



Child Labour in India: Causes, Consequences, Legal provisions and Efforts

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Abstract:

Children are the future citizens of the nation and their adequate growth is the topmost priority of the nation. Children around the world are engaged in a large number of activities classified as work. This paper focuses on various concepts and studies associated with child labour, their socio-economic issues. Various causes of child labour like the curse of poverty, lack of educational resources, Social and economic backwardness, Addiction, disease or disability, inadequate family income, large families, poverty, illiteracy etc.. Consequences of Child Labour such as general child injuries and abuses like cuts, burns, and lacerations, fractures, tiredness and dizziness, excessive fears and nightmares, drugs and alcoholism, physical abuse, emotional neglect etc. The Policy initiatives taken by Government of India through various programmes, NGO's and major National Legislations had a great impact on the situation of child labour and for the protection of child rights and elimination of child labour in India. From several decades, legislation of India has tried to control and regulate labour. For several decades in India, laws exist to regulate and control to child labour. The main concern of the legislation was to regulate working hours for children, to prescribe the lowest age limit for working of children, to ensure the life, health of the child workers, and to restrict the working of children in dangerous work. Child Labour legislations are which restrict the working of children below the age group of 14 years and 15 years in some of the prescribed occupations. In absence of provisions to resolve the problem and due to lack of political will, the number of child labour in total labour force of the Nation is keeping on increasing. Since, 1881, an oversized numbers of laws were enacted that gives the legal protection to the operating youngsters. The Child (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933 followed by the Employment of Child Act, 1986. Various recommendations given by a series of Commissions and because of which Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 enacted.

Keywords: poverty, Illiteracy, health hazardous, Child Labour, Constitution, Laws, Social factors, Constitution Laws, Acts.

INTRODUCTION:

Children are the greatest gift to humanity and childhood is a state of vulnerable human development as it has the budding for future development of any society. "The child is a father of man," Wordsworth said. Nehru considered that "The child to be the greatest asset of the nation". The child is usually a person who is less than 14 years of age and develops less, immature and cannot understand the consequences of any work and is not aware of his rights. According to 2011 census 4.5 million girls and 5.6 million boys are engaged in work in India. They are more prevalent in Utter Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Madya Pradesh and Rajasthan etc. in this society the child labour is more visible to all because there is a change in the location of the work and it is converted to business owner and other workers. 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. In India, child labour is an incessant problem which is a challenge before the nation. Government has taken various protective measures to deal with this problem through strict enforcement of assorted legislative provisions along with simultaneous rehabilitative policies. Several committees, sub-committees and commissions have been appointed from time to time by the government to find out ways and means to prevent child labour

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives has undertaken for the study;

- 1) To find out the socio-economic background of child labour in India.
- 2) To study the causes and consequences of child labour.
- 3) To study the legal provisions and efforts against child labour

METHODOLOGY

For analysis this study is based on mainly secondary data on census of India, 2011 and some data collected from different books, journals and internet etc.

Definitions of Child Labour:

Child: Under 15 (Set by ILO's Convention No. 138) in the most used standard. ILO (1996) let ages depend on work contents, under 13 for "light" works and under 18 for "hazardous" works.

Labour: "Economically active", when a person works on a regular basis for which he/she is remunerated or that results in output destined for market.

Article 1 of the UNCRC defines everyone under the age of 18 years as a child. It lays down a detailed charter of children's social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights and mandates their protection from any practice prejudicial to their rights. Article 32 of the Convention obliges states parties to proscribe children from working in any condition that is likely to be hazardous, or interfere with their education, or be harmful for their health, physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual development.

PROBLEM OF THE CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA:

In India it has seen that the workforce and the participation rate of child labour have decrease in last two decades compare to earlier decade. The national sample survey data shows that in the year 2004-05 the estimated child work force was 9.07 million as against 21.55 million in 1983. There is a considerable fall in the child work force during this period and it is 12.48 million. However in the absolute numbers the problem is very big because as per census 2001, there are 1.26 crores economically active children in the age group of 5-14 years. As per NSSO survey 2009-10, the working children are estimated at 49.84 lakh which shows a declining trend.

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'. In addition, more than 42.7 million children in India are out of school. However, the good news is that the incidence of child labour has decreased in India by 2.6 million between 2001 and 2011. However, the decline was more visible in rural areas, while the number of child workers has increased in urban areas, indicating the growing demand for child workers in menial jobs. Child labour has different ramifications in both rural and urban India.

