

Globalization, Vulnerability and Child Labour

Indian Context

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Introduction

On the face of it, globalization and child labour may not appear to be so directly related, but, in reality, it is not so difficult to find the linkages. The process of globalization, coupled with the related phenomenon of privatization and liberalization, today seems to be impacting the Indian socio-economic scenario down to the level of the small towns and villages. Needless to mention that the entire process of economic activity, i.e., creation of goods and services and the factors of production, namely, land, capital, enterprise and the labour which, ipso-facto includes child labour, are affected by the winds of change blowing around us. Child labour or the children put to work to generate economic activities is nothing new, nor is it limited to any particular country or region, or a period of history. Either on account of the dearth of resources or necessity, or due to lack of education, understanding or sensitivity, the children have been always abused and taken advantage of their vulnerability. However, the process of development, liberalism and democratic participation which led to consciousness of the human rights including those of children, and the societal accountability towards the weak and vulnerable which again included the children, has brought in some realization that the children must be nurtured to grow their fuller potential unhindered by the adulthood challenges. Logically speaking, this process should have led to increasingly protective environment for the child, but, somehow, the thoughtless and global steamrolling materialism with all its capitalistic vices has mostly acted against the interests of the vulnerable segments of the population, including the children. Precisely for these reasons, in the modern times, the best of intentions and thoughts have co-existed with the most uncivilized and pernicious practices.

Any understanding of the complicated phenomenon of child labour in the wake of globalization demands a clear understanding of the dynamics involved and implications thereof, along with the assessment of the events and development taking place in the past century that ultimately manifested in the process of *Globalization*. An insight into the global development process reveals the numerous factors instrumental in shaping the development discourse in the twentieth century. Post- World War II and decolonisation gave birth to new nations which were faced with intractable economic and social problems. In search for national identity and in order to find solutions to the growing problems aggravated by the ever increasing demands and aspirations, the countries were forced to give economic growth a central place and priority within their development agenda.

Historical Perspective

In the colonial and British imperialistic set-up, India was mostly serving the interest of the masters who were driven by their own global designs with very little understanding or concern for our local needs. However, equity and social justice became the two main planks of our 'welfare state', which was artificially created and also documented in loftiest of terms in the Indian Constitution. The successive five- year Plans laid down the goals and some kind of action plan for a balanced social and economic development by means of growth with distributive justice, self- sufficiency in food production, poverty alleviation, industrial growth and employment generation. Time and again, the children and the need for their protective care and the guarantees were provided for in the constitution, multiple policy documents and the legal provisions. But, very little could be done to ensure and create a system for their care, protection and development and for the welfare and rehabilitation of marginalized amongst them. Perhaps, it was primarily for the reason that the Indian child remained part and parcel of the larger issues relating to under-development and lack of resources, poverty and deprivation.

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UN / International Perspective

On the global front, the United Nations and its agencies played a critical role in promoting a certain model of development through trade, aid and technology transfer, bilateral and multilateral funding and international agreements. The development model dominating the sixties with its emphasis on industrial growth, modernization and liberal democracy failed to make inroads into poverty and unemployment and hence led to the shift from growth to fulfillment of basic needs, income distribution and employment generation as the prerequisites of poverty alleviation. The failure of the 'trickle down' growth as such sparked off many debates around dependent economies and hence called for a new economic order. Again the Brundtland Commission defining eighties as the decade for 'sustainable development' remained a lost decade witnessing deepening crisis and debt situation, which ultimately culminated in the *structural adjustment programmes*. It was the changed socio-political context of the nineties which was marked by globalization of economies which created new networks of production and distribution, information dissemination and control. Its implication for the disadvantaged sections of society, primarily the women, children, poor, tribals etc. highlighted the critical need for human or people-centred development. The Human development report (UNDP, 1997) advocating globalization to reduce poverty in some of the largest and the strongest economies-China, India and some of the Asian Tigers, remained without much support since it also produced losers among and within countries. Even the critics of the Bretton Woods Institutions (IMF and the World Bank) see a contradiction between the growth paradigm and the human and social development paradigm. Again, in the midst of the changing economic orders and priorities, the child in need of care and protection, which necessarily included the millions of working children, did not acquire the requisite attention.

