

Role of Non-governmental Organisations to Tackle Child Labour in India: A Review

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ABSTRACT This paper is based on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working to eradicate child labour in India. Due to the high rate of poverty and rapid population growth, child labour is hired to work in fields, factories, mines, as domestic servants or maids, or street vendors. The objectives of this study are to discuss the various NGOs working on the protection of child labour rights and to identify issues faced by NGOs during the rescue and rehabilitation of children. The methodology adopted in this paper is based on primary and secondary sources. The study is based on both theoretical and empirical data. The required source material for preparing this paper will be collected from journals, newspaper papers, research papers, and websites. The survey method is adopted for the field study. The researchers conclude that NGOs work effectively to eliminate child labour in India. They organise programs to spread awareness about child labour. But they also face trouble while doing so.

INTRODUCTION

Since establishing the International Labour Organisation or ILO, several international and national organisations have worked together to deal with child labour responsibly. India joined the ILO as a permanent member in 1919 (Kumar 2021). In 1990, the Trade Union Movement began work on Convention No. 182, which mandated members to plan and implement initiatives to end the worst forms of child labour. Debates on the abolition of child labour began in 1998 at the International Labour Conference. In India, the Trade Union Organisation, the Global March Against Child Labour, and international NGOs formed a coalition to combat child labour (Narasiah 2004). NGOs worldwide collaborate with the International Programs on the Elimination of Child Labour to promote children's rights, healthcare, and education (Gupta 2015). NGOs are consistently collaborating with International Perspective on Elimination of Child Labour with the help of the government, companies, and labour unions. NGOs were directly involved in several International Perspective on Elimination of Child Labour programs, or these programs were initiated by NGOs (Limaye and Pande 2013).

According to Census 2011, 10.1 million children are working as child labour in India, of which

8.1 million are from rural areas, and 2.0 million are from urban areas. 'Child Labour Global Estimates 2020 of ILO and UNICEF' indicated 160 million children, of which 97 million boys and 63 million girls are working as labour in hazardous occupations (Kumar 2021). Under the National Child Labour Project Scheme, the number of children rescued from child labour and rehabilitated in 2017-2018 is 47,635, in 2018-2019 is 66,169, and in 2020-2021 is 58,000 (Rahman and Khanam 2012). In addition, India has around 42.7 million children who are not in school. The good news is that the number of children working in India has fallen by 2.6 million between 2001 and 2011. The reduction was more noticeable in rural areas, whereas the number of child employees climbed in urban areas, indicating an increasing need for child workers in low-wage jobs. In both rural and urban India, child labour has diverse consequences (Sankar 2020).

UNICEF has also collaborated with other United Nations organisations to reduce child labour. To tackle child labour and child rehabilitation, UNICEF collaborates with various NGOs and civil society organisations. These NGOs work on multiple topics relating to child labour on a national and worldwide level (Asian 2019). NGOs are constantly focusing on specific issues of child labour and working to improve them. NGOs working

in child welfare may be found all across India. Food, education, lack of housing, and rehabilitation of disadvantaged children living in extreme poverty or other regions are tackling concerns (Dutta 2020).

NGOs are social service organisations dedicated to making the world a better place. True to its name, they continue to make a positive difference by bringing people together who share a shared vision of a developed India and paying it forward to the community that has aided the people (Narasiah 2004). NGOs such as Save the Children and Young People also work to strengthen anti-child labour laws by presenting persuasive evidence that serves as the foundation for legislation (Srivastava 2019). Legislative triumphs like the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, which was strengthened thanks to the involvement of non-governmental organisations. India, while having the world's biggest educational system, has poor attainment due to low enrolment and high dropout rates (Sahoo 2021).

NGOs have legally founded groups that function independently of any type of government. Natural or legal individuals form them. When governments support NGOs entirely or substantially, the group preserves its non-governmental character by excluding government representatives from the membership. The phrase is normally reserved for groups that have broader societal goals with political overtones but are not explicitly political, such as political parties (Sankar 2020). An NGO's most serious problem is obtaining financial support. Because of irregularities in the government's release of money, many NGOs leave their projects in a state of worry about acquiring the finances to finish them. The majority of NGOs struggle to obtain sufficient funds for their activities, and finding acceptable donors is one of the most difficult challenges (Dutta 2020). They appeal to international donors for help due to a lack of resources. Existing contributors may, in most circumstances, alter their decision and withdraw their donations, placing them in jeopardy. The cancellation of projects due to a lack of financial and operational sustainability may discourage NGOs. Developing children require consistent funding (Ravikanth 2014).

