CHAPTER V

A LEAP INTO FUTURE LIFE:
REHABILITATION OF CHILD LABOUR
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As seen in the previous chapter the Government (both Centre and State) failed to eliminate the child labour totally even after its series of steps taken by it. Its aim was defeated by the industrialists as well as the parents of the children. Hence the Government came forward with a new national policy for total elimination of child labour. As per new proposals many rehabilitative measures were introduced by a concerted effort involving International Labour Organization, Central and State Governments, NGOs as well as sociologists. Hundreds of children worked in the industries of matches and Fire works industries of Virudhunagar were permanently as well as partly rehabilitated as seen in the successive pages.

The burden of elimination of child labour would affect the child, family, industrialists and even the Government itself. If a child is prevented from doing work in a hazardous factory, the family would be starved. Further they may be forced to borrow money from their owners for obligatory expenditure such as marriage and other socio-religious functions and thereby would face pecuniary stringencies. The child will also be affected due to lose of its individual income and thereby he may be forced to depend upon for even trivial expenses and would make him to become a socially unwanted element, and he would become an unwanted member in a poor family and that would cause the revival of infanticide as is practiced even to-day in other dry belt of Tamil Nadu. At the same time the Government also has to meet so many problems such as:
i. Unemployment problems which would threaten beyond manageable size.

ii. New schools could not be adopted immediately due to financial crunch.

iii. The children who are withdrawn could not be rehabilitated immediately, due to involvement of heavy expenditure.

iv. Proper training could not be given as envisaged.

v. Official machinery have to be toned up to meet this new situation.

On the other side the industrialists would also be affected by this elimination as:

a. the increase in wages due to appointment of more male or female labourers with higher wages, will lead the fall of profit. In order to make up this they have to raise the price of their product. In the competitive market this would affect the industrial growth. This trend could not be appreciated.

b. They could not elicit more work from the adult members as from the children.

With all those above mentioned hurdles the industrial decline will lead to the decline of economic prosperity of the country. Hence the total elimination is feasible only by proper planning and execution because the child labour is a deeply rooted social milieu. Hence various methods should be adopted cautiously.

**ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING RULES AND REGULATIONS:**

i) **Supervisory Committee:**

The Government of India in order to enforce the laws constituted in the year a central level advisory committee called the “Child Labour Technical Advisory
Committee" to advice the Centre in the purpose of elimination of child labour.¹ The important function of this committee was to evolve a national policy and monitor the national scheme for the elimination of child labour. In consonance with the Central Government Policy the Tamil Nadu Government also constituted a state level committee with the Labour Minister as the Chairman and representatives of all Government Departments, Non-Government Organisations and Sanitary Officers as members, to implement to eliminate the child labour totally.

ii. Administrative Machinery:

In order to execute the scheme and serve as liaison officer between the industries and the district authorities, a Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories was appointed. His work was to inspect the industries personally along with medical officer in order to keep check on the age proof, health condition, working hours, wages etc.

iii) Enforcement Cell:

Child Labour Enforcement Cell was formed to inspect Match and Fire Works establishment in the entire State and enforce the child labour act.

iv) Special Court:

The Special Court was also established with jurisdiction over the entire match belt for a period of 5 years exclusively to try child labour cases as the then existing judicial magistrates were not able to appreciate the difficulties experienced by Field Inspecting Officers.

v) Power of Controller of Explosives:

The Controller of Explosive was empowered under the Explosives Act to suspend license if child labour was found in a fire works industry. In accordance with the Arms

and Explosives Act when a child labour was detected the issue of raw material and production was suspended immediately. This special power was used to the fullest extent.

The licensing authority strictly enforced the provisions for improved issuance of license and non-engaged of child labour with power to cancel the license in case of violation. Instead of inspecting officer the unit owner should be made responsible for proving age of the child.

vi) **Conversion of industries:**

Another strategy which was adopted by the government was to encourage cottage industries to spread radically around the villages by using excise duty differentials, sales tax and other concessions etc.

**REHABILITATIVE MEASURES:**

The Government also took some rehabilitative measures

a. The price rate to the parents was increased in order to mitigate the loss due to the abolition of child labour.

b. Worker's Co-operative managerial and marketing support was established in order to promote cottage industries. Concessions and other forms of incentives were offered to encourage adult workers to join the Co-operatives with a common “Child labour free” label.

c. After Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act 1986 the Tamil Nadu Government passed Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Rules in 1988 in order to
implement the recommendation of Hari Baskar Committee of 1984 as well as the provisions and the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act 1986.

