

Newsletter

Introducing the Alliance:

WNCB is a multi-country and joint initiative launched to contribute towards the concentrated global efforts in ending all forms of child labour by 2025. Through four integrated pathways of change to address the root causes of child labour and its pervasive impact on children, youth, their families and communities, the alliance will work on achieving the impact that children and youth are free from child labour and enjoy their rights to quality education and (future) decent work, thereby contributing to SDG 8.7 in six countries- Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Mali, Uganda, Viet Nam and India. The program is being supported by MOFA, The Netherlands.

Understanding the interaction of various socio-economic and demographic factors with the causes and prevalence of child labour forms the core of the Work: No Child's Business (WNCB) intervention in India. Our work revolves around addressing the complex interplay of factors such as migration, caste and gender inequalities with poverty being one of the underlying root causes. Guided by the area-based approach and supply chain approach, the core focus of the program is on strengthening child protection systems, ensuring quality education for all children, empowering youth economy, finding alternative livelihoods, strategizing to build Child's Rights and Business Principles and also creating evidence-based outputs in India. With three regions: Rajasthan, the National Capital Region, and Bihar under the program, the alliance in India focuses on eliminating child labour from the natural stone sector, the garment, and textile industry, domestic/ informal and agricultural labour respectively.



Editor's Message

Friends, since COVID-19 has struck humanity, reports by several civil society institutions and editorials in national dailies point out to alarming levels of danger a child in labour faces. Worldwide an estimated 152 million children are said to be at work with half of them left to labour for hazardous work. UNICEF points out about COVID-19 pandemic fast becoming a child rights crisis. Estimates by the Government of India's labour and employment ministry put the size of the migrant workforce at over 100 million of which 20-25 per cent are children. In 2011, there were 33 million children in labour between the ages of 5 and 18; the current crisis is driving up these numbers. With the digital divide, there are widened disparities in education too. Violence, abuse, child marriages have increased and severe economic distress has left the child who is already in the throes of marginalization further unprotected from labour, hunger and exploitation.

The Work: No Child's Business (WNCB) Alliance complements the state and civil society's efforts at mitigating the risks that emergence of COVID-19 has unleashed upon us in reaching a milestone to achieve the sustainable development goal 8.7. WNCB in India shall work on the ground as well as connect with people and institutions for making policies on child labour more robust and effective. This newsletter shall bring to the readers stories from the ground as well as perspectives from those working on the issue.

This introductory edition has essays by veteran journalist Usha Rai and education activist Surjit Thokchom besides snippets on work by partners.

REACH OUT TO CHILDREN IN PERIL IN THE PANDEMIC

- Usha Rai

A decade of work by child rights activists to secure a bright future for children based on their education and development has got a tremendous setback with the Covid-19 lockdown and the dire straits of our economy. **The reverse migration saw children, women and men trudging back to their villages, walking hundreds of miles with hardly any food or rest.** Who can forget the story of 12 year old Jamlo Makdam who in April, soon after the lockdown, walked over 100 km from the chilli fields of Telangana, where she worked as child labourer, and collapsed and died of exhaustion about 11 kms before reaching her home in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh.

But there are many stories like that of Jamlo Makdam already happening across the rural and urban underbellies of India. Children are being exploited and forced to work as schools remain closed and impoverished parents are unable to

provide for them. Sometimes the push back into child labour is blatant but more often it is stealthy and insidious. Take the case of Govind and Hari (names changed) the 16 and 12 year sons of a municipal

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garbage collector, of Vikarabad District, Telangana. Govind was in the ninth class of a residential school run by the social welfare department and Hari in class 6 in a government school. Their father runs a tempo trolley, given by the civic body, to collect garbage and his earnings came from the Rs 50 a month he collected from the over 2000 homes he serviced. Since he paid for the diesel of the tempo trolley, his income may have been Rs 12,000 a month. As schools stayed closed, the father stopped going out to work and sent his two sons to collect the garbage. Hari, who had accompanied his father earlier on weekends and

ran around for the door to door collection, now began driving the tempo though clearly underage. Govind did the door to door collection.

When a child rights activist took up the case with the labour department, the father threatened the activist. He said

“ you can adopt my sons or open the schools. I can't feed them!

Till the case is sorted out, the children were left in the care of the labour department. **Quietly, children are being pushed into the labour force, often by their own parents.**

In Maredpalli Mandal, Hyderabad, Raja (name change) a sixth class student in a government school, began accompanying his father, an electrician, carrying his bag and learning the tricks of the trade during the lockdown. The father **could not afford a smart phone** for his son and the family had



no internet facility or computer for Raja to join online classes.

The **situation of young girls** during the lockdown and economic slowdown is worse. The girls are being trafficked and forced into **child marriage**. Recently, a 15 year old girl who returned home from her residential school, was **sexually assaulted** by her father when her mother was not at home. The mother was reluctant to register a police case because he was the only bread winner of the family. The girl was traumatised. Child Line has reached out to the girl and is trying to ensure her safety.