The problem of child labour in India is so widespread that it requires assistance and contributions

from all sectors of society to be eradicated. Although the labour of children declined in industrialised nations, it continues to exist in poor ones (Kumar 2021). Despite the rising worries from international organisations, child labour in industrial regions is decreasing or may not be legally documented. The government has taken initiatives such as providing free education, encouraging parents to bring their children to school through awareness programmes, and allocating funding to child health and development (Dutta 2020). Poverty, in addition to poor school infrastructure and limited educational opportunities, plays a role in the problem. Thousands of children are forced to work as child labourers across India due to the country's poverty problem. Family members of children from socially disadvantaged communities are frequently forced to work in factories and industries (Gupta 2015).

Work done by a child under the legal minimum age for that type (as defined by national legislation and established international standards) is likely to obstruct the child's education and development. Hazardous employment is defined as work that jeopardises a child's physical, mental, or moral well-being, either by nature or by the conditions in which it is carried out (Gupta 2015). The notion of the worst forms aids in prioritisation and may be a springboard for addressing the broader issue of child labour. The notion also aids in drawing attention to both the influence of work on children and their job. The ratification of ILO Convention No. 182 in 1999 solidified the worldwide agreement on abolishing child labour. It offered much-needed emphasis without sacrificing the ultimate aim of effectively eradicating child labour, as stated in Convention No. 138 (Kumar 2021).

NGOs Working on Child Labour

Global March Against Child Labour

Kailash Satyarthi (Nobel Peace Prize winner) started this NGO. It has been in action since 1980, intending to end child labour. Mr. Satyarthi and his Bachpan Bachao Andolan collective have liberated over 85,000 children protected from exploitation and established a successful program for their education and rehabilitation. He demanded the adoption of ILO Convention 182 on the worst kinds of child labour. The convention aims to ensure that children can live

independently and with respect and have the fundamental right to freedom, protection, and education. Child labour breaches fundamental human rights that have severe consequences for poverty, low literacy rates, and dignity (Ravikanth 2014).

Bachpan Bachao Andolan

It is an Indian-based campaign for children's rights that promotes childhood safety. Kailash Satyarthi established it in 1980, for abolishing child labour, bonded labour, and human trafficking and raising awareness about education. He attains his vision of a world free of violence against children, in which all children live in freedom, safety, health, and education. He was instrumental in rallying support for the 1986 Child Labour Act, which has been later revised in 2016. *BBA has rescued over 90,000 children from prostitution, trafficking, and hazardous labour in the past four decades.* In 1998, he headed the Global March Against Child Labour, which travelled throughout 103 nations to support abolishing the worst forms of child labour on the world stage. From 2014-2019, they rescued total children 6,739 under 18 years of age (Narasaiah 2004).

Child Rights and You

CRY ensures that all children are well brought up. Ripen Kapoor founded the organisation. It was established in 1979 and worked to protect the rights of children. It is now working with 102 NGOs in 19 Indian states, protecting the lives of 3 million children. It is an organisation that stimulates Indian citizens to investigate their employment opportunities and assists in solving them by providing funding and technical advice to local NGOs to create a lasting impact on the ground to end child labour. CRY focuses on four main sectors, that is, education is required for the 'Right to Development,' while health and nutrition are necessary for the 'Right to Survival,' safety and security are necessary for the 'Right to Protection,' and child participation is required for the 'Right to Participation.' In 2019-2020, CRY rescued 2,064 children from Child Labour, child marriage, and child trafficking (Gupta 2015).

