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## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

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# From Exploitation to Empowerment: Eradicating Child Labor in India with Thoughtful Controls & Measures

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**ABSTRACT:** Child labour is a widespread occurrence that is most common in nations with poorer socioeconomic standing and resources. Children enter the workforce for a variety of reasons including poverty in society and the family, parental death, illness, or incapacity, lack of social security and protection, and restricted access to or ignorance of the need for education. Child labour hinders the growth of the individual child as well as the economy and society. According to estimates, 152 million children—64 million girls and 88 million boys—are employed globally, making up nearly ten percent of all youngsters. Even though a lot of impoverished rural families strive to live better lives in cities, this forces parents to have their kids work to support the family and boost revenue. This study examines the several contributing elements to child labour and looks for instances of prejudice in this field. Furthermore, The results show that child labour is a significant problem & serious evil for India, a developing nation. This paper aims to critically examine the issue of child labour in India, The significance of the need to Develop Psychosocial Rehabilitation Procedures by Creating plans for the thorough rehabilitation that are supported by evidence with the reintegration of formerly exploited children & Determine which zones are most impacted by child labor in India to effectively target measures that support child-empowering educational activities.

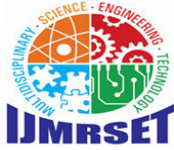
**KEYWORDS:** Child Labour, Exploitation, Rehabilitation, Psychosocial, Poverty, Child trafficking, Child rights, Forced labor, Hazardous work, Child abuse, Human rights violation, Child protection.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Child labor is a common occurrence that is mostly concentrated in developing and impoverished nations. The kids are the most valuable resource in any community, and it is important to protect and foster their development in an atmosphere of security and encouragement.

- Work that harms a child's bodily or psychological progress and robs them of their youth, potential, or dignity is sometimes referred to as "child labor." It refers to labor that poses a risk to children's emotional, social, physical, or moral development; and/or
- Hinders their education by denying them the chance to participate, forcing students to leave ahead of schedule, or having them try to balance attending class with unduly demanding and lengthy tasks.[1]

The National Child Labour Project and the Child Labour Act of 1986 tackle child labor and forbid the hiring of minors under the age of 14 in 65 procedures and 18 professions in India. Instead of going to school and receiving a quality education, around 10.12 million youngsters in India are today learning how to weave carpets, roll beads, work as domestic assistance, do handicrafts, create clothes, and engage in a variety of other activities. Jobs that cause harm to children or keep them from attending school are referred to as child labor. Growing disparities in income and poverty have caused millions of young children to be taken out of school and into the workforce in the US and around the world in the past few years. [2][3]



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### Importance of Psycho-Educational Interventions & Rehabilitation

Children can no longer analyze or comprehend situations or other people, thus mental wellness is very important. Since they've been raised to feel that their only feelings are hopelessness and terror, they must come to understand that there is a world outside of their own. stressing the importance of their mental health [10]

Psycho-educational interventions play a vital role in helping adolescents and children recognize, prevent, and manage anxiety. Such programs equip them with the necessary tools to seek help when needed, promoting mental health awareness and resilience. By targeting emotional and behavioral issues, these interventions help reduce the prevalence of mental health problems through early intervention and support. [11]

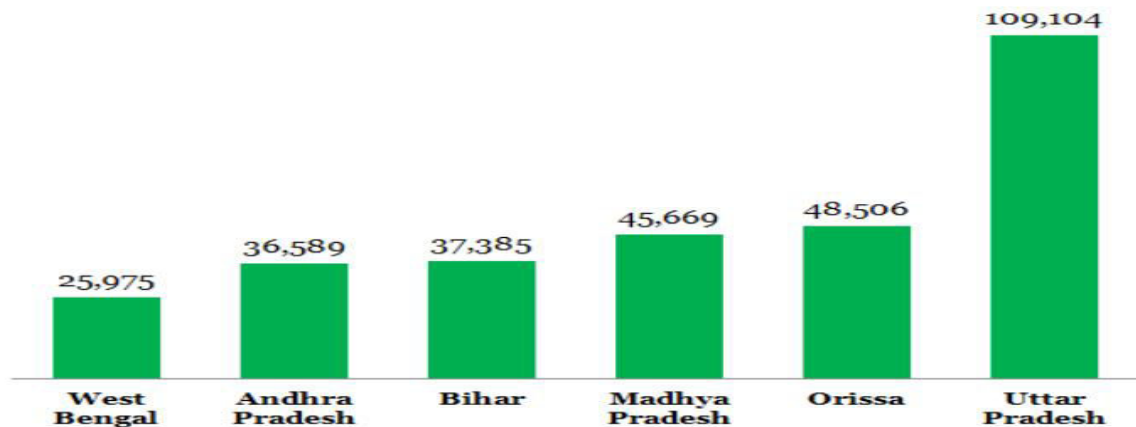
### Role of Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation services are essential for children with disabilities in India, aiding them in regaining independence and confidence. These services help children manage the after-effects of disabilities while simultaneously preparing families for better caregiving. Rehabilitation involves various activities focusing on enhancing the child's efficiency in daily tasks, ultimately fostering self-reliance. [12]