In relative terms Uttar Pradesh alone accounts for 20.6% followed by Maharashtra (11.4%), Bihar (10.4%), Andhra Pradesh (9.3%), Madhya Pradesh (6.6%), Gujarat & Rajasthan (5.8%), Karnataka (5.7%) and West Bengal (5.4%). Over the years there have been changes in the relative share of states in the country's total child

labor force. For example, the share of U.P. in the country's total child labor force has gone up from 12.3% as per census 1991 to 15.2% in census 2001 and to 20.6% in census 2011. It is pertinent to mention here that the state is the most populous state in the country. The share of Maharashtra in total child labor force had gone down from 9.3% as per census 1991 to 6.0% in census 2001 before rising again to 11.4% as per census 2011. The state of Bihar has witnessed its share in total child labor force rising from 8.2% in census 1991 to 8.8% as per census 2001 and finally to 10.4% in census 2011.

CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR:

Poverty: The main reason for child labour in India is poverty. Most of the country's population suffers from poverty. Due to poverty, parents cannot afford the studies of their children and make them earn their wages from a tender age.

Social and economic backwardness: Social and economic backwardness is also the main reason for child labour in India. Socially backward parents do not send their children to receive an education. Consequently, their children are trapped in child labour. Due to illiteracy, many times parents are not aware of various information and schemes for child education. Lack of education, illiteracy and consequently the lack of awareness of their rights among them have encouraged child labour.

Addiction, disease or disability: In many families, due to alcohol addiction, disease or disability, there is no earning, and the child's wages are the sole means of family's sustenance. Population growth is also increasing unemployment, which has an adverse impact on child labour prevention. So, parents, instead of sending their children to school, are willing to send them to work to increase family income.

Family tradition: It is a shocking but bitter truth that in our society it is very easy to give child labour the name of tradition or custom in many families. The cultural and traditional family values play their role in increasing the problem of child labour in India at the voluntary level. Many families believe that a good life is not their destiny, and the age-old tradition of labour is the only source of their earning and livelihood.

Discrimination between boys and girls: We have been conditioned into believing that girls are weaker and there is no equal comparison between boys and girls. Even today, in our society, we will find many examples where girls are deprived of studies. Considering girls weaker than boys deprives them of school and education. In labourer families, girls are found to be engaged in labour along with their parents.

Large Family Size: A family, which is big in size with low income, cannot lead a happy life. As a result, family members cannot get better education, entertainment, health care and opportunities to grow into a healthy family environment.

CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOUR:

Children are exposed to accidental and other injuries at work. They should thus be protected to prevent social, economic and physical harm, which persist to affect them during their lifetime. Such injuries include General child injuries and abuses like cuts, burns, and lacerations, fractures, tiredness and dizziness, excessive fears and nightmares.

Physical abuse that involves corporal punishment, emotional maltreatment such as blaming, belittling, verbal attacks, rejection, humiliation and bad remarks.

Emotional neglect such as deprivation of family love and affection, resulting in loneliness, and hopelessness.

Physical neglect like lack of adequate provision of food, clothing, shelter and medical treatment. Lack of schooling results in missing educational qualifications and higher skills thus perpetuating their life in poverty.

Competition of children with adult workers leads to depressing wages and salaries.

Apart from the above, lack of opportunity for higher education for older children deprives the nation of developing higher skills and technological capabilities that are required for economic development/transformation to attain higher income and better standards of living.

LEGISLATION, POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND EFFORTS:

1. Legislation for Child Labour in India

The first protective legislation for child labour in India was seen in 1881 in the form of Indian factories Act which had the provisions prohibiting employment of children below 7 years, limiting the working hours for children to 9 hours a day and providing 4 holidays in a month and rest hours. This was actually made by the ruling British Government to decrease the production in Indian industries through some legal restrictions.

It may be submitted that the labour legislations in India including protective legislation for children have been greatly influenced with the result of various Conventions and Recommendations adopted by International Labour Organisation. Besides Constitutional provisions, there are several legislative enactments which provide legal protection to children in various occupations.

2. Constitutional Provisions Regarding Child Labour:

The framers of the Constitution of India deemed it necessary to include special provisions in the Constitution for the protection of the rights of working children. Several articles of Indian Constitution provide protection and provisions for child labour.

Article 15 (3): The State is empowered to make the special provisions relating to child, which will not be violative of right to equality.

