



Poverty and Child Labour in Karnataka -A Study

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Abstract

Children are regarded as a nation's most valuable asset and the most vulnerable segment of society. Compared to adults, all children are vulnerable by nature, but some are more critically vulnerable than others. Child vulnerability is a downward spiral where each shock leads to a new level of vulnerability, and each new level opens for a host of new risks. In other words, with each shock, the likelihood that a child will suffer a negative outcome increase. Over the years, child protection has undergone significant change. The traditional approach of custodial care in an institution is being replaced because of a strong conviction that the right of family is one of the most basic rights of a child. Recognizing this right of a child to a family, all interventions must try and ensure that the physical, social, emotional, and educational needs of the child are met in a secure, nurturing family environment. The child labors have no shelter, or food and no education. They run the risk of contracting various ailments and skin diseases. They are vulnerable to exploitation by almost anyone-the employer, the employer the parents. The cops and even the common man they become easy targets of drug pushers they are even sexually abused. Certain principles of policy are therefore, to be followed by the state so that children get opportunities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and the childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and moral and material abandonment. Let us hope, by the orders and the directions of the Supreme Court in December 1996, the child of the twenty – first century will find himself into the “heaven of freedom”.

Key words: Causes, Child Labour. Exploitation, employer, childhood, material, abandonment.

Introduction:

Child labour is a wide spread phenomenon especially in a developing country like India. Poverty and economic inequality are the two major factors invariably related to the incidence of child labour. Every parent and the society wants its children to grow into good and responsible citizens. This is possible when the children are given nutritious food, proper education, good shelter, better environment, affection and direction as well as proper guidance, lack of these facilities puts that life of the youngsters in jeopardy. Child labour is an example of this, which is a form of exploitation due to lack of protection: both from the family and the society. A word child labor itself says how complex. It is has wide and vicious scope in all parts of our social life. It has perilousness it in its nature and considered as dangerous to every child who were working as child labor in many places. It has become very common phenomena in our contemporary Indian society. And this is spurring respect of due to many problems like poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and over population. Government of India launching compulsory literacy programmes throughout the country. (Article 45) and Gov't spending huge amount on adult education. On the other side currently India having 11.50 crore child laborer in all production sections of the society. But worried thing is Karnataka representing with 3.90 lakh child laborers who having age of below 14 years. It will create dangerous

hurdles in a developing path of our country. Till today rural India totally depending on agriculture unfortunately this sector has extensive child labor force. Here we can absence 60% laborers were below 10 years and 23% child labors engaged in trade, small scale and cottage industries. Even though the problems is very savior in urban area also. Here they were working in hotels. Canteen, Garages, Dhaba, and in others latent sector of the complex. 36% children were chugged in household worries Urban society unsporting familial conditions will come for this problem.

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD LABOR: The Encyclopedia of social sciences (1959): Defines child labor as when the business of wage earnings or of participation in self of family support conflicts directly or indirectly with the business of growth and education the result is child labor.

Homer Flock , chairman , united states , national child labor committee defined child labour as :Any work by children that interfere with their full physical development , their opportunities for desirable minimum of education or needed recreation.

CHAILD LABOUR IN INDIA AND KARNATAKA

The problem of child labour has been undoubtedly one of the deepest concerns of all societies. Child labour denies child hood to a person. It denies some basic human rights to children, mainly right to education, right to food and nutrition, and right to enjoy childhood. The international labour organization has involved in the fight against child labour since its establishment in 1919. Yet child labour continues to exist in a substantial size in all developing countries. Wide spread poverty forces the family to put their children to work. The existence of child labour therefore associated with survival of the family. Poverty and child labour form a vicious cycle.

A large number of studies have been under taken at macro and micro level to bring out the fact that how difficult it is to eradicate the child labour. The major studies are reviewed here to prepare the base for the present investigation about child labour in backward region. Child labour has gained considerable attention at national and international level in recent years. The Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC) is an evidence of it. Consequently, now it is for most duty of every nation to protect and promote the welfare of the children. But the undesired prevalence of child labour has affected the progress. The problem of child labour has become more severe problem than elsewhere. It is in existence since time immemorial in all most all parts of the world, irrespective of the level of development and economic growth of the country. The laws so far enacted have very little effect. They have failed to identify clearly the magnitude and dimensions of child labour. Social workers, activists from the trade union re facing difficulties in helping the children due to the ambiguity in the laws in existence, the other are social and economic factors. The workers involved in fight against child labour do not get the proper data and information on the nature, causes and conditions of child labour and about their feelings and aspirations.