IDENTIFICATION:

As per the Rules in Tamil Nadu “Child Labour Committee” was constituted in all the districts in 2000.2 This committee under the Chairmanship of the Collector with the members namely Superintendent of Police, Tahsildars of Sattur, Sivakasi and Virudhunagar, RDOs of Sivakasi and Arruppukottai and Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories and Match Factories of Sivakasi. This Committee met once in a month. The State Level Committee directed the District Level Committee to identify the child labour and take necessary action against it as recommended by its resolution. They decided to seek the help of NGOs since they are closely working with the people with the interest of rehabilitating them properly. In pursuance of this order the Virudhunagar District Committee convened its meeting and selected NGOs like TRRM, MMSSS working in that area.3 In order to identify the child labour it was decided to take survey, inspections and investigations and executions of erring companies.

The Government decided to take survey on the presence of child labour in Match and fire works Industries. It was done through Anganwadi Workers (Integrated Child Development Scheme and Noon Meal Workers) defraying them 50 paise per form. The area was divided into a number of blocks to take survey. This survey consisted of details of the name of the household, his address, caste, the type of house in which he resided, the type of amenities available in the house, details of the family members including

2 Collectorate Records of NCLP, Virudhunagar, dt. 7.10.03.
3 Ibid.
Further, this survey was mainly concentrated on non school going children educated and occupational status, and income and details of children in the 6 to 14 age particularly working in Match and Fire Works industries. Some time the parents hide the details about their children. The followings is the details of the cases filed by Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of case filed on Match works</th>
<th>No of cases filed on Fire works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories is another Government official who worked

### Regulation and Enforcement by Factories Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cases Filed</th>
<th>Disposal</th>
<th>Conviction</th>
<th>Aquittal</th>
<th>dismissal</th>
<th>Fine amount</th>
<th>Cases Filed</th>
<th>Disposal</th>
<th>Conviction</th>
<th>Aquittal</th>
<th>dismissal</th>
<th>Fine amount</th>
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<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>1,58,000</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>4,08,500</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
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<td>Nil</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>4,72,000</td>
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<td>117</td>
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<td>98</td>
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<td>Nil</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13,96,000</td>
<td>1232</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for the elimination of child labour. This official checked the factories to ascertain whether child labours were in the Match and Fire Works Industries of Sivakasi Block. During his periodical visits he found child labourers in the Imperial Match works, Ramalakshmi Match works, Kani Match works, Eswaran Match works, Kala Fire works, Venkateswari Fire works, Vadivel Fire works and some other industries, situated in Sivakasi town area. He filed cases against them under the Factories Act, for engaging the child labour.

Though the Government took serious measures to curb the practice of child labour by the industrialists, it had to take up the cudgels in the court of law. The court took time to dispose the cases since it has to go through various evidence. Sometimes even after a long battle the Government could not succeed in it because of procedurral and recordical lapses of evidences. While the case was pending in the court the children attained and the case became null and void. The Supreme Court while delivering a judgment that recommended compulsory Insurance Scheme for both adult and child employees taking into consideration of the hazardous nature of match and fire works industries of Virudhunagar district.\(^5\) On the basis the Tamil Nadu government introduced this scheme. Accordingly the industrialists insured their employees for a sum of Rs. 50,000/ and they paid premium.\(^6\) They also adopted group insurance scheme.

In the meantime various national development programme were floated with wide coverage in the areas of ‘education’, ‘health’, ‘nutrition’, ‘integrated child development’, and ‘income and employment generation’ for the poor. These programmes were utilized...
to create socio-economic awareness. This compelled the parents to send their children to school rather than factory (Pattarai). In continuation of this policy projects based on "Plan of Action" were undertaken in areas of high concentration of working children. The prime activities of this project were:

* Stepping up enforcement of the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act of 1986, the Factories Act of 1948, the Mines Act of 1952, and such other acts within the project area.

* Coverage of families of working children under the employment and income-generating programme and anti-poverty programme.

* Formal and Non-Formal education of child labour and stepping up programmes of adult education for the parents of working children.

* Setting up of special schools for working children where provision for education, vocational training, supplementary nutrition, health care, etc., would be made. If necessary stipends would be given to children taken out of banned forums of employment to compensate them for loss in earnings.