What is Globalization?

In common parlance, *Economic Globalization* is nothing but the expansion of the market to encompass the entire globe within its sphere through the opening up of national boundaries allowing freer trade and flows of capital, labour, technology and information to integrate the various regional markets into a world market. The policies, such as, market liberalization, privatization, trade liberalization, incentives to foreign direct investment, and the worldwide use of micro-electronics in the nineties were instrumental in increasing the permeation of the national economic boundaries. It is during this very period that most of the underdeveloped and the developing countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe facing severe economic hardships after a prolonged resistance were actually forced to adopt the structural adjustments thrust upon by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) as part of the package deal to bail out of the debt crisis. The removal of the trade barriers and rationalization of tariffs and the principal outcome of the WTO Agreements, led to movements of goods and services, capital and labour on massive scale. These global developments essentially impacted the domestic policies causing further disadvantage to the disadvantaged.

Process of Globalization/Liberalization and free Market Economy: Impact

The liberalization of India's external sector during the past decade was extremely successful in meeting the BOP crisis of 1990 under which foreign currency reserves plummeted to \$1 billion, export growth turned negative, industrial growth collapsed to 1.3 per cent, inflation soared above 16 per cent 1991 and the overall economic growth plunged to less than 1 per cent in 1991- 92. The result was adoption of immediate strong stabilization programme and launching of wide- ranging reforms in fiscal policy, industrial policy, foreign trade, the exchange rate system, the financial sector, capital markets, agricultural pricing and distribution policies and the public sector in order to put the development on a sustainable path. With the removal of Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) the SSI sector, which was hitherto largely protected through tariff walls and Reservation Policy, were subjected to foreign competition by way of cheap imports, with the lowering of tariffs. At the same time, there were many areas in which larger corporations could not supply goods and hence took the assistance of the SSI sector to fill the gap. The small-scale sector continued to manufacture products for niche markets since, MNCs were increasingly outsourcing their products. (INDIA, 2003)

The globalization and the liberalization policies followed by the structural arrangements which were aimed to reduce external and internal deficits had far reaching redistributive implications. This redistributive arrangements initiating the policy changes crucially affected the families and households as a whole. For instance the new economic policies with its market dominated paradigm led to deregulation of labour laws, accelerated retrenchment caused depression and greater inflation, compelling children of vulnerable families to enter the labour force. Liberalization further led to the growth in the home-based sector with the women and children having little or no security. Factories manufacturing products for exports, such as sports goods, hosiery started contracting work on piece-rate basis coming into the homes, that encompassed a large number of children along with the women.

It is believed that the technological and cultural globalization which accompanied Economic Globalization have had some positive and major negative impact. Industrialization helped in reaping the maximum advantage of the prevailing labour conditions, selected technological and cultural globalization and increasing consumerism impacted the people, communities, nations, values, even social behaviour. On the global front, all this has led to marginalization of the poorer countries of the world. 'Structural poverty' resulting from unequal distribution of wealth and power, mass poverty and growing pauperization could not be addressed by the free market ideology and liberalization strategies. On the positive side, it enabled people to migrate to places with more opportunities, investment in other national economies, imports, internet etc. On the negative side, the globalization alongwith the concomitant intensely fierce market economic undermined the interests of the weak, poor and vulnerable segments of society, like the children.

The phenomenon not being just Indian, it has been observed that the farms in the western countries often resorted to the exploitation of cheap labour in getting their products manufactured. Children, women and the unskilled labour are often paid perhaps 10-20 percent of the final sale price to produce goods, in conditions, which are deleterious to health. While the middlemen at all levels and the companies, local to global, reap considerable profits without facing much risks, the impact is directly felt on the children of the poorer households leading to increased child labour activities, such as, care of siblings, cooking, collection of firewood and water, animal care and house maintenance ultimately leading to the poverty spiral and out of school children. Such pushing of the children in the labour market at early age is found in most of the third world countries. The benefits of economic growth are, therefore, hardly distributed among the majority of people, the ultimate cost being the non-fulfillment of basic needs and infringement of human rights, particularly the basic needs and rights of the defenseless children.

Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) leading to the dramatic retrenchment of workers in the public sector cannot be without an impact on the child labour. Even in the absence of any empirical assessment, it can be hypothesized that cuts in public sector spending involving disproportionately larger cuts in budgets of social sectors, such as health and education, will lead to an increase in child labour by diminishing opportunities for schooling. In spite of the Education Commission (1966) recommendations of investing 6% of the national income from the public exchequer in education by 1986 the goal was never realized. Only 3.6% of the GNP was invested in the education in 1997-98. The budgetary allocation to the elementary education has increased from 4906.63 crores in the year 2003-2004 to rupees 6004.00 crores for the year 2004- 2005 but it still remains far below the requirement. The allocation to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan which has risen from 2732.32 (03-04) to 3057.08 in 2004-2005 in meeting the desired results but only if the implementation of the project is taken up in true mission mode in the entire country. The targets set to send every child to school by the year 2003 and to complete 8 years of education by 2010 is nowhere in sight.

What is Child Labour

A broad definition of child labour would generally include all working children, paid or unpaid, below the age of 15. In developing countries *child labour* is defined as work that impairs the development and well – being of children. Economists generally viewing child labour as those participating in some kind of economic activities have now come to realize that ignoring the time spent by the children in collecting wood and water, tending the animals, preparing food and meals,

caring for family members would imply that a child spending only two hours a day in agriculture work could be placed alongside twelve hours a day in the absence of their parents.

The Campaign against Child Labour (CACL) defines child labour to include children prematurely leading adult lives, working with or without wages, under conditions damaging to their physical, social, emotional and spiritual development, denying them their basic rights to education, health and development. This includes children working in any sector, occupation or process, including the formal and non-formal, organized and unorganized, within or outside the family. The general perception remains that any child out-of-school is a potential labour. The Government's ambivalent stand in this regard is considered to be the prime reason for the persistence of the problem which reflected in the lack of political will. The most unrealistic, and the reducing figures of child labour in India speaks volumes about the misunderstood perception and lack of political and administrative determination to tackle the problem.

The sector wise percentage distribution of child labour in the census 1991 reveals that more and more children are being pushed into the informal sector. Though over 80 % per cent of child labour in India are reported employed in agriculture (**Census 1991**), another 5.67 % in livestock management, while others employed in the domestic, hotel and some other industries, yet the National Policies and the *CLPRA, Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986* only recognizes and prohibits certain selected 'hazardous' occupations and processes which are estimated to be only six per cent of the total child labour force. As a result, a very large number of working children in the non-hazardous occupations' are without legal protection (or any schemes) or social programming that ensures the realization of their rights (**HAQ**). A study conducted by UNICEF in 1999 and 2000 in 30 developing countries revealed that factory work was rare. Only 3% of children worked outside of their households for remuneration and the unpaid domestic work remained the most common child labour practice.

Prevalence of Child labour

The numerical estimation of child labour has been subjected to differences in definitions, reference periods and the limited perceptions of the agencies concerned. The NSS 50th round (1993-94), puts the number of child workers across the country at 10.1million. The estimated number of working children in the country as per the 55th Round of the NSSO Survey 1999-2000 puts the child labour figure at 10.4 million (***Economic survey, 2002-2003***) which stands much in contradiction to the non-governmental estimates varying between 60 to 115 million. It accounts for the highest number in the world ranging from 75 to 90 million-child labour under the age of 14 (***Human Rights Watch, 1996***). International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 15 are working around the world, the largest numbers being in India. Whatever be the exact numbers, criteria or definitions, it is widely believed that one in every four child labour in the world is to be found in India.

Why do the children work?