There is also great danger of girls, who were studying in government and philanthropic private schools in the cities, being forced into **agricultural labour** on coming home with their migrant parents. Only in

The situation of young girls during the lockdown and economic slowdown is worse. The girls are being trafficked and forced into child marriage.



the agriculture sector there was an economic uptick during the pandemic. There was and continues to be a demand for labour in the farmlands of India. Big farmers are happy to pay less for children, and girls with nimble fingers are very much in demand for picking cotton and chilli. They travel in crowded autos or tractors or just walk to the farmstay and worksites day in and day out labouring without respite. They have just not been able to say 'no'. **For who is listening to their voices of hunger, pain and suffering, asks a child rights activist.**

I don't know what is worse—being forced into agriculture labour

or being trafficked to work in sweat shops in the big cities or for sexual work in red light areas. With train services resuming, a growing number of children are falling prey to trafficking. Just recently the Salaam Balaak Trust rescued 14 children, 13 to 16 years of age, from the Delhi railway station. They were part of a group of 20 youngsters from Katihar, Bihar, being trafficked for work in Delhi. On a tip off from the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights, the raid was conducted with the support of some 40 policemen. All forms of child exploitation are painful for the child who is not allowed to grow to his or her full potential with education and care.

Currently one in 10 children in the world is engaged in the labour force. It is feared that the UN's sustainable development goal to eliminate all forms of child labour by 2025 has suffered a crippling blow with the pandemic. The situation in poor and developing countries like India is worse. As per the 2011 India census, 10.1 million children of 5 to 14 years are in the work force. According to a UNESCO study, 330 million students in India have been affected by the

Collaboration, based on trust and equal partnership, has to be built between NGOs and the government to reach out to children and respond to their needs with a sense of urgency.



***About the writer:**

Usha Rai is a veteran journalist and the recipient of Chameli Devi Award, FAO/Science Writers Award, Media India award and Stree Shakti Lifetime Achievement Award. She was a pioneer in reporting on women's issues, health, environment and development. She is currently working as a media and communication consultant with various national and international development agencies, a consultant for Limca Book of Records. She also freelances and contributes to the Hindu Businessline, The Asian Age, the Hindu, The Sunday Guardian and the Tribune.

pandemic, many of who were dependent on their mid-day meals at school for a full stomach.

So what can be done? Shantha Sinha, the first chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and winner of the Magsaysay award for her work with children in bonded labour, says there has to be a greater decentralisation when you work for children. "Government must trust local bodies and park funds with them for emergency relief and rehabilitation of children. At this level, children are names and faces and not just statistics. Every child has to be tracked and accounted for. A committee consisting of ASHA workers, anganwadi workers, school teachers, SHGs, Village Child Protection Committees and local functionaries should be constituted to assist the local bodies to give relief to children." When a child is forced to work or pushed into marriage, this committee should meet the family, counsel them and warn employers of legal action for exploiting the child during this crisis

Schools perform several functions in addition to teaching and learning. They are safe spaces for children and make them visible. In schools children enjoy peer support and friendships; schools are spaces for sports, music, dance and co-curricular activities; a place where libraries provide books and the joy of reading. **Dr Sinha feels all the functions of the school should be taken up in the communities with support from gram panchayats. Government should support such activities till**

the lockdown is lifted and schools are reopened. While it is fine for children to miss some lessons, which they can always catch up on,

it is important they remain stress and anxiety free. There has been a spate of suicides by children unable to cope with the tough situation they are in.

Most important, Shantha Sinha says there has to be an assured mid-day meal and even breakfast under these COVID times of scarcity. "Collaboration, based on trust and equal partnership, has to be built between NGOs and the government to reach out to children and respond to their needs with a sense of urgency.

All forms of child exploitation are painful for the child who is not allowed to grow to his or her full potential with education and care.

Decoding the Codes of NEP

Providing access to education for all children plays a key role in the prevention of child labour and rescuing child labourers with the hope of offering a bright future. Placed at the core of WNCB, we look at the issue of Child Labour through the lens of the New Education Policy launched in 2020 in India. Whether the education/policy reform could be the solution or provides plenty of opportunities and corresponding interventions in achieving the global agenda of eliminating Child Labour in India, particularly when COVID-19 global pandemic poses as a risk to reverse the progress, we explore.

THE CHILD LABOUR AND NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020 - Surjit S Thokchom

Who is child labour?

For the present analysis, we take child labour as a child employed for a work that deprives their childhood, education, their potential and dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. In this context, child labour must include every child who is not in school because he or she is a hidden child worker. While a child in a school can be still child labour, a child out of school between 5-14 years is necessarily child labour. In the rural context, particularly amongst the marginalized and socially discriminated section of society, the traditionally accepted form of an engaging child in domestic and farm works, by the above definition, are child labours. All children who are engaged in unorganised work are child labours though they are not officially counted as child labours.