The National Child Labor Project (NCLP) Scheme in India aims to rehabilitate children engaged in labor through various supportive interventions. These include providing bridge education, vocational training, stipends, and healthcare services. Such programs are instrumental in ensuring that rescued children can transition from labor to education, enabling them to build a better future. [13]

Rehabilitation efforts also emphasize the importance of physical and mental health. Many child laborers face health issues due to hazardous working conditions, and rehabilitation programs often include medical care and psychological support to address these needs [14]

### Total Children Rehabilitated Under NCLP 2009 TO 2013

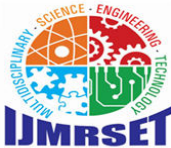


Source: India spend [15]

Whereas,

Recent data from the **Department of Labor (dol.gov)** 2022 highlights- India made a passable level of progress toward ending the most severe forms of child labor. The Government of India through the National Child Labor Project Scheme successfully removed and **rehabilitated** 13,271 children from child labor between April 2021 and March 2022. Additionally, in Haryana alone, the police department removed 1,760 children from labor situations and reunited 378 child trafficking victims with their families [16]





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### High-Risk Zones Affected By Child Labour

Major child labor endemic states as per the 1991 and 2001 Census are given below:

-UP, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujrat, Tamil Nadu[5]

**Table 01** Below is the information on registered cases under Child & Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act) 1986 State or Union Territories-wise [14]

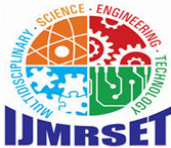
Sl. No.	State/UT	
1	Andhra Pradesh	12
2	Assam	78
3	Bihar	14
4	Gujarat	40
5	Haryana	12
6	Jharkhand	5
7	Karnataka	58
8	Kerala	3
9	Madhya Pradesh	5
10	Maharashtra	57
11	Odisha	6
12	Punjab	8
13	Rajasthan	19
14	Tamil Nadu	26
15	Telangana	224
16	Uttar Pradesh	1
17	Uttarakhand	25
18	West Bengal	2
19	Chandigarh	7
20	Delhi	11
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>613</b>

Source: National Crime Records Bureau 2021

As per the National Crime Records Bureau Report for 2021, around 613 cases were reported in 2021 under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, of 1986. The state of Telangana recorded the highest incidence of these cases, making it a significant area of concern for policymakers and child welfare advocates. Following Telangana, Assam was noted for having a substantial number of registered cases, indicating that child labor remains a pressing issue in these regions [17]

**Table 02: According to the Annual Report Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) JULY 2022 - JUNE 2023 (Combined data for both rural and urban across all states and UT's**

State/UT	Households	0-4 years (Total)	5-14 years (Total)
Andhra Pradesh	3934	838	1832
Arunachal Pradesh	1720	598	1419
Assam	3509	1070	2450
Bihar	5544	2547	4305
Chhattisgarh	1610	1059	1719
Delhi	1008	125	457
Goa	256	58	136
Gujarat	3515	1039	2479
Haryana	2268	794	1860
Himachal Pradesh	1412	479	1292
Jharkhand	2742	1156	2392



