

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STATUS OF NATIONAL CHILD LABOUR PROJECT (NCLP) IN INDIA

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Abstract:

Child labour is one of the most debated issues since many decades. Several laws and policies have been framed and enforced which prohibits children from working in both hazardous and non hazardous industries which led to the reduction of child labour. In order to tackle the problem of child labour, the National policy on education, 1986, provided that free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality shall be provided to all children up to the age of 14 years. Through National Child Labour Project (NCLP), the government of India tries to withdraw children from hazardous occupations and processes. It is a programme where children are provided education through NCLP Special Training Centers (STCs). The scheme has covered 324 districts and 3250 Special Training Centers (as on 2018) in the country.

Key Words: *Child Labour, NCLP Scheme, NCLP STCs, India*

Introduction:

Child labour is one of the biggest problems around the world because it puts children in danger. It damages and spoils future of children. The issue of child labour has long term serious matter not only in India but also in other developing countries. The participation of child in economic activities in India is not a new thing. In a country like India, over 40 percent of the population is living in conditions of extreme poverty. Child labour is considered as exploitative as it forces children to be away from their childhood, their schooling and their normal growth and development. It means any labour force activity by children below a stipulated minimum age. Generally child labour belonging to 11-13 years group are more in number than any other age group (Agarwal & Pathak, 2015).

Childhood is a period of life to be devoted to education and training. Education has been considered as the most important factor of economic growth. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE) is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted on 4 August 2009, which makes education as a fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 and 14 in India under Article 21a of the Indian Constitution. This act came into force on April 1, 2010. The title of the RTE Act incorporates the words 'free and compulsory'. (Mete & Mondal, 2001) Child labour is curse to society and it can be eradicated through the universalisation of primary education. This act ensures that all children are in school and out of child labour. Education for all was unanimously agreed as a target towards reaching the goal of elimination of child labour, in addition to scaling up efforts through poverty reduction, social protection and building political commitment to tackling child labour. In order to tackle the problem of child labour, the National policy on education, 1986, provided that free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality shall be provided to all children up to the age of 14 years before we enter the 21st century. The National Child Labour Policy in India aims at progressive elimination of child labour in general and specifically in hazardous occupations. The National Child Labour Policy seeks to adopt a gradual and sequential approach with a focus on rehabilitation of children working in hazardous occupations and processes. For this purpose the NCLP was initiated in 1988. This project has been implemented in areas of high concentration of child labour. The objective of the act could be realized by enrolling and retaining all children below the 14 years of age in school. These children are enrolled in these schools which provide education and economic rehabilitation to their families through giving stipend and finally bringing them into regular schools. Child labour has mostly engaged in hazardous and non hazardous occupations and processes in states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand etc. the Government of India has taken major initiatives including NCLP with the coverage of 271 districts in 21 states of the country to eradicate child labour (Agarwal & Pathak, 2015). This paper made an attempt to analyze the status of NCLP scheme and NCLP Special Training Centers (STCs) in India.

National Child Labour Policy:

The National Child Labour Policy, August 1987 addresses the legislative action plan to eradicate child labour by implementing child labour act 1986. It was formulated in areas of high concentration of child labour. Under this plan children are withdrawn from hazardous occupations and provide education and training that they live a better life in future. It is an action which aims to universalisation of primary education.

The policy consists of three main ingredients:-

Legal Action Plan: With emphasis laid on strict and effective enforcement of legal provisions relating to child labour under various labour laws;

Focusing of general development programmes:Utilization of various ongoing development programmes of other Ministries/Departments for the benefit of child labour wherever possible;

Project-based plan of action: Launching of projects for the welfare of working children in areas of high concentration of child labour.

National Child Labour Project (NCLP)

The NCLP programme is a flagship programme providing education for children in the age group of 9-14 years. This programme is a major achievement of India that it withdraws child labour from hazardous occupations and processes. It was first implemented in 12 districts. But at the end of 12th five year plan this project was extended to 271 districts in 22 states of India.

