

## A STUDY ON ABOLITION OF CHILD LABOUR

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### INTRODUCTION

The term "child labour" means "working Child" or "employed Child". 'Child labour is any work done by child for monetary purpose. 'Child Labour' is a derogatory term which translates into child exploitation and inhumanity, according to sociologist, development workers, medical professionals and educationists. They have identified child labour as harmful and hazardous to the child's development need, both mental and physical. The term child labour is used for employment of children below a certain age is considered illegal by law and custom.

Exploitation of children is a universal problem but the problem of child labour is more acute in developing countries like India. Poor rural and urban families living below poverty line (slums, Jhopadpatties) are being forced to send their children to work mainly due to poverty factor. A working child belongs to the age group of 5 to 14 years. As per the constitution of India, no child can be employed up to the age of 14 years.

### MAGNITUDE

As per census 2001, the number of working children in the age group of 5 to 17 years was 288.5 lakhs and in the age group of 5 to 14 years was 126.7 lakhs. According to statistics given by Indian government there are 20 million child laborers while other agencies claim that it is 50 million.

As per Census 2011, the total child population in India in the age group (5-14) years is 259.6 million. Of these, 10.1 million (3.9% of total child population) are working, either as 'main worker' or as 'marginal worker'.

### INITIATIVES

The government of India announced national Child labor projects (NCLP) during 11th five-year plan, under which children with drawn from work are sent to special school that are operating in 250 child labor endemic districts across 20 states of the country. There are

approximately 7328 special school for over 4.20 lakhs children withdrawn from work.'

### CAUSES OF CHILD LABOR

Some common causes of child labor are poverty, parental illiteracy, social indifference, and ignorance, lack of education and exposure, adult unemployment, exploitation of cheap and unorganized labor. The family practice inculcate traditional skills in children also pulls the little ones in the trap of child labor, as they never get the opportunity to learn anything else.

### GOVERNMENT MEASURES

Child labor is a reality in spite of various steps taken by the legal machineries (Indian constitution and Fundamental rights) to eliminate it. Child labor still prevails and persists.

### PRESENT STUDY

This study was taken up with the students of Sociology department, few active members of NGO – pratham. This study focuses on the child labor under M ward in Chembur area. As child labor is a matter of grave concern that children are not getting the education and leisure which is important for their growing years because they are involved into laborious activities which is meant for people beyond their years.

Child labor is hazard to a child is mental, physical, social, educational, emotional and spiritual development. Broadly any child who is employed in activities to feed self and family is being subjected to 'child labor'.

Therefore along with central, state and local government, NGO's stake holders and common people have to come ahead together, hand in hand to find out solutions at various levels and to abolish child labor. Hence Pratham a well established and active NGO working at grass root level to abolish child labor in different areas under N – ward in Mumbai, This study was taken with the group of students involved for social cause.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To nurture and preserve their birth right toward a carefree and innocent childhood.
2. To abolish child labor under M ward of Chembur.
3. Send them back to their parents.
4. Motivate them to study through municipal schools.
5. For their overall growth and development.

#### **ACTION PLAN**

1. Five small groups of four students each were formed. Different areas were allocated to the groups.
2. All groups went to their respective areas and searched through the local shops such as the grocery stalls, roadside book stalls, newspaper stands, bakeries, dhabas, road side eating joints, vendors, flower shops, at the traffic signals, crossroads, etc.
3. Interrogation was done concerning the backgrounds of the children found working therein.
4. The causes were inquired into and also a brief to how the child began working and under what circumstances.

#### **FINDINGS**

1. Children caught on random basis mainly belonged to the poor households with a large family size.
2. Majority of the children involved were migrants from Utter radish and Bihar.
3. Some of the children were brought down to Mumbai by their relatives to find employment.
4. Some children were actually traded for monetary purpose by their parents or relatives. The child is sold to the loaner lie a commodity for a certain period of time.
5. They had no fixed working hours. They were made to slog throughout the day. They were being constantly threatened and harassed.

