PREFACE

The recent trend in the global system is to evaluate the development of any country, not in terms of their military or economic strength or the splendour of their capital cities and public buildings, but also in terms of human development or the well-being of its people. Against this backdrop the existence and perpetuation of child labour has been one of the main limiting factors in the way of human development in almost all the third world countries including India. The issue of child labour is major human rights issue and at the same time it is highly emotive one, these emotions tend to be coupled with very strong views both on what the child labour problem is and on what ought to be done for its elimination. Although the predominance of child labour has to be quite pronounced in all the developing and under developed countries, it is a global phenomenon which exists in almost all the countries of the world. The difference, if any, is of degree only. The concept and practice of child labour being economically unsound, psychologically wrong and socially dangerous has posed a big threat to peace and overall world development. Therefore, the gravity of the situation and pervasive nature of the problem has attracted the urgent attention of all social, political organizations, social scientists, activist groups and governments of the world including India.

The term 'Child Labour' is generally used to refer “any work by children that interferes with them in their full physical development, the opportunities for a desirable minimum of education and their needed recreation.”

In India due to growing urbanization, industrialization and migration from rural areas and disintegration in the traditional family and community structure, there is a change in the socio-economic scenario, which has given rise to a vulnerable group of children in the cities called ‘child labourers’. When children all over the country are enjoying their rights, education and childhood, child labourers are lagging far behind. Though there are various government schemes, programmes and projects for the welfare of the child labourers, their rate of development is very slow.
The main reasons that force children to work and earn their livelihood are poverty, large size of the family, parental neglect, negligence of illiterate parents, attraction towards city life etc. They live and grow up on the margins of society often without education, parental care, affection and guidance from adults. There have been various legislations to prohibit, eliminate and rehabilitate child labourers. But still there are a large number of children who are working as child labourers and are deprived of their basic needs including education. Keeping this in mind the study has been undertaken to study the impact of Child Labour Act of the promotion if Universal Primary Education.

The research study deals with rational of child labourers from the point of view of social, economic and educational aspects. The origin and historical development of child labour in world perspective have been clearly stated, which will help the other researchers to understand philosophical, psychological, sociological and educational bases of child labourers.

Indian scenario in this respect has been spelt out with facts and figures. Attempts have been made to review studies in global, national as well as regional perspective. Interview Schedules have been developed to achieve the objectives of the study. Discussions have been made with GOs and NGOs on the facilities provided to child labourers.

The strategies used for developing the schedules and the techniques used for analysis and interpretation of collected data will help future researchers in the field of social science, psychology and education for conducting further researches in this field. I hope the research findings will meet the emerging challenges in the field concerned.

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