

## **CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA: A BURNING ISSUE**

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### **Abstract:**

Child labour is the illegal practise that robs kids of a typical childhood, a typical education, and a typical period of growth and development. Child labour is a significant societal problem that is ruining the future of the country by impairing the physical and intellectual growth of its future leaders. For kids, it's extremely risky in many ways-mentally, physically, socially, and morally. Children's education is hampered by it; they are denied the chance to go to school; they are forced to finish school early; they are required to work long hours and hard; etc. Child labour has turned children into slaves, cut them off from their youth, education, and families, and exposed them to dangerous situations, infections, diseases, and a host of other negative effects from an early age. In addition to fishing, mining and quarrying, construction, manufacturing, restaurants and hotels, storage, transport, communications, real estate, business services, and many more, the agricultural sector employs a significant number of youngsters. In order to protect the present and future of the country's children, it has spread throughout the entire nation like a sickness and poison.

**Keywords:** Child labour, Growth, Development, Society, Agricultural sector, Manufacturing,

### **Introduction:**

Children should develop in a setting that gives them the freedom and respect to live their lives as they choose. For them to develop into mature, receptive citizens, opportunities for education and training must be made available. Unfortunately, a significant minority of youngsters lack access to their fundamental rights. They can be found working in a variety of economic sectors, particularly the unorganised one. Child labour is a problem for both human rights and child development because some of them are imprisoned and mistreated, made into slaves, or refused access to the basic right to free and compulsory education.

Particularly in developing nations, child labour is a significant component of the labour force. These kids, who belong to the most underprivileged segment of the population, are compelled to work from a young age in order to support their families or earn a pittance while forgoing their own personal development. The shocking prevalence of children is caused by poverty, the fast expanding population, ignorance, and an increasing reliance load. Employment in emerging country towns and villages. Child labour has increased throughout countries as a result of the exploitative structures, unequal development, unjust resource ownership, and their association with widespread unemployment and extreme poverty.

Child labour impedes a child's normal growth in terms of their physical, intellectual, emotional, and moral development. When carrying large loads or being forced to adopt abnormal positions at work for extended periods of time, children who are still growing may permanently alter or impair their bodies. Because they have lower illness resistance than

adults and are more susceptible to radiation and chemical dangers, children are more vulnerable.

### **Causes for Child Labour:**

#### **2.1 Primary causes:**

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the greatest single contributor to child labour is poverty. Income from a child's job is typically essential for that child's survival as well as the survival of the home in low-income households. Even if the income is modest, working children can contribute anywhere between 25 and 40% of the household's revenue. The same result has been reached by other academics, including Harsch on child labour in Africa and Edmonds and Pavcnik on child labour worldwide. According to ILO, another significant factor pushing children into dangerous labour is the lack of relevant alternatives, such as affordable schools and quality education. Children work because they are bored and have no other options. There are not enough acceptable school facilities in many localities, especially rural ones where child labour is rampant to the extent of 60 to 70 percent. Even when schools are available, they are frequently too far away, challenging to access, expensive, or the quality of instruction is so low that parents question whether attending school is actually worthwhile.

#### **2.2 Cultural causes:**

Certain cultural attitudes have rationalised child labour and consequently fostered it throughout European history when child labour was widespread, as well as in the modern world today. Some people believe that working helps kids develop their skills and personalities. The cultural tradition in many countries is that children follow in their parents' footsteps; child labour is then an opportunity to learn and practise that skill from a very young age, especially where informal economy and small household businesses exist. Similar to this, females are often forced into child labour, such as performing domestic duties, because their education is less valued or they are simply not believed to need formal education. After retrieving recyclables from a waste, child labourers in Brazil depart. 70% of child labour worldwide is used in agriculture.

