'CHILDHOOD INNOCENCE VIOLATED DUE TO POVERTY- HUNT FOR MONEY VIA VIKAS SWARUP'S Q&A'

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO SHAILABALA WOMEN'S AUTONOMOUS COLLEGE AFFILIATED TO RAMA DEVI WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

SUBMITTED BY

Gayatri Barik

University Roll No.: UGA18ENG006

Registration No.: UG-8497/2018

GUIDED BY

Sonali Dutta

H.O.D in English

PG Department of English

Shailabala Women's Autonomous

College, Cuttack



Sonali Dutta

H.O.D In English Department

Shailabala Women's Autonomous College

Cuttack-753001

Odisha

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, "Childhood innocence violated due to poverty-hunt for money via Vikas Swarup's Q&A" submitted by Gayatri Barik, for partial fulfillment of the Bachelor degree in English Literature from the Department of English, Shailabala Women's Autonomous College, Cuttack, is an authentic work carried out by her under my supervision. To the best of my knowledge, the matter embodied in the dissertation has not been submitted to any other university/institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

(Countersigned By H.O.D)

Sonali Dutta

(Supervisor)

DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that my final year graduation project entitled "Childhood Innocence violated due to poverty-hunt for money via Vikas Swarup's Q&A" is completed at Shailabala Women's Autonomous College, Cuttack, Odisha in the academic year 2021, under the supervision of Mrs. Sonali Dutta. The information submitted by me here is true and original to the best of my knowledge.

BA in English literature

Department of English

Gayatri Barik

ShailabalaWomen's

Autonomous College,

Cuttack

(Signature)

Barik | 3

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the accomplishment of my project, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all

the people who have been concerned with this project. I am heartily thankful to the Almighty for

giving me the strength to successfully conduct my experiment and for sustaining my efforts

which may at times oscillate.

I am deeply indebted to my supervisor cum our H.O.D. Mrs Sonali Dutta for her

constructive feedback and advice throughout my research paper. I acknowledge the kind of

support, efforts and timely guidance provided by Miss Shilpa Sahu and Miss Juhee Panda, guest

faculty of Shailabala Women's Autonomous College.

Special thanks to my seniors and peers for many helpful discussions and good ideas along

the way. I could not forget books, publication houses and, ofcourse internet which provided me

with substantive matters that would ultimately contribute to strengthening society.

Last but not the least I would like to express my appreciation towards my family and

friends without whose constant support, love and encouragement this research project would not

have been possible.

Gaytri Barik **BA** in English

Department of English

College Roll No: BA-18-305

Exam Roll No: UGA18ENGOO6

Shailabala Women's Autonomous

College, Cuttack-753001

Table Of Contents

Title	Sub-title	Page No.
ABSTRACT		5 - 6
CHAPTER-1	1.1. Introduction 1.2. Literature Review	7 - 9
CHAPTER-2	2.1. Significance of Childhood 2.2. Why Children	10 - 12
CHAPTER-3	3.1. What Gives Rise To Child Labour	13 - 20
CHAPTER-4	4.1. Impact Of Child Labour 4.2. Measures to Tackle Child Labour	21 - 27
CONCLUSION		28-29
WORK CITEd		30-33

ABSTRACT

My dissertation demonstrates how Childhood Innocence is violated because of heartless adults; highlighting the problems postcolonial India is facing like dire poverty, exploitation, crime, sex abuse, trafficking and many more. The sense of childhood has completely been corrupted for the need of inhumane adults. Vikas Swarup presents his debut novel approaching this social problem "Q&A" where children are seen horrified and always chased with violence and hatred that characterises their brutal and unfortunate childhood. In the book children appear to have been subjugated because poverty has led callous adults to use their innocuousness and energy to generate money. Swarup portrays world-class India as still a place of extreme poverty. The author provides a wealth of knowledge on the widespread unethical ways of treating children that are still practiced in the country. The paper also presents the post colonial view that Equality is not a part of the modern systems of the world; social divisions are still prevailing. It also attempts to showcase that indigence not only makes them suffer in life but to also become unethical citizens. The very first chapter of my dissertation will introduce child labour accompanied by the gist of novel Q&A. It also concerns the literature review of related literature. Second Chapter helps to identify some specific occupations, child labour is involved and considered as hazardous. The forms, extent and modality of child labour is also enunciated in this chapter. Then the third chapter attempts to answer why the tender little hands are subscribed to such heinous affairs and while stating the causes of child labour it accesses the condition of workplaces illustrating Vikas Swarup's novel. The corrosive impact of this stigma is then presented in the forth chapter thus, suggesting some remedial measures that would help to alleviate child labour. Keeping these things in view, the paper seeks further research on the pitfalls of this predicament. As such the paper aims to challenge and dares to bring the global attention on serious problems for Indian society so as to ensure their childhood to be happy,

innocent and prosperous. "Children should not work in fields, but in dreams! This paper later provides some facts and knowledge which will constitute a framework for understanding of this societal evil that would also help the scholars and activists for further studies.

