

Production of Profit and Economics of Child Labour

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ABSTRACT

Since independence India is growing and expanding its economy to a global platform and is competing with other developing countries so in developing India Child Labour was never a new phenomenon. Despite of the various attempts taken by Government of India and other national as well as international organisation Child Labour not only continues to exist but is rising to. As entries of Global markets and Marketisation in India has developed Capitalistic approach of people have blatantly ignored the working of children. As Karl Marx in his book “*Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (1844)*” have rightly pointed out that Capitalist system was inherently meant to benefit the rich and exploit the poor. Marx identified the four-part economic process, production, distribution, exchange, and consumption, in this way: production creates the object correspond to the given needs which is further equally divided among people then these products are exchanged among them according to their needs which is finally consumed by people. But today Capitalistic society machines have replaced human hands but doesn't mean human labour has been stopped rather now it is more being exploited and one of its form is Child labour. What Karl Marx with his *theory of Alienation* told us very earlier that in Capitalist economic system, labourers were dehumanized and exploited and their working of multiple hours every day resulted them being alienated from society, the human race, and the object they produced, is very much prevalent on the present context of child labour prevailing here. Though India is emerging and now small scale industries of town like Mirzapur- Bhadohi (near Varanasi) have gain global importance one never imagined but Government should also consider this that Growing GDP and FDI is not what development is all about, but what is needed is holistic development of economic, social and political aspect too. Basically my term paper takes a holistic view in understanding this crucial problem related to child exploitation which is being paid as the cost of Production of profit.

Child Labour in India

Important industrial policies of the country are that of 1948, 1956, 1973, 1980 and 1991 according to reliable government source. In this policy, importance of public sector as well as private sector was accepted but leading role was given to public sector. Industry was divided into four parts and some sectors were reserved for public sector which was considered strategic and important for the industrial development of the country. Accepting the importance of small, cottage and village industries, policy to promote these sectors was initiated like. This probably helped both private sectors industries and public sector industry to grow and achieve new height. Policies like Dereservation for small scale industry helped these sectors to immensely grow for example Varanasi District still enjoys a high concentration of carpet weaving in Bhadohi, Aurai, Digh, Suriyawan blocks. In Bhadohi town along with the weaving of Persian carpets, production of Tibetan-Nepali carpets is increasing. The carpet industry is large in terms of turnover and foreign exchange earned. It is major employer of adult and child labour. The carpet belt in UP is believed to account for approximately 70 per cent of carpet production in India (ch2, Anker, Barge, Rajagopal, Joseph, 1998.) .

Another example can be traced of from Glass-Bangles Industry of Firozabad which includes over 50,000 children in it and is quit famous. And last but not least example which I want to cover in my term paper is from Surat Industry of Diamond as in the last few decades India has made tremendous progress in the world diamond trade commanding 70 per cent of the volume and 50 percent of the value. The diamond industry and trade accounts for nearly US \$4 billion per annum in exports. There has been a phenomenal growth in the exports in the last decade from Rs1189 crores in 1983-84 to more than Rs 11,400 crores in 1993-94. India is one of the countries in the world that process raw diamonds and its singular specialization is in cutting and polishing small sized and low quality diamonds (*ch 3,4 ibid*).

Case study of Child Labour In Industries of India

Well reading all this make us feel proud that India is continuously growing since it achieved independence and trying to compete with global market and big industries including small industries are developing and reaching to new heights but the problem here is this is only the one side of the coin, the other side of the same coin is disastrous, sad and problematic which can be also considered hindrance in the overall development of the country which is “CHILD Labour” these industries specially small scale industries are working as a fuel in the fire to increase child labour. Though first side of the coin was development and growth of these industries and their contribution to Indian economy but let me also introduce the other side of the coin i.e. its consequences which is that they are growing on the expense of small children innocent childhood, they are snatching children rights from them and when these children are expected to play and study, on the contrary these industries are indulging them in the hazardous works snatching away their childhood from them. The biggest example for it is in Carpet industry of Mirzapur-Bhadhoi , according to a Bupinder Zutshi , professor of Center of Study in Regional development(Jawaharlal Nehru university) a survey in 1985 found out that out of 2,30,00 carpet workers, number of the child workers estimated to be working that time was 75,000 and presently according to ILO-IPEC study(2000) estimated a ratio of 4.21 adults labours to child labour(both family and hired) in the carpet industry so number of child working in it were 1,30,000(*ch 8,pg.182-184.Kak and Pati,2012*). Richard Anker and his co editors describes its adverse effect on children working under this as weaving is done sitting on a wooden plank in a cramped posture. This work is hard demanding concentration and is also tediously repetitive nature where the hands and eyes have to be completely synchronized. Continuously sitting for 8-10 hours inside poorly lit and ventilated structures and inhaling wool fluff are likely to affect adversely weaver’s health.

