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How can child labour schemes help mainstream child labourers back to school? A case study of NCLP in Kolkata

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ABSTRACT

Child labour has been an issue which many governments and NGOs has tried to solve through various schemes, projects and acts. There is a universal agreement that education can help child labourers back to school, but there is a disagreement on how to do this. This thesis examines the Indian educational child labour scheme, National Child Labour Project (NCLP) in Kolkata, with a focus on the education, and state and NGO discourse. Through the theories of Spivak and Freire as well as current academics, and an interview with a prominent NCLP NGO in Kolkata, this thesis concludes that the NCLPs budget is too small for it to function as prescribed, and that the power imbalance and difference in discourse between NGOs and the state makes the NCLP unlikely to succeed. The thesis concludes with a recommendation to the Indian Government that they should invest more heavily in institutional schools, where the education is customised for the child labourers, with a place for the NGOs to come with feedback from the field.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CRC – Committee of the Rights of the Child

CoRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child

GACWL – Grant in Aid on Child and Women Labour

ILO – International Labour Organization

KNCLP – Kolkata National Labour Project

LIC – Low Income Country

NCLP – National Child Labour Project

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

Rs – Indian Rupees

UN – United Nations

INTRODUCTION

In the last half century, the citizens of the global North have become increasingly aware of, and have condemned, child labour. The global North have for millennia used child labour, but in correlation with the development of the society and the increasing living standard; the ethics of right and wrong have also developed. This can be observed by looking at how more and more rights have emerged, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. The cost and toll which labour takes on children is far exceeding the benefit of child labour (Brown, 2012, p. 9). However, for those families who live in poverty, the money which working children bring in is a necessary evil, especially for boy children (Bhalotra, 2007, p. 50). Because living standards have increased, the dependency on and need for child labour have lessened to a point where they have become obsolete – moreover, countries started to rule against child labour. The future of the global South rests to a high extent on the shoulders of the children of the global South. Therefore, there needs to be put in place a global effort to make sure these children will get the best chances in life. Child labourers are amongst the most neglected children. Research has found that education has a positive effect on poverty, and a very positive effect on child labour (Augeraud-Veronü and Fabre, 2004, pp. 17-18; Fyfe, 2005 pp. 44-50). This has been found, tested and implemented by countless researchers, NGOs, governments and statisticians. Governments and NGOs have adopted this view and implemented rules and schemes for the benefit of child labourers. This thesis will look at India, as India has a population of over 1,31 billion people (Data.worldbank.org, 2016), making India the largest democracy in the world, with around 472 million children (Childline India, 2011), and with an estimated 12 million child labourers (Salaam Baalak Trust, 2017). This thesis will look into the state of West Bengal and the capital city of West Bengal, Kolkata. West Bengal has ratified and enforced several of the Indian laws, including the law of Free Education, but still 23,73% of the population is illiterate (Indian Census, 2011; Samantroy et. Al., 2017, chapter 3 and 4). The West Bengal state government is fortunately not alone in its efforts to

improve the life of children – hundreds of NGOs are also working to this end, either with funding from the state, from private funding or from international funding (West-Bengal.ngosindia.com, 2017). Kolkata has one of the lowest costs of living and wage levels of India, and has one of the highest percentages of child labourers compared with other big cities of India, why Kolkata is interesting to look in to.

Eradication of child labour is aided by many factors, amongst these being increased living standards, the rise of the internet and the awareness of the international consumer, and the work of the government and NGOs. This thesis will look at the work of the government and NGOs. The government of India has two major schemes to combat child labour and aid child labourers: The National Child Labour Project (NCLP) and the Grant in Aid on Child and Women Labour (GACWL). The NCLP is the main scheme, which operates in 17 main states, and the GACWL runs in the states and districts where NCLP does not cover; hence it will not be further investigated (Labour. Gov. in. B, 2017). The NCLP is present in Kolkata, where it has an impact on child labour. This involvement in the rights of child labourers and aid to them; sets the tone in the government of child labourers, as well as sending a signal to NGOs, both to those which are collaborating with the government, but also to those NGOs which do not collaborate with the government; that the government has an interest in making sure no child will work in hazardous environments. This programme, and its results are also what India can present internationally, to show their partners how much they do for the child labourers. The children handpicked for the NCLP scheme must be 5-17 years old, but will fall into three categories – the 5-8-year olds, who will go directly to formal mainstream school, the 8-14-year olds who will attend the special schools, and the 15-17-year olds who will be recommended to other NGOs, to receive help. Although the roles of the NGOs are often defined within the sphere of the government; – where the government fails or has a gap, NGOs can step in and help, either the government or the people, or both. This means that NGOs tend to be at the mercy of the government, where, if the government does not like or agree with the NGO, the government can directly or indirectly terminate an NGO (Banks et al, 2015, pp. 708-709). Moreover, if a government funds a project within the NGO; the NGO

