

## **Voluntary Organisation Accountability of Child Labourer in Nanded District: An Appraisal**

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**Abstract:** *Since last three decades, the Voluntary Organisations are increasingly emerging as key players in the development process. They have acquired status as 'third sector' for innovative approach, flexibility and above all poverty reach. In light of such scenario, this paper attempts to comprehend the extent of success of their effort on abolition of child labour by following own ideology, autonomy, flexibility and accountability in Nanded district located in backward Marathwada region of Maharashtra State.*

**Keywords-** *accountability, autonomy, flexibility, third sector, uneven development*

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### **I. Introduction**

Voluntarism or voluntary service is an age old phenomenon in Indian Social landscape. Like any other social phenomenon, its emergence, growth, nature of dynamics varies depending upon given social formation. During pre-colonial era it atoned to religious spirit of charity and altruism for helpless people suffered in natural calamities. After words, voluntary action witnessed major shift towards social reform movement, helping and providing services to the needs and deprived sections of the society. In order to condense these threats raised by the voluntary spirit of cross section of people, the colonial legacy as part of administrative strategy, gave it fillip under legal strait jacket like society Registration Act (1860). Since then, the voluntary action got institutionalised and became tangible as a socio-legal entity committed to activities and programmes oriented towards change in the social, economic and political arena. Historical antecedents divulge that colonial ruler used the Act deemed fit to support and perpetuate colonial administration. However, till independence, both formal and informal voluntary activities were nationalistic in spirit, social reform on prejudice and belief system and welfare in approach primarily based on religiosity, generosity and humanity. In fact, these were inspired more by idealism rather than ideology (Dhanagare, 1988). After independence Voluntary Organisation (VO) or Non-Government Organisation (NGO) are playing pivotal role under five-year plans to accomplish the gigantic task of nation building. Specially after seventh five-year plan with the initiation of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation process, VOs are increasingly emerging as key players in the development process as non-state actors in areas of health, education, labour, food security, agriculture, training, research, etc. as 'third sector' with vast potential for change and development due to innovative approach, flexible structure, poverty reach, capacity to set closer to the people, ability to mobilise local initiatives, catalytic, autonomous, participatory, accountable and capable of plugging breach in the state machinery. In short, in last three decade the state and VOs interface has deepened evidently (PRIA, 2003).

As part of involvement of various development programmes, VOs are engaged in child labour programmes since the declaration of 1979 as International Year of Child by the United Nations which has exposed the magnitude of the problems in its varied dimension. India has the dubious distinction of child labour in many informal sectors like agriculture, bidi industry, match factory, textile industry, carpet industry, etc. alone contains 16 percent of child labour force in the world. With this perspective, a study was conducted on VOs accountability to child labour program relating to rehabilitation, education, employment, and survey and awareness generation in the Nanded district located in backward Marathwada region of Maharashtra State. Though the region is enriched in culture, art, sculpture and centre of many political and social reform movements against alien rulers, but abject poverty, high inequality, landlessness, casteism, gender discrimination, dalit atrocities, feudalism, disparity, natural disasters, uneven development, undeveloped agriculture, low per capita income, bonded labour, poor infrastructure in connectivity, low industrial development, rampant migration in search of livelihood, displacement, land alienation owing to incursion of Special Economic Zone backed by State, high handedness of social hierarchy, lack of accessibility of available resources, etc. remains over the years, and current massive farmer suicide add to the woe of Marathwada region in general and Nanded district in particular (Planning Commission, 2003) In last three decades, above one

thousand VOs have registered and some of them keeping in view the Indian social tradition recognition to children as important assets for family, society, nation and latest UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989, are accountable to child labour problems.

## **II. Child Care Centre**

Child Care Centre is running by VOs with shelter of male child workers from background of broken family, landless, migrant family and urban slum dwellers. Child labour force are perpetuating from the background of these family due to rising indebtedness of parents, land alienation, modernisation of agriculture, break down of traditional joint family and consequent changes in the social structure which has resulting in eroding family support to children. Through this Centre, concerted efforts are being made to overcome their helplessness of life with security and development by reproducing home environment in accommodation with provision of formal education in local schools. Often child labourers feel disarray and emotional constraints and uncommunicative, solitary because of irregular contacts with their parents, prevailing impersonal atmosphere in form of lack of affection and personal attention, lack of privacy, sharing of space and as well for apathy of school teacher towards child worker students. Though, very few of them are employed and receiving higher education but at last they are often left on the wisdom of vulnerable parents which yields no significant future development. Besides, their standard maintenance, up gradation of education, avoidance of insecurity basically depends upon quantum of fund and timely support of Social Welfare Board, Pune, Women and Child Development Department of State and Central Government and other Aid agencies which in fact always in constraints for sustaining their comfort and ensuring child rights. Divert of funds from other developmental programs found not feasible always to maintain the minimum standard of protecting their childhood and ensuring child rights. Under such situation, the VOs own ideology and accountability plays a subsidiary role in building future of child labourers, such reality requires appropriate self-dependence planning to bring an end of their problems.