* Creation of awareness through social activist groups and by other means so as to educate people regarding the undesirable aspects of child labour.

ii. Necessity for Rehabilitate measures:

Suitable rehabilitation of the child and its family are two distinct and important issues after identification and release of the child labourers.
First children have often been compelled to work on account of economic necessity or on the priorities of current consumption of families. It is, therefore, essential to ensure that the child is not an economic burden to the family. For this purpose, there is a need for schools, hostels and other institutions wherein these children could be admitted and their requirement of food, clothing, books, medical care etc., should be met. It is important to note that primary schools and vocational training centres which take care of these requirements in a consolidated manner could not serve effectively for the rehabilitation of child labour. Only such schools which can provide the children with boarding and lodging facilities, support for their education and skill development, and can provide a measure of care and solicitude should be selected for this purpose. It is important to make arrangements for boarding and lodging in schools where such facilities are not existing in the districts wherein the practice of child labour is prevalent. In addition to the above various Central and State Government programmes like the National Child Labour Project, Non-formal Education, Social welfare hostels, Ashram schools, District Primary Education Project, etc., should be geared to meet the requirements of the educational and psychological needs of the child labours. Special support would be provided by the ‘Labour Ministry’ for this type of educational and psychological rehabilitation of the child labour in the district with concentration of child labour, by expanding their activities under the programme of the National Child Labour Project.

The argument in favour of sending children to school rests, in the researcher's view, on the following premises:

8 Ibid
* Child Labour dehumanizes children and stunts their growth and block mental development at a formative stages in their lives and in that sense contributed to the poverty of their lives as adults.

* Children may have nimble fingers, but these can in the long run be much more profitably used to write with, play and learn thereby of think cognitively rather than to weave carpets, roll beedies, and manufacture of matches and fire works etc.

This is accepted as the central message, and that message needs to be transmitted to all sections of society, namely, the representatives of the people, policy formulators, programme implementers, NGOs, local self-governing bodies, teachers, students, women, and youth. The question is the degree to which NGOs can act as a natural and effective conduits its dissemination. Since NGOs work with the people at the grass-roots they can be effective agent in spreading the message. No single method can be used to transmit it; many fold approaches and strategies, conventional and non-conventional could be adopted. NGOs could do their advantages, adopt the basic strategy that was adopted in the Total Literacy Campaign under conductive environment for literacy. This was done through the numerous non-formal folk forms of communication such as dramas, songs, slogans, skits role play etc. They should have complete freedom in creating a conductive environment for the elimination of child labour using whatever methods they believe to be suitable in a particular context to senitize employers, parents, and children themselves about the issues involved.

**a.Action Plan Regarding education:**
In order to educate the working children the following “Action Plan” are enforced:

1. Compulsory primary education in phase in the match belt. This requires State legislative assistance in the spirit of the Constitution which declares that every child must receive “free and compulsory education”. Enforcement could start in the child labour intensive areas through local communities (Village Education Committees) Selecting “Truant Officer” and placing nominal fines on parents who have not enrolled their children or have pulled them out of schools. The funds thus collected can be managed by the villages committee for local requirements such as school improvement or assistance to destitute families. Enforcement can be phased by class I and II in the first year, upto class III in the second, upto class IV in the third, and finally upto V in the fourth year. This would translate into a more feasible enforcement on elimination of child labour in phase which otherwise cannot be phased by age due to legal implications.

2. Strengthen and improve the primary education system in terms of facilities, teacher strength and quality of teaching/learning. If enrollment and attendance increased tremendously, the introduction of a shift system in selected schools may be entertained. Strengthening of primary education is also essential to decrease the drop-out rates at the secondary level and to motivate parents as well as children to appreciate

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9 Report of the Sub-Committee on elimination of child labour in the Match and Fire Works industries in Tamil Nadu, Government of Tamil Nadu, 1993, p.28
the value of education.

3 Since the average age of child labour is 10-14 and has given the high drop-out rates at the middle and secondary levels especially among girls, attention must focus on achieving Universal Elementary Education (upto class VIII) once Universal Primary Education is attained.

In Virudhunagar the identification of child labour was started after the accident occurred in 1980 at Thiruthangal due to a flash flood in the river Arjuna. In this accident thirty seven children lost their lives. After that the Government of India initiated stern steps to deal with the problem of child labour with iron hands. The Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories initiated steps to identify the child labour in Virudhunagar District in accordance with the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986. Apart from those Inspectors there were 14 officers empowered to inspect the child labour. These inspector can visit factories at any time. But according to the Factories Act they should inspect not less than four times in a year. Doctor was authorized for giving physical fitness certificate to adult labourers. For this purpose the Doctor was paid Rs.5/- for each certificate, by the owners of the factories. But however by the violation of law child labour continued as usual. The factory owners disputed the method of inspection as well as the identification process itself. They vehemently opposed it saying that even unqualified Noon Meal Organisers were appointed as enumerators. Further they blamed that the higher authorities who were often forced with the target wantonly launched prosecution against the employers without proper application of mind. Some of them contested the identification of child labour by some officials in the court and the court passed a verdict that age proof might be given only by a qualified doctor. This shows
that some of the false identification put the Government in an embarrassing position. Except such cases the identification was properly done.

