



CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WORKERS

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ABSTRACT

The situation of migration in India during Covid -19 has resulted in massive chaos around the country. News headlines are filled with situational accidents, deaths and struggles of migrant workers all over the world, especially in India with a 135.26 crore population (worldometer, 2018). The migrant workers are among the worst hit due to the pandemic, yet the most vulnerable among the vulnerable communities consist of children of these migrant workers, labourers. During the migration of around 455.78 million people in India, the invisibles and most vulnerable – Children of our society face a lot of hurdles, especially that they suffer to fulfil basic necessities for themselves.

The 2011 census reports nearly 92.95 million migrant children migrate were found in India. The migrant children population of rural areas comprise 56% and urban account (44%). The migrant children have a stark division among them coming from well off and not so well off or poor households. The division studied by MPCE (monthly per capita expenditure) and the vulnerabilities faced by children show that children in bottom tercile households are bad in comparison to the middle tercile households (MPCE). This clearly highlights the inequality existing in the Indian society in consideration to the children migrating.

This paper aims at analyzing the areas where migrant children have been suffering in India, especially during the pandemic outbreak. The objective is to study in-depth data around migrant children's health, labour conditions, trafficking, and education. The paper also put emphasis on government programs, initiatives and policies that are formalized in order to help migrant worker's children and other vulnerable children during Covid-19 crisis.

The paper utilises secondary data in order to incorporate a clear understanding of the topic. Analysis of secondary data is assessed by evaluating information and literary outcome of various articles like UN reports, UNICEF analysis, WHO reports on malnutrition, health, News/article platforms like – The Hindu, Frontline & The Wire. Scrutinization of pertinent articles will assist in getting maximum current, updated and in-depth information about the topic thereby assisting at forming an outcome useful for readers.

Keywords – Migrant workers, Children, Covid-19, UN, Education, Health, Labour

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

There have been variant epidemic outbreaks in India for example- the swine flu in 1918 taking lives of more than 5 lakh people, the small pox of 1920s with majorly affecting the people's health, 1992-93s cholera outbreak infecting numerous lives being a communicable disease. Most recently too there have been outbreaks of H1N1 2009-10 starting from Mexico spreading countries across and other viruses like Ebola taking lives of many across the globe (FRONTLINE, 2020). But interestingly Covid-19 has been a contagious disease with various researches giving out dangerous facts and figures. The virus is yet to have a vaccine and still has various levels of facts to be discovered. Awareness drives have been spread throughout the nation over media, by ministers and across the globe through UN initiatives. Yet, the research on the actual source of the virus, drug investigation, study of Remdesivir and Hydrochloroquine and progress of health facilities to curb the disease is still in continuation.

The pandemic has not only affected people with financial issues but has also led its cruel hands on the physically, mentally challenged sections and vulnerable population of the society as well. Recently, there has been a good light on people already struggling to earn bread having additional difficulties due to the pandemic. People of Delhi and other urban, rural cities, who lived there day by doing petty works have seen a hard setback at the professional front. Though they are facing the economic issues due to Covid-19, they struggle to be a part of the well- to-do society and break the chains of poverty-stricken challenges.

In this dangerous virus outbreaks economic issues dragging the country back to its slow development pace, political issues bearing nations to have their military, navy and other defense forces up-to-date and social division making it impossible for everyone to have the same facilities for fighting back the Covid-19 virus, have not spared any country. Developing countries like India are also running the race of providing good health facilities and trying to cope with other major issues like- poverty, unemployment, hunger, etc. of the nation. In the wake of these challenges the most vulnerable among the vulnerable sections of the society – Children, are left unnoticed at times. Though the challenges faced by children, especially of the poor, from labourer's home, children living in slums, orphaned and child labourers exist from decades, it might hit our country (India) worse during the pandemic.

According to the data around 10.1 million children are still doing child labour in India despite laws against such practices (UNICEF), there are millions rural area children who suffer abuse either from their own family members or from places they go to work because of their vulnerable condition. Most strikingly there are around 20-50,000 children who are trafficked to other countries for money which is a severe crime under the prohibition of human trafficking law in the Indian constitution Article 23(1), The immoral traffic (prevention) Act,1956. These data not only showcase the grim reality of the situation children are going through but also states strong reasons for being one of the most vulnerable in any country.

