



CATALYST

July 2007

Vol.V, Issue 2

Newsletter of Cyriac Elias Voluntary Association (CEVA), Kochi

From the Chief Editor

The Government of India in 2006 has included two more areas namely, domestic help and hospitality sector, as areas banned for employing children below 14 years. Children in India were already banned from working in factories, mines, and other perilous jobs. India's Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, passed in 1986, will now carry two more in a list of 57 professions deemed "hazardous" for children. Thus, virtually there are no areas where children could be employed. As per the provisions of the law the violators could face imprisonment up to two years and a hefty fine. The countrywide ban has come into effect in October 2006. A very welcome decision.

Child rights activists in India believe it is an important step in the battle to stop child labour. But some worry that the government is still not doing enough to provide alternative options for families that depend on income from their children. And many are sceptical about how effective the enforcement of the ban will be.

We should remember that the problem would not disappear one fine morning with the introduction of a law. On the other hand, legislation is a good start. A signal has gone out loud and clear that no one can get away with employing and exploiting children as workers. But unless the legislation is accompanied by efforts to raise awareness about child rights and the need to protect children, the situation will not change. There is also a need to tackle the root causes of child labour like poverty and illiteracy. The government, NGOs and civil society need to work together for bringing in a better environment for the children, so that they can reach their potential.

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protection of child rights

Underlying Factors of Child Labour

Bro. I. Sebastian Fsc.

St. Joseph's Development Trust is a registered charitable trust working in the field of development for the last 15 years, with a vision of "Child Focused Community Development". The fundamental principle we hold is that the child can have the best environment to bloom in their own family and community.

St. Joseph's Development Trust's experience in eradicating the system of child labour is vibrant. Our experience in this field taught that poverty and illiteracy of the parents are the underlying factors contributing to the emergence of child labourers in the target areas. This small write up is drawn from our own experience in the field.

Definition of Child Labour

Child labour is defined as "an act where children between the age of 5 and 14 years are directly or indirectly forced to work at home or outside it". As a consequence, children are not only deprived of their dignity but also their freedom to play, and their scope to develop physically, mentally and emotionally is drastically diminished. These children are also denied education, which is a fundamental right under any circumstances.

Causes for Child Labour:

i. Family Issues:

- a. Irresponsible parents (unemployed, drunkard, immoral and unethical)
- b. Harassment, torture and fighting within the family
- c. Ill-treatment by stepmother
- d. Miserable poverty condition of the family
- e. Dependent siblings

ii. Educational System

- a. Oppressive system of education making children with special skills unfit
- b. Parents face a crucial dilemma in the investment on education for their children

It requires parents to make substantial investment of resources (especially in the context of commercialised education) forcing them to postpone the contribution they can make towards

the family. For families living on the margins of survival this means real jeopardy of their ability to meet the basic needs.

- c. Investment on children means faith in the future which parents have reasons not to make:
 1. Return of educational investment is not guaranteed (in terms of certificate as well as job) and added to that are all shadow costs of bribes, donations etc. Only wealthy families can afford such risks.
 2. The risk of investing savings on a child who may desert them in the future while investing in market has assurance of returns.
 3. From our experience, we understood that the childhood that the children wanted for themselves contained play as well as school, yet at the same time, work was seen as an integral part of their lives, particularly to help out parents who were clearly seen to be struggling to make ends meet.
 4. In our experience with the re-schooled children, poverty proves to be one important factor contributing to discontinuing schooling. During seasonal migration in drought prone areas sometimes parents sought to diversify risk by sending one child to school and another to work.
 5. What surprised us often is that the statement "parents work with the best interest of the child" is not always right. Parents who offer their children as bonded labourers or parents who encourage their girl children to earn money illegally are not rare.
 6. Gender inequality, one of the important reasons to deprive education to girl children, are not specific to any particular social group but cut across religion, region, caste and class.
 7. The very constitution of schools, their rules and regulations make the education of children coming from lower caste communities a constant struggle for their families. Conventional education practices such as giving of homework and punishment to those who do not comply, discriminate however unintentionally, such children.

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**Bro. I. Sebastian Fsc. is the Executive Director of St. Joseph's Development Trust, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu.*

Child Labour- A Violation of Child Rights: Beyond What Meets the Eyes

Thomas B.*

Volumes have been written on child labour and child rights and there are ample researches to prove the statistical magnitude of this problem in India and worldwide. No one disputes the fact that child labour is one of the worst forms of violation of child rights, especially the Rights to Survival and Healthy Development. According to the 1991 census, there were 12.66 million working children in the country. Child rights activists consider it a very conservative estimate and peg it at 60 million or more. I do not intend to summarise the popular debates on child labour from a legal angle or provide a statistical overview of child labour in India – they are available on the internet – nor to belittle the mainstream concerns around the issue of child labour. I invite my readers to join me in my attempt to look around, introspect and understand child labour in a wider and unconventional perspective.

Is child labour a problem only of the poor and marginalized?