The issue had attracted the attention of the government and people. At national and international level efforts are going on to fight against the child labour. Many studies have aimed at eradication of child labour. The systematic, precise, and effective steps have to be taken from grass root level to combat the child labour. Therefore, one who wishes to root out the problem has to understand it in a better way. Better understanding of the problem would help in framing suitable policies so as to eradicate the problem. The review of literature on child labour provides the information to frame the suitable policies which can help eradicating the child labour.

Child labour has become a global phenomenon in these days. It is not peculiar to a particular country irrespective of economic development, growth and prosperity has spread over all the countries of the world. The ILO estimates (1975) shows its spread over around the world. Different countries of the world either developed or developing like South East Asia, Africa, South America Europe and North America have the problem of child labour. South East Asia had the highest child labours i.e., 29 million. Africa 9.7 million, South America 3.1 million. The ILO estimate 1975 revealed that there were 52.0 million child labours in the world. Thus it has become a worldwide burning problem. Karnataka state has situated in southern part of India and has 27 districts, 175 talukas, 270 towns and 29,483 villages. Among these total villages 27,575 villages are inhabited and 1908 villages are uninhabited. The total population of children of Karnataka state is 68,26,168 (census, 2001).

Karnataka state comprises of 27 district having agriculture as the predominant occupation. Child labours are found mainly engaged in agriculture. According to an estimate there are totally 11,69,402 child labourers in Karnataka state. The census 1991 reveals that there are 11,083,943 children in the age group of 5-14 years among

these 5,602,033 boys and 5,481,798 girls. 7,824,740 children were living in rural area 32,5909 children living in urban area, Karnataka state stands in fourth place having more number of child labours.

During the year (1984-85) a survey of the working children in urban area had been conducted by the institute for culture and research action Bangalore. This has become a base for drafting a child labour bill in 1985 and also helped the working children to acquire skill, knowledge and to have training so as to become productive labour.

Statement of the Problem;

There are no definite estimates of child labour. This is because of under reporting of the phenomenon. Majority of the child labour working in agriculture or in informal sector in the form of 'helpers' 'assistants' does not figure into child labour statistics. Therefore, it is difficult to identify the magnitude and the problem of child labour in India. In this direction the micro level studies are useful to understand the problem.

Objectives

1. To study the causes of child labour in Karnataka.
2. To know the wage and working condition of child labour.
3. To study the measures for eradicating child labour in the district.
4. To know the role of Government in eradicating child labour.
5. To suggest suitable measures for eradication of child labour.

Causes of Child labour in Karnataka;

It is known fact that child labour is in existence since time immemorial. In the olden days when the family was an unit of production and agriculture was the main stay children assist their parents in light activities in agriculture, animal husbandry and household activities. The industrial revolution and technological development has paved the way too many problems and gave birth to new class of wage earners. This era of industrialization and technological advancement subjected children to economic and social exploitation by employers whose concern was to maximize the profit. This fact was confirmed by the royal commission on labour in 1931. Since independence there has been reduction in child labour as pointed out by the national commission on labour in 1969.

a. Poverty: The most important cause for prevalence of child labour is wide spread poverty. Poverty compels the parents to send their children to seek employment. Family income some time may fall short to meet out the needs of the family. The institute of public opinion conducted a survey in 1969 and had expressed that, nearly 41.2 percent of India's population was living under poverty.

b. Illiteracy and Ignorance of Parents: Illiteracy and ignorance is the main character of the Indian society. Most of the lower socio economic groups of population are illiterate. They worried about present than future. For them present is more important than future. There is a belief in the minds of the illiterate mass that early work of children will help them to lead better life.

c. Large size of the family: The large size of the family is one of the contributing factor for the existence of child labour. The large families usually have less income. These families largely contribute for the cause of child labour. If a family is small in size and well planned has no question of sending their siblings to the labour market. In small family's children have been taken care of.

d. Cheap labour: The technological advancement has developed a tendency among the employers to earn quick and more profit at low cost. Hence, in every country there was a tendency to employ children at low wages and for long hours of work in horrible working conditions.

e. Absence of Scheme for Family Allowances: In India there were no schemes for family allowances launched by the government so that people may have adequate standard of living and may not be compelled to send their children to labour market. The amount which is paid in the form of pension or as compensation is insufficient to maintain or too less to meet out the family expenditure, without the help of children's income.

f. Migration: Migration of parents is also one of the major causes for the existence of child labour. Usually the parents have to leave their native places in search of employment opportunities. For the survival it is the essence for them. To them it is very hard to maintain their families without employment.

g. Adult unemployment and under employment: Adults unemployment and under employment is also one of the cause for the existence child labour in our country. As India is a developing and over populated country has facing the problem of unemployment and under employment. The adult members of the family rarely have the opportunities of employment.

h. Broken families: The children of the broken family are the child labours. The separation of parents, death of mother and father in the family leads to the emergence of child labour, apart from that long illness, old age of parents forces the children to enter in to labour market, as they are the only supporters of the family.

