

Child Labour in India

Children are the wealth of a nation. They are the citizens of tomorrow. The future prosperity of a nation lies in them. It is they who are going to control and rule the nation in all spheres of its activity. So the prosperity, well-being, and social, economic and moral progress of a nation depends to a great extent on how children are brought up.

But the case of India with regard to the well-being of her children is far from satisfactory. Child labour is a common feature in India. Even as the country is on the threshold of the 21st century, thousands of her children still spoil their career in unhygienic factories and hotels and also in smuggling and other anti-social activities. Child labour is one, of the major evils of urbanisation and industrialisation. It is common because of its easy availability and cheapness. In India there is a vast population, but not enough employment. Unemployment is acute among the youth. Even then child labour is practised by exploiters.

The main reason for child labour is poverty. Poor parents often have many children in their families. They believe that the greater the number of children, the higher will be the income of the family. Instead of sending the children to school, poor parents send them out for work. The second reason for child labour is ignorance and illiteracy. Illiterate parents do not realise that they are spoiling the career of their children by sending them to work. The third reason for child labour is its easy availability and cheapness. The employers pay only very small wages to the children, and thus they become rich by clever exploitation.

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Children are the future builders of the nation. They are the real asset of the nation. One can see a number of children in the age group of 5 to 10 working in hotels, factories and other places for a petty salary. Thousands of children work in match-box companies, cracker-making companies and presses in Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu. They are paid from Rs.2 to Rs.5 for a day's work. They spoil their health and career by working under unhygienic and dangerous conditions. Gradually they become a liability to the nation.



Childhood is the blooming period of man. Each child has a right to get the facilities of childhood. It is a delicate age. The experiences of childhood have a great impact on one's future life. The future course of life will be determined to a large extent from the training got in his childhood. A child should have sources of recreation and enjoyment, opportunities for education, healthy food and good clothes to wear. Only then he will grow and develop into a useful citizen. Child

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labour destroys the creativity of a child. Poverty drives many children to resort to anti-social activities also. Many of them grow as criminals. Later they may turn into smugglers and drug carriers, and thus become a menace to the nation.

Child labour is a social and economic evil. Most of the child labour is actually bounded labour. It makes the children pessimistic. It causes adult unemployment also. The government and social reformers have raised their voice against this evil practice. There are laws to prevent child labour. However, these laws are not implemented property. Unless and until effective measures are taken to prevent this social evil, the country will lose her vigour and vitality.