A Child in Educational fold under NEP 2020 can be still a child labour:

In NEP 2020, the mandate for children's education is limited to bringing them into the educational fold, not necessarily to bring them back to school for mainstream education, nor to provide an equitable quality education through an alternative approach. A child can be in the Educational fold if the child is admitted to either in a regular course or multiple pathways. There are 5 types of children within its educational fold under NEP-2020 viz. children attending (i) regular school, (ii) open schooling, (iii) online education, (iv) vocational education and (v) home-schooling for severely disabled children. The Document does acknowledge that India has 3.22 crores drop out children and it is also said that these children must be brought back within the educational fold. By allowing children to be in the educational fold without really attending a formal school or a non-formal centre, NEP 2020 recommends a State-sponsored manipulation to achieve 100% GER without any substantive changes in presently prevailing exploitative situation that compels children to become child labour.

Count down to end publicly funded school system under NEP 2020: pushing children into child labour

Within NEP 2020, the Private schools and State Government Schools will be treated symmetrically. With the provision of resource sharing in the name of twinning of a Private school and a Government school within a school complex, along with institutionalisation of Private school practices in a Government school and permitting the private school to collect fees of any amount to the extent of surplus income provided it is disclosed in the State School Standard Authorities website,

count down for the end of the Publicly funded school system is now started. Moreover, the NEP 2020 has removed two important terms directly related to social justice: free education and reservation. In place of these terms, the merit-based scholarship/free-ship and affordability have been introduced. In addition to these anti-poor measures to accentuate inequality, many standalone schools will be shutting down in the name of rationalisation to create school complexes within the radius of 5-10 kilometres. The obvious consequence is the inaccessibility to school to attend a regular class. In other words, there will be large scale drop out (in fact pushed out) children as per present NPE 1986(as amended in 1992) perspective and in NEP-2020's Regressive perspective, these pushed out children will be in the educational fold through multiple pathways. It means 100% GER with no meaningful education for the majority of children. These majority children, by default, are to become child labour.



Historical perspective to fight against the practice of Child labour: NEP 2020 takes U-turn

Referring back to the Constituent Assembly debate in 1948, Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that the right place for children until they attain the age of 14 was a regular formal school and he tried his level best to put it into part III of the Constitution but the aggressive argument by the members on the basis of "who will work in our field?" finally forced Dr Ambedkar to compromise the mandate to constitutionally abolish child labour and thus it was reduced to a non-enforceable constitutional directive principle for state policies in part IV and that was how Art. 45 of the constitution with 10 years deadline was inserted. The spirit of Art 45 got converted into Art 21 A in the somewhat diluted form under 86th amendment. Now with NEP 2020, even whatever little remedy available through RTE Act 2009 to rehabilitate child labour will be removed.

NEP 2020 conspires to promote child labour in conjunction with CLPR Act

The existing the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, amended in 2016, and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Rules, 1988, amended in 2017 allow a child to work in family's business or enterprises after his (or her) school hours or during vacation. Reading this in conjunction with the multiple pathways recommended by the NEP -2020

within the newly proposed structure: 5+3+3+4, wherein a child can be a student without any school hours through online and open schooling, the remedy to stop child labour has been permanently annulled. Further, the Act allows employing a child below 14 years in any workshop or school established by or receiving assistance or recognition from, Government. Reading the CLPR Act in conjunction with NEP 2020 gives us a threatening possibility of reviving the caste-based occupation and caste-based society. This possibility increases several folds with the recommendation of vocational education

stream from class VI onward by allowing the family enterprises to employ or use the services of the children.

The dilution of the State commitment was initiated in NEP 1986 as amended in 1992 with LPG and culminated in full in NEP 2020

What NEP 2020 proposes is not something that happens all of a sudden. For six decades after independence, there was no legislation for free and compulsory education though Art 45 was in place with a deadline of 10 years. NPE 1968 proposed Common School System through neighbouring schooling. But due to lack of political will, it was never pushed forward adequately. In India's rhetorical summersault in the post-emergency period too, even in 20-Economic Programmes, children's health and nutrition along with equitable education were not incorporated. As India was negotiating her political destiny during the cold war period, the agenda of children's education with a particular reference to the restoration of childhood was taken a back seat. The first formal document with clear direction to dilute the State's commitment to the equitable quality of education came in NPE 1986 (as amended in 1992) as "Resolve" with the introduction of two streams:

Formal Education & Non-formal Education (NFE). Vocational Education (VE) introduced at the secondary level under NPE 1986 was for diverting children from the so-called Mainstream Education. The provisioning for both NFE and VE was minuscule and it was sugar-coated with beautiful rhetorical pedagogical terms with no adequate financial and human resource provisioning. Reading NPE 1986 in conjunction with the Child labour (Child labour and Prohibition) Act 1986 reveals clearly that the State had diluted the Constitutional mandate. The dilution in NPE 1986 was in consonance with the condition made under EFA (the Jomtien framework). But even in NPE 1986 before the advent of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation in India in 1992, the dilution of the State's Agenda to fight against the menace of child labour were evidently visible. Agenda of dilution of commitment to both equitable education for all children particularly marginalised children who were highly vulnerable to be exploited as Child-Labour was initiated in the middle 90s with the structural adjustment under the dictate of World Bank. Now with NEP2020, child labour will have hardly any legal remedy. A child can be a child labour and can be within the fold of education of course with no space for equitable education.

The Social context of Child labour within the epistemological framework in NEP 2020: an urgent concern!

