CHAPTER - IX

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME
FOR RELEASED CHILD LABOURERS IN THE STUDY AREA

This chapter deals with the implementation of Child Labour Project of Markapur and also welfare programmes provided by the State and Central Governments to eradicate child labour and to rehabilitate released child labourers in the study area.

9.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILD LABOUR PROJECT:

In 1987 the Government of India recognised the necessity for a National Policy on Child Labour. It identified the slate industry of Markapur along with nine other industries\(^1\), in which child labour is extensively used, and which are particularly hazardous to children.

On a request made by the Ministry of Labour of the Government of India, a multi - crore project was sanctioned by the International Labour Organisation for the Markapur region with the following two - fold objective. First, to identify children between 8 and 14 years employed in the entire Slate Industry, including slate mines, quarries and slate factories and household slate manufacturing units situated in and around Markapur area and to remove at least 1000 children from the more hazardous activities of the slate work. Second, to rehabilitate these children by evolving a constructive programme such as providing non-formal education and vocational training, and other

\(^1\) The Government of India identified the following industries where children are employed in hazardous occupations:

i. The Match industry in Sivakasi, Tamilnadu.
ii. The Diamond polishing industry in Surat, Gujarat.
iii. The Precious stone polishing industry in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
iv. The Glass industry in Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh.
v. The Brass-ware industry in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh.
vi. The Hand-made Carpet industry in Mirjapur-Bhadoli, Uttar Pradesh.
viii. The Lock-making industry in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh.
ix. The Slate Industry in Markapur, Andhra Pradesh.
x. The State Pencil Industry in Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh.
support services such as nutrition, health-care etc. There was also an attempt to give income more
generating schemes beneficial to the families of the children but this latter scheme was never imple-
mented. This project depended on the financial support of Rs. 3.8 Crores during the period be-
tween 1987-1996.

9.1.1. JAGRUTHI SOCIETY:

To implement the scheme, an independent project society by name"JAGRUTHI" was regis-
tered in August’1988, with the Ongole District Collector as its Chairman and 13 other district
officers as its members. To co-ordinate the activities, the District Labour Officer was appointed as
the Project Director. JAGRUTHI is an autonomous body operating at the district level under the
control of the Central Government. Thus although the Board of Jagruthi had State Government
officials as members, the funds offered by the ILO were released directly to it by the Central Gov-
ernment, and discretionary powers over the expenditure were given to the District Collector.

The Government recognised the necessity of involving Non-Governmental organisations to
ensure the implementation of rehabilitation projects, and the catalytic role they play in creating
greater awareness among the public. Consequently, within a couple of months of the initiation of
the project by JAGRUTHI, the entire responsibility of the implementation of the scheme was trans-
ferred to ASSIST - INDIA, a voluntary organisation, while the financial aspects of the project were
continued to be looked after by JAGRUTHI Society.

9.1.2. ASSIST - INDIA:

Assist - India is an NGO registered in 1985. It is the most important NGO organisation which
is active in Guntur and Prakasam Districts of Andhra Pradesh with head quarters at Chilakaluripeta.
The aims of Assist - India include turning “the village” into a viable unit for its own development,
creating better living environment, promoting indigenous socio-cultural values, regenerating vil-
lage economy, and finally to forge a link between the village and Government development machin-
ery.

In November 1988, Assist was entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the ILO
funded project. The organisation was assigned immediate targets like (1) Conducting a base line
During the period 1988 - 1996, Assist - India promoted many welfare programmes for the working children in slate factories and mines. While conducting the base line survey, the organisation attempted to create awareness and consciousness among villagers and thereby motivated the slate workers to send their child to school.

9.1.3. RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL:

One of the major welfare activity of Assist - India is to promote education on non-formal and vocational lines. A special Residential School started by JAGRUTHI was taken over by Assist - India in November, 1988. The school is of the residential type and designed as a special school in a compact space. 8 Kms away from Markapur on the Ongole - Markapur trunk road. The school was started with the enrolment of 300 children. At present there are about 400 children in the school.

The programme of education in this school includes the following:

1) Following non-formal education syllabus prepared by SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training) strictly, so that 5 classes were completed within a time frame of 2 years.

2) Provision of training children who have completed the non-formal education to enable them to appear for the seventh class common entrance examination thereby to enroll in their regular schools, and to encourage them to go to higher education.

