

Vol II Issue X July 2013

ISSN No : 2249-894X

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*Monthly Multidisciplinary  
Research Journal*

*Review Of  
Research Journal*

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2249-894X

Review Of Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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## CHILD LABOUR (A CURSE TO OUR SOCIETY)

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### Abstract:

*"Child labour" is, generally speaking, work by children that harms them or exploits them in some way (physically, mentally, morally, or by blocking their access to education).*

*Childhood is perhaps the most blessed stage in a human life. It is that phase of life where, children are not really aware of any form of worldly responsibilities, they are free from all the tensions and they can learn a whole lot of new things. No wonder, people keep having this wistful desire of going back to their childhood and relive all those beautiful memories. But there is other side to this phase and in that, many children are forced to work in inhumane conditions. This phase is also known by "child labor" where a child is full of tensions and burdens and he has to perform the tough job of being primary earning member of the family. Such children lose their innocence to satisfy the needs and wants of their family. The problem of child labor is huge and is faced by many countries in the world*

### KEYWORDS:

Child Labour , Society , Physically , Mentally.

### .INTRODUCTION

Child labour is one of the alarming issues confronting our country today along with all developing countries of the globe. In India this problem is widespread and it is increasing day by day. The crucial period for the development of an individual into a better citizen depends on a protective childhood. A better citizen in turn leads to p has been given positive contribution towards the development of a nation economically, socially and psychologically. Therefore, protection of children has been given due weightier by organizations which is why are against child labor .The humanitarian concern towards child welfare is recognized and widely accepted for the eradication of child labor . Child labour thus, encourages a child forcefully to an environment of excessive exploitation.

A future without child labour ,the ILO's most comprehensive on the subject to date , notes that there has been a worldwide response to calls for abolishing child labour ,especially in its worst, through direct action at the local, national and international level.

### DEFINITION OF CHILD LABOUR

The crucial period for the development of an individual into a better citizen depends on a protective childhood . a better citizen in turn leads to positive contribution towards the development of a national economically, socially, psychologically. Therefore, protection of children has been given due weightage by organization which is why are against child labour.

There is no universally accepted definition of child labour. Varying definitions of the term are used

Title:CHILD LABOUR (A CURSE TO OUR SOCIETY)

Source:Review of Research [2249-894X] PUNAM KESHARWRANI yr:2013 vol:2 iss:10

by international organizations, non-governmental organizations, trade unions and other interest groups. Writers and speakers don't always specify what definition they are using, and that often leads to confusion. The [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#) states that child labour may be defined in a number of different ways, and a different definition yields a different estimate of child labour in India as well as other countries. According to ILO, children or adolescents who participate in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling, is not child labour; rather it may generally be regarded as being something positive. he is also a man who tiheir parents around the home, assisting family or earning pocket money outside school hours and over holidays. These kinds of activities, suggests ILO, may contribute to children's developmentlly, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, or work whose schedule interferes with their ability to attend regular school, or work that affects in any manner their ability to focus during school or experience healthy childhood.

### **WHO IS CHILD**

International conventions define children as aged 18 and under. Individual governments may define "child" according to different ages or other criteria. "Child" and "childhood" are also defined differently by different cultures. A "child" is not necessarily delineated by a fixed age. Social scientists point out that children's abilities and maturities vary so much that defining a child's maturity by calendar age can be misleading.

### **WHAT IS LABOUR**

Not all work is bad for children. Some social scientists point out that some kinds of work may be completely unobjectionable — except for one thing about the work that makes it exploitative. For instance, a child who delivers newspapers before school might actually benefit from learning how to work, gaining responsibility, and a bit of money. But what if the child is not paid? Then he or she is being exploited. As Unicef's 1997 State of the World's Children Report puts it, "Children's work needs to be seen as happening along a continuum, with destructive or exploitative work at one end and beneficial work - promoting or enhancing children's development without interfering with their schooling, recreation and rest - at the other. And between these two poles are vast areas of work that need not negatively affect a child's development." Other social scientists have slightly different ways of drawing the line between acceptable and unacceptable work.

### **So we can say -**

"The parents of child labourers are often unemployed or underemployed, desperate for secure employment and income. Yet it is their children - more powerless and paid less - who are offered the jobs. In other words, says UNICEF in their 1997 "Roots of child labour" report, children are employed because they are easier to exploit.

