

SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF CHILD LABOUR IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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CHAPTER – VI

CONCLUSION

The presented data in this study indicate that the practice of child labour has been primarily prevalent among the socially and economically weaker section of the society. The present study focussed on the following objectives:

- i) To find out how the social and economic factors are responsible for the growth of child labour.
- ii) To find out the attitude of employers, parents and children regarding continuance of the existing child labour system.
- iii) To find out if the children would leave their present work places in favour of proper education and rehabilitation.
- iv) To evaluate child welfare policies and programmes especially meant for child workers planned and implemented by the Central and State Governments as well as the efforts of the non-governmental organizations.

Based on these findings, the over all conclusion may be summed up in the following paragraphs.

We have selected four representative districts respectively, Guntur District, Prakasam District, Kurnool District and Nizamabad District. Out of the three geographical regions of Andhra Pradesh such as Andhra or circar, Rayalaseema and Telangana regions for the purpose of our study. The study covered 180 child labourers between the age group of 6 to 14 years and in the designated districts both males and females child labourers were included. We also propose to study child workers working in organised industries only. The study revealed that poverty, complex socio-economic processes, lack of sufficient employment opportunities and illiteracy are some of the main causes of child labour in Andhra Pradesh. Child labourers usually belong to large families, living with the illiterate parents, earning wages to enable their families to survive including self-survival.

In all the four districts, we have found that majority of the child labourers belongs the age group of nine to fourteen years. In Nizamabad District, majority of the child labourers that is 28 (56 percent) belong to the age group of 11-12 years. In Prakasam District, majority of child labourers belong to the age group of 13-14 years that is 15 (50 percent), whereas in Guntur District 16 (40 percent) and in Kurnool District 33 (55 percent) belongs to the age groups of 9-10 years. As far as religion classification, it has been found that in all the four districts majority are Hindus. In Nizamabad District, 35 children (70 percent) of the sample are Hindus. In Prakasam District 19 children (63.3 percent) are Hindus whereas in Guntur District 21 children (52.5 percent) are Hindus and in Kurnool District 30 children (50 percent) are Hindus, then comes Muslims and lastly Christians.

The study revealed that majority of the respondents belongs to the Backward class in all these four districts. In Nizamabad District, 41 child labourers (82 percent) belong to the Backward Class. In Prakasam District 14 (46.7 percent) belong to the Backward Class. In Guntur 20 children (50 percent) belong to the Backward class and in Kurnool District 30 children (50 percent) belong to the Backward. This is followed by forward castes and lastly scheduled castes. The study revealed that there are some orphan and semi-orphan children also in all the four districts.

The study probed further certain causes responsible for child labour. The data with regard to causes of child labour disclosed that a great majority of children reported that their parents sent them to work in order to supplement their earnings to support their large families. In all the four districts we have found that majority of the child labourers come from families consisting of 5 to 6 persons in a household while some of them have 10 to 12 members in their family.

The data indicate that child labourers have to work longer hours a day. The monthly income of the working children has been categorised into 100 to 400, between 400 to 800, between 800 to 1200 and in between 1200 to 1600. The study revealed that most of the children earns in between Rs.400 to 800. Low wages is another reason. By taking jobs at the tender age these child labourers are playing the role of a family supporters.

The living condition of the child labourers is not very conducive to health and need improvement. In Nizamabad District 21 (42 percent) child labourers and their families are living in rented accommodation and 29 (58 percent) children are in their own accommodation. In Prakasam District, 17 (56.7 percent) child labourers have their own accommodation and 13 (43.3 percent) of them are in rental building. In Guntur District, it was found that most of the respondents have rented accommodation in our study that is 26 (65 percent) child labourers have rental accommodation and 14 (35 percent) child labourers have their own house whereas in Kurnool District, we found that 45 (75 percent) child labourers have their own houses and 15 (25 percent) child labourers are living in rental accommodation. We have found that most of the child labourers in rural areas have their own accommodation but urban child labourers very frequently are accommodated in rental buildings.

Due to poverty and poor socio-economic status most of the child labourers have no time and means to spend their leisure time for entertainment. Most of the child labourers spend their leisure time in watching movies. Cinema is a very popular source of recreation for the child labourers and majority of children prefer to watch Telugu and Hindi movies as there are two common languages spoken by a majority in Andhra Pradesh. Most of the child labourers watch movies once a week. But some children watch movies only once in a month and there are some children who watch movies only once in a year and there are few child labourers who never go to a movie and do not have any entertainment.

