

Child labour – An overview of its causes, consequences and necessary measures

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Abstract

The phenomenon of child labour is deep-rooted in socio-economic stratification, mass poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, particularly in tribal areas of the state. The child labour system is an age old phenomenon which retards the development of child due to early employment. Children are the greatest gift to humanity and the same gift is being misused for personal gains as child labour. They constitute 36% of India's population but a large majority of children in the age group of 5-14 years continue to remain in distress and turmoil. Child labour is any kind of work children are made to do that harms or exploits them physically, mentally, morally, or by preventing access to education. However, all work is not bad or exploitive for children. In fact, certain jobs help in enhancing the overall personality of the child. For example, children delivering newspapers prior to going to school or taking up light summer jobs that do not interfere with their school timings. Due to acute poverty poor families residing in rural areas send their children to urban areas for bread and butter. In urban areas, to survive in a cutthroat competition, manufacturers have lowered the real wages for adult workers in order to employ child workers on low wages. The problem is very much vast in its dimension. Children are forced to work in the most hazardous, unhygienic conditions, where they are vulnerable to many severe health problems. Poverty is not the sole factor responsible for child labour. Other factors such as improper implementation of primary education system, poor schooling system, cheap labour, employer's preferences, poor implementation of legislative measures, large family sizes and parent's poor or no employment are the other main causes of child labour. Handling dangerous tools and machines, using pesticides etc. can cause physical causality and as well as many severe disease to the children. These days child abuse and harassment cases are also been seen with child labour. Child labour is an international evil. It requires cumulative efforts to wipe it out. Toiling long hours for a pittance, these little breadwinners accept exploitation as a way of life. The government on this front has also taken a few steps. The need of the hour is to expand the machinery for enforcing the various laws on child labour.

Keywords: Child Labour: Children below 14 years of age, working in organised or unorganised sector. I.L.O: International Labour Organisation

1. Introduction

"Out of school children comprise the workers and non-workers. In our view they together signify a measure of deprivation among children and can be considered as a potential labour pool always being at the risk of entering the labour force" - NCEUS, 2007

Child labour is not a new phenomenon in India. The phenomenon of child labour is deep-rooted in socio-economic stratification, mass poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, particularly in tribal areas of the state. The child labour system is an age old phenomenon which retards the development of child due to early employment. According to International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2002) reports that children work the longest hours and are the worst paid of all labourers. They endure work conditions which include health hazards and potential abuse. Their working conditions do not provide the stimulation for proper physical and mental development. Children work for a variety of reasons, the most important being poverty and the induced pressure upon them to escape from this plight. Finally, these children are deprived of the simple joys of childhood, relegated instead to a life of drudgery. In a general parlance, Child Labour implies a situation in which young people are being exploited, or over worked or deprived of their right to health, education or to childhood. It impairs their health, their overall physical, mental and social growth".

Child Labour, consisting of children below 14 years of age, is defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as "the type of work performed by children that deprives them of their childhood and their dignity, which hampers their access to education and acquisition of skills and which is performed under conditions harmful to their health and their development". Children are the greatest gift to humanity and the same gift is being misused for personal gains as child labour. They constitute 36% of India's population but a large majority of children in the age group of 5-14 years continue to remain in distress and turmoil. One in every five children below the age of 14 is a labourer. The flower (Child) withers before it blossoms.

1.1 Definition of Child Labour

The ILO concept of child labour is derived from the ILO Minimum Age Convention No. 138 of 1973, which sets 15 years as the general minimum age for employment. Any work in violation of Convention No. 138 is considered illegal child labour that should be eliminated. 'Child labour is started as work that deprives children of their childhood and their dignity, which hampers their access to education and the acquisition of skills and which is performed under deplorable conditions harmful to their health and their development'- ILO 'Child labour conventionally referred to children working before they reached the lawful minimum age for

employment in their country, often the same as the cut-off age for compulsory attendance at School' – UNICEF

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 defines a child as any person who has not completed his fourteenth year of age. Part II of the act prohibits children from working in any occupation listed in Part A of the Schedule, which include among others, domestic work, dhabas & hotels, catering at railway establishments, construction work on the railway or anywhere near the tracks, plastics factories and automobile garages. The act also prohibits children from working in places where certain processes are being undertaken, as listed in Part B of the Schedule, which include among others, beedi making, tanning, soap manufacture, brick kilns and roof tiles units. These provisions do not apply to a workshop where the occupier is working with the help of his family or in a government recognised or aided school.

