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June 2004

Online at <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/48416/>  
MPRA Paper No. 48416, posted 19 Jul 2013 06:31 UTC

# **CHILD LABOUR AND SCHOOLING IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE : THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES EXPERIENCE**

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## **I. Introduction**

The problem of child labour is well known in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, as they are the hosts of high prevalence rate. There has been a great deal of debate on the policy matters to deal with the problem of the child labour. Also, there is a pressure from external forces to eliminate the child labour in their economies. For instance, ILO Labour Standards, GATT's Social Clause, and the Harkinson's Bill of USA.

In fact, the problem of child labour is not a unique feature of developing countries, the very same problem of child labour was experienced in the present developed countries in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, severely. And, they took quite a long period to overcome this problem. The experience of Britain, as a classic case, had shown that there was a high incidence of children working in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain as compared to any of the contemporary developing countries (Basu, 1999; Cunningham, 1996). Rest of the industrialised countries were also had similar experience. Though some scholars argued that child labour continues to exist even now (Lavalette M, 2000) and its absence is a myth (Fyfe, 1982) in the developed countries, as a matter of fact, it was virtually eliminated by mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Though there are some similarities in the catalyst factors and their agents, which carried out the process of elimination, they vary with different countries at different point of times.

In the light of the present debate on the problem of child labour in developing countries, it is the need of the hour to look into the experiences of those developed/industrialised nations. The high incidence of child labour in the industrialised nations during the last two centuries, especially in 19<sup>th</sup> century, also generated a debate (see Weiner, 1994). It is hoped that a greater understanding of the history of childhood and child labour in the developed countries help us to understand, analyse and appreciate this problem in the Third World Countries such a India, better. Hence, we

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undertake this review of the phenomenon of child labour in the developed countries such as Great Britain, Germany, Japan and USA.

Having said the paper is organised in the following scheme. The next section (i.e. second) traces out the evolution of the concept of childhood and child labour. The debated issues with respect to child labour and the process of elimination in the context of contemporary developed countries in their past i.e. during the industrial revolution and thereof is discussed in the third section. It is followed by case studies of selected countries are briefly presented in the fourth section. The policy implications of developed countries experience to deal with the problem of child labour in contemporary developing countries are presented in fifth section. And the last section concludes.

## **II. The Evolution of Childhood, Child Labour and Child Schooling**

### ***The Concept of Childhood***

According to Phillippe Aries, there was no place for childhood in the medieval period (Fyfe, 1989). In his classic work, *Centuries of Childhood*, which documented a history of changing adult attitudes towards children, Aries forwarded a thesis that the childhood is a Western invention of 13<sup>th</sup> century (see Fyfe, 1989; Weiner, 1994). But the concept became more significant in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as literary themes established, childhood was seen as distinct from the adulthood and special treatment was given to children. The process continued into 19<sup>th</sup> century where due to cultural force, according to Viviana Zelizer, children became priceless (Weiner, 1990; Cunningham, 2000). Once economically valuable children were transformed into emotionally priceless objects. In the process childhood was institutionalised where children are treated as innocents and are expected to be protected (see Fyfe, 1989). Meanwhile, a great deal of debate on childhood took place and it marked a historic shift in thinking about the proper role of children and childhood. However the notion of childhood was not immediately universalised to every child across the socio-economic class. At the beginning, in case of Britain, the ideology/notion of childhood was limited to aristocratic class and later extended to middle classes. But it took enough time to extend the idea to working class (Davis, 1989). Through cultural transformation, the western notion of childhood is universalised to extend to the developing countries as well (Fyfe, 1989). The international organisation like I L O, UNICEF and World Bank are making efforts in this direction.

### *Evolution of the Child Labour*

The phenomenon of child work is not a new one (Medelievich, 1979) and the notion that children should be kept in school and out of labour force is a modern idea (Weiner, 1994). Child work was universal in all societies years ago and it had social and economic functions which implies socialisation and contribution to the family-economy respectively (Fyfe, 1989). The economic factors that determine the extent and nature of the child work are identified in modes of production and structure of the labour market (Rodgers and Standing, 1982; Fyfe, 1989). In pre-industrialised societies child work was considered as a socialisation, learning by doing and participatory. Of course, the extent and nature of work was influenced by socio-economic status of the parents (Weiner, 1994). For instance, privileged class children could escape from manual work and emulate their parents. The economic roles of children vary with the nature of the modes of production. Therefore, in the transition the changing roles of children can be observed.