Majority of the child labourers come to work on foot. As far as the motivation of the children to work, in some districts, the majority of the children are highly motivated due to the fact that their work is a source of basic satisfaction through personal earnings. But in some other districts the children are disinterested to work mainly because they are forced to work in order to support their families. Majority of the income of the children is spent on pairs of clothes.

The study revealed that parents of the child labourers want to take care of their children but due to poverty, lack of socio-economic opportunities, illiteracy, large family they have no other alternative but to forced their children to work.

The study probed further certain causes responsible for child labour. The data with regard to causes of child labour disclosed that majority of child labourers feel that lack of parental care is another cause of child labour. In our study we have found that some parents of the child labourers do not take care of their children. Most of the parents are illiterate and lack of proper education of parents is also one of the important aspects because the parents are poor, they want their children to work and support them financially. Some of the families are large in size due to the presence of grand parents, grand children and other relatives. Most of the child labourer's parents have debts and also bad habits on which part of their earning had to be spent. Unemployment is yet another cause of child labour recruitment.

In this present study, we have observed that a majority of children would like to continue their job, which very clearly shows that they have realised their responsibility at an early age. In Nizamabad District 14 children like their job and 36 children do not like their job. In Prakasam District, 15 working children like their job and 15 working children dislike their job whereas in Guntur District 36 child labourers are in favour of their jobs and 4 child labourers dislike their jobs and lastly in Kurnool Distirct also we found that 31 child workers are in favour while 29 child workers dislike the job. In Kurnool district, most of the respondents do not like the job in Lime Kilns due to the fact that when the child workers come late to the work spot or absent himself for work, their employers react by beating them up, abuse, scolding or shouting at them. Some employers even threatened being terminated. Their working conditions are highly deplorable and unsatisfactory when they have to work in congested dirty atmosphere. There are times when the work is in full swing their headache, heart cry, but they have to work from 10-12 hours at a stretch on orders of the employers. If they are absent a day or a little late they are not tolerated by their employers. But the children have no alternative but to bear all such things patiently due to inability of their parents to provide sufficient food, clothes and shelter.

The aims of education are said to be socialization, preparation for adult roles and responsibilities, transmission of skills and knowledge. It is an agency for development of knowledge and for value change. However, in spite of their aspiration for school education, majority of the children do not continue their studies.

A majority of child labourers who are not continuing their education, are mostly illiterate which means that in India we do have some children who have never been to school. These children also seem to be very keen to pursue their studies. Unfortunately, due to socio-economic compulsion they are unable to pursue their education aspiration. The child labourers has expressed their desire to go to school for education even after finishing their work each day. But these children requires an opportunity for an informal system of education to fulfill their educational aspirations.

The data indicate that in Nizamabad District 48 child labourers would like to continue their education while only 2 child labourers has responded saying that they are not desirous of continuing their education. In Prakasam District, 20 children want to continue their studies and 10 children did not like to study, whereas in Guntur District 28 children have expressed their desire to study after completing their work while 12 children have no desire for study and lastly in Kurnool District, most of the child workers have understood the value of education. That is 51 child workers have desire to continue their education while 9 child workers have responded saying that they are not desirous of continuing their education. Therefore, it can be said from the study that a majority of them desire to continue education. Therefore, they have realised the value of education. These children who have no desire for study are happy with their present job and are least interested in education.

The data indicate that many children have high aim in life. Most of the child labourers seem to be very keen on continuing their studies and have proper aim in life. The aims of these children include to become teacher, doctor, police officer or any other kind of Government employment. But there are few children who do not have any specific aim in life. We have interviewed these children in order to find out the reasons behind it. Some children responded by saying that their parents are illiterate and their parents ignore their

education and forced them to work in order to support their family financially. Some parents think that the present system of education falls short of providing vocational/job oriented training to the children. Thus, to prevent the eventual future unemployment of their children they send them to workshop rather than to schools so that they acquire gainful skill in some craft or art. Thus, education for some children has been closed by their parents even if they want to study. This is the main reason for their aimlessness.