will become an extension of the government, and cannot have the same level of freedom which the non-governmental organisation name might suggest.

The aim of this thesis is to show how an educational child labour scheme can help child labourers back to school, and to understand the power balance between the state and collaborating NGOs, through the example of the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) scheme that India has implemented, by looking at an NGO in Kolkata. The NCLP is India's primary child labour scheme, and was implemented in 1988, so it has had almost 30 years to become a big programme and learn through trial and error. However, the NCLP has been criticised for not being ambitious, and for its budgeting and monitoring, which this thesis confirms through statistics and an interview. However, the focus of this thesis is to examine the power relations between the government which funds the NCLP and the NGOs which carry out the NCLP, and to observe and discuss the different discourses of the NGOs and the state, to understand the NCLP better, and to be able to improve the programme for the future. Moreover, education, which is known to be one of the most effective ways of alleviating poverty and aiding child labourers, needs to be of a certain quality to make sure the children who attend the schools will benefit. To be able to understand the basics of the scheme, the education, as well as the child labourers, and to understand the power relations between the oppressed and the oppressor, this thesis will use the theories of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Paulo Freire, who both are or were prominent Marxist post-colonialism critics, and who had a specific interest in the education of the voiceless or the subaltern. This thesis argues that the child labourers are subaltern, and that the NGOs are in a voiceless sphere, despite their education and knowledge, but rather because of oppression. The research for this thesis consists primarily of secondary data which has been analysed, and complemented by qualitative primary research, in the shape of an interview with an anonymous prominent NGO in Kolkata, in this thesis called Shashti, who has been a part of the NCLP since the scheme was introduced to Kolkata. Through the secondary research, the application of the national and international laws, as well as two in-depth literary analyses of Spivak and Freire, and the interview with Shashti, the thesis has a critical view of the NCLP scheme, as well as the

government and government funding. Little research has previously been done on the power balance between the two collaborators, the state which funds and the NGOs which carry it out.

The thesis is split into four chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the ethical issue of child labour, who child labourers are and the background reasons why children work. This chapter also introduces the theoretical framework of Spivak and Freire, and how the state discourse and NGO discourse influence child labour schemes. Chapter 2 considers the factual parts of West Bengal and Kolkata, why Kolkata has been chosen, and why it is significant, as well as which laws have been introduced and ratified in India and Kolkata, and also a brief introduction regarding the international stakeholders which affect child labour. Chapter 2 also introduces the NCLP. Chapter 3 is about the methodology, and explains the methods, the background, the nature of the coding of the primary research, the limitations of the study and of me. Chapter 4 introduces the case study of Shashti and presents the coding and findings of the interview, and brings all four chapters together in a discussion on the different findings and takeaways, which is followed by the conclusions.

1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Education is needed to alleviate poverty (Augeraud-Veronü and Fabre, 2004, pp. 17-18; Fyfe, 2005 pp. 44-50) and education is a form patch or a treatment of the symptoms, so the causes of child labour need to be examined and understood. Because education as a mass-production, which is not fitted to the needs of the students, it will unfortunately leave the child labourers and impoverished children behind, again. To reach the slums, impoverished areas, subaltern people and child labourers, the government will often turn to NGOs to carry out programmes, in which the relationship and the discourses of the government and the NGOs is vital to understand. To recognise what differentiated and specialised education is, and why and to which extent it is vital for the growth and inclusiveness of development, this chapter has considered the ideas of Kolkata born, literary professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Paulo Freire, a Brazilian revolutionist from the 1960-70s, whose idea of educating the peasants, and educating them in their own language, has inspired much of today's educational theorists.

