

CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA AND THE ILO

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Child labour is a persistent problem of our country. It has been a subject of grave concern for administrators, policy makers, academicians and Justice. It is not only our problem rather is a Global problem. In developing countries of the world over 50 Million children participate in labour force and are subject to unsafe working condition and deprived of normal family life. According to Sample Survey projection, the number of child workers in India is estimated to be about 17 million. Eighty three percent of them work in agriculture, the remaining work in manufacturing, processing, repairs and allied areas.

The role of International Labour Organisation is of Paramount importance regarding the inhuman practices what is prevalent in the worldwide context. By establishing a bridge between the concerned Government and the workers it is maximizing the welfare of the labour to the desired extent. It has given top priority to the child labour prohibition in its network towards the member countries these days. To show natural interest on the part of India is but natural because India is a welfare state by its nature and moreover it is a staunch member of ILO from its Inception.

So far as the activities of the Government of India is concerned, it has launched a Rs. 2.77 crore child labour action and support project (CLASP) to enforce the child labour laws and to provide support for ongoing and future projects. The three-year project is specifically intended to facilitate the implementation of child labour (prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 and the national child labour policy. The project is to be executed by the ILO and its and the ministry of labour.

Regarding the above new proposal of co-operation between Indian Government and the International Labour Organisation was discussed when the Deputy Director -General of ILO Mr Herbert Maier called on Labour minister P.A Sangama on 7th April 1993 in Delhi. The subject covered included occupational safety, social security, elimination of child labour and structural adjustment. Regarding child labour, Mr Maier was of the view that it was a phenomenon of a situation of poverty and not enough remunerative employment for their parents.

ILO has sponsored on workshop also on the hazards to the safety and health of working children in the second week of April 93 in Delhi. The participants were of the form opinion that children engaged in work, that are hazardous to their safety and development should receive first priority in the move to combat child labour and every country should have a child labour policy that must be clearly prescribed the participation of children in the kinds of work or occupational conditions known to be significantly hazardous to them.

So far as ILO's contribution in India on child welfare is concerned it has earmarked \$ 2.25 million assistance for international program on elimination of child labour (IPEC) in India for the year ending in December 31st. The Government of India has constituted a national steering committee (NSC) comprising representative of Government, employers, workers and non-gazetted officers to ensure time bound implementation of programme.

So far as my view is concerned that, the international program of elimination of child labour has made a good start, would help in improving the lot of child. Involvement of non-governmental agencies in big way, particularly which have done credible work in Prime requirement of time. I can say that proper result is still hidden in the future but the exigency of the hour is to do a lot more with proper efforts and in a positive direction.