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THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT ON THE **ISSUE OF CHILD LABOUR**

The National Policy on Child Labour declared in August 1987, contains the action plan for tackling the problem of Child Labour.

It envisages:

A legislative action plan:

- The Government has enacted the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986, to prohibit the engagement of children in certain employments and to regulate the conditions of work of children in certain other employments.
- Focusing on and convergence of general development programme's for benefiting children wherever possible, A Core Group on the convergence of various welfare schemes of the Government has been constituted in the Ministry of Labour & Employment to ensure that the families of the Child Labour are given priority for their upliftment.
- Project-based action plan of action for the launching of projects for the welfare of working children in areas of high concentration of Child Labour.

A. Legislative Policy adopted by Government for eradication of Child Labour following steps has been taken.

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Prevention:

- Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 years in 18 occupations and 65 processes.
- The onus of enforcement of the provisions of the Act lies with the State Governments as envisaged in Section 2 of the Act.
- The Union of India monitors the enforcement from time to time. Special drives on enforcement and awareness generation are also launched from time to time.

Rescue & Repatriation:

During inspections and raids conducted under CLPRA, Child Labour is identified and rescued, and rehabilitative measures are set forth in motion by way of repatriation, in case of migrant Child Labour, and providing bridge education with the ultimate objective of mainstreaming them into the formal system of education. Besides, pre-vocational training is also provided to the rescued children.

A. The convergence strategy of the Ministry of Labour for the eradication of Child Labour

A Core Group on the convergence of various welfare schemes of the Government has been constituted in the Ministry of Labour & Employment to ensure that the families of the Child Labour are given priority for their upliftment. Considering poverty and illiteracy are the root cause of Child Labour Government follows that educational rehabilitation of the children has to be supplemented with economic rehabilitation of their families so that they are not compelled by the economic

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circumstance to send their children to work. Ministry is taking various pro-active measures towards between schemes of different Ministries like,

- Ministry of Women and Child Development for supplementing the efforts of this Ministry in providing food and shelter to the children withdrawn from work through their schemes of Shelter Homes, etc.
- Ministry of Human Resource Development for providing Mid-day meals to the NCLP school children, teachers training, supply of books, etc., under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and mainstreaming of NCLP children into the formal education system.
- Convergence with Ministries of Rural Development, Urban Housing and Poverty Alleviation, Panchyati Raj for covering these children under their various income and employment generation scheme for their economic rehabilitation.
- In each State, one officer from the State Department of Labour has been nominated as Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) to act as a link officer for coordinating with the Ministry of HRD in that State for the prevention of trafficking of children. CBI is the nodal anti-trafficking agency.
- Convergence with the Ministry of Railways for generating awareness and restricting trafficking of children.

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- Further, the Ministry is implementing a pilot project, Converging Against Child Labour – support for India’s Model in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, SRO Delhi, funded by the US Department of Labour with the objective to contribute to the prevention and elimination of hazardous child Labour, including trafficking and migration of children for Labour. The project covers two districts, each in Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa, for a duration of 42 months. USDOL Donor Contribution of US\$ 6,850,000
- The Railway staff is also sensitized to dealing with suspected migrant and trafficked children.
- The Government is taking various proactive measures towards convergence of schemes of different Ministries like Ministries of Human Resource Development, Women & Child Development, Urban Housing & Rural Poverty Alleviation, Rural Development, Railway, Panchayati Raj institutions etc., so that Child Labour and their families get covered under the benefits of the schemes of these Ministries.

B. Project-based action plan of action for the welfare of working

With regard to educational rehabilitation, the Government is implementing National Child Labour Project Scheme (NCLP) in 266 Child Labour endemic districts in 20 States. Presently about 7311 special schools are in operation with the enrolment of 3.2 lakh children. Under the Scheme, about 8.95 lakh children have been mainstreamed into the formal system since its inception.

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The NCLP Scheme was started in 1988 to rehabilitate Child Labour in pursuance of the National Child Labour Policy. The Scheme seeks to adopt a sequential approach with a focus on the rehabilitation of children working in hazardous occupations & processes in the first instance. Under the Scheme, after a survey of Child Labour engaged in hazardous occupations & processes has been conducted, children are to be withdrawn from these occupations & processes and then put into special schools in order to enable them to be mainstreamed into the formal schooling system.

Objective of the Scheme:

- This is the major Central Sector Scheme for the rehabilitation of Child Labour.
- The Scheme seeks to adopt a sequential approach with a focus on the rehabilitation of children working in hazardous occupations & processes in the first instance.
- Under the Scheme, a survey of Child Labour engaged in hazardous occupations & processes has been conducted.
- The identified children are to be withdrawn from these occupations & processes and then put into special schools in order to enable them to be mainstreamed into the formal schooling system.
- Project Societies at the district level are fully funded for the opening up of special schools/Rehabilitation Centres for the rehabilitation of Child Labour.
- The special schools/Rehabilitation Centres provide:
 - a. Non-formal/bridge education
 - b. Skilled/vocational training
 - c. Mid Day Meal

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d. Stipend @ Rs.150/- per child per month.

e. Health care facilities through a doctor appointed for a group of 20 schools.

The Target group:

The project societies are required to conduct a survey to identify children working in hazardous occupations and processes. These children will then form the target group for the project society. Of the children identified, those in the age group 5-8 years will have to be mainstreamed directly to the formal educational system through the SSA. Working children in the age group of 9-14 years will have to be rehabilitated through NCLP schools established by the Project Society.

Project Implementation:

The entire project is required to be implemented through a registered society under the Chairmanship of the administrative head of the district, namely, District Magistrate/Collector/Dy. Commissioner of the District. Members of the society may be drawn from concerned Government Departments, representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions, NGOs, Trade Unions, etc.

Funding pattern:

The projects have been taken up in the Central Sector, and the entire funding is done by the Central Government (Ministry of Labour & Employment). Funds are released to the concerned Project Societies depending upon the progress of project activities