In this chapter, I have started by writing about what child labour is, and what the causes of child labour are. Then I have followed on by introducing discourse analyses to understand the different truths of some of the stakeholders of child labour. Thereafter I have looked at the theories of education and subaltern studies by Spivak and later Freire, trailed by which international laws and organisations play into the rights of the child labourer. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a discussion on why and to what extent specialised education is an option, as well as how NGOs can be the voiceless voice of the subaltern, and to which extent the international organisations can play a role in eradicating illegal child labour.

1.2 WHY DOES CHILD LABOUR HAPPEN?

There are several definitions of what child labour is, which can differ between the different NGOs, laws and countries. To commit to a single definition on which to build this thesis, I am using UNICEF's definition of child labour:

“Percentage of children aged 5 to 14 years of age involved in child labour activities at the moment of the survey. A child is considered to be involved in child labour activities under the following classification:

(a) children 5 to 11 years of age that during the week preceding the survey did at least one hour of economic activity or at least 28 hours of domestic work, and

(b) children 12 to 14 years of age that during the week preceding the survey did at least 14 hours of economic activity or at least 42 hours of economic activity and domestic work combined.” (UNICEF, 2017)

Countries have varying definitions of child labour, because of different laws, but this definition is so broad that it encompasses most countries and situations. Though, the basic idea of why child labour is wrong, is because a child should have his/her right to be just a child, to play, be educated, be protected and to have a future. If a child labours too much, too strenuously or with too much risk involved, the child will not be able to enjoy being a child, and have his/her future possibilities taken away, if the child cannot attend school and gain an education.

All the time that the global North implemented rights for children and condemned child labour, the global South was and is, to a high degree, still dependent on child labour for several reasons. For one, the global South has in general not reached as high a standard of living as the global North. Moreover, the global South deals with several severe issues, such as civil war, famine, corruption and poverty. If more pressing matters occur or happen, the rulers of the countries down-prioritise less severe human rights offenders. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

As much as it would be easier to simply condemn child labour as unethical, this is far from the reality. There are several benefits of child labour, for the child, which must also be taken in to consideration. If the job is domestic, the child can take over the chores and care for siblings, thereby freeing the parents, and often the mother who in turn can go to work. A job with wages will often also provide a solid meal, something the child might not get at home. A child with work might simply make the difference for the family of life and death, as the little extra money is much more than nothing.

1.2.1 Stakeholders

Child labourers are cheaper to employ than adult labourers, which means that, if lacking regulations, checks and balances of laws, children will be employed instead of adults. There is a supply and demand for child labourers in the global South (Zutshi, Creed and Shol, 2008, pp. 56-57). There are several stakeholders who are influenced by children working; the families of the children, the employers, the customers of the employers, the schools, the communities of the children, the international community, the government, the NGOs who work with the children, and of course the children themselves. The family of the child will wish for the child to work, so the family will have more money – more on families is written below. The customers of the employers and the employers themselves are also major stakeholders, as the customers have a wish to buy the goods to a low price, which means the employer will wish to hire children, as they receive a lower wage than an adult and hence profits will be maximised. These stakeholders, especially the employers, will not be interested in making any change unless forced to do so (ibid, pp. 45-47). The government and NGOs have a major say in the eradication of child labour, and they often wish to do so, but they also face many difficulties in doing so, as the government internally might have limited resources, and have the other stakeholders work against them, such as the employers. Steven Wind interviewed some government child labour inspectors, who said that the employers would lie and use aggressive tactics to make sure they could avoid adhering to the laws (Wind, 2007, pp. 365-367).

The cooperation and lack thereof between the state and the NGOs working with child labourers will have a major say. If the government introduces a scheme, such as the National Child Labour Project, which this thesis will discuss in depth in chapters 2 and 3, to help child labourers, the scheme will have been set up by the government, with the state's discourse in mind, and with all the other roles and expenditures the government has in mind. If the state cooperates with NGOs, these NGOs might have a completely different experience of the scheme, but they might be bullied or oppressed into not expressing their point of view (Krishnan, 2007, pp. 245-247). Every stakeholder does not have an equal share, and even if the government has programmes, laws and acts to make sure children do not begin to work, if the government does not listen to the other stakeholders, the actions taken by the state may not make a big difference (Banks et al, 2015, pp. 715).

