

CHILD LABOUR AND ITS IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY

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Abstract

The article highlights the worst situation faced by the children which is “child labour” in the country which has become a global phenomenon. Most of the children are employed as a worker to work in factories, industries and several other places which is a matter of serious concern especially in India. Secondly, the article focuses on the reasons and causes like poverty, unemployment, previous debts, begging due to which this issue arises in the country. Also, the article deals with the effects of child labour in the lives of children which largely affect the economy. Children do not get access to education and other facilities like physical activities which also lead to lack of development due to which they ruin their career and leads to adverse effect in their entire life. The article also illustrates the steps taken by the government and the legislations and National policy and also the penalties are imposed on people if found indulged in these activities which is imprisonment of more than six months. This is the critical situation for children because they either forcefully or willingly have to work daily in adverse circumstances. The proper awareness among the people should be made and followed in the country which can help in strengthening the nation and can help control to a great extent.

Keywords: Poverty, Unemployment, Economy, Imprisonment, Legislation.

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INTRODUCTION

A child is called 'gift of god', below the age of 18. This age is expected for their childhood activities which mainly include playing and studying, going school and talking to friends. But nowadays at many places children are forced to work in industries, factories forced to work as a beggar in several other places which sounds vexatious. This evil practice is considered illegal in many countries with punishments and penalties. Children are forced to work at various places due to their household and financial crisis which compels them to do so and consequences are worst and critical. They don't get proper education and access to extracurricular activities which are very important for their development of personality in this particular age. This adversely affects their mental and physical health. They are forced to work in adverse circumstances at different places. This situation must be tackled because it results in terrible situation which ruin their lives and results in decline of economic growth of the country. Child Labour can lead to partial physical and mental development of the child. The child is expected to live a peaceful and happy educational life but this can cause retarded growth in their body. People must understand that how important is education for a child in his life. This is very important for them to develop themselves and succeed in their careers rather than being forcefully employed to work. Children are the one who can build a new society change the nation and build a better society. They are the future of the country. Proper concern should be made among individuals about the cons which can take place in the society if not controlled on time. Eight boys including six from Jharkhand, west Bengal and Tamil Nadu were rescued¹ from the smart city site.

REASONS FOR CHILD LABOUR

As India is a developing country and there is a need to look towards this issue arisen for the betterment of children which has become a global phenomenon. There are various causes and reasons which give rise to child exploitation in the country which totally varies according to their financial problems. In India many children are considered as the helping hand of their parents and they take care of their families in context to earning money due to which they are willingly or forcefully compelled to work at some places. Some reasons due to which this issue arises are as follows:

- *Poverty*: In India poverty is one of the major cause for child exploitation in the country.

When people are not able to afford basic needs like food, shelter, money for their family

¹ Gokul Rajendran, *Child workers rescued from smart city*, Times of India, Available at: https://m.timesofindia.com/city/trichy/child-workers-rescued-from-smart-city-site/amp_articleshow/81489557.cms, (Accessed on: May 18, 2021).

they send their children out to work as a worker to earn money. Most of the children are the supporters and helping hands of their families. They use to take care of them by doing such works and earn money for their livelihood. Families who are unable to earn send their children to go and work outside which results in their poor development of their personality and lack of getting access to education. Poverty deprives the rights of the child of schooling and acquiring skills which plays a very crucial role in their overall development. Due to poverty many children remain unskilled throughout their whole life.

- *Unemployment:* Unemployment is another reason because in India there are many people who are still unemployed as they don't get enough job opportunities due to which they are compelled to work at different places in adverse circumstances. They usually send their children to work in factories and at other places due to unemployment they did not get any job. Unemployment levels are high in India. Children are deprived of their school life and even their fundamental rights are infringed. Due to unemployment, parents do not have enough money and earnings to send their ward to school and they do not fulfill necessary requirements. Due to this, children are urged to go out and live their life as an employed worker.
- *Debts:* Debts are the third major cause as people with poor economic conditions are urged to borrow money from others to fulfill their basic needs and demands for their survival. Many people who are not financially powerful borrow money from moneylenders and creditors but are not able to pay the debt on time and are trapped by debt bondage. Lastly when there are no such options left for them some people insist and send their child to work for them day and night in adverse circumstances which is very critical for the child to do so.
- *Begging:* Child begging is considered the most dangerous cause. Children who belong to poor families have to work as a beggar at several places so that they can meet their families' demands like food, shelter. They are compelled to do begging so that they can support their families through their daily source of income which they get through begging. Thus, this results in child's mental ability and development and results in unskilled worker. Rather than studying, talking to friends, playing games they are forced to work daily for hours on regular basis for their families. Therefore, the situation is very critical and must be tackled for the development of better economic growth of the country.

