

# Rural backwardness and child labour in Assam

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**Abstract-** Assam is the most important part of North East India with huge amount of natural resources such as forests resources, water resources & mineral resources like petroleum, natural gas, coal, limestone etc. Despite these resources, the region is still facing serious problems of unemployment and poverty. Most of the people of Assam are living in rural areas. But the people of rural areas are still backward. This paper tries to analyze the causes of backwardness of rural areas of Assam. The main reasons of backwardness are ineffective implementation of government policies, misutilisation of loan, unawareness and prevalence of child labour etc. This paper focuses mainly prevalence of child labour as a cause of rural backwardness in Assam.

**Index Terms-** child labour, rural backwardness.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Assam is a state which provides doorway to the seven sisters. Its population is 31205576 (according to 2011 census) of which 26807034 people live in rural areas and 4398542 people live in urban areas. The total no.s of villages are 26395 and the total no.s of towns are 226. Thus we notice that huge amount of people of Assam live in rural areas. Most of the village people are uneducated and they do not aware about their prospects of development using their own resources, skills and abilities. They are being unemployed because of their lack of knowledge and unawareness about their possibilities.

If we see our history through back, we will see most of the rural people are characterized by peasant farming though some farmers have larger amount of land. The family heads of the peasant farmers want their family members to earn income along with their children. Because of this, a huge portion of rural people send their children to the jobs market for earning money. This leads to the problem of child labour.

## II. CHILD LABOUR PROBLEMS AND RURAL BACKWARDNESS

Children can be considered as a potential capital to the economy because it leads to the generation of new knowhow through research & development which leads the economy to a new direction. In case of removing rural backwardness, poverty and unemployment, removal of child labour can boost the economy. Rural people are very much unaware about the prosperity of their children to grow to a extent that can improve the economic status of their family. To supplement the economy to compete with world economy, at first we need to improve our

individual economic status. If economic status of each and every people of the rural Assam is improved then whole Assam will grow to a extent that can compete with other developed regions. Due to lack of this unawareness, the poor people send their children to work instead of sending them to the school for their better life. Generally this happens more to girls in rural areas. Rural people do not show much intention to send their girls to higher & higher education. Because they think that this is an unnecessary task.

Therefore the negative impact of the psychological reasons leads to the deterioration of mental health of rural poor people. From the historical fact, it is proved that one-third of the children of the developing world are failing to complete the four years of education. According to UNICEF, in the world's poorest countries, around one in four are engaged in child labour. The most important is that, in these countries they are engaged in work that is potentially harmful to their health.

According to 1971 census, amount of child labour exist in India stood at 10753985 of which Assam bore 239349. And in 2011, amount of child labour exist in India stood at 12666377 of which Assam bearing 351416. From the data we have noticed that in 2011, India has been able to reduce its child labour to 43 lakh of which Assam bearing 99512.

**Table: Distribution of Working children under age of 5-14 years**

YEAR	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
ASSAM	239349	No data have	327598	351416	99512
INDIA	10753985	13640870	11285349	12666377	4353247

Though Assam has been able to succeed in reducing child labour in 2011 in comparison to earlier periods, but there still have large amount of child labour. To reduce poverty from Assam, specially from rural areas we need to remove child labour totally.

Rural Assam bears a huge portion of unemployment. One of the basic reasons is child labour which has occurred due to unawareness among old generation about their children's prosperity of earning better income. They prefer current income rather than better future income. They want that their children must help them to earn for the family. Due to this when they get maturity, they are either unemployed or employed with a very little income sources. It leads them to enter into a vicious circle of poverty.

### III. OTHER CAUSES OF RURAL BACKWARDNESS-

Another most common reason for the underdevelopment of rural Assam is Debt. Rural people of Assam seek loans from government for investment purpose. But once they got the amount from bank or any other sources, they instead of utilizing it for productive purpose they use it for consumption purposes. They spend the amount either to repay the earlier loan or use it for consumption purpose. Due to this, they are unable to repay their loans. It forces them to take another higher amount of loan or obliges them to sell their property to repay the loan.

Another reason which hinders the growth of rural Assam is the unawareness among youth about their future. They waste a huge portion of time of their childhood/adulthood period in irrelevant activities such as 'adda'. It does not provide any current benefit rather it deteriorates their future life.

Another factor responsible for backwardness of rural area of Assam is government defective policy, corruption and delay in implementation. Actual beneficiaries are deprived of getting the benefit of the schemes. In rural Assam a major portion of people do not have the ration card.

### IV. PREVENTIVE MEASURES:

To compete with global regions we need to remove poverty and unemployment which can be removed by making awareness among rural people about their children's possibility of prosperity of higher income levels. Through this, we can supplement the rural economy of Assam to grow with urban one. In this case government should encourage NGO, or administrative officials to take initiative such as workshop to make awareness about their possibility of future prosperity.

Government should properly implement the child labour act, 1986, so that no one can use them for income generation. And if any person is found to break the law, the government should punish him/her as he/her needed to provide the full cost of schools fees to the minimum education level of this child through sending the child to school. It will create fear among people who exploit the child earlier. For this, government bureau must be corruption free.

Government should provide a cell in each department which directly related to beneficiaries where beneficiaries can get the benefit of schemes without interference of intermediaries. But the benefit amount should be divided in terminals after scrutinizing the usefulness of first amount so that the beneficiaries are unable to use the amount for their consumption

purpose. It will force them to invest the amount for the productivity purpose. It will create the employment generation, income generation and thus will increase the efficiency and productivity of the economy.

### V. CONCLUSION:-

Assam is agri-based region. Most of the people engage in agricultural activities. They have enough resources and potentials. Most the young generation spend their time in unproductive activities. To increase the growth of the region, government should provide opportunities such as loans to the small scale handicraft industries, tax free for employment generation productive activities etc. Through this, government can remove the poverty and unemployment problems from the region and can help the rural Assam to compete with global region.

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