At the micro level poverty within the family as the major factor behind the prevalence of child labour remains the most accepted theory. It is viewed that every where parents prefer to send their children to school but it is lack of resources that induces the impoverished households to push their children into child labour to meet their basic needs for their survival. It is the world's poorest nations that mostly account for the child labour population when compared to the richer and affluent countries with relatively higher per capita income and GDP. On the domestic front in India, child labour is more concentrated in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, M.P, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Although, these more backward and the poverty stricken states account for a large percentage of child labour, this may not always hold true since there are instances of growing child labour in better off states like Punjab and Haryana.

But, at the same time, poverty as the sole reason does not always have a direct bearing and it fails to convince the prevalence of the child labour situation in several parts of the country. The phenomenon spells out new dimensions in the wake of the new economic order, market forces and the globalization. It also holds true that the parents want their children to work. This view implies that

parents take advantage of any earning opportunities open to their children. It is therefore appropriately believed that so long as the parents benefit more when the child goes to work than when the child goes to school, the problem of child labour will persist.

It also most commonly observed that incidence of child labour is higher wherever the access to primary education is low. Child labour has a lot to do with the primary education system and the provisions thereof. In India, in spite of the Constitutional guarantee under the Directive Principles recognizing free and compulsory education of children in the age group of 6-14 years and now the same as a fundamental right, nearly 80-100 million children are reportedly out of school. Some of the prime reasons, probably not unknown that account for out of school children are: distance of school from home, poor school infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, schools without proper drinking water facilities and sanitation (15.5% of primary schools had urinals, NCERT, NAYAR 1993), absenteeism of teachers, unappealing curriculum etc.

Facets of Globalization: Prevalence of Child Labour

There are numerous ways in which child labour and globalization intermingle. One of the strongest arguments in favour of globalization is that it may lead to ***increase in the employment and earning opportunities*** which may become available to the poor households in developing countries, possibly due to the increased inflows of the foreign investment or increase in the value of a developing country's export products leading to the increased demand of local labour and higher wages. For instance, countries with comparative agricultural advantage and their integration into the international markets may increase the price of the exports products to international levels thereby leading to increased employment and wages. All these changes in labour markets of developing countries stemming from globalization could also possibly create child labour as earning opportunities. Indirectly, increased earning opportunities for parents as well may change the type of work performed by them thereby forcing the children to take over some of the household activities usually performed by the adults. The contention that increased earning opportunities can reduce child labour by enabling parents to withdraw their other children from work and send them to school may hold little strength.

Further argument is advanced that the entry of the foreign multinationals depresses the earning opportunities and wages of the local workers especially in the face of non-competitive market power in the local market. The increased foreign competition and the higher wages paid often force the inefficient firms in import-competing industries out of the business, creating difficulties in the households with children. Putting a question mark on the ability of globalization to increase the earning opportunities of those in poorer countries and its impact on reducing child labour, as the official and the unofficial figures indicating the instances of child labour, continue to assume gigantic proportions and is a pointer to that in any case the children of the weaker households are the worst affected.

Globalization increases the influence of the developed countries in the domestic policies of the developing countries, which rely heavily on foreign markets to sell their products. Rich countries can always use the threat of trade sanctions to coerce policies that attempt to curtail child labour. But, as discussed earlier, the hard reality remains that there were many areas in which larger corporations (MNCs) are not able to supply goods and hence take the assistance of the SSI sector to fill the gap, thus supporting child labour indirectly.

The structural roots of child labour is appropriately described as embedded in the wider social matrix and it cannot be understood or analyzed outside the context of the family/household. The agricultural labourers, cultivators and the artisans forming the bulk rural poor, migrate to the cities to overcome the recurring droughts and famines thus adding to the urban poor population. In such cases a typical peasant household/ or a marginalized family is left with no option but to try and achieve a certain balance between labour and consumption depending upon the size of the family. This may also depend on the number of working members within the family and the size of land owned etc. Such equilibrium is said to help the family to exist as a unit in most trying situations and the ***child labour becoming a typical survival strategy of the poor households.***

We also need to look into the interconnectedness of the family/ household to the wider structures of the society where the researches have shown that the brunt of the globalization is primarily borne by the poorer families, principally by the women. Pressures on the women to increase family income in the face of *inflation*, and the decreasing social sector budgets has resulted in more and more children being put to work either as a substitute for the mother in the domestic chores in the case of girls or to add to the family kitty. It has already been established that the structural adjustment policies in the developing countries have had deleterious consequences both on women and children putting them under tremendous burden in facing the economic and social hardships.

