

## Annual Report 2018-19

### Centre for Labour Research and Action

The main work undertaken by CLRA in the current year was (i) Mobilisation and advocacy of brick kiln workers in Telengana state around district of Hyderabad (ii) Publication of Study on Incidence of Child Labour in Cottonseed production areas of North Gujarat and South Rajasthan (iii) Workshop on Mathadi Act in Jaipur (iv) Rehabilitation of children and adolescents who lost their limbs in accidents in cotton ginning factories of Gujarat (v) Support to land rights campaign in Gujarat.

**Mobilization and advocacy work with brick kiln workers around Hyderabad:** CLRA supported a team to continue mobilization work with Odisha brick kiln workers around Hyderabad. The work was done in collaboration with local NGO The Dalit Alliance (TDA). The team worked in two districts Sangareddy and Rangareddy. It organized two public meetings – one in each district. It also followed up on case work from past years as well as current year.

CLRA had to step in as the ongoing donor Tata Trust withdrew its support suddenly in September 2018. Work was going on the Labour Exchange concept and agreements had been entered into between employers and workers with the mediation of the local Union Shramik Adhikar Manch. It was decided to support the project with CLRA funds. Ultimately the employers backed out of the agreement.

**Publication of Child Labour Study:** Every year thousands of tribal children from South Rajasthan are trafficked to cottonseed plots of North Gujarat for cross pollination work in the rainy season. The trafficking had been going on for at least two decades but the issue flared up in 2006 because of the efforts of the Dakshini Rajasthan Majdoor Union, a workers' union promoted by Prayas Centre for Labor Research and Action, a local NGO. The campaign created a major impact and drew state and national level attention. The state issued a protocol recognizing the movement of children as trafficking and constituting District Level Task Forces to combat it. The Employers were forced to negotiate with the Union and sign collective agreements hiking wages and not to employ children. The campaign drew the attention of national and international NGOs who initiated projects to tackle child labour.

Nearly ten years down the line, the issue has faded from public memory. The state as well as civil society has moved away. The media has lost interest after fairly intensive coverage. The large projects got over with claims of having tackled the issue successfully. The task forces set up to combat child labour have become inactive.

However, there are indications that child labour continues. Village level surveys carried out by the Union indicate that children are still being trafficked. There are instances of vehicles being intercepted. The movement now takes place very unobtrusively, in public transport rather than separate vehicles. Some cottonseed production has shifted to tribal areas – reducing child trafficking but continuing with child labour. Within Gujarat, there are reports that cottonseed cultivation has diversified to areas other than North Gujarat. Most importantly the wage rates have stagnated and remained at levels where only children and adolescents are likely to find work.

CLRA undertook a study of the existing situation to estimate the current incidence of child labour in cottonseed plots. The study depended on household surveys in source area as it has become very risky to visit cottonseed plots as farmers impose a blockade on entry of outsiders and resort to violence. This was backed by (i) selective visits to destination plots (ii) assessment of areas where cottonseed cultivation has spread (iii) mapping of contractors.

The study findings are that the

- Incidence of child labour has reduced, especially children below 14 years
- However, there continues to be some child labour and significant incidence of adolescent child labour
- Cultivation has shifted to tribal areas where child labour gets passed off as family labour that does not attract provisions of the Child Labour Prohibition Act and gets hidden

Steps were taken to publish the report this year. The draft was sent to an editor for editing. This was followed by design setting of the manuscript. The ready manuscript has been published.

**Workshop on Mathadi Act in Jaipur Rajasthan:** In the month of September CLRA helped organize a workshop in Jaipur on the Mathadi Act. The objective of the workshop was to disseminate findings of the Mathadi study done by CLRA amongst a range of stakeholders including Government. CLRA has been pushing Mathadi Act as a model to provide social security to workers in the informal sector. It undertook a study for ILO on the implementation experience of Mathadi Act in Maharashtra. The workshop was well attended by participants from labour organizations, civil society, and Government. Trade Union activists from Maharashtra including Baba Adhav of Hamal Panchayat Pune also attended the workshop.

**Rehabilitation of children/ adolescents who lost their limbs in Ginning Factories of Gujarat:** A large number of tribal children and adolescents from South Rajasthan have lost their limbs working in cotton ginning factories of Gujarat. CLRA has collaborated with interested philanthropists to fix prosthetic arms on two such adolescents – Anil Bhagora and Ajay Mina. Anil lost his hand in an accident in the year 2012 while Ajay lost his hand in the year 2015. The prosthetic limb is fixed at Jaipur Foot Rehabilitation Centre in Jaipur. The photographs are attached.



The children have also been supported to get their legally due compensation. While in normal cases, employers settle the matter with payment of small sums, in these two cases the victims have received their legal entitlement under the Workers Compensation Act amount up to Rs. 8 lakhs. The money has been deposited in their bank accounts as FD.

There are many more such cases in the tribal South Rajasthan and also in industrial area around Kadi. CLRA has documented more such cases and hopes to be able to rehabilitate them as well.

**Support to JaminAdhikarJumbish:** About 28 different organizations from the Dalit and tribal communities from Gujarat joined hands in this effort to stake their claim on land ownership under the aegis of JaminAdhikarZumbesh (JAZ) (Land Rights Campaign). CLRA has given support of Rs. 15,000/- to the Jumbish for printing of educational material on land rights of tribal and dalit communities.

## **Potential Collaboration in the year 2019-20**

CLRA is in discussion with following donor organizations to receive support in the coming years

Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives: APPI has expressed interest in supporting Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and organizations working on the issue of migrant labourers. Discussions are going on with them to support Rajasthan Pradesh Int Bhatta Majdoor Union in Bhilwara – Ajmer in Rajasthan and MajdoorAdhikarManch in Ahmedabad Gujarat. The former Union works with brick kiln workers while the latter is a general workers union that engages with workers in construction, agriculture, and small factories. A concept note has been submitted.

Terres des Hommes (TdH) Germany: This is a Germany based international NGO that supports work on child rights. Discussions are going on to support work with children at brick kilns in Ajmer- Bhilwara cluster. A concept note has been submitted by the India office of TdH.

ING Foundation We Trust: This is a Taiwan based Trust. It has expressed interest in supporting work with children at brick kilns. Initial discussions have been held. The Foundation is expected to invited a proposal for around US\$ 20,000 per year for two years.