



PROBLEMS OF CHILD LABOUR IN BACKWARD REGION OF HYDERABAD-KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT :

The problem of child labour has also engaged the minds of jurists, legislators, social thinkers, politicians, economists and philanthropists from time immemorial. The problem has changed its venues and from public platforms, it has reached the inner circle of legislative, executive and judicial chambers. It is a universally known that children are the blooming flowers in the garden of society. They are the most valuable assets of the nation and their importance in nation-building process cannot be undermined. Children of today are the potential citizens of tomorrow. The quality of life they enjoy today would ultimately determine the quality of future population of the nation. The children have rights like other human beings, to be respected with regard to their integrity, dignity, interest and opinions. But significantly most of the children in India are deprived of even the basic human rights guaranteed to them in a civilized society.



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KEYWORDS : Child, Labour, Problems, Workers, assets.

1. INTRODUCTION

Child labour is a burning problem all over the world, both in developed and developing countries. Though several attempts were made and are being made to eradicate/mitigate child labour at national and international levels, yet, the magnitude has been increasing at an alarming rate, particularly in the third world countries. As much as 90 percent of the child labour is concentrated in the undeveloped countries of the world. The proportion of child workers to total child population in different regions demonstrates a relatively high percent in South Asia (5.4 percent), Africa (4.0 percent) and Latin America (2.6 percent). When the global picture is seen, ILO estimated it at 248 million, which shows the gravity of problem. Among the countries, India possesses the highest child labour force in the world. Participation of children in work is not a new concept particular to this age. It has existed in different forms in every society throughout the human history. Mendelievich has rightly observed: "To a greater or lesser extent, children in every type of human society have always taken part, and still do take part, in those economic activities which are necessary, if the group to which they belong is to survive".

This traditional concept of child labour is also endorsed by International Labour Organisation (ILO). As the ILO states, it is not concerned with children helping in family farms or doing household chores' and defines child labour to ...include children leading permanently adult lives, working long hours for low wages under conditions damaging to their health and physical and mental development, sometimes separated

from their families, frequently derived of meaningful educational and training opportunities that could open to them for a better future.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

M.C. Naidu and K.D. Ramaiah observed that the prevalence of child labour was one of the most important problems confronting the world at large, especially developing countries such as India. They expressed the view that child labour was mainly necessitated by economic compulsions of the parents. The main reason which gave rise to child labour was widespread unemployment and underemployment among the adult poor strata of the population, inter India, due to sharp growth of population. They also observed that large families with low income and often lack educational facilities. Such families are illiterate ignorant about the importance of education as well as about the impact of labour on the health of their children.

R. Chamarbagwala observed that besides poverty and credit constraints, parental expectations of future earnings for their children affected schooling and child labour decisions. He also found that child labour was negatively correlated with returns to primary schooling. He examined the evidence from India that higher regional returns to primary education not only increase the likelihood that boys and girls attend school but also decrease the likelihood that they work, these relationships held only for the top three quintiles of the income distribution and mostly for children in the age group 10-14 years. He suggested that liquidity constraints might not allow poor households to respond to the economic benefits of education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the magnitude of the problem of child labour in Hyderabad Karnataka Region.
2. To give suggestions for combating the problem of child labour in Hyderabad Karnataka Region.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Scope of the study was confined to analyse the gravity of the problem of child labour-in Hyderabad Karnataka Rgion with special reference to Gulbarga and Raichur districts. Few research studies have been made to throw light on the issue of child labour but these attempts have been made in organised and industrial sector. The present study was conducted to cover children working in unorganised sector. Endeavour was made to classify the child labour as school going children, child labour, nowhere children (non-labour and non-school goers).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for the present study was collected through primary as well as secondary sources. The primary sources include Annual Reports of Ministry of Labour, parliamentary debates on enactment of child Labour Legislations like Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, the Commissions for Protection of Children Act, 2005 and Right to Education Act, 2009 etc. The secondary sources include books, articles published in journals and newspapers.