The most conventional tendency to look at child labour is from a poverty perspective. Our assumption is that children are forced to work to supplement family income. Then, to what do we attribute the work that children do in the entertainment industry (films, TV serials, advertisements etc.)? Is it not child labour because it's glamorous and well paid? Those children may or may not stay out of school but certainly their social life (which includes playing with friends, having time for themselves), which is crucial for their development as healthy human beings, is affected. We also have numerous examples of children who enter the fields of sports and games with the hope of becoming Sachin Tendulkars or Sania Mirzas or P T Ushas, forfeiting their childhood and education. In the same breath, the performance pressures most of us impose on our children to score well in their exams deprive them of their right to a pleasant and healthy childhood because they end up living with their books most of the time. Is it not one form of child labour, especially when the children are forced to do so?

One of the reasons often quoted for children, especially girls, dropping out of school is that they sit at home to look after their younger siblings, when the parents go to work. I wonder if such children are beneficiaries of any of the schemes or

projects under the National Policy on Child Labour (1987). I consider such children as child labourers (like any modern day baby sitters who make a handsome living out of it) though their work is less hazardous compared to other forms of work. I'm not sure if such children are part of our headcount.

Child marriage is an age-old practice in our country across all socio-economic strata. In many instances, the motive is more economic than cultural or any other. Married children are deprived of their rights to survival and healthy development, which include rights to healthy childhood, education and protection from all forms of abuse and are forced (against their right to decide) to work as housewives and often, instrument for sexual gratification of adults. It's nothing short of child labour, which affects them physically, mentally and even spiritually! The same holds good for child sex workers.

How do we define magnitude of the problem of child labour?

The magnitude of the problem of child labour should not be analyzed in numbers alone, though that's the easiest thing to do. It is essential to look at it from a broader perspective of child rights, strongly rooted within the human rights framework. Children are perceived as voiceless population, having no rights and adults are the best judges for what is best for them. The manner in which children are brought up in our society is characteristic of this perception. Rights of children are often looked at as inferior to the rights of adults.

Child labour is a very complex issue enveloped and sustained by systemic factors. The modern global economic policies promote liberalisation and privatisation, which lead to unemployment of adults and inadvertently encourage child labour. There is a huge economy around child labour, although only around 10 to 12% of working children are employed in mainstream industries directly involved in international trade and the rest are engaged in informal sectors like agriculture, fishing, selling goods on streets, domestic work (housemaids) etc. The legal and policy frameworks around child labour conveniently segregate child labour and child work (although the line is too thin!) to safeguard our economic interests in the context of

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globalisation. For example, a child working in a family owned farm could easily be passed as child work. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986 does not prohibit child labour (except in 25 hazardous industries) but regulates the hours and conditions of work for child labourers. While it defines a child as “a person who has not completed 14 years of age”, it doesn’t set a minimum age for employment of children. The skewed and GDP centric economic policies of the Government of India, which focus more on economic growth and less on development (economic growth need not lead to development) institutionalise poverty and marginalisation of over 300 million people in the country and push millions of children to work. It’s irony that on one hand we say that children should not be allowed to work at the cost of their education and on the other, we allow them to drop out of our poor education system and bad schools to enter the workforce. Most rural children find the education imparted in schools irrelevant to their lives and livelihoods and choose to work for a living. In a welfare democracy, we do not have

sufficient budget to invest in essential services, especially primary education and primary health but we have money for subsidies to boost international trade. One can go on and on like this and it doesn’t take a child labour expert to prove that our socio-economic and political systems perpetuate child labour and the magnitude of the problem is way beyond numbers.

Websites of Some Organisations / Government Departments working with Children

www.cry.org
www.childlineindia.org.in
www.infochangeindia.org
www.crin.org
www.wcd.nic.in
www.smilefoundationindia.org
www.unicef.org/india

The last word

While all of us should be gravely concerned about “eliminating child slavery, forced labour, trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom, prostitution, pornography and various forms of hazardous and exploitative work” as exhorted by the ILO through ‘The Worst Form of Child Labour Convention’ - No. 182 in Geneva in June 1999 and the glaring statistics, we must also try to be honest and look at

it from a humanist perspective. All of us have the responsibility to contribute towards building communities of healthy people and our first step should be respecting and protecting the rights of our children, nothing less than human rights.

Future Uncertain for HIV+ Children

A controversy is raging in Kerala, the most literate State in India, over the admission of five HIV+ children to school. Last December, the five children, four girls and one boy, were thrown out of the lower primary school in Kottayam District following complaints by the parents of other students.

This year, the school authorities allowed the children to attend school and the children were back in school on June 18th after a six month battle. The school which has 65 students on its roll relented after the government threatened to withdraw its permit to operate.

But the future of the five students still remains uncertain, as a section of parents threatened to take away their wards, if they were readmitted. “So far, they have been able to attend classes only for two days during the new academic year”, said Sr. Alphograce who is in charge of the children at Asha Kiran, the rehabilitation centre which looks after the children.

“Though Kerala claims 100 percent literacy, social discrimination against people with HIV is more evident in the State”, said P.B.Bindu, Secretary, Kerala Positive Women network. Ms.Bindu said nearly 2000 women and 1000 children living with HIV were facing alienation in the State.

Source: *The Hindu (Kochi Edition) 19/June/2007, The Hindu (Kochi Edition) 27/June/2007*

It is a sad reality we have to face: Child abuse is an issue, here and today and perhaps just around the corner right now. Children are an easy target, in Bolivia as well as in Uganda, Germany or India. It is a global issue and children all over the world, both in developed and developing countries, are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

The forms of abuse are widespread and may reach from physical and emotional violence or even sexual abuse to abandonment and neglect. Child abuse can take place in any situation and environment, at home and in public spheres such as schools, hospitals or child care centres and can cause severe harm to the child's physical and mental health, survival, development and dignity.