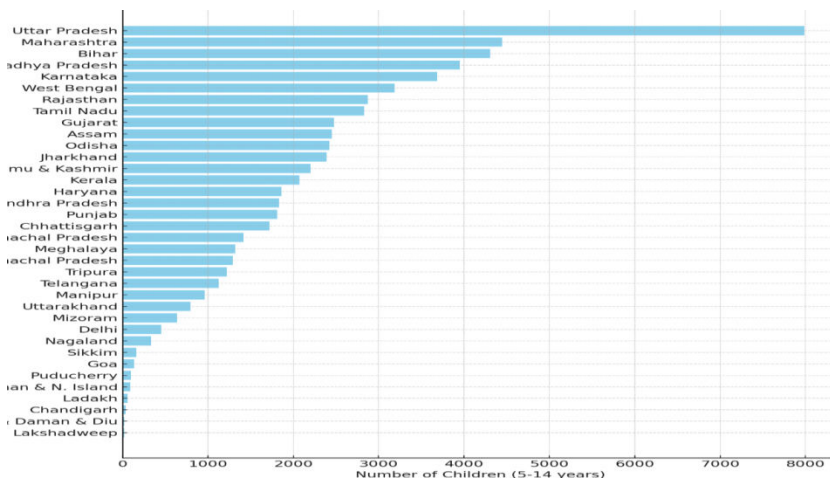
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Karnataka	5512	1533	3685
Kerala	4184	960	2070
Madhya Pradesh	4704	1897	3950
Maharashtra	7986	2518	4447
Manipur	2148	650	963
Meghalaya	936	541	1319
Mizoram	640	308	636
Nagaland	412	207	334
Odisha	3948	1106	2426
Punjab	3200	710	1814
Rajasthan	4216	1456	2876
Sikkim	472	124	164
Tamil Nadu	6648	1315	2832
Telangana	1998	619	1124
Tripura	1764	710	1224
Uttarakhand	1568	479	797
Uttar Pradesh	9875	3485	7988
West Bengal	7040	1639	3187
Andaman & N. Island	91	51	92
Chandigarh	47	23	40
Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman & Diu	24	12	22
Jammu & Kashmir	3136	1014	2204
Ladakh	24	49	62
Lakshadweep	16	9	21
Puducherry	255	67	99
All India	101655	30439	68812

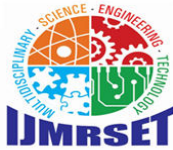
Source: Annual report PLFS 2022-23

**Graph 1: Frequency of Children (5-14 years) across States &UTs of India**



Source: Annual Report Periodic Labour Force Survey 2022-23

- Above drawn bar graph showing the frequency of children aged 5-14 years across various States and Union Territories in India:



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1. **Uttar Pradesh** has the highest frequency of children in the 5-14 age group, followed by **Maharashtra** and **Bihar**.
2. **Lakshadweep, Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman & Diu, and Chandigarh** have the lowest frequencies. [16]

### Root causes of child labour in India:

The root causes of child labor are multifaceted, primarily driven by economic deprivation, lack of access to quality education, socio-cultural norms, and weak legal protections. Poverty emerges as a crucial factor, compelling families to rely on their children for additional income. Cultural beliefs can perpetuate child labor by prioritizing work over education and reinforcing gender stereotypes. Moreover, insufficient governmental policies and enforcement mechanisms exacerbate the problem by allowing exploitative practices to continue unchallenged.

#### 1. Economic Factors

Poverty remains the most significant driver of child labor, as families struggling to meet basic needs often depend on their children's income [4]

Without access to decent work opportunities for adults, families are driven to involve their children in the workforce to survive [5]

Economic growth is associated with a decrease in child labor, indicating that improving family incomes can help alleviate the problem [6]

Additionally, the prevalence of low-wage informal economies fosters environments where child labor can thrive due to insufficient job security for adults [7]

#### 2. Educational Barriers

Access to quality education is crucial for breaking the cycle of child labor. When children do not have adequate schooling options, they are more likely to enter the workforce [4]

In many cases, families perceive work as the best use of children's time, particularly when educational institutions are of poor quality or unaffordable [8]

#### 3. Socio-Cultural Influences

Cultural norms and beliefs significantly impact children's involvement in labor. In some communities, working is seen as beneficial for character development and skill acquisition or as a way for children to follow in their parents' jobs

Gender roles further complicate the issue, as girls often bear the burden of domestic responsibilities and are frequently taken out of school [56]. These cultural practices perpetuate a cycle of poverty and limit children's future opportunities for education and employment. [4]

#### 4. Impact of Conflicts and Displacement

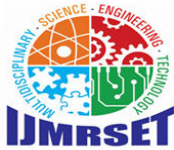
Conflicts and natural disasters contribute significantly to child labor by displacing families and disrupting social support systems [9]

## II. OBJECTIVES

1. To highlight the Significance of Developing Psychosocial Rehabilitation Protocols
2. To uncover High-Risk Zones affected by child labor & to target interventions effectively that promotes initiatives & measures that empower children for a better future.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study has some quantitative components but is mainly qualitative. It will provide a thorough grasp of the child labor issue in India & its approaches to eradicating child labor in India through the use of a mixed-method approach. This paper also analyses existing literature, reports, and previous studies on child labor (Secondary Data). Usage of data from the Indian Census, National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), and reports from Ministry of Labour and



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Employment, National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Women and Child Development, UNICEF India....

