CHILD LABOUR A NECESSARY EVIL FOR INDIAN ECONOMY

A Case study of wood carving labour in Saharanpur City

Synopsis

Submitted for carrying on Research work in the Subject of Economics for Ph.D. Degree of Ch. Charan Singh University, Meerut

2008

Supervisor : Dr. Alka Mahajan
M.A. (Eco.), M.Phil, Ph.D.
Reader & Head, Dept. of Economics
M.L.J.N.K., (P.G.) College, Saharanpur

Research Centre : M.L.J.N.K. (P.G.) College, Saharanpur

By : Rajinder Kumar
CHILD LABOUR A NECESSARY EVIL FOR INDIAN ECONOMY

A CASE STUDY OF WOOD CARVING LABOUR IN SAHARANPUR CITY

INTRODUCTION

The problem of child labour is a major social concern. The number of working children in the country represent 6 percent of the total work force. The child labour problem is causing more concern in India as a large number of children are employed in hazardous industries. In industries like glass ware, bricks making, gems cutting, fireworks, slates tiles, carpets, wood carving and bidis, the children working there have more chances of contracting diseases because their immunity levels are far below than adults. Besides, physically the children are not adaptable for using tools used by adults. Muscular skeletal disorders prone to children due to use the equipments for adults.

The policy of Government is to ban the employment of children below the age of 14 years in hazardous employment and to regulate the working conditions of children in other areas of employment. There are currently about 100 National Child Labour Project (NCLPs) covering 2.11 lakh children in 13 states where the use of child labour is relatively high. Major activities
undertaken under the NCLP are the establishment of special schools to provide non formal education to children.

India has followed a proactive policy in the matter of tackling the problem of child labour and always stood for constitutional, statutory and developmental measures that are required to eliminate the child labour.

The National Policy on child labour was formulated in 1987 which apart from requiring enforcement of legal provisions to protect the interest of children, envisages focusing of general development programmes for the benefit of child labour and project based plan of action in areas of high concentration of child labour.

The National child labour projects have been set up in different areas to rehabilitate child labour. A major activity undertaken under the NCLP is the establishment of special schools to provide non formal education, vocational training, supplementary nutrition etc. to children withdrawn from employment. The programme for the elimination of child labour received further impacts after the announcement of the new programme for the rehabilitation of the children working in hazardous employment. Under the programme, 100 projects have been sanctioned to cover around 2.13 lakh working children in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Punjab. The Government has approved continuance of the schemes of NCLP during the Ninth Plan.
CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA

India is one among the major countries in the world employing child labour. The chairperson of South Asian Coalition servituate has disclosed that child labour is employed in leather, garment and granite industries. Every state in India employ child labour, though its intensity varies from state to state. More than 20 crores of child labour is employed in Indian Economy and they produce 20 percent of GDP but draw less than 5 percent of the national income. UNICEF cites figures from various resources that put child labour in India at between 80-90 million. For some observers, the exact number of child labour in India could be as high as 200 million. India is the largest producer of child labour and illiteracy on this earth. A quarter of the world’s total number of child labourer are in India and every third household in our country has a child at work.

Children in India are employed in almost all the activities of the non formal sector. However, most of them are employed in the agricultural sector or in jobs closely related to agriculture, as is the pattern in many developing countries. A unique characteristic in India is that a significant number of these children are bonded labourers. The child labour cell is entrusted with the responsibility of formulation and implementation of policy and programmes for tackling problems of child labour. The cell is responsible for funding and monitoring of the projects taken up under the scheme of National child labour projects.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As explained in the Report of the Royal Commission on Labour (1931) set up by the British Government in 1929 had far reaching effect on the Government of India is formulating a galaxy of labour legislation in the country. This commission had recommended a uniform labour code, which through not acted upon the establishment of a permanent Tripartite labour Organization called Indian Labour Conference on the Model of ILO in the year 1942 was an important step forward in promotion of uniformity in Labour legislation. The outcome of the deliberations of Indian Labour Conference and Standing Labour Committee has however, mostly covered the organized field. Nevertheless, Whittey Commission’s contribution for the decasualization of Port and clock workers, who were ever casual in their employment, depending upon the arrival and departure of the vessels at the Ports to load and unload cargo, was significant. In fact, the system by hiring dock workers in European and American parts was almost identical in as much as the employers who maintained large strength of casual workman in excess of requirement, and due to erratic and fluctuating demands, there was chronk under employment.

