

THE CHILD LABOUR (PROHIBITION AND REGULATION) ACT, 1986

UNICEF considered a child as exploited if he/she is put on work. Human Development Report of United Nation Development Programme says that working children in India make up more than 0% of labour force, which is much above the world average of 6%. According to International Labour Organisation (ILO) report (1979), as many as 1/3rd rural children aged between 10 and 14 years and 1/8th of the urban children are at work in India. The Census of India reported 13.7 million children whereas the Planning Commission reported around 17 million children are working in the country. It is certain that large number of children engaged in domestic, non-wage earning work is totally excluded from such calculations. However, Child labour contributes to 20% of India's GNP. It is also reported that the number of child labour is as high as 55 - 100 million that is equal to the number of unemployed adults in the country.

The main aim of the Act is to prohibit the engagement of children in certain employment and to regulate the conditions of work of children in certain other harmful employment. This Act repealed the Employment of Children Act 1938. It extends to the whole India. According to this Act the child means a person who has not completed his 14 years of age (Sec 2). No child shall be employed in any hazardous occupation - transport, railways, catering establishment at a railway station or in train, construction or port, bidi making, carpet-making, cement factory, cloth printing, dyeing, weaving, mica-cutting and splitting, soap tanning, wood-clearing, matches, explosives and firework (Sec 3).

The Central Government shall form "Child Labour Technical Advisory Committee" to advise the central government for the purpose of addition of any other occupations or processes (Sec 5). If any child is working then he shall not work for more than 6 hours per day and 3 hours continuous before he has had an interval for rest for at least one hour. He will neither be allowed to work between 7 p.m. and 8 a.m., nor allowed to do overtime. He will be given a weekly full wage holiday (Secs. 7, 8). If any establishment has children as the workers should inform the inspector who will inspect the conditions and nature of work and also certify age of the child (Secs. 9, 10). Each establishment where a child is working make sure for his health and safety. Any violation of the Act may lead to the punishment with imprisonment or fine, or both.

Reference

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