

**Topic: PENCIL PORTAL LAUNCHED IN INDIA**

PENCIL (Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labor) -- an electronic platform for no child labor developed by the Labor Ministry has been launched by Home Minister Rajnath Singh September 26, 2017 in the National Conference on Child Labor, a Labor Ministry statement said.

PENCIL is launched to foster the creation of a child labor free India, which will seamlessly integrate implementing and monitoring mechanisms for both, enforcement of the legislative provisions and effective implementation of the National Child Labor Project (NCLP).

The ministry said that it was felt that an online portal which connects the Centre to the state government, district and to all project societies would provide a mechanism for implementation. In this backdrop, the online portal PENCIL was conceptualized.

PENCIL portal has five components -- Child Tracking System, Complaint Corner, State Government, National Child Labor Project and Convergence.

The Districts will nominate District Nodal Officers who will receive the complaints. Within 48 hours of receiving the complaints, DNOs will check the genuineness of the complaint and take the rescue measures in coordination with police.

According to 2015 National Crime Records Bureau report, the number of cases filed for child trafficking was 3490, and the number of victims of the cases amounted to 3905.

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India is home to the largest number of child laborers in the world. This platform is going to pave the way for effective enforcement of the new child labor law and also ensure accountability of enforcement agencies. Today's national consultation was a landmark occasion where the Home Ministry and the Labor Ministry have come together to ensure effective collaboration and convergence of efforts and mark a policy shift for India.

The position of India in terms of child labor is not an appreciable one; with a credible estimates ranging from 60 to 115 million, India has the largest number of working children in the world. Whether they are sweating in the heat of stone quarries, working in the fields 16 hours a day, picking rags in the city streets, or hidden away as domestic servants, these children endure miserable and difficult lives. They earn little and are made to work more. They struggle to make enough to eat and perhaps to help feed their families as well.

**Rights of Children under International Law**

The concept of equality of all human beings, as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 stipulates under Article 25 para 2 that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance. The above principle along with other principles of the Universal Declaration concerning child were incorporated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1959. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights under Articles 23 and 24 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights under Article 10 made provisions for the care of the child.

Topic  
Introduction

The first Act in India relating to child labor was the Enactment of Children (Pledging of Labor) Act of February 1933. In 1979, Government formed the first committee called Gurupadswamy- Committee to study the issue of child labor and to suggest measures to tackle it. According to a 2001 census, an estimated 185,595 children are employed as domestic help and in small roadside eateries. Most child domestic workers in India are trafficked by placement agencies operating in states like Orissa, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Indian higher judiciary has played good role in protecting rights of children and specifically in the case of child labor. The Supreme Court of India, in its M.C. Mehta Vs State of Tamil Naidu has given certain directions regarding the manner in which children working in the hazardous occupations are to be withdrawn from work and rehabilitated, and the manner in which the working conditions of children working in non-hazardous occupations are to be regulated and improved.

The state shall endeavor to provide, within the period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years.

Government also launched Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) for enforcement of legal framework against child labor. The SOPs aims at creating a ready reckoner for trainers, practitioners and monitoring agencies to ensure complete prohibition of child labor and protection of adolescents from hazardous labor ultimately leading to Child Labor Free India.

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<https://currentaffairs.gktoday.in/pencil-portal-launched-effective-implementation-national-child-labour-project-09201748398.html>

<http://www.news18.com/news/india/home-minister-to-launch-portal-pencil-on-child-labour-elimination-1528103.html>

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=171096>