## **Non- Formal Education**

Accepting education as means to develop innate potential and strength for better and purposeful life, and following constitutional mandatory Education for All, the VOs have initiated Non-Formal Education programs for dropouts and nonstarter child workers who are engaged in unorganised sector like brick manufacturing, private households, agricultural sector, shops, restaurants, etc. This system introduced as a part time or flexi-time educational activity for the child labour learner. It does not emphasise organised context, staff and structure. The willingness and convenience of child worker learners is given paramount importance. The teaching method adopted at maximum learning in minimum time. The teacher primarily acted as facilitator rather than dictator. A multi-media approach resorted to for hastening the learning process like print materials, visual aids, games and entertainments. Despite flexibility in learning process, hardly five percent of them enrolled in formal school and rest rarely able to retain skill of reading, writing and numeracy, and many of them lapses into illiteracy as before. Because, the teaching and learning materials provided by SCERT, Government of Maharashtra and other nodal agencies rarely touched upon child workers local culture, needs and environment in which they are socialised.

Though parents oriented to facilitate lofty goals of education program, but illiteracy, abject poverty and stagnation of rural economy lead to mark deficient for larger interest of child labourers. Besides, apathy of VOs staff due to fresh inexperienced instructors, irregular payment, consolidated meagre salary, assign other activities rather than teaching inhibit to optimize the use of teacher in teaching-learning process. In fact, almost all of them perceived this assignment as part time social service which belies the very spirit of child labour education program. This apart, the lack of VOs monitoring and follow up system and parents casual perception on children education apathetically contributes to the least sustenance of interest of learners.

## **Girl Child**

This programme is basically to disorient girl child workers engaged as maid servant in private households, employment in farming and non-farming sector to ensure their very right to survival with dignity. These girls are usually subject to exploitation in many forms like low wages, sexual abuse, early marriage, and deprivation of minimum nutritional food intake, mental and emotional harassment etc. VOs addressed these through generating awareness program by providing literatures, delivering lecture, establishing personal contact, displaying audio and video cassettes, etc. about their inherent skills and energy, injecting self-reliance

and self-confidence, educating for own rights and responsibilities, inculcating set of ideas on reproductive health and hygiene, etc( Kaber,1994). Beside, acquainting income generating programs intended for them for overcoming the crisis and enhancing the quality of life. Though some successful instances are apparent in demolishing many of their misconceived notions but retention of awareness and follow-up in real life situation is dismal due to abject poverty. It is still a long way to go to bring change of girl child labourer in social scenario.

### **Awareness Generation**

VOs are usually engaged in surveying child labour in various unorganised sectors as per instruction of district administration. Along with generate awareness through distribution of leaflets among parents of child workers on provision of various Acts related to Indian factories Act, 1881, Mines Act, 1901, ILO (1919) role of All India Trade Union (1920), Children Pledging Labour Act, 1933, Plantation Labour Act, 1951 Shops and Establishment Acts, various Constitutional Provisions etc. for protection in various occupations to ensure child rights(Sahoo,1990).Paradoxically, in Nanded district these protective legislations are barely provide any relief to child workers. Rather, as cheap source of labour they are paid low wages, work long hours and exploitation in various forms continues unabated. Even, not a single case of enactment of these laws is observed. One wonders why the government has not so far been able to implement it duly despite having various law enforcement agencies are operating for rights of children.

### **III. Conclusion**

On the whole, the VOs are mostly eluded own independent vision, values and autonomy in planning and implementation of child labour prohibition program, and working under regulatory provision of state, adhere financiers agenda, policy prescription and governance. Similarly, VOs, are hardly take note of ideas, experience, views, knowledge of parents of child labourer and as well hardly consider inherent raising inequality, regional disparity, cause of abject poverty, rampant casteism, growing exploitation, gender inequality of this district while implementing various schemes prohibition of child labourers. In other words, VOs action is sectoral in approach and do not encompass the entire fabric of human development system within which they live and survive. Probably, VOs own ideology, self-accountability, autonomy, openness and decisiveness on free from state and external aid agencies could help to prohibit child labour. Simply, subjective benevolent intention loosing own ideology can hardly resolve the child labourer issues.

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