Presence of child labour and society with an exploitative situation are two sides of the coin. State's intervention for Social Justice is necessary to bring an alternative non-exploitative situation. One of the important tasks for abolishing child labour is to internalise that child labour is wrong. The state has to create a favourable climate to abolish child labour along with legislation and implementing apparatus. It is here that the knowledge framework of the NEP 2020 has a direct implication. NEP 2020 promotes three sets of knowledge systems: Sanskrit knowledge system (based on Ancient Indian Eternal Knowledge), Indigenous knowledge system and western scientific knowledge system. While the Sanskrit Knowledge system is based on self-testified



***About the writer:**

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knowledge with no scope for verification by external agencies, western scientific knowledge is generated through verification by external agencies. And therefore, the two are not compatible with each other. In a situation like this, the indigenous knowledge system will polarise to one of them depending on which one is patronised by the State. A social climate as a result of polarisation towards Sanskrit knowledge system is likely to be in line with value framework such as Manu Smriti. It will legitimise the doctrine of inequality and inequity. This will legitimise child labour. And becoming child labour will be the destiny of the majority of children.

COVID make the situation from bad to worse:

With Covid 19, the situation is now taking from bad to worse. The issue is no more that of education but of survival. Children are now digitally divided into two groups: digitally accessible and digitally inaccessible. For those children who have some access to the digital world, they are now engaged in some form of educational activities but children who are digitally inaccessible, are from the lower strata of the society and they are already now child labours. In a situation like this, what can we probably do it? One possible action is to consolidate our collective strength for proactive action to resist the anti-child policies. Another area is to work for widening our democratic space for dialogue, discussion, and collective action within the constitutional framework.



COHERENT CALL FOR CHANGE

SUSHMA'S HEROIC EFFORTS TOWARDS THE GIFT OF EDUCATION

-Ashima Sharma with inputs from Garima Kaur & WNCB Partner

Rasalpur Panchayat, Bihar. On a sultry afternoon, girls and boys, their clothes soiled in mud continued to play under a tree with a patch of wet earth. It was at this hour when Sushma didi spotted them kneading the mud and making utensils out of it. One would have called this affair, kitchen-kitchen. She walked closer to watch them play; not close enough to scare them. Yet, a boy spotted her and the word quickly spread in the group with murmurs. "See, Sushma is watching us play. She will scold us."

Sushma took this route to work each day. The children were familiar to her. She said she won't scold them at all but wants to watch them play. So the children resumed talking and kneading when she interrupted, "Do you all wash hands before eating? Your clothes are all dirty in the mud, will you now take a bath or no?"

Her job is to track all Non School-Going (NSG) children in the area. The NSG tracking is an initiative of the MV Foundation to pull children back into the cycle of education. A lot of children in rural Bihar face the pull of labour demand in cities. As the schools remained closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, children become prone to be an easy target for child labour. WNCB partner MV Foundation attempted to address this issue of children during the lockdown in the villages.

Sushma has been actively contacting families and encouraging the parents to take care of their children's health. She accompanied the children back to their village and promised not to tell their parents of what they were doing. However, what she wanted to know was why their parents were allowing the children to go out without masks in the time of a pandemic. She got to know that there is no provision to make food or even to live properly inside the house, let alone take care of the boys. Their parents either worked in someone's wheat fields or brick kilns

and are out of money. Sushma took charge and told all of them to tie handkerchiefs around their face and maintain distance if they cannot access masks.

Sushma thought that her initiative worked. Two days after, when she crossed the field, she saw no children there. But it was only a matter of few more steps when she spotted a group of boys playing with broken matchsticks. They all ran at the sight of her and shouted "Bachhao" (save us). In tracking the children who do not go to school, Sushma's work included taking a picture to identify the children and submitting it in the school. The children were aware of this, and ran as if running for their lives.

With 2.07 million workers aged between 5 and 17, the state accounts for 10.7% of India's underage workforce and has the second-highest number of child and adolescent workers.

At first, Sushma was scared that the villagers may think she has tried to harm the boys. But as soon as she reached there, the villagers were laughing and asked her if the children ran away on seeing her. Since a lot of people came out of their houses and gathered, Sushma took this opportunity to explain that it is important that the parents take initiative in their child's studies at home.

As Bihar witnessed a reverse migration of labourers coming back to their native places, the issue of coronavirus and education presented a dilemma. Most families did not have the resources to provide for daily needs like ration and sanitation. The situation became worse in the flood affected areas of Bihar. Left to fend for a livelihood, education was not a priority. Sushma had to convince families to educate their children.

At this instant, a lady interrupted and asked, "Will you take a tuition for my child? One hour every day?" Other parents joined to say the same. Sushma said, "I cannot come and teach until there is provision for children to sit at a distance and wear masks."

It was not very easy to go through all this. Many people in the village discouraged her saying she cannot run the centre when the schools are closed. Once while walking to another village, a woman stopped her on the way and inquired about where she goes despite the lockdown restrictions. What Sushma had to fight was systemic—the mindset of people around educating the child versus having them work and earn.