This paper aims to look at the issues faced by migrant workers and labourer's children in India during Covid-19 with certain government initiatives and loopholes we still have to fill as a developing nation. The paper focuses on children and covid-19 elaborating on the conditions of children during the pandemic, followed by some health issues (both physical and mental) being encountered by children of migrant workers/labourers. The third topic discusses upon child labour, trafficking and laws around the two and forth targeting the condition of education, educational facilities for children of migrant workers. At the end certain government initiatives which pre-exist and some that are created at the time of the coronavirus outbreak with certain challenges our nation still struggles, are discussed.

CHAPTER 2 – MIGRANT WORKERS, THEIR CHILDREN AND COVID-19

One must take a focused look at the economic misbalance of migrant worker's situation, as they are the third-tier manual workers in factories and companies, but without ignoring the migrant worker's children being the most vulnerable among the vulnerable communities. Not alone the children who are struggling to walk home with their parents, but also children in shackles of informal sector, child labour and the ones who are left at homes of relatives because their family goes other places to earn a living.

The Immediate decision of lockdown (as announced on 24th March,2020) (EconomicTimes) of the nation at one hand was a step of caution from the pandemic and at the other a disastrous mishandling of masses who migrated in panic with their families to native states, or from their state of job towards their home wanting to be with their family. There are around 65 million interstate migrants in the country with 33% being just workers, according to a survey by Prof. Amitabh Kundu of Research and Information system for Developing countries (The Hindu Businessline).

At most 139 million workers have migrated since the lockdown has been announced, with many more still to reach their homes. The chaotic migration of workers took the lives of around 300 workers (till 5th may) , with many left without basic facilities like food, medicines, and sanitation. Various incidents of child exhaustion, injury and death has also been reported due to long walks of migrant workers, as the whole family tries to migrate back to their hometown. A worker's family walking from Telangana to Chhattisgarh faced a similar unfortunate situation as their 12-year-old child died during the journey (Mumbai Mirror, april,2020). In addition, the incident that happened taking the lives of 16 migrant workers who slept on the railway track might leave their children with no or less livelihood facilities as well as the grief of parent's death.

'Shocking poverty impacts of Covid-19 will hit children hard' stated by Save the Children CEO Inger Ashing (Save the Children). Though elders are being more affected due to the pandemic, children too account for one of the most vulnerable sections showing almost equal damage in livelihood issues, healthcare issues and issues of violence (as by news reports in April- 8.6% positive Covid cases between age group 0-20). The report by the Education and Drug Department accounts around 770 children below 10 years of age being infected with Covid-19 and age group 10-20 years being 1,579 in numbers (MEDD). During the first phase of lockdown itself, the govt. helpline for children received 4.6 lakh calls for several enquiries, with 30% being just about covid-19 related information, especially for food support. And other calls asking for help regarding children being trafficked, sexually, physically abused and abandoned.

The vulnerability is also pushed more through a large number of poor in the country. As per the United Nations the children in middle & low income countries may increase by around 86 million making the overall poverty 672 million by 2020 end, due to the coronavirus (joint study by UNICEF and Save the Children) (UNICEF, UN). In addition, 'the pandemic has triggered socio- economic crisis that is draining various resources for families all over the world' as stated by UNICEF Director Henrietta Fore (UNICEF, UN).

CHAPTER 3 - HEALTH

3.1 Children and Health

The pandemic is spreading without discriminating among any age, class or state, thus, children being one of the vulnerable society sections has to be given more care under family, state, government authorities and law. The state of Child Care Institutions (CCIs), Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP), Children in Contact with the Law (CICWL) or Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) have to take major precautions and care of the children under their observation. (Indian Express). Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) study also reports lack of health safety in the JJ (Jhuggi, Jhopadi) that urban poor are living in which makes them more vulnerable to the virus, because of bad immunity, hygiene (Central Pollution Control Board).

Though the courts and laws are trying to protect children from various cruel acts under their own understanding and pace, yet there are lots of edges from which situations may fall. The Indian villages and other rural livelihoods have no clean drinking water, sanitation and suffer from a variety of illnesses living in unhygienic conditions. Government shelter homes have also reported positive cases of Covid- 19 among children in Tamil Nadu (Livemint). The health and family welfare department of the state and social welfare department has been asked by the Supreme Court bench to submit a proper detailed report of the spread and future measures to be taken.