The national policy on child labour was approved by the Cabinet on 14th August, 1987 during the Seventh Five Year Plan period. Under the policy a project based plan of action was envisaged. Accordingly, nine projects were started in areas of high concentration of child labour. Among the nine projects one project was implemented in match and fire works industry in Virudhunagar district. The National Child Labour Project in Sivakasi was launched by the Union Minister of State for Labour on 24.4.86. This society was registered on 18.4.86 (Registration No.26/86) under Societies Registration Act 1875 under the Chairmnship of the Collector. In Tamil Nadu the NCLP has been functioning in 8 districts viz 10 (1) Coimbatore (2) Dharmapuri (3) Pudukkottai (4) Trichy (5) Salem (6) Vellore (7) Tuticorin and (8) Virudhunagar. A full time Project Director is administering the project society with the grant in-aid released by the Ministry of Labour, Government of India directly to the society.

The aim of the project in Virudhunagar district is to eliminate child labour in match and fire works industries and to enroll them in the special school so as to provide primary education and vocational training in wire-knitting, tailoring etc. 11

The NCLP rests on a gradual, sequential, progressive and selective appropriation that initially should concentrate attention and action in areas with a high concentration of child labour. The NCLPs had the following components:

* Imparting non-formal education to enable the children release from work to receive functional literacy and acquire a level equivalence with the

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10 Collectorate Records, Functioning of the Child Labour Project in the State, p.1.
11 ibid.
corresponding grade and level in the formal system.

* Supplementary nutrition through midday meals.
* Income and employment generation through impartation of skills.
* Stepping up of enforcement of child labour laws.

Special schools were to be opened under each project with fifty to seventy-five children in each school corresponding to the grade/level of the students. Special schools were designed to impart instructional lessons in a non-formal mode by teachers selected through a special selection procedure involving the community.

In Virudhunagar area the NCLPs formed as the special school as sanctioned by the Government of India that 50 children in each school for imparting nonformal education to the child withdrawn from the work spot. The number of special schools and number of children sanctioned by the Government of India are as given below in Appendix No. II.

In the Special schools students are paid stipend at the rate of Rs. 100/- per month and Rs.2.50/- per day towards noon meals.12 Mid-day-meals are being served for students with effect from 6-6-97 from the State Government funds, under M.G.R. Nutritious Noon-Meal Scheme. Extension of this scheme for further 675 students has been applied and received the sanctioning order on 10.8.2000. Free Bus Pass have been supplied to needy students from their home to schools in which they are studying.13 It was provided for every students of special school.

12 National Child Labour Project, Sivakasi (a) Virudhunagar, Virudhunagar District Collectorate, Tamil Nadu, p.3
13 ibid.
NCLP – Special School Under ASSEFA
Classroom & Vocational Training
Cultural Programme to encourage
Special School Students
Awareness Programme against Child Labour on Anti Child Labour Day in Virudhunagar on 30.04.02
Further the health of the each child is monitored by the medical officer once in a month; proper medicine is also given to them. Hearing aids for 2 children and two handicapped students are also given with the financial assistance of the Government.\(^{14}\)

Each Special School is provided with a table and three chairs each from the funds of the District Labour Welfare Committee. The Committee has further proposed to supply teaching materials, and furniture to 58 special schools amounting Rs. 5.8 Lakhs.\(^{13}\)

A majority of NCLP students in Virudhunagar district i.e. about 62% were not child labourers and were not engaged in any economic activity. A majority of children (8 percent) in Virudhunagar district who were at the time of admission in special schools were engaged in non-agricultural occupations. The total number of children, going to NCLP schools are 4 percent among NCLP children in Virudhunagar district is the prevalence of home based Match and Fire Works manufacturing works. The children are thus not withdrawn from work to pursue their education.

A household survey reveals that two-thirds of them in Virudhunagar (64 percent) received free textbooks from their schools. Over 9 percent of students enrolled in NCLP schools in Virudhunagar district received stipends. Other benefits given to students included a monetary payment of Rs.2.50 to 3.00 per day per child in lieu of a midday meals.

Almost all schools were functioned in rented buildings; except some schools set up in earlier years no separate rooms for each class. The working hours of the school was between 9.30 A.M., and 4.30 P.M., \(^{16}\) The subjects like Tamil, English, Mathematics, Social science, and Environmental Science were taught. In all the schools vocational

\(^{14}\) Ibid.

\(^{15}\) Interview with Mr. Ramesh Kannan, op.cit., Virudhunagar, dt.6.10.03.