According to International Labour Organization (ILO), 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; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work".

In other words, child labor is any kind of work children are made to do that harms or exploits them physically, mentally, morally, or by preventing access to education. However, all work is not bad or exploitive for children. In fact, certain jobs help in enhancing the overall personality of the child. For example, children delivering newspapers prior to going to school or taking up light summer jobs that do not interfere with their school timings. When children are given pocket money earning oriented tasks, they understand the value of money, as well as respect it even more.

Child labor is work that harms children or keeps them from attending school. Around the world and in the U. S., growing gaps between rich and poor in recent decades have forced millions of young children out of school and into work. The International Labor Organization estimates that 215 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 currently work under conditions that are considered illegal, hazardous, or extremely exploitative. Underage children work at all sorts of jobs around the world, usually because they and their families are extremely poor. Large numbers of children work in commercial agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, mining, and domestic service. Some children work in illicit activities like the drug trade and prostitution or other traumatic activities such as serving as soldiers.

1.2 Child labor involves at least one of the following characteristics

- Violates a nation's minimum age laws
- Threatens children's physical, mental, or emotional well-being
- Involves intolerable abuse, such as child slavery, child trafficking, debt bondage, forced labor, or illicit activities
- Prevents children from going to school
- Uses children to undermine labor standards

1.3 Magnitude of the problem

Child labour is more a rural phenomenon than an urban phenomenon. Due to acute poverty poor families residing in rural areas send their children to urban areas for bread and butter. In urban areas, to survive in a cutthroat competition, manufacturers have lowered the real wages for adult workers in order to employ child workers on low wages. The problem is very much vast in its dimension. Children are forced to work in the most hazardous, unhygienic conditions, where they are vulnerable to many severe health problems.

UNICEF estimates that around 150 million children aged 5-14, or nearly 1 in 6 children in this age group, are involved in child labour. According to the latest estimates from the International Labour Organization, 7.4 million children in the same age group are engaged in domestic work, which is disproportionately carried out by girls.

The government last month amended child labour laws allowing children below 14 to work in family businesses and the entertainment industry (excluding circuses) to create "a balance between the need for education for a child and reality of the socio-economic condition and social fabric in the country." The amendment also introduced a new definition of "adolescents"—children between 14 and 18 years of age—and barred them from working in any hazardous industry. On the World Day Against Child Labour, Mint looks at 10 hard-hitting statistics on the issue of child labour in India.

1. One in every 11 children in India is working.
2. Child labour has been decreasing at an abysmal rate of 2.2% per year from 2001 to 2011, as per an analysis of census data by non-governmental organization CRY (Child Rights and You).
3. 80% of working children are based in rural areas and three out of four of these children work in agriculture, as cultivators or in household industries, most of which are home-based employments.
4. More than half of the 5.5 million working children in India are concentrated in five states—Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.
5. Adolescents doing hazardous work form 20.7% of those employed in this age group, while almost 25% of adults work in hazardous conditions.
6. Adolescents between 15 and 17 years of age doing hazardous work form 62.8% of the overall child labour population.
7. Nearly 10% of adolescents working in hazardous conditions are working in family enterprises.
8. 56% of the working adolescents are no longer studying. And 70% of those in hazardous conditions are not studying.
9. More boys (38.7 million) than girls (8.8 million) are involved in hazardous work.
10. While the incidence of hazardous work among adolescents is highest in Nicaragua, the number of adolescents in hazardous work is greatest in India (2.4 million). Source: International Labour Organization's World Report on Child Labour 2015 and CRY recent analysis of the Census 2011 Child labour is still common in many parts of the world. Estimates for child labour vary. It ranges between 250 to 304 million, if children aged 5–17 involved in any economic activity are counted. If light occasional work is excluded, ILO estimates there were 153 million child labourers aged 5–14 worldwide in

2008. Official figures indicate that there are over 12 million child workers in India, but many NGOs reckon the real figure is up to 60 million. The number of girls involved is not much lower than the boys.

Child labor problem is not unique to India. New global estimates published by the Unicef in 2012 indicated that, in 2008, 215 million children were involved in child labour all over the world, 115 million of them in a hazardous work ^[22]. The 2001 National Census of India estimated the total number of child labour, aged 5–14, to be at 12.6 million ^[24], about 0.12 million children in a hazardous job ^[25]. UNICEF estimates that India has the highest number of labourers in the world under 14 years of age ^[26].

