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The world is progressing towards unprecedented growth, development, technological advancements and various constitutionally framed laws and regulations. But still the existence and persistence of child labour pervades within the realms of a flourishing society. The plague of child labour has griped not only the under-developed or undeveloped countries but the so called developed countries too are under the sharp tentacles of this alarming incidence. Since time immemorial child labour has been prevalent in the societies in various forms and practices but very little has been done to completely eradicate the problems of child labour. The increasing rate of children’s involvement in generating income curbs their families’ financial issues to some extent but at the same time they give rise to a plethora of problems such as crime, juvenile delinquency, health and nutrition, education etc. thus devoid them of a normal childhood. The children involved in labour force are not only subjected to mental and physical pain but they also sustain the burden of negligence from their parents and employers. The repercussions of child labour are undoubtedly malignant, agonizing and heart-rending. The traumatic journey of a child from a house to a factory entails a series of underlying causes and factors which ultimately results in unimaginable growth of children labour force. The harbingers of laws and regulations have effortlessly essayed the role of corrupt bureaucrats and officials but fail in their attempts to implement, monitor and regularize the existing laws in eradicating or posing limitations on child labour. The government, undoubtedly formulated various laws and policies to tackle the problem of child labour but they somehow directs their attention only towards the organized and formal sector or rather any established factory or industry. Thus leaving those children behind, languishing in the dungeons of unorganized or informal sector or rather at home based level.
In the countries where child labour exists, it is often stated that poverty is the main reason why children are sent to work and that poverty should first be solved to eradicate child labour. But, as experts state, 'child labour also perpetuates poverty as children become part of the destructive inter-generational cycle of repetitive impoverishment', 'child labour adds to unemployment of adults as they take the jobs of as many unemployed adults, reduces the need for technological innovations which is so essential to the expansion of exports-, holds wages down and, hence, increases the number of families living below the poverty line'. Two important causes of child labour as stated by many labour experts are the vested interest of employers in cheap child labourers and the inefficiency and inadequacy of existing primary education facilities. The first cause implicates that child labour serves the interest of employers; they can pay low wages, extract more work, make maximum profit and remain free of any labour unrest. Child labourers are also victims of physical, mental and sexual abuse by employers. The second cause implicates that children lose interest in education because Government schools are often poorly run and maintained, lack teaching materials and (motivated) teachers.

India is considered to have the largest population of child labourers, the exact official estimates however varies between 17 million and 44 million-child labourers under 14 years of age. Estimates made by respected NGOs range between 55 million and over 100 million. India alone is officially said to have 17.36 million in child workers, more than anywhere else, comprising 5.9 percent of the total labour force. Some 93% of these child workers are in the rural areas. Out of estimated 210.8 million children in the world between the age group 5-14 years who are engaged in some form of economic activities, children fall within the strict definition of child labour and of this 111.3 million children could be included in the category of hazardous work.

India's competitive position in the world market is now partly based on the fact that it can provide both domestic and foreign investors with the
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cheapest, most flexible and docile workforce which is mainly working in the informal sector and 'of whom the majority consists of children and women, who are self employed, casual, contract, temporary, seasonal or migrant workers'—. Industries and workshops, which operate in the informal sector in India, do not come within the purview of labour legislation, labour unions are opposed by these industries and workers are hindered to organize themselves; no collective bargaining agreement exists in the unequal relationship between the employer and the (child) worker, to improve the terms and conditions of their work.

Child labour is widespread in home based manufacturing activities in the informal sector in most developing countries. Home based work in manufacturing can easily lead to the employment of child labour especially when the head of the household procures the raw materials from a contractor and performs the work at his home with family labour. In Uttar Pradesh the child workers work both in hazardous and non hazardous occupation in the informal sector. The incidence of child labour in U.P has no doubt had been increasing day by day since the shift from formal sector to informal sector or rather at home based level. Many districts of U.P. such as Firozabad which is famous for its bangle and glass ware industry employs tender aged children for numerous work which is both harmful and hazardous to their development.

The present study focuses on the various implications of child labour at the home based level. The pragmatic shift of employing children at the household level has further aggravated the problem of this social evil. The purpose of this study “Child Labour and The New Legislation: A Study of Home Based Bangle Industries of Firozabad U.P.” is however done to depict and assess the plight of these child workers and to bring to light the manifold types of exploitation and abuses which they face in the everyday life. Although the glass bangles industry of Firozabad is under the hazardous employment, but still children are employed in the wake of new legislation and laws because the laws itself does not lay down the strict code of guidelines regarding its
eradication at domestic level, so the employers have shifted their work from organized sector to home based units. Very few studies had been conducted in the area of bangle industry and those which had been done were only restricted to the formal sectors and did not take into account the children who work at the household level. A complete comprehensive picture of the problem still seems to be eluding the researcher thus there is a need to carry out a more analytical and deeper study in this area.