In agrarian societies, as part of social division of labour related to age, sex and personal capacities, children contribute to the family survival (Rodgers and Standing, 1982). In a peasant economy, family labour was necessary to fulfil their family subsistence where children has to work (Fyfe, 1989). In these societies exploitation was possible within the family through age hierarchy and gender (Fyfe, 1989; Elson, 1982). But, in these societies, children worked in the family domain under the supervision of the parents or kin. Under the feudalistic relations, work intensity and exploitation has enhanced. In these societies, children's contribution was significant. The function of socialisation, work sharing, assimilation of children to adult tasks and obligations played major role, whereas education was of little importance for the working people (Rodgers and Standing, 1982; Fyfe, 1989). In this society, exploitation through bondage, extra-economic coercion and serfdom was immense.

The growth of capitalist relations was associated with the interrelated phenomenon of an increase in industrial production, a shift of cash-crop farming and a commercialisation of agriculture, growth of landless population, migration and urbanisation, the progressive monetisation of domestic activities and a growth of unemployment (Rodgers and Standing, 1982). Where the growth of wage labour was enhanced, the division of labour was associated with labour market segregation. Among these, child labour was cheap and exploitation of children accelerated capital accumulation. The experience of industrialised countries in the transition shows that child labour was utilised more intensely especially in Great Britain. In later stages, advanced technology and improved management policies had changed labour relations thus eliminating the

child labour (Cunningham, 2000). Large-scale capitalist enterprises ceased to make extensive use of child labour. Rather, in the under-capitalised small-scale sector which was not prone to advanced technology, such as sweat shops, children's cheap labour was utilised to accumulate surplus (Lavalette, 2000). In the case of developing countries, most of the child labour is in informal the sector which has the character of an under-capitalised capitalist unit. Whereas in agriculture, pre-capitalist production relation existed in these countries, capitalism that entered is still in primary stages.

### **III. Issues Debated With Respect to Child Labour**

#### ***A. Debate on Issues related to Child Labour***

The issues related to child labour are sought to be discussed in the light of the experience of developed countries. *Firstly*, there is an argument that children have been always working and further child work or labour is not new, and it is a pre-capitalist and pre-industrial phenomenon (Weiner, 1990). But the evidence shows that though work done by children is not new, (super) exploitation of child labour is a specific characteristic of industrial capitalism. Hammand and Hammand (1917) highlighted the exploitation of children during the period of Industrial Revolution. Thompson (1961) had also referred to the exploitation of children during the industrialisation during late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Super-exploitation of children through corporal punishment was also observed (Nardinelli, 1982).

*Secondly*, further, there are points of view on the issue whether industrialisation had increased the child labour. A traditional view was that it was in fact so (Hammand and Hammand, 1917; Thompson, 1961). Later, it was challenged by the studies on proto-industrialisation. According to them, in the proto-industrialisation period, children were working in domestic industries, and pre-mechanised textile industries prior to mechanisation. Children from the age of four years were contributing to their family income, at least for their own up keep. And they were part of workforce. But, recent studies based on family budgets, of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century in Britain, have given a evidence, which renewed the traditionalist view, that increase in child labour did so during Industrial Revolution. Horrel and Humphries (1995) found that in early industrialisation, the number of children working and the number working in factories had both increased, while the age at which children work had gone down. In case of Japan, Saito (1996) also observed that child labour had increased at the time of industrialisation.

*Thirdly*, like in the case of adult labour force, there was gender difference even in the case of child labour. In Great Britain, though both boys and girls were employed in industries like textiles, cotton and mines, share of employment of boys were higher than the girls (Cunningham, 1996). Girls were employed more as domestic servants. But in Japan exceptionally, young girls were employed more than boys in cotton textile industries during the period of industrialisation (Saito, 1996). In Britain, while implementing compulsory schooling in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, girls were over looked, they were permitted to carry on domestic work either paid or unpaid (Davis, 1982).

*Fourthly*, generally, it is felt that demand for child labour depends up on the prevailing technology in the particular industry. Experience shown that with same technology for textile industry, Massachusetts of US preferred young female labour rather than child labour, whereas Manchester of Britain, recruited mostly child labour. It is explicit that along with technology, availability of children (supply) and employment strategies and labour relations maintained by manufacturers (demand) have equal weights to determine child labour (Cunningham, 2000).

*Fifthly*, as Goldin (1990) observed that the participation of children in the labour force varied with age, sex and ethnicity. The study on an American city revealed that among the ethnic minorities especially those who were migrated and settled there was a higher incidence of child labour as compared to the native children.