CHAPTER-1

1.1. INTRODUCTION

What is the most perceptible thing in children? Is it simply their cute faces and toothless smile, their unintentional and unconscious activities? I would say no. Children are beautiful because they possess something that we adults lack - innocence.

1.1.(a). Childhood Innocence

The notion of innocence refers to a child's simplicity, lack of knowledge, and purity not yet spoiled by mundane affairs. Such innocence is taken as the promise of a renewal of the world by the children. Children are undoubtedly the harbingers of innovative ideas, icons of liberty and model of a prosperous nation. "Children are like buds in a garden and should be carefully and lovingly nurtured, as they are the future of the nation and the citizens of tomorrow" said Jawaharlal Nehru.

1.1.(b). Poverty Killing Child Innocence

Poverty can be described as a social phenomenon in which a section of society is unable to fulfil even the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing. Even with more than a thousand research and hundreds of policies and programs to exterminate impoverishment, it is still ubiquitous. Throughout the world, millions of people are suffering from poverty and its crippling effects. Poverty has been called "the world's most ruthless killer and the greatest cause of suffering on the earth" (Gordon, 74). Child Labour happens to be one of the most debilitating concerns jeopardising children around the world, more so in the developing countries, where assets and amenities are scarce. With child labour forming a staggering 13% of the total workforce as per the 2011 census, India has been one of the major victims of this issue(ILO). While in recent times, rural child labour has shown a downward trend, it is on the rise in urban areas(UNICEF,2001-2011). Further, in many cases, it remains invisible, as legal vigilance has

shifted their focus of child labour from registered factories and establishments to unorganised sectors, such as small shops and eateries, unregistered small-scale industries, street vending, domestic labour and family trade. The Indian scenario has witnessed several policy and legal interventions to deal with the problem, including preventive laws and making Right to Education for children aged between six and fourteen years a fundamental right. Despite these measures, child labour remains a reality, owing to an ecosystem of poverty, lack of education, inadequate enforcement of legislations and proliferating demand for resources due to a mushroomed population. This review investigates the past and ongoing issues concerning child labour in India, theoretical positions of its dynamics with statistics and the underlying socio-economic issues that helps child labour prevail.

1.1(c). Q&A by Vikas Swarup

This paper demonstrates that the purpose of literature is to portray society in a manner that will grab global attention and assist in finding possible remedies for various harsh and odious problems. Indian writings no longer hinges on narratives of "family sagas" or "the colourful celebration of Indian language and sentiments" in post-globalised India. Most of the novels showcase the lives on the edge, amidst exploitation and violence, people struggling for their survival. My paper gives an overview of the disparities of Indian society through the spectacular debut novel by an extraordinarily successful writer 'Vikas Swarup's " Q&A" (2005) which depicts the rags-to-riches story, enriched by the insights and smells of the contemporary India (Library Journal). This novel has been appreciated with a number of awards and has been translated into 34 languages and contributed to the smash-hit Oscar winning movie "Slumdog Millionaire" which is the recipient of 104 world cinema awards. Swarup draws the picture of child Labour for lust of money through the didactic narration of the hero Ram who is meant to be

an 'Indian Everyman'. The marginalized protagonist Ram Mohammad is born as an orphan and spends his childhood struggling for his existence working as a child labour. Swarup portrays the astounding effects of modernization that prevails in India.

The novel Q & A, by Vikas Swarup, is a picaresque ride through the underbelly of urban India having many hidden evils and intimately addresses the vast barrier between social classes in India, as well as the often-violent division between Muslims and Hindus in contemporary Indian society. The author mentions various misadventures of protagonist Ram Mohammad Thomas, a penniless teenager who wins the jackpot at 'Who Will Win a Billion' while serving as a vignette of Thomas's life. 'Q & A' is a comedic yet heartbreaking glimpse into the life of an orphan living in the penury of modern India. The novel tackles themes of class, religion, abuses of power, and sexual exploitation. These themes are interlaced throughout the narrative revolving around the idea of winning money on a quiz show and by the end the themes and symbols culminate into a powerful commentary on what it's like to live a life of poverty in India.

1.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review gives a comprehensive idea to my discussion which explores the unilluminated and disregarded side of India- poverty, abyss between monied and indigent society. The following study nudges both qualitative and quantitative approaches by using sociological study to exhibit an inclusive scenario to understand the rapacious people who violate childhood while chasing for money via "Q&A" by Vikas Swarup. This novel is a colourful, unvarnished portrayal of the contemporary world. This page-turning novel, chronicles the poor kids who are misguided and misused to satisfy man's greed and pleasure. There are many research that have been performed on this book related to racism, poverty, sexual abuse, potrayal of woman etc but there is no or limited research related to child labour which i think is the main cause for degradation of our nation future. And moreover i think in the present era it's high time to look upon it and nullify the errors in the society.

CHAPTER-2

2.1. SIGNIFICANCE OF CHILDHOOD

Children are considered to be the greatest gift to mankind. Childhood is a small window of time to explore and discover; doing a full-time occupation- to play and enjoy. Henry Mayhew, an urban ecologist and a social researcher portrays childhood innocence as a time to play being protected by parents. It derives pleasure and employs basic capabilities such as access to education, living a decent and healthy life, adoring the innocent freedom. This phase of life is a crucial stage in human development as it holds the future power of any society.