The shift in the state's role in development from social welfare model on to an emphasis on integration of the world economy witnesses the most disappointing phenomenon generated as an outcome of globalization, thereby, enabling the state to abdicate its welfare responsibilities. As apprehended, in India there is shrinking of resources in the social sector and greater move towards the expensive privatization of the basic services, such as, health and education. In spite of the government's commitments to provide clean drinking water, bottled drinking water sold by private enterprises are becoming more easily available than the water from public taps, particularly in the backward states. This no doubt affects the children more directly and is bound to have long-term implications on the status of children at risk and at work in India. The argument beholding the neo-liberal paradigm is that growth will automatically and slowly trickle down to the poor in the long run. However, many proponents of this theory have already come to realize that significant sections of the population to whom the fruits of growth have never reached are worse off than earlier, and therefore the need for a human face to structural adjustment.

It is increasingly believed that despite the entire process of globalization and the economic restructuring having gone through more than a decade, the number of out of school and working children has not reduced appreciably. For instance, of the 410 million children under 18 years of age in India, nearly 140 million are estimated to be enrolled in the schools leaving nearly 270 million unaccounted out-of-school children at primary and secondary levels. The said economic restructuring in wake of globalization has resulted in socio-economic insecurity, which also creates extreme pressure on the families of the poor to somehow cope and survive. Besides, the expansion of the informal sectors of economy operates both indirectly and directly to increase child labour. The lower level of skills required leads to an increase in women and children working under onerous conditions to eke out a livelihood. This has invariably meant that children also start working with their mothers or do various domestic chores to relieve their mothers for work outside the home. More important, the subsidiaries of multinational corporations subcontract part of their production to small firms, which often rely on child labour. Even large export-oriented national enterprises resort to similar subcontracting.

A study conducted by Unicef to assess the effect of globalization and the stabilization policies in the developing countries revealed sharp reversal in the trend towards improvement in health, nutrition and educational standards of children. Employment growth slows down, real wages fall, income inequalities worsen further and the consumption of the poor decline, government expenditures on social services decline. For instance, the successive allocations to combat child labour has increased from Rs. 249 crores in the 9th Plan to Rs. 602 crores in the 10th plan (2002-2007) but even this allocation would remain far too short in making dent, let alone overcoming the problem. Reduced social expenditures has also led to reduction in lower per capita food consumption. The consequences of all this are disastrous for children. All these converged and resulted in an overall decline of living standards of the population, higher morbidity, greater numbers of children prematurely in the labour market, and higher rate of school drop-outs. Decrease in the adult employment has also led to an increase in child labour. The incidence of children begging, stealing, scavenging through refuse and engaging in prostitution have also increased (**Unicef, 1988, p. 213**). The study therefore reiterates that in the wake of globalization in the third world countries/developing countries the meagre employment opportunities for the adults result in the rise of child labour instances. Globalization could also be looked as a major cause behind the increasing instances of trafficked children. Adjustment with a human face has been suggested for protection of the vulnerable and the restoration of economic growth. The contention, however, remains that for the overall economic growth, interest of some

sections of the population mainly the poor would have to be sacrificed or dispensed with. Development with a human face is practically impossible in the long run precisely because the polarizing logic of the global system will necessarily perpetuate uneven development and the core-periphery distinction will persist and even exacerbate. It also hints towards the creation of the elite islands, which may further intensify the division between the rich and the poor, raising the danger of more joining the ranks of the poor and the destitute in the Third World.