Furthermore , an under-nourished weaver is more prone to infections, allergic reactions to the treated wool, stunted growth and respiratory problems such as TB and lung infections. Also as the knots have to be cut by a sharp curved knife, there is always the risk of nicking/cutting the fingers. In the easing process, certain chemicals and acids are used which affect the skin of the workers. There is also possibility of arthritis and development of joints in hands and fingers (*ch 2, pg 38, Anker, Barge, Rajagopal, and Joseph. 1998*).

Likewise in working condition of children in GLASS-BANGLES industries are no different ,even though here children did not work directly around the furnace, but as as ‘carriers’ they were equally affected by the heat, sound and pollution emanating from it. These factories are large structures of an average size of over 1000sq.meters. Most of them were open on all sides. The atmosphere was charged with heat, smoke and noise. The procedure of bangle making i.e. both joining and cutting involved long hours of sitting in one posture which carried the risk of causing cramps. Colouring, especially of multicoloured bangles done in homes by girls had quite a high toxic effect as the colours are chemical based. The colours because of their regular handling by hand generally stick to the fingers and palm difficult to remove. Tb in Ferozabad is quite common like in Mirzapur and both young males and females are afflicted (*ch 3,pg 64-68,ibid*).

Another example of misery of child labour is from Indian Diamond Institute which implies approximately 1, 50,000 child labourers to be employed in the diamond industry as a whole in the country. A study by ORG showed that children worked and stayed in the units in “not so well” hygienic conditions. These children suffered from various deficiency symptoms and diseases. (*ch.4, pg.74-86, ibid*). Further study showed that during one year prior to the survey at least half of the children had fallen sick. Some children also suffered from chest pain having symptoms of TB. This survey also included enquiry from local doctors who reported that the workers both children and adult suffered from chronic obstructive lung diseases, infections including all respiratory problems from mild cold to pneumonia, tuberculosis, scabies, eye problem, urinary tract infection including an analysis of deficiency symptoms among the working children indicated that almost half of them suffered from dental caries. Similarly, data on weight for age of sample children revealed that the nutritional status of more than 1/5 was below average (*ibid*).

Historical perspective of Child labour

Not only in Industries but there are exploitation of children in TOURISM and other Informal sectors, Commercial exploitation of child work in urban slums of Bhubaneswar and so on. There have been various case studies done by experts and surveys which indicate alarming condition of children especially poor employed in these sectors. But after reading all this a question always arises that how come this has gone so far? From where has this trend emerged and answer to this question automatically goes back in the historical perspective of child labour. According to Suneet Chopra, joint secretary of the All-India Agricultural workers' Union, is of view that historically from slave society onwards, the notion of force and era of exploitation entered with the involvement of children in the arena of production. Wages were not paid frequently to child bonded labourers who simply work with their bonded parents (*ch2.pg 21, Kak and Pati, 2012*). Tracing Wikipedia we get to know that “During the Industrial Revolution, children as young as four were employed in production factories with dangerous, and often fatal, working conditions. Based on this understanding of the use of children as labourers, it is now considered by wealthy countries to be a human rights violation, and is outlawed; while some poorer countries may allow or tolerate child labour. The Victorian era became notorious for employing young children in factories and mines and as chimney sweeps. Child labour played an important role in the Industrial Revolution from its outset, often brought about by economic hardship. Charles Dickens for example worked at the age of 12 in a blacking factory, with his family in debtor's prison. The children of the poor were expected to help towards the family budget, often working long hours in dangerous jobs for low pay, earning 10-20% of an adult male's wage. In England and Scotland in 1788, two-thirds of the workers in 143 water powered cotton mills were described as children in 19th-century”.