As the child labour is available in different professions as household servants, Brick kiln, In Hotels, Dhabhas, shops, agriculture etc. So a list of professions was prepared, where the children are working in maximum numbers. The house-hold, the agricultural and Hotel workers are more in the villages. So the sample was selected on the basis of the nature of work. The child workers were divided in the following categories:

- (a) Household Workers and Domestic Servants
- (b) Work in Hotel
- (c) Agricultural
- (c) Others

Four blocks from Gulbarga district and three blocks from Raichur district were chosen and two villages from each block were chosen on random basis as is shown in the following table:

Districts	Block	Villages
Gulbarga	Gulbarga	Ankalga, Aurad
	Sedam	Mudhol , Malkhed
	Jewargi	Andola Ainapur
	Afzalpur	Ghangapur ,Chaudapur
Raichur	Raichur	Appandoddi , Agrahar
	Lingasur	Maski Maraldinni
	Devadurga	Akalkumpi Alkod

320 child labour respondents (160 from Gulbarga District and 160 from Raichur District) have been chosen on random basis who are working as Domestic Workers, Hotel Workers, Agricultural Workers and Others. 40 child respondents were chosen in Gulbarga district from each Block and 20 from each village on random basis. Raichur is comparatively a small district and is comprised of three blocks only. The number of child labour respondents chosen from each block of Raichur District is more than four blocks of Gulbarga District. This has been done so as to choose equal number of respondents from each district. Information was collected from the children and their parents by applying personal interview to elicit their views on the issue of child labour. Information was also collected from NGOs through Questionnaire method on various issues relating to child labour

DATA ANALYSIS

Working Children and Size of their Families

The larger the family, the lower is per capita income which in turn is indicator of poor economic status of the family compelling its children to send them labour market. Thus, size of the family is an important factor contributing to the evils of child labour. The twin issues of child labour and children's right to education have been key issues which had drawn the attention of policy-makers.

Table-01: Distribution of Working Child Respondent According to their Family Size

Categorisation of responders	Gulbarga District					Raichur District				
	Family size up to five members		Family size above six members		Total	Family		Family		Total
	No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%	
Domestic works	10	6.25	25	15.62	35	17	10.62	39	24.37	56
Hotel works	4	2.5	5	3.12	09	11	6.87	22	13.75	33
Agricultural works	37	23.12	76	47.50	113	19	11.87	48	30.00	67
Carpet weaving	03	1.87	-	00	03	04	2.5	-	-	04
Total	54	33.75	106	66.25	160	51	31.87	109	68.12	160

Table 01 indicates that vast majority of the working children respondents i.e. 66.25 per cent in Gulbarga district and 68.12 per cent in Raichur district belong to families having 6 and more members. On the other hand, a relatively small proportion of them i.e. 33.75 per cent in Gulbarga district and 31.87 per cent in Raichur district are from small families having less than 5 members. Thus, it can be concluded that the larger the size of family, the lower is per capita income. The data shows that economic conditions of large families are one of the important factors which compel them to send their children to join labour market. Thus it can be concluded that size of family is one of the crucial factor responsible for the menace of child labour.

CHILD LABOUR AND AGE CRITERION FOR EDUCATION

The rate of development of a country depends, to large extent, upon the rate of literacy of that country. This is particularly so in a country like India where the majority of people live in rural areas without adequate access to educational opportunities. It is estimated that more than 40 crore Indians are illiterate and as per UNESCO Annual Report 2007, India occupies 105th place with reference to education. Though the literacy rate has gone up from 18.33 per cent in 1951 to 65.38 per cent in 2001 its fruits have not reached to the majority of backward classes who constitute a sizeable portion of the population.

Education assumes special significance in the context of child labour as it facilitates progress and spawns a progressive attitude in child/ individual. The Constitution of India as expounded by the Supreme Court of India, makes free and compulsory education upto the age of fourteen years a fundamental right.

However, a large number of children in that age group are deprived of the opportunity of education due to extreme poverty.

Table-02: Distribution of Working Child Respondents According to the Age at Starting Education

Categorisation of respondents	Starting age of education							
	Gulbarga district				Raichur district			
	6 Yrs	8 Yrs	10 & above	Total	6 Yrs	8 Yrs	10 & above	Total
Domestic works	9	13	11	33	14	18	20	52
Hotel works	04	03	02	09	9	11	12	32
Agricultural works	29	29	46	104	14	21	28	63
Other works	01	00	02	03	1	2	00	03
Total	43	45	61	149	38	52	60	150

The schools or are attending the schools in different ages. On the other hand, out of 160 child labour respondents in Raichur district 150 have attended or are attending the schools at different ages. Unfortunately 6.88 per cent child labourers in Gulbarga district and 6.25 per cent child labour respondents in Raichur district could not get a chance to go to school in spite of the fact that Karnataka is one of the prosperous states of India.