Save the Children India

This NGO was founded in 2008 in Gurugram (Delhi) as 'Bal Raksha Bharat,' to improve the lives

of India's marginalised children. Deepak Kapoor and Bidisha Pillai are the company's Chairman and CEO, respectively. It helps children by providing food, hygiene, abuse prevention, education, and rescuing them from child labour in dangerous situations. In India, between the ages of 5 and 14 years, there are roughly 10.13 million children who work as labour in both paid and unpaid work, and its consequences reflect on their physical, psychological, emotional, and academic growth. Thousands of women and girls are kidnapped and trafficked each year in India for labour. Including girls in modern slavery, forced labour, sexual slavery, and domestic slavery are just a few instances of abusive and illegal activities (Dutta 2020).

Issues and Challenges Faced by NGOs

Various new NGOs have sprung up to combat child labour throughout time, but some are doing real work in the appropriate position. These are carrying out children's protection projects, and their work will have a higher degree of credibility as a result. These strive to fight child labour in India and defend children's rights despite various hurdles (Ravikanth 2014). The government has provided cash to NGOs, but they are irregular and insufficient to accomplish their projects and activity. The most challenging task for NGOs is to achieve their objectives due to illiteracy and lack of knowledge of rights between parents. A huge proportion of youngsters grow to be unskilled labour due to a lack of skills and education. Millions of youngsters are forced to labour, frequently in unsafe and exploitative situations, because they lack a good education. The most prominent variables in child labour are familial poverty and a lack of education (Singh 2019).

NGOs working on child labour are suffering various issues due to the non-assistance of government and parents and the weak implementation of child labour laws. NGOs are working tirelessly to safeguard women and children forced into child labour, children subjected to communal abuse, children who are victims of child trafficking, and women and children who are victims of disasters or emergencies (Dutta 2020). It protects women and children against various threats, including abuse, neglect, exploitation, aggression, and physical assault. The NGOs are driven by the notion of ensuring pleasant and safe childhoods for all mothers and

children, even in the most distant parts of India (Prasad 2020).

Objectives

The objectives of this research were:

1. To discuss the various NGOs working on the protection of child labour rights.
2. To identify issues faced by NGOs with the rescue and rehabilitation of children.

METHODOLOGY

The current study included 100 non-governmental organisation (NGO) personnel as participants. Between November 2020 and April 2021, the samples were purposefully chosen using a random sampling technique. The data is collected using a self-designed questionnaire during the field survey and attempted to contact NGOs that focus on child protection and welfare, and to collect essential information about NGOs' work, challenges they face while working, and the reasons for child labour in India. SPSS used to tabulate and analyse the data, which included frequency and percentage.

RESULTS

The collected data are discussed below.

Table 1: NGOs working in the areas of child labour

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Fre- quency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid percent</i>	<i>Cumulative percent</i>
Health care and nutrition	26	26.0	26.0	26.0
Education	15	15.0	15.0	41.0
Rescue and rehabilitation	7	7.0	7.0	48.0
All of the above-mentioned	52	52.0	52.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Data is collected through a survey

Table 1 shows what NGOs are doing for child labour wherein 26.0 percent of the respondents agreed on health care and nutrition, 15.0 percent of the respondents agreed on education, 6.0 percent of the respondents on rescue and rehabilitation, and 52.0 percent of the respondents agreed with all. The rate of acceptance is given on all the options. The survey outcomes indicated that

Table 2: Issues faced by non-governmental organisations

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Fre- quency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid percent</i>	<i>Cumulative percent</i>
Parents are not cooperating	21	21.0	21.0	21.0
Ignorance of government	15	15.0	15.0	36.0
Lack of funding	19	19.0	19.0	55.0
All the above-mentioned	45	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Survey: Data is collected through a survey

the educational level of NGOs employees varies, as do the most chosen criteria for child labour prevention initiatives. The study discovered that NGO employees' qualifications in the prevention of child labour affect education, health, self-image, and self-esteem techniques because education and health are significant parts of their lives, most NGO employees supported education and health initiatives to prevent child labour. The practice of child labour has been identified as a socioeconomic issue in India and other nations. The Indian government has been amending laws and ordinances linked to the removal of child labour for many years, but it is impossible to eliminate the problem.

It shows the issues faced by NGOs working on child labour. 21.00 percent of respondents agree that parents are not cooperating and 15.00 percent of respondents agreed on ignorance of the government, 19.00 percent of respondents agreed on lack of funding and 45.00 percent of respondents agreed on all mentioned options. NGOs are always a part of ignorance despite their endless efforts. They always face threats from parents and employers while rescuing any child from employment. Parents do not cooperate with them to file complaints against employers. Government ignorance and lack of sufficient funds is the biggest issue in the working of these organisations.