Article 21: No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty, except according to procedure established by law. The Supreme Court held that „life“ includes free from exploitation and to live a dignified life.

Article 21A (Right to Education): The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years, in such manner as the State may, by law, determine. Where children are allowed to work, in such establishment, it is the duty of employer to make provisions for the education of child labourer.

Article 23: Traffic in human beings and beggar and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this prohibition shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 24 (Prohibition of Employment of Children in Factories, etc.): No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any actory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment. The Supreme Court held that “hazardous employment” includes construction work, match boxes and fireworks therefore; no child below the age of 14 years can be employed. Positive steps should be taken for the welfare of such children as well as for improving the quality of their life.

Article-38 (1): Provides that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively, as it may secure a social order in which justice, social, economic and political shall be ensured.

Article 39 (e): The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing the health and strength of the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength.

Article 39 (f): The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity; and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

Article-42 and 43: It provide for securing just and human conditions of work and hold out a promise that the State shall endeavor to secure, by suitable legislation, economic organization or in any other way, for all workers, a living wage with specified conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full employment of leisure and social and culture opportunities. This definitely includes child laborers in widest sense.

Article-45: The constitution provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. The general provisions under Article, 38, 42, 43, 45 and 47 of Directive Principles of State Policy, although do not deal directly with child welfare but provides strategy for indirectly promoting welfare of children.

Article-46: It makes provisions for promotion, with special care of the educational and economic interest of SC and STs and other weaker sections of the society.

Article-47: Lays emphasis on raising standard of living of people by the State. These also include children in their purview. While assessing the progress and implementation of these provisions, it is noteworthy that child labor is increasing day by day¹¹.

Article 51A (e): It shall be the duty of every citizen of India, who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or ward as the case may be, between the age of six and fourteen years.

3. Beneficial Law for Children:

Children Pledging of Labour Act, 1933: This Act was enacted to prevent the practice of pledging the child under 15 of age. According to this Act any agreement relating to the pledge of the service of a child is void and any person entering into any such agreement is to be punished.

The Factories Act, 1948: The Act prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years. An adolescent aged between 15 and 18 years can be employed in a factory only if he obtains a certificate of fitness from an authorized medical doctor. The Act also prescribes four and a half hours of work per day for children aged between 14 and 18 years and prohibits their working during night hours.

The Plantation Labour Act, 1951: This Act has not only limited working hours for the child to 27 a week but also provides for one day leave for each period of seven days work in addition to certain other welfare provisions.

The Mines Act, 1952: This Act defines a child to be a person who has not completed the age of 15 years and an adolescent means who has completed 15 years of age but is less than 18 years of age. This Act also provides that an adolescent who has completed the age of 16 can only be employed in any part of the mine if it is under ground, after obtaining a competent medical certificate and that too for only four and half hours on any day, save between 9 p.m to 6 a.m. This Act also prescribes the penalty on the violation of the provisions of law.

The Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961: This Act prohibits employment of children below 15 years of age in motor transport undertakings; however, an adolescent can work subject to Production of certificate of physical fitness in such organization.

The Apprentices Act, 1961: This Act provides that a person who is less than 14 years of age will not qualify for apprenticeship training but this rule is not applicable for those apprentices who are receiving vocational training.

The Employment of Children Act, 1938: Its successor, the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, are substantially the same. The latter aims at identifying more hazardous processes and industries with a view to banning child labour in these units and regulates working conditions for children in non-hazardous units. The new Act of 1986 has prescribed various valuable provisions for prohibiting and regulating the child labour. The main objects of this Act are as under:

1. To bring uniformity in the definition of child in the related laws.
2. To ban the employment of children in specific occupations and processes.
3. To enable modification of scope of banned industries and processes by laying down a procedure.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986: The Act prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years in 13 occupations and 57 processes that are hazardous to the children's lives and health. These occupations and processes are listed in the Schedule to the Act.