Sixthly, another issue to be considered is whether children's contribution to the family economy was substantial or not. Recent study (Horrel and Humphries, 1995) based family budget in Britain of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century has found that child contribution was significant. In US also, it was observed that children in the ethnic families controlled a larger percentage of family income than did native children (Goldin, 1990).

### ***B. The Process of Elimination***

This section proceeds to discuss the success achieved by the developed countries in eliminating child labour. By second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century most of the developed countries could eliminate child labour. Different explanations are offered for this success.

#### ***a. Economic Growth Vs. Affirmative Actions***

In this regard, whereas traditional view (especially old generation historian) attributed the success to anti-child labour legislation and its strict implementation, but the recent studies had also laid

their emphasis on other factors. Nardinelli (1981) observed that child labour laws were mere effect than cause for eliminating the child labour. Factory reforms, he said, could only regulate the child labour rather its complete abolition. In his view, reforms speeded up the movement which had already begun. According to him rise in real income and technological changes were the main cause of decline in child labour. It was family strategy; when the real income of the families rose then parents ceased to send their children for work. Moreover, he pointed out that, child labour laws, given poverty of families, could possibly shift away the children from the more onerous one. He considered that in the course of 19<sup>th</sup> century, new industries like steel and chemicals, came up where use of child labour became obsolete.

Sanderson's (1981) observations are in consistent with Nardinelli (1982). Sanderson's study in the context of USA for the period late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century pointed out that child labour laws were not that much effective to eliminate child labour. He observed that these laws were actually enforced when the child labour problem was on its way out. He considered that the factors, which led to a decline in the employment of children are: increase in family income, changes in technology and demand for goods.

Humphries (1995) observed that the persistence of working class family through class struggle where it demanded the family wage (male breadwinner norm) which could remove the children and women from the labour market. Davis (1982) observed that change in domestic ideology of childhood; bourgeoisie ideology was transposed and got reproduced in the working class family. Lavalette (2000) observed that both the re-emergence of the working class family and the ideology of childhood influenced the eradication of child labour.

#### *b. Changing Structure of Labour Market*

Cunningham (2000) observed that adulting the both the labour market and structuring of family economy, in the course of 19<sup>th</sup> century, could have redressed the problem of child labour. But he considered that the process of adulting is difficult to explain. He also observed in this period, rise in age of entry into workforce and change in the nature of the work done. For this, he considered the following four explanations which are: family strategy (rational decisions of parents when their real income increased), state action (both child labour laws and schooling laws), development capitalist labour market (trade unions and technology), and cultural change and cultural values. Rise in real wage increased the family income where rational parental decision stopped children sending from work. Along with rise in real wage other factors to be considered are welfare legislations, married women's employment (which was substitute to child

employment) and sanctification of childhood. Rise in adult wage and increasing insignificance of children's contribution to both family economy and national economy had ensured to complete the process of adulting.

### *c. The Spread of Mass Education*

However, another interpretation is by Weiner (1990) who argued that it was mass education and compulsory schooling laws which redirected the children from work to schools. In an insightful account of a historical perspective, he observed that a great deal of mass education prevailed before industrialisation in most of the developed countries. During industrialisation and post-industrialisation period, compulsory schooling laws increased the number of children in schools. Meanwhile decline in children at work is observed.

The best alternative to child labour has been the education either by formal or informal schooling. What experience a show is that incidence of child labour has been decreasing with an increase in schooling of children. Before, laws were enacted for child labour and compulsory schooling there was a mass education; this was even before industrialisation (Weiner, 1990). In Germany, Protestant Reforms, in 16<sup>th</sup> century, emphasised the need for education of the mass. Then after, the Pietist movement continued its motive and it could convince the state to support the existing schools and to set up new ones. The way that it convinced was that the educated mass is more subjected to be ruled, they are law-abiding, docile and sober. Whereas in Scotland, Calvinist reforms as Protestant reforms did, advocated the education for the people since 16<sup>th</sup> century. At the time of Industrial Revolution it was recognised that knowledge of science for an industrial worker was important. The result was that technical education was introduced to the working class. In Japan also until the industrialisation it was religious philosophy since inception of Taika reforms that did widespread the mass education, later it was the ethos of Japanese to grow with western technology and the Japanese spirit, that encouraged the spread of education among the people (see Morishima, 1981).

