

Dear Mr. Srivastava,

Subject: Suggestions for expansion of hazardous occupation under CLPR Act

Please refer to your d.o. letter No. A.42025/2/2004-CL dated 7/12/07 seeking suggestions to include occupations as hazardous under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. The commission deliberated upon the subject and has the following in terms of recommendation for the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):

- 1. Occupations connected with agriculture and allied activity as hazardous for children.*
- 2. Occupations connected with salt making, processing and packaging*
- 3. Occupations connected with aqua culture, including fishing inland and in seas*
- 4. Occupations connected with carriage of goods and head loads for example, LPG cylinders, Consumer goods and other material*

Children working in agriculture face hazards detrimental to their growth and development. Young girls and boys work under scorching heat with blistering sore feet dug into marshy land to produce paddy and other food crops. They do sowing, weeding, harvesting of vegetables, lentils, chilies, flowers, cooking oils and all the food items working long hours under conditions of total submission and servility without any support, and risks to health. With growing commercialization of agriculture and use of hybrid varieties of seeds there is a corresponding growth in use of chemicals and pesticides. Children's health is damaged due to continued exposure to such material.

Studies of WHO and others have shown that exposure to pesticide resulting in, symptoms of acute pesticide poisoning include vomiting, skin rashes, headaches, tremors, respiratory problems, muscle cramps, blurred vision, loss of co-ordination, seizures and death. Some studies have also shown that children of farm workers are particularly vulnerable to agro-chemical exposures. For example the results of the study on children working in production of cotton seeds showed that they performed significantly worse in tests assessing mental ability, cognitive skills, concentration, balance and co-ordination. Some of the pesticides that are used are: Endosulfan, Methomyl, Cypermethrin, Monocrotophos, Nuvacran And Metasystox.

When they are not working on the fields, children are engaged in tending to cattle, sheep, goats, in fishing and work in the poultry, contributing to produce milk and milk products and all other food items. Children engaged in grazing of cattle/livestock suffer health hazards such as snake bites, attack from wild life, scorching heat, cold and accidents in the higher altitudes due to fall. They also suffer fatigue due to walking long distance without proper food, water and nutritional replenishments.

On the eve of the world day against Child Labor the International Labor Organization (ILO) ILO mentioned that agriculture is one of the three most dangerous occupations to work in along with mining and construction in terms of fatalities accidents and ill health.

In the light of grave hazards posed by agriculture and allied activities the commission deems it as necessary to declare, *Occupations connected with agriculture and allied activity as hazardous for children*. This may be listed as hazardous occupation under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986

Large numbers of children are used in salt making, processing, packaging and selling. Hence, this deserves banning.

Lastly, it has brought to the notice of the commission during various consultations that children are being used in carrying head-loads of material and goods, e.g., distribution of cylinders to households. This must also be banned completely.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Shantha Sinha)

Shri S.K.Srivastava,
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