"Childhood should be carefree, playing in the sun. Not living a nightmare, in the darkness of the soul" (Dave Pelzer).

But unfortunately none of these opportunities are available to millions of children who have to eke out their sustenance in this cruel world. It has been universally accepted that children are physically, emotionally and psychologically vulnerable hence, are often considered 'cheap labours' as they are ignorant of their wages and even their work span exceeds unreasonable hours. Childhood innocence is violated in various forms, as defined by Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182, it involves:

- all forms of 'slavery' or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour.
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, or for the production of pornography or sexual abuse.
- involving in illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs and smuggling.

leads to child labour and exposing to various hazardous jobs, especially mining, farms,
 firecrackers, brick-kilns, etc.

Child labour is an age-old issue and has been growing, even in the developed countries, like Canada and USA. In 2018, 50 per cent of the victims detected were trafficked for sexual exploitation and 38 per cent for forced labour while trafficking for the purpose of organ removal was reported in North America, and Europe in the reporting period. About 152 million children are estimated as child labourers (ILO Report, 2021). UNICEF estimates that India with its larger population, has the highest number of laborers in the world under 14 years of age. Due to the gender inequality relations, girls-many of whom do double duty(domestic and wage work) mentioned by Hochschild and Machung in their book Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home (1989), are more likely to do certain kinds of wage-work than boys. The extreme form of child labour, child trafficking includes trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, engaging in prostitution, early marriage, removal of organs and recruitment for begging. Internet had been significantly misused as a tool for the dissemination of child pornography.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) as "the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society..."

To emphasis child labour it is necessary to know who is considered as a child. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Childunder Article 12 defines "the child" as "every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier".

2.2. WHY CHILDREN?

Childhood is a susceptible phase where one is docile and easily prone to exploitation by blatant threats or manipulation. Children, 'the neediest', who augmented their life with deprivation, paucity, and atrocities since their birth are perfect for employment. ILO 2016 data indicates that there are 152 million working children in the world between 5-17 years, of which 23.8 million children are in India. Both the child and parent see work as the best use of the time in contributing to earn and feed the family. Studies done by 'Save the Children' Sweden, suggest that most children start to work on command, or at least following a request from their family to contribute to the family income and/or help with unpaid household work. They even work extra for extra income to weigh the family responsibility and to forgo education and the parents too concentrate on overcoming hunger rather than child education. On exploitation, abuse, oppression, a child can hardly go to the courts and raise a voice against their subjugation. The innocent kids get easily falsified, where some of the remunerations are involved or whereby the perpetrators benefit in some manner - both socially and monetarily. Child labour is a cheaper substitute for adult labour as children require lower pay, less demanding, more obedient and have a dynamic and energetic mindset. At the age of playing, dreaming and attending schools, they have become the breadwinner of their families. Toys suit child money does not.

CHAPTER-3

3.1 WHAT GIVES RISE TO CHILD LABOUR?

Kailash Satyarthi,a human rights activist said, 9"Child labour, poverty, illiteracy is a triangular paradigm of exploitation of children (THE TIMES OF INDIA, 2018). This global nodus 'poverty', despite so much progress and modernization in many spheres in the world, is a multi-dimensional issue and is certainly the greatest single force driving children to enter the doom of the workplace. Child labour has cropped up as an issue of widespread concern in the last quarter of the 20th century. Many developing countries owing to penury and lack of education and schooling facilities still demonstrate cases of child labour. India is no exception in this case where their basic rights of freedom and happiness are snatched by the mean, exploitative, avaricious people.

Child labour statistics (2011 census data):

- 10.13 million child labourers between 5-14 years in India.
- 22.87 million working children in India between 15-18 years
- What one in 11 children are working in India (5-18 years)
- 80 percent of the child labour in India is concentrated in rural areas
- 16 percent of the working children (or every 6th working child) in this age group is in India

Vikash Swarup has presented this grim reality of India's impoverishment under the global spotlight in his masterpiece "Q&A" as never before. Through the hero's life story Swarup has offered us the snapshot of Indian society, mainly focusing on the slums. According to a government survey, about 65 million Indians live in slums and out of about 42 million live in city slums. He has set his story in the largest slum of Asia, Dharavi. Dharavi sits like a cancerous

lump in the heart of the city (INDIA TODAY, 2020). Thousands of people like Ram, thronged in 8 foot by 10-foot brick shanties or marshy boggy urban wasteland, where they jockey for every scrap in the ghetto areas, where there are stinking communal latrines, clogged drains the breeding ground for mosquitoes, a mound of filthy garbage dumped on every corner of the narrow lanes. The residents work in Dharavi's illegal factories; live in illegal houses; use illegal electricity; drink illegal water. At times, they have to suck in their breath to squeeze through its narrow, claustrophobic alleys; they live like animals and die like insects.

