

Practices of Child Labour

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Child labour is the practice of having children engaged in economic activity, on part or full-time basis. The practice deprives children of their childhood, and is harmful to their physical and mental development. Poverty, lack of good schools and growth of informal economy are considered as the important causes of child labour in India. As per generally agreed norms employing a person below age 18 years of age is termed as child labour. However depending upon socioeconomic factors the definition of child labour may slightly differ. In India it is allowed to employ persons above age 14 but less than age 18 for light work which is not hazardous and does not require extreme physical exertion. Hence in India employing any person between age 14 and less than 18 years in any hazardous activities or activities requiring extreme physical exertion may be termed as child labour. Also employing any person below age 14 years in any kind of activity aimed at earning a living is termed as child labour.

Child labour is the practice where children engage in economic activity, on part or full-time basis. The practice deprives children of their childhood, and is harmful to their physical and mental development. The 2001 national census of India estimated the total number of child labour, aged 5-14, to be at 12.6 million. Child labour problem is not unique to India; worldwide, about 217 million children work, many full-time.

In 2001, out of a 12.6 million, about 12 million children in India were in a hazardous job. UNICEF estimates that India with its larger population has the highest number of labourers in the world less than 14 years of age, while sub-saharan African countries have the highest percentage of children who are deployed as child labour. International Labour Organization estimates that agriculture at 60 percent is the largest employer of child labour in India, while United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization estimates 70% of child labour is deployed in agriculture and related activities. Outside of agriculture, child labour is observed in almost all informal sectors of the Indian economy.

UNICEF defines child labour differently. A child, suggests UNICEF, is involved in child labour activities if between 5 to 11 years of age, he or she did at least one hour of economic activity or at least 28 hours of domestic work in a week, and in case of children between 12 to 14 years of age, he or she did at least 14 hours of economic activity or at least 42 hours of economic activity and domestic work per week. UNICEF in another report