The perpetrators are equally diverse as the forms of abuse. They need not be only criminals and organised crime, but also policemen, teachers, peers, doctors, friends, family members or even parents. Child abuse is a problem that affects society in general and should not be played down as an issue for just a few children in particular circumstances. It is an extensive social problem and one of the most severe human rights violations.

Having said so, it is not surprising that organisations working on social changes are starting to address the issue. A twofold response mechanism is tangible. On one hand the issues are directly addressed. Projects are implemented to support victims, facilities are opened as a safe havens, aggressors are targeted, legal reforms are initiated and awareness-raising campaigns are launched. On the other hand a more internal approach is applied when organisations working with children and young people increasingly commit themselves to engage in safeguarding the children's welfare and protecting them against abuse and maltreatment by adopting concrete guidelines and measures.

So does the Karl Kübel Stiftung für Kind und Familie (KKS). KKS is a secular, charitable trust based in Bensheim, Germany, that aims *"to enable more parents around the world to be the physical, psychological and spiritual basis for their children's growth"*. Children and their families are in the centre of KKS efforts and as such protecting their well being is our prime concern.

Adhering to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in particular the article 19 which refers to the obligation of State Members *"to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse"*, KKS is committed to the adoption of a **Child Protection Policy** which sets out common values, principles, and beliefs and describes the steps that will be taken in meeting the commitment to protect children and other vulnerable persons.

KKS' Child Protection Policy responds to four major objectives:

- To protect children and other vulnerable persons from abuse, exploitation and neglect
- To protect KKS staff, volunteers and representatives from false allegations
- To protect KKS and its project partners from falling victims of infiltration
- To raise awareness on this important topic among the own organisation, partners and associates

This policy is conceived as a response to the concrete problem of child abuse and exploitation. It is a shared responsibility of all parties involved with defined instruments and procedures, which include: a risk analysis, Code of Conduct, investigation and reporting procedures, a system for management of cases of abuse, communication guidelines when dealing with the media, and recruitment policy guidelines among others. In this way, KKS intends to ensure highest safety standards for children and vulnerable persons within the sphere of its activities and programmes.

As part of its policy, and to uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct, Karl Kübel Stiftung has developed a **Code of Conduct** which is one of the core elements of an organisation's protection policy. It provides guidance and defines standards, rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders through a series of commitments regarding what **I WILL, I DO, and I DO NOT** when interacting with children. It clearly states which behaviour is acceptable and which not, when working with children.

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*Dr. Sigrid Maurer is the Coordinator of Development Cooperation of Karl Kübel Stiftung, Germany

Butterflies is a voluntary organisation which believes in the right of every child to have a complete childhood where he/she has protection, respect, opportunities and participation in his/her growth and development as a right. Butterflies has been working with street children and working children in Delhi since 1989. Its activities include alternate education, Bal Vikas Bank (Children's Development Bank), health co-operative, income generation and technical education, alternate media (National Children's Times), Butterflies Broadcasting Children (a radio group of children), Bal Rang Manch (a street theatre group of children), alliance building (to network with other like minded NGOs in the city, national and international levels) and Childline (a national, 24 hour, free emergency telephone help line for children).

Bal Vikas Bank (as it is known in India) or **Children's Development Bank (CDB)** (as it is known internationally) was started by Butterflies in April 2001 for imparting life skill education to street and working children. Prior to that, Butterflies had a saving scheme and a credit union for street and working children and the CDB is the natural development of these two. The CDB was conceptualized and initiated by Butterflies to empower street and working children.

The objectives of the Children's Development Bank are:

- ❖ To organize children for collective action for self empowerment
- ❖ To inculcate the habit of saving and budgeting
- ❖ To equip street and working children to access education and health care
- ❖ To provide facilities for skill acquisition and vocational training
- ❖ To provide skills and support to initiate and manage economic enterprise (small businesses)
- ❖ To enhance self esteem and confidence of children and adolescents
- ❖ To work in partnership with local government and other organizations concerned with children, civil society, media, financial institutions and local entrepreneurs

- ❖ To provide technical assistance to other children's groups in India and abroad to set up their own Children's Development Banks

Tighter Child Labour Laws

In the month of July 2006, the Indian Government brought an amendment in the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986, banning the employment of children under 14 years of age as domestic servants or servants in dhabas (roadside eateries), restaurants, hotels, motels, teashops, resorts, spas or other recreational centres, effective from 10 October 2006. Anyone found breaking the law faces a maximum punishment of one year imprisonment and a fine of Rs.20000.

Source: www.bba.org.in

The CDB ensures children's participation and it is run for and managed by street and working children with support from adult facilitators. Any street and working child who is above nine years can become a member.

CDB has been expanded to Chennai, Kolkata, Muzaffarpur and Leh in India and Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka in South Asia to benefit larger number of children. At present the CDB has 25 main branches and 58 sub branches in these places. It has 6000 members and has a cash balance of INR 1.3 million.

The CDB has provided advances to several adolescents who are above 15 years for starting small economic enterprises such as tea shops, starting mobile PCO, embroidery work etc. thus ensuring a better future to street and working children. Several children have also taken advances from the CDB to continue their education.