3) To provide vocational training to those who crossed 10 years of age. This skill training include carpentry, tailoring, motor winding etc.
9.1.4. ASSIST DAY SCHOOL CENTRES (MID-DAY MEAL SCHOOLS):

Assist - India designed and implemented another scheme for imparting education to a large number of working children all of whom cannot be accommodated in the residential complex, by opening day school centres in various villages. Provision was also made for providing meals to those attending these schools. Children in these schools are provided with required learning material like slates, books and pencils etc. There are 12 schools of this type in 12 villages functioning in the entire study area. Nearly 40 children on an average are enrolled in each day school centre. In these centres education from classes 1 to 5 is provided.

9.1.5. ASSIST BALWADI CENTRES:

In order to curb the future recruitment of child labour in the Markapur area, Assist - India formulated a scheme for creating an attitude among children towards education at a very early age by opening Assist Balwadi centres. In villages the children in the age group of 3 - 6 years are taken during the day-time by Balwadi teachers. The children in these centres are helped to develop their senses by way of songs, games, story telling and other visual aids and also provided supplementary nutritious diet. The intention behind the introduction of these Balwadi centres is that these centres should help in attracting and moulding children to school life at an early age and thereby enable them to take up formal education, an essential pre-requisite preventing them from going to work in the slate industry.

In order to create awareness among them, Assist - India conducted health camps like TB camp and Eye test camps. Besides undertaking health-camps in various villages its Balwadi teachers are encouraged to take up adult education programmes in the evening. Awareness regarding rehabilitation programmes of Assist is very high. About 80.00 per cent of the children in the study area and their parents are well aware of the Assist - India programmes.
9.1.6. LIMITATIONS OF JAGRUTHI - ASSIST INDIA:

1) The present study reveals that the actual functioning of the rehabilitation programme, has not been satisfactory. Interviews with child workers and their parents, local people, administrative staff of the organisation, trade union leaders, and several administrative and elected officials of the area reveals the following loopholes in implementing the Assist - India programmes. The success of Assist - India programmes on children is dependent on compensating the family income lost by removing the child from work. Thus a scheme was announced by Assist to identify persons for bank loans for self employment schemes. Even though it identified 206 families under this scheme, Assist - India could not implement it so far. Some of the parents of child workers revealed that after keeping their children for two or three years in the residential school at Rayawaram, they could never get the promised loan of rupees 6000 from banks because the banks insisted on a security which they did not have.

A similar scheme promised by Assist - India but not yet implemented is the offer of monthly stipend of rupees 100 to the families of those children admitted to the school.

2) The study noticed the downward trend in the response and enthusiasm of the child workers and their parents towards this rehabilitative programme. Out of 582 sample children 126 are the children who utilised various programmes of Assist - India, had discontinued from these programmes.

The reasons for dropout of sample children from Assist - India Schools are important to note here and again joined in the slate work. Out of these 126, 27 have dropped due to ill-health 42 children due to lack of proper facilities and 5 due to home sickness. Lack of proper teaching in these schools is the reason for the dropout of 19 children. The remaining 33 children have dropped due to financial reasons.

The experience of the children who came out of the residential school during the initial state seems to have been harsh. There were unhygienic conditions in the residential complex. Due to these unhygienic surroundings children were affected by diseases like scabies. Food served to the children at the residential complex was, according to children, bad and unclean. Girl children were made to do extra work like cleaning vessels, fetching water, cleaning the campus etc, after the school hours. Because of this many girls gave up their studies in the rehabilitation school and their parents were
quite bitter about it. Though the conditions in the Residential complex have now improved to some extent children and their parents in study area carry the earlier impressions towards the assist school.

3) The actual functioning of the administrative organisation associated with its goal of improving educational status and skill level of the released child worker has not materialised. There is inadequate and irregular supply of stationery, books and uniform dresses to these children. Despite the emphasis on non-formal education in the project guidelines, the entire teaching is carried on formal lines, teaching similar to the method followed in government schools. Children are not able to acquire basic skills even after two or three years of schooling in these schools. Teachers of these schools are frustrated because though they are trained teachers, their pay is very meagre i.e 700 Rupee per month, which is even lower than the pay of teachers in Government Schools, and their posts are temporary. Most of the teachers have no attachment and commitment towards their jobs and they always try to quite this job by searching for a better opportunity.

This tendency reflects on the performance of the students in the schools. Interviews with the children in these schools and the personal observation of the researcher who stayed in Residential School along with the children reveal a shocking fact that the majority of the children enrolled in the Residential school and Mid-day Meal schools were not the released child workers from slate industry. They never worked either in the slate mines or in the slate manufacturing units. They are all children from Markapur and other nearby villages who got the recommendation of local political leaders and other officials.