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Innovative methods to tackle child labor for the future of India

1. **Community Engagement:** Engaging local communities in awareness campaigns can alter perceptions towards child labor and education. Grassroots movements led by local NGOs can educate families about the importance of schooling over work. [17]
2. **Technological Solutions:** wearable technology for monitoring children's activities can help identify those at risk of entering labor markets[18]
3. **Policy Reforms and Enforcements:** This includes rigorous implementation of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act and the Right to Education Act, ensuring all working children have accessible educational opportunities.[22]
4. **Awareness Campaigns:** Utilizing media and technology, campaigns can reach diverse audiences, fostering a culture that prioritizes education and childhood over labor[19]
5. **Rehabilitation Programs:** The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was established to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities in programs and activities conducted by federal agencies[20]Effective rehabilitation strategies for child laborers include not only removing children from exploitative environments but also providing comprehensive medical, psychological, and educational support to facilitate their reintegration into society[20]
6. **Educational Strategies:** Programs like the Right to Education Act and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan focus on enrolling out-of-school children and improving infrastructure and teacher training[22]
7. **Financial Support Programs:** These could include conditional cash transfers for families thatkeep their children in school or provide subsidies for education-related expenses[26]

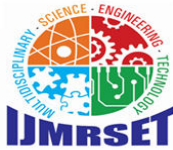
“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than how it treats its children”. Nelson Mandela – 8 May 1995.[17]

#### The legal framework and policies to control child labor in India



Source: Child labour laws in India[19]

1. **Legal Framework:** India's legal framework against child labor was significantly shaped by the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986, which prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 in hazardous occupations [19] [5]The subsequent Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation)



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Amendment Act, of 2016, further strengthened these provisions by completely prohibiting child labor for those under 14 years and regulating conditions for adolescents aged 14 to 18 [21].

2. **Constitutional Provisions:** The Indian Constitution also prohibits child labor under Article 24, explicitly stating that no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment. Additionally, Article 21 A mandates free and compulsory education for all children aged 6 to 14 years, reinforcing the right of children to receive an education instead of being subjected to labour[22] [23]
3. **Key Policies:** India has implemented various policies to control child labour through legislative measures and government programs. The National Policy on Child Labour, formulated in 1987, aims to gradually eradicate child labour by emphasizing rehabilitation and education. The government has also initiated programs like the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) to withdraw children from hazardous occupations and provide them with educational and vocational training[23][1]
4. **Enforcement Mechanisms:** Despite the robust legal framework, enforcement of child labor laws remains a significant challenge. The informal economy, where a large percentage of child labour occurs, complicates monitoring and enforcement efforts. Factors such as poverty, lack of educational opportunities, and cultural norms perpetuating child labour further hinder effective implementation.[19]

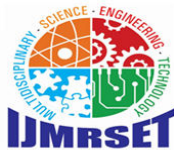
### V. CONCLUSION

India's child labour crisis is a complicated and multidimensional problem with roots in societal and economic issues that have imprisoned many young people in a cycle of hardship and exploitation for far too long. But if we recommit to finding comprehensive, cooperative solutions, we can design a course that will safeguard children in danger while simultaneously giving them the tools they need to create a better future. As a result, the government has been proactively addressing this issue by enforcing legal requirements strictly and implementing concurrent corrective measures. The proper implementing authorities, the state governments, have been conducting routine inspections and audits to find instances of violations. Eradicating child labour in India requires innovative and multifaceted approaches that integrate education, community engagement, and legal enforcement. Efforts must focus on not only preventing child labour but also addressing the root causes such as poverty and lack of access to quality education. The government has placed a strong emphasis on the rehabilitation of these kids and on enhancing the financial circumstances of their families because poverty is the underlying cause of this issue and enforcement measures alone cannot assist fix it. To effectively tackle child labor in India, it is essential to incorporate a multi-faceted approach. This can include policy reforms, community engagement, educational initiatives, and collaboration with various stakeholders. By addressing the root causes of child labor, creating awareness, and implementing sustainable practices, the challenge can be mitigated.

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