The study probed further into certain reasons given by their parents for sending their children to work. In Nizamabad District, the main reasons for sending their children to work are due to socio-economic problem and poverty. Parents are not in a position to socialize their children support them financially and make them responsible citizens of tomorrow. Twenty seven parents of our respondents react by saying that due to socio-economic problem they are unable to send their children to school and remaining twenty three parents reiterated poverty as the reason. In Prakasam District, Seventeen parents have given poverty and thirteen parents said socio-economic problem as the reason for their difficulty in sending their children to school. In Guntur District out of the forty parents interviewed thirty six have given poverty as the reason for their inability to send their children to school, three of them have given socio-economic problem and only one parent has given illiteracy as the reason to send their children to work. In Guntur District, apart from poverty, socio-economic problem, illiteracy and ignorance is another reason for sending the children to work. In Kurnool District majority of the parents of the child labourers have responded that poverty is the main cause for sending their children to work. Thirty three parents indicate poverty as the main reason, while twenty four parents said that socio-economic problem as the reason for sending their children to work and the remaining three parents have given other reasons like illiteracy and ignorance as the root cause.

The furnished data with regard to causes of child labour disclosed that an overwhelming majority of parents of the child labourers responded that poverty and socio-economic compulsion is the main causes of child labourer recruitment. Other causes is lack of proper education that is illiteracy and ignorance of parents is also one of the important

aspects. Thus, empirical evidence shows poverty and lack of socio-economic opportunities as the main reasons for the continuance of child labour.

Poverty is also a barrier preventing millions of children from reaching the desirable nutritional standard. If people are too poor to feed their children and if children don't work, they will die. The kind of work that these children are forced into they will die in any case, of burns, poisonous chemicals, gases and toxic fumes and fatal injuries. Child labour is a result of the exploitation of the weak and the vulnerable and it is always the poorest sections of society who are most vulnerable to his exploitation and in the lower socio-economic groups not only because of economic compulsions but also because of lack of appreciation on their part of the living condition of the people.

When children start working at a young age they remain illiterate, unskilled and unable to demand their rights for equal wages and better conditions of work. Working long hours, they burn themselves out and their health is severely weakened. As adults, in situation like this, they are often heavily in debt. The circumstances of unemployment combined with their inferior position in the hierarchies of caste and class, influence favourably to put their own children to work. And so the downward spiralling of exploitation and poverty is perpetuated. They are forced at an early age to accept poor working conditions, long hours of work and less than minimum wages. The poor find themselves in a state of 'false consciousness' believing that their children becoming child labourers as accepted pattern. So it is belief that unless poverty and socio-economic problems are eradicated child labour cannot be eliminated. There are other causes also such as illiteracy and ignorance of the parents, large family size, inadequate income, absence of adult wage earners, family tension, desire to satisfy personal needs, tradition of engaging in family occupations.

The field survey reveals that child labour working in organised sector belong to lower socio-economic strata of society where we found that most of the parents are illiterate. The illiterate parents are ignorant of the evil consequence of child labour on the health and development of children. They value their immediate economic need more than the future of their children. A large majority of parents of the child labour in Beedi and Lime Kilns are

illiterate. It is seen that lack of appreciation for child development on the part of parents is another reason for employment of child labourers in the organized sector of Andhra Pradesh.

Inadequate income and larger family size is another reason. The problem of child labour is basically of the problem of low income of parents to support a large sized family. Most of the child labourers reported that their parents sent them to work in order to supplement their family earnings which are too scanty in amount to support their large families.

The study indicates that the problem of child labour in hazardous industries of Andhra Pradesh is basically the reflection of the problem of low-level wages of parents and their large families size. It is the economic compulsion which compels the poor parents to make their children work. Thus, we have found that majority of the child labourers come from families each consisting of five to six persons while some of them have ten or more members in their family.

Most of the children reported that they seek work in the labour market because they do not have any adult wage earner at home who would provide them with food, clothes and shelter. Most of the child labourers are orphan or semi-orphan. By taking jobs at the tender age, these children play the role of a family supporter due to family tension. Some of the child workers reported that they have to work in order to satisfy personal needs which their parents could not provide because of low income. Thus, the parents of the working children, because of low income, are unable to satisfy the economic, social, psychological and medical needs of their children. As such certain children desire to satisfy their unfulfilled basic needs through personal earnings.

In rural areas especially in Nizamabad and Prakasam Districts, in Beedi Industries, in certain cases it was found that certain families have an age-old tradition to engage their own children on the jobs, so that their children in future grow as fully skilled workers. Early marriage is an age-old custom and ironically so in lower-socio-economic groups. This puts them further under economic strains. Thus, the parents send them to earn for themselves.

