CHAPTER-VII

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1. Children are the future of the society and economy of a country. Every child should have the opportunity to develop his skills to occupy an important position in future. Every country should formulate policies from time to time depending upon the situation of the working children in the country.

2. The classification of the children by activity status reveals that the child labour has many facets and forms and it is an accepted part of the economic and cultural behavior in much of the developing world till 19th Century and is so to a lesser degree even today. In rural areas it is considered as a socializing process, for the vast majority of the children in the rural areas the work place was the traditional farm or their own home.

3. Distribution of the child labour population shows that there is a decrease of number of children from 89 million in 1980 to 79 million in 1990. Asia has the largest share of 76 per cent in the World child labour population. But when we look at the participation rate i.e., the percentage of children of the relevant age group who work as a labourers, the problem 1990 was most serious in Africa (27.87 per cent) compared to Asia which was 15 per cent.

4. The child labour participation rate is highest in the case of Ethiopia (39 per cent) compared to Africa (23 per cent) and Brazil (11 per cent). For over a decade child labour is recognized as key issue of human rights, despite the large social reform movement which has this been generated around issue more than 200 million children worldwide are still in child labour and a staggering 115 million are in its worst forms.

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5. The Worldwide figures reveal that child labour continuous to decline modestly, only a three per cent reduction in the four year period covered by the new estimates (2004-08) reveals that the overall reduction rate has slowed, as there are still 115 million children in hazardous work with regard to children aged 5 -14 in economic activity, the Asian – Pacific region and Latin America and Caribbean experienced a decrease, but the number of children is increasing in Sub -- Saharan Africa.

6. In spite of considerable growth rate of GDP in India the agrarian sector is facing a crisis which is affecting most of the rural poor. The more disturbing development is a considerable weakening of school attendance of children from agricultural labour households. Though there is an increase in the absolute number of children, the proportion of children in the total population declined between 1991 and 2001. The reduction in the proportion of children is attributed to drastic reduction in the total fertility rate in many of the major states, like Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra and Gujarat. The proportion of children in the population has implications for the incidence of child labour.

7. As per the census of India 2001, there were 12.26 million working children in the age group of 5-14 years as compared to 11.3 million in 1991, revealing an increasing trend in absolute numbers though the working participation rate of children has come down from 5.4 per cent to 5 per cent during the period. The child labour in India is around 8.9 million in 2004-05 with a work force participation rate of 3.5 per cent.

8. The child labour across the states of India reveals that there is a decline in the incidence of child labour in the Southern and Western Indian states and Union Territories between 1991 and 2001. Eastern and Northern Indian states shows an increase in the absolute magnitude of child labour between 1991 and 2001, specially in the states of Utter
Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Highest incidences of child labour is noticed in Utter Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh as per the 2001 census.

9. 90 per cent of the working children are concentrated in rural areas. The problem of child labour in India is essentially a rural problem. In 2004 - 05 out of 9.07 million child labourers, 7.44 million were in rural areas. Though there is a declining trend in general, magnitude of child labour in India, the concentration of child labour in rural areas continues.

10. Social group wise identification of child labour indicates that the children among lower castes are more vulnerable to labour related exploitation in India. The children among the Scheduled Tribes are twice likely to be engaged in gainful economic activities than the others. In the children in the age group of 10-14 the work participation rate is highest for Scheduled Tribes followed by Scheduled Castes and other Castes. The work participation rate is higher among minority religious community than that of children hailing from Hindu groups and others during 2004 - 05.

11. There is a positive correlation between incidence of child labour and household economic status. The magnitude of child labour is significant among poorer sections than among richer sections. The literacy levels of head of the child labour households is also playing a significant role for the status of child labour in the country. Though the literacy levels are increasing, the incidence of child labour is high among the households where the head of the households in an illiterate.

