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**THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON PREVENTING CHILD
LABOUR IN INDIA**

Abstract-

Children are the nation's future citizens, and their continuous growth is the nation's top priority. Children all over the world are involved in a wide range of activities that are classified as work. These range from innocuous, even admirable, activities to physically dangerous and morally repugnant people. Child labour is a difficult and contentious issue. Millions of children work in appalling and exploitative conditions that are clearly hazardous to their health. India is one of the top countries in terms of the proportion of the labour force that is 'child labour.'

Keywords-Child labour, Abuse, Poverty, Laws, Dangerous

Introduction-

Child labour is a major issue in India because early entry into the labour market at a formative stage of life means missing out on proper schooling, resulting in a loss of future opportunities for a better life. Child labour is a complex issue, At the same time, the nation bears the deadly consequences of society's curse. The child is usually a person who is less than 14 years of age and develops less, is immature and cannot understand the consequences of any work and is not aware of his rights. This research addresses the concern over child labour and the impact of education on

it but first we have to understand what is child labour and what are the causes of it and what are the impacts of it on the children.

What Is Child Labour-

Child labour refers to children who practise and engage in economic activities on a part-time or full-time basis. Child labor can be best described as work that snatches away childhood, dreams, and capability. Involvement of children under the age of 18 in some economic activities, whether paid or unpaid. Children under the age of 14 who are engaged in work that is unsuitable for their health, education, or moral development develop less, are immature, and cannot understand the consequences of any work. Children are deprived of their childhood and their physical and mental development is harmed as a result of this practice. Child labourers are working children who are either too young to work or are involved in dangerous activities. It refers to work that is socially or morally, mentally or physically dangerous or harmful to children, and interferes with their education by denying them access to school, forcing them to leave early, or requiring them to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

In India, children under the age of fourteen account for 3.6% of the total labour force. Almost 85% are employed in the traditional agricultural sector, less than 9% in manufacturing, services, and repairs, and 0.8% in factories. According to a new report from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF, the number of children engaged in child labour has risen to 160 million worldwide, up 8.4 million in the last four years, with millions more at risk due to COVID-19's effects. Every child has the right to have a good time during his or her childhood. Children have always participated in economic activities in every society.

For about a decade, child labour has been a source of heated debate around the world, with many different points of view on the subject. It is argued that child labour exists in developing countries because there is a demand for it as well as a supply. Child labour is in high demand among producers due to the significantly lower wages paid to children. As a result, child labour exists. The presence of child labour is accepted as either an unwelcome reality or an unavoidable necessity. Recently there has been a renewed attack on child labour, citing physical, moral, and psychological trauma for the children, as well as the loss of childhood. Recent discussions on human rights, human capital formation, and international labour standards have stimulated such debates. Despite various stringent labour laws, the issue of child labour poses a serious challenge

to developing economies' development. The Government of India enacted the National Child Labour Policy in 1987.

Causes Of Child Labour-

Child labour is a violation of human rights and is regarded as a "necessity evil" in a poor economy such as India. The reasons for child labour are numerous and diverse. As a result, a variety of factors can be blamed for the use of child labour.

- **Poverty-** The issue of poverty is a very relative and pertinent concept. When families are unable to meet their basic needs such as food, water, education, or health care, they must send their children to work to supplement the household income. Poverty is one of the leading causes of child labour because it is linked to other factors like low literacy and numeracy rates, natural disasters and climate change, a lack of decent work opportunities, mass displacement and conflicts. Poverty and child labour are closely linked, if we don't address one, we won't be able to address the other.
- The education provided is frequently of poor quality, and parents and children similarly believe it is irrelevant to local needs and conditions. Children who drop out of school due to family debt or who are expelled from school are more likely to work as children. Girls from underprivileged backgrounds are more likely to be forced into child labour.
- Children from large families are more likely to work than children from small families because the parents' income is insufficient to support a large family.
- When a family becomes trapped in a debt cycle, it contributes to child labour. Children begin working at a young age to help their families become financially stable and to assist them in getting out of debt.
- Since children are inexpensive, many employers prefer to hire them. Furthermore, children are less obnoxious, more disciplined, and adaptable than adults.
- The social structure of society can sometimes be held responsible for child labour. Our country's social structure is characterised by a caste system. Members of lower castes and underprivileged communities are supposed to serve the upper castes. As a result, they are deprived of their dreams.

