern and north Indian states and union territories. While the position in Kerala and Tamilnadu requires attention, it is heartly 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 reductions in work force participation, along with the dramatic increase in enrollment of children in schools. Surprising is the case of Himachal Pradesh which has shown significant increase in school attendance and in literacy levels. (R.R.Govind (edited 2002)).

METHODOLOGY

The trends and magnitude of child labour in India needs an in-depth study as to know the status and intensity of the problem as well to explore strategies to curb the incidents of child labour. An intensive study was undertaken to highlight the child labour with causes and its consequences in the Industrial belt of Jaggampet in East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh. It is a place famous for roof tiles manufacturing. The place is an identified chronic area where over 10 per cent of child labours in Andhra Pradesh are employed in 35 roof tile manufacturing units. The concentrations of industries are attributed to availability of cheap labour and raw materials. A sample of 100 child labourers and an equal number of their parents are selected randomly and interviewed using separate schedules. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has identified this area for setting up child labour rehabilitation centre's and through persuasion some children were registered on its rolls.

Socio Economic Conditions**Impact of Gender, Age, Family Size and Socio Economic Conditions on the Incidence of Child Labour**

The employment of children is rampant and not confined to male sections of the society. A significant number of female child labours in the age group of 5 – 13 years are employed. Surprisingly female child labour in the age group 13 – 14 years is insignificant and it was identified that child marriage is the reason. The literacy rate is very low among the child labour respondents and parent respondents. Again the size of the family has an important bearing on preference for employment on gender basis. In small – sized families only males are employed and in large – sized families both males and female children are employed.

Table 4. Distribution of the respondents by Age group & Sex,

| Age group | Sex of the respondents (Number and Percentage to total population) | | Total |
|-----------|---|------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | |
| 5 – 8 | 24 (16.00) | 20 (13.33) | 44 (29.33) |
| 9 – 12 | 25 (16.66) | 40 (26.67) | 65 (43.33) |
| 13 – 14 | 28 (18.67) | 13 (8.67) | 41 (27.33) |
| Total | 77 (51.33) | 73 (48.67) | 150 (100.00) |

Note: Figures in the parentheses are percentages to total.

Children belonging to different age groups of both sexes and of different castes have been working in tile making units. It is evident from the above table that 29.33% of the respondents belong to 5 - 8 years age group, 43.33% to 9 to 12 and 41% the age group of 13-14 years. With regard to the sex components of the sample more or less equal percentage of the respondents belong to both the groups' with male and female accounting to 51.33% and 48.67% respectively. However, significant differences are noticed between the female children in the age group of 9-12 years are highest percentage (26.6%) where as the male child labour dominated the 13-14 age groups. This shows that there is a declining trend in the working of female children as they move towards the age group of 13-14 years due to early marriage than boys.

Table 5. Distribution of Child Labour by Social Community & Sex

| Social Community | Sex of the respondents (Number and Percentage to total population) | | Total |
|------------------|---|---------------|-----------------|
| | Male | Female | |
| O.C | 36 (24.00) | 30 (20.00) | 66 (44.00) |
| S.C | 5 (3.33) | 11 (7.33) | 16 (10.67) |
| B.C | 36 (24.00) | 32 (21.33) | 68 (45.33) |
| Total | 77 (51.33) | 73 (48.67) | 150 (100.00) |

Note: Figures in the parentheses are percentages to total.

With regard to the social community it may be seen that 44% of the respondents belong to open category and 10.67% to the schedule caste and around 45% belonging to backward caste. When the distribution of female child workers is considered the highest Percentage of the female children on the backward caste (21.33) and the lowest percent is seen in the schedule caste community (7.33%).

Table 6. Distribution of Child labour by social Community and Educational Level.

| Social Community | Level of Education | | Total |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | No Education | Literate | |
| O.C | 61 (40.67) | 5 (3.33) | 66 (44.00) |
| S.C | 15 (10.00) | 1 (0.67) | 16 (10.67) |
| B.C | 56 (37.33) | 12 (8.00) | 68 (45.33) |
| Total | 77 (51.33) | 73 (48.67) | 150 (100.00) |

Note: Figures in the parentheses are percentages to total.