Apart from the major issue of security and care it is equally important to look at the issue of malnutrition among children in India, especially children living in poverty and children of informal sector, daily wage labourers or landless farmers. The UNICEF 2019 World's Children Report concludes that 69% of deaths among children under 5 years of age happen due to malnutrition itself (UNICEF, World's children report). The issue of malnutrition during this unprecedented viral infection has brought very difficult health challenges among children of migrant workers/labourers. UNICEF also recently (in May,2020) warned through its report that 1.2 million additional children under 5 could not live more than six months in low and middle class countries (UNICEF, report). It had advised to have routine health services and reduce child wasting which may cause India largest deaths, up to 3 lakhs. Even the project undertaken by Tata institute of social sciences named – Towards Advocating Networking and Development (TANDA) warned India, which falls behind various developing countries in standings of child morbidity. Yogendra Ghopdade (the field coordinator of the project) also stated that India might suffer major setbacks if it didn't focus on child morbidity and mortality during covid-19.

To deal with the issues of child safety and health state initiatives to distribute dry rations under ICDS and maintain supply of food, medicines, fruits in addition to take home rations (THR) through ASHA and Anganwadi workers have been running to reduce the danger of malnutrition in Indian states. Though, the grave reality still has affected the beneficiaries as manufacturing areas are closed during lockdown due to monetary issues and the improper distribution too is leaving the needy behind. The slow services of Anganwari and other government facilities for providing health, medication, food and health consultation for the rural and other poverty-stricken areas may have major obstacles to SDGs like No Poverty, Zero Hunger and Ensuring healthy lives and Promoting wellbeing for all. The shutdown of other government facilities like Mid-day meals under Child Development Schemes (CDS) has also led to severe conditions of health and nutrition among rural and urban slums. More than 95.1 million children dependent on the mid-day meals might get deprived of food due to the lockdown. Even the medical care and supplementary nutrition that aim at reaching children suffering from MAM and SAM (Moderate or severe acute malnutrition) have failed to deliver proper services.

Considering the stark situation of children's physical health and safety it is necessary to check progress and improve facilities for these issues. Yet, the government, authorities and health officials should not ignore the

mental/psychological health of the children, especially the ones living in difficult situations. Mental health being one of the major parts of health of a being should be closely taken care of.

3.2 Mental Health of Children-

Children and their mental health have been one of the several challenges the lockdown has put in front of the weak sections of the society. Social psychiatrist for HL Hiranandani hospital, Mumbai reports calls from parents whose children show behavioral changes among their child.

Children are likely to suffer from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disaster) after the death of their relatives and close ones during the Covid-19 virus spread. Death of migrants on road, on railway tracks and during travel from exhaustion causes their children to suffer from more poverty. Besides the indirect mental effect children may also get caught with anxiety such as fear of dying through the virus and not receiving medical treatments on time. The children may also suffer from physical, sexual abuse leaving them in trauma of the incident. Some children may just have anxiety, loneliness being home alone or being apart from their families (UN, 2020).

Besides this the changing situation due to pandemic, leaving children in anger, irritation and sadness for long may also lead to severe mental conditions. They may not be allowed to go out, go to school, face abuse at home, might not receive proper care, food because of financial issues. Thus, leading them to suffer from suffocation of non-understanding.

With increasing population of children in the shelters and more dependence on the local donors, less attendants or service providers, lack of helpers, less space, could all lead to risk of more infections and bad health care. With increasing facilities in physical health, the health professionals must not ignore the psychological/mental health of the young ones.

CHAPTER 4 – LABOUR AND LAWS

4.1 Child labour and Trafficking

Around 84% of the Indian population suffered from fall in income in April,2020 because of the world's advice to stay at home and work from home, during the Coronavirus outbreak. Among which the rural household is hit the worst because of lack of various facilities required to survive being at home, as studied among 5800 homes by Chicago Booth's Rustandy Centre of Social Sector Innovation (RustandyCentre). As per the Centre for monitoring Indian Economy's weekly tracker survey the Indian urban society has 30.9% unemployed people (as of April 5,2020). The economic misery is just a part of the list of troubles being faced by 100 million Indians losing their jobs (CMIE),since 25 march. Unemployment had also increased from 8.4% in March to around 23.4% by the end week of April,2020.