\(^{16}\) Collectorate Records of NCLP(1988), Virudhunagar.
courses like carpentry, tailoring, basket making, simple wiring, bookbinding, embroidery and screen printing were offered.

The results of a written test conducted for the III and V year class students of NCLP and of Non-NCLP schools revealed that the level of learning of children in NCLP schools is much lower than in formal schools.

Government schools offered no incentives to children to continue their education in formal schools after they pass out from NCLP schools by providing free textbooks and uniforms from their own funds. Some parents complained that the NCLP schools did not issue transfer certificate that enable to get admission in formal schools, only progress report were issued, making it difficult for them to seek admission to formal schools. The press media also exposed certain irregularities happened in certain area. For example Thinamalar Tamil News paper, pointed out the misappropriation of NCLP fund allotted to Virudhunagar District.

Focused group discussions conducted with parents of students of NCLP schools revealed that most of them admitted their children in NCLP schools because of their overage and supply of free textbooks, uniforms, and midday meals.\(^\text{17}\)

The NCLP scheme has made a modest beginning in addressing the acute problem of educating working children and achieved a medium of success in its efforts. The sheer magnitude and laxity of the problem demands more intensive and cost-effective approaches to eliminate child labour. There was a need for a concerted and well coordinated effort among different government departments, on the one hand, and the various sections of the civil society, on the other. The Department of Education has played a vital role to play in working towards improved access to and quality primary education.

\(^{17}\) ibid.
SPECIAL SCHOOLS UNDER NCLP

Year 2000 - 2001

MAINSTREAMED CHILDREN (Year wise) UNDER NCLP

Males & Females
education, and evolving suitable system of alternative schooling. The Ministry of Labour has taken initiatives in enacting suitable legislation, strengthening enforcement, and sensitizing of society about the evil of the child labour.

The following details show how various agencies helped to implement the NCLP:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Department</th>
<th>Nature of help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Adhi-Dravida and S.C. and B.C. students hostel</td>
<td>S.C. and B.C. students hostel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Backward Class Welfare Department</td>
<td>facilities for their higher studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Rehabilitation Department</td>
<td>Hostel facilities provided to the handicapped students and to NCLP Students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Education Officer &amp; Chief Educational Officer</td>
<td>Can instruct to regular enrollment to take special school student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Department</td>
<td>Provided benefits to the child labour like Group house loans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Department</td>
<td>Provided benefits to the child labour families like Vettu mania patta, Old age pension.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further the following is the structure through which the NCLP project was pursued:

**Administrative structure:**

Central Government  
(GOI, Ministry of Labour)  
/

State Government  
(Commissioner of Labour & Sanitary of Labour & Employment Department)  
/

District level  
(Collector)

**Financial structure:**

GOI Ministry of Labour  
/

District National Child Labour Project

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18 Interview with the Project Director of NCLP, Virudhunagar District Collectorate, Virudhunagar, dt.6.10.03.
Multidimensional and multisectoral approaches to eliminate problem of child labour
In Virudhunagar district the NCLP was mostly implemented through the NGOs. In Virudhunagar district there were so many NGOs worked for the abolition of child labour. These NGOs served mostly situated in the rural area. In the initial stage there were a measure number of special schools but in course of time it rose to more than 50 under the management of the NGOs. The list of the NGOs and when the schools were started by them is shown in the Appendix No. II. Among those NGOs some of them like MMSSS, SPIRIT, TRRM, SPEECH and ASSSEFA have served well. They covered the nook and corner of the area where the child labour prevailed. But now a days some of NGOs work is not as expected level. It was noted by the Collector and they were served warning notices that unless they have rectified their mistakes they may be replaced by some other NGOs.

Though the NCLP was initiated in 1986, the special schools were started in 1988 only. From the beginning they identified and released more than thousand students. In the special schools they provided vocational training viz tailoring, wire knitting, mat weaving etc., to get job in future. The mainstream students were given in the graph.

b. ACTION PLAN REGARDING COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MOBILISATION:

In order to promote public awareness and mobilize the public support, various programmes were undertaken in Virudhunagar area:

**Awareness Campaign:**

A communication and social mobilization campaign for the elimination of child labour and universal primary education was launched with great vigour. The campaign focused on bringing forth an attitudinal change not to condone child labour and to mobilize local communities to support the enforcement to eliminate child labour and achieve universal primary and elementary education. The school mobilization campaign
also targeted on education for girls and improvement of the status of the girls child.\textsuperscript{19} Local Non-government organizations played the key role in the communication, social mobilization and enforcement activities and in organizing the local communities.