#### **CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOUR**

The consequences faced have a far-reaching impact on the child, society, and the nation as a whole:

##### **Child Consequences:**

##### **Health Risks:**

This exposes children to hazardous working conditions, physical and mental abuse, and long

hours of Labour, which can result in injuries, illnesses, and developmental issues.

##### **Education Deprivation:**

Working children are often denied access to education, leading to a lack of basic literacy, limiting their future opportunities, and perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

##### **Stunted Development:**

It disrupts normal childhood development, depriving children of playtime, social interaction, and emotional well-being, hindering their physical, cognitive, and emotional growth.

##### ✓ **Societal Consequences:**

##### **Undermining Human Rights:**

It violates the fundamental rights of children, denying them the right to education, protection, and a safe and healthy environment

##### **Poverty and Inequality:**

It keeps families trapped in a cycle of poverty, as children's earnings contribute minimally to the household income and hinder their long-term economic prospects.

##### **Social Disintegration:**

It disrupts family and community dynamics as children are forced into work instead of receiving proper care and education. This can lead to a breakdown in social structures and intergenerational poverty

##### ✓ **National Consequences:**

##### **Economic Implications:**

It deprives children of education, leading to a less skilled workforce, reduced productivity, and limited opportunities for economic advancement.

##### **Human Capital Loss:**

It results in the loss of potential human capital as children are denied education and skill development. This diminishes the nation's capacity to compete globally and achieve sustainable development goals.

##### **Social Welfare Burden:**

The physical and psychological consequences lead to increased healthcare and social welfare costs for the nation. Governments must allocate resources to address these issues, diverting funds from other critical areas.

#### **SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUE OF CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA**

Addressing the issue of child Labour in India requires a comprehensive approach involving various stakeholders.

**1. Strengthening Legislative Framework:**

Enforce and strengthen existing laws, such as the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, to ensure comprehensive protection for children and stricter penalties for offenders. Amendments should align with international standards.

**2. Access to Quality Education:**

Ensure universal access to free and quality education for all children. Implement and enforce the Right to Education Act, focusing on reducing dropout rates and increasing enrollment in schools.

**3. Poverty Alleviation:**

Tackle the root causes of child Labour by implementing poverty alleviation programs, providing economic support to families living in poverty, and promoting livelihood opportunities for parents.

**4. Awareness and Sensitization:**

Conduct widespread awareness campaigns targeting parents, communities, and employers about the detrimental effects of child Labour on children's physical, mental, and educational development.

**5. Rehabilitation and Social Protection:**

Develop and implement comprehensive rehabilitation programs for rescued child laborers, including access to education, vocational training, healthcare, and psychological support. Establish social protection schemes for vulnerable families to prevent children from entering the Labour force.

**6. International Cooperation:**

Collaborate with international organizations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF, to access expertise, technical assistance, and financial resources to combat child Labour effectively.

**7. Empowering Local Communities:**

Involve local communities, including parents, teachers, and community leaders, in preventing child Labour. Empower them to identify and report cases of child Labour and provide support for rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

**MEASURES TAKEN**

1. The children were spoken to and given counselling as per the hazareds of child labor and were advised to take up studies and make their childhood a happy stage and lead a fruitful life.
2. The concerned employers were warned to stop child labour.
3. An attempt was made to find out the backgrounds of the children through the employers and relatives, so as to send them back to their families.
4. Those employers who continue child labor in spite of warning, were reported to the police and a fine of Rs. 20,000/- is charged or an imprisonment of 6 month or both.

**CONCLUSION**

The future of a community is in the well being of its children. The above fact is beautifully expressed by words worth in his famous lines "child is father of the man." So it becomes imperative for the health of a nation to protect its children from premature labor which is hazardous to their mental, physical, educational and spiritual development needs. It is urgently required to save children from the murderous clutches of social injustice and educational deprivation and ensure that they are given opportunities for healthy, normal and happy growth.

It requires concerted efforts, comprehensive policies, and the active involvement of various stakeholders to ensure the protection of children's rights and their holistic development.

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