1.2.2 Poverty, Class and Uncertainties

Poverty is one of the main reasons for child labour, but not the only cause. A low income-country (LIC) will have a higher number of extremely impoverished families (International Labour Organization, 2004, p. 9), and extremely impoverished families are the ones who supply most child labourers (ibid, pp. 81, 84, 85). A LIC tends to have the conditions which need to be in place for child labour to happen, such as corruption, inadequate education system, lack of infrastructure, and absence of a safety net to help its citizens if needed. This can act as a catalyst for child labour, but in turn child labour can also make it difficult for a country to escape the 'poverty trap' (ibid, pp. 91-93; Augeraud-Veronü and Fabre, 2004, pp. 17-18). If a family is faced with severe poverty and struggles to survive, the family will not be able to have the luxury of having non-working children. Poverty alone might not be the cause of child labour, but it can influence or exaggerate other causes. The social class of the family will also influence whether the child works. If the family belongs to a lower caste or a Dalit (also called the Untouchables), the child will have a higher risk of becoming a child labourer. The same applies if a child belongs to a minority of race, ethnicity or religion, the risk of becoming a child worker is higher (UNICEF, 2011, p. 3; Rammohan, 2014, p.

494). Even if a family is not poor; economic shocks can change the livelihood and savings of a family, which in turn can force a family to make their children work. Economic shocks can also mean that factories and other employers cannot, or choose not to, afford adult labourers, and in turn will only hire children, making the parents unemployed and dependent on the wages of the children (Muedini, 2015, pp. 76; ILO, 2004, pp. 95-97).

1.2.3 Social Structures and Norms

A child's family might have several challenges, which will increase the likelihood of child labour. If any of the family members have a disability that increases the family's expenses with medicine and hospital coverage; one or both parents might even be left at such a disadvantage that neither can work and consequently pressure and responsibility will be put on the child. A child is dependent on his/her family for learning to understand how the world, country and culture work and what is expected of them. If a family owns land or a business it can be expected that the child works on the land alongside his/her parents, unpaid – this is even if the family is not in poverty (International Labour Organization ILO, 2004, pp. 88). Sometimes the child can bring manufacturing jobs to the house, and produce things such as shoes, beads, jewellery and textiles, or the child can help the parents with their work. Traditionally, many girls also help with the domestic chores, and take care of younger siblings (Samatroy et al. 2017, pp. 8, 17). It should also be noted that the education of the parents also has a high correlation with whether the children work. So, if both parents are educated, and have attended higher education, the chance that the children will also be educated is higher (Rammohan, 2014, pp. 506-507). Unfortunately, it can be observed in impoverished families that often the father figure is addicted to substances such as tobacco, alcohol, gambling, hashish or other forms of narcotics and hallucinating drugs. This can either render the parent incapable of working, or give an extra expense, which puts the family further in danger and deeper in poverty (Bagchi, 2006, pp. 137-139). A dysfunctional family will also raise the risk of child labour, as well as non-protective parents and parents who, simply put, are not capable parents, as these do not protect their children from

being abused by either employers or traffickers. Even worse, bad parents might even sell or supply their children into modern day slavery or prostitution (International Labour Organization, 2004, pp. 88).

1.2.4 Female Children

Male children tend to have more risky work, but the female children are at higher risk of being kidnapped or sold into trafficking and prostitution. Female children are also more likely to have domestic work, either at their own home or for others; and when they work for another family, they are at a high risk of being abused by their employers. It is also very important to mention, that girls are at an even higher risk of becoming child labourers, as girls can be seen as less worthy than boys in some societies of India – they require a dowry to marry, which is thus the only expenditure, whereas educating them will increase the costs (International Labour Organization, 2004, pp. 142-150).

