



Mains Practice Question

Q. Child labour deprives children of their right to go to school and reinforces intergenerational cycles of poverty. Comment.

23 Jun, 2021 GS Paper 3 Economy

Approach

- Start the answer by briefly discussing the magnitude of child labour in India.
- Discuss the impact of child labour on poverty & education.
- Conclude Suitably.

Introduction

Child labour refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives them of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, and that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful.

According to the Census of India 2011 nearly 10.1 million working children in the age group of 5-14 years. This number is bound to rise given the economic crisis triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Body

Impact of Child Labour on Poverty & Education

- **Cause & Effect Relationship:** Child labour and exploitation are the result of many factors, including poverty, social norms condoning them, lack of decent work opportunities for adults and adolescents, migration and emergencies.
 - These factors are not only the cause but also a consequence of social inequities reinforced by discrimination.
- **Disguised Child Labour:** Despite rates of child labour declining over the last few years, children are still being used in disguised form of child labour like domestic help.
 - This affects their future possibilities to overcome the vicious circle of poverty, incomplete education and poor quality jobs.
- **Linkage With Child Trafficking:** Child trafficking is also linked to child labour and it always results in child abuse.
 - Trafficked children are subjected to prostitution, forced into marriage or illegally adopted; they provide cheap or unpaid labour, are forced to work as house servants or beggars and may be recruited into armed groups.

Way Forward

- **Role of Panchayat:** As nearly 80% of child labour in India emanates from rural areas, the Panchayat can play a dominant role in mitigating child labour.

- **Integrated Approach:** Child labour can be minimized through integrated approaches that strengthen child protection systems as well as simultaneously addressing poverty and inequity.
 - This can be done by improving access to and quality of education and mobilizing public support for respecting children's rights.
- **Treating Children as Active Stakeholder:** Children are key actors in child protection and can give valuable insights into how they perceive their involvement and what they expect from the government and other stakeholders.

Conclusion

The continuing persistence of child labour and exploitation poses a threat to national economies and has severe negative short and long-term consequences for children such as denial of education and undermining physical and mental health.

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