CHILD LABOURERS AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION (PRE AND PRIMARY SCHOOLING)

The Right to Education Act, 2009 was passed recently in the country. The Act overlooked the kindergarten (pre-primary) education of children below six years and the education of children crossing 16 years of age. Kindergarten education which starts from three plus years is coupled with the provisions of nutritious food which is necessary for the future education and healthy citizenry on which the soundness of the country depends. This is the age at which children require nutritious food for their physical and mental growth, which most parents in rural areas neglect due to poor economic conditions. Any neglect on these basic things force some of the children to fall much behind others for whom these are available. Hence it is the responsibility of the government to provide nutritious food to all the children below six years of age and run kindergarten schools in the rural areas. Further, keeping in view the poor economic background of a large majority of poor people in rural areas, appropriate efforts must be made to extend the coverage of school-going age from three plus years to 15 years to cover both kindergarten and X class against the present six to fourteen years which covers up to VIII standard only. For better education, sound foundations must be laid at the tender age which is essential for the mental growth of children. If possible, nursery schools of the nature of play schools must be encouraged in all the villages in the country.

Table-03 Distribution of Child Respondents as per Level of School Attended

Categorisation of Respondents	Gulbarga District					Raichur District				
	Pre-school	%age	Primary	% age	Total	Pre-school	%age	Primary	% age	Total
Domestic Works	18	51.42	17	48.57	35	13	44.33	17	56.66	30
Hotel works	02	50	02	50	04	16	51.61	15	48.38	31
Agricultural Works	19	29.23	46	70.76	65	14	36.84	24	63.15	38
Other works	01	33.33	02	66.66	03	01	50	01	50	02
Total	40	37.38	67	62.61	107	44	43.56	57	56.43	101

Question was raised to child labour respondents regarding their level of education, their responses are tabulated in Table 03. The data revealed that 62.61 per cent child labour respondents attended primary school in Gulbarga district and 56.43 per cent child labourer respondents in Raichur district could go to schools for primary education. The remaining children 37.31 in Gulbarga district and 43.57 per cent from Raichur district could not go to schools for primary education for one or the other reason. 37.31 per cent children in Gulbarga district and 43.56 per cent children in Raichur district could go to pre-schools. The majority of child labour respondents could not go to pre-schools. This depicts a very alarming situation in spite of the fact Right to Education Act, 2009 has been passed which provides free and compulsory education to all the children below the age of 14 years. From the above analysis, it can be concluded that high percentage of children are not attending the school due to poverty and ignorance. The Government must take concrete steps to ensure that children must get Pre School and Primary education.

Child Labourers - Simultaneously Working & Studying

Large number of child labourers are found working and attending schools simultaneously particularly in unorganized sector. They are working as cultivators, agricultural workers, domestic workers, brick makers or carpet weavers. They also work as helpers in different agricultural operations such as sowing, weeding, harvesting and threshing. Some of them are regular workers and some of them are working as casual workers or part time workers. They are also getting pre-school or primary education after school hours or during school vacations. Their life is very miserable as they have to bear the burden of work as well as study.

Table-04: Distribution of Working Child Respondents Studying and Simultaneously Working

Categorisation of Respondents	Studying & Working			
	Gulbarga District		Raichur District	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Domestic Works	25	53.19	19	37.25
Hotel works	03	6.38	09	17.64
Agricultural Works	19	40.42	22	43.13
Other works	-	-	01	1.96
Total	47	99.99	51	99.99

The data in Table 04 indicates that out of 160 child labour respondents in Gulbarga district, 47 children are attending schools as well as doing work in different fields like domestic works, agricultural works, Hotel works and Other works. In Raichur district, out of 160 child respondents 51 child labour respondents, are attending schools along with undertaking work after attending schools. Majority of these children are working as domestic workers or agricultural workers after attending schools or during school vacations. In Gulbarga district, 53.19 per cent, 6.38 per cent and 40.42 per cent children are working as domestic workers brick makers, agricultural workers respectively after attending the schools or during school vacations. But in Raichur district, 37.25 per cent, 17.64 per cent, 43.13 per cent, 1.96 per cent are working as domestic workers, Hotel works workers, agricultural workers and carpet weavers respectively. They are also getting education along with work in schools.