Table 3 is based on the question about parent respondents' awareness of child labour and its harmful impacts on children's health. Only 12.5 percent of respondents know about child labour, and 18.5 percent of respondents know about its harmful effects. The majority of parents are not aware of child labour laws. They indulge their children in labour for family financial support. They are not ready to send their child to school despite

Table 3: Parent awareness about child protection laws, education, and harmful consequences of child labour

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Yes	60	60.0	60.0	60.0
No	40	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Data is collected through a survey

free education for children until 14 years. The major issue is parental illiteracy. The illiteracy of parents prevents them from appreciating the significance of a perfect childhood. They do not like to leave their houses and participate in the activities run by NGOs. It is a common misperception that NGOs must fight against the government to succeed. The reality is that NGOs must have a relationship with the government for their work to be successful. It is challenging for NGOs to develop the proper communication to engage with potential funders because of their problems.

Table 3 covers the reasons why children indulge in labour. 35.00 percent of children work to support their family due to the large size of family and adults unemployment. 15.00 percent of respondents work because they do not know the government's welfare schemes. 20.00 percent of respondents have no interest in studying due to long working hours. 14.00 percent of respondents work due to their parents' disease and disability. Some adolescents who flee their homes searching for better careers in towns are subjected to aggressive or unsafe working circumstances. 50.0 percent of

Table 4: Reasons for children indulged in child labour

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Financial assistance to family	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
Lack of knowledge on child welfare schemes	15	15.0	15.0	50.0
No Interest in Study	20	20.0	20.0	70.0
The disease of family or one parent deceased	14	14.0	14.0	84.0
Drugs addiction parents	16	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Data is collected through a survey

children labour work as rag-pickers, hawkers, and shoeshine boys, whereas others work in stores. These children are unwell due to their occupational hazards and the filthy living conditions, and they are forced to suffer from summer, winter, and rainfall. Parental knowledge of the dangers of child labour can help avoid disruptions in school and the forced work of children. Due to parents' misunderstanding, child traffickers exploit children, and several trafficked children wind up working as minors.

Table 5 shows the consequences of child labour on children. 15.00 percent of the respondents agreed on children becoming victims of harmful diseases, 20.0 percent of the respondents agreed on the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children, 12.0 percent of the respondents agreed on school dropout rates increasing due to workload, 53.0 percent of the respondents agreed on all the above-mentioned consequences. Children have equal rights, yet individuals disregard those rights, resulting in crime against them. It is a critical issue that India has been dealing with for a long time. Their thoughts are overwhelmed with fear and anxiety as a result of the escalating violence, which has an impact on their growth and development. Even if the country's economy is improving, certain people are still treated with disrespect and dignity in some parts of the country. This is the case; every parent wants their child to study and advance in life, but in a disadvantaged culture, few children under the age of fifteen are employed in a chemical manufacturing plant or as construction labour. They are not provided with the necessary education, nor with a better environment in which to study, play, and build a fascinating childhood.

DISCUSSION

NGOs are seriously concerned about child labour in India. It is important to remember that one-third of the children in underdeveloped nations do not finish their primary schooling. Annually, 2 million children in India die from serious illnesses, as per UNICEF. Children work in both paid and unpaid occupations that are not hazardous to them, and yet, these activities will impede their long-term physical, mental, social, and intellectual development. Target 8.7 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals aims for the abolition of all kinds of child labour by 2025. Relevant and timely data is essential

Table 5: Consequences of child labour

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Fre- quency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid percent</i>	<i>Cumu- lative percent</i>
Children becoming victims of harmful diseases	15	15.0	15.0	15.0
Sexual exploitation and trafficking of children	20	20.0	20.0	35.0
School dropout rates increasing due to workload	12	12.0	12.0	47.0
All the above-mentioned	53	53.0	53.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Data is collected through Survey

for successfully monitoring the effectiveness of any endeavour. Addressing data gaps on crucial issues affecting children, including data collected by a variety of stakeholders, including children, is critical. The most prominent variables in child labour are family poverty and a lack of education. Around one-third of children in developing, nations do not complete their education.