NCEUS reports of 2007 states the contribution of the unorganized sector to be around 50%. And among this population are migrating children who are also sometimes part of this unorganised sector contribution (National Commission for Enterprises in the Un-organised Sector(NCEUS)). There are three dimensions of children being the vulnerable migrants who – either migrate with parents, migrate alone, or are left behind without any support or family. The first section seems to have around 53% of children (stating to be migrating with their parents) as accounted by ILO study (International Labour Organisation, 2013). Another 2013 study by ILO stated around 47% of children aged 6-14 and

68% children aged 15-17, working as labourers. The top 5 states to have child migration for the purpose of employment include- Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and UP (ILO, 2013).

In all such situations with low production, profit and loss of business the production companies, small shops and companies will look for cheap labour, which will lead in increasing human trafficking. Trafficking of children are most likely to hit human rights as they are denied access to freedom of life and are exploited beyond imagination. Sex work too being a major end to human trafficking, as 30 lakh girls/women get involved in sex work, 2007 government data (Government of India, 2007).

4.2 Numbers, Law and Programs –

There are 152 children labourers worldwide, which will make it difficult to eradicate child labour by 2025 under the Sustainable Development Goals. The Ministry of Labour and Employment launched PENCIL portal in 2017 which exposed the child labour in our country by rescuing around 1.7 million children involved in child labour, giving education to around 50% of them. Though there is a decrease in child labour since 2001, according to 2011 census India has large no. of 10.13 million child labourers between 5-14 years. Urban data shows an increase in child labour since 2001 which was 1.3 million to 2011 which terms to be 2 million. In 2016 reports of ILO child labour in India stands with around 23.8 out of some 152 million children as child labourers (5-17 age group). Article 24 of the constitution bans child labour below age 14 under Child labour (prohibition and regulations act, 1986) which was amended in 2016.

India has aimed to end child labour of all types by 2025 under SDG 8.7. For this the government has started various schemes and campaigns, with some successful being the Operation Muskaan in states like Telangana where every year children are rescued from cruel societal evils. The successful campaign has rescued children of young age like 8 years working for more than 12 hours in factories, bus stations, footpaths etc. According to reports some 3914 children were rescued and 2266 children were admitted to rescue homes and shelter places. Children are admitted to the rescue centres by NGOs or Officials but many are there as their poor families have no choice, they have no food and shelter security and children are too young to get employed. Thus, these children are sent to rescue homes. Lack of education, basic needs leading to lack of employment opportunities, child labour or exploitation at work make lives worst for these children. Large number of Child labour prohibition acts like- prohibit and regulation amendment act, 2016 prohibits children from getting indulged in hazardous occupations like factories, mining etc., yet many children are engaged (around 60% of child labour) in these jobs. Covid 19 might lead to more of these children looking for jobs to work for any sector, with increasing work hours from 8 to 12, no payment guarantee will result in the rise of exploitation.

A technical analysis conducted by another child rights NGO – child rights and you (CRY) has also stated that cases of hazardous occupations, exploitation, engagement in agriculture of children has chances of escalation. Child labours will also tend to be exploited on amount of payment, doing long hours of work, having an abusive environment especially during the lockdown times. States like Madhya Pradesh are most vulnerable under child labour as they have more than 7 lakh child labourers giving to the census of 2011.

The International Labour Organisation provides a legislature for state, workers and employers for structural functioning and execution of labour standards inside all member countries. The main aim focusses on protection, non- exploitation, freedom of association, safe work conditions, abolitions of forced labour, protection of migrant workers, elimination of any kind of harassment and many more. India too holds good documentation of labour laws including Trade Union Act 1926, the minimum wages act 1948, employees state insurance act 1948, industrial disputes act 1949, industrial disputes decision act 1955, payment of bonus act 1955, personal injuries (compensation) act 1963, maternity benefits act 1967, contract labour act 1970, bonded labour systems act 1976, equal remuneration act 1976, interstate migrant

workmen (regulation of employment) conditions of service act 1979, the child labour (prohibition and regulation) act 1986, to name a few.

The fundamental rights and directive principles of state policy of Indian condition states responsibility of the state to grant citizens the right to adequate means of livelihood, protection against exploitation of workers, protection of health, equal pay for equal work and also secure facilities, opportunities for children against exploitation. However, they fail the implementation of statutes of labour laws in all the sector and progress in decreasing social evils like child labour and trafficking, mainly in the unorganised sector.

CHAPTER 5 - Education

5.1 Education for All?

The recent 2019 report of UNESCO says that many countries like India lags behind in providing education for migrant children. We have a long way to go as 2013 UNESCO report also stated many children to drop out because of seasonal migration as they have to leave school for work for living. 80% of children as of 2018 don't go to schools (Aid Et Action study), with GEM report stating only 55% of children of Delhi slums went till primary school.