Table-1 History of labour legislations

Year	Legislation	Age that Regulations Apply	What it Says
1881	The Factories Act	7	Working hours limited to 9 hours
1891	The Factories Act	9	Working hours limited to 7 hours
1901	The Mines Act	12	Specifically for mines
1922	The Factories (Amendment) Act	15	Working hours limited to 6 hours
1923	The Indian Mines Act	13	Raised the age to 13 years
1926	The Factories (Amendment) Act	15	Working in two separate factories on same day prohibited
1931	The Indian Ports Act	12	Related to child labour handling goods At Ports
1933	The Children (Pledging of Labour) Act	-	First law against bonded labour
1934	The Factories (Amendment) Act	Dec-15	Employment prohibited in certain areas and employment hours restricted to 5 hours
1935	The Mines Amendment Act	15	Working hours regulated to 10 hours above ground and 9 hours below
1938	The Employment of Children Act	13	Handling of goods allowed for 12-14 age
1951	The Employment of children (Amendment) Act	17	Prohibited working for 15-17 at ports and railways
1951	The Plantations Labour Act	12	Prohibited working of children under 12
1952	The Mines Act	15	Required medical certificate for underground work
1954	The Factories (Amendment) Act	17	Prohibited work at nights
1961	The Motor Transport Workers Act	15	Prohibits working in any motor transport undertaking
1966	The Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act	14	Prohibits working in tobacco factories
1978	The Employment of Children (Amendment) Act	15	Prohibits working on and near railway premises
1986	The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act	14	Most comprehensive bans employment in specified industries regulates the working condition where not prohibited uniformly in definition of children in related laws

Source: www.labour.nic.in

4. Other Major Legislations:

a) Commissions for the Protection of Child Rights (C.R Act, 2005): Act provides for the constitution of a National as well as State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR and SCPCRs) in every State and Union Territory.

b) Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015: It is a comprehensive legislation that has replaced the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000. It provides for strengthened provisions for both Children in Need of Care and Protection (CICP) and Children in Conflict with Law (CICL) by catering to their development needs and by adopting a child friendly approach in the adjudication and disposition of matters in the best interest of children and for their ultimate rehabilitation through various institutions established under the act.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 is the widely accepted UN instrument ratified by most of the developed as well as developing countries, including India. The Convention prescribes standards to be followed by all state parties in securing the best interest of the child and outlines the fundamental rights of children.

Contribution by national institutions: A number of national institutions such as the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute (VVGNI) and the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) and some state level institutes have played an important role in the areas of training and capacity building of government functionaries, factory inspectors, officials of panchayati raj institutions, NCLP project directors, and heads of NGOs. These institutions have also made a significant contribution in the areas of research and surveys, awareness raising and sensitization, thus bringing the discussions on this issue to the forefront.

National legislations and ILO conventions:

The enactment of the Child Labour Amendment (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2016 and The Right to Education Act 2009 have paved the way for ratification of ILO's two core conventions.

1. Convention No 138 stipulates that the minimum age at which children can start work should not be below the age of compulsory schooling and in any case not less than 15 years; with a possible exception for developing countries.
2. Convention No. 182 prohibits hazardous work which is likely to jeopardize children's physical, mental or moral health. It aims at immediate elimination of the worst forms of child labour for children below 18 years.

5. Committees and Commissions on Child Labour:

Along with legislation, a series of committees and commissions have been appointed by the Government of India, either specifically on the question of child labour or on labour conditions in general to enquire into the causes or consequences of the problem and to suggest measures to reduce the incidence of child labour and to ameliorate the conditions of the child workers.

The Royal Commission on Child Labour observed that the employment of children continued to be a problem and found out that in many cities large number of young boys was employed for long hours and the employees imposed corporal punishment and other disciplinary measures against them.

The Labour Investigation Committee submitted in its report in the year 1946 observed that in various industries, especially smaller industries, the statutory prohibition of employment of children was not seriously enforced. (GOI, 1946). According to the National Commission on Labour.

"The employment of children is non-existent in organised industries. It persists in varying degrees in the unorganised sector. The Gurupadaswamy Committee, in its 1979 report, identified the sectors of the economy with substantial number of working children.

The Committee in its report recommended, setting up of Child Labour Advisory Boards, Fixation of minimum age of entry to any establishment, strengthening of enforcement machinery, Formulation of effective education policy. It was realised that legislation alone cannot bring an end to child labour. Therefore, the National Policy on Child Labour was formulated in conjunction with the legal measures to address the socio-economic issues and to provide a framework for a concrete programme of action. The policy encompasses action in the field of education, health, nutrition, integrated child development and employment. The National Authority for the Elimination of Child Labour (NACEL) was constituted on September 26, 1994 under the chairmanship of Union Labour Minister. The NACL in its 1995 meeting adopted a programme of securing convergence of services of Ministries of Governments.