All the families with their children are made to earn for the family either in the family workshop or in the neighbouring Karkhana.

Some parents argued that they are forced to send their children to work at their tender age because they perceive that the present system of education is incapable of providing vocational training to their children. They believe that education would make them literate unemployed.

As far as the number of children working for wages in a particular family, the study indicate that most common pattern is one child working for wages and supporting the whole family financially. It has been found that a majority of them do not have security of job and many of the parents have taken leave on medical ground. Medical facilities and aids are not provided, but loan may be given on medical ground and at the time of festivals. Most of the parents argued that they are not given bonus and are not given increment but they may be terminated without any warning. The job is absolutely insecure.

As far as exploitation of child labour is concerned, majority of the parents are of the opinion that the employers do exploit their children by paying them low wages, more hours of work, cause them to extract more work. The employers guided by the doctrine of self-interest exploit the low bargaining power of child through paying them low wages and making them work for longer hours.

Child labour are paid for almost the same amount and the kind of work but on lower wages than their parents and adult workers. They are deprived of normal wages. Due to low wages these children are not able to meet even their basic necessities. Apart from low wages payment, the employers generally pay their wages on the persistant demand from their parents depending on their mood. Also it was found that the employers keep the workers under heavy debts, which they often are unable to pay. So these children became virtually bonded labour.

The employer makes the working children work for longer durations and become worse victims of the abuse of work by their employer. The study has revealed that child labour are not suited to long hours of strenuous work. Since it effects the mind, efficiency and the whole life of the children. We have observed that larger number of the children are suffering from malnutrition.

The affectionate relationship between parent-child have turned into purely economic relationships as children are deprived of proper school education. In the study it was also found that most of the child labourers are exploited by their employers especially in lime kilns industries through exposure to heat, dust, sun, leading to skin diseases and infection.

Some parents think that their children are not exploited by their employers. These parents feels that their employers are helping their children to become skilled labourer and also financially their children are helped and in their opinion, their children will become skilled workers in future. These parents responded by saying that their employers are friendly and affectionate and sympathetic with them.

Our final focus is on the opinion of employers regarding child labour. We tried to find out why they are employing children in Beedi and Lime Kiln factories. On the question of whether they are paying wages directly to the children, any recreational facilities for the children any health check-up, what such children will do in future when they grow up and what is the rate of absenteeism, we have found that in both Beedi and Lime Kiln Industries the Managers responded differently to the above stated question. In all the four districts we got more a less the same type of answer in both Beedi and Lime Kilns factories.

Most of the employers responded by saying that they are not employing any children in their factory. They express that they cannot employ children in the factory as it is prohibited by law. Some employers responded by saying that children are employed on contract basis. Contractors act as middlemen between employers and children. So the employers have no direct contact with the children while some employers said that parents used to force the employers to employ their children in their factories. Due to poverty and

lack of socio-economic opportunity they force their children to work in the factory. Some employers who are employing children has given some other answers. They responded by saying that it lowers down the cost of production as they are cheaper in relation to adult workers. Some responded by saying that the opportunities usually starts with no wages or a philanthropic employers. The employers may pay only some marginal tip. After learning a few simple processes, the employers starts paying him wages which is far less than the normal wages paid to adult workers.

Some employers responded by saying that they employed children out of sympathy because their parents are very poor. The employers added further. The poor parents cannot send them to schools and if they were not employed would become social menace. The employed children have low bargaining power and can be hired at lower wages, made to work for longer duration, under bad working conditions. The children accept the lower wages and bad working condition and do not betray the employers.

Some Managers give wages directly to the children while some Managers give wages directly to their parents but if it is on contract basis, the contractor used to give the wages to the workers.

There is no recreational facilities as a general rule for the children in the factory except on certain occasions when they were given pocket money for recreation. Most of the Managers said that there is no health check up for their workers. No health check up neither for the parents nor for the children. Some Managers use to take their workers once in a year or once in a month for medical check up. The Managers use to give the fee for medical check up whenever there is medical doctor directly. But on occasions, he may also help the workers financially.

All the Managers claim that all the workers, both adults and children, are temporary. If the worker get more money in another Lime Kiln, he or she is always free to move to another factory. As such, the Managers do not bother about their future, and the workers do

not have security. Male workers get higher wages than female workers as they are considered to be able to do more volume of work.