12. Sectorial distribution of child labour in India reveals that the agriculture and allied activities alone accounts for over two third of the child employment. The manufacturing sector accounts for 17 per cent of child employment trade and hotels accounts for 8 per cent of total
child labour force. More than 87 per cent of the child labourers are located in farm activities in states like Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, while this accounted for 82 per cent in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra in 2004-05.

13. The district level analysis shows that, there are regional variations in the trends on magnitude of child labour. The district level data for 2001 reveals that three of the top 12 districts having more than 80,000 child labourers are in Andhra Pradesh. Three districts are in the range of above one Lakh and 8 districts in the country are with a range of 75 thousand to One Lakh. In West Bengal, Haryana, Punjab, Bihar and Rajasthan there has been an increasing trend of magnitude of child labour is over 90 per cent of the districts.

14. The magnitude of child labour is derived not only with the children counted as children actually working but also on the basis of children not attending schools. The children not attending schools provides an essential link between the two issues of child labour and education. It also makes a presumption that reasons for children working are the same as the reasons for children working are the same as the reasons for children not attending schools.

15. The Andhra Pradesh situation relating to the magnitude of child labour shows that the total number children engaged in different aspects of child labour is 47,09,996 as per the records of School Education department 2004-05. The number of child labourers from the period 1971 – 2001 reveals that there is a decrease from 15 per cent of India's child labour in 1971 to 11 per cent in 2001. Child labour in Andhra Pradesh is mostly in the rural areas. The percentage of child labourers are 92 per cent in census years 1991 and 2001. The proportions of child labourers is due to several factors. The main factors are over 80 per cent of the children live in a rural areas and the real income of the rural households is low and seasonally affected.
16. The district wise child labour population figures reveal that Mahaboobnagar, Guntur and Kurnool districts are having highest share of child labour in 2001. The region wise distribution of child labour reveals that the Telangana and Coastal regions are having more than 80 per cent share of the total number of child labourers in Andhra Pradesh. In census years 1991 and 2001 the share of girl child workers is 51 per cent and 53 per cent respectively.

17. The class wise dropout rates in children from the year 2004-05 to 2008-09 are declining in Andhra Pradesh. The district wise dropout rates in Andhra Pradesh reveals that Mahaboobnagar is has highest dropout rate i.e., 38 per cent followed by Medak, Warangal and Nalgonda. There are several reasons for this high dropout rates of children in Andhra Pradesh. Lack of sufficient number of teachers, and building facility are the main reasons for the high dropout rates in Andhra Pradesh.

18. The post - independent era witnessed commitment of government to the cause of children through Constitutional provisions, Legislation, Policies and programmes. The National Child Labour Policy is aimed at reducing the incidence of child labour progressively though a number of measures. The three main components of the policy are Legislative action plan, focussing on general development programmes and project based plan of action.

19. The emphasis is laid on strict and effective enforcement of legal provisions relating to child labour under various labour laws including the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986, The Factories Act 1948, The Mine Act 1952 etc. Government also brought forward legislation to delete provision contained in the Minimum Wages Act allowing different wages to be fixed for children. The Central and State inspection Machinery was setup to protect exploitation of children in the name of child labour.
20. Recognizing the poverty as the root cause for the child labour, various poverty alleviation, and employment generation schemes are formulated for the benefit of child labour families. Various national development programmes in the areas of education, health, nutrition and integrated child development were also formulated.

21. The Child Labour Development Project was launched in 9 districts of high child labour endemicity in the country in the year 1998. This scheme envisages running of special schools for child labour withdrawn from the work. This project is expanded to additional 150 districts during the 10th Plan. It is also decided to expand NCLP scheme to all the districts of the country in the 11th Plan. Child labour elimination efforts are linked with the scheme of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan of the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

22. International Labour Organization (ILO) also launched the International Programme on the elimination of child labour with the objective of designing, implementing and evaluating programmes for child labour. The ILO also implemented the state based project in Andhra Pradesh in 2004. In addition the National Steering Committee also gave a green signal to the ILO supported projects to combat worst forms of child labour in Sericulture Industry in Karnataka. The Ministry of Labour Government of India and United States Department of Labour have developed a project under ILO – IPEC for prevention and elimination of child labour in identified hazardous sector.