According to the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2019, a study supporting bad child labour conditions in India reports around 8 in 10 children, among 7 cities investigated, without access to education. Around 28% of the children growing up in rural areas are either illiterate or have just completed their primary education. And most importantly 40% children are likely to end up in the work sector than in educational institutes (UNESCO). The 2018 report by Annual status of Education also records 2.8% of children being out of school. Among the students who manage to go to school also, have less hope in reaching 12th standard or completing a Bachelor's degree. The obstacle is not only financial but also the failure of policy progress creating disruption in dreams of millions. Not only education but work or skill development training become far from reach of children in this pandemic situation. Lack of teacher/trainer's training in usage of technology is also a setback, parallel to the lack of facilities among rural and poor households. The ASER survey of 2018 also reveals data on Class-5th students able to read class-2 texts, with states like Tamil Nadu, Arunachal Pradesh and many more having more than 50% of students unable to do so (ASER). This clearly dictates the current situation of education in India though the enrolment and literacy rate has increased in recent years. And the ongoing situation will make it more backwards as lack of facilities, dropouts and increasing study gaps come in.

When the situation has made around 321 million students to stay at home (UNESCO), how will they remain updated with learnings? No classrooms for some students lacking internet, radio, and computer facilities will make them suffer from widening learning gaps, especially with the extension of lockdown. Kamal Gaur, deputy director, education at Save the Children has stated Covid-19 to be the education disaster, as around 20% children drop out post lockdown concludes in loss of child education.

5.2 Internet and Other Facilities for Children

NSS Education survey of 2017-18 in addition states only 40% of rural households with internet facilities. Estimation of UNESCO regarding education of children (learners), estimates around 91% i.e. 1.57 billion learners from 191 countries being affected by shutdown of schools. Of India around 32 crore learners are affected of which some 15.8 crore are female and male comprise 16.2 crore, as estimated by UNESCO (UNESCO).

The juvenile justice care and protection of children act give shelter to various children abandoned, orphaned and also of homes with poor socio- economic issues. a 2019 report by the Jena committee on Child care institutions states the child population of 1.8 lakh people being taken care by the CCI. Nivedita Dasgupta being the India country head of miracle foundation (Int. NGO) states the bad condition of around 400 children who were sent back to their homes after authority orders, the feedback they received from these children were only negative as they had no proper food, basic necessities at their homes. Within the same condition analysis Dr. Prahalathan (co-founder Bhumi) also states the situation of no online classes, lack of internet facilities resulting in loss of precious education time for children living in shelter homes. This situation of lack of basic facilities plus no education facilities will make the children wander in the same poverty covered life, with no progress.

Digital learning had bought a great divide among children of private, urban, high income backgrounds and children from rural and low-income backgrounds. When food, shelter are basic needs for these children of migrant workers they can barely afford to think about the facility of the internet and gadgets even if they have enthusiasm towards learning. CCIs only get around 40% of ICPS funding making it more difficult for them to function well during covid-19.

Nearly 16 lakh children of poor families study in municipal and government schools in Delhi itself. Delhi with 1,028 government schools where around 15 lakh students study, of which 1.12 lakh are class 12 students, trying to access zoom classes and IVR (Interactive voice recordings) to get education. These children face a lack of facilities like mobile, laptop, internet etc. during the term of lockdown as they can't go physically to the schools amid restrictions. Talking of government facilities under information and communication technology (ICT), introduction of zoom app and WhatsApp platforms for assignment, online class material and other study material for children have been proven difficult for children to use. Though the students must be able to access assignments and some online material, the proper usage, visual impact and all time availability of gadgets have caused hurdles to their learning. With some families having one or two gadgets like smartphones, might not be available for all time children's access as the parents go out for work carrying the phone.

Difficulty in teaching certain subjects like maths, science subjects also occur even at the online platforms. The pace is slow with certain ideas (Jugaad) of distributing worksheets, assignments when parents come to collect rations at ration shops are not enough.

A PIL has been issued in Delhi asking the AAP to issue free laptops, mobiles and internet facilities for poor students to access educational digital learning facilities. The bench of justices Manmohan and Sanjeev Narula has issued a notice to the Centre regarding the response to PIL. The PIL has background of Article 21A of the constitution (protection of economically weaker section and disadvantaged category children) for having equal facilities removing financial barriers in education and other areas. EWS category students, those studying in private schools too were not all well equipped to attend online e-classes, digital assignments.

