

Child Labour in India: Causes, Government Policies and Its Consequences

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ABSTRACT

As we talk of moon landings and technological advancements we are becoming unconcerned about the realities around us Child labour in India is a human right issue for the whole world it is a serious and very extensive problem, with many children under the age of fourteen working in various hazardous occupation . Though for the protection of these children the India government passed plethora of laws and specific policies to address child labour. In reality India has the worlds largest child labours population Dada peer of Karnadaka Munna Raja of West Bengal , Sundararajan of Chennai and others are the few among them . In most of the case, the benefits if their work never reaches in their hand , that money will reach in the pockets of either parents or the contractors . these children will get bad food and worst health there are excess of laws to prevent this cruelty but most of them are not working properly this study mainly dealt with, what are the causes of child labour in India . How do government policies affects its? What are the major effects in children due to hazardous labour

Introduction

As we talk of moon landings and technological advancements we are becoming unconcerned about the realities around us. Child labour in India is a human right issue for the whole world. it is a serious and very extensive problem,with many children under the age of fourteen working in various hazardous occupations. Thouges for the protection of these children the india government passed plethora of laws and specific policies to address child labour. In reality india has the worlds largest child labours population.dada peer of karnadaka muunna raja of west Bengal, soundararajan of Chennai and others are few among them. In most of the case, the benefits if their work never reaches in their hand, that money will reach in the pockets or the contractors.These children will get bad food and worst health. There are excess of laws to prevent this cruelty but most of them are not working properly. This study mainly dealt with what are the causes of child labour in India? How do government policies affect it?what are the major effect in children due to hazardous labour ?

Casues of child labour in india

Child labour in india is a human right issue for the whole world there are about 218 million child labour under the age of 14 world wide and 15 million in india. 85 %of them are from rural pockets . it is a very serious problem with many children under the age of fourteen working in tanneries , in commercial establishment , on plantation ,on apprenticeship, glass blowing units and making fire works and so on obviously , the children working in so-called debt servitude are particularly vulnerable and heavily exploited. They are often exposed to sever occupational hazards which can lead to stunning defomaties other health hazards and feature debilities quite apart from working long hours in dreadful conditions for appallingly low wages there are many recorded instances of maltreatment and corporal punishment by employers . in general , the hazards that such children and other child workers in valurable situations face are not only physical but also cognitive social and emotional; and in most case they are damaged for life as itself. Some of the important cases for the child labour in India are following

1.Extreme poverty of household

Although multifarious Causes are responsible for a wide spread of child labour in the developing country the extreme cause poverty of the household is the main causes. Generally, the death ,disease ,physical and mental disability of the principal earner of the household are the major causes of extreme poverty of the household from their child labour is drawn. For poor household child are a great advantage because every working child means an additional income to the family.

In most of families children are conceived as one of the earning member of the family.Sometimes for the debts of the family child will given as a bond to the person to lends money to the parents.Children from these households are not sent to school so as to make them available for labour market. It has also been observed that “To a greater or lesser extent in every type of society children have taken part in domestic economy and in other economic activities which are necessary for the survival of the family as well as the group to which they belong”. Amidst the child labour until the poor families are provided with some alternative source of income. All the sample surveys reported in front line,November, 2006, says that “they have to work because they are poor.”

2. Widespread of unemployment and underemployment among the adults.

Another important cause of child labour is the widespread unemployment among the adults from the lower income strata of population. Large size of family with low income, lack

of educational facilities, illiteracy of parents and ignorance of the household regarding the ill effects of labour on the future and health of their wards are some other causes of child labour. Besides, inadequate, irregular or no family income is also responsible for child labour. It is reported that child labourer was also indirectly contributing towards household income by performing household chores and other menial time consuming activities in order to free adults especially women from household chores to perform more productive and important tasks.

3. Faulty Educational System.

Faulty educational system is also responsible for child labour. The child labour and non schooling of children have a significant linkage in the poor sections of the population. In many remote areas of the countryside, schooling facilities are not only scarce but also inaccessible. In many cases the schools are in such a critical condition that neither the children nor the parents have any attraction for schooling. In many rural areas the timing of school coincides with the main agricultural operations. However, in some states like Punjab during the harvesting season, the schools are closed so that children can help their parents in various agricultural operations.