Some Managers complaint that the rate of absenteeism is high. These workers move from one place to another according to their own free will. There is no hard and fast rule in the factory. If it is on a contract basis, the contractor bear the responsibility of dealing with it. If the workers absent themselves from work, they would not get their wages. The contractor, are getting good profit by employing child workers.

In the beedi factory, no children are employed now but the children are helping their parents at home in beedi making. The children were directly attached to beedi factory earlier but now it is prohibited by law, they now cannot employ children directly in the factory but indirectly these children are working helping their parents at home.

On the basis of our findings, it may be concluded that the phenomenon of child labour, like all other social phenomena, is socially conditioned. The practice of child labour is primarily found among the economically weaker section of society. In fact, it is difficult to envisage a successful campaign against child labour in general and against hazardous work in particular even with ample participation from both Government and Non-Governmental organisations. The need is that they should have combined efforts and act in collaboration even though their specific role may be different, in a multi-pronged approach. Government can focus on the establishment of a conclusive legislature and policy climate, the provision of households to employees, and income and ensuring strict adherence to certain minimum labour standard such as prohibition of work in hazardous occupation for children or activities and work before the completion of primary school while NGOs can be effective in advocacy organizing communities and implementing small local project.

Many of the suggestions mentioned are either being implemented or in the process of being implemented. The emphasis of the Government should not be adding new schemes but on implementing the existing schemes effectively fortifying them with wide public

participation and effective social control. Government should work in collaboration with NGOs in order to eliminate child labour. .

Children work because they and their families are poor. Child labour perpetuates poverty from one generation to another. Poverty is often, but not always, the main cause of child labour. Poverty is a deep rooted and major factor in the persistence of child labour. Natural calamities, disasters, illiteracy, powerlessness, lack of viable option further initiate the deprivation that the families confront and poor parents feel compelled to put a child to work. But poverty is not the only factor for child labour.

The working condition of the child labour in the Beedi and Lime Kiln industries are detrimental to the growth and developmental of the child workers who are totally deprived of the minimum requirements available to their counterparts in the organised sectors.

Poverty and socio-economic condition of the children are subjected to exploitation in the Beedi and Lime Kilns industries. Educational opportunities for poor children are limited, costly and inaccessible. In the opinions of the parents the low quality of education and the irrelevant of the curricula offers no motivation for children to stay in school. Families resort to employing children to keep them busy and allow them to learn skills and earn money. Most of the children decided to work because of expectation in pooling resources of family members and since a major percentage of the child income is generally remitted to the household head.

From the study it seem some children have realised the value of education and a desire to continue their education. The child labourers have expressed their desire to go to school for education even after completion of their work each day. Thus, we can say that the child labourers requires an opportunity for an informal system of education in order to fulfill their educational aspirations.

Parent's preference is for children to acquire skills over receiving an education, which in their opinion holds few promising prospects for gainful employment. Many poor parents

remain unclear about the long term significance and value of education over the short-term economic gains of child work. Adult perceptions influence children's school attendance and labour force participation. For instance, the family's dependence on girls labour at home denies her access to education and other opportunities outside.

Market demand for child labour determine employment of children in various enterprises and industries. Children are employed because the employers know that they are easily managed, obedient, hired at cheaper rates than adults. They involve no long terms of insurance and social security and other benefits. With financial profits as the goal, the practice to employ cheap labour and children are paid low wages and making them work for longer hours.

The conditions under which children works have got a market influence on his health, efficiency and quality of work. In the absence of desirable working conditions the children feels uncomfortable as the job become boring and tends to kill initiatives and energy of the children. The worst suffers of bad working conditions are especially the child labourers as it has serious repercussions on their psyche, physical development. Working in such unhygiene places is bound to have its adverse impact on the quality and quantity of the work as it cuts down the profit of the employer who subjects his workers to the miserable working conditions. As a result, the child labour become the worst victims because their childhood gets brutally killed.

We have found that abolition of child labour is not favoured by most parents and employers for economic reasons. Some of them are willing to overcome the problems of child labour if their economic status is improved. They also like to send their children to schools rather than sending them to work. Most of the parents are willing to overcome at least in their generation as they do not desire their children to follow the same footsteps like themselves. They are conscious of the problem of their children. Some parents like to overcome the problems but they do not know how. Some have no hope, some parents said that if the income of the families were increased, they will send their child to school. At

present, their conditions are not feasible. Some parents feel that affordability is far from visibility.