23. The Judiciary in India has played very crucial role in augmenting the efforts of all concern for elimination of child labour. The Supreme Court in its Judgment directed among all other things to conduct a detailed survey of child labour in the entire country. The court directed that the child labour must be eradicated through well planned poverty focused elevation development and imposition of trade sanctions in employment of children etc.
24. The present study reveals that more number of child labour households belong to nuclear family, and these social status explains that 94 per cent of sample households belongs to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Backward class categories. More than 80 per cent of sample child labour household have entered the work below the age of 14 years, and most of them are involved in agricultural labour activity.

25. The study also identifies that more number of child labour households and their wives are illiterates. The child labour households (more than 75 per cent) are landless and they are worried with number of problems due to agricultural price falling and price inflation. The average monthly income is very low and the expenditure is very high. This forced them to engage their children at work.

26. Most of child labour households do not have access to institutional credit to meet their consumption expenditure of social functions and medical expenses etc., they borrow huge amount for non institutional agencies and are trapped in debt. More than 60 per cent of child labour households are suffering severe debt trap. This is another reason to place their children at work. Another important reason for child labour is migration of child labour households in search of employment opportunities.

27. Most of the child labour households are engaging their children at work places to increase their family income and to survive their family economically and socially. Most of the child labourers are from illiterate families and due to ignorance of parents. The study also reveals that 92 per cent of child labour households are unable to send their children to school due to inaccessibility of schooling facility and non existence of provision for compulsory education.

28. The study highlights that due to lack of employment opportunities and proper legislation and policy, and the consequent engagement of
children in work. Most of the child labour households (98 per cent) are not aware of child labour Laws. They are fascinated towards migration to urban areas for one reason or other, unable to find suitable job and this situation also forced them to engage their children at work.

29. The employers are taking the child workers to task, when they are absent from the work. Their wages are cut and their workload is increased. More than 60 per cent of the sample child workers experienced physical beating at workplaces, affecting the safety, security and mental condition of the children.

30. Children are facing a number of problems to reach the work place as most of them are going by on foot only. 23 per cent of sample child workers are working 8 hours a day whereas more than 76 per cent are working more than 12 hours a day. The monthly income of child workers is very low even they work for more hours. Most of them are working to assist their family. Children are involved in carrying heavy loads and exposed to dust, fire, gas and loud noise. This situation is seriously affecting the health of the children.

31. The working children having poor relations with their employers due to high work intensity. They are living in bad working conditions and experiencing physical and verbal abuse from their employers. More than 50 per cent of sample child labourers are unable to sleep comfortably, and are sleeping either at employer's house or at workplace. More number of sample child labours do not have interest to continue in the same job for longer period, due to lack of work satisfaction. Low pay and low business returns and no guarantee for continuing in the present job for the longer period are the other reasons for the change of the job.
CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR AND SUGGESTIONS TO ERADICATE CHILD LABOUR:

The main reason for existence of child labour as per the study are low levels of family income, poverty and indebtedness. According to a new Oxford University study 55 per cent of India's population 1.1 billion or 645 million people, are living in poverty. Using a newly developed index, the study found that about 1/3 of World's poor live in India. The government should concentrate seriously on formulating and implementing the anti-poverty programmes. A general raise of the population above the poverty line will lead to progressive elimination of poverty. Measures should be taken to promote employment opportunities in rural and urban areas. Successful implementation of all these programmes is essential. When the employment opportunities are generated for the adults and they are rewarded more fairly to raise their standard of living, children will no longer be required to work.