The CDB has been able to develop saving habit, budgeting and accounting skills among the street and working children as well as it teaches them how to prioritize their needs. It has been able to contribute in a significant way towards improving their self-confidence, teaching them how to work as a team and how to be responsible towards others and with their own money.

*Sebastian Mathew is working with Butterflies, New Delhi.

NEWS FROM CEVA

Workshop on Social Apostolate of CMI Congregation

A workshop on Social Apostolate of South Indian Provinces was held at CMI Prior General's House, Kakkanad, Kochi from 29th April to 1st May 2007. 34 participants attended the workshop. Prior General, Very Rev. Fr. Antony Kariyil inaugurated the workshop by lighting the lamp. During his orientation talk, Rev. Fr. Kariyil opined that genuine love has two dimensions-love of God and love of fellow beings. He emphasized the need to open our eyes and ears to the sufferings of our fellow beings.



The workshop was interlaced with input sessions by resource persons and presentations and discussions by participants. Rev. Sr. Molly FMM, an advocate at High Court of Kerala took a session on “New Social Legislations and its Impact”. She explained the content and impact of two legislations - ‘Right to Information Act 2005’ and ‘Protection of Women against Domestic Violence Act 2005’. Rev. Dr. Joe Arimpoor SDB, Director of Bosco Institute of Research and Development for Youth (BIRDY), handled two sessions on topics - “Developing Scientific Temper in Our Social Apostolate” and “Possible Development Programmes in Youth Ministry”.

Fr. Varghese Kokkadan presented a paper on ‘Taking up New Projects’. He suggested that CMI congregation could approach funding agencies for supporting projects at congregational level and province level. A major project on Youth Ministry can be submitted to Italian Bishops Conference at the CMI congregational level. He explained the modalities for submitting projects to funding agencies.



Fr. Werner made a presentation on ‘Medinet Global Project’. It is a call-centre supported global network service to link medical service providers with each other and with the clients. He added that it would be a boon for the poor in need of medical help.

Mr. P. J. Ignatius, President of CEVA introduced some training programmes for various target groups, which may be taken up at the generalate level. He emphasized the need for reporting and documentation. He also urged the participants to mobilize local funds instead of going behind foreign funds.

Mr. George Kadankavil, the Board member of CEVA, presented a paper on ‘Religious Way of Social Intervention.’ He introduced an innovative idea for the growth of students who failed in SSLC and Plus

Two exams. This idea is to bring together one youth with an elderly person who can lead this youth into a better future.

Social Secretaries of each province presented their activities, challenges and issues in the social work field. The participants were divided into four groups and were given topics for discussion based on the issues and challenges that were raised during the presentations. After the discussion, all the groups presented their group discussion report. During the valedictory session, Rev. Dr. Joe Arimpoor summed up the programmes of the workshop and he suggested that effective follow up is essential to implement the suggestions that emerged in the workshop.

KKS-KKF-KKID-CEVA Annual Meeting - 2007



The eleventh Annual Meeting of KKS-KKF-KKID-CEVA family was held at KKID, Coimbatore on 15th to 17th March 2007. The Executive Director of KKS, Mr. Ralf Tepel along with Mr. Arno Eul and Mrs. Sigrid Maurer from KKS attended the meeting. From CEVA, Mr. P.J. Ignatius, the President, Fr. Varghese Kokkadan, the Secretary, Fr. Thomas Medeckal, Regional Secretary along with all the coordination staff attended the Annual Meeting. The discussions were fruitful and led to a number of concrete results.

KAVACH Project

The KAVACH project aims at restricting the spread of HIV among truck drivers and associated high risk population. This project supported by TCI started in 2005 as a one year project, but now has been extended till July 2007. This year the focus of the project has been long distance drivers and helpers and the strategy changed from Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) to Inter Personal Communication (IPC) including brokers strategy and key population strategy, with rebranding of the slogan from 'Josh mein bhi Hosh' to 'Seena taan ke'. During the appraisal of the project at TCI level, among the 38 partners 21 were dropped. In terms of performance the project implemented by CEVA was considered one of the best. This is an important achievement for CEVA.



EADS Team at Khushi Clinic

Apart from visits of representatives from Gates Foundation, TCI, PSI, Path, Appollo Tyres and social work students, a team of representatives from EADS (European Aeronautical Company), the second largest aero-missile company in the world, visited the project. They appreciated the good work being done by the project to prevent the spread of HIV.

Schools for Child Labourers

The three schools for child labourers run by CEVA, NRO, two in Loni and one in Khoda, supported by government has completed one year. The schools have also been partially supported by Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Each school has 50 children with access to education up to 5th standard, daily nutritious meal, stipend of Rs.100 per month and access to health services.

A 3-day training was conducted for the capacity building of the teachers. This has given new insights to the teachers on the education methodology to be used while dealing with child labourers. Every month PTA meetings are organised to raise the awareness level of the parents. Apart from this, three SHGs of the parents of the children have been formed. Though it is difficult to maintain the groups due to a number of causes like the distance between the area, working hours of the parents etc, vigorous efforts are being taken for energising the groups.

The schools run by CEVA are considered one among the best and many dignitaries like Chief Secretary and Labour Commissioner visited the school during the year. In addition to this, a documentary on the schools run by CEVA was made and telecast on national and regional channels on the occasion of promulgation of law restricting children from working as domestic servants in dhabas and restaurants.