The unprivileged people are denied opportunities, equality and justice, thus, they have become prone to despondence, ostracism and marginalisation and hence, their voices are often muted, tased as 'unwanted'. Slum-dwellers have experienced the agony of penury from their babyhood and the treatment of non-humans; their existence hardly matter anyone as depicted in the novel:

"My departure from Asia's biggest slum would make no difference to their lives. There would be the same queue for water in the morning, the same daily struggle to make it to the seven-thirty local time. They wouldn't even bother to find out the reason for my arrest. Come to think of it, when the two constables barged into my hut, even I didn't. When your whole existence is 'illegal,' when you live on the brink of penury in an urban wasteland where you jostle for every inch of space and have to queue even for a shit. Even arrest has a certain inevitability about it. You are conditioned to believe that one day there will be a warrant with your name on it, that eventually a jeep with a flashing red light will come for you" (11).

3.1.(a). Poverty

It is both the cause and result of child labour. It is the main cause that leads to other streams like illiteracy and unemployment ultimately engendering child labour. Economic hardship exacts a toll on millions of families to such an extent where children's security is risked over. According to UNICEF, almost 22,000 children die each day due to poverty essentially due to the dearth of nutrition and medical facilities. Poverty is one of the most serious challenges the world is facing today. And, poverty, in turn, is a serious threat to political stability, social harmony, peace and justice. No matter their intentions for their lives, no matter their contributions to society, anyone penniless in India is barely considered human to those ranking above them. Such poverty stricken people do not even owe any jurisdiction or justice rights as shown in the novel.

Arresting the poor is certainly inevitable in slums, police barge into houses and drag them off. Seeing this unfair affair Ram says, "And I came to fear the police. They were the ones responsible for sending most of the boys to the Juvenile Home. Boys caught stealing bread from a roadside stall or hawking black-market tickets at a theatre, and unable to bribe the constable" (92). Also as it's movie 'Slumdog Millionaire' shows Jamal(Ram) is brutally beaten by the police only because he answers every question in the show being a slum-poor.

The novel gives an outlook where Money and authority has become synonymous in the very first chapter where the poor kid Rqm is saying ,"the brain is not an organ we are authorised to use. We are supposed to use only our hands and legs" (12).

A Journal of the American Medical Association article reinforces the argument that poverty is a crucial cause of crime. The study — titled Children in India-2012 — stated that around 57% of the 33,887 children involved in crime last year belonged to families with an annual income lower than Rs. 25,000.

3.1.(b). Inequality

There is a huge gap and inequality in the distribution of the world economy, more than one billion people in the world live in abject poverty on less than \$1.25 per day while the richest 1% of people have almost half of the world's wealth s statement from THE WORLD BANK (2015) read. Ezra Klein, an opinion columnist says,". "It is in our power to wipe out poverty. It simply isn't among our priorities". The country does not want to eliminate poverty because the poor underclass aids to their gain(New York Times). Discrimination and social exclusion ensures lower wages, inequitable pay for equal work and lack off- access to employment opportunities. The upper-class and rich people let them only access odd jobs(mining, rag-picking, sanitation and scavenging).

The book revolves around such taints as noticed when The elders in Dharavi say, "Never cross the dividing line that separates rich from poor" (12).

It also discusses how Ram is blamed for cheating on the game show. With no proof or evidence, they just assumed that he cheated because he was an underdog and from the 'bustee'.

3.1.(c). Unemployment

India's unemployment struggles and concerns on job numbers are merely one ground of child labour. Industrialisation and technical innovations have not created jobs in poverty-stricken areas. The exodus of migrants or refugees has also led to huge joblessness. The unlettered people, then, see no alternative to take out the children from schools and put them to work to feed their families. Underlining the connection between child exploitation, illiteracy and unemployment Satyarthi said,"210 million adults are jobless in the world....(then) why are 152 million children being engaged in work? Every child working is working at the cost of an adult job" (THE TIMES OF INDIA).

Throughout the story, the protagonist Ram has been seen doing various kinds of jobs like tourist guide, bartender, care-taker. The scourge of underemployment among the adult poor strata of the population, inter alia, due to sharp growth of population. Children from large families are seen more in the working sphere than small families only because the parents' income is not enough to support the larger family. Such families with insufficient income cannot cope with the increasing demands of children and fail to provide them with educational facilities and adequate nutrition.

3.1.(d). Lack of Educational resources

Even after 74 years of independence, India's educational backwardness is quite glaring. Many ancient families consider schooling is simply 'unaffordable' even when it is 'free'. Analysis of census data by Child Rights and You (CRY) revealed that about 1.4 million child labourers in India in the age group of 7-14 years can't write their names. This means one in three child labourers in the said age group are illiterate. As per the 2018 statistics, the all-India average dropout rate of the primary student is 4.13 per cent while it is 4.03 per cent in upper primary and 17.06 per cent in the secondary levels.

3.1.(e). GLOBALISATION

Despite the latest economic boom in India, more than a third of all Indians still live below the poverty line. This has increased the plight of working children as unscrupulous adults exploit children to make a quick profit. With the advent of the modern industrial system, there came a tendency among employers to earn easy and quick profits at fewer expenses. Child labour, being cheaper than the adult one, to get a sufficient amount of work is accomplished.