Childhood is the most innocent phase in human life. It is that stage of life when the human foundations are laid for a successful adult life. Many children, instead of spending it in a carefree and fun-loving manner while learning and playing, are scarred and tormented. They hate their childhood and would do anything to get out of the dungeons of being children and controlled and tortured by others. They would love to break-free from this world, but continue to be where they are, not out of choice, but force. This is the true story of child labor.

1.4 Factors Responsible for Child Labour

Poverty and child labour are contemporary to each other. Since India has an agri-based economy and since 70 per cent of the Indian population lives in villages, therefore child labour is found mainly in this field. In poor families a large number of children in a family are considered to be an economic asset rather than a liability. The problem of child labour is existent not only in our country but all over the world. The latest statistics show that about 250 million child labours exist in the age group 5-14 all over the world. India alone accounts for the largest number of child labours (Bhargava, 2003).

According to the World Bank Report (2000), nearly 6 crores working children are to be found in India; of which at least 1.5 crores are bonded labour. It is a serious shame that when other issues such as that of globalization and information revolution are being highlighted, very little attention is being paid to the issue of child labour. Mishra and Pande (1996) are of the view that the ultimate responsible factor for child labour is widespread poverty. It is this poverty that lets parent leave the child to fend for themselves.

Poverty is not the sole factor responsible for child labour. Other factors such as improper implementation of primary education system, poor schooling system, cheap labour, employer's preferences, poor implementation of legislative measures, large family sizes and parent's poor or no employment are the other main causes of child labour. It has been found that 37 per cent people believe poverty, 33 per cent say over populated family, 10 per cent say government policy failure, 6 per cent say weak laws, 2 per cent say parents unemployment and 1 per cent say high education and living are responsible for growing child labour (source Internet: Google search).

I. Social Aspects of Child Labour

Child labour are a socially disadvantaged group of society. They are deprived of basic necessities such as education, healthy diet, recreative time etc.

1. Parent's Illiteracy: Illiterate parents discourage children to attend schools because they lack the awareness of the merits of education. In an analysis made by Geetha (2005), it was found that there was a high incidence of illiteracy with around 50 per cent of them reporting lack of education. Lack of education may have also induced them to send their child to work.

A seminar held in 1977 highlighted the fact that child labour is prevalent extensively in lower socio-economic groups because of the lack of appreciation of the merits of education on their part of the role it plays in leading an improved life (Singh, 1990).

2 Negligence of Parents Regarding the Ill Effects of Child Labour:

Since parents don't consider child labour as bad, hence, they can be directly held responsible for the ill effects suffered by them. Illiteracy prevents them from taking right decisions about their children. Because of excessive number of children, issues such as health, education, social activities etc. are not paid attention to.

Most of the parents interviewed did not agree with the notion that child labour has an adverse consequence on the child's future. By involving children into the labour force, they believe themselves to have done a wonderful job. Ultimately the child ends up earning, something which he could not do while in school. Therefore, parents are very much responsible for the prevalence of child labour.

3. Improper Implementation of Compulsory Primary Education:

Although there is a free provision for education upto primary level, the schemes, however, are not properly implemented, hence, resulting in the improper education patterns of people. Education is a weapon which can be effectively used to tackle the social evil of child labour, but the primary schools fail in providing the kid of education which can brighten the future of the children. The kind of education provided in most educational institutions is of little relevance to the children and does not prepare them in any way for the challenges ahead (Sinha, 1997).

When the level of implementation of the compulsory primary education was researched, with the reason of majority of children being drop out of school, it was found that teachers themselves are not interested in teaching these students. A teacher argued that, when these children ultimately have to earn and work, then why should they at all be coming to school. These children enroll into schools for the sole purpose of earning scholarships and getting cereals, which the teachers claim, they will happily distribute. Majority of the parents are dissatisfied with the education system, the type of teachers and the entire setup. A significant factor in discouraging children from attending school is child labour and short comings of education system (Yadav, 2005).

4. Poor Education System: Poor education system along with the inaccessibility of schools plus an irrelevant and unattractive school syllabus, lack of skilled teachers will be taken up for discussion in this section.

Accessibility of schools is important for the children of remote areas, usually they do not have conveyance means to reach school. Schools are far away from the research areas. Distances make schools unattractive for children as well as parents.

The school curriculum is another unattractive feature of these schools. Most of the contents of the curriculum is irrelevant for poor children, who feel that learning in school is useless since it does not provide skills (Yadav, 2003). Extracurricular activities are almost non-existent in these primary schools and no due time and importance is given to sports and physical activity because of the lack of teachers of the subject. Primary schools should basically be clean and safe.