In the wake of various legislation, policies and government enactments, the incidence of child labour has been increasing in the informal sector and there has been a pragmatic shift from organized sector to home based level which has given employers the opportunity to exploit children on their own terms and condition. The child labour law ignores the working of children in the home based enterprises thus involving children in the workforce. Despite the varying estimates one cannot deny the presence of child labour in the glass bangle industry in large numbers. The issue of legislation to eradicate child labour, which has been considered as an important tool to eliminate child labour, however is not functioning effectively as it sidelines the informal sector. The study has attempted to evaluate the impact of the legislation both in terms of direct and indirect indicators.

The research design adopted by the researcher for this study is “Descriptive cum Diagnostic”. The Descriptive analysis of child labour envisaged a plethora of problems, situations and consequences pertaining to the existence of this social evil. It is also diagnostic in nature as it focuses on the various problems pertaining to the overall development of children. It will help to identify the major issues and areas and thus accordingly formulate and implement a plan of action to curb the existence of the child labour.

The following objectives were taken into account while essaying the consequences, causes and conclusions drawn during the research on child labour in unorganized sector:-

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To study and investigate the geographical and social profile of the district.

To study and investigate the socio-economic profile of the sample households.

To investigate/study the relationship between the incidence of child labour and educational background of their parents enrolment ratio and drop out rates of working and non working children.

To investigate the consequences of hazardous work on the health of children working in the industry.

To study the cause for the dependence of the children on this hazardous work and the interest level and aspirations of children employed in these industries.

The expected outcome of this study indicates two basic criteria, firstly it aims at effecting and bringing about viable changes in the various policies, programs and governmental initiatives taken in context of child labour and secondly it will tend to benefit the future researchers. The following study analyzed and presented will be an extension in the field of child workers through proper and effective legislation and implementation of governmental policies.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:

The following hypotheses will be tested

- The geographical and social profile of the district correlates with the employment and involvement of children in the bangle industry.

- Within the framework of socio-economic profile, the various factors such as migration, education, indebtedness, caste system, occupational mobility etc do have direct bearing in the emergence of child labour.

- The educational level of the sample household is a determining factor in the rise of child labour.
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- Lack of participation in education and the schooling status of the child workers has decreased due to the increased ratio of child labours.

- Child labour in the unorganized sector are bereft of any medical facilities thereby suffering from various contagious diseases.

- Children employed at home based level compromises with the congested and confined working area thus resulting to a series of serious health issues.

- Poverty, parental pressure and educational handicaps corroborate the entry of children in this high-risk industry.

- Children working in the bangle industry seem to be impassive, lacking interest in their personal pursuits and expressing low level of aspirations and attitudes.

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the impact of legislation and socio-economic status of the child workers. The study undertaken depicts the horrifying situations and conditions under which a child works and also it tries and focuses on the ineffectiveness of the existing laws, policies and programs pertaining to child labour.

The crux of the study is that a major chunk of children are still being engaged and involved in the glass and bangle industries. The law formulated prohibits the working of children in the formal sector but it totally ignores the working children at the home based level. The law makers are aware about the involvement of child workers at the home based level but since the law does not lay down strict code for home based industries, to abolish child labour from the informal sector, they have to ignore this given reality thus paving the way for rampant child labour in the district.

This study highlights the socio-economic profile of the respondents (child workers) and their educational status, the wage structure, working conditions and health hazards. The study draws its attention towards the plight of the child workers and the negligence of the law makers towards the betterment of child workers. It also focuses on the child’s perception, attitude
and aspiration. This study will in a way serve as an eye opener for the other researchers, government officials, policy makers etc. This study will further work in the direction of making stringent rules and regulations and also to take punitive action against the employers and parents who deliberately curtail the childhood of their child.

The universe taken for this proposed research comprises of 500 working and 139 semi working children (who more or less fluctuates between working and non-working). Although a detailed investigation of the socio-economic profile, health, education, occupational mobility, wage structure, working conditions are elaborately discussed and presented.

The respondents selected for this study are mainly 500 working children between the age group of 5-14 years. Due to the shift of work from the organized sector to the unorganized sector the concentration of child labour has increased in Firozabad district. Most of these children work at home based industries at different level of manufacturing bangles. Their small stature, alertness and active participation have given impetus to employ children at tender age. The children employed mainly comprises of male rather than females. Although children are quick and energetic in doing their work females are mostly employed for the work of Rangai while male children in other manufacturing processes. Moreover an impediment in employing female children is their restricted movement.