In Virudhunagar district the Government conducted awareness programme on the important days like Child Labour Day, on 30\textsuperscript{th} April, Womens Day on 8\textsuperscript{th} September and Children's Day on 14\textsuperscript{th} November.\textsuperscript{20} In those days they conducted meetings of families of child labourers to discuss about the rehabilitation of child labour in Virudhunagar, Sivakasi, and Sattur. Cultural programmes by the NCLP special school students were staged with the theme of importance of education. Rallies were undertaken in co-operation with other organizations like ILO, CLASP stressing the children's right and the importance of education. Apart from this the society appointed an area Animator to create awareness among the rural people. For other programmes refer Appendix III.

The Ministry of Labour sanctioned a sum of Rs.5 Lakhs to identify and create awareness through programmes in the year 1994. Those programmes are given in the Appendix IV.

In the meantime International Programme for Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and the Child Labour Action and Support Programme (CLASP) are also implemented under the Technical Co-operation Programme of the ILO. The IPEC programme is global in scope and provided technical advisory services to all ILO members on request. The programme seeks "to eliminate child labour by stimulating governments to establish standards on child labour, launching programmes to protect and rehabilitate child workers which will serve as model for action regarding child labour".\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} Report of Sub-Committee, op.cit., p.29.

\textsuperscript{20} The Project Director, NCLP, Op.Cit.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) on IPEC in the second quarter of 1992 was signed by the ILO and the Government of India, reaffirming that national efforts in the country would be aimed at the eventual elimination of child labour and that this objective could be attained only through vigorous action by State governments and involvement of NGOs and Trade Unions.

IPEC in India aimed at the progressive elimination of child labour through a comprehensive approach based on the line of its Convention No. 138.

The highlights of the IPEC programme in India are:

i. Raising public awareness against child labour.

ii. Assisting in policy making at the national and state levels.

iii. Training NGOs on the design, management and evaluation of child labour projects.

iv. Sensitising employers and employees organizations against child labour.

v. Enrolling working children in regular schools after wearing them away from the work place.

vi. Eliminating child labour in selected areas and work spot.

A total of 118 projects benefiting over 81,000 children in 15 states have been implemented with IPEC assistance through trade unions, employers' bodies and NGOs. It has been alleged that the IPEC funds were abused and the project has degenerated into an educational programme from being an initiative to abolish child labour. There is an overlap between IPEC's child labour project and the government. The NCLP initiative of
TRANSITIONAL EDUCATION CENTRES (TECs) UNDER ILOP

Year 2000 - 2001
1987 includes non-formal education for working children, nutrition and a small stipend for children working in hazardous industries.\textsuperscript{22}

However, ILO officials insisted that IPEC was a demonstration programme aimed only at showing what can be done about the child labour problem. The idea was to make myriad interventions by enhancing enforcement officers, creating awareness, offering non-formal education for child workers and so on. Besides ILO officials claimed that about 50\% of child labourers directly targeted by IPEC have stopped work.\textsuperscript{23}

CLASP, the another ILO programme, was originated in response to the initiatives taken by the Indian Government in the mid 1980s to deal the problem of child labour. In Virudhunagar district, IPEC's child labour project was implemented by the ILO. IPEC is here called as ILO project for child labour. Its tenure was only two years from March 2000 to February 2002 in Virudhunagar district. Under this project 80 schools were functioned with 25 students.\textsuperscript{24} Under this project, just like NCLP, the children were divided as age wise and according to their age they have different type of mainstream like,\textsuperscript{25}

* 5-7 age children were identified as mainstream to regular schools, they have no stipend.

* 8-12 age group of children were identified and joined in the Traditional educational Centre, also called special schools. In this they gave education upto 5\textsuperscript{th} standard after that they sent to mainstream regular schools.

* 13-16 age group of children were also identified and trained

\begin{itemize}
\item[{\textsuperscript{22}}] ibid
\item[{\textsuperscript{23}}] ibid
\item[{\textsuperscript{24}}] Records of ILO Project, Virudhunagar District Collectorate, Virdhunagar.
\item[{\textsuperscript{25}}] ibid.
NILA PALLI ALBUM

Nilapalli site Rally by Children

District Collector with Employers Joyful learning exercise

Question - Answer Session Sensitization of Parents

Prize distribution Prize Distribution to Parents
in various fields i.e. tailoring, wiring, fitter and beautician course. These above programmes covered all the children who missed their education.

c. Community based Activity:

Since the community is a factor for cohesiveness of the Tamil society the planners of the elimination of child labour also utilized this factor in Virudhunagar area.