Few days later, Sushma was walking back to that village to check on the children and ensuring there is enough space to teach. Once again, she spotted the children picking mangoes from the tree. She stood there and laughed as the children immediately threw away their

mangoes and said, "We will not do this again." She knew that her initiative was working.

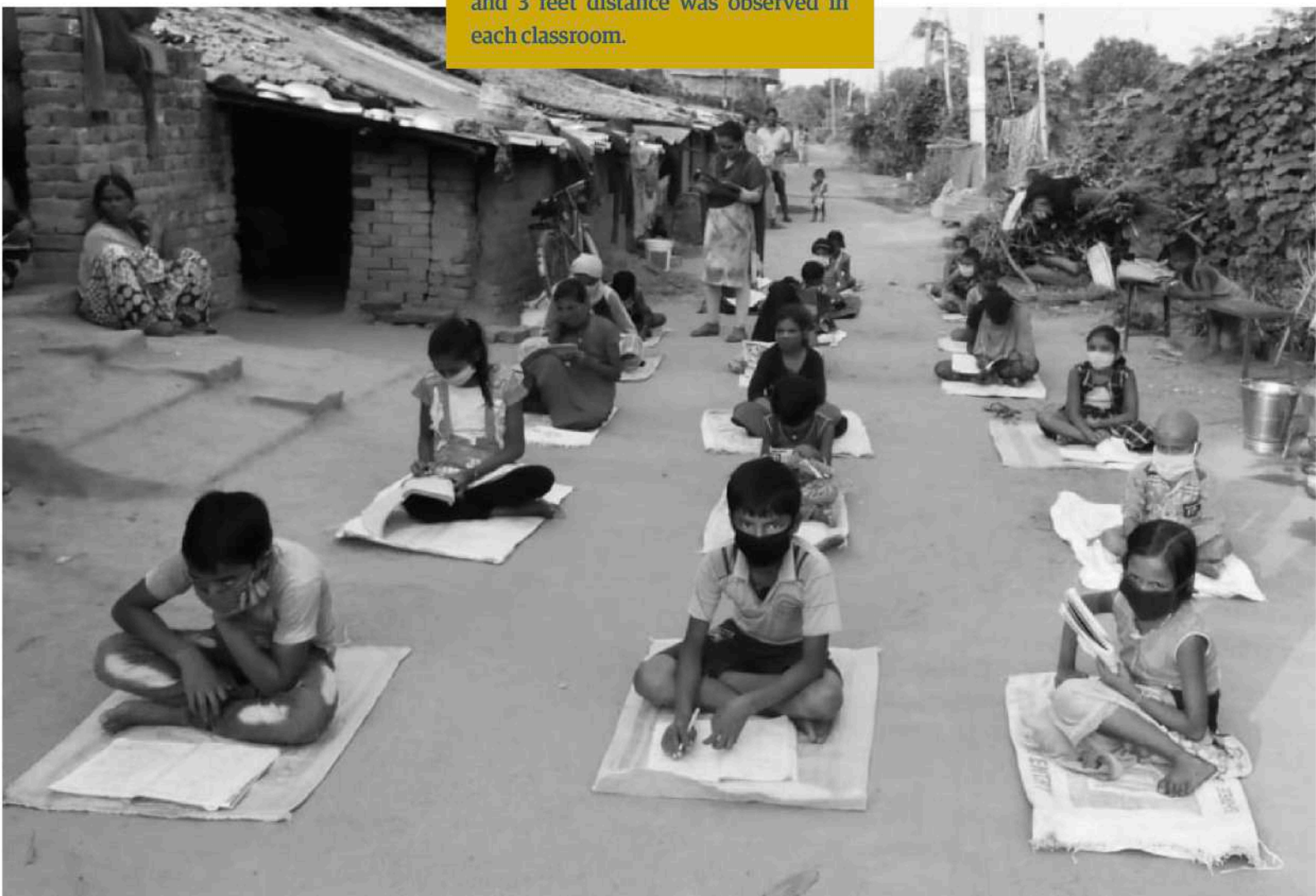
Sushma mobilized 25 children and started teaching them in a temple. She faced the problems created by the drunken men in the vicinity of the temple, who were sourcing illegal liquor and creating menace for the children. After a few days, some villagers recognised her determination. There were two women ward members, who were closely watching her. They told her to conduct classes at their home.

In the village, in a spacious backyard, Arjun's mother had cleaned and lay small mats for boys and girls. Sitting at a distance of two arms, copies in their hands, Sushma started by asking them to write their name. The children were from classes 1 to 8, each at a different stage of learning. They were given small tests to check how much they know and where to begin teaching them. The class soon

During this drive of enrolment, 3738 children were enrolled in the schools. The programme of remedial classes for children during the lockdown covered 2146 children in 96 centres among 5 districts of Bihar. All these centres were incidentally organised in Mahadalit communities (marginalized communities in Bihar), classes were organised from 3 p.m. to 5p.m. in the afternoon and in all 96 centres the village youth, child rights protection forum members and MV Foundation staff have been organizing classes, games and other activities for the children. MV Foundation's thrust has been to intervene in vulnerable communities for tangible impact. These communities often include people who had to either drop out of school given financial restrictions or those who have never had access to education before this. Children enrolled in this programme were made to study in school buildings and sometimes in the tree shade. They were encouraged to wash their hands and 3 feet distance was observed in each classroom.

became that of 35 children who were now learning despite the schools being closed down.