Basic amenities like toilets and water are not to found in the entire area. Students generally use nearby fields for toilets; and to drink water, they take permission to go home, and do not come back. Electricity is not present in the schools. Most of the schools almost have no seating arrangements, and students sit on the floors. Though most of the schools have blackboards, they do not have teaching aids such as maps, charts, chalks etc.

Teachers do not use blackboards normally, but they do so during inspection. If the number of teachers in a school is more than one, the teachers engage in conversations. When there is only one teacher in a school, he takes this time to complete his personal work. No kind of discipline is maintained as such in the school.

It is widely understood that the learning ability of a student is greatly dependent upon the teacher's teaching ability. A number of unskilled teachers are employed in primary schools in remote areas. Most are neither B.Ed. nor B.T.C., either they are plain graduates or post-graduates. In North India, especially more than half of these teachers do not have any kind of teacher training qualification (Zachariah, 2005).

Due to lack of proper teaching training, the teachers lack proper communication skills, and cannot interact with students properly. When a search for presence of incentives to promote education was made, it was found that they are not provided adequately. A provision for scholarship and mid-day meals is there for students with 80 per cent attendance. The scholarship amount is Rs. 300/- student per annum and 3 kg of wheat is to be provided every third month. But students get only 7-9 kg of wheat per annum. This is mainly because of the corruption and greed prevalent in the staff itself. It was found during field study that such schemes are a failure at the grass root level of upliftment of education. Although these policies have positively affected the enrolment ratio, there have not had any positive effect on the literacy rate of students.

A number of students can be found who have passed significant levels of education but are still unable to read and write properly, and this includes writing their names.

II. Economic Aspects of Child Labour

Child labour is to a great extent the result of poor economic conditions. The need to raise the overall income of the family pushes children into the labour force. Family size, economic status, adult unemployment are all factors which are responsible for child labour.

1 Family Size: A large family size is one of the major factors responsible for child labour. Parents consider children as economic assets rather than responsibility. The reason behind this is the lack of adequate resources. The needs of the family are dependent on the size of the family. When needs rise, expenditures rise, and this is when children are pushed into the workforce, so, the family expenses are meant to be borne

by all family members, irrespective of age. The child labour brings in income, be it any amount, and this helps in raising the overall income of the family.

2. Adult Unemployment: Adult unemployment is also in a large manner responsible for child labour. Sometimes child labour even replaces adult labour because child labour is comparatively much cheaper, and easier to handle. Children work faster and get lower wages. Adults may raise objections regarding wages and work load and work hours, but children do not do these.

3. Insufficient Incomes of Adults: This is also a prominent factor for child labour. During times of crisis, which is forever, there, they use their children as earning hands. Children bring in money, and this helps the family to a degree.

4. Lack of Resources: In rural areas, there is lack of resources of livelihood. Due to these lack of resources, there is hardly any employment opportunity in remote areas. These are the only opportunities they find both of these fields, however, need skill, which majority of the people do not possess. This is because, earlier, these professions did not have much employment prospects, but now things have changed.

III. Cultural Aspects

Among other factors involved, the cultural aspect too is responsible for child labour. It has been believed down the ages that a child should learn the skills present in his family. This tradition also helps in enhancing child labour. This is justified both by the child's parents and his employers. Children in such setups are believed to be assisting their families, not working. Therefore, they are made to learn the craft as early as possible. Similarly, a cultivator's son who does not learn to handle the plough and other instruments at an early age will find it difficult to handle it at a later age (Yadav, 2005).

1. Tradition of Learning Family Craft

As Caste system inherits some caste occupation by birth. People involved in this occupation usually believe that their children should also learn the skills of that occupation, so they take their children to their work places to develop their interest. Once interest has been developed, it becomes easier for their training. In areas, where other employment opportunities are dismal child labour has increased by leaps and bound. Parents believe their children to have secure future in this profession. None of the concerned parties, employers, parent or children see anything wrong in it, child labour continues (Yadav, 2005).

2. Prevalence of Cultural Myths about Child Labour

Some myths also result in child labour. Parents feel unduly obliged by employers when their children get work. But, the fact is that employers are only concerned about their profit, they actually maximize the profit in lesser time at cheaper wages. No evidence, however, is to be found to prove that child labour is necessary to preserve the traditional arts and crafts. There is a myth that only the nimble figures of children can carry out knotting, but in actuality, children do work

faster, therefore this myth exists. It is also a common prevalent myth that child labour cannot be abolished because of economic factors. It is true that child labour exists because of economic factors and is a large problem, but effective laws and the will to remove it can help eradicate child labour.

