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“Foundation to Landmark, brick by brick”

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A Comprehensive Look at India's Policy on Child Labour

The Indian government's policy on child labour is a detailed and multi-faceted strategy designed to eradicate this issue through prevention, rescue, and rehabilitation. The foundation of this approach is the **National Policy on Child Labour, declared in August 1987**. This policy is structured around three core pillars:

1. Legislative Action and Enforcement

This pillar focuses on creating a strong legal framework and ensuring its strict enforcement to deter child Labour.

- **Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986:** This landmark legislation is the cornerstone of the government's legal strategy.
 - **Prohibition:** It explicitly prohibits the employment of children below 14 years of age in 18 occupations and 65 processes identified as hazardous.
 - **Enforcement:** The responsibility for enforcing the Act lies with State Governments, with the central government monitoring its implementation.
 - **Special Drives:** The government periodically launches special drives to intensify enforcement and raise public awareness.
- **Rescue & Repatriation:**
 - During inspections and raids, child Labourers are identified and rescued.
 - For migrant children, a process of **repatriation** is initiated to safely return them to their families.
 - Rescued children are provided with "**bridge education**" to prepare them for formal schooling and **pre-vocational training** to equip them with skills.

2. Convergence Strategy and Inter-Ministerial Collaboration

Recognizing that poverty and lack of education are the primary drivers of child Labour, this strategy aims to provide comprehensive support by integrating various government welfare programs.

- **Core Group on Convergence:** The Ministry of Labour & Employment has formed a special group to ensure that families of child Labourers receive priority access to schemes from other ministries.
- **Key Collaborations:**
 - **Ministry of Women and Child Development:** Provides crucial support through schemes like Shelter Homes, offering food and a safe environment for rescued children.
 - **Ministry of Human Resource Development:** Supports the educational rehabilitation of children through the **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan** by providing midday meals, teacher training, school supplies, and facilitating their integration into mainstream education.

- **Rural Development, Urban Housing, and Poverty Alleviation Ministries:** Their income and employment generation schemes are leveraged to provide economic rehabilitation for the families, preventing them from sending their children back to work.
- **Ministry of Railways:** Railway staff are sensitized to identify and assist suspected migrant and trafficked children.
- **Anti-Human Trafficking Efforts:**
 - State-level officers from the Department of Labour are nominated as Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) link officers to coordinate with the Ministry of HRD.
 - The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) acts as the nodal anti-trafficking agency.
- **International Collaboration:** The government is implementing a pilot project, "**Converging Against Child Labour**," in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), funded by the US Department of Labour. This project focuses on the prevention and elimination of hazardous child Labour and trafficking in specific districts across multiple states.

3. Project-Based Action: The National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme

This pillar focuses on the direct rehabilitation of children who have been withdrawn from work.

- **Scheme Objective:** The NCLP scheme, initiated in 1988, is a major central sector scheme that adopts a sequential approach, prioritizing children in hazardous occupations and processes. The goal is to withdraw them from work and provide them with a path to formal education.
- **Implementation and Reach:**
 - The scheme operates in **266 child Labour-endemic districts** across 20 states.
 - It manages approximately **7,311 special schools** and rehabilitation centers, with an enrollment of 3.2 lakh children.
 - Since its inception, the scheme has successfully mainstreamed about **8.95 lakh children** into the formal schooling system.
- **Rehabilitation Services:**
 - **Educational Support:** Provides non-formal and bridge education.
 - **Vocational Training:** Offers skilled/vocational training to equip children with livelihood skills.
 - **Incentives:** Provides a monthly **stipend of Rs. 150** per child and midday meals.
 - **Healthcare:** Ensures access to healthcare facilities through a dedicated doctor for every group of 20 schools.



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- **Target Group:**
 - Project societies conduct surveys to identify child Labourers.
 - Children aged 5-8 are directly mainstreamed into the formal education system via the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
 - Children aged 9-14 are rehabilitated through the NCLP schools.
- **Administration and Funding:**
 - The entire project is implemented through a registered society at the district level, chaired by the District Magistrate/Collector.
 - The **funding is entirely provided by the Central Government** through the Ministry of Labour & Employment. Funds are released to the project societies based on progress.