

Abstract

Child Labour is one of the most debated issues of the contemporary world in the Human Rights perspective. Pakistan is among top countries as far as the problem of Child Labour is concerned. Although on the insistence of the International Community, governments of Pakistan have been taking some measures yet most indicators show that it has not decreased in the country.

No doubt the concentration of Child Labour is in the rural areas and in formal sectors but it has been noted that its population and growth rate has been accelerating in the informal sectors of urban areas. In this regard a survey of Auto Repair Workshops of Lahore has been conducted to assess the difficulties of these children. The survey revealed that about 85% and 48% of total labour force of these workshops was under the age of 18 years and 14 years respectively. It is also observed that in many cases the Child Labour of this sector has been bearing more abusive and exploitative conditions than the Child Labour of rural areas. They are not only underpaid and overworked but also harassed mentally and physically. The conditions of these workshops are generally filthy and unhygienic. Many tasks and processes in the workshops are hazardous and harmful for the children's health and growth. The violations of their Human Rights occur a number of times a day but there is hardly an effort on the part of the government to address this problem.

The role of government to check Child Labour is mostly confined to export oriented industries to oblige its buyers and donors of the developed countries. But it is astonishing that the area where Child Labour exists with all its severity and perils has been overlooked. The findings of the survey reveal that none of the government departments has inspected these workshops to check Child Labour. The laws are not applied therefore conditions have been aggravating in this sector with the passage of time.

The Government has not taken concrete measures to address its root causes like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, overpopulation and weak social protection system. The major components of government i.e., legislature, executive and judiciary have not been delivering as far as Child Labour problem is concerned. They are inefficient and do not have required commitment and coordination.

It is a fact that children can bring forth a bright future for a nation and if they would not be given proper environment and education, then they are unlikely to become productive citizens. It is, therefore, need of the hour that the government should take all appropriate social and economic measures to uproot the problem of Child Labour. For that matter it has to initiate micro and macro economic policies on short as well as long term basis. It should associate local community and ensure efficiency and coordination of its concerned departments to get long lasting and required results. This problem cannot be overcome unless the government does have political commitment and motivation.