Lack of education and training and poverty are the main cause and consequence of child labour. Providing education and training an essential component of child labour that removes children from hazardous occupations. For this purpose, the government of India initiated NCLP in 1988. NCLPs will be implemented in close coordination with state, district administration and civil society. Both Central and state governments have a strong responsibility for eradication of child labour. Other stakeholders, NGO’s, academicians and enforcement agencies should concentrate proper rehabilitation of the released child labour.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India is funding the NCLP Scheme for the child labour of the country. The V. V. Giri National Labour Institute (VVGNI), Noida, Uttar Pradesh, is the nodal agency working directly under the Ministry of Labour to guide and evaluate the NCLP on behalf of the ministry. The main thrust area of the NCLP has been to reduce the incidence of child labour in the country.

Data Source and Methodology:

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the descriptive method has been used. The present study is based on secondary data. The secondary data has been collected from various sources like journals, reports, publication, etc. To analyze the data, different tables and charts have been used.

Results and Discussion:

NCLP Scheme

To eliminate child labour, the Government of India initiated child labour Act, 1986. It seeks to ban employment of children working in certain hazardous occupations.

The NCLP was first started in twelve districts in India. Now this scheme has increased progressively to cover different districts of India.

Table 1: State wise number of sanctioned and operational districts under NCLP scheme in India

States/UT	No. of Sanctioned NCLP Districts	No. of Operational Sanctioned Districts
Andhra Pradesh	13	6
Assam	5	2
Bihar	24	0
Chhattisgarh	8	0
Delhi	1	0
Gujarat	9	3
Haryana	3	2
Jammu and Kashmir	3	1
Jharkhand	8	5
Karnataka	17	4
Madhya Pradesh	22	7
Maharashtra	18	11
Nagaland	1	0
Odisha	24	3
Punjab	3	3
Rajasthan	27	3
Tamil Nadu	18	15
Telangana	31	3

Uttar Pradesh	56	9
Uttarakhand	13	1
West Bengal	20	10
India	324	88

Source:Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1552, dated on 4.3.2020

The scheme has covered 324 districts in India as of March 2020. Uttar Pradesh has the highest NCLP covering districts i.e 56 districts. The NCLP scheme is being sanctioned in five districts of Assam. Both Nagaland and Delhi have only one NCLP covering districts. But the number of operational sanctioned districts in India is 88 in the year 2020.

The NCLP Scheme seeks:

A. To eliminate all forms of child labour through

- i. Identification and withdrawal of all children in the Project Area from child labour,
- ii. Preparing children withdrawn from work for mainstream education along with vocational training;
- iii. Ensuring convergence of services provided by different government departments/agencies for the benefit of child and their family;

B. To contribute to the withdrawal of all adolescent workers from Hazardous Occupations / Processes and their skilling and integration in appropriate occupations through

- i. Identification and withdrawal of all adolescent workers from hazardous occupations / processes,
- ii. Facilitating vocational training opportunities for such adolescents through existing scheme of skill developments;

C. Raising awareness amongst stakeholders and target communities, and orientation of NCLP and other functionaries on the issues of ‘child labour’ and ‘employment of adolescent workers in hazardous occupations/processes’; and

D. Creation of a Child Labour Monitoring, Tracking and Reporting System.

TARGET GROUP:

The scheme focuses on:

- i) All child workers below the age of 14 years in the identified target area.
- ii) Adolescent workers below the age of 18 years in the target area engaged in hazardous occupations / processes
- iii) Families of Child workers in the identified target area.