Sushma's effort is reflected in a 15-year old boy who could not even write his name but is now enrolled in a school. Each child has transformed in their own way. Even the villagers have started taking initiative and teaching their children. "When I am late for a class, the villagers take it upon themselves to check the homework given," says Sushma with a sense of fulfilment. And why not! A 15-year old boy, who used to dance and play instruments in marriages in order to make money for a living will now be educated and can dream of a better future. It is with such stories that Sushma continues to journey village to village on foot and encourage children to get educated. In a firm voice she says, "Despite being discouraged, I am firm that I have to teach these children. I have to let people know about their talents and potential."



From Ground Zero

Undaunted, marching towards its mission to abolish child labour and uplift the quality of life led by the children and their parents, the WNCB team, comes together to collaborate & elevate its purpose. With support from its stakeholders, diverting its efforts towards the children in the month of September & October, especially towards the girl child as the world observed the International Girl Child Day on October 11, the following activities were undertaken as measures of relief and to set an example for the betterment of the society:

CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD

And admiring the struggles, the beauty, and the pride of her being.

The International Day of the Girl Child is celebrated globally on October 11, every year. To make it memorable and fruitful, our partners meticulously contributed with their unprecedented efforts towards celebrating the day.

During the month of September, when **Save the Children** along with its partner, Dr. A.V. Baliga Memorial Trust, successfully collaborated with the Senior Superintendent of Post Office of South & South East Post office to open girl child accounts under Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, for children aged within 10 years, it was a moment of victory and empowerment for what appeared to be another prominent step towards a stable future for the girl child of this country. On the remarkable day of celebrations, Save The Children distributed 36 Sukanya Samridhi Account (SSA) passbooks to the beneficiaries to honor their daughters & sisters; to give them all the hopes they deserve for a future they dream of.

Concurrently, **MV Foundation** celebrated October 11, 2020, by bringing together 225 girls in Bihar, at the MVF project area, to discuss the importance of their being, their virtue & talk about the seamless opportunities they envision themselves fostering and excelling. The organisers formed groups and invited girls to formulate within themselves a set of inspiring questions that precisely stirred them to discuss their freedom & voice their

opinions about who controls it. It urged them to explicitly discuss their imagination on how they think the society envisions their freedom along with touching the crucial topics like obstacles to girl child education, the discrimination they face, and what in

their opinion could make it easier for them to be a part of the society by being more than a 2nd gender & demanding education as any other right. The groups later fearlessly presented their views & opinions in this regard & helped the foundation gain an insightful perspective.

On the same day, the **All India Primary Teachers' Federation** along with its affiliates joined hands with a like-minded forum to reflect upon the status of the girl children during the COVID-19 and their education. The teachers from the group pledged to create a safe & secure school environment for the girls that would promote equality and sensitivity.

These dedicated initiatives by our partners reflected on the emergence of the girl child acknowledged the premise of betterment and carved a path of hope all at once.

RESTORING DREAMS & CHILDHOOD BY REFUELING THE LAMP OF EDUCATION

The pandemic has pushed the means to access education off the limits. While in its course, it has disrupted the improving patterns of education attained by the children, our partners have been thriving to not only reverse its effects but to succour a system that entails an equal opportunity for all even in these trying times.

Setting an example, first in the line is the **Fakirana Sisters Society (FSS)** which amongst its many endeavors, has conducted 8 Panchayat level campaigns in two months in the project areas in RTE, government schemes & other rights for children. It exhibited information in the simplest form by displaying it on flax and bringing it up via the



nukkad sabha for approximately 1870 community members out of which 810 were women. Later, keeping the motivation alive amongst children, the project staff at FSS pushed through a total of 263 out of school children, to enroll in schools by conducting an enrollment drive with the help of their parents/members of SMC, PGs & teachers. Addressing the most prominent issue for the children- the lack of physical imparting of knowledge in schools, FSS helmed 11 bridge course centers for out of school children with the help of teachers who registered in extra hours & efforts for a total of 289 children aged between 6-14 years, who were found to be regular & safe, attending the same.

Standing firm to its ground, **Save the Children**, accelerated the enrollment of children in schools as soon as the Delhi MCD & government schools started their admission process. It has fortuitously enrolled 154 children into the MCD schools in its catchment area. Moreover, it also proffered online & onsite classes for 60 children within the age group of 6-14 years across project locations by encouraging the parents with smartphones to put technology to the best use of imparting education for their children.

Fighting against injustice as a regular practice, **MV Foundation**, stood strong as a pillar for the children in Champaran district to protect their legal right to education. From motivating parents to enroll their children in schools, to becoming the voice of the voiceless by protesting against the teachers who baselessly refused admission to these children, the foundation along with its proficient mobilizer, Doli Kumari, secured admission for 17 children who had never been to school. Keeping a close eye on the growth & subsequent transfer of children from primary to middle & high school, MVF sincerely plays a crucial role in the process. Identifying loopholes such as illegal procurement of transfer fees by the school or teachers, challenging caste system practices within schools, and fighting for the rights of children to seek education under government aid, MVF, defies all odds to build a promising tomorrow for these children.