One such programme is “Moon School” concept. Moon school is a carefully conceived concept for retaining the children in the special schools run for the child labours till they reach Formal schools. Generating interest and enthusiasm among the children and their parents attracting the school dropouts and unenrolled children into the schools is the primary objective. Awareness creation among the village community, factory management, pressure groups and policy markers and sensitizing objectives of this once-in-a-month conglomeration under natural setting.26

Moon schools concept is perceived from the cultural milieu of India. Indian mothers feed their children showing the moon and telling tales. Similarly, the village folk assembled along the river banks on full moon days and part took their supper in the moon light. This practice is called in Tamil “Nilla Choru”. There used to be a lot of fun and fluoric. “Nilla Palli” is expected to generate same level of enthusiasm among the children and their parents.

Moon schools bloomed on full-moon days and served as a platform for the children to exhibit their innate talents in front of their parents and other rural folk. It served as forum to talk about dropout and enrollment issues and to analyze the pull and push factors, such as economic conditions, quality of education, attitude of parents and

26 Dr. K. Gopal, I.A.S., Collector/Chairman, Nillapalli, Moon School, An innovative effort to scaleup the anti-child labour activities, NCLP, Virudhunagar District, Tamil Nadu, 2000.
tendency of factory management etc.

Moon schools functioned with the co-operation and guidance of the functionaries of Governmental departments, Non Government Organizations, Elected Bodies, Field Staff of the NCLP, ILO project, Continuing Education and Community support groups.

The salient features of the Moon schools are:

* Arranged once in a month on Full-moon days, at 150 locations where special schools were located.

* Arranged at open place in villages.

* Children’s Rallies are organized as a part of social mobilization process.

* Songs and cultural programmes are organized.

* Joyfull of learning methods are demonstrated.

* Children’s talent and their capacity are assessed.

* Parents who have encouraged their children to study are honoured.\(^{27}\)

* Games for children are organized and prizes are offered.

* Book reading activities are demonstrated.

* Suggestions and comments by parents, community support group are encouraged.

* Employers are sensitized on the problem of child labour.

* Elected representatives, NGOs and Officials participation is ensured for positive impact.

* Various benefits under Government schemes are offered to the needy parents.

\(^{27}\) ibid.
Moon schools started in Virudhunagar District with an intention to bring about a change in people's perception about the education and elimination of child labour from hazardous and non-hazardous occupations. This community based activity was aimed to play a positive role in the eradication of child labour in Virudhunagar district as follows:

N - Nature (under the moon)
I - Interesting (games & stories)
L - Learning (in joyful method)
A - Appraisal and assessment of talent (before parents)
P - Participatory (exchange of ideas and suggestions)
A - Aim (for 100% enrollment, Retention and 0% dropout)
L - Lead (leading the dropouts, unenrolled into schools)
L - end (support and assistance to the children and parents)
I - Involve (industrialists, Formal school and Community)

Nillapalli is a natural and interesting 3 to 4 hours event, a learning and appraisal forum with the participation of everyone, aiming for retention of children in the school and recruitment of unenrolled, and also to lead the dropouts into both special and formal schools, to lent support to children and their parents, by involving local industrialists, factory management, Government officials and community if necessary.28

In Virudhunagar district Nillapalli was started in September 2002. The responsibility of arrangement for this function was undertaken by the local organizations in Kallipatti, Thiruthangal, Thayilpatti, Nehru Colony, Servaikkarapatti, Sadayam patti, etc. It is most welcomed by the children and their parents.

28 ibid.
ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF CHILD LABOUR:

It is obvious that the child labourers are belonging to poorer section of the society. The best method of eliminating child labour is to ensure that families are enabled access to adequate opportunities for livelihood and to improve the quality of life. In order to provide sustained livelihood to such families, the Ministry of Rural Development has agreed to provide to these families on priority basis the following benefits:29

a. Assured employment for two adult members in the family for 100 days each in a year under the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) Intensive Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (I-JRY) or the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS). The Collector of the concerned district is to ensure this employment under any of these Rural Programmes. The scheme of projects will have to be planned in advance so as to ensure that members of these families seeking employment during any time in the year got assured employment. Accordingly, such priority to these families was emphasized under the relevant manuals of these programmes;

b. In the matter of allotment of house sites and allotment of Indira Yojana (IAY) houses, the child labour’s family accorded a very high priority along with SCs/STs and families of freed bonded labours. All such families whose details were available at the district level were given the highest priority in the allocation of house sites and in the construction of IAY houses.

In Virudhunagar district parents were given employment in the employment

programme such as Self Help Group under Mahalirthittam and Bankers (NAPARD)
Under IAY scheme so far 7 houses were allocated to the child labourers family in Sivakasai area.

