

HRO

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Sent: Friday, October 17, 2008 12:49 AM
Subject: CHILDREN AT RISK

CHILDREN AT RISK - A CHALLENGE FOR CHILD ACTIVITIES:

The State of Andhra Pradesh, ranks fifth in terms of population with 66,508,008 and that works out to 8.64% of Indian population of 84, 63, 03,688. Out of this all India percentage of population of children works out to 36% of the total population, divided in the following order of age groups: 0-4 yrs.-12.85% and 5-14 yrs.-23.15% of the total population. It can be safely worked out that 23.15% of the in A.P. too are in the age group of 5-14 with slight difference in the margin of about 3.15%. Without being contradicted even by Government sources, it works out to an average of 20% of the total population of the state.

CHILDREN AT RISK:

Child Labour: Andhra Pradesh has the dubious distinction of having the highest number of children labor in the whole of India with 1.95 million (1981) and in 1991 it is estimated to be over 3.5 million. The figure doesn't include bonded child labor, child labor in villages and remote tribal areas and children employed in unorganized sector located in unregistered work places like domestic child labor, migrating construction work force and children doing labor in homes handing over the finished products to small industrial establishment for petty compensation, disproportionate to the labor involved.

Gender Composition In Child Labor: Analyzing the gender composition of child workers in the state reveals interesting data. 58% of all child workers are boys and 42% are girls. 7.29% of the total female child populations in Andhra Pradesh are workers; while comparable all India average is 2.95% only. In Andhra Pradesh, as is true of all India scenarios; more girls are engaged as agricultural labour than boys. Andhra Pradesh ranks 7th state in terms of people living below poverty line with 195.7 lakhs of people (33.7%) that is slightly less than one third of the total population. More than 70% of them belong to the unskilled agricultural labour class.

Bonded Children:

It is estimated that there are ten million bonded child laborers or slaves in India. In Andhra Pradesh, the bonded children must be over a million by most conservative estimate. **Child Sex Workers:** Child sex workers, mostly girl children (for instance, Child Devadasis and Jogins) represent the most abominable manifestation of exploitation of the child and therefore demand action at once. Where does this problem begin? The child is prostituted with the collusion of his or her family.

GIRL CHILD DISCRIMINATION:

- Three times as many girl children die as boys due to malnutrition or murder.
- The literacy rate in India is 39% for women and 64% for men illustrating the unequal educational opportunities
- Girls are still given less all occasions of food and health care than their male Counterparts. Female infanticide, the killing of female fetus

CHILD MARRIAGE:

* As per 1981 Census the percentage of married children in the age group of 0-14 in rural area was 5.4% for boys and 15.59% for girls.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH CARE:

* 11,000 children die every day due to preventable diseases and it is estimated that 1.5 million children die every year because of diarrhoea alone. The contributing factors to these unnecessary deaths include over populations, lack of health care resources in rural tribes, and a lack of education in nutrition and health.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE:

- Child battering and injuring the child physically by the parents, teachers and others in authority.
- Sexual abuse of the child: some estimates show that in 30% to 50% incidents, the offenders are family members, close relatives, neighbors and friends and 80% of children know their attackers.
- Traditional themes of the sanctity of the family, prerogatives of parents and children viewed as parental property have protected abusive families from inspection and intervention by society.

• That so many of the children brought to the detention center reported abuse as the primary reason for their presence on the streets suggests that child abuse should no longer be called a family matter that can continue to persist behind closed doors.

Madhava and Nirmala.