WORK DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOURERS

In developed countries, children work to earn their pocket money whereas in developing countries they work for their existence and for their economic need. They accept the work to assist their parents.

In a developing country like India, children work both in modern sector as well as in Agricultural sector to which they belong. The proportion of child labour varies from situation to situation, place to place and occupation to occupation. In rural areas, most of the children are engaged in agricultural sector, whereas in cities they are engaged in unorganized sectors like street business, manufacturing units, garage etc.

In rural areas, child labour can be divided into three categories on the basis of their regular or casual participation:

1. Working only
2. Working and studying
3. Working and helping in household chores

Table-05 Activities Wise Distribution of Child Working Respondents

Categorisation of Respondents	Gulbarga District							Raichur District						
	Working only	% age	Working & studying	% age	Working & helping household	% age	Total	Working only	% age	Working & studying	% age	Working & helping household	% age	Total
Domestic works	7	10.76	25	53.19	4	8.33	36	15	41.66	19	32.75	22	33.33	56
Hotel works	01	1.53	03	6.38	00	00	07	1	2.77	02	3.44	30	45.45	33
Agricultural works	56	86.15	19	40.42	41	85.41	113	18	50.00	35	60.34	14	21.21	67
Other works	01	1.53	-	-	03	6.25	04	02	5.55	02	3.44	-	-	04
Total	65	40.62	47	29.37	48	30	160	36	22.5	58	36.25	66	41.25	160

Table 05 shows that in Gulbarga district, 40.62 per cent child respondents are working only and 29.37 per cent child respondents are both studying as well as working. But 30 per cent child labour respondents are working and helping in household chores in Gulbarga district.

In Raichur district, 22.5 per cent child labour respondents are only working and 36.25 per cent child labour respondents are doing work as well as studying. 41.25 per cent child labour respondents are working and also helping in households in Raichur district.

Parent's Perception on Child Labour

Parents have a very important role to play in eliminating child labour. However due to economic reasons, poor quality education, unaffordability of high fee structure, low level of information, parents are unable to play effective role in the elimination of child labour.

Table-06 Parent's Perception on Child Labour

Categorisation of Respondents	Gulbarga District		Baranala District	
	Responses	% age	Responses	% age
Economic Reasons	99	61.87	86	53.75
Lack of Quality Education	13	8.12	19	11.87
School Related Reasons	21	13.12	21	13.12
Unaffordability of Fees	22	13.75	26	16.25
Socialization	05	3.12	08	5.00
Total	160	99.98	160	99.99

In response to the question raised to the parents of working child respondents about prevalence of child labour, 61.87 per cent parents of child labour respondents in Gulbarga district identified the economic reason as one of the main factor for sending their children to work. 8.12 per cent, 13.12 per cent, 13.75 percent and 3.12 per cent parents of child labour respondents said that lack of quality education, other school related reasons, unaffordability of paying school fee and socialization are the other reasons which compel us to send their children for employment.

In Raichur district, 53.75 per cent parents of working child respondents reported that due to the economic reasons they are sending their children at work. However, 11.87 per cent, 13.12 per cent, 16.25 per cent and 5.00 per cent parents of child labourers expressed the view that due to lack of quality education, other school related reasons, unaffordability of paying school fees and socialization are the other factors which foster the child labour.

Nature of Employment

The children are compelled to work for long hours-sometimes 12-15 hours a day in unhealthy and unsafe conditions. They work on regular basis or for short period or on seasonal basis.

Table-07: Nature of Employment of Child Labourers

Categorisation of Respondents	Gulbarga District				Raichur District			
	Permanent or Regular	Short Period	Seasonal Basis	Total	Permanent or Regular	Short Period	Seasonal Basis	Total
Domestic Works	12 (17.14%)	07 (22.58%)	17 (28.81%)	36	26 (44.06%)	16 (31.37%)	14 (28.0%)	56
Hotel works	03 (4.28%)	04 (12.90%)	-	07	07 (11.86%)	12 (23.52%)	14 (28%)	33
Agricultural Works	55 (78.57 %)	18 (58.06%)	40 (67.79 %)	113	25 (42.37%)	22 (43.13%)	20 (40%)	67
Other works	-	02 (6.45%)	02 (3.33%)	04	01 (1.69%)	01 (1.69%)	02 (4 %)	04
Total	70 (43.75%)	31 (19.37%)	59 (36.87%)	160	59 (36.87%)	51 (31.87%)	50 (31.25%)	160