The Report of the Labour investigation committee, painted out that when the Royal Commission on labour reported in 1931, working class in India was neither sufficiently organized nor properly established out in later years there has been a greater concentration of the working class population in industrial areas and this led to the rise of an industrial proletariat in most cities. Various
studies have revealed that unlike the trade union movement in England organized under Trade Union Congress, The Indian scene was marked with rifts on political consideration from the time the All India Trade Union Congress was formed in 1920. As against the single trade union organization started in 1920 and functioning as such prior to independence, division took place in 1948, further divided into three and again into four, which dominated the scene for quite a long time enjoying Government recognition for participation in India Labour Conference and international labour organization. Presently, nine Central Trade Union Organization exist, viz., INTUC, NLU, AITUC, CITU, UTUC, HMS, HMP and BMS. This being the position at macro-level, there have been mushroom growth and multiplicity of unions at micro-level registered under trade union Act 1926, with comparatively much less increases in total union membership after independence.

The National Commission on Labour (Gajendra-gadkar Commission 1969) had devoted three separate chapters of its report on “Employment of Women and Children”, “Agricultural Labour” and “Unorganized Labour”. As stated earlier, it admitted that “Unorganized Labour” is a group of workers who cannot be identified by a definition but could be described as though who have not been able to organise in pursuit of a common objective because of constraints, such as (a) casual nature of employment (b) ignorance and illiteracy (c) small size of establishments with low per capita investment per person employed (d) scattered nature of establishments and (e) superior strength of the
employer operating singly or in combination. The commission had brought within the fold of unorganized labour the ten categories of labour as explained earlier. Among its recommendations the Commission had observed that with spread of education, unorganized workers would become organized and would form themselves into unions and this process should be expedited that more vigorous steps should be taken towards protection of workers against exploitation by middlemen and development of self help among them through cooperatives. The strength of unorganized workmen in industrial sector was estimated by the commission as 10 millions as per 1961 census. This Report was submitted more than two decades back, but no action has yet been taken for its implementation. The data have become old and inclusion of a separate category of tribal workers as “Unorganized Workmen” is not understood, since tribals are also employed in organized sector, particularly with reservation available for their employment in government and public sector undertakings.

Studies in regard to employment of boys and girls below fifteen years who are forced to pick up jobs mostly in unorganized sectors, wherein they face problems like long hours of work, work in hazardous employment, low wages, work in unhealthy environments etc, have been made by Dr. B.R. Patil, Prof. of IIM Bangalore, “Working Children in Urban India” in Bangalore City, published by D.B. Publishers (P) Ltd. Bangalore (1988) This work has dealt with employment, working conditions and wage rates of working children in
Bangalore City. The author has suggested a model legislation along with rehabilitation programme. This study is, however, confined to one city only.

Dr. S.K. Tripathy’s (1989) “Child Labour in India”, is a study on Bhubaneswar City in the State of Orissa,. It is inadequate to detect the problem and to suggested remedy therefore.

The book edited by Dr. Basudeve Sahoo (1990) incorporates some articles on women employment in India which also reflects the picture of women workers, their percentage, their literacy rate, their occupation pattern, trend in women employment but has not touched the problems of unorganized women labour in different sectors.