Most the child labour parents are illiterates especially the mothers of working children. Illiteracy of the parents is a responsible factor for the development of child labour. The illiteracy of the parents should be tackled through programmes like the total literacy campaigns at village, mandal and district levels, which provide large reservations of child labour. Another important factor related to the elimination of child labour is the provision of free and compulsory primary education to all sections of the rural and urban population. Integration to the formal school system has been shown to have significant inverse correlation with the incidence of child labour. There is a little resistance to school enrolment from the parents of working children. Specific interventions of the state are required to ensure that procedures relating to admissions in the schools do not become impediments to the universalization of primary education.
The study also identifies the land owning position of child labour households, and caste status is also responsible factors for the incidence of child labour. More number (more than 75 per cent) of the sample child labour households are landless labourers. They are able to increase their income levels if the government implements the land reforms successfully. Another problem identified with regard to child labour households with land below three acres is that frequent failure of the crops frequently. Government should take initiative in design crop insurance schemes for the benefit of these sections. There is an urgent need to develop irrigation facilities through sources various such as canals and bore wells and thereby boost the agricultural output leading to generation of more income and employment. As Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Backward class social group child labour households are do not have land, sufficient measures should be taken to distribute surplus land to these disadvantaged social groups.

The study identified that more number of sample households do not have access to institutional finance to meet their family expenditure. As a result they are entering into the clutches of money lenders and micro financiers. Their interest rates are very high compared to bank rate of interest. The money lender and micro financiers are fully benefited and the receiver of the loan is heavily exploited. This is the one of the reasons for engaging the children at work. Government should instruct the institutional agencies to cater the needs of these sections of people as an important measure to eliminate child labour. The child labour households and employers of child labour are not aware of child labour legislation. It is true that various child labour laws have been enacted, but, enforcement machinery is both inactive and inadequate. In this context the judiciary should play a crucial role in augmenting the efforts of all concerned for elimination of child labour. People especially employers and the parents of the children should be made aware of the existing laws concerning child labour and the penalties should be imposed upon people flouting laws. Measures should be taken for stricter implementation of these laws. The lapses of employers in implementing legislative and other provisions regarding working children should be widely
publicised in order to build a strong option against defaulters. Further the World Trade Organization (WTO) should enforce restrictions on all the firms engaging child labour by imposing trade sanctions.

The Child Labour Act 1986 banned the employment of children below 14 years in certain industries which are hazardous. According to this Act all the children below 14 years working in different sectors will not come under Child Labour Act. This is creating lot of confusion in the stage of collecting census data of working children. Though more number of children are working in agricultural sector, they were not figured in the census data. Due to this reason the census data is not exactly matching with the occupations listed in hazardous under the Child Labour Act. A clear segregation of data into hazardous and non-hazardous occupations has to be done to have broad estimation of children working in different occupations.

Lack of awareness among the parents, employers and society in general about the problem of child labour is the major concern. There is a need to develop awareness in the child workers, their parents and employers of the damage the early work can cause to the society, young earners and their generations to come. They should be informed about the benefits of the alternative solutions. They should be explained the difference between right, educational work on one hand and exploitative drudgery on the other hand. For a wider publicity of this message, mass media should be used giving regular information and running educational campaigns. Public lectures can also be organized with more emphasis on the problem and its repercussions.

Child labour is most common in backward economies where, participation of children in the labour market is an important component of social structure. The social phenomenon is a reflection of the economic phenomenon and vice-versa. Therefore, the solution to the problem lies in the planned development of society. The elimination of child labour cannot be achieved in isolation, but would be an integral part of the other socio-economic changes. Mechanization, which needs more skilled workers, would discourage child workers and encourage them to opt for education and skilled
training. Child labour cannot be approached as an isolated problem. It is a complex socio-economic, demographic phenomenon, which can be reduced and eliminated by multiplicity of actions both by government and public, at social as well as individual levels. The aim of the social policies should be to reduce the intensity of child labour in the short-term and eradicate the child labour in long-term planning.