

CHILD LABOUR IN BEEDI INDUSTRY

Dr.S. Shyamala Devi

Government First Grade College, Channapatna

INTRODUCTION

Child labour is not unique in India. It is a universal phenomenon. Children were always taken as additional help for domestic, agriculture, business, or industrial work. The issue of child labour has assumed wider dimensions and has become a national agenda today. Major industries manufacturing like agarbatti, silk, beedi, carpet weaving, etc., are not covered by the existing child labour prohibition laws in the country. There is an urgent need to revise the child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986 to bring these industries under its purview.

The children are employed in gainful occupation because of these reasons. Firstly, they belong to the families under the poverty line. Secondly, the child labour is cheap and easily exploited. Thirdly, the adult wage is insufficient to maintain the family. Fourthly, the facility to send the children to school was inadequate which also compelled their parents to allow their children to work.

The Government has to chalk out programmes to eliminate child labour completely to ensure that the country's child labour grow under condition which provide opportunities for their proper physical, moral and mental development.

Meaning of child labour:

The term 'child labour' is at times used as a synonym for 'employed child' or 'working child'. In this sense it is co-extensive with any work done by a child for gain. But more commonly than not the term 'child labour' is used in a pejorative sense. It suggests something which is hateful and exploitative.

V.V.Giri has distinguished two senses of the term 'child labour' in his book, 'Labour problem in Indian Industry', "The term 'child labour' is commonly interpreted in two different ways. First, as an economic practice and secondly, as a social evil".

In a restricted sense, 'child labour' means the employment of children in gainful occupation which are dangerous to their health and deny them the opportunities of development. The term child labour not only applies to the children working in industries but also to the

children working in all forms of non-industrial occupations which are injurious to their physical, mental, moral and social development

Objective of the study:

1. To examine socio-economic pressures under which the child is employed.

Problems of child labour:

Child labour is a socio-economic problem. It is generally considered that illiteracy, ignorance, low wages, underemployment and low standard of living all are roots of child labour.

The children hail from the economically lower strata. The children are not directly employed by the contractors but are owned by the family itself. The employment of child in beedi rolling with a view to adding to the income of the family. Which reveals that the work by the children interferes with their full physical development, the opportunities for a desirable minimum education of their needed recreation. Moreover, the children face very unsatisfactory conditions - they work for long hours in ill-ventilated, ill-lighted and dirty atmosphere. Most of the families are larger ones and the head of the family reported with inadequate income as the cause to employ their children in gainful activity. About 90% of the total households derived income by craft as profession.

Causes of child labour:

1. The problem of child labour is interrelated to the problem of living wage of adult workers. Inadequacy in wages of adults compels them to send their children to do some work in return of some wage. "The report of ILO also indicates that this problem of child labour is not the problem of itself but it is the problem of the maintenance of child and the living wage of the adult wage earner so that they should maintain their family at adequate standard".
2. Lack of schemes for family allowance is indirectly cause of child labour. In our country there is no allowances given to the families to have adequate standard of living and them say not be forced to send their children to the labour market.
3. The adult worker had no employment or under employed which compelled the children to seek their work. Lumpkin and Douglas in "child workers in America", have pointed out the fact that two-fifth of the children seek their work because of their adult wage earners are unemployed and nearly two-third of children were at work

because of their adult workers had no employment or had some part time jobs and one-third Childrens went to work due to the serious cuts in the pay of their adult”.

4. Large families with comparatively less income compelled the children to work.
5. Another cause of child labour is poverty. Families below the poverty line had to deploy their children in the labour market in order to eke out a bare subsistence.
6. Illiteracy and ignorance of parents, which in turn made their children lose their education opportunities and the seek jobs. Addam in his book “Child Labour and Pauperism”, has rightly predicted that, “the child labourers today will be the paupers of tomorrow; they are the children who will grow up without either formal schooling or knowledge of a trade; sooner or later, their youthful energies exhausted, they will become dull, shift-less, drift less”.

General Background of Beedi Industry:

The age old Beedi, industry, a legacy of Muslim rule has been declined as a cottage industry. It is a labour-intensive industry and plays an important role in the economy of the state. This artificial (beedi) has its own demand in a smaller or bigger measure specifically in rural areas at large. The manufacture of beedi largely depends on raw materials like the leaf used in rolling beedi and the tobacco dust, workers of beedi are inhaling from the economically lower strata of society. The other unique feature of beedi industry is the practice of rolling the beedies by women in rural and urban areas at their houses at leisure. Beedi rolling involves a simple process. The dry leaves are cut to a rectangular shape and the tobacco dust is put on the leaf and rolled with the hand. At one end a small thread is tied and the other end is inserted with the help of a stick. Though the process seems simple, it involves considerable skill.

Policy Implications:

1. Free and compulsory education to be provided to children upto the age of 15 years.
2. The scope of social security should be extended to cover the families where the adult income is insufficient.
3. Adequate health services are to be provided to child labour.
4. Another important measure is implementing family planning programmes, so that the earning of adult wage is sufficient to meet the needs of the family.

5. The parent of low-income group should be motivated to send the children to school.
6. Greater stress should be laid on opportunities for developments of all children below 15 years.

References

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