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Study on child rights in Patna- A voice to those silent shrieks (A study on child rights with reference to underprivileged children of Bihar)

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Abstract : *In the last five years, Bihar has seen tremendous development due to a number of projects undertaken by the Government. Bihar stands at 13th position in contributing to the total GDP (Gross Domestic Product), i.e., total of 2.71%. The World Bank, in its 2009 report, has ranked Patna as the second best city after New Delhi to invest in India. In 2010-11 fiscal year, Bihar attained a GDP Growth rate of 14.15% at 2004-05 prices. But these developments could not overcome many social issues; child exploitation is one of*

them. As per the Convention of Rights of Child, 1989, a child is defined as any human being below the age of 18 years. Children's rights are the human rights of children with particular attention to the rights of special protection and care afforded to the young. Through the project we got to know that the Laws have been enacted, but their implementation is not satisfactory. There are certainly loopholes in the implementation of these laws by the Government. The national figure of child labourers is 17 millions, out of which 1.5 million are present in Bihar. Bihar tops with 67% of the total child marriages in the country, another evil in the society. The literacy rate is also as low as 63.8% only (male literacy rate 73.5%, female literacy rate 53.3%). The discrimination in the city is evident from an unfavourable sex ratio of 892 (females per 1000 males). The NGOs are playing a vital role in providing the basic Rights to the marginalized children, yet due to the insignificant contribution by our Government, just 17.56% of the budget goes towards child welfare. The contribution by the NGOs also seems microscopic.

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Key words: *Child Rights, discrimination, Child labour.*

Introduction:

Our project, Study of Child Rights - A Voice to those Silent Shrieks, is a study of the rights that the children are getting in comparison to the rights they ought to, according to the various National and International Laws, with a special reference to the marginalized children of Patna district. This research also aims at studying the contribution of the Government and the NGOs in implementation of Child Rights.

For the concrete development of any nation, children play an important role. They are the future of the nation who would eventually be the pioneers of development in the country. John Milton has rightly said, "The childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day." The prosperity of any country depends upon the upbringing of the children.

The Government has enacted many laws for the implementation of the Child Rights and abolition of Child Exploitation.

If these laws had been properly implemented, there would be no child working on the road-side 'dhabas' or small motels. There would be no child picking up rags from the piled-up garbage. It is a sad truth of our economy that the children- the pillars of our economy- are deprived of their rights.

The importance of these rights was initially felt after the First World War, and the Declaration of Geneva was passed in the year 1924. Later in the same year, the League of Nations (now United Nations Organisation) adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child on September 16, 1924. Finally on 20th November 1989, **International Convention on the Rights of the Child** was adopted as the first international legally binding text recognizing all the fundamental Rights of the children.

Objectives :

The focal pivotal points of our research are enumerated below:

1. To assess the apathy of the society towards child persecution.
2. To measure the magnitude of benefits received by the deprived children from the Government and the NGOs.
3. To study the deplorable conditions of the impoverished children.
4. To ascertain the change in the quality of life of rehabilitated children.
5. To study the limitations and shortcomings in implementation of plans for desired achievements.

Hypotheses:

The hypotheses of our research are:-

- The plans and programmes formulated by the government in respect of child rights are not properly implemented in Patna.
- Apparently the policies formulated by the concerned authorities are not having any significant impact on the conditions of the children due to various factors including the violation of Article 39(f) of the Directive Principles.
- The contribution of plans and programs with respect to child rights has failed to achieve its objectives due to loopholes at the execution level and it needs to be restructured in order to achieve the desired results.

Methodology :

In our project we have dealt with two of the Child Rights, viz., Right to Survival and Right to Development. We collected our data using the two basic sources, namely, Primary sources and the Secondary sources. Our primary sources of data included interview of the children of Ashok Rajpath, as per the questionnaire prepared by us. These children were basically categorized into two groups: (i) child beggars, the children working in road-side 'dhabas', rag pickers, children working as tempo

or bus conductors and house servants, who only have the support of the government, and (ii) children associated with an NGO. The secondary sources included the various newspapers, internet websites and books.

Child Rights :

In the Eleventh Five Year Plan, 2007-2012, the Government of India adopted four basic Rights of Children:-

1. Right to Survival
2. Right to Protection
3. Right to Development
4. Right to Participation

Right to Survival: The foremost right of every individual is to LIVE. It is the fundamental right that governs all the other rights. Survival in a proper condition is, thus, the right of every child. This right comprises two essential aspects: **the right to have one's life protected from birth and the right to be able to survive and develop appropriately.**

Right to Protection: This right ensures the protection of these budding souls for their physical, mental, and social well-being, since they are not over and done with the development of their mental and physical competence. This right ensures the children to be protected from any abuse, discrimination, violence, or any mistreatment.

