



## CHILD LABOR DEPRIVES CHILDREN FROM POLITICAL ORIENTATION AND THEIR RIGHTS IN INDIA: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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### ABSTRACT:

Child labor is an evil which is a worldwide problem and a large number of children are subjected to inhuman treatment and are denied of their basic rights. Children, who are the future responsible youth, must be politically aware, because they have to cast their vote and choose representatives to rule. Those children who are engaged in child labor are not aware about their rights and having very low level of political orientation. In Kashmir valley of Jammu and Kashmir, due to continuous shot downs, strikes, protests, and cross firing etc. has kept the school going students inside their homes resulting in child labor in so many ways. Difficult terrain and topography coupled with hardships of winter also keeps its subjects confined to homes which has kept them economically backward and in order to earn a living, they have adopted many occupations like cottage level industries which they can perform within the households even though these are hazardous to their health and also fetch low economic returns. A number of International conventions have been passed to protect the children from exploitation but yet the Children are not provided environment in which they can groom as physically, morally and mentally developed subjects. In spite of all these measures, the problem of child labor still continues and there is ominous need to reconsider and re-devise our policies and programs so that people are not forced by their economic necessity or otherwise to send their children for work.

**KEY WORDS:** Political Orientation; Child labor; child rights .



Image 1: Child Labor



Image 2: Youth Voting

### INTRODUCTION

Children of today are the responsible subjects of a nation in future. In future they are going to cast their votes and select their representatives. A child in future needs to be politically aware so that he will be

able vote in a proper manner. The nations of today are not judged by the capital resources which they own rather these are assessed in terms of developed human beings whom they own. Children in fact are the budding buds who if nurtured and looked after properly can develop the entire nation with their sweat fragrance and beauty. Children are the future hope of every nation and these beautiful flowers of life's garden are supposed to take over the nation toward development in future times and to shape its destiny through their achievements and excellence so as to confer on it a status of superiority over other nations. Any developed conscious nation cannot ignore the proper physical and mental development of the children to keep its future in safe hands.

By employing children in various hazardous occupations, we are not only depriving these children of their right to grow but we are consciously or unconsciously losing a large chunk of potential scientists, doctors, engineers, researchers and scholars who could otherwise be of great service to the nation.

According to UN report, 42 armed groups in 11 nations have employed children in war. These nations are Burundi, Ivory Coast, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Columbia. Still surprising is that government forces from Congo, Myanmar and Uganda also appear on the list besides 42 rebel groups. (Greater Kashmir, Feb. 11, 2005).

It is a wide spread concern that the children are involved in economic and non economic activities. There are children who are put to too much work within their household like fetching of water and other essentials of life, taming of animals and engaged with agricultural work and are all non-paid activities. These activities affect the schooling of the children. It has led to too much work load which always remains unaccounted. A difference is there in child labor and child work but the reality is that the children in both cases hardly get time to be children.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To Study the extent of child labor in Jammu and Kashmir depriving them from political orientation and their rights.
2. To study the causes of Child labor in Jammu and Kashmir during current armed conflict.
3. To suggest the measures that may be adopted as remedies to eliminate the menace of child labor.

### **SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS**

The Study is confined to Kashmir Division of Jammu and Kashmir because of its unique climate conditions, topography and continuous armed conflict from so many years, shot downs, strikes, and closure of schools resulting in increase of child labor.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Descriptive method is adopted in this paper based on secondary data from various Books, News reports, Journals, websites of different agencies and Magazines.

### **Child labor and political orientation**

Nations have progressed through their people in economic, educational, cultural, social, scientific, industrial and spiritual fields only when care will be taken of the subjects' rights from their childhood. According to census data the child and youth constitute 22 percent of the total population of India. Child labor is having vast negative and bad consequences results in politically unaware future youth who have no knowledge of the government ruling upon them and their rights. If they will not be politically aware, then they will not be able to choose the right representative. If a nation wants to be strong and want to develop then the youth should be aware about all the aspects of the government and other things.

### Child Labor in Jammu and Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir with armed conflict in Kashmir valley and its difficult terrain and topography with cold winter keeps its subjects restricted to homes which have kept them economically backward and in order to earn a living, they have adopted many occupations like cottage level industries. They can perform this type of work within the households even though these are hazardous to their health and also fetch low economic returns. The valley's unique geographical features and the presence of workshops and work centers in hard-to-reach areas impede law enforcement throws children into distressed condition. More so, more many children are caught into the shackles of deplorable working conditions due to unique political status and the resultant armed struggle prevailing in the valley of Kashmir. The situation deprives a big chunk of children of their right to receive education. Indian Census of 1981 shows that the state of Jammu and Kashmir has highest number of child workers as mentioned in the table 1.1 below:

**Table 1.1: High Child labor percentage in states of India. (Highest in Jammu and Kashmir), as per Census 1981**

S.No.	Name of the State	Percentage(%) of Child Labor
1	Jammu and Kashmir	10.3
2	Madhya Pradesh	7.9
3	Meghalaya	7.9
4	Karnataka	7.6
5	Sikkim	6.8
6	Maharashtra	6.4
7	Himachal Pradesh	5.8
8	Nagaland	5.6

The census figures of 2001 shows that there were 175630 children engaged in the child labor in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Indian census of 2011 shows that there are 25528 children under the age group of 5 to14 years engaged in Child labor in Jammu and Kashmir State. (See table: 1.2)

**Table 1.2: Working children in Jammu and Kashmir in the age group of 5-14 years as per Census 2001 and Census 2011:**

State	No. of working children in the age group of 5-14 years group of 5-14 years	
	Census 2001	Census 2011
Jammu & Kashmir	175630	25528

### Causes of Child Labor in Jammu and Kashmir:

1. The Poor families use to send their children for work due to low income or no income to fulfill their day to day needs.
2. Lack of Education of Parents has been one of the reasons for employment of children in various occupations and ugly work situations.
3. The prevailing situation in Kashmir valley has made the children to be inside of their homes results in child labor in so many ways.

4. Unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir: the high rate of unemployment prevailing in Kashmir valley has made many people as pessimistic about the education of their children as they fear that after completion of education, their children will be part of the educated unemployed youth.
5. There are many activities on which a section of society is enjoying monopoly. This monopoly prevents these families from passing on the job skills to outsiders. In order to sustain such a monopoly these families do not hire work force from outside but instead induct their own children into the occupation.
6. In Kashmir valley the inefficient state planning and lack of proper coordination among different governmental departments due to Kashmir problem has led to emergence of child labor.
7. Some of the Children who are poor in studies and fail to pass their examinations are pushed by their families towards child labor.
8. **Political disturbance as a reason for child labor in Kashmir:** Political uncertainty which is prevailing in the State of Jammu and Kashmir for a long period is one of the main causes of Child Labor in Jammu and Kashmir. Continuous Shot downs, strikes and closure of schools in Kashmir valley because of armed struggle results in the child labor.

According to Guild o Service (North India), one of the repercussions of this armed conflict in Kashmir has been ever increasing number of widows. With the rising number of widows, the number of orphans goes on increasing and they face the worst life situation forcing their entry into the labor market to survive.

#### **Child labor and Law Enforcement in Jammu and Kashmir:**

In Jammu and Kashmir the Labor Department is empowered to keep an eye on the growing menace of child labor. The department is headed by a Commissioner and has its offices in both the divisions of Jammu and Kashmir (i.e. one in Jammu and second in Jammu).

#### **SUGGESTIONS:**

1. Child labor in Jammu and Kashmir goes on increasing due to abnormal conditions prevailing there from so many years. Steps need to be taken to keep close watch by the government on the locations where the child labor is going on. The government must punish those who support this evil practice. The employers should understand their ethical duty to discourage the practice of employment of children.
2. Alongside the parents shall have to understand their responsibility to ensure better schooling of their children and not to employ them in hazardous jobs or such occupations which can keep them away from education.
3. Parents should be motivated to send their children to schools by explaining them various government child welfare schemes and must be made aware of harmful effects of child labor.
4. Strong Union must be made at the village level to keep watch and discourage the practice of child labor.
5. The situation in Kashmir valley needs to be resolved and to ensure peaceful environment so that government will work properly.
6. As there is governor rule prevailing due to resign of the ruling government, care must be taken because child labor may increase due to continuous shot downs strikes.
7. Education should be given to the parents especially poor about the bad consequences of child labor and should be provided with financial support.
8. Investigate the abuse and exploitation of children by agents and employers, and prosecute such agents and employers under the relevant domestic laws.
9. Public awareness campaigns needs to be launched related to the prohibition of bonded child labor.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Child labor is a worldwide problem in which a large number of children are subject to inhuman treatment and are denied of their basic rights. In Jammu and Kashmir the conditions are worsening day by day that will the increase the cases of child laborers. The people think that there is no watch on them

because the government is busy to restore the normal position in Kashmir valley. Continuous closure of schools, strikes, and shot downs in Kashmir valley has resulted in the increased child labor. A number of International conventions have been passed to protect the children from exploitation but yet the Children are not provided environment in which they can groom as physically, morally and mentally developed subjects. The child is becoming illiterate in the way having no knowledge of politics being a part of it. There is need to use such strategies to combat this evil practice so that minds of the people will develop and they will dislike to send their children for work. Then the Children with complete education will be aware, politically and in other aspects. Then and only the nation is bound to be strong, results in the development of the nation.

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