The study also reveals that Assist had certain reservations in providing admission to those belonging to the Scheduled Caste category though a good number of the working children in slate industry belonged to Scheduled Caste category. People from the S.C. colonies of the study area pointed out that they were all neglected by Assist and even after repeated requests their children have not been provided with admission, neither in the residential complex nor in mid-day meal centres. This trend defeated the very objective of the Child Labour Project of Markapur.

The study further disclosed that Assist is involved in a number of developmental activities of its own. It's involvement with child labour is one among many of its activities. The staff employed by the Assist for the child labour project are paid salaries from the funds of Jagruthi. However Assist uses some of the staff of the Child Labour Project for its own development and activities. This dilutes the commitment, time and effort they spare for the Child Labour Programme.
The Deputy Commissioner of Labour, who is the Director of Child Labour Project of Markapur stated that effective control over Assist is not possible to Jagruthi, because it has been reduced to the status of fund routing agency. He expressed the necessity for the government to evaluate its policy of giving government programmes to voluntary organisations. He felt that it would be a better idea if the government provides funds specially for child labour, rather than giving vocational training in carpentry, tailoring etc. He further felt that Assist personnel are not properly trained to carryout the various tasks of the project. On the other hand the Assist personnel stated that irregular release of funds cause problems for organising the residential as well as other day schools of the entire project.

Not only the Child workers and their parents in the study area, people from almost all counte\[
\text{\textit{viz}},\text{ local political and trade union leaders, Administrative Officials, senior citizens etc, have accused the functioning of the Assist - India and misuse of funds of the Child Labour Project of Markapur.}
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Thus the hypothesis that the Child Labour project in the slate industry of Markapur has failed to eradicate Child Labour and to rehabilitate the released Child Labourers from the slate industry is proved.

Thus, the hypothesis of the study that the Child Labour Project in the Slate Industry of Markapur, launched by the Government of India has failed to eradicate Child Labour and to rehabilitate the released Child labourers from the slate industry is proved.

9.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF CENTRAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT WELFARE PROGRAMMES:

The Central and State Governments are implementing several welfare and development programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) Nehru Rozgar Yojana, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, self employed Programme for Urban Poor etc. District level Development agencies such as the District Rural Development Authority, SC, ST and BC corporations are also financing several schemes for the weaker sections.

Four branches of the State Bank of India, one Syndicate Bank, and one Vaisya Bank are working in the study area. Only the State Bank of India and the Syndicate Bank are involved in
implementing Government Schemes such as IRDP and Nehru Rozgar Yojana by way of disbursement of loans and subsidies. But a majority of the slate factory owners and slate exporters have taken loans from the Vaisya Bank.

Discussions with Bank officials revealed that there are several problems when it comes to the proper utilization of the loans by the beneficiaries. These are:

1) The loans do not reach the beneficiaries as the allocated amount is retained by the middle men, such as Sarpanch or some other political leaders who take away a post of the amount sanctioned to various beneficiaries.

2) The loans are not utilised for the purpose sanctioned and instead are used to settle past debts or for a wedding or medical treatment, etc.

3) Even when the loan amount reaches the beneficiary, the amount, which ranges from Rs. 3000 to Rs. 6000 is not enough to enable him/her to earn an adequate income, or to even sustain the trade or any activity that has been started.

The officials interviewed were very sceptical of the scope for industrial development in the area and pointed out the agricultural output of the region would not be able to sustain more than the few existing oil, rice and dall mills. The manager of the Syndicate Bank was of the view that cattle rearing cannot be taken-up on a large scale due to the lack of availability of fodder in the area. Hence dairying does not have an employment generating potential. However, he was of the view that sheep rearing could be taken-up on a large scale as the vegetation in the area was more suitable for sheep. He said that Syndicate Bank prepared to sanction loans for sheep rearing.

9.2.1. DEVELOPMENT OF IRRIGATION:

The general opinion of almost all the officials is that, in order to make the area more economically dynamic, it is necessary for the Government to invest in irrigation and thereby boost the agricultural output leading to generation of more employment.
The Markapur region is agriculturally backward mainly due to the absence of proper irrigation facilities. In the mid 1980’s a special scheme for surface wells was implemented under which loans of Rs. 38,000 with Rs. 19,000 as subsidy were sanctioned. However the officials of the irrigation department stated that this scheme was made use of mainly by the big farmers who could offer appropriate security. Even the schemes implemented by the Andhra Pradesh Irrigation Development Corporation (hereafter A.P.I.D.C) have also mainly benefited the big farmers. Small farmers accuse the bigger land owners of preventing the APIDC from giving assistance to the small farmers. A small number of Scheduled caste individuals have however secured borewells from the APIDC.