Right to development: The Preamble of the Declaration on the Right to Development states "development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom." This right is mostly concerned with the marginalized section of the society.

Right to Participation: Every child has a right to participate in every decision affecting him directly or indirectly. For the participation to be effective, they should have the access to correct information.

Findings:

Right to Survival

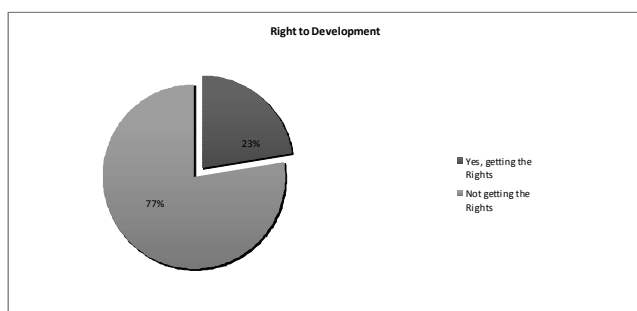
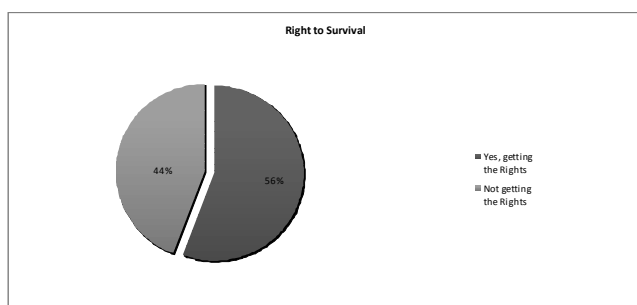
(In Percentage)

S. No.	Questions	Only Government support		Getting NGO support	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Whether the surrounding is clean or not?	16	84	74	26
2.	Whether there is proper source of clean drinking water?	30	70	67	33
3.	Whether they are able to have a proper meal twice a day?	67	33	90	10
4.	Whether the families have ration card?	60	40	45	23
5.	Do the children of the family work?	84	16	6	94

Right to Development

(In Percentage)

S. No.	Questions	Only Government support		Getting NGO support	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Do all the children of the family go to school?	20	80	90	10
2.	Whether aware about Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan ?	7	93	10	90
3.	Whether aware about the Right to Education ?	3	97	52	48
4.	Do the girls of the family get equal treatment as the boys?	23	77	71	29



Data Analysis:

Of the total of 60 respondents, 56% children enjoy their Right to Survival, out of which 61.9% children are supported by the NGOs and 38.1% are those who were not supported by the NGOs. Furthermore, only 23% children had an access to the Right to Development, out of which 81.7% are supported by the NGOs and among those without the support of NGOs, only 18.3% children get their Right to Development. From this data it is evident that the condition of the children without the support of the NGOs is pitiable.

The findings of the research study clearly depict that all the three hypotheses of research have been proved. It proves that the plans formulated by the Government in respect of child rights have not been properly implemented in Patna. It has created no significant impact on the conditions of the children and has failed to achieve its objectives due to various flaws at the execution level. There is a need of proper restructuring in the plans and programmes for attainment of the desired results.

Conclusion and Suggestions:

While concluding our project, we came to know that although the Government policies for accomplishment of Child Rights have been enacted, they have not been implemented properly. On the other hand, private institutions and NGOs are catalyzing the provisions of the Government, but due to inefficient execution of Laws at execution level, proper rehabilitation of the underprivileged could not be done.

What Children want from the family:

- Children want love, care and respect.
- Their thoughts and expression should be properly acknowledged by the family.
- Child marriage should be stopped.
- Curbing atrocities and ill-treatment towards children by any member of the family.

What Children want from society:

- Children want love, care and respect.
- The poor and neglected children should be helped financially.
- School teachers should not ill-treat the children.
- Discrimination in all respects should be discarded by the society.

Group Suggestions:

For the proper enforcement of the Laws, Government should focus on the following areas as well:

- For the sake of secure future of the children, birth certificate and ration card should be provided easily to all the families by the government.
- Government should ensure availability of safe drinking water in every area.

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- Availability of suitable primary health facilities in each area and provision of adequate nutrition and vitamins through the Anganwadi to all needy children.
- Children upto the age of 14 years should be provided free and quality education in all government institutions.
- Eradicating child labour by effective enforcement of the law to completely ban child labour and to rehabilitate them, wherever needed and also take necessary steps for opening of residential schools especially for deprived children.

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