

Child Labour in India

- Debate on child labour came up in 1985
- Major concern after 1991 – globalisation
- Elimination of Child labour by ILO, UN system and other international agencies
- 2002 – Govt. of India and US Deptt of labour initiated a major project to eliminate child labour esp. in hazardous industries
- Many laws and policies to eliminate child labour in India

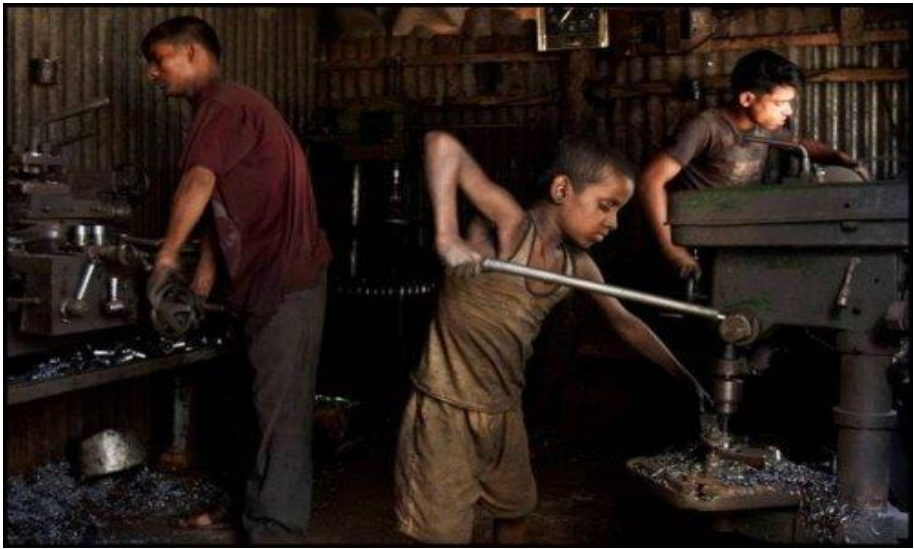
Causes – 2 schools of Thought

1) *Poverty is the main cause*

- Without their input standard of living of families will decline further
- Not easy to eliminate child labour
- Regulation in employment – improving working conditions, reducing working hours, some health facilities, minimum wages could reduce the plight of the child

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- 2) ***Does not distinguish between child 'work' and child 'labour'*** – anyone outside the school is a child labourer
- Schooling should be made compulsory – primary level
 - Non-formal education (earning and learning) is a myth – does not work
 - Enforcing a strict system is the only way to deal with the problem



Demand for child labour

- Children work for less pay
- They are more flexible
- They do not demand overtime
- They are easy to be disciplined
- They have no unions and less absentism
- Can be brainwashed to work for the betterment of their families

Child labour - characteristics

- All market activities – either working or as helpers
- Non-market activities – agricultural sector, own activities like livestock, construction, HH enterprise
- 12.66 million child labourers – age group of 5-14 (2011) – 4.12 % of the child popn.
- 80% in the rural areas and rest in urban areas (higher age group – 10-14) – in agriculture

Statistics

- Highest in Uttar Pradesh (20%), Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
- 82 lakh children (5-14 years) in child labour
- 62.8% of children in hazardous work – in the age group of 15-17 years.

HH Characteristics of Child Labour

- Composition of the HH, Size, Caste, Religion, Status of Female, Size of landholding, financial status, monthly per capita income, indebtedness, non-availability of schools, education and occupation

Rural – poor and small in size, socially backward classes like SC, ST and OBC

- More from female headed HHs
- More boys than girls

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Urban –

- Children may have primary level education
- Socially backward classes
- Large number of children
- Female headed HH provide double the ratio of child labour to child popn.
- Male of age group (10-14), HH size less than 8, income less than 500 per month (HH)
- Not always poverty – could be due to social exclusion, large size of HH, lack of education and traditional occupation pattern of HH

Main occupations

- Urban – manufacturing, trade and commerce
- Girls – factories and agriculture
- Examples industries – ‘bidi’ making, glass bangles, crackers, bricks, stone quarrying, matches, locks, carpet weaving, delicate works that require soft hands (dexterity)

Efforts by Agencies

- Both government and NGOs, national and international agencies – trying to reduce the child labour and it has helped
- Both poverty and illiteracy needs to be attacked and no ‘either or’
- Child labour is a reality in India
- Balance between ‘right to education’ and ‘right to adequate standard of living’.
- Make education more meaningful and rewarding – to reduce school dropouts
- Emphasis on women’s education
- Non-formal education, vocational education and training for children, income generating activities for families
- Poverty reduction policies
- Enforcement of labour laws
- Community participation

Efforts cont'd

- Campaign against child trafficking
- Campaign against child labour
- Convention on the Right of Child (CRC) 1992
- National Authority on the Elimination of Child Labour (NAEL, 1994)
- Several NGOs working among children to prevent them from working in the streets\
- Bachpan Bachao Andolan (Kailash Satyarthi)

Child Labour Bill 1986 and 2016

The Bill amends the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, which prohibits the employment of children younger than 14 in 83 hazardous occupations and processes. The amendment extends this ban on employment of children under 14 across all

2016 Bill

The Bill brings down the list of hazardous occupations from the earlier 83 to just three: mining, inflammable substances, and hazardous processes under the Factories Act.

Children under 14 years will be allowed to work in family businesses, outside of school hours and during holidays, and in entertainment and sports.