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Title: Need to invest in imparting skill-based education to youth .

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SHRI E. AHAMED (MALAPPURAM): I would like to draw the attention of the Government of India to the issue of child labour, which is very alarming. Presently, the number of child working population is increasing day by day in the developing and under-developed countries.

Actually, the child working population are called as child labour whose age ranges from five to fourteen. In India, the children are engaged mostly in various low-key jobs of the unorganized sectors which are hazardous in situation.

The census found an increase in the number of child labourers from 11.28 million in 1991 to 12.66 million in 2001 and 21.39 million in 211. In addition, nearly 85 per cent of child labourers in India are hard to reach, invisible and excluded, as they work largely in the unorganized sector, both rural and urban, within the family or in household based units.

Our constitution and the Right to Education Act guarantees free and compulsory education to all children between six and fourteen as their right.

As far as children between fifteen and eighteen are concerned, the Juvenile Justice Act safeguards this age group from all kinds of abuse and exploitation. However, the current child labour law is mute about treatment of these young adults.

Child labour is especially prevalent in rural areas. Children work for a variety reasons such as parental poverty which is the principal controlling factor.

The poverty of parents in rural area is widespread. Landlessness contributes to poverty and poverty causes landlessness. A majority of parents send their children to work rather than to school at the school going age, primarily on account of their need for a supplementary income.

Schooling problems also contribute to child labour. Many times, children seek employment simply because there is no access to schools. When there is access, low quality often makes attendance a waste of time for the students. Schools in many developing areas suffer from problems such as over-crowding, inadequate sanitation and apathetic teachers.

The Labour Ministry's initiative regarding the passage of pending legislation to ban child labour for children under the age of 14 is commendable.

While the Parliamentary Standing Committee has already cleared the Bill, it is now given to understand that the Bill has been referred back to the Ministry of Labour citing the hushed reason that the child labour cannot be completely banned due to poverty.

I urge upon the Government to take immediate action on this issue and must invest in imparting skill based education to our youth.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I would request all the Members to be brief. We have to complete this 'Zero Hour' before seven of the clock. So, be brief in their speeches.