6. Children's Rights:

Children's rights agreement has been implemented as International Justice from September 2nd 1990 onwards. This agreement has given importance to the children's in socioeconomic, political and cultural issues. There are various rights to the Children, They are:

- 1. Right to Life:** This right provides an opportunity for health facilities, highly standard livings etc
- 2. Right to Protection:** This is the right that provides an opportunity to avoid exploitations. It is introduced in constitution for getting the protection from exploitation bonded labour etc.
- 3. Right to Development:** This right provides various rights i. e right to education, right to protection, social security, right to entertainment etc.
- 4. Right to Participation:** Respecting the children's opinions, right to expression, right to freedom etc were under this right.

6. Rehabilitation Programmes:

National Child Labour Policy

Constitutional and legislative provisions providing protection to children against employment has been elaborated in the National Child Labour Policy announced in 1987. The policy addresses the complex issue of child labour in a comprehensive, holistic and integrated manner. The action plan under this policy is multi-pronged and mainly consists of:

1. A legislative action plan; Focuses on general development programmes for the benefit of the families of children; and
2. Project-based action plan in areas of high concentration of child labour. National Child Labour Project Scheme for rehabilitation of child labour, Government had initiated the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme in 1988 to rehabilitate working children in 12 child labour endemic districts of the country. Its coverage has increased progressively to cover 271 districts in the country presently.

Some of the prominent schemes of these Ministries/department, which could have an explicit component for child labour and their family are given below and could be utilized for government interventions for elimination of child labour. This is however, only an indicative list and could be extended to others programmes to:

a) Schemes of Department of Education

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

Mid Day Meal Scheme

b) Schemes of Ministry of Women & Child Development:

ICPS scheme For providing food and shelter to the children withdrawn from work through their schemes of Shelter Homes, etc

Balika Samridhi Yojana and admission of children withdrawn from into residential schools under SC/ST/OBC Schemes.

c) Schemes of Ministry of Rural Development

Mahatama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

Swarnjayanti Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)

Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)

d) Scheme of Ministry of Labour & Employment

Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)

Skilled Development Initiative Scheme (SDIS)

e) Other Social security schemes

Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme

National Family Benefit Scheme

Janani Suraksha Yojna □ Handloom Weavers' Comprehensive Welfare Scheme

Handicraft Artsans' Comprehensive Welfare Scheme

Pension to Master craft persons

National scheme for Welfare of Fishermen and Training and Extension of Janashree and Bima Yojana.

As poverty and illiteracy are the prime reasons for child labour, a combined and coordinated effort of the various departments would greatly help to mitigate this problem. The National Policy on Child Labour, prescribes the need to focus on general development programmes for the benefit of the families of child Labour. Providing income generation opportunities to the parents of child labour would enable them to send their children to school rather than work. Moreover, encouraging the parents of the working children to form Self Help Groups (SHGs). This would also help to bring children from these families to the fold of education.

7. Efforts to overcome child labour at national level:

a. National Policy for Children 1974: National policy for children as adopted on 22nd August 1974 stands as the basis of several national policies and programmes initiated in the last few Decades to address the varied needs of the children, and is the policy frame for this plan.

b. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC): The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has been deeply concerned about the employment of child labor in the country as it leads to denial of the basic human rights of children guaranteed by the Constitution and the International Covenants. The Commission monitors the child labor situation in the country through its Special Reporters, visits by members, sensitization programmes and workshops, launching projects, interaction with the Industry associations and other concerned agencies, coordination with the State Governments and NGOs to ensure that adequate steps are taken to eradicate child labor.

c. Elementary Education as a Right to Every Child: Investment for Education is investment for nation. Education is the most important investments that any developing country can make for its future. Education is the most effective tool for reducing child labor. As a finding of continuous and persistence advocacy campaign, the Parliament Passed 93rd Constitution Amendment Bill 2001 to make education a Fundamental Right in India.

d. Ensuring Right to Food even for street children: Malnutrition of children is one of the biggest public health problems facing the country. It adversely affects the growth and development of children including their learning ability, and the capacity to cope with the problem of daily living. Female children are more undernourished than male children.

e. National Child Labor Project (NCLP): National Child Labor project which began with number of 12 districts only, has been progressively extended to various parts of country with the coverage of 271 districts in 21 states of the country, which is playing an important role in elimination of child labor.

f. Day Care for children: There is a need for Care Centers for children of working women in rural and urban areas. Concerning health, nutrition, and social development, childhood is a period of care.