Consequences Of Child Labour -

Child labour includes working children under a certain minimum age. This is the worst form of child exploitation and has been going on for a long time. Child labor's consequences include not only harming a child's physical and mental health, but also depriving him of fundamental rights guaranteed by our constitution, such as the right to education, development and freedom. Some of the impact are-

- Negative Health Consequences- Children work in dangerous export-oriented industries like glassblowing, lead mining, matchmaking, lockmaking and fireworks. These are places where the health of the children employed there is jeopardized. As soon as they reach adolescence, they are already suffering from a variety of life-threatening diseases.
- Physical abuse includes corporal punishment, as well as emotional maltreatment such as blaming, belittling, verbal assaults, rejection, humiliation, and derogatory remarks.
- Emotional neglect, such as a lack of family love and affection, can lead to feelings of loneliness and hopelessness.
- Sexual exploitation of girls by adults. rape, early and unwanted pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, drugs, and alcoholism are all examples of sexual abuse.
- Due to their lack of experience, children do not easily understand the consequences of their actions, which increases the risk of losing their life if they are involved in some hazardous work. There have been numerous cases where children made mistakes at work and had to repay with their life. Working for someone increases the likelihood that a child will be sexually harassed by the employer or adult coworkers.

Laws Against Child Labour-

To prevent children from working in dangerous occupations, The government came up with a list for the same. All hazardous occupations were listed, and children under the age of 14 were strictly prohibited from working in such places. To protect children from child labour, numerous laws have been enacted. Some of these laws are as follows:

1]The Plantation Labour Act, 1951- This Act prohibits the employment of children under the age of 12, but a child over the age of 12 can be employed only if a fitness certificate is issued by an appointed doctor.

2]The Mines Act, 1952- This Act provides that no child should be present where the work of mining is going on and no child should be employed for such work.

3]The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986- According to this act, no child under the age of 14 shall be employed in any hazardous occupations listed by law. This list is expanded on in the article. Not only was this list updated in 2006, but it was also updated in 2008.

4]The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of Children Act, 2000- According to this act If a person employs a child in any hazardous work or uses a child as bonded labour, that person will be punished under this Act.

5]The Indian Factories Act, 1948- A child under the age of 14 shall not be employed in a factory. In addition, if a factory employs pre-adults aged 15 to 18, there are rules that must be followed.

Judicial Interpretation-

1] M.C. Mehta Vs State of Tamil Nadu¹- In this case the Supreme Court did not allow children to work in a prohibited occupation. According to the judges, the provisions of Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy have remained a long way off, and while all children under the age of 14 are sponsored to attend school, economic necessity forces grown-up children to look for work.

2] Neerja Chaudhary V. State Of Madhya Pradesh²- In this case the Supreme Court of India stated that the Child Labourers should be rescued and provision for their rehabilitation should be made.

3] Ganesh Ram v. State Of Jharkhand And Ors³- In this case, the court held that under the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation Act, 1860), if a child under the age of 14 is employed, a penal

¹ M.C. Mehta v State of Tamil Nadu(AIR 1997 SC 699)

² Neeraja Chaudhary vs State Of M.P. (AIR 1984 SC 1099)

³ Ganesh Ram vs State Of Jharkhand (2006 (2) JCR 489 Jhr)

order will be issued against the employer, but the employee will be free and will not face any penalties.