3.1.(f). Family Dysfunction

Socially disadvantaged, alcoholic and morally bankrupt families produce more child workers. Families with numerous children often face the destructive dynamics of pecuniary challenges (debt, land mortgage) and there the child's wages are the sole means of the family's economy. Ignorant parents, unaware of the importance of education enlarges the number of dropouts as well as the upshot of labour on the health of children breeds child labour. Distressed families, homeless or orphaned children migrating to the cities cause a concentration of child labour in urban cities. Such children live and work amidst trash, open sewers and diseases like frostbite, dengue, anaemia ,typhoid and malnutrition or underweight.

Discriminating attitudes of parents towards educating girl children force them to work. Out of 152 million children in child labour 42% are girls informs the most recent Global Estimates of child labour of 2017. Gender gap and family violence paves the path for exposure to a toxic environment which has a disastrous sequel that violates and deteriorates moral values and decency. Separation from families makes them atrocious and also victims of abuse and exploitation. As we know 'Innocence, once lost, can never be gained. Darkness, once gazed upon, can never be lost'.

Q&A shows a side of India where non heretical and nugatory customs are still in existence; females are considered 'puppets' and categorized as 'unequal elements' of society. The story of Nita, the girl whom Ram loves, discloses about her life's struggle as she is a Bedia tribal girl from the Bhind district in Madhya Pradesh. The community demands one girl from each family to serve as a communal prostitute, called the Bedni. "You can find Bendis in truck stops, hotels, and roadside restaurants, selling their bodies for money" (305). These girls earn money for the family, while the males spend their time drinking alcohol, playing cards. When asked by Ram on doing this if she catches some disease, Nita with a hollow laugh says, "this is a

profession for me, not a hobby. It gives me enough to feed me and my entire family.... We prostitutes know about AIDS. But it is better to die of disease tomorrow than hunger today"(298).

The eighteenth-century French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed, children are born good, pure and guiltless, and through life experiences, they learn badness and guilt. The miserable circumstances haunt them exerting a deep impact on the kids .Through such rapes, forced labour, murders, Ram's wide-opened-innocent voice turns to moral outrage in the novel.

According to UNICEF, child labour in India has probably shifted from factories to employee homes and the informal home-based sectors makes it difficult to recognise and expose child labour. A joint report by ILO and UNICEF warns that child labour has risen to 160 million in two decades, significantly has risen due to the pandemic. With the coronavirus having pulled the normalcy out of our lives and pushed us to stay indoors, these children are still going out to work. Ram has been working as a maidservant at Colonel Taylor's house (50,000 HOW TO SPEAK AUSTRALIAN), Neelima Kumari's flat (10,000,000 TRAGEDY QUEEN); Salim as cook and caretaker of Ahmed Khan's house(1,000,000 LICENSE TO KILL).

The novel presents a mafia underworld that cripples children and trains them as beggars; the desperate deplorable and felonious measures to which poverty guides ordinary people; arrogant whites persecuting their retainers; families who have reached beyond the dreams of avarice while prostituting a daughter; acquisitiveness and dreary meanness of the rich. 'Swarup is also pointing at the country's division of caste, class, and above all, the wide abyss between rich and poor nags at any notion of equality, education and social justice' (Outlook).

There is a demonstration in the novel where the poor abuse the rich, who live in their palatial homes and do not care for the poor servants; abuse the government whose promises are only till the papers; abuses God for creating an unjust world..

The most heart-wrenching incident showcased in the novel is chapter four, 'A THOUGHT FOR CRIPPLED'. Babu Pillai, famously called 'Maman', purchases boys from the juvenile homes, and trains them to beg, "prepare the papers for these two. I'll collect them on Monday." The children to fend themselves have to earn a hundred each night and others are deliberately maimed (with a deformed arm, hind leg; even some are blinded) to beg on local trains, traffics; also some salute the spectators when poked by the owner like 'madari' with a pointed stick and pick up the thrown money. As Smita shivers hearing the appalling episode, "I cannot imagine there are still people in this day and age who can inflict such cruelty on innocent children."(120) Swarup has tried to create a similar footprint of such gruesome people and the remorselessly tough world in our hearts. His ironic description and vivid characterisation be it the guileless Salim, the epitome of everyman Salim, unprotected girls like Gudiya and Nita, covers the full social spectrum (slum-dwellers, prostitutes, explicit activities, gluten-sniffers) makes it easy to feel for them and paints a portrait of contemporary India.

CHAPTER-4

4.1. IMPACT OF CHILD LABOUR

This paper aims at stating not merely the activity of child labour but the effect it has on the child involved. Child labour is the most abhorrent form of violation of child rights. This exploitation is a social disgrace because of the ramifications for the child's suffering. The repercussions of violence and torture hampers the mental and physical health of children which poses a threat to the nation's growth. Children are the posterity of any nation and their adequate amelioration is our utmost priority. Nelson Mandela quotes, "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children".