Data relating to social community and educational status on the respondents as provided in the table no.6 shows that 12% of the working children were educated up to 7th standard. All these children are drop outs from the school. Among the literates, 2/3rd belongs to backward caste and 1/3rd from forward caste and there is only one representative from the schedule caste group. These results indicate that the literacy levels are very poor among scheduled caste children.

Table 7. Weekly Earnings of Sample Respondents

| SL. NO | WEEKLY INCOME | AGE GROUP | | |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | 5-8 YEARS | 9-12 YEARS | 13-14 YEARS |
| 1 | Below Rs. 700 | 41 (93.19%) | 26 (40%) | — |
| 2 | 700 to 1100 | 3 (6.81%) | 31 (47.69%) | 9 (21.95%) |
| 3 | 1100 to 1500 | — | 8 (12.31%) | 30 (73.18%) |
| 4 | 1500 & above | — | — | 2 (4.87%) |
| Total | | 100 | 100 | 100% |

Wages are the only type of earnings the child labour received at the end of each week. The earnings include all emoluments varied in between Rs.460 to Rs.1500 per week (Daily wages Rs. Rs.60 to Rs.200). Most of the Child Labours are earning less than Rs.100 Perday. The child workers have been asked to reflect on the adequacy of the wages paid to them by the respective employers, the child workers across the tile making units unanimously opined that the compensation is inadequate compared to the contribution they have been making.

The families of the child labour respondents are below the poverty line and the earnings of parents are insufficient to meet their daily expenditure. The child labour practice is traditional and the parents are identified with the same employers when they were child labour. A significant portion of the child labour is working for no pay and the dangerous fungus of bonded labour is also prevalent. The parents of child labour personally knew the employers where their child is employed and they themselves were child labour in their childhood. Again, the symptom is not confined to a particular caste. Even the literate parents are also encouraging child labour. The Jaggampet Industrial belt has minimum primary school facility, and school dropout rate among the age group 10 – 14 years the school dropouts are high. The child labour has shown keen interest to be back at school but poverty is the barrier. The practice of child labour in tile manufacturing restricts occupational mobility to manual work and curtails their ability to acquire skills that improve their earning capacity. The parents are keen on their kid's future but poverty restricted and forced them to seal their fate as child labour.

The tile manufacturing which does not need number figures but abundant labor at minimal cost in this labour intensive sector is the cause for the employer's zeal for opting children. The place is an identified child labour prone area which is in distress and leaving the future of children in shambles. This is why the Government of Andhra Pradesh has started Child Labour Rehabilitation Centre with school facility.

Service Conditions

The tile manufacturing industry is a deemed hazardous process industry and employment of children below 14 years of age is completely prohibited. But contrary to rule this regulation, children in the age group 5 – 14 years are employed.

Statement - I

| 1 | Nature of employment Temporary / Permanent | Daily wages, Not shown in any record |
|----------|---|--|
| 2 | Rest Intervals | 15 to 30 minutes Once in a day's work |
| 3 | Hours of work | 9 1/2 to 10 1/2 hours bur sometimes will be asked to work even longer |
| 4 | Number of days engaged on work | All the week days |
| 5 | Adult worker doing the same job as child worker, and difference of output | No difference of output |
| 6 | Perceptions regarding the dangerous nature of work | Dangerous, Accident prone, amounting to loss of fingers, and limbs of arms and legs due to the If all of heavy materials and due to revolving and cutting machines |
| 7 | Knowledge of Occupational diseases | No |
| 8 | Availability of medical assistance at the work spot | No medical assistance |

The above statement indicates the unfavorable conditions in which they work and the extent of exploitation that is being effected on them. They work more turn out equal amount of work compared to the regular worker but are paid less.

The perception of the child labour on several important issues of their work is provided in statement no. 1. The child labours who are appointed for this job are neither permanent nor considered regular workers although they have to be appointed as long as the manufacturing of the tiles continues. In order to shift the tiles the child labour should work for 9 1/2 to 10 1/2 hours a day with a nominal rest interval ranging from fifteen minutes to 30 minutes. The work in the tile making factory is a continuous activity except during the time of excessive rains. Child labour are appointed on all the seven days of a week, even they do not enjoy even weekly holidays. Moreover they used to work for more number of hours compared to a regular labourer.

Further it is curious to note that the child labourers are quite often involved in dangerous operations. All the child workers reported that their employers are not providing any kind of leave with wages even when they are sick or in case of accidents.