The social workers like, Swami Agnivesh and Kailash Satyarthi have in fact argued that child labour perpetuates poverty, rather then reduces it. They argue that child servitude is equally, if not solely responsible of causing and perpetuating adult unemployment, poverty, population growth and mass illiteracy. They argue that social cultural factors, including abominable caste system, ethnic and gender discrimination, nexus between politician and manufacturers, absence of compulsory primary education and profit motivating concerns are responsible for the perpetuation of the scourge of child labour.

Badiwala, Mitesh (1996): The issue of child labour is a developmental issue worth studying. The idea that children are being forced into labour concerns many people. India is a good example of a nation which suffers from the labour.
UNICEF Report (2006): It is difficult to find much that is praiseworthy, form the stand point of a child centered approach to child work, in a unilateral import ban.

An unpublished study was conducted by Kumari Mena Gupta, Ministry of Labour and Employment (1988), on women labour employed by contractors in the mining belt of Singhbhum district in Bihar, which revealed their large scale exploitation, including sexual abuses, by the contractors.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The present study is an attempt to make a critical evaluation of the impact of child labour in Saharanpur City which leads an economic & social problems in the District. We should also study the reasons of the problem. The problem faced by the Govt. Agencies and also by the target group will also be studied. Fruitful suggestions will also be made to solve this present economic problem. The whole study will be carried out on the basis of the synopsis.

**THE SAHARANPUR SCENARIO**

Saharanpur is the study area of this work. Saharanpur is one of the most important districts in Western Uttar Pradesh. In the year 1997, Saharanpur was announced to be a commissionery by the state government of U.P. The geographical area of the district is 3860.2 sq. kms. out of which 336 kms is covered by forests.
Saharanpur occupies a very important place in the industrially developed district of Uttar Pradesh. There are 11 large scale industries, 2052 registered small scale units, about 7500 unorganized small scale units, and a large number of cottage industries in the district. In the district, most of the working children are found in the unorganized sector and in marginal occupations on the streets.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study is aimed to evaluate the relationship of the increased rate of child labour with other economic factors which lead to an economic and social problem. Therefore, the objective of the study are:

(1) To find out the relationship between poverty and increased rate of child labour.

(2) To examine whether the big size of the family is the main reason for the prevalence of child labour?

(3) To study the different causes for increased rate of child labour.

(4) To evaluate the contribution of child labour to the family income.

(5) To study the working conditions of the child labour in the district.

(6) To study the schemes implemented by the Govt. to protect the interest of child labour.

(7) The investigate the trend of child labour in district Saharanpur during past ten years.
RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Keeping in view the above objectives, an attempt has to be made to test the following hypothesis:

(1) Poverty is the main reasons of child labour.

(2) The big size of the family is the cause of child labour.

(3) Low wages and illiteracy of parents and children, migrant population from rural areas to urban places, rigid non related school system, social and cultural backwardness are the main causes for child labour.

(4) Child labour contribute significantly in family income.

(5) The working condition of the child labour are very bad.

(6) The Government policies regarding child labour have not been properly worked out.

(7) Child labour is increasing in Saharanpur district.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of the study, Normative survey method of research will be followed by the investigator. The study will be conducted by and large on the basis of field visits to different selected areas in the Saharanpur city. Study of the literature available on the subject, different related plans and programmes prepared and applied by Government in the district, annual reports of different programmes will be studied and questionnaires will be prepared to
collect relevant information from the Govt. Organization as well as from the target groups.

A sample of 400 child labour will be drawn randomly from different wood carving units. These target groups i.e. child labour and their families will be studied to find out the reasons of increased rate of child labour force in the units.

To analyse the reasons of increased rate of child labour force in the units, the data collected for the purpose will be properly classified and presented through statistical tables.

Statistical tools such as Averages, percentage and chi-square test etc. will be used besides of graphs and diagrams, where ever necessary to make the subject clear, use of secondary data will be made. Such data will be collected from published and unpublished records of the Labour Department, Block Development Officers and other Government Agencies.