## **IV. CASE STUDY: INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY EXPERIENCES**

### *a. Great Britain*

The Great Britain, was a classic case of both agricultural revolution and industrial revolutions and where revolutionary changes in social, economic, political, cultural and ideological aspects took place since 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The decay of Feudalism and the emergence of capitalism, brought changes in the socio-economic order of the society. In this transition the power of middle



classes had increased and the levels of living and powers of working class declined. In 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain, domestic production utilised child labour as auxiliary in and odd jobs where child labour was a learning component (Davin, 1982). Whereas, in case of poor people who are unable to get employment and subsistence wage, they were getting poor relief from the Parish which collected the taxes from rich for the purpose. Industrial change brought gradual destruction of domestic industry. The enclosures and agricultural revolution had increased the proletarianised workforce. Wage labour system had emerged where differentiation in wage, employment and status came to be linked to differences in age, gender, and skills. At one point of time, female and child work was marginalised, and organised workers resisted the entry of women and children into their trades. Low wages and underemployment in countryside encouraged a continual migration to urban areas. Monetisation of wage payment was subjected to the market price fluctuation where need for supplementary income arose.

During the period, unemployment and poverty has increased. As most of the children were unable to find employment, they remain idle. All this meant increased burden on the poor relief of the Parish and taxpayers. To over come this problem the policy makers suggested that:

Children of poor should not be idle, they should acquire good habits of the adult, and they should contribute at least their upkeep (Cunningham, 1990).

The result was the structuring of children's time either through education or to productive labour (Cunningham, 1990). In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, John Locke proposed that unemployed and idle children were burden, to be maintained by parish so it was better to put them to work. He suggested the setting up of working schools in every Parish (Cunningham, 1990). At the same time, 'the doctrine of the utility of the poverty, which was unchallenged until the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, taught that there must always be a large mass of people driven to work by want, and that habits of work must be learned at an early age' (Cunninham (1990). In this situation, working schools and charity schools established Parishes as a Nurseries of industry where children were trained to be placed in various industries. Parishes indeed were taking over the children of the poor, trained and placed them in industries. In 1775, House of Commons Committee on the Poor, recommended, as Cunningham (1990) mentioned that 'employment in a work house should be provided for the infant poor above four who had lost their parents or whose parents were unable to support them'. Also, it emphasised a note that 'the key cause of poverty was the decline of employment for the wives and children of working poor'.

Consequently, at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century Parish workhouses were providing convenient supply of child labour for the newly emerging textile industries (Fyfe, 1989).

In the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the 'ideology of childhood' emerged in the ruling class firmly. It was followed by a growing middle class which exempted its children from the work (Davin, 1982). They felt that children had to be protected and educated. Demand for education to children increased but it is basically religious, moral and intellectual instruction, not a practical one. It was not immediately applied to working class children but new ideas concerning family and childhood were gaining force during first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Davin, 1982). But the ruling class attitudes towards working class children were that early discipline and training in work was necessary for their future life. The idea that 'idleness is a sin', fitted well into religious beliefs where ruling and middle classes utilised the labour of working children in their industries, trades and as a domestic servants (see Davin, 1982).

During Industrial Revolution, there was growing demand for child labour from the manufacturing, mines and other small scale industry, although it was not matched by supply (Cunningham, 1990). Growing number of factories increased the number of children working in factories (Horrel and Humphries, 1995). There were certain types of jobs which could be identified as suitable for children (Cunningham, 1990) for instance, chimney sweeping. At the same time by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, destitution became a severe problem and the Enclosure Movement and Industrialisation augmented it, as a result mass pauperism became a serious menace to national security. Only then, the humanity and public interest together directed public attention on the problem of the poor (Greg, 1962) as well as on child labour.

During the Industrial Revolution (c.1760-1850) child labour was identified with cruelty, super-exploitation. Although some times, in factories, children were working along with their parents they were not under the control of the parents but under overseers. Most of the children used to work independently. Hammand and Hammand (1917) vividly highlighted the exploitation of children during Industrial Revolution. Thompson (1961) remarked that child labour during Industrial Revolution was one of the most shameful events in British history. Nardinelli (1982) referred to the corporal punishment inflicted on children working in mines and manufacturing industry to increase their productivity.