Visit of Mrs. Christina Weber and Mrs. Sigrid Maurer to CEVA, Kochi Office

Mrs. Christina Weber, Project Officer of KKS, Germany and Mrs. Sigrid Maurer, Coordinator, Development Cooperaton, KKS, Germany visited CEVA, Kochi office on 21st May, 2007. They held discussions with the staff and executive committee members of CEVA. Mrs. Christina who is leaving the job at KKS was given a memento on behalf of CEVA for her services and cooperation.

Coordination of Projects

At present CEVA is coordinating 46 projects supported by KKS, Germany. From January to July 2007, five new projects were sanctioned The following are the new projects:

Projects Sanctioned in 2007	
Name of the Project	Implementing Agency
Women Empowerment for Child Labour Eradication and Rehabilitation (WE CLEAR)	Chaitanya Bharathi Andhra Pradesh
Child Labour Rehabilitation and Community Empowerment Project (CLRCEP), Hospet	ABHIVRUDDI Society Karnataka
Programme for Care & Support to the HIV/ AIDS affected Persons & their Families in the District of Thrissur, Kerala	KESS, Kerala
Sustainable Development through Women Empowerment Karamadai	GSHEC, Tamil Nadu
Permanent Housing for Tsunami Victims in Vasavankuppam	REAL, Tamil Nadu

Projects for the Protection of Children supported by KKS

KKS, Germany and CEVA is committed to the protection of child rights. This has always been one of the priority areas of project funding by KKS. It is reflected in the number of projects for children supported by KKS in different parts of India at present. The following table will give a brief overview of the ongoing projects supported by KKS in India for the well being of children.

Details of Ongoing Projects supported by KKS, Germany for Care & Protection of Children in India			
Sl. No.	Name of the Project	Implenting Agency	Duration
1	Child Rights Education & Development Project Parvathipuram, (CREAD)	Jana Kalyana Samakhya (JKS), Andhra Pradesh	01.06.2004 - 31.05.2007
2	Women Empowerment for Child Labour Eradication and Rehabilitation (WE CLEAR)	Chaitanya Bharathi Andhra Pradesh	01.03.2007- 28.02.2010
3	Youth, Women & Child Development Programme, Hallimysore (YWCDP)	PRACHODANA Karnataka	01.04.2004 - 31.12.2007
4	Community Empowerment on Child Rights and Rescue of Child Labourers in Harapanahalli	Socio Economic Education and Development Society, (SEEDS) Karnataka	01.10.2004 - 31.12.2007
5	Child Labour Rehabilitation and Community Empowerment Project (CLRCEP), Hospet	ABHIVRUDDI Society Karnataka	01.03.2007 - 28.02.2010
6	Eradication of Child Labour in Periyanaickenpalayam Panchayat Union, Coimbatore	Native Medicare Charitable Trust (NMCT), Tamil Nadu	01.10.2004 - 31.12.2007
7	Strahlemann – Peace Support Centre for Children Affected by Tsunami, Velankanni	PEACE Trust, Tamil Nadu	2005 - 2009
8	Child Sponsorship Programme	VIKASANA, Karnataka	2003 - 2010
9	School Partnership for Global Learning (SPGL)	VIKASANA, Karnataka	2004 - 2007
10	Bridge School, Bhoothahanalli	VIKASANA, Karnataka	2001 - 2007
11	Bridge School, Galihally	VIKASANA, Karnataka	2001 - 2007
12	Safeguarding of Women and Child Rights	Jan Shikshan Kendra, Uttar Pradesh	01.01.2007 – 31.12.2007
13	Education & Rehabilitation of Street Children	St. Joseph's Service Society New Delhi	01.01.2007 – 31.12.2007
14	Night Shelter Programme for Girls	Salaam Baalack Trust Maharashtra	01.11.2006 – 31.10.2007

Rubina (Name changed) is a sweet, energetic child, aged about 10 years, and has faced a lot in her little life. She is daughter of a commercial sex worker and was engaged in a house as domestic worker by her mother; she wanted to keep her child off the unhealthy environment. But the day when Rubina's employer came to know of her background, he started torturing her physically and mentally. The family denied keeping the child in their house any more and after receiving the information Right Track intervened in the matter. Her mother was called, a police complaint was lodged and ultimately the child was rescued from the choked situation. Her mother became very helpless to bring up the child and requested us to save the child from the vulnerable environment where she stayed [Munsigange-Brothel]. Considering the situation Right Track contacted a Shelter Home at Howrah and sent the child there. The incident has left a deep scar in her mind. Rubina needed several counseling sessions to recover from the shock and come back to normalcy. She has been admitted in a formal school, and is getting chance to learn drawing and dancing. Now she studies in class II. Her all-round performances are remarkable. She has overcome her sorrows and looks set for a bright future.

This is not an isolated incident. This is the situation, millions of children all over the India, have been facing for years. The children sent for work as domestic help outside the family are amongst the most vulnerable and exploited. They begin work at an early age, shoulder excessive responsibilities such as caring for babies/infants, handling fuel, stove and sharp tools among others, and work for long hours with no rest period, with little or no remuneration. Working conditions are at the mercy of the employer and they frequently suffer from gender and sexual abuse. Most of the child domestic workers are girls. Lured from village with the promise of a better lifestyle in the city, in addition to good clothes, adequate food and enough money, they go with great expectations. They are deprived of access to schooling, play and social activities and of the affection and support of their family and friends.