#### **2.3 Macroeconomic causes:**

The macroeconomic determinants that support child labour have been researched by Biggeri and Mehrotra. India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines are the five Asian countries on which they concentrate their research. They claim that although it is a significant issue in all five, child labour is not a recent issue. Over the course of most of human history, global macroeconomic factors favoured widespread child labour. They contend that both the supply side and the demand side are contributing factors in child labour. While the supply side of child labour is explained by poverty and the lack of adequate schools, the demand side is suggested by the expansion of the lower-paying informal economy rather than the higher-paying formal business. Inflexible labour markets, the magnitude of the informal sector, industries' reluctance to expand, and a lack of contemporary industrial technologies, according to other academics, are the main macroeconomic factors influencing the demand for and acceptance of child labour. Other reasons include; d) having or increasing a poor

family's income; e) lowering labour costs in a production organisation; and f) participating in domestic help since the children are less likely to be disrespectful or violent.

### **Categories of Child labour**

Child labour is a term that needs to be unpacked: it cannot be used in a sweeping manner but covers a range and variety of circumstances in which children work.

**1 Child Labour:**Children who work for pay or for free in mines, factories, workshops, workplaces, and the service industry, such as domestic work. The phrase "child labour" has only been used by India's Ministry of Labour in reference to young people engaged in "hazardous" work. Inferentially, children who are not engaged in "hazardous" work are not regarded as child labourers and are instead said to be engaged in child labour. As a result of the Labour Ministry's definition of child labour being so limited, millions of children who need government policy and programmatic help are left out, and only a very small percentage of children who are working are included.

**2 Street Children:**Street children, include shoe shine boys, rag pickers, newspaper salesmen, beggars, etc. When compared to child labour in workplaces and factories, the issue of street children is slightly different. For starters, while street children are totally unaccompanied and at the mercy of their employers, most children have some form of home to return to in the evenings or at night. They occupy the bus stops, train stations, and sidewalks where they live. They are helpless against both the cops and urban predators. They are constantly moving and lack a fixed home. As a result, their issue is more serious than that of kids who live at home and work in factories.

**3 Bonded Children:**Children who are either struggling to pay off the inherited debts of their dads, or who have been promised by their parents for pitiful quantities of money. In some states, forced child labour is a serious issue. Because they are unavailable, bonded children are sometimes the hardest to help. If the carpet owner purchased them, they are unable to flee. They cannot flee if the middle-class housewife paid for them. If the village landlord considers them to be property, they will live in servitude until they get married and are then free to sell their offspring.

**4 Working Children:**Children who labour in agriculture and at home as part of the family workforce. Youngsters in comparable situations to those of children working for other companies if they are working 12–14 hours a day with their parents at the expense of their education. Parents actually place enormous demands on their children, especially girls, that are completely out of proportion to their skills and abilities. The majority of children who are not in school and are employed full-time fall into this category. And it is in this sector that the majority of girls are found to be working rather than attending school. Children who are sexually exploited: The sexual cravings of males from different social and economic backgrounds are sated by thousands of young girls and boys. There are many direct connections between different forms of child labour that exploit children and commercial sexual exploitation of minors. Sites of sexual exploitation are frequently found in factories, workplaces, street corners, train stations, bus stops, and households where children are employed. Particularly helpless against employer abuse, whether perpetrated directly or through intermediaries, are children. Loan sharks from the village frequently function as procurers for the city's brothels, lending money to the family that must be repaid through the

daughter's employment. Almost all of these kids have their confidence violated by people they thought they could trust. One of the riskiest types of child labour is commercial sexual exploitation due to the physical (health, risk of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases) and psycho-social harm it causes.

**5 Children used for sexual exploitation:**The sexual cravings of males from different social and economic backgrounds are sated by thousands of young girls and boys. There are many direct connections between different forms of child labour that exploit children and commercial sexual exploitation of minors. Sites of sexual exploitation are frequently found in factories, workplaces, street corners, train stations, bus stops, and households where children are employed. Particularly helpless against employer abuse, whether perpetrated directly or through intermediaries, are children. Loan sharks from the village frequently function as procurers for the city's brothels, lending money to the family that must be repaid through the daughter's employment. Almost all of these kids have their confidence violated by people they thought they could trust. One of the riskiest types of child labour is commercial sexual exploitation due to the physical (health, risk of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases) and psycho-social harm it causes.