Positive developments, in the way of elimination of child labour, could be observed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Until then there was support for the employment of children as a means of structuring

the time of unemployed and idle children. But the reverse happened at the turn of the century when campaign against child labour became prominent. During the period of Industrial Revolution, demand for regulation of child labour rose to a peak in 1830's. The result was the Factory Act of 1834, which was a milestone in the regulation of child labour. At the same time in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, working class struggle against dismantling of 'family', and demand for family wages raised but which were materialised in second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, it could reduce the supply of child labour in the market rather than women (Humphries, 1995; Davin, 1982; Lavalette, 2000). On the other hand, the idea of childhood was transposed and reproduced into the working class in the second half of (19<sup>th</sup>) century (Davin, 1982; Lavalette, 2000).

In Great Britain, along with religious motive, education, for the lower order was offered to structure the idle children's time until first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Cunningham (1990) stated education could rescue the idle children rather than children working in factories. Later part of the (19<sup>th</sup>) century, it was industrialisation which needed the educated workers. As Roderick and Stephens (1978) mentioned:

At the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> century, key issue... was the spread of education for the lower orders. In this the influence of religion was dominant. The aim was to produce a god-fearing, law-abiding and industrious workforce: sober, honest literate citizens imbued with a sense of duty... During first quarter of the (19<sup>th</sup>) century, increasing industrialisation is a need for industrial worker, who has a knowledge of science related to his industrial practice (Roderick and Stephens, 1978, p.3).

Consequently there arose technical education for the working class. Also, the changing structure of the economy demanded a compulsory education (Weiner, 1990). The result was the Education Act 1970 which made education compulsory for children up to the age of 13 years. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a half-time solution, where children can be worked out of school times, emerged. But in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it was also banished (Cunningham, 1996).

Trade Unions were very strong against the child labour. They resisted the employment women and children in their trades as it would swell labour ranks and reduce their bargaining power. Demographic change, i.e. fertility decline, was in favour of the reducing the supply of children into market (Cunningham, 1996). Changes in working class family economy of the working where married women employment could reduce the children into labour force. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century real wages had increased thereby by raising the family income. A social policy towards improving the living standards of the working class had introduced some welfare measures. Along with the changes in ideological shift towards childhood, schooling which

coincided with changes in structure of the economy had greatly reduced the supply and demand for child labour in Great Britain (see Fyfe, 1989).

*b. United States of America*

Another country which undergone to rapid industrialisation was United States of America. It too had a great deal of the experience with respect to the phenomenon of the child labour it is relevant here in the policy perspective. One of the contrasting points, which raised interest, is that in the during the industrialisation Massachusetts in USA and some of the industrial town in Britain has shown differentiation in the use of child labour. The former restricted the use of child labour but the latter utilised it under the very same prevailing technology.

*c. Germany*

In the case of Germany, there is no concrete evidence to show the incidence of child labour. But literature does refer to the persistence of child labour. As was the case in other European countries, industrialisation had increased exploitation of child labour, in Germany. At the time of industrialisation, that the alternative to child work was education was firmly established in Germany. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Protestantism and its reforms laid emphasis on the education of people for their religious motives. Protestants and later Pietists could convince the government about the need for education of the people. The way they convinced was that educated people are more subjected to be ruled, law-abiding, docile and sober. At the beginning, the church established schools, but later state came to supported them and set up more schools under its supervision.

During the industrialisation, children were working in factories. At that time, military service was compulsory for every one. There was a complaint from the military that those who come from the industrialised regions for recruitment in the army were not healthy and strong. Hence, child labour in those industries which were harmful for the physical and mental growth of children was sought to be banned (Weiner, 1990). Thus, although there was no specific legislation in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany prohibiting the child labour in general, it could be reduced by spreading education for children.

*d. Japan*

Ethnically and culturally Japan has been a homogenous country for a long time. It is one of the Asian countries which has not been controlled by any imperial power. Its unique socio-economic

and cultural factors were different from other countries. Normally one would assure that culture alters in accordance with change in material conditions and economic circumstances. But the reverse case is true in the case of Japan, where economic structure and relation were strongly conditioned by its national ethos (Morishima, 1981). The Japanese passion for development is a peculiar phenomenon.

In Japan, cultural transformation through the introduction of new religions, such as Confucius, Buddhism and Shintoism had altered the social order. It brought radical reforms in the society. Education had flourished with help from religious philosophies. As Morishima (1981) stated:

Confucius greatest achievement lay in throwing open to a greater number of people the culture and education which had hither to been the monopoly of aristocracy (Morishima, 1981, p.10).