Over 50,000 children are employed as domestic help in Kolkata households. Study shows that:

- 86% of child domestics working in Kolkata are girls
- 83% of the children working in Kolkata households are primarily school dropouts.
- 84% of the children have to work more than eight hours a day

- 56% of them are found to receive substandard quality food in their employer's home
- 40% of child domestic workers give their salary to the brokers who have given them employment
- 50% of child domestics never got leave to go and visit their family once in 12 months.
- 22% of them have no connection with their families
- 46.6% of the child domestic workers are prey to brutal physical abuse from their employers.
- 86% of them are subject to humiliation and various kinds of mental abuse
- 32.2% of them suffer from sexual abuse by their employers or their peers
- 20.3% of them were compelled to have sex with their abusers
- 12% of the children have been thrown out of the job without any explanation

What has Right Track done during last three years (2003-2006)?

Right Track started intervening in eight Municipal wards under Kolkata Municipal Corporation with a primary focus of accessing the 'live-in' Child Domestic Workers (CDWs) in the household/housing complexes, sensitize the employers towards improving the working conditions of the children, establish child rights in this area through increasing awareness of employers and different duty bearers including local administration on child rights, issues related to child domestic work and other exploitative forms of child labour. During the three years intervention:

- 2,123 Child Domestic Workers have been identified out of which 634 children were enrolled through the 33 'Drop In Centres' managed by Right Track. These are largely girls who were either out of school and therefore at the risk of being trafficked or migrated in search of work, or children already working as domestic help, wanting to go back home.
- 145 children have been mainstreamed through vocational training.
- 97 children have been enrolled into formal schools to go back to education.
- Most of them have been withdrawn from work
- Five children were rescued from abusive work situation
- 255 children have been withdrawn from work and reintegrated with their families

Continued on page 16...

*Piyali Deb is the Project Coordinator of Right Track, Kolkata, West Bengal

Experience of PRACHODANA

C. C. Poulose*

PRACHODANA is a Non Government Organization working with children for the past 11 years in the districts of Hassan and Kodagu in Karnataka, where large number of children are employed and exploited in trades like domestic work, agriculture, construction, begging etc.

We are doing various sensitization programmes for different stakeholders to control the issue of child labour, like sensitization programme for the parents, school teachers, SHG members, elected people's representatives etc. as preventive measures.

PRACHODANA runs village based Non-Formal Education centres during the evenings for the dropouts and non-school going children. Intensive coaching is being given to them in these centres. Eligible children, based on their age and learning capacity, are admitted to Government schools or are made to appear for 7th

class examination directly. Prachodana has succeeded in mainstreaming above 1500 children till date.

We have been running two bridge schools since 2004. Child labourers, school-dropouts, non-school going children and children from very poor families are identified and brought to the bridge school. These children are provided coaching by the bridge school teachers. They are kept in the bridge school from one year to a maximum of three years. After that they are admitted to the Government schools. So far 129 children have been enrolled to the Bridge School. Out of these, 79 children have been admitted to the Government schools. Some of them are staying in the Government hostels and the remaining are day scholars. PRACHODANA is one of the active members for the campaign against child labour and work as District convener of CACT-K for Hassan District.

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Consequences of Child Labour

i. Physical Problems:

Torture, over burden leading to stunted growth, unhealthy atmosphere, suppression of normal physiological functions and exposure to hazardous work.

ii. Mental Problems:

Deprived of education, play time, proper nutrition, friendship etc., they adopt all kinds of mechanisms to either compensate for these or just forgo. The impact is that the child is confused and uncertain of what is right and wrong. The abusers systematically exploit this situation.

iii. Moral Issues:

Abused is the one who in turn abuses others. This chain has no end.

iv. Emotional Issues:

Lack of affection, lack of security and safety and lack of trust in adults lead to a total emotional breakdown. Anger, bitterness, feeling of let down, sadness etc. set in the child.

v. Social Issues:

The exploited child looks at the society with lot of suspicion,

confusion, anger and fear. The reaction of the society is also the same.

SJDT's Intervention Strategy - MEALS

Motivation

Identify the child labourer, establish contact with parents of the child and if possible the employer too. Through a process of counselling motivate them towards different options such as re-schooling, better employment, skill upgradation etc.

Equipping

Equip the child with necessary knowledge & skill for mainstreaming either to school or skill upgradation.

Accompanying

Process of accompanying them in re-schooled situation or skill training situation or better employment.

Linking

Linking with mainstream such as schools, skill training centres, care giving institutions etc.

Sustaining

Sustaining the child in the process.

Social evil of child labour has pushed several children to become school dropouts, depriving them of education and childhood. The rights of the children are misunderstood and misquoted by many communities. The legislations, conventions and declarations ensuring the rights of the children are conveniently overlooked.

Jana Kalyana Samakhya (JKS), through the project 'Child Rights Education and Development Project, Parvathipuram (CREAD) supported by KKS-Germany has initiated measures to eradicate child labour, protect child rights and mould tomorrow's global citizens and groom them as innovators, decision makers, thinkers and leaders. Most of the children in the CREAD project area are child labourers due to poverty, ignorance of the parents, illiteracy, and unavailability of schools within the vicinity of the villages.