Satandru Sen, associate professor of South Asian history in University of New York describes history of child labour in context of India, as Andamanese children would be put to work by the colonial regime is not surprising in the context of the history of childhood in nineteenth century in India. Children here were drifted through juvenile wards of jails and reformatories, not to mention orphanages and asylums operated by secular and religious organization of all strips. As this institution became more legally and bureaucratically organised in the 1870s, their inmates were put to various kinds of work, ranging from handicrafts and industrial labour to apprenticeship as domestic servants and trainings as missionaries. Nevertheless, Andamanese child labour was not entirely invented by individual Britons running wild in the islands. They were rooted in ideologies of age, race, civilization, domesticity, sexual morality and investigative colonialism that had wide currency in Britain's nineteenth-century empire including the Indian mainland. For young aborigines who were put to various kinds of work by the colonial regime, labour was simultaneously mandated and relieved by savagery. There is a visible trajectory in this enterprise, ‘the savage must work’, to ‘the savage children will work’, to ‘the savage cannot work’, to ‘savage must work as a savage’. Each stage is marked by experimentation and wonder (ch 4, *ibid*).

Production being cost of exploitation of Small Children

There is no doubt that India is considered as a emerging economy and is growing at fast pace but with this is also growing various problems and Child labour is one among them. Though small scale industries and big industries of India is contributing to Indian economy at large amount .In his book Shakti Kak, Director ,Centre for the Jawaharlal Nehru Studies,Jamia Millia Islamia, (New delhi) describes that the rate of growth of GDP at factor cost has varied from 9.50 per cent in 2005-6 , 9.70 percent in 2006-7,6.70 per cent in 2008-9 and is estimated to be 7.20 per cent for 2009-10. The high rate of growth has largely been a result of an expanding service sector and increase in exports. The increase in GDP should result in a rise in incomes and quality of life of every citizens characterised by better schools, hospitals and nutrition. All these features of a fast growing economy have not been witnessed by a large proportion of the population of the country (ch 6,pg 115 *ibid*).

Though India is growing but not developing in all true sense. Reason and Causes of Child labour are many they include economic causes along with social and political too. Firstly if we see in economic terms, first thing which comes into mind is Globalisation and Liberalisation, these two processes can be traced as two way process in sense that it is a twofold edged process bringing in its wake immense wealth and also immense disparities. These have their own impact on widening gap between the rich and the poor, food insecurity, slowing down in the growth of formal sector employment and increasing in formalisation of the employments.

Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has called our attention to the fact that we ‘live in a world of unprecedented opulence’, yet one ‘with remarkable deprivation, destitution and oppression’ (*ch 1, pg.1,Satyarthi and Zutshi 2006*).The impact of globalisation, liberalisation and structural adjustment has severely affected some of the key economic and social sectors like agriculture, employment in formal sector, displacement of native communities, education of children and health and nutrition aspects of women, children and other marginalised communities. The development paradigm in India has also resulted in large scale displacement without appropriate rehabilitation policies and programmes. An estimated 25 to 30 million people in the name of development projects have been displaced. The world commission on dams also observed that large dams apart from having considerable cost involvement had harmful social impact on the livelihood and health of the affected communities (*pg5,ibid*). This has affected these displaced families very badly resulting in negative impact on child education and healthcare of these children.

Most of the time people regard Globalisation being the sole reason of poverty and inequality so one can ask does globalisation effect either increasing or reducing child labour. So answer to this can be if globalisation means more poverty, more decentralization of production with flexible labour and more sourcing of cheap labour for exports then it is but obvious to believe that Globalisation leads to more child labour. According to ILO estimates,246 million children are child labourers and out of six children in the world today is involved in child labour, doing work that is damaging to his or her mental, physical and emotional development. 73 million children are less than 10 years of age. The number of working children in the world between the ages of 5 and 14 years is at least 120 million. India with a population of more than 1 billion in 2001 A.D has the largest population of these working children in the world.(*pg.6, ibid*)

Development Growth Of India along with Growth of Child Labour: its Causes and Problems

With the growth in India is increasing child labour because the growth strategy which South Asian countries have adopted specially India has led to high levels of income disparity among people in the society that is why the range of people living under poverty is very high so for such families Children's work is also one of the major source of income for them and child labour also contribute to the growth of population as well. As large population of India is under poverty and uneducated indulge in agriculture sectors they have a strong belief of "More Hands More Work". According to P.S.Vivek a sociologist is of view that "The problem common problem of child labour in India is majority of poor people, bonded child labour in agriculture and certain parts of industrial sector, trafficking in children both inside and out of the country, children indulge in export industries, children working in hazardous, labour intensive industries like matches, glass bangles, bidi etc, lack of universal primary education large number of poor and malnourished children"(ch.10,pg .209, Kak and Pati 2012).