Besides the above stated indirect consequences of globalization, the negative impact on the issues relating to Child labour and Child Rights are found concealed in various forms. The economic reforms which pervaded the agricultural sector has increased the plight of the small and the marginal farmers, who do not have access to capital, the situation becoming increasingly grim in the wake of the declining public investment and the lending's by public sector banks. The agricultural crops previously subjected to a variety of administered price regimes, minimum prices, support prices, levy prices, issue prices, etc, huge subsidies expended to bring down the real prices of inputs for the agricultural producers. All these may have to go under the WTO regime. Thousands of farmers have reportedly committed suicides. Policies affecting Agriculture may have also led to the migration to small towns and cities. The rural population below poverty line stands higher than the urban population, which also has much increased number of the deprived. All these conditions created directly on account of the new economic order and globalization most adversely effect the children and drive them into situations wherein they are forced to work in order to survive.

The recent report issued by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, presented in February 2004 by the United Nations International Labour organization (ILO), calls for building an "inclusive" globalization. *A fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for all*, acknowledges globalization's potential for good, but warns that current imbalances in the world economy are ethically unacceptable and politically unsustainable. The report which offers no instant and miraculous remedies has come up with certain recommendations to be put forth in the June International Labour Conference, which calls for fairer rules for international trade, investment, finance and migration as well as measures to promote core labour standards and a minimum level of protection in the global economy. The experts also propose the need to mobilize international resources to meet the Millennium Development goals (MDGs).

(Source: UN Weekly Newsletter, February- March 2004)

Prayas Model for the Elimination of Child labour

Prayas has been working with the urban-based child labour in Delhi since its inception in the year, 1988. In this context, Prayas has endeavored to alleviate the harsh conditions in which some of the most vulnerable, the most exploited street and working children are living in the urban slums of Delhi. Later, the organization has expanded its intervention in the earthquake-ravaged 36 villages in Bhuj district of Gujarat and in five districts of the poorest state of Bihar. The organization directly serves more than 50,000 children in three states and takes holistic care in terms of alternative education, vocational training, health, nutrition, recreation and shelter for nearly 10,000 children at any point of time. Prayas believes that child labour has to be eliminated in a phased manner, not just through legislation but also by providing proper occupational alternatives to the working children. The strategy adopted is aimed to provide an integrated approach covering various components to address the child labour care, protection and development needs. It is believed that this enables the most disadvantaged children overcome the limitations of their difficult situation and have the opportunity to develop to their full potential. It is believed that in fulfilling these basic needs and rights would mean the fulfillment of their basic rights as well.

The Prayas concept of Alternative Education is based on planned and structured educational activities and programmes for the out of school children in the age group of 6-14 years, leading to learning outcomes comparable to that of elementary school. The Alternative Education model adopted focuses to bring under its purview children remaining out of the education system for a considerable period of time generally constituting children in need of care and protection, street and working children and the numerous other categories of working children constituting child labourers. Any action

undertaken in the area of elimination of child labour must necessarily be preceded by a first hand survey of the situation. Hence, Prayas conducts an extensive survey every year in the areas of its operation primarily to assess the out of school children. The children engaged in the household cores or working outside their homes not always engaged in work, meant that these child labourers were left with a fair amount of free time on their hands could be definitely brought under the purview of education.

Even as Prayas has enabled a holistic development of a child through a well-defined programme, the main focus has always been on **mainstreaming**. In this regard the Alternative Education followed as a major Rehabilitative Strategy demonstrates the following components:

- ◆ Alternative Education
- ◆ Formal Education
- ◆ Distance Education (NIOS)
- ◆ Inclusive Education
- ◆ Vocational Education

- **FORMAL EDUCATION**

Every year Prayas prepares nearly 5,000 children through the AE program who are then mainstreamed into the formal schooling system or into different vocations. Similarly, children are sponsored to enable them to continue with their formal education.

- **DISTANCE EDUCATION**

Prayas has been accredited by the Ministry of HRD, Government of India to run the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) for street and working children. The NIOS programme also covers all children belonging to the marginalized sections of the society. It provides teaching & learning material to all children enrolled in NIOS programme and also organizes tutorials for such children. The entire admission procedure related to the filling of examination forms and other formalities is carried out by Prayas and certificate to successful candidates is issued by the Ministry of HRD. The success of the Prayas NIOS programme can be assessed from the fact that 250 were enrolled in the NIOS in the last financial year.