Political reforms in Japan around 5th century AD recognised the importance of education. Taika reforms introduced in 6<sup>th</sup> century were landmark for social, political and cultural changes in Japan. Under these reforms the Chinese system of meritocratic bureaucratic administration along with its religious philosophy was adopted. Education was the basis for the entrance to the administration. Access to education and further to administrative job has been made smooth in Japan. Thus, Social mobility is made possible through the education. It is obvious that in Japan, class division was in accordance with educational status. By then, the notion that educated people were more amenable for rule of law had also emerged.

Since the Tokugawa period, education system has been well developed. One important factor was that in Tokugawa regime 5 per cent of the population was in administration apart from Samurai and local fiefs (Maddison A, 1972). It gave the idea that considerable amount of population was in better position. Obviously, these cultural factors could influence the spread of education among their children. At that time, the subject to learn was Chinese classics and moral education. It is observed that in this period 35 per cent of the population was literate (Maddison, 1972).

On the eve of Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan broke away from its self-imposed isolation. It opened the country for the entry of foreigners. In the following decades, the foreign visitors of Japan were so impressed by the way Japanese children are treated (Saito, 1996). In the advent of Meiji restoration, elite class was dismantled, and social and economic structure had changed. The passion for economic development in the country rose to a higher level. Its possibility through

the education and technology improvement has considered which it led to set up the education system. Schools were established under the government supervision. To capture growing western technology and develop indigenous technology education was considered important. In 1887 Education Prescript Passed which established the universal education system. But compulsory schooling law enacted in 1879. A school fee was abolished for primary schooling in 1900. In 1907 compulsory schooling raised from 4 to 6. In this regard, Japan invited western educated people to teach in their country. Though a curriculum in school was changed to vocational and technical education, the importance has given to moral education. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an American Professor while visiting the Japan, remarked that it as a 'paradise for the children' (Saito, 1996).

In spite of these impressions, Saito (1996) observed that during the industrialisation child labour obviously existed but its incidence was lower as compared to the contemporary western countries. Japanese industrialisation did not lead to an extensive use of child labour. In Japan although the first Factory Act was passed in 1911, only in 1916 only employment of child under prohibited. It denotes that without much either educational and child labour legislation, Japan could achieve education of children and reduced the use of children labour. Thus cultural factors appeared to have played an important role in this regard.

## **V. The Policy Implications**

One cannot assume away the experience of child labour in developed countries as grotesque remnant of the past. The implications of the developed countries experiences to the developing countries are important. Without understanding the basic problem of child labour, simply banning or abolition only lead to change in occupation of children which may be more onerous to earlier one.

Child labour is prevalent in developing countries where schooling and literacy lag behind. Cultural factors can influence education in both positive and negative ways. Before the industrial revolution it was religious philosophy that positively influenced the education in Japan and Protestant Germany and other regions in Europe. In developing countries, for instance Srilanka, also religion played a positive role (Weiner, 1990). In India, Kerala is different from other states regarding educational development where widespread education and high literacy levels are obvious. In this particular state, religious outlook and social reforms influenced the education

(Ramachandran, 1997; Weiner, 1990). Whereas other parts of India lag behind social division of society denied lower orders, the access to education.

Historically, the prevalence of child labour is severe in minority or marginalised communities. In developing countries, economic advantage of children is observed by different case studies in different countries. The persistence is seen more in undercapitalised capitalist units (Lavaletter, 2000) and in agriculture where it exist either in pre-capitalist production relations or relations of an early stage of capitalist.

In India during pre-colonial period, social structure itself was barrier to spread of education. Religious elitism and caste discrimination did not allow the downward filtration of education. Imperial policy on education also in favour of religious elitism and caste bias, in spite of its radical changes (Constable, 2000). As Sen stated, the rot in Indian education is ultimately related to the structure of Indian society (Sen, 1996). Whereas, more egalitarian and populist tradition of Buddhism appreciated the basic education in countries like Thailand, Srilanka, China and Mynmar in Asia apart from Japan.

## **VI. Conclusions**

Education emerged as the one and only alternative to the child labour. Nevertheless, education alone is unable to keep children away from the child labour. Other factors which can redirect the children from work to school, have also to be considered. Income level of the household, cultural attitudes of parents towards children, technological change, conscientisation of public on child labour, state's welfare measures towards poor, and demographic changes are the necessary factors to facilitate the environment conducive for mass education. In addition, cultural factors also played important role. Thus, the elimination of child labour is complex task where socio-economic, political and cultural factors play important role in the process. It seems both cutting off the supply of children to labour market and the cutting off the employment opportunities to the children, are a matter of concern in resolving the problem of child labour. It is possible through extension of education where the state can promote education through compulsory education policy and compensatory welfare measures.

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