Table2: Number of children rescued /withdrawn from work, Rehabilitated and mainstreamed under the NCLP scheme in India

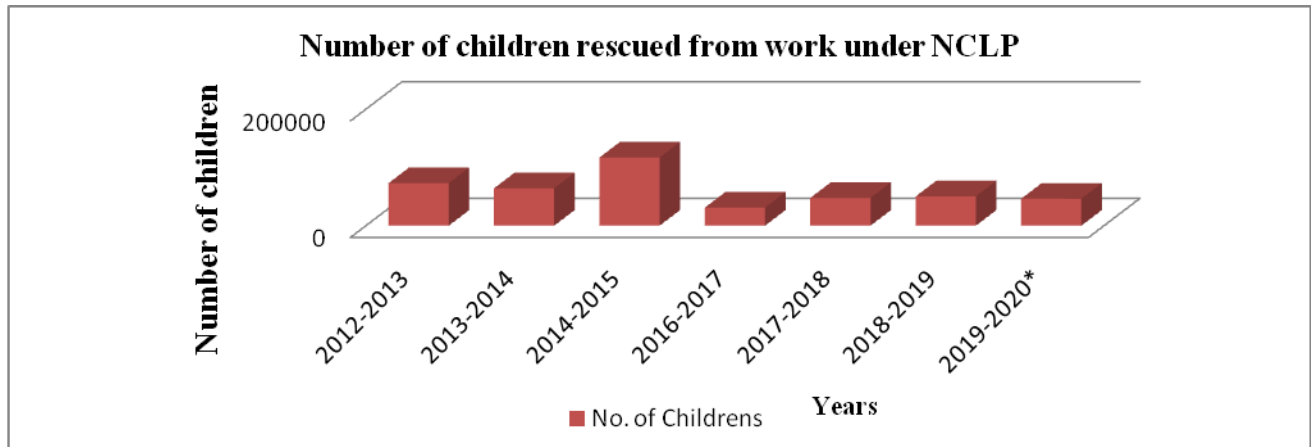
Year	No. of Childrens
2012-2013	72976
2013-2014	64050
2014-2015	116957
2016-2017	30979
2017-2018	47635
2018-2019	50284
2019-2020*	46198

Note*: Upto 02.03.2020

Source:Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.170, dated on 30.11.2015 &

Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.1643, dated on 02.03.2020

Fig1: Number of children rescued /withdrawn from work, Rehabilitated and mainstreamed under the NCLP scheme in India



Source: Table 2

Under the NCLP scheme, during the year 2012-13 , the number of children withdrawn from work were 72976. But in the year 2014-15 these children went higher i.e 116957. But it is gradually declining to 46198 in the year 2019-20.

Provisions under the NCLP scheme-

Non formal education

Education gives a better life of every child. With the ultimate aim of mainstreaming the child labour, withdraw from hazardous occupations imparted non formal education with a condensed syllabus for a maximum period of three years under NCLP. After taking this education these labourers are expected to join formal education system.

Vocational training

In order to equip these children for income generating activities in future, vocational training is also imparted. The District Project Society can identify a vocational trainer for a group of 3 Special Training Centers. The children of these special schools are also imparted craft and pre vocational training as considered appropriate to their age. Vocational training may consists of training in tailoring, basket making along with main arts and crafts.

Nutrition

Unhygienic working conditions lead to a negative impact on physical growth and development of child labour. They suffer a physical damage, long term injury due to lack of sufficient nutrition and supplements. Under NCLP Children would also be provided a nutritious cooked mid-day meal as part of the Government’s Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme. The entire expenditure on this will be charged to the State/ District mid-day meal scheme and not NCLP.

Stipend

Provisions are also made to provide the children of the special schools with a monthly stipend. Previously the stipend of Rs.100/ per month per child was being disbursed. Now, a stipend amount of Rs 150/ per month is deposited in the bank account of every child and the accumulated stipend amount is disbursed only after the child is successfully mainstreamed into formal system of schooling.

Health Component

The project society should ensure regular health check-ups of the children enrolled in special schools. The scheme provides for involvement of one doctor for every 20 special schools of 50 children each. Health card in respect of every child should be available at the school for necessary entries.

Awareness campaign

After identification of the target group, the project staff will need to sensitize the parents, employers and the children themselves about the need for schooling. Activities such as distribution of lifters, meeting with women labour in different working places, campaign in rickshaw stand, tea stall, market etc. were performed to carry out the

campaign effectively. Project society can also mobilize support for Child Labour elimination efforts by giving adequate publicity to success stories of rehabilitated children through local media/magazines.