Table 07 present the picture of nature of work being performed by child labour respondents. Majority of working child respondents of Gulbarga district i.e. 43.75 per cent are permanently employed and 19.37 per cent are employed for short period and 36.87 per cent are employed on seasonal basis. In Raichur district, 36.87 per cent child workers are employed permanently and 31.87 per cent are employed for short period and 31.25 per cent are employed on seasonal basis.

SATISFACTION LEVEL OF CHILD LABOURERS

Sometimes child labourers have to do work in poor working conditions. Due to this reason, employers prefer to employ children instead of adult because children do not raise any question on the working conditions or any other problem they face at the work place.

Table-08 Measurement of Satisfaction Level

Categorisation of Respondents	Gulbarga District				Raichur District			
	Satisfied	%age	Not satisfied	%age	Satisfied	%age	Not satisfied	%age
Domestic Works	21	24.41	15	20.27	29	31.18	27	40.29
Hotel works	02	2.32	05	6.75	12	12.90	21	31.34
Agricultural Works	59	68.60	54	72.97	48	51.61	19	28.35
Other works	04	4.65	-	-	04	4.30	-	-
Total	86	100	74	100	93	100	67	100

Question was raised to the child labour respondents about the level of satisfaction drawn from the job. Their responses as tabulated in Table 08 indicate that the level of satisfaction among child labour respondents in Gulbarga district is comparatively lower than the level of satisfaction among child labour respondents in Raichur district. 86 child labour respondents (21 Domestic Workers, 2 Hotel works Workers, 59 Agricultural Workers and 04 Other works worker) of Gulbarga district expressed the view that they are satisfied with their job. 74 child labour respondents of Gulbarga district however, held the view that they are not satisfied with the job. The reasons expressed by them are low wages, indifferent attitude of the employer, unhealthy working conditions etc.

On the other hand, 93 child labour respondents (29 Domestic Workers, 12 Hotel works Workers, 48 Agricultural Workers, 04 Other work workers) of Raichur district expressed the view that they are satisfied with the job. 67 child labour respondents of Raichur district however, held the view that they are not satisfied with the job. The reasons expressed by them are low wages, indifferent attitude of the employer, unhealthy working conditions etc.

SUGGESTIONS

- i. The action plans for the eradication of child labour must be multifaceted and multidimensional and have diversity of approaches so as to provide solution to the complex and deep-rooted problem of child labour. Several issues like the child's perspective, context and environment must be incorporated and properly addressed to meet the growing challenge of child labour.
- ii. The Indian legal system has to evolve a great deal in securing the rights of the child. Firstly there has to be some synchronization of the upper age limit for childhood if the rights of childhood have to be realized. The Convention on the Rights of the Child creates, for the first time, a balanced and clearly articulated framework for determining the rights that a child has under international law. Even with its inherent problem of enforcement, the Convention can be a catalyst for legal reform since it sets out the rights, a child should be able to claim at some point in the national legal system.
- iii. There is a need to include the provision for mandatory enforcement of the orders of the National Commission for Children and the Commission should be given powers to initiate contempt proceedings against those not complying with its orders within a time frame.
- iv. The Government of India should ratify the International Labour Organizations Convention 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. The Government should also ensure compliance of the Supreme Court ruling on child labour.
- v. The district-level vigilance committees should be strengthened to identify and eliminate bonded child labour.

CONCLUSIONS

The role of judiciary in India has been quite significant in promoting child labour welfare. The judiciary has played important role in protecting the child workers from exploitation and improving their conditions. Judiciary has shown a generosity towards poor child workers by relaxing the rules of locus standi. Judiciary made sincere efforts to benefit the poor child workers by entertaining their problems and giving them relief despite the limitations of locus standi. The observations made by the judiciary in various decided cases show that it is always committed to the cause of the child labour. Whenever a legal wrong or legal injury is caused to the child labours by their employers, the judiciary has come forward to help them despite the locus Standi issue. The courts have always liberalized the concept of locus to meet the challenges of time and provide justice to the child labourers

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