In addition to the above mentioned benefits, these families were provided assistance under IRDP as per the provisions of the revised IRDP manual with adequate investment for self-employment ventures in land based or related traditional occupations. The investment under IDRP and selection of occupation was made to enable these families to earn a minimum incremental income of Rs.5000 to Rs. 7000 per year. Necessary linkage like training for skill improvement, supply of raw material and marketing facilities for product were made available to all those beneficiaries under IRDP by DRDA.

In Thiruthangal, Moolipatti, Sathiyanganagar, Kumilankulam, Sattur, Erichanatham, Uppathur, Pothireddiyapati, Naduvapatti, Vadpatti, Vellur, Paraipati, villages 1092 families utilized a sum of Rs 109,20,000/- under IRDP scheme. This scheme prevented more than 1200 children from going to the factories since the parents income has marginally improved from Rs. 80/- per day to Rs.200/- per day.

e. ACTION PLAN REGARDING THE HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY:

In order to improve the family income the following project was undertaken:

1 A few NGOs were currently involved in organizing the community in waste land development using locally available resources for income generation. Such scheme has to be increased to provide more employment for the under-employed agriculture based men in the surrounding areas.30

2. Funds were collected through levying additional cess to the match units and this was utilized for mobilizing women under thrift and credit societies. Thus, families obtained loans or advance.

3. As a long-term solution, irrigation potentials in this area should be explored to improve agriculture; productivity and new agricultural research was undertaken to improve crops, which were suitable to this region. The Departments of Rural Development and Agriculture gave focused attention to these drought prone areas to develop the agricultural potentials.

Apart from this they also created Self-Help Group in rural areas. In Virudhunagar district 114 SHG are functioning consisting of 2342 members. They availed loans and improved their own profession and improved their profit. Preference was given to the family of working children so that they could send their children to the schools. This scheme prevented thousands of children becoming child labours in Virudhunagar district. This can be seen in the increase of strength of Mainstreamed children under NCLP.

Though there are many rehabilitatory schemes were executed there are many hurdles uncertainties and difficulties in its implementation:

i. Delay in release of funds to the projects and uncertainty about continuance of the projects are major inhibiting factors. They led to a great deal of demoralization and demotivation. These procedural bottlenecks should be ironed out at the earliest. Long-term planning to eliminate child labour is obviously very essential.
ii. One of the principal objectives of the NCLP is to withdraw children working in hazardous occupations and mainstream them into the formal school system. As working children are from different socio-economic backgrounds, have different skills and experience, the normal schools are not in a position to cater to their specific needs. The rehabilitation centres essentially act as a bridge to facilitate their entry to eliminate their entry into the formal schools. The child labour projects have been able to make a dent on the problem and have been able to facilitate both the withdrawal of children from hazardous work and their gradual entry into mainstream education. However, the problem persists. It is necessary to continue the project approach during the Five Year Plans.

iii. The aim of the NCLP is to enable working children to become productive and participate members of society. Therefore, apart from academic inputs, there should be strong pre-vocational and craft components in the education of children in the rehabilitation centres. An appropriate module for the curriculum should be finalized at the state level. The V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, NODIA, could also be associated in preparation of alternative moulds.

iv. The existing NCLP scheme provides for payment of a stipend of Rs. 100 per child per month. While this amount does not fully compensate the income foregone by the working children, it acts as a great motivating factor for parents to send their children to school. Therefore, the system of paying the stipend should continue.
v. People’s participation and the involvement of grass-roots level organizations are essential components for the success of this programme. The NCLPs at Kalahandi and Rangareddy have demonstrated this. It is recommended that the volunteers should be essentially from the local community and grass-root level organizations like youth clubs, mothers’ club, cultural and social organizations should be fully associated, share the responsibility, and run the rehabilitation centres. The existing scheme does not provide for any institutionalized monitoring mechanism; an inspection system is virtually non existent. Some of the state governments have been monitoring the place and progress of the implementation of NCLPs in their respective states, but their role has been limited because of lack of financial support under the scheme. It is therefore, necessary that the monitoring and inspection mechanism, especially at the state level, should be created, strengthened, and earmarked for each of the NCLP states and a specific role should be assigned to them.

i. The present scheme does not allow any flexibility to adapt to the local conditions. This is very essential. It is, therefore, recommended that while the board physical parameters in terms of coverage and provision of welfare inputs should be prescribed adequate operational flexibility should be allowed to be exercised at the project society level subject to the overall cost ceiling. The involvement of development functionaries of allied departments like Education, Health, Social Welfare, Rural and Urban Development, Panchayat Raj, and interaction with them at the district level