According to 2008 figures, 60.0 percent of the world's 215 million boys and girls work as child labour. There are 17.5 million children who work as labour in India's various factories, the majority of them are working in agriculture, leather, mining, and matchmaking. Agriculture, according to the International Labour Organisation, is the world's largest employer of child labour, accounting for 60.0 percent of all child labour, while the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation believes that agriculture and related industries account for 70.0 percent of all child labour. Child labour is found in practically every informal sector of the Indian economy outside of agriculture. Agriculture labour received the most attention, preceded by fisheries, aquaculture, livestock, and forestry.

For childhood development, NGOs are working to offer access to healthcare and nourishment. Malnutrition occurs as a result of children's struggles for food. It harms a child's cognitive development, resulting in long-term and permanent impairment. These effects manifest in tissue growth, which severely impairs brain growth. Annually, millions of Indian children and adolescents struggle with diarrhoea and pneumonia. Mr Satyarthi leads the Worldwide Campaign for Education, a civil society organisation dedicated

to ending the international education issue and ensuring that every child has access to free and high-quality public schooling. He was influential in gathering a nationwide motivation to maintain education, a constitutional provision that helped pave the way for all children to 'free and compulsory education in India in 2009. India has inadequate literacy due to decreased registration despite having the world's most extensive public education system.

Save the Children, for example, has a variety of programs to help children enrolled in school. The organisation keeps track of out-of-school students, especially those on the edge of falling out, to ensure reintegration into the educational system. Most children do not attend a school or leave early. Local NGOs run the majority of schools. Awareness also ensures that communities take advantage of development, education, employment, and business opportunities, resulting in a more socially and economically advanced society with fewer children suffering. NGOs educate societies about the significance of children's rights through community activities, games, the arts, and drama. They also provide money, academic opportunities, and information systems to assist children and their societies in moving forward. Governments, NGOs, and international community members must work together to help their children escape dangerous situations. When fighting to end child labour, NGOs face challenges because they do not have complete support from everyone in their workplace.

Under the scheme, these children receive formal and informal education and vocational training and a monthly stipend of INR 100. A medical examination is also performed on them. Bachpan Bachao Andolan suggests that children are rescued and rehabilitated and that they are carefully relocated to a secure environment under the auspices of the Child Welfare Committees or "Child Care Institutions". Children who had been in child care received medical help, food, clothing, recreational facilities, and counseling. The NGO assists people in recovering salaries, obtaining release certificates, and filing compensation claims. Children who have been subjected to torture and abuse are more likely to participate in petty theft or trafficking for financial gain.

CONCLUSION

The current study reveals that children in India are not getting full attention, and as a result, they are used by an exploitation-prone society. This has been

going on since the beginning of time, while its nature and scope have changed throughout time. Poverty and illiteracy are the key causative elements behind the problem, according to this research, and this evil is prominent among the lower socio-economic category. While the Indian government does not explicitly emphasise the value of a carefree childhood. It is frequently emphasised by NGOs. Children have the right to a carefree childhood, according to Indian NGOs. Not all of the labour that the children do indeed has to be detrimental. Although there is universal agreement that some features of child labour can be beneficial to children under the correct circumstances, this notion has little support in the Indian context. The NGOs agree with the sociologists that it is more important to address the issues that force children to work rather than the difficulties of working children. They recognise that attempting to solve the concerns of child labour would be ineffective rather than tackling the circumstances that force children to work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the abolition of child labour, the government's and the media's roles are critical. Various endeavours should be made regularly by these authorities to educate the public about the situation of these poor children as well as to motivate them to extend their cooperation for the successful implementation of government plans to eradicate this evil. For efficient implementation of the law, NGOs may work closely with the implementing authorities. There is a need for stronger coordination between NGOs and state governments. NGOs fill in holes in government programs and reach out to those typically overlooked by government initiatives. Grants are to be released without any delay, and the process of giving grants should be easy. NGOs should be held accountable if they misuse grants. There should be a need for intensive awareness camps on child labour laws and the negative consequences of child labour in sites where child labour problems persist.

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