Child labour's consequences are staggering; results in extreme bodily and mental harm, and even death. Globally, the ILO estimates that some 22,000 children are killed at work every year.

4.1.(a). Mining and chemical industries are one of the worst forms of child labour that ravages childhood utterly. The heavy works; collecting raw materials, extracting metal and selling it through informal channels, can mangle a growing child's bones and muscles resulting in postural deformity; exposure to toxic solvents, dangerous chemicals, mineral dust makes them suffer from various skin and respiratory diseases and loss of eyesight. Several girls suffer from genital infections after working waist-deep in acidic water perpetually. Due to less safety measures and unsupervised use of poor quality equipment children fall from the construction heights and risk injury from sharp tools and dangerous machinery.

- **4.1.(b).** Children are seen falling prey to the exploitative labour in Bangle, firecracker and matchsticks-producing industries. They are forced to work in the glass furnaces in poorly ventilated with small cells and badly illuminated rooms under extremely high temperature. They have to work for long hours all day crouched next to the burner and flickering oil lamps welding the colorful pieces of glass to make bangles release hazardous gases they inhaled through their whole childhood. Accidents, explosions or blasts are frequent in the cracker industries. In 2012-13, a major fire accident occurred in Sivakasi, where both children and adults lost their lives.
- **4.1.(c).** Millions of Indians are dependent on alcohol, cannabis, and opiates, and drug misuse is a pervasive phenomenon in Indian society, says a new report, published jointly by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and India's Ministry of Social Justice. Drug use and crime are interlinked and intensify each other. The easily available tobacco and alcohol serve as 'gateway substances'. This helps them cope with daily cycles of sexual, physical mental abuse, peer pressure and stress. Many kids support their addiction habits, work full days and spend every penny on it as addiction takes hold. Children are at higher risk of inculcating problematic social behavior like social exclusion, feelings of isolation, preventing healthy emotion and physical aggression. For instance, Jitu from the novel being a genuine victim of drug use says,"I am addicted to glue.'I buy it from the cobbler. Glue takes the hunger away, and the pain. I see bright colours, and occasionally my mother."
- **4.1.(d).** Sexual abuse and rape are known associates of child labour and has extremely devastating effects. From poverty to erosion of values, other several factors like desire to earn money, declining job scopes, globalisation which includes promiscuity and myth about sex with

virgin women are pushing more and more women and young girls to make to prostitution all over India. It is a form of dicrimination and gender-based violence. The loss of innocence and trauma of such events depresses and scares them psychologically. Girls trafficked soliciting, early marriage and for commercial sexual exploitation suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder(PTSD), Sexually transmitted diseases(STD), unwanted pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other health issues. Nevertheless boys also face sexual harassment and are made dissabled so as to earn money by selling their organs and making beggars on the street.

- **4.1.(e).** Children engaged is child labour are not only robbed off of a beatific and wizard childhood but also become incognizant of the amenities of education. All the child characters of the novel- Ram, Salim none of the others are even seen discussing schooling and education. They have adapted to the poor circumstances and accepted it as their fate.
- **4.1.(f).** Children who have no access for education enter into child labour trap and once engaged in childlabour they often unable to return to continue their studies. At times the employers intentionally prohibit children from attending schools by demanding for long term work. Many schools that do exist are of such poor quality that children choose not to go or drop out. They may be overcrowded, have only one teacher, and lack classrooms, toilets, or drinking water. Learn as much information as one can about physical and sexual abuse. Child labour perpetuates poverty as child workers, deprived of education and healthy physical development, are likely to become umskilled adults with low earnings prospects. The relationship between poverty and child labour (i.e. the more poverty the more child labour, and vice versa) is complex. In such ways, India is losing out on an educated and skilled workforce that is required to propel our country's economic growth and progress to greater heights.

4.2. MEASURES TO TACKLE CHILD LABOUR

The novel Q&A, is a painful reminder that the inferiority of the impoverished is still an issue deeply rooted in Indian psyche. Therefore, the solution is never an equitable distribution of wealth but is when individuals will treat one another more humanely, sensitively and more selflessly. Eradicating impoverishment, class differences in all its forms is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

4.2.(a). Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations affirms that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services". The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of Children Act (JJ Act), 2000, through its amendment in the year 2006, mentions, "any working child below the age of 18 years is a 'child in need of care and protection'."

4.2.(b). Empowering the vulnerable sections living in remote corners of country by extending to them various welfare, development and anti-poverty schemes of the Government of India, such as, National Rural LIVELIHOOD Mission(NRLM), THE Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act(NREGA), Public Distribution System(PDS), Prashant Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin(PMAY-G), Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), Kishori Shakti Yojana, etc. This would provide scope for ample economic opportunities for the women and other traditionally disadvantaged groups in their native place itself so as to reduce their vulnerability to trafficking.