- **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Prayas believes that for the universalization of primary education and for checking the rate of drop-outs from schools, it is extremely essential to make a child-friendly and need-based curriculum. There should be provisions for giving special attention to slow learners and children with disabilities. Hence the concept of inclusive education is of great significance. This is because a high percentage of children are mentally challenged, visually impaired, hard of hearing and in the category of slow learners. The Ministry of HRD, Government of India is formulating strategies for alternative models of education with the assistance of NGOs and International agencies. Prayas has been actively associated with the Union & State Governments in this partnership.

Prayas strategy for child protection

In the three states, namely, NCT Delhi, Gujarat and Bihar, the organization has created a highly evolved and comprehensive, multi-sectoral strategy to protect the children under most difficult circumstances, most of them being the child labour. These children are being provided the protection of law by systematic implementation of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, Child Labour (Regulation) Act, 1986, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1986, besides other legislations, governments policies and programmes. By creating the mechanism and institutions like, Child Helpline (1098), Crisis Intervention Centre (CIC), Shelter Homes for Boys & Girls and constant interaction with the police and other governmental and non-governmental organizations, multiple networks, advocacy groups etc., Prayas is able to create a powerful protective umbrella and rehabilitative package for the child labour under most difficult and hazardous situation.

- **VOCATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION:JAN SHIKSHAN SANSTHAN PRAYAS**

The child labour victims suffer because they are mostly engaged in unskilled labour in the unorganized sector. The mainstreaming efforts have not yielded fruitful results as the existing education system is inadequate to meet the challenges of the victims of child labour and other underprivileged children in Delhi and in the other parts of the country. Alternative schooling through Non-Formal Education needs to be coupled with vocational training and life skills education and furthering it through the placement and rehabilitation of the skilled, trained manpower mainstreamed into the society. Prayas has been able to realize the need for an alternative education system of these marginalized groups of working children and youth. As a result, Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), an outfit of the Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India, was set up in Prayas thus, epitomizing this model of education. Prayas has been providing significant inputs on developing this alternative education model at the national level and has been on various Committees of the Department of Education, government of NCT Delhi and Ministry of HRD, Government of India. Under the JSS, Prayas children in the age group of 12-18 years are trained in vocations catering to their interest and needs and which also have market potential. Such children, through their vocations, can enter into self or profitable wage-employment. JSS Prayas caters to the needs of additional 5,000 underprivileged school drop-out youths, adolescents, children and women by imparting skill training for socio-economic rehabilitation. There are 26 non-formal vocational training courses of varied duration ranging from 3 months to 1 year, such as computers, house wiring, auto repairing, beauty culture, cutting & tailoring, screen printing, detergent making, and other allied trades in a professional manner. The vocational trades are identified on the basis of market surveys undertaken in different slum localities. Adolescent girls and women are encouraged to join vocational education and form self-help groups for micro-credit, micro-finance and income generation programme.

Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a flagship programme of the Ministry of Education, for achieving the goal of universal elementary education through a time bound approach in partnership with the states, Prayas is running 50 learning centers in Delhi and several others in the state of Bihar and Gujarat religiously following the objectives of the Abhiyan of providing quality elementary education, community ownership and monitoring, development of relevant and useful curriculum, teachers training programmes, focus on the educational participation of girls, religious and linguistic group and the socially and economically disadvantaged groups. The out of school children along with those with working backgrounds are attending these learning centers and the deserving children are proposed to be put in the formal school system in the academic year beginning in the year 2004.

In the most recent development Prayas has been included as one of the collaborative partners of Delhi Child Labour Rehabilitation- cum- Welfare Society working under the aegis of INDUS Child Labour Project. *The INDUS Child Labour Project, executed by the ILO is a collaborative effort between the Governments of India and of the United States of America. **The Project recognizes the crucial link between Education and Child Labour.*** It, therefore, seeks to formally work with the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Labour, in an effort aimed at elimination of Child Labour by linking them with Public Education through direct and transitional measures.

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