**6 Migrant children:** "Distress seasonal migration" is a significant problem for India. Every year, millions of families are compelled to spend several months away from their homes and towns in pursuit of work. Due to these migrations, families are compelled to drop out of school, which eliminates the sole chance to end the cycle of poverty generation after generation. Migrant children are generally employed at labour sites. Migrations are widespread and increasing, according to all available data. The number of children under the age of 14 who will be impacted by this may already be about 9 million. 14 Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and Other Backward Caste people make up the majority of migrant populations. They are the landless and landless poor who have the fewest resources, abilities, or education. According to studies, areas like Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra are home to the bulk of migrant workers. Migration appears to have an impact on almost all major states, albeit to various degrees. The majority of migrant labour is used in many industrial and agro-industrial sectors, including the production of bricks, salt, sugar cane harvesting, stone quarries, building, fisheries, plantations, rice mills, and so forth.

**7 Children engaged in household activities:**A huge number of kids (particularly females) labour in their own homes doing activities that aren't typically considered to be "economic activity," except from kids who are employed for pay (either bonded or otherwise) as domestic help. These kids help out with household chores including cooking, cleaning, and looking after younger siblings. Such activities need to be recognised as "work," as evidenced in the literature on women's labour. Furthermore, if such kids aren't put in school, they'll eventually work in one of the types of child labour mentioned above.

**Legislation for Child Labour in India:**

The Indian factories Act, which had the provisions prohibiting the employment of children under the age of 7, limiting the number of hours that children could work each day to nine, and allowing for four monthly holidays and rest periods, was the first piece of protective legislation for child labour in India. The British government in power actually created this in

an effort to reduce Indian industry production through some legal constraints. It might be argued that many Conventions and Recommendations enacted by the International Labour Organization have had a significant impact on India's labour laws, especially child protection laws. The legal protection of children in diverse jobs is provided by a number of legislative laws in addition to the Constitution.

Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (1986) was the culmination of efforts and ideas that emerged from the deliberations and recommendations of various committees on child labour. Significant among them were the National Commission on Labour (1966-1969), the Gurupadaswamy Committee on Child Labour (1979) and the Sanat Mehta Committee (1984). The goal of the Act is to forbid children from working in dangerous occupations and to control the services provided by children in non-hazardous occupations. It aims to specifically: (i) prohibit the employment of children, defined as those under the age of 14, in 18 specified occupations and 65 processes; (ii) establish a procedure for adding new occupations or processes to the list of those that are prohibited; (iii) regulate the working conditions of children in occupations where they are not prohibited from working; and (iv) establish penalties for the employment of children in violation of this law. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Amendment Bill, 2012 was introduced in Rajya Sabha on 4 December, 2012 further to amend the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. The amendment also seeks a blanket ban on employing children below 18 years in hazardous industries like mining. The Bill is referred to Standing Committee on Labour and Employment.

**Conclusion:**

Children are viewed as the country's future. As a result, they need to be well safeguarded from any danger. They should receive the required attention and love, be given space to grow up, receive an education, and receive other benefits in accordance with their legal rights. Instead of bricks, they need to be holding books. Toys and other indoor or outdoor games like football, cricket, etc. should be played by them. Instead of going to the mines or factories, they ought to go to school. Numerous NGOs are working in this area to guarantee that all Indian children receive the fundamental rights outlined in the 1992 United Nations Charter of Children's Rights. The rights to survival, protection, development, and participation are considered fundamental rights. Textile, hand-knotted carpet, silk, brassware, construction, glass, footwear, gemstone polishing, fireworks, etc. are a few of the industries that use child labour. Industrialists and businesses typically favour child labour because it provides them with effective work at a reasonable price. In order to raise awareness about child labour, April 30 is observed as Anti-Child Labor Day throughout India.

As a result, the government has been proactively tackling this issue by strictly enforcing legal requirements and implementing rehabilitation programmes at the same time. The proper implementing authorities, the state governments, have been undertaking routine inspections and raids to find instances of breaches. The government has been placing a lot of focus on the rehabilitation of these youngsters and on improving the financial circumstances of their families because poverty is the core cause of this problem and enforcement alone cannot help fix it.

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