CHAPTER 6 - GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND CHALLENGES

INR 1700 billion relief package is announced to deal with the lockdown. This is in the form of food grains, cash transfers for the vulnerable section of the population. Ministry of consumer affairs, food and public distribution approved integration of UP, Bihar, HP, Daman & diu etc. with national clusters under One Ration One Card (OROC). Total states and UTs rise to 17 and more for the scheme. Beneficiaries should not be denied rations due to interstate migrations.

Providing livelihoods and school infrastructure under MNREGA would be a contribution for saving the society's vulnerable section from trafficking and forced child labour. NRMC has also made good efforts for implementation of projective tools and techniques for progress of child rights and protection programs. This helps in keeping track and filling gaps required for success of programs for children. The Government initiative under Integrated Child development services (ICDS) has promised the provision of food, primary education and regular check-ups for children under 6 years which currently are shut down with Anganwadi workers busy in covid-19 response. Thus, as said by the World Bank – it brings in the importance of role of Anganwadi in battling against undernutrition.

For promoting education also, among all sections of the society and providing free and compulsory education in India, different schemes have been launched by the government including – Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, ICDS, Anganwadis, etc. State initiatives include- Kerala's state policy for children which tracks and rehabilitates the migrant children. Maharashtra 2014 child policy accounts for child education, health and protection of migrant workers.

Though the government tried to ease the situation by providing schemes to rural and urban slum masses, creating ration facilities available to workers and also opening up shops and starting trains, buses for travel, it could be clearly seen that the facilities lack framework of deliverance causing havoc, defeating the sole purpose of physical distancing. It also led to a lot of chaos around the issue of making quarantine centers, providing food medicine like basic facilities and providing assurance of jobs for people migrating their state as Covid – 19 hit the globe.

It would be a good initiative in a successful union government project like Vande Bharat starts and implements well at the grassroots domestic levels for the poor Indian. The trust of egalitarian society and right to life (Article 21 of the constitution should not be left understated by the responsible authorities).

A bill introduced in 2019 – occupational safety and health and working condition code has not yet been passed which has left the situation of fractured laws unanswered.

The government rather than semi structural distribution should aim at an organised distribution by recognising areas, slums of people living under most vulnerable livelihood. This will help not only food, medicines, necessity items to reach all the sections (as some in news and interviews claim no supply of items, food from the government), and also have a check balance system of distribution of facilities. Though the government has made various schemes, programs, and monetary help initiatives and much more to curb the financial, social loss during Covid-19 yet, it is necessary to have a detailed documentation and information record of areas covered, not covered. This practice will not only help to reach all the masses but also keep a check on people who are corrupting procedures. Awareness about the schemes and venue, date, timings of the distribution should be properly spread in addition to measures that should be taken to be protected from covid-19 and other illnesses. According to item no. 81 of the union list the union is responsible for inert state migration and hence, a better management and organised solution for issues arising around the same could bring better change in the situation of migrant workers.

CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSION

The invisibles- that what they are entitled, as they are neither counted while calculating census nor do they have any official data, literature on them. According to 2011 census the child labour in India is around 10 million which tends to increase as poverty, and now the pandemic has built walls of grieve situations. Soledad Herrero the chief of UNICEF (India) has stated- ‘children may not have been the face of the pandemic but they are one of the worst affected. With its impact on their health, mental wellbeing and education, the pandemic could become a child rights crisis. A whole society approach is needed so that children do not become the worst victims.’

Walking the journey of children’s challenges being faced during the lockdown and the pandemic it would be a high time to mend various laws, in place and make certain laws according to the current situation as well. Waiting for more problems to endanger lives, health and future of the vulnerable children will make the whole nation suffer a loss unrepairable. The eye to look, study and analyse situations/hurdles of the nation in a proper manner requires adjusted focus at grass root level issues. Without the focus on grave issues of domestic level the nation will never grow from all edges.

As rightly said by Nelson Mandela- ‘there can be no keener revelation of the society’s soul as the way in which it treats the children’ (1995, 8 May). It is highly integral to solve issues revolving around the vulnerable of the society, especially the most vulnerable among the vulnerable community because this not only slows down the growth of a nation but also pushes it back in the line of progress. Thus, government’s programs to curb the issues around child development, health, education and safety are needed for the developing nation like India to stand with other nations.

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