Our Experience in Working with Child Labourers in the Project Area

- ◆ Due to poverty, the children of the project area have chosen or were forced to be child labourers and extend support to their families with their meager earnings. This was done to provide more income to the family as the income earned by the parents were insufficient to maintain the family. We realized that unless the economic situation of the families improved the child labour issue cannot be dealt with. JKS initiated steps to address the issue by involving the families in the Self Help Groups (SHGs). Through these groups, financial assistance was provided to the families to start suitable Income Generation Programmes (IGPs). By motivating the parents through the SHGs the child labourers were brought back to school. Bridge schools have been started to help the children to get back to the normal school.
- ◆ We put in every effort to bring out the best in every child. Efforts have been taken to remove the fear of

education and to create happy learning environment for the children. We impart education on the foundation of the trust, generosity and responsibility. Counseling and motivation classes are provided for children, teachers, parents and community as a whole by involving Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI). We seek the support of Mandal Legal Services Committee to educate the community on various legal aspects and laws enacted by the Government on violation of child rights.

- ◆ We firmly believe that the formation of nine children's clubs with four hundred and sixteen children, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and education committees created enormous awareness among the children, parents and civil society about the violation of child rights. The role of children's clubs in the awareness raising has been enormous. It played a major role in motivating the community by translating its knowledge into action. With the support of CBOs, by *child-to-child motivation*, parents' motivation through cultural shows, rallies, melas, meeting etc., they helped to spread the message of valuing education and restoring childhood.
- ◆ We have also tried to inculcate the positive feelings like joy, happiness, satisfaction, fun and enthusiasm in every child. Our efforts have been towards helping each child to attain his/her potential. Regular visits, monitoring, follow-up and feed back by the project team are the key strategies used for getting maximum results.

We have laid the foundation to liberate children from child labour to a dignified life and reach certain levels of excellence. We do hope that the efforts made by JKS in partnership with KKS and CEVA through the CREAD Project will produce tangible results.

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All staff of the Karl Kübel Stiftung, people travelling under the direction of KKS, and persons holding a KKS consultant contract, must sign up this Code and abide by it. Moreover, partner organisations and coordination offices are requested to adopt an equivalent policy and to develop their Code of Conduct. To facilitate this process, KKS will provide training opportunities and technical support to project partners with the aim to

meet the commitment of preventing child abuse and protecting children with / and for whom we work.

Child protection is a shared responsibility. Please join together to build and maintain a child-safe environment where the rights of children are promoted, respected and protected without discrimination.

**M. V. Varghese is the Secretary of Jana Kalyana Samakhya (JKS), Parvathipuram, Andhra Pradesh.*

In India, it is common to find children involved in collection of coal pieces, at brick kilns, working in agricultural land and grazing animals. Moreover, it becomes the responsibility of children to take care of their siblings and complementing to household works, as their parents are working. However, such works are considered household works, and not under child labour, but it definitely affects the growth and development of children. There is an absolute need to develop sensitivity and concern towards the children and their capacity to work so that a clear-cut division can be made between child related work and child labour.

Child labour is the outcome of capitalism. It is an instrument of the rich to maximize profit because one child labourer works equal to two adults but receive only half the amount (even much lesser in many cases) as remuneration. The rich communities engage child labourers in many types of work and save money. On top of it all, they exploit the children physically, psychologically as well as economically.

Poverty is the major cause of child labour, which in turn is creating another social problem i.e. illiteracy. There is a strong need to launch joint collaborative programmes between the society and government for eradicating the problem of child labour.

Child Labour and Laws

The Articles 23 and 24 of Indian Constitution protects a child against exploitation. According to Article 24, no child should be employed in factories, mines or dangerous work places. Article 39 (E & F) and 45 of state policy also protects the rights of children. The first Article says that childhood should not be misused and no person should be employed in a job, which is not suitable to his capacity and age. The second Article instructs the state government to provide free and compulsory education to children up to the age group of 14 years.

There are about 15 provisions of Constitution which provide legal support to children who work in different situations. Generally, various legal provisions related to child labour give emphasis on five major points i.e. minimum age of work, maximum hours of work, prohibition of working at night, prohibition of employing children in certain categories of work and health check-up of all working children.

According to some people, there are no basic differences in Child Labour Act of 1938 and 1986. According to Act of 1986, there are two major objectives: The first one is to identify areas of work which are dangerous, and secondly, to assess the working situation of children involved in non-dangerous work.

There are some gaps in the Act. For instance, this Act is limited to organized sector. According to present situation, 90% (approx.) children who work in unorganized sector of rural and urban area do not come in this category. The act does not have any provisions for the children who work in glass and bangle making factories.

The provisions of the Act and state policy are against the existence of child labour. One is in favour of complete abolition of child labour while other one indicates to eradicate the child labour problem gradually. According to 1986 Act, the target was to eradicate child labour problem within 10 years. But unfortunately, the problem could not be solved even after 21 years of enactment of the law. Many children completed their young age and have passed on the problem of child labour to the next generation.