The appointments are verbal and rarely appointment orders are served. The working hour are torturous with spread over of 14 hours and over time exists. The daily hour of work is 10 hour rest interval. The wage fixation method is preposterous and done verbally. The parents bargain individually with the employer and collective bargaining is not heard off. The holiday compensation system is not fixed properly and the child labour is classified as casual

employees by the employers. Weekly holiday is provided but no work no pay policy is followed. The public, festival, casual and sick holidays and leaves are permitted without pay.

In case of accidents meager compensation is paid and usually not intimated to factory Inspectorate as per Factories Act, 1948. They had no knowledge of statutory deductions namely ESI, PF etc., and wage increments are minimal and not periodic.

Causes for Taking up Employment

The crucial issue of enquiry into child labour is the causes for seeking employment. To probe into this issue a set of questions have been incorporated into the schedule and response of the child labour has been elicited. Information pertaining to

1. Income from child labour as supplementary income to the family to clear debts to help the family maintain its standards.
2. Child workers becoming self supporting members and to spend the earnings for self and
3. The parent interest to fix him/her as a child labour due to debts borrowed either from the employer or from the outsiders has been gathered from the respondents.

Table 8. Age wise distribution of responses of the Child Labour pertaining to self sufficient earning member due to insufficiency of parent's income

| Age Group | Reasons for taking up employment | | Total |
|-----------|---|---------------|-----------------|
| | Self Sufficient earning member due to insufficiency of parents income | | |
| | Agree | Disagree | |
| 5-8 | 41 (93.18) | 3 (6.82) | 44 (29.33) |
| 9-12 | 52 (80.00) | 13 (20.00) | 65 (43.33) |
| 13-14 | 32 (78.05) | 9 (21.95) | 41 (27.33) |
| Total | 125 (833.33) | 25 (16.67) | 150 (100.00) |

Note: Figures in the parentheses are percentages to total.

All most all the child respondents expressed that they have strong desire to become a self supporting earning member. With regard to insufficiency of parent's income and to overcome the poor standards of living of the family all the respondents are agreed that their incomes are useful to overcome the economic stress of the family. Therefore all the child workers feel that their parents want them to work and help for the family.

Table 9. Age wise distribution of responses of the Child Labour pertaining to lack of schooling facility as a cause of child labour

| Age Group | Reasons for taking up employment | | Total |
|--------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | Lack of Schooling Facilities | | |
| | Agree | Disagree | |
| 5-8 | 14 (31.82) | 30 (68.18) | 44 (29.33) |
| 9-12 | 23 (35.38) | 42 (64.62) | 65 (43.33) |
| 13-14 | 14 (34.15) | 27 (65.85) | 41 (27.33) |
| Total | 51 (34.00) | 99 (66.00) | 150 (100.00) |

Note: Figures in the parentheses are percentages to total.

The predominant issue in the Indian society is the concept of compulsory elementary education has an essential instrument to with draw the child labour from the labour market. Therefore it is very essential to know the impact of availability of the schooling facilities has reason for promoting child labour. Very interestingly the child labour express their opinion that, even if schooling facilities are available and the child labour are interested to pursue their education they do not have the opportunity to attend the school simply because they are economically constrained to work. Therefore the non availability of schooling facility is not a significant cause for child labour and poverty has a reason for promoting child labour has been considerably established.

Table 10. Distribution of Respondents (of Child Workers) related to debt of their parents.

| Caste Group | Reasons for taking up employment | | | Total |
|--------------|----------------------------------|---------|----------|----------|
| | To Clear Debts of Parents | | | |
| | Yes | No | Don't No | |
| O.C. | 9 | 34 | 23 | 66 |
| | (13.64) | (51.52) | (34.85) | (44.00) |
| S.C. | 7 | 7 | 2 | 16 |
| | (43.75) | (43.75) | (12.50) | (10.67) |
| B.C. | 13 | 31 | 24 | 68 |
| | (19.12) | (45.59) | (35.29) | (45.33) |
| Total | 29 | 72 | 49 | 150 |
| | (19.33) | (48.00) | (32.67) | (100.00) |

Note: Figures in the parentheses are percentages to total.

The analysis will be more meaningful if the nexus of debt and child labour is explored. The data relating to debt of parents is the cause for child labour; it could be observed when compare to the open and backward category child labour, the schedule caste child labour agreed that they should work to clear of their debts of their parents. This confirms the poor

socio-economic background of the schedule caste and even inspite of several poverty elevation programmes, there seems to be no change in the economic conditions.