- **4.2.(c).** The philosophy of 'I grow' instead of 'we grow' is an exalted concern that needs to be rectified in order to be a successful developed country. In order to bring society together, Schools can be places where the children of rich and poor families can become friends, and the barriers of inequality are broken down. They can challenge the rules that perpetuate economic inequality in broader society, and give young people the tools to go into the world and build more equitable societies. It is only when we as a society adopt a zero-tolerance attitude towards this exploitative and abusive practice can put an end to it.
- **4.2.(d).** India became one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child through the 'Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education 'Act, 2009. Access to high-quality primary education and supporting child well-being is a globally-recognized solution to the cycle of poverty. This is, in part, because it also addresses many of the other issues that can keep communities vulnerable. Education is often referred to as the great equalizer: It can open the door to jobs, resources, and skills that a family needs to not just survive, but thrive. Educating parents to make them understand and aware about the policies and their rights at the same time is also crucial. Also the victims or rescued children need to be inducted in the school with necessities like books, uniform. "If a country spends one dollar on education, the return would be 20 times over the next 20 years. So it has been proven that the best investment is investment in education," Satyarthi said.
- **4.2.(e).** Government of India has taken numerous measures to ensure the welfare, assure equal opportunity for girl child like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao(2015), (Balika Samridhi Yojana (1997), Mukhyamantri Laadli Yojana(2007), among others. Government policies to stop child labour include:
 - ❖ The Mines Act, 1952
 - Minimum Wages Act, 1948

- The Plantation Labour Act, 1951
- ❖ The Beedi and Cigar Workers Act, 1966
- ❖ The Children Act, 1960
- **4.2.(f).** Prostitution is an age-old social problem. Dealing with such a chronic problem is not an easy task. It will require sincere and sustained efforts of the government, voluntary organisations, people's groups and all around support of the socio-religious and political leaders and opinion makers based on a properly planned national line of action."Strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies to arrest and prosecute those involved in trafficking. This would include ensuring that law enforcement agencies comply with their legal obligations. Giving special attention to vulnerable areas like massage parlours, escort services, party hostesses, attendants, companions, etc. so as to prevent linkage between trafficking and non-brothel based prostitution. Providing access to legal, medical and counselling services to all trafficked victims in order to restore their self-confidence and self-esteem. Special provision should be provided to those who have contracted HIV/AIDS.
- **4.2.(g).** The cruel environment of street life, which robs childhoods and replaces it with addiction, exploitation and violence must be changed to an ecosystem of support. Half of the children said they need help in quitting. But for that the government, NGOs and society at large needs to extend a helping hand. We need more rehabilitation centres for street children. Also, there should be heavy penalties on people who sell drugs to children. Strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies to arrest and prosecute those involved in trafficking. This would include ensuring that law enforcement agencies comply with their legal obligations. Some of them are:

- ❖ International Justice Mission (IJM) in collaburation with Anti-Human Trafficking Unit(AHTU) rescues victims and help them rehabilitate. Also it brings the criminal to justice. Working on the five pillars of Prevention, Protection, Rescue, Rehabilitation and Reintegration, Prajwala, an anti-trafficking NGO supports victims of rape through their Rape Victim Support Programme (RVSP), and the witnesses as well, through the Victim Witness Protection.
- ❖ Another NGO that sets apart its aim is GURIA(GUDIYA), that not limit itself to the rescue of the victims, but has a broad-based goal of eliminating sex trafficking altogether, especially child prostitution. The NGO has also launched initiatives to fight hunger and poverty − the main cause for increase in such crimes. Also NGOs like CARE INDIA, CHILD RIGHT AND YOU are working to eliminate child labour from India.
- UNICEF IN India focuses on safeguarding and strengthening legislations which includes protection against child labour, child marriage, gender based violence, exploitation and abuse.
 'Save the Children' has created Inclusive Learning Friendly Environments in intervention schools in slums and villages, to make education attractive for children.
- Kailash Satyarthi, Nobel laureate (2014) modeled Bal-Mitra Gram, which empowers children to take democratic actions to protect their rights, and enables parents and other stakeholders to stand up for the rights of children and build a protective community thus, creates a safety net around children to prevent child trafficking, child labour, child sexual about and child marriage.
- **4.2.(h).** Awareness campaigns through television and radio as well as educational workshops must be carried out to limit this scourge. Access to information is crucial, and families must know the risks involved in trafficking. World Day Against Child Labour grows every year and on 12 June 2014 which promotes awareness and action to tackle child labourb worldwide.

Conclusion

India, in the last 74 years since independence has brought out many legislations and policies for removal of the scourge of child labour and give every child a decent childhood and make them educated. Child labour has decreased by 38 per cent in the last decade. In the last 20 years almost 100 millions children have been removed from child labour, bringing numbers down from 246 million in 2000 to 152 million in 2016 (ILO 2021). Despite all the communal upheavals, poverty and prejudices, India, overlooking its modalities and idiosyncrasies, is emerging with flyings colours.

Education is the proven strategy to break the cycle of poverty at the root of child labour. "Children should be meant to learn, not to earn" should be the motto to be sprawled.

Swarup has achieved a triumph with this thrilling, endearing work which gets into the heart and soul of modern India' (New Zealand Herald). The trailblazing novel, Q&A crosses social boundaries to paint a picture of India as we have never seen it earlier.