Intercepting the adverse effects of the prominent Digital Divide and to further prevent more dropouts, the **WNCB Rajasthan Platform**, worked with subject experts and developed work-sheets for grades 1-5. These worksheets have been developed following the defined Minimum Learning Levels (MLL) in the textbooks. At present the worksheets have been developed for subjects like Mathematics and Hindi. These worksheets reached about 1000 children of Budhpura and surrounding villages.

Relentless support & facilitation by **Manjari's Education Volunteers (EVs)** during these challenging times of the pandemic, piloted a network of 6 Education Volunteers & 10 Peer Educators in 13 villages/habitation around Budhpura. In just over three months of implementation, they learned to overcome critical challenges like the lack of equity in access to ICT-based learning, lack of access to computers, mobile

phones, and internet connectivity & witnessed exciting progress.

Working towards the same issue of tackling the challenges proposed by the global closure of schools, the determined members of **All India Primary Teachers' Federation (AIPTF)** intervened in 3 states; Delhi, Bihar, & Rajasthan to reinforce quality public education.

From submitting a Memorandum urging the governments to ensure accessibility of online classes for all children, adequate training & equipment for the teachers to protesting on shortcomings of the New Education Policy to prevent the deterioration of the quality of education & its commercialization, the AIPTF, resourcefully contributed to the welfare of its stakeholders.

The AIPTF also celebrated World's Teachers' Day on October 5, 2020 where all its state affiliates participated in a 24-hour live event, based on the theme- *Teachers Taking the Lead*. It highlighted the significance of teachers & collected constructive feedback from the community, parents & students.

Being torchbearers of protecting the rights of children to attain equal educational opportunities, the WNCB team and its partners understand the urge to bridge the gap between their financial shortcomings & connect with the children to polish their skills.

To encourage the same intentions, Save the Children, through its partner, Dr. A. V. Baliga Memorial Trust was able to enroll 37 youth and adolescents into Vocational Training and skilling courses across Vocational Training/Skilling centers. They have been enrolled in courses like Customer Relationship and Sales, Hospitality and Digital Marketing in Tech Mahindra Foundation SMART center, SEED's, CSR Center, and Godrej CSR along with timely counseling and assessments.

At the same time, FSS rendered vocational training for students at the identified centers. Proving it to be worthwhile, a total of 18 students attended computer classes, whereas, 22 girls were a part of tailoring classes, where a combination of theory & practical was weaved together on a regular basis for comprehensive understanding and result-oriented growth of the students.



BUILDING COMMUNITY, BINDING EFFORTS

Recognising the strength of community learning and the impact of shared experiences, the partners at WNCB, again redefined the set bar of their quality efforts by undertaking various valuable exercises for the society.

Kickstarting the same, the **Fakirana Sisters Society (FSS)**, organized an exposure program for 244 children, with an equal amount of participation from the girls. They extended an opportunity for the children to learn from 24 groups about how to protect oneself as well others in case of any emergency and how to prevent child labor in society. Under its care, FSS further amplified the power of its stakeholders by organizing regular meetings for its staff and conducting two days of training on 7th-8th September. To keep the flame of change burning and soaring, FSS dedicatedly held regular sessions for various groups to emphasize distinct issues like that of livelihood, education and child labor crises along with the need for savings. FSS also conducted consistent meetings with the boys and girls, PGs group members, on a monthly basis to not only openly discuss & debate about child education, migration, and risks of trafficking but to also delegate the roles & responsibilities of each member. A total of 320 children enthusiastically participated, with an almost equal sex ratio.

Moreover, by adopting a set of non-conventional activities- from being in constant touch with different stakeholder like DCPU, CWC, Child Line, RSETI & the Welfare Department of West Champaran district to monitor the status of child labourers in the the district & project areas, to capturing these ongoing efforts, the team at FSS, continuously strived towards its mission in the month of September & October. Mr. Abhay Kumar, DCPU, Ms. Subhasani Prasad, Welfares, Mr. Diwedi from RSETI and Mr. Majid from Child Line, supported the children by networking and contributing towards the efforts. A very helpful scoping study facilitated by Mr. Sandeep Kumar & Mr. Sunil Kumar, was also organised with 80 HH of migrant labor, teachers, stakeholders, traffickers and company in charge. Making learning fun and prioritising spreading awareness in the most relevant way, FSS,

prepared a script to host a puppet show program at 8 Panchayats in the working area to highlight the importance of abolishment of child labor and the disadvantages of child marriage. Outnumbering the total participation of men in the program, 650 women out of a total of 1150, the participants prolifically conveyed the message for the



children by demanding a greater sense of responsibility from the parent's end as well.

On the other hand, critically acknowledging the preventive measures for the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, **Nav Jagriti** raised awareness with the help of Suchna Rath in project villages. The Suchna Rath with IEC materials & AV moved to all 30 villages, where people actively visited the rath to consciously learn about the preventive measures.