1.2.5 Future

In LIC and especially in India, families facing poverty might not believe that education will be the best choice for their children. In India; the unemployment percentage rate increases with regard to the higher rate of education. Amongst non-educated people, only 0.3% were unemployed in 2009-2010, whereas primary school educated people were 1.2% unemployed, and diploma educated people were a whopping 9.6% unemployed (Gov. of India, 2016). Unsurprising, some families argue that since education does not guarantee a job, it is better to work. Sometimes a child will also manage to get an apprenticeship, which will guarantee an income during the apprenticeship and will also increase the chance of the child gaining a job after the apprenticeship is finished. Unfortunately, apprenticeships are rarely regulated in any way and are often illegal, meaning that the children have no rights and no protection (Bagchi, 2006, pp. 139-143).

1.3 THEORY ON THE SUBALTERN AND EDUCATION

1.3.1 State Discourse and NGO Discourse

Each stakeholder in any situation has a different view about themselves, their role and the others' role; they have a different discourse. What is the truth for the government will not be the same truth for an NGO or NGOs (Sullivan, 2009, "Discourse"). The different discourses can be vital to comprehend and make clear to understand a situation where two big stakeholders have a different view or experience, especially if there is a power imbalance. According to Milliken, presented by Struett (Struett, 2004, p. 5), there is no unanimous chosen way to understand and analyse discourses. Therefore, I have chosen Leslie A. Pal (1995), as she has presented a simple yet effective way of understanding the background, objectives and actions for a discourse but at the same time provides us with a model where one discourse can easily be compared and understood in relation to other discourses. Pal writes about the five factors of defining a discourse, the *process*, the *objectives*, the *scope*, the *evidence* and the *action strategies* (Pal, 1995, pp. 187-188). The *process* looks at how the actors define themselves and defines their roles (ibid, p. 187). In the case of child labour, the government personnel will define themselves as the government, as law makers and leaders in the field. The NGO could define their role as carrying out the laws and schemes imposed from above, and being in a contact with their clients as well as being their voice. The *objectives* define what the child labour rights system aims for, and what the individual actor wants to accomplish (ibid, pp. 187-188). So, for example, the movement wishes that there will be no more child labour, and the NGO might wish for no more child labour in one geographical area especially. The *scope* helps to underline how big the issue is, and if there are any parallels, or any other issues, movement, industry, sovereignty or others with which the movement might interfere (ibid, p. 188). The child labour movement goes beyond any border, and will interfere with corporations, productions, consumers, and will question the sovereignty of countries, as well as religious and cultural practices. The *evidence* might be the most concrete and necessary part of a discourse. By having a standard of evidence,

and having the evidence itself; the movement can build and change the outcome of the issue, but if evidence is not collected, public or true, any change will be difficult – this is a general issue of a recalcitrant government, which does not wish to share that information. The way the evidence is analysed and understood can also differentiate between the different actors (ibid, p 188). And finally, the *action strategies* take all the four previous factors into account and help to understand the actions which the actors perform, to help aid the solution of the issue (ibid, p. 188). This can explain why the government has chosen to make the NCLP as it is, as well as the actions in the field by the NGOs. When an NGO collaborates with the government, there is a notion that the partnership is egalitarian. This partnership in practicality, however, is rarely the case, but it is vital to understand the discourses between government and NGOs, to have an ability to understand that their actions do not originate from the same truth, but rather from their discourse and their privileges and powers.

1.3.2 Education for the Subaltern

1.3.2.1 Spivak and Freire

Both Freire and Spivak believe that there is a group of people, who are marginalised by society, and who do not have a voice which they can use, or can be heard. They are also both against the use of a standard mechanically applied education, where the culture and traditions of the students are not taken into consideration. When applying this to the education of child labourers, it will make a lot of sense that the children will need an education, where they can understand why they are benefitting from it, as well as making their parents understand why giving their children an education can generate prosperity in the long term.

Paulo Freire is one of the first theorists to question the education system of South America and the world. He is also the source of inspiration which many current academics use – such as Spivak. His biography and social construction are what makes him and his ideas highly fascinating. He was born in 1921 in Brazil, and was highly affected during his upbringing by the economic financial crisis of the 1930s, as well as his social class of labourers. Here he suffered hunger and malnutrition,

which led him to not understand or take an interest in school; as he could not focus while being hungry. Despite this, Freire acquired an education as a teacher, and started to gain a more critical view of the education system, then he published a PhD and papers on the topic, which led to him being accused of being a traitor, imprisoned and exiled; which was when he wrote his first book “Education as the Practice of Freedom” in 1967; this made him famous in academic circles (Bentley, 1999).