3. Parents are the Ones who are Least Concerned about the Ill-Effects of Child Labour

In many studies it is revealed that inspite of telling them about the serious consequences of child labour, people believe that the children are working for themselves and their family and there is nothing wrong in doing. Children can learn skills at a young age only and this will benefit them in adulthood, when they will be able to generate more incomes to sustain a better livelihood.

4. Increasing Employment Opportunities in Unorganized Sector

It is a well known fact that main concentration of child labour is in unorganized sector. In unorganized sector children do a variety of jobs in different well known industries of the country. They are continuously exploited by their employers. But it is surprising that neither the labours nor their parents believe that they are being exploited by employers.

5. Ineffective Enforcement of Legal Provisions

Although, there are a number of constitutional provisions against child labour, they are not properly implemented. Every district has a labour department, but inspections are not carried out properly. Labour officers inspect only those places where child labour is low, they never go to high impact areas. The provision under child labour prohibition and Regulation Act, 1986, deems that children are not to be allowed to work in hazardous industries. But everywhere, this law is violated. The central as well as state governments have passed a number of laws for child welfare in order to eradicate child labour, but none of these policies, schemes or legislations have been properly implemented. Poor parents willingly involve their children in the labour force. This exists along with the harsh reality that the parents are not willing to put their children into schools, and nor are they willing to stop child labours through proper legislation. They usually harbor the belief that since children belong to them, therefore they have the right to decide their children's futures. And they are the ones to decide as to how and till when they should use children to earn a living for the family.

6. Employer's Preference for Child Labour

Child labour is cheap labour, and child workers are easy to handle from adult workers who may create demands. But none of the interviewed employees admitted that they employed child labour because they were cheap. They said that the parents of these children came to them and insisted on having their children put in for work. In such situations, employers usually did not have much options.

But, in actuality, the fact that children can be easily controlled and have no awareness of rights makes children the best options to employ. Child labour is a great source of profit for such employers, who make children work long hours with low wages. Neither the children nor their families bargain for wages with the employer. These people obliged the parents by giving their children jobs.

7. Lack of Strong Sense of Responsibility of Government Officials and Political Leaders

Because of a lack of strong sense of responsibilities towards their duties, the government officials and political leaders do very little to eradicate child labour, inspite of the fact that everyone is aware that child labour exists in nearly all hazardous and non-hazardous industries in different regions all over the country. Labour officials and political leaders ignore the problem of child labour, infact they hide the seriousness of the problem. It is only by firm legislative law implementation that these problems will get eradicated. Child labour exists because of these economic and social factors. Also, there is a cultural factor involved. Ineffective laws further add to the flourishing of child labour.

IV. Consequences of child labour in India

The picture that emerges is dark. Children are working in hazardous export oriented industries like fireworks, match works, electroplating, beedi rolling, glass blowing, brassware, lock making, glass blowing, lead mining and stone quarrying amongst several others. These are places that have a severe negative impact on the health of anyone working there. In the case of children, by the time they begin touching their teens, they are already inflicted with several life threatening diseases. Sitting at home in a city, we have no idea of the terrible conditions that these children are made to work in and for more than ten to twelve hours a day. In many cases, these children are offered by the parents in lieu of a loan that they may have taken from the factory owner. So it's a barter deal; loan in cash that is repaid in kind through the child. Not all are barter deals. Some work for money where the pay is as little as ten rupees per day!

There are other situations where children are made to work. These are typically home run cottage industries like handloom and carpet weaving. This author has personally visited carpet weaving centers in Bhadohi and Mirzapur, in eastern U.P. and has seen children working alongside their parents, in virtually all homes lying in interior rural areas. The typical explanation given by the parents are that they see the child as an additional resource for income generation.

This is a necessity given the abject poverty prevailing in rural areas and in the absence of any social security system. People look at raising children as additional manpower, which further exacerbates the population problem that India is reeling under. It's a Catch-22 situation! A poor villager can't afford to raise children but continues to produce them in the hope that they will add to the income while also providing an income security in his old age. This is one of the primary reasons one sees large families in rural areas where deep poverty prevails.

While this situation is still understandable even if not justifiable, what about child labour and abuse in urban and semi urban cities and towns?