Child labour increased after Covid-19². Due to the pandemic, there was closure of schools all over the country so; the number of children working day and night has been increased in many states.

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOUR

Child Labour is considered a big challenge which affects the economy in a big way. Children who work daily day and night for hours have to face hardships at some places which sounds very annoying. They have to perform their daily duties given to them. This deprives children from getting education which is the fundamental right of every children and results in mental and physical body harm. The most dangerous outcome is death which is quite common during working at the workplace. Also, there are risks of accidents while working at the workplace. They also face injuries like cuts in their hands while working due to some dangerous equipment. Physical violence is quite common at the workplace and children are sometimes beaten for not performing their duties effectively. They are emotionally and mentally tortured to perform work efficiently which leaves negative impacts in the minds of the child and the child is disturbed mentally and causes depression. Children might suffer from malnutrition and it affects their morals. Children's is totally neglected from getting food, other requirements and medical treatments on time and have to work in adverse situations like during rainfall due to which they fall ill. Neither adults nor children can work continuously on regular basis for hours. Sometimes they get tired and exhausted due to extra load like night shifts which results in lowering their body strength and illness and are prone to several other diseases. India will only be called a developed nation when children would get proper education and skilled children who will progress, work hard and build a better society. The younger generations must be provided education by their families which is very necessary for them and plays a very vital role in determining the upcoming future of the country.

LAWS RELATED TO CHILD LABOUR AND STEPS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT AND LEGISLATIONS

Child Labour has now become a socio- economic issue for the country. So, to get rid of this government has taken several steps and various laws are made to eradicate this problem. Also, penalties are imposed with punishments which basically includes imprisonment on those people if they are found indulged in such activities. In India this practice was growing rapidly so, there

² Unknown, *Child Labour increased after Covid-19*, The Hindu, Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Coimbatore/child-labour-increased-after-covid-19/article34120519.ece/amp/>, (Accessed on: May 19, 2021)

was the need for legislations and today there are many acts which prohibits Child Labour like the “Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act ³of 1986” which strictly prohibits the child who are below the age of 14 to work. This basically prohibits the following activities:

- Carrying goods for transportation from one place to another.
- Working at railway stations basically working as a vendor from one platform to other
- Construction works and other related to railway lines.
- Selling of crackers in shops.

The second is, The Mines Act of 1952⁴ which prohibits children below the age of 18 to work in mining occupation. This is the worst activity which has led to death of many children in the past few years. Also, there is “The Indian Factories Act” which also states that no child below the age of 14 should be employed in the factories. There are several penalties ranging from ten thousand rupees and can also extend to twenty thousand rupees and imprisonment of more than six months for individuals who are engaged in such practices.

NATIONAL POLICY ON CHILD LABOUR

This policy was incorporated in August 1987 which was made to control and tackle the issue to a great extent which comprises of:

- Well planned legislation to eradicate this issue from the country.
- Development plans for children for their benefits.
- For the betterment of children, project action plans are launched.

CONCLUSION

The condition of Child labour is very disturbing as compared to developed nations. Various effective measures have been taken by the government to deal with the problem arising in the country. This problem cannot be solved without the efforts of the people. However, due to poor literacy rate, unemployment, financial crisis this issue arises and which must be controlled by giving proper education to the children from childhood age. Children are considered one of the most valuable and precious asset of the country who can change the entire nation and build a better economy and developed society. Child labour is destroying the bright future of the children and the country. This forbids them from acquiring education which is mandatory for

³ Shivani Verma, “Child Labour laws in India”, [blog.ipleaders.in](https://www.google.com/amp/s/blog.ipleaders.in/blog.ipleaders.in/child-labour-laws-in-india/amp/), Available at: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/blog.ipleaders.in/child-labour-laws-in-india/amp/>

⁴ Ibid

their career and also their fundamental right. This evil practice has affected the human kind globally and varies from country to country depending on their economic conditions. But nowadays this practice is prevailing mostly in developing countries like India, spread like a virus which results in big loss. Due to poverty and many other factors children are forced to work at various places for different persons to support their families and meet their basic necessary demand like food, money and shelter for their survival. Also, the society has played a major role in giving rise to such evil practice and many people knowingly having knowledge about the cons of this practice hires small kids to work for them as a labourer. Society is the biggest obstacle in preventing the country to develop. This system leads to rich getting richer and poor getting poor in the society. Therefore, parents must provide their children with proper education which is very crucial in determining their upcoming future. Proper awareness must be circulated among individuals about the cons of child labour if not controlled on time. Children are the future of the country. Therefore, they must be protected and the violators of laws must be punished. There are many regulatory departments and various laws made by the legislations which could only be possible with the cooperation of people. The main aim should be providing education to children and providing sufficient facilities and funds to eradicate and tackle this issue.