Effect Of Covid On Child Labour-

COVID-19 and subsequent economic distress are expected to have increased the risk of child labour. The closure of 1.5 million schools in India as a result of the pandemic and lockdowns has affected 247 million children enrolled in elementary and secondary schools, increasing the risk of them falling into child labour and unsafe migration. According to a simulation model, if Covid-affected children do not have access to critical social protection coverage, this figure could rise to 46 million. Globally, the report shows a significant increase in the number of children aged 5 to 11 years who work in child labour. The number of children aged 5 to 17 years who work in hazardous conditions has increased. Additional economic shocks and school closures caused by COVID-19 mean that children already in child labour may be forced to work longer hours or in worsening conditions, and many more may be forced into one of the worst forms of child labour due to job as well as income loss between many vulnerable families. In child labour, nearly 28% of children aged 5 to 11 years and 35% of children aged 12 to 14 years are not in school. Because of Covid children in poor and disadvantaged families in India are now more likely to engage in negative coping mechanisms such as dropping out of school and being forced into labour, marriage, and even becoming victims of trafficking. The Covid outbreak had a severe impact on the lower class, especially children.

The Effect Of Education On Child Labor-

Even though there has been a lot of awareness about child labour and many people are against it but even after so many laws passed by the government, child labour is still happening. Education is a critical component of any successful effort to end child labour. There are numerous interconnected explanations for child labour. There is no single factor that can fully explain its persistence and in some cases its growth. The way different causes interact with each other at different levels ultimately determines whether or not a child becomes a child labourer. Education is the factor that leads to human resource development, which includes providing a better, more sustainable, and valuable natural upbringing for all. The primary goal of the educational system

is to provide knowledge skills as well as to transmit certain important values. Children are ready to receive education. They are very concerned about education fees and other expenses, so they want it to be free and close to their home.

More than 86 million rural children in the age group of 5-14 years have not been enrolled in the school register, out of a total of 140 million. In rural areas, approximately 62 percent of children do not attend primary school.

According to the 2011 Census, India's total child population in the age group (5-14) years is 259.6 million. Among these, 10.1 million (3.9 percent of the total child population) work as main workers' marginal workers.' Furthermore, over 42.7 million children in India are not attending school. According to Census data, the incidence of child labour In India decreased by 2.6 million between 2001 and 2011. The data shows that rural areas are experiencing a greater decline than urban areas. The rise in rural-to-urban migration is driving up demand for child labourers in cities.

Recently, there have been major headlines about the coco industry's use of child labour. It was said that in two West African countries alone, an estimated 1.56 million children work in cocoa production. Among other harmful activities, hazardous work includes the use of sharp tools, working at night, and exposure to agrochemical products.

Education is critical to the abolition of child labour. Education International observes World Day Against Child Labor on June 12th each year. Early education, according to Education International, is critical for keeping children out of the labour market. It not only helps children learn necessary skills, but it also allows them to live a decent life in the future. Education and training are essential drivers of social and economic growth, as well as democracy. A strategy based on educating children and dragging them out of poverty will reduce the number of child labour cases. Education influences people's attitudes toward life and helps them become better people.

Conclusion-

The issue of child labour appears to be serious and involves a number of factors. The prevalence of child labour in India is complex and deeply ingrained in the culture. For India, eradicating child labour remains a distant dream. Poverty plays a role in keeping children out of school, but

it does not necessarily drive them into the labour force. The government has taken a variety of measures to actively address the issue of child labour. However, due to socioeconomic issues such as poverty and illiteracy, which are the primary causes of child labour, it cannot be solved unless and until all members of society work together to solve it. Education would be extremely beneficial in the abolition of child labour. An emerging idea in educational infrastructure is that we have, to some extent, overcome the stage where there was an acute shortage of physical infrastructure, such as a lack of school buildings. It is believed that the bottleneck now exists primarily in terms of the human component, specifically the availability of teachers. The main task is thus to ensure that schools are adequately staffed and that teachers have enough time to care for individual students. It is critical to raise awareness about child labour and help people understand how important it is for a child to grow and enjoy his or her childhood because they are the future of our country. A collaborative effort by all of us will undoubtedly help children to drag them out of the labour world and lead a better life ahead.

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