Those parents who are not willing to send their children to school have given reasons that they would be deprived of their livelihood. Some parents responded by saying that they have no hope as their condition do not allow them to send their children to schools. Some of the problems they have mentioned are:

- a) Having more number of children.
- b) Migration due to lack of work in their village.
- c) Alcoholism and bad habits of elders.
- d) Girl children are used to assist their mother at home and take care of younger siblings.
- e) Of low wages.
- f) Illiteracy of parents.
- g) Inability of the sick, unhealthy parents to feed their children.
- h) Severe economic problems.
- i) Family debts.
- j) Lands are barren and not used.
- k) Higher rates of interest on loans.

So due to economic instability stopping education of their children at a tender age and sending children for work instead of school. Some of them feel that they are spoiling the future of their children. They want certain facilities from the Government and Non-Governmental organisations such as:

- a) Free education and hostel facility for children.
- b) Barren lands to be developed, they want financial help, so that barren land can be brought under cultivation.
- c) Playground and play materials.
- d) Wages to be increased.
- e) Work opportunities in the village should be widened.
- f) Food provision for their children when the parents are away for work.
- g) Skill training opportunities in their places to earn supplementary income.
- h) Loan facility to be provided.,
- i) Dropouts to be care for.
- j) Free medical facilities.
- k) Debt relief.
- l) Free education with food facilities for their children.
- m) Hospital and medical care.

- n) Irrigation facilities.
- o) Night schools for children and elders.

So, parents demanded that if there are facilities, they will be happy to send their children to school. Some illiterate parents feel that education is considered to be a difficult task. So they ignore it. Thus, we can say that illiteracy and ignorance is another cause for child labour. Adult education is also a necessity here. Some children responded by saying that they want to study even after daily working hours, but they have no opportunity as their parents are illiterate and do not know the importance of education and thereby encouraging their children to work and not to learn.

One problem is the multiple and conflicting definitions of child labour. Article 32 of the convention of the rights of the child states clearly that it is:

“the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development”.

ILO convention number 138 supports this and the new conditions cover hazardous labour. It was widely felt by professionals in all sectors that Government definitions of hazardous labour are currently too narrow. The distinction between labour and work is not always clear. Labour always means something that is in contravention of the convention whereas work can include acceptable economic and productive activities. This raises difficulties with the position adopted by some agencies in Andhra Pradesh. There is a widespread lack of distinction between different form of work and their classification as labour or expected contributions to household functioning. For instance, the MFV have taken the view that any child out of school is a child labourer. This is not internationally accepted. Categorisations are often fuelled by a desire for support for a particular solution to the problem and the competitive nature of donor support. Opportunities for detailed

7 comparative analysis are also lost. Broad categories limit the development of meaningful child related indications. It has to be recognised that there is a great deal of difference between the work that a child does to help out in the fields and home and that done by a child in bonded labour.

The age at which children begin work varies from region to region and correlates most closely to family economic need in relation to demand from the employment sector. It was common that children aged 6-14 attend school for a brief period before they were forced to work in the beedis and lime kilns factories.

Greater state intervention and emphasis is needed for the state to take an uncompromising stand both on the elimination of all forms of child labour as well as compulsory education. Much of the justification for child labour arises not out of any concern for the children themselves but for the employers who are in search of cheap labour.

The child labourer's availability provides for lowering of costs of production and more important access to labour that is unorganized, unresisting and almost endless, as a result, adult workers wages are depressed, unemployment increases and above all general poverty levels increase in the society.

In spite of the formulation of policies specifically meant to deal with child labour and the implementation of number of programmes, both by the Government directly and through NGOs in pursuance of these policies, the impact on the child labour situation has been so far minimal. Thus, neither in term of literacy levels nor in terms of the number of working children any significant improvement has been achieved in the state. The absolute of working children have expanded considerably.

India's share, both in the world's illiterates as well as child labour, remains high and is in fact rising. Andhra Pradesh has the highest number of child labourer in proportion to the total population in India. Child labour in Andhra Pradesh is prevalent in almost every economic activity in the monotonous and unattractive classes. It is thus important to

understand the scope of the policies and programmes adopted within the country with which they operate in order to appreciate the importance of the framework.

The monotony of any work retards the fullest development of children working in hazardous industries like Lime Kilns and beedi industries, children are exposed to serious health problems such as tuberculosis, asthma, chronic bronchitis, suffer loss of appetite, exposed to various infections, dust allergy etc.