1. IPEC action: The cooperation between the ILO and the Government of India in the field of child labour started in 1992 with the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This agreement laid down the principles, areas and modalities of cooperation for the progressive elimination of child labour.

2. The INDUS Child Labour Project: INDUS is a technical cooperation project jointly funded by the Government of India and the Government of the United States of America. It was developed within the framework of the Joint Statement on Enhanced Indo-US Cooperation on Elimination of Child Labour signed between the two governments on 31 August 2000.

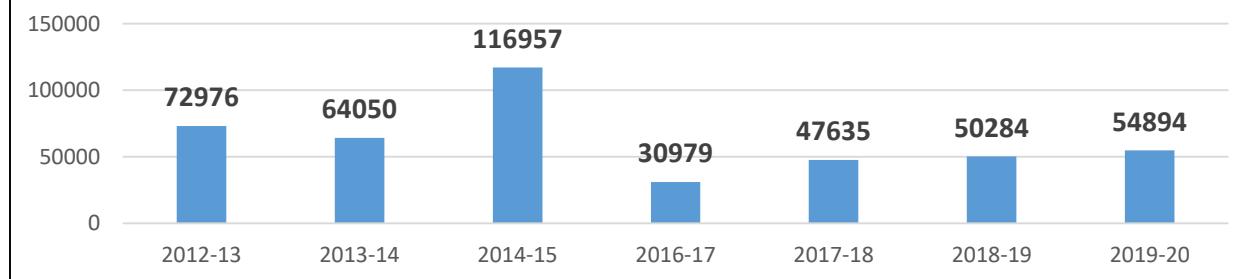
3. Child Welfare Schemes: The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Government of India for early childhood care and development. The prime objective of the programme is to lay foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child, improve health and nutritional status of children below six years of age, reduce infant mortality morbidity, malnutrition and school dropouts, achieve effective policy implementation to promote child development and enhance capability of the mother to look after health and nutrition, education and other needs of her child.

4. Schemes for Health and Nutrition of Children: The Nutrition component of Prime Minister Gramodaya Yojana and Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls is implemented with additional central assistance from Planning Commission to promote nutrition of children.

5. ILO-International Programme for Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC): ILO launched IPEC Programme in 1991 to contribute to the effective abolition of child labour in the world. India was the first country to sign MOU in 1992.

6. Rescue, rehabilitation and mainstreaming of child labourers: The status of total children rescued/withdrawn from work, rehabilitated and mainstreamed under the NCLP scheme during the period 2012-13 and 2020-21 is presented in Figure-1. During the year 2012-13, the number of child labourers rescued/withdrawn from work under the NCLP scheme were 72,976. But in the year 2014-15 the number of these children went higher (1,16,957) and sharply dropped to 30,979 children in 2016-17 (Fig.1).

Fig.1: Total children rescued, Rehabilitated and mainstreamed under NCLP Scheme



CONCLUSION:

The problem of child labour appears serious and involves various factors. The incidence of child labour in India is complex and deeply rooted in the society. The problem of child labour is a challenge before the nation. This practice is depriving them of their livelihood and is detrimental to their physical and mental development. Poverty, unemployment, lack of good schools and development of the informal economy are considered important reasons for child labour. So, the problem of child labour is universal. The constitution of India under Art.24 defines "Child" as any one below the age of 14 years and who shall not be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment. Under Child Labour (Prohibition and

Regulation) Act, 1986 "Child" means a person who has not completed his 14 years of age. Article 21-A of the Constitution states that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may by law determine. Now, amended Article 45 of the Constitution states that, the state shall endeavor to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years. As a possible solution to this chronic problem, the Central Government and the respective governments in the States will still have to prepare a more effective action plan under the guidance and supervision of the International Labour Organization and of the United Nations Organization. It is a challenge and long-term goal to eliminate all types of child labor in many countries. Especially in developing countries, it is considered as a serious issue these days. The Government of India has put in on various proactive policies towards eradication of child labour. There are a number of child labour projects in India which have been implemented to help and educate children from hazardous occupations. Government has been lay a lot of importance on the treatment of these children and improving the economic conditions of their families. Government has so been taking hands-on steps to tackle this problem through firm enforcement of legislative provisions along with immediate rehabilitative events.

Every citizen should be aware of his responsibilities and take corrective measures to prevent child labour.

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