Spivak; a Kolkata born Indian literary theorist, born in 1942, whose criticisms and reflections on post-colonialism, post-colonial development, and the education of the poorest in society, have been written from the 1980’s until today, make her highly relevant for this thesis. Her main point is that the subaltern people – the poorest in society who are those who are minorities – are either not included in decisions taken which affect them, or have bad representatives, who do not truly know the subaltern culture, take decisions for them (Spivak, 1988, pp. 78 - 81). Spivak has supported and founded several schools in West Bengal, many of these in the rural areas. As a teacher; she believes that the curriculum should not be only top-down, as the teachers should also learn from the pupils, and teach what the pupils need to learn.

1.3.2.2 The Culture of Silence and the Subaltern

The term subaltern has been used by Marxists as a synonym for the proletariat (ibid, 78), but has been popularised by Spivak. She has stressed that subaltern is not just a word synonymous with the oppressed, minorities or workers, but is a term for minority groups which do not have access, or have limited access to “cultural imperialism” (de Koch, 1992, pp. 45-46), which means that a group is subaltern if it does not have any way or means to speak out or be heard. An example of this is a cultural minority group which speaks a small language and does not speak much of the school taught language or foreign languages, which means they have limited access to the outside world. Another case could be that most of the minority group were illiterate and ill-educated, which makes communication with the outside world difficult if not impossible. Her belief is that the humanitarian teachers should

understand the culture and language of the subalterns, and that they therefore will teach the subalterns a way to become simply minorities, and to have a voice. Though, academics such as Harris argue that this belief is not very realistic (Harris, 2015, pp. 139-140). The reasoning for aiding the subaltern is also important, as, if a privileged person helps the subaltern as a ‘feel good’ factor, they will never truly understand the subaltern, as they come as someone who’s ‘better’, ‘more entitled’ and simply ‘better knowing’ than the subaltern; whereas if they aid with the reasoning that this is simply the subaltern’s right, the rights of self, this gives the subaltern and the humanitarian teacher a more egalitarian stand (Spivak, 2004, pp. 537-539).

Since Freire’s childhood was spent amongst workers and peasants, he was able to have a unique standpoint for understanding education and for understanding the flaws of education for the rural poor. Here he observed what he called the “*culture of silence*” a result of many years of colonial rule, where the Europeans had come and ruled through dictatorship, where the poor and natives had little or no way of having a voice – this had continued after the abolition of colonialism, but had been kept in place by the country’s elite (Freire, 1970, p. 3). The elite, he explains, do not wish for any real change, but will, to silence the masses, make superficial changes. This cannot be documented easily, as the elite and government would refuse to admit this and go far to disprove this, but it might be experienced by NGOs, companies and society who do want changes, but little is done, or any real changes are challenged and combatted. Such a change was, and to some extent still is, education for the working class (ibid, pp. 33, 34). The education which is provided for the lower class is merely learning to memorise; not for the masses to gain the critical and analytical skills required for questioning the very foundation of the social structure (ibid, pp. 9, 34). This, Spivak agrees with, and she points out “[In] the global South, in the schools for middle class children and above, the felicitous primary use of a page of language is to understand it; in the schools for the poor, it is to spell and memorize. This is an absolute and accepted divide, the consolidation of continuing class apartheid” (Spivak, 2004, p. 561).