NCLP special schools

Providing basic education for child labour, the fundamental right of every children NCLP project society establishes some special schools in the areas of high concentration of child labour. These schools are imparted education for maximum period of 3 years and after that these labourers are mainstreamed or rehabilitated into formal education system. These schools are run by some prominent NGO’s and other implementing agencies. They give vocational training and craft as appropriate to the age of children. Apart from education, children are also provided with a package of welfare inputs such as supplementary nutrition and health- care through special schools to meet their special needs. Now a stipend amount of Rs 150/ per month is deposited in the bank account of every child on the basis of child having a minimum of 75% attendance in a month.

- Focus of enrollment should be on children in the age group of 9-14 years. The working children in the lower age group should be motivated to join formal school system (primary and upper primary) directly.
- The curriculum, course content and textual material should be finalized at the District/State level by associating the SCERT, DIET, DRU and non-governmental organizations working in the field of child labour and other related areas. The State Governmental/District Child Labour
- Project Societies have the freedom to decide the ground conditions. The training of volunteers in the form of a brief orientation programme should be organized at the district level with the help of DIETs and DRUs.
- Considering the nature of work the children are employed in, it is necessary to ensure that the special schools are run in a manner so as to effectively prevent children from working in.

The NCLP schools renamed as special training centers could be for a period of 3 months to two years depending upon the time the child requires to come on par with other children of the class.

The Special Training Centers should have a display board with all the basic information pertaining to the Centre, including a timetable, weekly work plan, number of children enrolled, weekly menu for the mid-day meals, list of volunteer staff etc. There should be a minimum of 15 & a maximum of 50 children in each Special Training Center under the NCLPS. Table 3 shows the number of Special Training Centers (STCs) functional in different states of India from 2013-14 to 2018-19.

Table 3: Selected state wise number of Special Training Centers (STCs) functional under NCLP in India

States	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017*	2018-2019-upto 24.12.2018
Andhra Pradesh	108	61	58	60	66
Assam	281	281	82	180	175
Bihar	561	253	249	158	0
Chhattisgarh	261	24	0	0	0
Gujarat	34	0	0	0	34
Haryana	128	62	62	66	34
Jammu and Kashmir	16	17	17	17	9
Jharkhand	172	172	169	167	162
Karnataka	151	81	55	55	28
Madhya Pradesh	514	273	299	297	246
Maharashtra	365	346	395	381	362
Nagaland	44	44	44	44	44
Odisha	675	0	0	0	73
Punjab	107	106	92	91	97
Rajasthan	239	19	27	86	90
Tamil Nadu	329	281	287	295	303
Telangana	231	235	185	167	86
Uttar Pradesh	912	113	106	249	701
Uttarakhand	3	0	0	0	5
West Bengal	954	863	720	662	735
India	6085	3231	2847	2975	3250

Note *:Upto 23.11.2016

Source:Ministry of Labour and Employment, Govt.of India

Table 4 shows that West Bangle has the highest number of NCLP STCs and Uttarakhand has the lowest number of functional STCs. During the report on 2018-19, Bihar and Chattisgarh has zero NCLP STCs. Assam has 281 STCs during the year 2013-14 but it has declined to 175 in the year 2018-19.

Conclusion:

Child labour is persistent in our country from a long time. For the purpose of eliminating child labour Government of India introduces many initiatives. Through National Child Labour Project,the government of India tries to withdraw children from hazardous occupations and processes. It is a programme where children are provided education through NCLP special training centers. In this study, it has seen that the status of NCLP scheme in India and Assam has progressively extended.

Children are the asset of any nation.In our country, children have been exploited indiscriminately. A cycle of poverty is formed in India and hence the need for child labour is reborn after every generation. At an International level, different organizations are also working for the same cause. But still there are a lot of efforts needed to create an environment which is free from child abuse. Government must take action to educate poor children. If NCLPs is implemented as per guidelines of the act and closely monitored by government and concerned implementing agencies, the incidence of child labour in India and Assam has to be gradually declined.

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