Government Policy

The practice of child labour is banned by the constitution and the article 24 prohibits employment of children in hazardous operations. Article 39 (E) proclaims that the state shall ensure its policy towards securing, that the health strength of the tender age of children are not forced by economic necessity to enter vocations unsuited to their age are strength. Article 39 (F) enjoins the childhood and youth are to be protected against exploitation, against moral and material abandonment. The article 45 declares, “The state must endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for all children until the complete age of fourteen years” (C. K. Sukla, S. Ali 2006). In passing the 86th amendment to the constitution of India, with the insertion of article 21 (A) the state has been entrusted with the task of providing free and compulsory education to all the children in the age group of 6 to 14 years.

Further, the Government of India has enacted a legislation child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986. The Act prohibits employment of child labour in hazardous industries and activities. It exempted family, non – wage based establishments and the agriculture sector. The prohibition Act provides for imposing a penalty of Rs. 20,000/- for each child employed and the same is to be deposited with Labour Department towards the child education. The labour legislation imposes a total ban on child labour. The Factories Act, 1948 prohibits employment of children below 14 years of age. The Mines Act, 1952 prohibit employment of children below 18 years of age in any part of the mine. Similarly, the Plantations Labour Act, 1951 imposes total prohibition on employment of children below 12 years of age. The Shops and Establishment (Amendment) Act, 1988 provides relaxation on their employment subject to six hours of work and two hours of education at the cost of employer.

The government of India has been taking several initiatives to reduce the problem. After passing the child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986, and formulating the national child labour policy 1987, the Government started national Child Labour Projects (NCLP). Till March 2002, Child Labour Projects have been sanctioned for rehabilitation of nearly 2,11 million children in hundred districts in the country. The package of services under NCLP includes special schools to provide non formal education, vocational training, supplementary nutrition, stipend, health care, etc. Further a National Authority on the Elimination of Child Labour (NAECL) was created in 1994. Based on its recommendations a Child Labour 7 Cell were formed at state level. The UNICEF and ILO are aiding certain agencies in that direction. Further, child labour schools were inaugurated at district level in NAECL identified child labour prone area. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by India in 1992.

In 1992, the International Labour Organization (ILO) launched the global programme, International programme on the elimination of the Child Labour (IPEC) to work progressively towards elimination of Child Labour. India was the first country to sign a MOU with ILO in 1992, and altogether one hundred action programme to cover 0.95 million children have been taken up under IPEC from 1992 to 2002. ILO also recommended the phase 1 of the state based project in Andhra Pradesh. A memorandum of understanding was signed between DFID and ILO in November 2004. The national steering committee has also

approved phase 2 of the Andhra Pradesh project in its meeting held on 24-08-2004 will focus on two most child labour endemic districts in the state i.e., Mahaboobnagar and Kurnool. The project will also focus on the special problems of urban areas and attempt to evolve a strategy for Hyderabad city.

Concrete efforts towards elimination of child labour are being planned to be taken up in the eleventh plan to eliminate child labour in a convergent and time bounded manner.

CONCLUSION

The complete elimination of child labour may not be practical without a comprehensive package consisting of monetary assistance to parents and incentives to children to attend schools. The problem is a dimension of economic under – development. The ongoing effort of the Government, Society and Non – governmental agencies is commendable but it is for a temporary relief. Until a programme is implemented to make parents economically independent the problem exists. The Seventh Five Year Plan observed, “Since it is not feasible to eradicate the problem of child labour at the present stage of economic development, attention has to be focused on making the working conditions of child labour better and more acceptable socially. The ultimate goal of abolition of child labour can only be achieved when there is sufficient improvement in the conditions of the families whose children are compelled to work”.

This social problem is not the entire responsibility of Government alone but the parents and society alike are responsible. The efforts of Non – governmental organization like VIKAS in educating child labour in Jaggampet is a leaf to be drawn by other responsible NGO’s. Therefore, the need of hour is a separate education policy for child labour on the pattern of German School System which has vocational and technical components with job or self – employment prospects. Once the child passes the old school pattern he will not revert to the same occupation. The plight of child labour in Jaggampet Industrial area is a testimony to the persecutory methods employed by employers in quest for cheap labour.

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