V. Negative Effects of Child Labor

1. Effect on Health: According to WHO, 1/8th of the cases of child labor are of worst forms, which includes physical, mental or even moral well-being. The child labor is viral in various sectors. But agriculture sector has the maximum (70%) involvement of child labor. Handling dangerous tools and machines, using pesticides etc. can cause physical causality and as well as many sever disease to the children.

2. Harassment and Child Abuse: These days child abuse and harassment cases are also been seen with child labor. According to a study by Indian government released in 2007 about 20% of children in as labor have faced sexual abuse. Most of the cases of sexual cases occurs with the girls below 15.

3. Indulgence into Crime Field: Uneducated/ Unguided children who work in society sometimes get influenced by the criminal activities and commit crime at low age. Some cases of juvenile criminals have been reported in India and its increase is also observed in India.

VI. Efforts against Child Labour

India has not ratified the two ILO conventions relating to child labour. However, there are constitutional and legislative provisions in place against child labour. Three articles of the constitution are concerned with child labour:

Article 21a - right to education for children aged between 6 and 14 years,

Article 24 - prohibition of employment of children in factories,

Article 39 - directs the state governments to form policies such that 'children are not abused and are not forced by economic necessities to enter avocations unsuited to age and strength'.

India has enforced a semi ban on child labour prohibiting child labour in hazardous occupations. Child labour prohibition and regulation Act, 1986, prohibits children from working in 13 occupations and 57 processes. It defines any person under the age of 14 as a child. The act was amended and made effective since October 2006, to include two more occupations, viz. employment as domestic workers or servants and employment in eateries, hotels and recreational facilities. This inclusion would directly affect 255,000 children. However, trade sector (gross and retailing) that employs nearly 10% of child labour was not included in the ban. Inclusion of this occupation would benefit child labourers in the urban areas. However, there is a negative repercussion, as the law might tend to be ineffective and make the children worse-off if implemented, depriving the family of income as there are no provisions for incentives for the children or for the family for the loss of income through child labour.

The National Policy on Child Labour, 1987 recommended project based plan of action targeting areas with high concentration of child labour. As a result, the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) was planned in 1987 and became functional in 1988. The project, financed by the central ministry of labour, aims at rehabilitating the children withdrawn from employment thereby reducing the incidence of child labour in the areas known for high incidence of child labour. Apart from awareness generation and legal action, the project also operates special schools for erstwhile child labourers. Its students are provided with a monthly stipend. The project has covered about 0.4 million children of whom about 0.3 million have been mainstreamed into schools. The project currently operates 250 districts with high incidence of child labour across the country.

India was the first country to join the International Programme of Elimination of Child labour (IPEC), a global programme operated by ILO since the year 1992 and its

operation in India was extended from time to time and was recently extended until Dec 2006. During the period 1992-2002, IPEC supported over 165 projects in India. The programme also operates state based projects, identifying child labour prone districts in the state. The programme works in tandem with NCLP. Under ILO- IPEC project, central ministry for labour and the US department of labour developed a project, INDUS, aimed at rehabilitating children working in 10 hazardous sectors. The project will directly benefit 80,000 child labourers and it plans to support 10,000 families of former child labourers

VII. Steps to Overcome the Problem

1. Child Labor Laws: Indian government has done a great job in attempt to overcome the child labor. Factory Act, Mines Act, Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, Right to free and Compulsory Education Act were framed to safeguard the children from laborious tasks and helping them to rise.

2. Awareness: Parents must be given awareness about child abuse and bad effects of child labor. This will bring change in the society and minimize the cases of child labor. Many NGOs are working in this field and need support from government to aware more people specifically the poor people living in villages or slum areas.

3. Social Alertness: Society must pay attention about the child labor going on in cities, factories or shops. They must report the cases to the police. It is a social antiquate to stop child labor running in your society and supporting those children toward education field.

2. Conclusion

Child Labor is a menace and an obstacle in India's development. New generation is the base of development of a developing country and as India is going on a wrong path, it must be directed to the right one. Child labour is an international evil. It requires cumulative efforts to wipe it out. Toiling long hours for a pittance, these little breadwinners accept exploitation as a way of life. The government on this front has also taken a few steps. The International Labour Organization (ILO) launched the International Programme for Elimination of Child Labours in 1991 and India was the first to join the same in 1992. But still the problem persists due to poor implementation of the plans and programmes. The need of the hour is to expand the machinery for enforcing the various laws on child labour. There is a plethora of laws but nothing can eradicate child labour unless there is awareness among parents and children, which will go a long way in saving the future of millions of working children in India. Lastly instead of blaming the "supply side", we must focus on the "demand side".

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