“Even in countries where education is free or where books, uniform and mid-day meals are provided, as in some Indian States, attendance may still be low. This is because one of the major indirect costs associated with schooling is the loss of child’s earnings. It very clearly states that all these things happen in the way of children is economic backwardness.

4. Excessive population growth due to high birth rate

Excessive population growth due to high birth rate among poor masses is also a contributing factor of large supply of child labour in India. Existence of growing unorganized sector and rapid urbanization which open new avenues employment for children, are also some of the causes of growing child labour.

5. Cheap availability of labour.

Finally the important cause of child labour is that it is cheap and becomes an attraction for employers to employ it. Employers prefer children because children can be paid less and exploited more. In many cases children are liable to do more work than adult. Studies by the Vidyasagar (1994) and Raja (1993) on child labour in match industry proves it. Children in such industries wake up in the early morning 4’ clock, get boarded into the factory bus, and sleep in the way , reach the factory at 5’O’ clock and further sleep if permitted or start the work immediately and continue the work till 8 p.m. the children do no mind the long working

hours as the wages are being paid on piece rate basis. These are some of the reasons for the child labour in India.

In nutshell, the problem of child labour in rural as well as urban areas is mainly due to poverty, unemployment, low levels of development, and unequal distribution of assets.

Archaeology of law of Child Labour in India

From the very ancient period child labour prevailed in India. i.e. even before the 321 B.C in most cases it was in the form of child slavery, Kautilya during the regime of the Mouryas (321 B.C – 185 B.C) codified some rules in a spirit of abolition of child slavery that clearly proves the existence of child labour in India. In the medieval period that is during the regime of Mughal kings (1200-1700 A.D) exploitative child labour practice was most prevalent. It was mainly due to the increasing human population pressure and recurrence of famine and these rulers do nothing to improve the condition of child and adult labourers. During the British period number of laws passed in India affiliated to child labour, which became the foundation of later child labour reforms.

Child labour in British India

Under the patronage of the East India company certain industrial organizations grew in the 18th and 19th centuries involving employment of large number of artisans specially in weaving, carpentry, silk, etc sectors. Gradually the speed had increasing. Such grim situation unleashed lot of socio-economic problems. Amongst those employment of children of tender age was identified as one of the burning issues of the 18th century.

Child labour in post independent India

No changes was observed in the child labour scenario of India immediately after independence. In 1948 on an average, daily over 11,444 child labourers were found working in different factories in the country. This period can be divided into two phases on the basis of effort put forward by the Government.

(a) First phase

First phase eleven major enactments, the years the passing these acts as follows; 1948 – two major enactments on factory and minimum wages, 1949 – Employment of children act, 1951- The plantation Labour act, 1952- Amendment to the Mines Act, 1958- The Merchant of Shipping Act, 1961- Beedi and Cigar Workers Act, Shops and Establishment Act of the same year, The contractor Labour Act of 1970.

(b) From the early 1980s several events took place, which made the child labour a national issue debated in various public fora. Two such major cross current events

sensitizing the issues are;- Frightening volume of child labour estimates and formation of NGOs for fighting the menace of child labour. Another important change that took place in child labour enactment was the passing of enactment of the child labour Act in 1986.

After that a National policy was adopted on child labour in 1987 this was for remove the social backwardness of the children. With these , two programmes were started- International programme of child labour (IPECL) and child labour Action and Support programme. Adoption of the convention of the Rights of the child in 1989 was one of important enactment to eliminate the child labour. The CRC , 1989 has, so far , been ratified by 191 countries including India till 2001. Finally the formation of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Child Labour was made a great change in the exploitations of the child labourers in the country. However, it is find that of the total child labour force of Asia, India shares 26.4% (and of total population of Asia, India shares 24.1% population) in 1971, 19.9% (25.5%) in 1981, 40.6% (27.6%) in 1991 and 16.5% (29.8%) in 2001 Sources:1, Human Development Report,2000.2, World Development Report, 1999/2000.

India's share of child labourers may not fall further due mainly to inefficiency of the child labour elimination project and programmes, unabated population growth and inter- regional migration of child labourers. Thus in short, though there plethora of laws to protect the children from child labour and to give proper education, even now India is the largest country having highest child labour population in the world

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