### **ORIGIN OF CHILD LABOUR**

Although children had been servants and apprentices throughout most of human history, child labor reached new extremes during the Industrial Revolution. Children often worked long hours in dangerous factory conditions for very little money. Children were useful as laborers because their size allowed them to move in small spaces in factories or mines where adults couldn't fit, children were easier to manage and control and perhaps most importantly, children could be paid less than adults. Child laborers often worked to help support their families, but were forced to forgo an education. Nineteenth century reformers and labor organizers sought to restrict child labor and improve working conditions, but it took a market crash to finally sway public opinion. During the Great Depression, Americans wanted all available jobs to go to adults rather than children.

### **HISTORY OF CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA**

In India child labour has always existed in the agricultural sector. Children and their parents used to work together in the farms. Moreover the task of taking the cattle to graze was always allotted to children. Although this work was hard and tiring, it did not lead to a worsening of their future prospects. Schooling was not available in most villages and most of the jobs were still in the agricultural sector. So this work served as training for their future. Large scale exploitation of children in India began with the arrival of the

British. Just as the case was in Great Britain, the new industrialists started hiring children who were forced to work in inhuman conditions. Laws against child labour were passed under Employment of Children Act of 1938. These attempts at legislation failed as they failed to address the root cause of child labour in India: poverty. Until and unless the populace was brought out of poverty, it was impossible to take the children out of the labour force.

**CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR**

**PARENTAL ILLITERACY:** Illiterate parents do not realize the need for a proper physical ,emotional and cognitive development of a child. As they are uneducated, they do not realize the importance of education for their children.

**OVER POPULATION:** Most of the Asian and African countries are overpopulated . Due to limited resources and more mouths to feed , Children are employed in various forms of work.

**POVERTY:** Many a time poverty forces parents to send their children to hazardous jobs. Although they know it is wrong, they have no other alternative as they need the money

**URBANISATION:** The Industrial Revolution has its own negative side. Many a time MNC s and export industries in the developing world employ wild workers, particularly in the garment industry.

**UNEMPLOYMENT OF ELDERS :** Elders often find it difficult to get jobs. The industrialists and factory owners find it profitable to employ children. This is so because they can pay less and extract more work. They will also not create union problem.

**ORPHANS:** Children born out of wedlock, children with no parents and relatives, often do not find anyone to support them. Thus they are forced to work for their own living

Poverty is widely considered the top reason that children work at inappropriate jobs for their ages. But there are other reasons as well

family expectations and tradition

abuse of the child

lack of good schools and day care

lack of other services, such as health care

public opinion that downplays the risk of early work for children

uncaring attitudes of employers limited choices for women

Child has been used as one of the major labour force in every sectors of Indian economy.

Domestic labour

Agriculture labour

Local business labour

Small scale industry labour

Indirectly by Large Scale Industries

Some solutions to the problem of child labour

According to the government of India (Economic survey 2000-01),”the availability of education, water, electricity, cooking, fuel, old age support, sanitation and employment are the basis needs for a civilised living. . . . . Government has to be the principle suppliers of service the constitute such public goods as education , health, family welfare, sanitation, nutrition, water supply, roads and social security. . . .

Increased family incomes

Education,

That helps children learn skills that will help them earn a living,

Social services

That help children and families survive crises, such as disease, or loss of home and shelter

Family control of fertility ,So that families are not burdened by children

Reduction of chronic poverty through broad-based economic and social development.

Rehabilitation by providing them with the essential services they may need like shelter, food, health care.

Affording viable alternatives such as extratuition, apprenticeship, pre-vocational training, sheltered workshop.

**CONCLUSION**

Thus, we can conclude the child labour problem in India is an alarming one and constitutes an egregious violation of children's rights. Therefore , this problem has to be looked upon with the proper ideological understandings.

Most importantly the incidence of child labour would diminish considerably even in the force of poverty, if there are no parties willing to exploit them. Strict implementation of child labour laws and practical and healthy authorities to replace this evil can a go long way to solve this problem of child labour. Along with this, participation of the common educated citizens in the process of eliminating child labour can help out a lot. As common people also, we can help the poor uneducated children in getting at least some idea about the alphabets also! In the words of Bill Gates, we can say that “Until we’re educating every kid in a fantastic way, until every inner city is cleaned up, there is no shortage of things to do.” Inclusion of Child Labour Laws in Legal Education and other branches of education can also be regarded as effective steps as it creates awareness among the student communities. As a student of law, we can at least make the downtrodden aware of the needs of formal education system and the cause of elimination of child labour so as to provide those helpless children a chance to enhance their capacities to the fullest extent possible and enable them to contribute their best for making this world a better place to live in.

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