"India is so large and multifarious. All stories about the country should be told to the world" says Vikas Swarup .

Vision of our incumbent Prime Minister is to remove poverty from India. The bane of child labour is poverty, where people have to make a choice between hunger and education, resulting in education taking a backseat and hunger pushing the families to put the children out as labourers.

Government is also providing rice/wheat, dal, oil, cooking gas, etc at highly subsidised rates to the people below poverty line and has also started the facility of mid-day meal in schools

which has helped in improving attendance in the schools and shall go a long way in eradicating illiteracy among the poor.

As already brought out in this paper, illiteracy leads to another generation in poverty and so will the future generations of these people if proper intervention is not made. Several acts, laws and policies have already been formulated, however, its application has to be monitored. Vigilance of the public is also essential to stop this menace.

We have come a long way in mitigating this problem but it seems the pandemic has reversed everything. The lockdown and reduction in job opportunities has made life difficult for the marginalised families leading to children being initiated into child labour again to support the family. Thus all the good over the years have come to a knot. The silver lining is that pandemic is not here to stay but shall pass sooner or later. With all the acts in place, it is for the Government machinery as well as you and me to remain vigilant so that no child is found working anywhere instead of going to school. USA & European countries have banned products from countries where it is known that they have been produced using child labour which shall also help in reducing child labour.

I may be noted that for India to flourish and become a leader in the world, upliftment and education of our children and eradication of child labour and poverty is very essential, without which success for India shall remain a mirage for times to come.

Work Cited

Primary Sources:

Swarup, Vikas. "*Q&A*" Great Britain, Amazon Kindle, Doubleday, 2005, https://www.amazon.com/Q-Novel-Vikas-Swarup/dp/0743267486.

McCormick, Patricia. Sold. hyperion, 2006. Amazon Kindle,

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=sold+by+patricia+mccormick&sprefix=Sold+by+Patricia&ref=nb sb ss ts-doa-p 1 16.

Secondary Sources:

Bajpai, Asha. The Legislative and Institutional Framework for Protection of Children in India. UNICEF, 2010.

The CSR Journal. "About 14 Lakh Child Labourers In India Cannot Write Their Names." *CRY*, 2016. *The CSR Journal*, https://thecsrjournal.in/about-14-lakh-child-labourers-in-india-cannot-write-t heir-names/.

ILO(International Labour Organisation). What is child labour? https://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/lang--en/index.htm

Ibrahim, Abdalla, et al., editors. "Child labor and health: a systematic literature review of the impacts of child labor on child's health in low- and middle-income countries." Journal of Public Health, vol. 41, no. 1, 2018, pp. 18-26. Oxford Academic, https://academic.oup.com/jpubhealth/article/41/1/18/4835667

ILO. Global estimates of child labour: Results and trends, *2012-2016*. geneva 2017 ed., International Labour Office (ILO), 2017.

The Indian Express. "All stories of India should be told to the world: 'Q and A' autho." *The Indian Express* [Jaipur], 22 Jan 2009, https://indianexpress.com/article/entertainment/entertainment-others/all-stories-of-india-should-be-told-to-world-q-and-a-author/

Janeiro, Rio de. INDIA COUNTRY REPORT. GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, 2008.

Limaye, Sudeep, and Milind S. Pande. "A study of Child labour in India Magnitude and challenges." *A study of Child labour in India – Magnitude and challenges*, vol. ASM's E journal of ongoing research in management and IT, 2013. *ResearchGate*, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261709693_A_study_of_Child_labour_in_India - Magnitude and challenges.

Unicef: Child labour, 2021

https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-labour

Naidu, M. C., and K. Dasaratha Ramaiah. "Child Labour in India - An Overview."

Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2017, pp. 199-204. **Taylor and Francis

**Online*, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09718923.2006.11892550.

Perlberg, Rich. "Why do we demonize the poor and give a pass to the rich who exploit the system?"

https://thelivingstonpost.com/why-do-we-demonize-the-poor-and-give-a-pass-to-the-rich-who-exploit-the-system/.

Samantroy, Ellina, et al. "State Of Child Workers in India."

Tare, Kiran. "Mumbai's ticking time bomb." *Indian Today* [Mumbai], 25 April 2020,

https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/the-big-story/20200504-mumbai-r squo-s-ticking-time-bomb-1670507-2020-04-25.

THE TIMES OF INDIA. "Every child working is working at the cost of adult job:

Kailash Satyarthi." 22 NOV 2018,

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/every-child-working-is-working-at-the-cost-of-adult-job-kailash-satyarthi/articleshow/667467

94.cms.

United Nations. "Labour disparity between girls and boys perpetuates gender stereotypes, UNICEF report shows." *UN News*, UNICEF, 7 oct 2016, https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/10/542182-labour-disparity-between-girls-and-boys-perpetuates-gender-stereotypes-unicef.

Boyle, Danny, director. *Slumdog Millionaire*. Celador Films, 2009. *YouTube*, https://youtu.be/w_g6f1FWIoo.

.