These various type of problems which have emerged in India have various reasons behind them to make this problem greater day by day, first of all 'Poverty' is one of the major factor for these small children to indulge into such work it will be wrong to conclude this as the only factor of child labour as it has numerous other factor too as 'Lack of Parental Interest' specially in rural areas who do not have much faith in education system including capability of their children. 'Migration to Urban Areas' is also one major factor to this and also is responsible in giving rise to Urban Slum Culture. And last factor which i strongly believe also by my personal encounter of these children are 'Economic Constraint', this is major problem which is also responsible for making various attempt of government of India to eradicate child labour go in vain as due to this poor people don't want their children to go to school because even if school fee or tuition fee is free, they have to buy other thing like uniform, books ,stationary etc so poor people who hardly earn to get food cannot even dream to spend their earnings in all this.

As per the S.N.Mishra and Sweta Mishra view "Indian education is such that it does not offer job-oriented courses for the children in the rural and urban areas. The existing education system rather prepares the child only for white collared jobs and that too they are offered to those with undergraduate degrees" (Mishra and Mishra, 2004). So the main problem is of job security in minds of these parents which stops them to send their children to school and another factor which they argued is that India also the problem of having no provision of compulsory education so some positive steps should be taken by government in appositive way to force these parents for sending their children to school leading hardly any scope of their employment.

Measures and Steps taken for Child Labour

As reading the historical perspective of Child labour it is very much clear that this not the newly emerged trends instead have roots in past too so since long, efforts have also been made consistently to improve the condition of working children by formulating policies national and international level. Since the declaration in 1979 as the "International year of Child" by the United Nation General Assembly this problem gained the greater picture and was recognised globally and call was made for action to eradicate this problem and then initiatives were taken up by people of various organisation to study these matters and address this issue. Among them was the International Labour Organisation presently specialised agency of the United Nations Organisation has contributed a lot in study of child labour. India is among the first ten founding, non elective and permanent members of the ILO and share special space in this. Then in 1992s ILO launched 'International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour' which is also known as operational arm of ILO and its basic aim is to eradicate most abusive and exploitative types of child labour. Another agency which came in picture in 1946 was UNICEF which urges on the "the need of giving priority to efforts for the immediate elimination of hazardous and exploitative child labour and urgent support for education so that children may acquire the knowledge and skills that can enable them to improve their lives. Besides it also stresses on the need for basic services, social development strategies, income generation measures and legal protection for children and their families and

communities” (pg.69 *ibid*). Another important organisation were various NGOs working across the country with the philosophy that going to school is the basic right of the children and children are kept away from labour is not only duty of government or law but also of whole communities.

As these movements were growing worldwide India was not different, In India also a group of social workers under leadership of Kailash Satyarthi organised themselves in 1980’s to effectively fight against facets of slavery, servitude and abuse of children and this group launched Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) movement in 1985 to save servitude throughout the country. In India today, “there are 80,000 members of the BBA with elected National and State Executive committees in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Haryana and Maharashtra”(pg-254,*Satyarthi and Zutshi,2006*).

Another important organisation ‘South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude(SAACS) came into existence in 1989 in a conference of ‘South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude’ under the guidance of Kailash Satyarthi which had representatives from all the countries of South Asia. With the passage of the time large number of NGOs, Human Rights Organisation and so on. Today SACCs has 800 registered partners, who are actively contributing towards the elimination of child servitude (pg. 255,*ibid*).

Today child labour is an issue which is being debated worldwide at international and national level and huge number of organisation are working day and night to eradicate this problem world and many remarkable work has been done by these NGOs and organisation to rescue these innocent children from this brutal and equally cruel practice but the sad part is still after so much effort and awareness campaign still child labour is increasing so these organisation have to redouble their efforts to free these children from the chain of slavery and have the better world for their survival.

Conclusion

Principle ‘Last person First’ given by Gandhi ji can be considered as a most democratic principle and also a key to achieve social justice and equity in India. What requires for it is proper campaigning and spreading awareness among the people of our country. Government of India should realise that with capital development and investment in private affairs it is also very essential to invest in rural development, education, health and agriculture development which will benefit children. Balanced mix of technologies is also required to regenerate rural employment on and off farm. Though spreading education is one of the means to lower down this problem but to completely eradicate it is just not enough as government of India must ensure that the needs of the poor are met and people should also realise that mere increase in GDP of the country is not growth instead a country is considered to be developed when it is economically along with politically and socially sound. Though India is fast emerging economy but problems like Black economy has also increased along with it and need of the hour is to check this and try to bring to a halt the evasions of taxes and seepage of capital from the India to other country which would end the budget deficit and provide the enough surplus to be invested in agriculture, health, education etc. So India needs to tackle the various possible cause of Child labour through governmental policies and strict and proper enforcement of these policies.

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