1.3.2.3 Education as a Cultural act for Freedom

Education, according to Freire, needs to be more than creating literate people, it is necessary for the student to create an act of knowing, as he says: “*Education is a cultural action for freedom and therefore an act of knowing and not of memorization*” (Freire, 1970, p. 1). He continues by saying education must be moulded into the needs of the students, and into the needs of the working class, if any real change is to happen, since studying can be alienating for the working class since it has so little to do with “*the student’s socio-cultural reality*” (ibid, p. 8). If the student ends up being alienated from education, the student’s chances of finishing the education thus lessens. Consequently, the teacher should try to understand the students’ situation, and using the words, situations and cases which the students use and meet on a regular basis, rather than academic, complicated words, which the student will have no use for knowing. For example, Freire believes that instead of using literature about peasants, the educator should use literature written by peasants, or literature which is written in cooperation with peasants (Freire, 1985, pp. 21-27). Spivak continues with the idea that being educated in literacy itself is not giving the poor a chance to speak up, make change or challenge a government, but being educated in democratic judgement, analysis and criticism can make the poor understand and give them the tools necessary to step out of the subaltern sphere, or give a way out of severe poverty (Brohi, 2014). Therefore, education cannot simply be top-down, but must go both ways. If the teachers do not understand their pupils, their pupils’ situation and culture, the teachers will find it difficult to educate the children, and make the children not only memorise the curriculum, but truly understand it, and be able to form a critical experience. She suggests that ‘humanity teachers’ should come to a subaltern community to observe the culture, and then learn the subaltern language – though, not to speak for the subaltern people, but to understand them in such a way, that they can create a curriculum for the children to learn how to enter the public debate, and thus how to make the subaltern people become non-subalterns (Spivak, 2002, pp. 537, 538, 557).

Freire is a strong believer that education is a cultural action for freedom, and that any form of education shows a “*concept of a man and the world*” (Freire, 1971, p. 43). What is meant by this is, that the educator, even if trying otherwise, will interpret the syllabus the educator will have to teach, and thus the syllabus will be taught with the understanding which the teacher already has of the world (ibid, p. 43). The “digestive concept of knowledge” (ibid, p. 7) introduces an interesting way of understanding education and knowledge. Freire explains that illiterates are *undernourished*, and need the *bread of the spirit* – knowledge – to be cured of their *illness*. Illiteracy is *intoxicating and debilitating*, because simple things, such as visiting a new place are terrifying if the illiterate cannot read the maps or signs, and they are *starving for letters* (ibid, pp. 7-8). These illiterate men are though not marginalised men, but rather they are marginalised by the system (ibid, pp. 10-11), which means that if they gained an education, they would be able to overthrow the elite, or to change the social infrastructure drastically.

Spivak also criticises education NGOs, claiming that these NGOs stem from such a privileged place, that they will never truly understand the minorities and subalterns they educate, and that they will come with a top-down approach (ibid, pp. 525-527). Moreover, NGOs funded by the global North are the least likely to provide education which suits the pupils, as these NGOs will not be able to fundraise in the global North if the citizens of the global North cannot recognise the education system (ibid, pp. 527).

As Spivak concludes in her essay, “Righting Wrongs” beautifully: “*first the culture of responsibility is corrupted. The effort is to learn it with patience from below and to keep trying to suture it to the imagined felicitous subject of universal human rights. Second, the education system is a corrupt ruin of the colonial model. The effort is persistently to undo it, to teach the habit of democratic civility. Third, to teach these habits, with responsibility to the corrupted culture, is different from children’s indoctrination into nationalism, resistance-talk, identitarianism.*” (p.563)

1.3.3 Other thoughts

Education is commonly seen as the way forward to the development of LIC. If you look at any NGO working with children in LIC, you will find they involve themselves with one kind of education or another. Though, the system of education and how it is generally a copy of the western style education system can bring about a debate, on whether it can be imposed on the variety of cultures and subcultures which LIC can have. An example of this is that of Thailand, where Headman Wibun Khemchaloem, strongly believes the western form of ‘education for all’ damages the indigenous knowledge: *“Education has been designed to produce people for industry. Learning has become something that is bought and sold. Education is an investment and investors want to get a return on their money. So, people who go through schools just end up like cogs in the industrial machine – sometimes without even realizing it.”* (Thailand Human Development Report, 2003, p. 6; Kanstrup-Jensen, 2006, pp. 11-20).

The necessity of giving the children an education where critical analysis is taught cannot be stressed enough – without this, simple yet difficult to obtain for the lower class of the global South, education can be almost pointless. It can be discussed for many years; how it will be possible to make an education which is customised for the different social and cultural classes, but it will need an extremely large amount of money to be realised. Moreover, as the World Bank has a massive influence in setting the agenda of education; there are few chances that it will divert from the mass production of education – especially if each small rural area should have a specified education programme. But what should not be more, or costlier, is to teach the children to analyse, be critical, and to relate to the syllabus. What this requires is educators who have been taught themselves how to be critical – raising the requirements for becoming a teacher, or training them to be critical themselves, just like teachers in the middle and higher economic class, will bring about an enormous positive change for the entire global South’s working class. The power imbalance of the NGOs and the government will also have a direct and indirect impact on the education of the children, as the results of no mutual trust will trickle down to the

children, so that the NGOs become voiceless, and the children will be truly subaltern.