Falling no short of exceptional efforts,

Save the Children, showcased enormous amounts of confidence in a girl's will to seek education. Hence, while profiling children for enrollment in Multipurpose Centre (MAC), when Dr. A.V. Baliga Memorial Trust received details of a girl & her family who refused to enroll her in a school, the trust immediately took action. During Child Protection Risk Communication and Community Engagement tele-calling, the girl child's parents were informed about child rights, child sexual abuse & child protection, which helped them to open up about their daughter's case & disclose the details to the project team. Having received the relief amount of INR 50,000 from the Delhi Victim Compensation Committee, the family was due to receive a sum of INR 1,50,000 from The Women Victim Compensation Committee. Putting its foot down, the trust then helped to accelerate the matter and after rigorous follow-ups, was able to

secure compensation for the parents which motivated them to enroll their daughter in school, in the third grade.

"I want to study; I want to go to school" said that young girl chipping away stones. Building upon the efforts of the partners in highlighting such voices of children, the team at ICCo ventured into the field to document the ground realities through its pen and lens.

They marked the launch of WNCB India twitter handle with their social media campaign called #GirlsDecide; celebrating #OctoberforGirls. Intending to move towards a gender equal world, WNCB decided to give girls the power to create social change and decide their future for themselves. The campaign culminating in a video captured how education and skill training enabled the girls to be independent and decide the course of their lives.

SOWING THE SEEDS OF RELIEF

The country has been battling many feuds amongst which the recent protests by farmers have been draining & unsettling not only for the economy but for the farmers, themselves too. Leveraging a sigh of relief, Nav Jagriti, with the help of Bayer Foundation, distributed seeds & organised on-field training sessions. Paddy seeds, fertilizers and pesticides were dispensed to 1870 farmers in Aurai block or Muzaffarpur & Mansi block of Khagaria districts along with french bean, bodo, & tomato seeds to 342 farmers for cash crop cultivation purposes, along with 2 sessions on vegetable cultivation to enhance their skills of hybrid variety cultivation where 93 farmers participated.



WNCB THROUGH PARTNER'S LENS



**Ramakanta Satapathy, Manager,
Child Protection, Save the
Children Rajasthan**

Children and childhood are meant to be fostered in conditions of freedom, dignity and opportunities to learn and to develop their full potential. They should not be subjected to or forced into any kind of economic engagement even in times of worst crisis like COVID-19 and they need to be protected against exploitation and abuse and against moral and material abandonment. We believe Work that deprives a child any of its rights to whatever little extent may be is detrimental and should be shunned.

**WHAT
DOES
WNCB
MEAN
TO YOU
IN YOUR
CONTEXT?**



**Vijay Prakash from Dr. A.
V. Baliga Memorial Trust,
Delhi**

WNCB works on the root cause of Child Labour and creates a massive impact on Children, Youth, and their community. To effectively eliminate Child Labor, with the help of government and non-government stakeholders, they use an area-based approach, wherein, we have identified sectors with a high incidence of Child Labour, the Garment Sector. WNCB believes that no child should be working but instead should have the right to a good education, to play, to enjoy their childhood, and to realize their full potential as human beings. The Programme 'Work: No Child Business' (WNCB) is designed to contribute to concerted global efforts to end all forms of child labor by 2025 along with accelerating opportunities to enhance the development of all children.



Piyush Kumar, Program Coordinator, Save the Children Bihar

Children need every one of us to drum up support and fight for them against child labour. Children are meant to carry books and not loads of bags on their heads, they need to craftily use their hands for writing and sketching and not for moulding bricks. Lastly, engaging children in labour is not at all a profitable business proposition so stop living off child's labour rather make children leave work.

Ashok Kumar from Dr. A. V. Baliga Memorial Trust, Delhi

Work: No Child Business is one of the best integrated initiatives to eradicate child labour in garment sector. It's holistic approach makes it special. WNCB is committed not only to eradicate child labour but also providing children in labour net an equal opportunity for their potential growth. Engagement of all major stakeholders also shows our collective responsibilities towards a world accountable to all children equally.

AIPTF

Children should be given full time to enjoy their childhood and study in school. Education is the birth right of every child. Childhood is their learning and growing period during which they should not be involved in any type of job.

Kalam, FSS, Bihar

“ WNCB is a campaign against child labor that advocates education for all children and focuses on the capacity building of academic mechanisms. As a unique platform for discussing the issues regarding CRBP at various levels, it also strengthens and mobilizes programs for stakeholders of the private sector and the government sector for better implementation. WNCB is a fight for child rights; a collective effort for community entitlement, better employment & a fearless advocate of change.

Venkat Reddy, MV Foundation, Bihar

WNCB is an unique initiative where local practitioners from different sectors in different countries and global networks meet to understand the problem of child labour and come up with innovative solutions in the best interest of the child.

Jitendra Kumar, Nav Jagriti, Bihar

In our thoughts it is a "Platform to listen the voice of deprived children". Another is bringing Change in the lives of children.



Supported by



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

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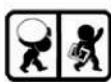
Swati Dhamija



CHILD LABOUR
School is the best place to work.



Save the Children



M VENKATARANGAIYA FOUNDATION



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