There are no large scale irrigation projects in the region. There has been a long pending demand for the Velugonda Project which is likely to be a main source of irrigation in the study area.

9.2.2. INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:

Another welfare programme with the greatest long term implications for the child workers in particular is the Integrated Child Development Scheme (hereafter called ICDS). The ICDS is restricted to the Markapur Revenue Division where 60 centres are functioning in 32 villages. But, families in the mining area, who reside in Tarlupadu, Donakonda and Konakanamitla Mandals which fall outside the Markapur Division are not benefitted by the ICDS.

There is a lot of dissatisfaction among the villagers as for as the quality of the food that is served in these ICDS centres. Food provided to the children in the ICDS centres consists of items made with Rice powder, Jaggery, Barley, etc occasionally eggs and milk are given to the children in these centres.

The lack of proper buildings for the Anganwadi centres is a major problem. This is due to the unwillingness on the part of the building owners to let out their houses as they get only small amount in the form of rents from the ICDS. The Anganwadi workers also suffer from low motivation due to the low wages, paid to them. There is also lack of co-ordination between voluntary organisations like Assist - India and the ICDS which tend to provide similar facilities such as child care centres in the same village. This affects the performance of both.
9.2.3. HOUSING SCHEME:

Housing is another area where effective intervention by Government is noticed. Poola Subbhaiah Colony (also called State Workers Colony) and Ekalvya Nagar Colony are two main areas of Markapur locality where houses were constructed with the assistance of the Government. In most of the other villages, the main beneficiaries of the housing schemes are the Scheduled Caste families. In some cases, the government provided just the land, while in other cases, a subsidy was also provided to cover the construction costs.

9.2.4. PROMOTION OF EDUCATION:

Implementation of Formal Education Programmes, Adult Education and Non-Formal Education Programmes are the main developmental programmes initiated by the Government to increase literacy levels in the Markapur area.

As mentioned earlier in the entire study area there is high incidence of drop outs especially at the primary and upper primary level, particularly among girls. Within the overall enrollment pattern an important accompanying element is that illiteracy is very high among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Categories and children from these groups are hardly noticed at the upper primary level. Extreme poverty conditions of these families and the absence of alternative income generating schemes induce many families to send their children to work in slate mines and slate manufacturing units.

Interviews with various development officials, senior teachers and senior citizens revealed that developmental activity in the field of education will not be successful unless there is proper implementation of long term economic developmental programmes in the region. They also suggested the need for vocational training and establishment of an ITI in the study area.
9.2.5. NON FORMAL EDUCATION:

With a view to provide educational opportunities to working children the Government has introduced Non-Formal Education Programmes with emphasis on functional literacy and training in local occupations and there are 100 NFE centres in the entire study area. This activity is a total failure in the study area, as working children hardly find time to attend NFE centres. NFE centres failed to attract the children in the study area.

9.2.6. ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME:

Since 1984 Adult Education Programme with the main emphasis on development and continuation of literacy levels of all those who possess minimum education, has been conducted through the Janaswadha Programme in the study area. According to the Project Officer of the Adult Education Programme in Markapur Division, the reasons for the recent failure in the overall implementation of the programme are:

1. Economic poverty of the people in the absence of any developmental activity in and around Markapur area is the main reason for a downward trend in the enthusiasm of the people towards Adult Education Programmes.

2. Inadequate funds and lack of commitment among local political leaders to the various programmes in the region leading to the failure of the scheme.

3. Lack of trained and regular teachers, lack of infrastructure facilities, irregular supply of books, etc., are major obstacles in diluting entire objective of the scheme.

9.2.7. HEALTH SCHEMES:

Implementation of health schemes like Immunization Programmes and Family Planning as covered by Markapur Urban Hospital and Primary Health centres showed a success. In implement--
Doctors in charge of health care at Primary Health Centres and other sub-centres felt that the implementation of the monthly target relating to family planning programme has however been made difficult owing to the socio-economic background of the study area, as many poor families are not opting such schemes. For them children are a source to supplement their family income. Another hurdle is the lack of health education and formal literacy in the area, especially among female members.