Since the art of bangle making traces back to the mughal era, people here are more inclined to continue with their age old tradition and occupation. Infact the district itself is confined with limited occupational mobility, there is limited scope for agriculture, sans mining etc. and since the district boasts of glass and bangle industries no other enterprise seems comfortable to flourish. The respondents are mainly focused at the bangle manufacturing, infact the whole households are employed in this business as the children work at home and the adults at the factory level.
Economic condition too plays a significant role in the employment of the children. Majority of the respondents are pulled towards this hazardous occupation due to the vagaries of economic constraints such as poverty, indebtedness, loans etc. to supplement and support their family income children join the bandwagon of earning at an early age as their economic condition compel them to be a part of the bangle industry.

Not only because of the socio-economic conditions but also due to the lack of proper educational facilities the respondents are employed in the manufacturing of bangles as is evident from the high drop out rate especially in the bangle manufacturing concentration areas.

The area of work in home based bangle manufacturing units is highly congested and devoid of any facilities pertaining to hygiene and sanitation posing serious threat to health of the working children.

The conclusion derived from this descriptive cum diagnostic study show a deliberate makeshift of the bangle industry from an organized sector to the unorganized sector. The appalling condition of the children toiling tirelessly in the deep caverns of this burgeoning industry depicts a horrifying picture of democratic India, where basic amenities are still a herculean task to achieve. Through the study the researcher has focused on the underlying factors related to the emergence of child labour in the unorganized sector.

The effects of labour have adversely damaged the overall existence of a child. The conditions under which children have to seek employment just for their survival are social evil and a national loss. The employment of children in factories and establishments, where they are exploited in all possible ways at a time when they have to be trained in schools and looked after very comfortably, has a very demoralising effect on them and does incalculable harm to their future. Repression of normal impulses, desires and powers of children at work, incline them towards delinquency in their hours of freedom seeking to have a good time or to exalt their submerged and humiliated selves.
Child labour is economically unsound, psychologically devastating and physically as well as morally perilous and harmful.

The present study found that bangle production consists of two broad stages. After the initial making of the glass spirals in the factory, the entire work is transferred to small home based level units. In these units, the incidence of child labour is quite high. As the study reveals that the contribution of children to the family income is substantial, therefore the withdrawal of children will require concentrated and well-planned strategic efforts at all key levels. Further the formalisation of the informal sector may, provide an opportunity for non – involvement of children in the work.

Efforts are required to change the present organizational structure of the industry in which major part of the work is done at the home based level and to introduce new technological interventions in order to bring improvements in working conditions. The workers should be encouraged to join savings and credit groups by which they can have easy access to their money. This will help them avoid taking loans in emergencies. The education system of the town should be improved considerably so that parents as well as children are motivated to go for education. Finally, enforcement of CLPR Act should take place at the home based level also so that the factory owners cannot shift their work from the factories to the homes in order to escape the law.

A close look at the issue of child labour proves that child labour is a social crime and many social factors significantly contribute to child labour. Field observation also suggests that the parents of working children are more interested in sending their wards to work rather than school. Therefore, it is suggested that compulsory education for children should be forcefully implemented.

The policies regarding child labour can be addressed at two levels viz. long term and short term. The long term strategies and policies should be aimed at improving the conditions of the society as a whole to such an extent that ultimately child labour is completely eliminated. Whereas, the short-term
policies and plans should be aimed at improving the working and living conditions of children so long as child labour prevails. Concerning such policies, various recommendations have been made by various committees and different authors.

The overall programme of rehabilitation of child labour needs people's participation and cooperation from all sectors i.e., from their families and societies working for them. Realization of this problem by the people is very much essential, only then they can think for the children who are being exploited at different work spots. Their overall support is essential in achieving the objectives of rehabilitation of child labour.

One of the root causes underlying many of the problems that India as a country faces is over population. Resources and infrastructure remain fixed but the number of population is growing continuously. This creates numerous problems, be it in the area of basic necessities or better amenities. Thus, relentless growth has to be controlled by means of strict regulations and prohibitions, through family planning measures.

Besides, provision of gloves and other protective items to children working in the industrial units; protection of self employed children against the occupational competition with the adults, moral education and protection against mis-guidance by anti social elements; controlling the drug addiction; etc. and occupational guidance, education and recreational facilities for the working children should be taken care of.

Undoubtedly, the institution of child labour is a great social evil and it must be abolished. The sooner it is abolished, the better for the society. By no standard of morality and humanism should this institution be permitted to exist in the society. The problem stems from genuine economic difficulties; therefore, the attack on this social evil must be multidimensional and therefore further study is suggested.