i. Orphanage of the child labour: Many children expose themselves to work is because of orphanage. The death of the father or mother or both made children in secure. There was no body to help them, unless they help themselves by entering into the labour market survival of them will be difficult. In such helpless conditions they have to work for low wages and for long hours.

j. Poor implementations of child labour laws: The constitution of India has made provision for legislative enactment whenever it is needed. The Article 14 of Indian constitution itself has forbidden the employment of children below the 14 years of age. So for many legislative enactments have been made to provide legal protection to children in various occupations.

k. The dimension of child labour: In November 1989 the government of India ratified the convention on the rights of child labour (CRC) drafted by the United Nations Commission on human rights. The convention draws its attention towards the four sets of rights of children namely the right to survival, the rights to protection, the right to participation, the right to development.

Various dimensions of child labour are

a. Concentration in rural areas: The estimates based on the N.S.S. Data shows that there are 214 million children in the age group 5-14 years in 1993-94.

b. Child labour is concentrated in agriculture Though the incidence of child labors declining over time, however it is concentrated in agriculture. The concentration was 14 percent for rural areas and 5.6 percent in urban areas

c. High incidence of child labour among SC/ST families Among the social group of the society SC's report the highest incidence of child labour and next followed by ST's. A study in Andhra Pradesh also reveals that scheduled casts report highest incidence of child labour in the Andhra Pradesh.

d. Regional disparities: The observation of N. S. S. Data shows that there is high incidence of child labour in Himachal Pradesh in rural areas. In case of Rajasthan it is not clear that why NCAER data shows very low level of incidence (1.2 percent) as compared to N. S. S. Data census data.

e. Variations in estimation of child labour The organization like ILO, UNICEF, NSSO, ORG, NGO's, Planning Commission etc., have shown that extent of child labour varies from 20 million to 111 million in India. The ILO estimate shows that over 250 million children are exploited over the globe.

Measures to Control Child Labour;

Since child labour problem is a global problem, efforts have been going on at national and international level to check the prevalence of child labour. Keeping in view the impact of child labour the constitution of India has made provisions for protection of women and children. Article 15(3) of the constitution says that nothing shall prevent the state from making any special provisions for women and children. Article 24 states that "No child below 14 years of age shall be employed to work in any factory or mine engaged in any hazardous employment". There is also provision in Article 42 and 43 for securing just and human conditions of work. Accordingly, thirteen major legislative enactments have been passed which provide legal protection to children in various occupations. They are

1. Children (Pledging of labour) Act 1933.
2. Dock worker's regulation and employment Act 1948.
3. Factories Act 19458
4. Plantation labour Act 1951
5. Mines Act 1952
6. Merchant Shipping Act 1958
7. Apprentices Act 961

8. Motor Transport Workers Act 1961
9. Bidi and Cigar Works (Conditions of employment) Act 1966
10. Contract labour (Regulation and abolition) Act 1970
11. Radiation protection Act 1971
12. Shops and commercial establishment Act

Many amendments have been made in most of the laws for improving the conditions of the child labour concerning age, nature of employment, hours of work, education and training etc. International labour organization (ILO) has passed 18 conventions and recommendation regarding labour standards for providing better working facilities to children. Out these India has ratified only three of them. They are minimum age of children, medical examination of working children and protection of children working at night. In addition, the comprehensive law has been enacted in India the child labour prohibition Act 1986 prohibits employment of children in certain hazardous occupation.

Conclusion:

Based on the observation, the present study arrived at the conclusion that child labour is a consequence of poverty in the study area. It has spread over all parts of the district economy. Child labour were found in all types occupations. There is exploitation of children in terms of long hours of work and low wages. Child labors in this area are working in a bad working conditions.

Child labour has badly affected the physical and mental development of children as they are the real wealth of our nation, they have to be protected from every evil. In this direction Government and private agencies should join hands together to eradicate child labour from grass root level. Peoples participation in this battle of eradication of child labour is essential. Developing critical awareness of one's reality, or the process of sensitization, leads to increased willingness and openness to take action to change the reality. Awareness, therefore, is often the first step towards preparing individuals and communities to initiate action. While awareness is critical, resultant action depends upon having the necessary tools to take actions based on this awareness. Accurate information, availability of resources, and established accountability mechanisms can facilitate necessary action, and lead to a positive change.

The state plan of action for children seeks to address the number of problems faced the children in the state. Government of India proposed and brought National plan of action in the year 1994. The Karnataka state responded to it by launching a plan action for development of children at state level in the same year. The present plan action has been developed by seeking guidelines from CRC, UN Goals and Draft NPAC, 2003. It collected primary data from various departments and periodic surveys

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