As far as the immunization scheme is concerned, the data available from the Urban Hospital and P.H.C. shows that these centres could implement the scheme successfully.

9.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The rehabilitation programme of the Government of India for Child labour, with funds from International Labour Organisation has been entrusted to the Non-governmental organisation named Assist - India. The registered society names JAGRUTHI disburses the funds directly from the Central Government to Assist - India. Assist - India is imparting education to child workers who are taken out of work. A special Residential School has been established in a compact space at Rayavaram, 8 k.ms away from Markapur on the Ongole - Markapur trunk Road. Assist - India has also opened day school centres in various villages. In order to curb the future recruitment of Child Labour in the Markapur area, Assist - India formulated a scheme for creating an attitude among children towards education at a very early age by opening Assist - Balwadi Centres.

However, the function of Assist - India is not satisfactory. Facilities provided in the rehabilitation centre are not satisfactory. Drop out rate is more from these schools due to lack of minimum facilities, proper teaching, and due to financial reasons. The study reveals that majority children of these rehabilitative centres were not child labourers. They never worked in slate mines, factories or household units. The funds which are meant for child workers in slate industry, are not reaching the targeted groups. Children from Markapur and near by villages who got the recommendations of the local political leaders and other officials, have been given admission in these schools. There is severe criticism of the functioning of Assist - India by children and their parents, local people, trade
union leaders, administrative officials and elected leaders. On the other hand Assist - India personnel stated that irregular release of funds cause problems for organising the rehabilitative programmes effectively.

In order to improve the socio-economic status of the people in the study area the Central and State Governments are implementing several welfare and development programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), Self Employment Programme for Urban Poor (SEPUP) etc. District level development agencies such as District Rural Development Authority (DRDA), Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Castes Corporations are also financing several Schemes for the weaker sections.

The present study reveals that the benefit of the majority of these programmes are not reaching the needy person. The loans sanctioned under various programmes did not reach the beneficiaries as the amount is retained by the middle men, the local political leaders who take away a part of the amount sanctioned to beneficiaries. The Markapur region is agriculturally backward mainly due to absence of proper irrigation facilities. A special scheme provided by the A.P. Irrigation Development Corporation for surface wells with 50 percent subsidy was made use of mainly by the big farmers who could offer appropriate security. There is no large scale irrigation project in the region. There has been a long pending demand for the Velugonda Project which is likely to be a main source of irrigation in the study area. The ICDS programme is restricted to the Markapur Revenue Division only. It is covering 80 percent of children of the study area who reside outside the Markapur Division. Two housing colonies were constructed for SC and ST families in Markapur with the assistance of the Government. In most of the other villages the main beneficiaries of the housing schemes are the Scheduled Caste families. In some of these cases, the Government provided, just the land, while in other cases, a subsidy was also provided to cover the construction costs. Implementation of Formal Education, Adult Education and Non-Formal Education Programmes are the main developmental programmes initiated by the Government to increase literacy levels in the Markapur area. Various development officials and senior teachers and senior citizens revealed that developmental activity in the field of education will not be successful unless there is proper implementation of long term economic developmental programmes in the region. They also suggested the need for vocational training and establishment of an ITI in the study area. Implementation of health schemes like immunization programmes and Family Planning as covered by Markapur Urban Hospital and Primary Health Centres showed a partial success. Implementation of Family Planning Programme is difficult in the study owing to the socio-economic background of the area, as many poor families are
not opting such schemes. For their children are a source to supplement their family income. Another hurdle is the lack of health education and formal literacy in the study area, especially among female members.
I am the Child
All the world waits for my coming
All the earth watches with interest to see what I shall become
civilization hangs in the balance
For what I am, the world of tomorrow will be
I am the child
You hold in your hand my destiny
You determine, largely, whether I shall succeed or fail
Give me, I pray you, these things that make for happiness
Train me, I beg you, that I may be blessing to the world.

by: Mamie Gene Cole
Working children in slate mines, carrying out the wastage like mud, stones, etc., from the mines.
Researcher, interviewing the parents of the working children in the study area.

Researcher, collecting the data in the field study.
A girl child too, sharing the burden of load.

Researchers interviewing the working children in slate mines.
children cutting the raw slate layers into required sizes, near the slate mines.

A Family of slate mine workers.
A child carrying out the load from a mine of 100 feet depth, over a highly risky path.

A 4 year old boy cutting the raw slate layers.
Looking for the 'HOPE'!