A Request to Eradicate the Child Labour Problem

Children are the future of the country. It is sad to have physically, psychologically and economically exploited children. It is also sad that India has about sixty percent of illiterate people, out of which majority are women and children. Among the exploited category, the maximum numbers are girls. Even today, there are innumerable places where there are no proper and good schools. Such situation is not only violation of child rights but it is also violation of human rights. There is need to have child labourer's right centered programme and advocating the issue of child labour at larger levels. In addition, there is also need to assess the relevance of various provisions of existing laws, legal conditions and important decisions of Supreme Court in 1996 and 2006, keeping in mind the present situation of the society and children. Accordingly, we also need to make collaborative people's initiatives and strategies for eradicating the issue of child labour.

*R.B Pal is the Chief Functionary of Jan Shikshan Kendra Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh.

The Periyanaickenpalayam Block of Coimbatore District in Tamil Nadu, where Native Medicare Charitable Trust (NMCT) is working is dotted with myriad small scale industries and brick kilns which act as a major focal point for migrant labourers from the surrounding districts such as Madurai, Erode and Salem. The lack of opportunities for the livelihood drives these labourers from the villages to the urban/semi urban centres. During the process the whole family is uprooted and shifted to the new area.

Most of the brick kilns are situated away from the city and the main roads with little or no access to infrastructure such as schools. In addition during the process of migration many parents do not get the Transfer Certificates of children from the schools. So enrolling of children in the schools, even if present, poses a problem in the new area.

Brick kiln owners and builders operate through 'manpower' agents who pay the migrating families a lump sum advance. The pressure to repay this advance forces many families to push children in the age group of 10-14 years to lend a hand in the adults' work. The lack of access to schools combined with other factors result in the creation of Child Labourers.

NMCT has been in the process of gathering such dropout children and motivating the families to send them to school. In order to facilitate the mainstreaming of children into the regular government schools, we have been organizing Bridge Course Centres (BCC) known as "Vimuktha Schools". These centres act as focal points for providing education, health and nutritional support. We have observed remarkable changes in the behaviour and attitude of children once they are enrolled in the BCCs. Children

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Abuse of Indian Children 'Common'

Two out of every three children in India are physically abused, according to a landmark government study. Commissioned by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the study says 53% of the surveyed children reported one or more forms of sexual abuse. This is the first time the government has done such an exhaustive survey on the controversial issue of child abuse.

Abuse of children, particularly sexual abuse, is rarely admitted in India and activists have welcomed the study. Releasing the report at a press conference in the capital, Delhi, Minister for Women and Child Development Renuka Chowdhury said: "In India there's a tradition of denying child abuse. It doesn't happen here is what we normally say. But by remaining silent, we have aided and abetted the abuse of children."

Describing the findings of the study as "disturbing", Ms. Chowdhury called for an end to the "conspiracy of silence". The issue of child abuse has been raised in the past by non-governmental organisations, but this is the first time an attempt has been made by the government to document the scale of the problem.

The study took two years to complete, and covered 13 states where 12,247 children (between five and 12) and 2,324 young adults (over the age of 12) were quizzed. Dr Loveleen Kacker, the official in charge of child welfare in the ministry, compiled the report. She said the study had revealed that contrary to the general belief that only girls were abused, boys were equally at risk, if not more. She said a substantial number of the abusers were "persons in trust and care-givers" who included parents, relatives and school teachers.

Dr Kacker said a disturbing finding of the study had been that 70% had not reported the abuse to anyone. Besides surveying physical and sexual abuse, the study also collected statistics on emotional abuse and neglect of girls. The study called for efforts to make society aware of the rights of children and officials say the data will help them formulate better policies to protect children.

By Geeta Pandey
BBC News, Delhi

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6539027.stm

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take greater care of their personal hygiene, are able to concentrate more and they start responding to instructions from teacher. Aggression is reduced and they show an inclination to attend schools like other children around them.

Very often the elder child is accompanied to school by the younger siblings as there is nobody else to look after them at home. Hence we have introduced play schools for the 3-5 age groups as part of the programme strategy. Monthly health checkups are conducted and ayurvedic medicines are prescribed and distributed. A morning snack and nutritional meals are provided. Books, notebooks, bags, uniforms are provided to the children.

Taking into account the older children who have dropped out of school and cannot be mainstreamed with the regular schools, we have introduced the concept of 'open schools' where working children are encouraged to enroll and prepare for the 8th and 10th standard exams without attending the regular schools. We also provide linkages to vocational training institutions for those who complete their basic education.

NMCT aims to reach out to all children up to the age of 18 years in the target area to ensure that all of them have access to education both elementary as well as vocational. We hope to realize this dream by the year 2010.

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To sustain the impact of the project, effort was taken to create community based protection mechanisms to stop abuse and exploitation of the domestic workers at least in the target locations.

- Right Track was successful in forming 15 Child Protection Committees in 15 municipal wards of the city with active support from the councilors (8), local level organization, youth (28) and 65 active college student volunteers.
- Different schools and colleges were covered under awareness / sensitization campaign through which 15,030 students were reached out across 27 schools and colleges with the messages on child domestic work with special focus on issues of child protection.
- Kolkata Police (48 Child Welfare Officers) and ICDS project staffs (2 CDPO, 11 Supervisors, 106 Anganwadi Workers) were covered under similar sensitization programs.

It is challenge for civil society to create a better world for children - a joyful childhood for every child. Can you make a difference...

Ensure a world free of CHILD DOMESTIC WORKER

Catalyst Volume V, Issue 2 For Private Circulation Only

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