The policies and programmes adopted by the Government as well as by most NGOs have failed to create much impact on the child labour situation. Policies and programmes and their implementation reveals poverty as the root cause of the situation wherein any impact on child labour is not possible. These belonging to the lower economic strata of the society, are unable to survive unless their children also work. Therefore child labour is an unavoidable consequence of the economic forces operating in the society.

Without adequately raising the economic status of the child labourer's family any effort to withdraw a child from the work force would lead only to further economic stress for the family. Since child labour is viewed as a logical consequence of the prevailing economic situation. The education has never been viewed as a method of keeping the children away from work. On the other hand, the emphasis has been on formulating a policy which would provide the requirement of the working child without interfering with the work schedule. The non-formal education programme with its emphasis on schooling outside working hours is an important aspect of this kind of an approach.

Education is a basic right. Children work both in an organized and unorganized sectors, education which imparts minimum levels of learning in a joyful environment can be an enjoyable and rewarding experience for children. When other children are enjoying educational facilities, why not for the poor children.

In order to eliminate child labourers from work forces compulsory primary education would help in the elimination of child labour. If the state could ensure that every single child

attends school, there would be no child labour. Additional change in people in general and parents and employers in particular who employ children and those who forced the children in the work place, is necessary.

The success of any education policy has been judged not merely by the number of children withdrawn from work but also by the number of working children catered to without dislocating them from work. For this consequences the education policy has failed to make any impact on the child labour situation. Thus, education policy can make an impact in the area of child labour through adoption of compulsory education laws.

We have noted that the work done by children classified into these essentially educational and beneficial to the children and these which represents the more exploitative form of work and needs to be controlled. Therefore, policies and programmes concerning working children should focus on the elimination of child labour actually while child work should be promoted with the belief that education being provided by the existing formal school education system is irrelevant to the needs of children of the poorer section in the rural areas. The reasons for irrelevance of formal education for these children are as follows:

- a) The content of school education is so irrelevant that it is not really worthwhile for any child to attend school. If only the children were to gain work experience, either in the family profession or in some other field of work, then the possibility of the child ending up as an unproductive educated unemployed would not arise. As it is, formal education shows the child unfit for any work in the rural areas.
- b) A second reason to the criticism of the formal school system relate to the manner in which work in school is routinized. Activity in most school reaches its peak at the same time as seasonal agricultural activity. As such children are withdrawn from schools and put to work during that period. This entails their missing school for several days, which could have been avoided had the school been closed for vacation. So in order to reduce the number of dropouts, the strategies that have evolved both in

the Government as well as non-Governmental organisations sector, should reflect the impact of the above framework.

Poverty alleviation and other developmental efforts must develop. If working children and their families would not service unless they resort to child labour, income generating and credit and savings schemes and support, measures need to be evolved to prevent and eliminate child labour.

If employers are poor themselves, it is more difficult to convince them of the need of withdrawing child from work as it would directly affects their profit margins. Such employers should be motivated to seek alternatives to child labour.

Thus, the formal school implies is that children cannot work and at the same time attend formal schools. Formal schools education makes it difficult for a child to work. Formal education, especially in the formative years of a child in the age group of 6-14 years, has an essential value that cannot be provided by any other means including vocational education. School is the only institution in existence today that deals exclusively with children and therefore occupies a unique place in any programme seeking to provide for the overall development of the child.

Due to severe economic problems, both in rural and urban areas, parents are not supporting formal school system. They said that they cannot achieve the one without achieving the other. The task of withdrawing a child from work therefore becomes the same as inducting the child into school. Since it has already been noted that the only form of school that does not support the concept of a child working is the formal day school, enrolment automatically implies enrolment into the formal school system. The difficulty given was that they will be deprived of their livelihood if the children are not sent for work.

Consequently, the emphasis would have to be on motivation of parents and mobilisation of the community at large. Processes have to be built up to bridge the gap

between illiterate households and the school keeping in view the large number of factors that work to sustain this gap.

Thus the entire strategy would have to be based on promoting the norm that no child should work and that all children should be in schools. The process of transition involves motivation of parents and children, involvement of the community at large and teacher. Depending on the type of work engaged in by the children in general and in particular child, the age and social background, a degree of isolation have to be provided from the work environment atleast for a limited period of time. This isolation could be in the form of short term, courses away from the place of work so that parents, children and the employers would be forced to make the necessary adjustments to ensure that the child does not go back to work.