1.4 LAWS IN PLACE

The two major international bodies which operate within the rights of children, and which have condemned child labour are the Committee of the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The CRC is committed to ensure and procure all the different rights of the child, and has its foundation built upon the “Convention on the Rights of the Child” (CRC), whereas the ILO deals with the rules, regulations and rights of the workers. Both the ILO and the CRC define a child as an individual under the age of 18.

The CRC was implemented by the UN in 1989 and ratified in 1990, and it states the most basic forms of rights for children – it should be read in context with and as an extension of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where e.g., in article 26, the right to free elementary education is mentioned and it is also stated that this should be compulsory (UN General assembly, 1948). The CRC defines the role the state has in relation to the child and its guardians, as well as the child’s right to education, his/her right to rest and leisure, and his/her right to be protected from exploitation (UN, 1989, A/RES/44/25). Especially these rights mentioned provide a solid argument why child labour is illegal and severely frowned upon, as child labour takes away a child’s possibility of being truly a child by exploiting the child for monetary gains. Legal child labour does exist, but exists on the child’s terms rather than on the employers’. Article 32 of the CRC addresses child labour:

“Article 32

1. States: Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

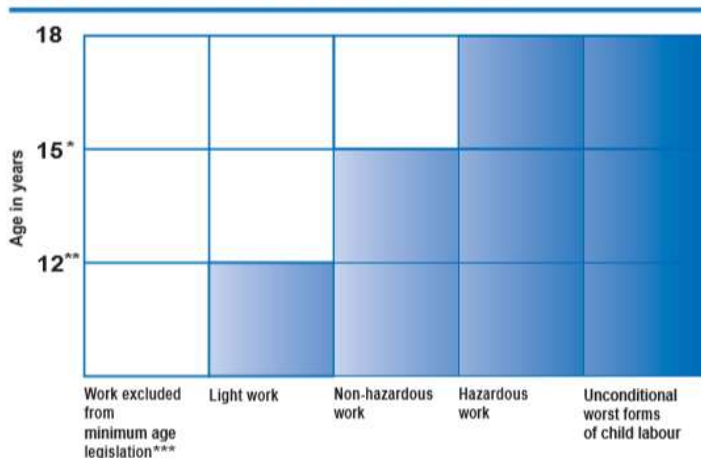
2. States: Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular:

(a) Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;

(b) Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;

(c) Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.” (UN, 1989, A/RES/44/25)

Figure 1.1: Basic distinctions in ILO child labour standards



Shaded area = child labour for abolition

* The minimum age for admission to employment or work is determined by national legislation and can be set at 14, 15 or 16 years.

** The minimum age at which light work is permissible can be set at 12 or 13 years.

*** For example, household chores, work in family undertakings and work undertaken as part of education.

The UN International Labour Organization (ILO) also has an agency working with, improving and ending illegal child labour. As ILO in the book “Child Labour” writes; “there are different forms of child labour, and there are different age levels”. (see figure 1.1, International Labour Organization, 2004, p. 17)

What the ILO defines as “unconditional worst forms of child labour” are; bonded labour, trafficking, soldiers, prostitution, drug dealing, as well as hazardous work,

which can be some forms for manufacturing, agriculture, and domestic work (International Labour Organization, 2004, chapter 1 and 2).

These international organisations unfortunately do not have any rights to do much about violations. Countries which have signed the CRC are expected to give status reports, and can, if the CRC decides it, in turn receive a custom-made plan to improve their systems (Ohchr.org, 2017).

Two other international players in education and child labour are the World Bank and the Millennium Goals. The Millennium Goals have worked as a push towards generating more laws and regulations to aid children in attending school. The World Bank has had a more ‘behind the scenes’ impact on child education, as they have invested heavily in education, which has accounted for up to 10% of “public expenditures on education in the Third World” (Muedini, 2016, pp. 42-46).

1.5 CONCLUSION

The background reasons for child labour are often seen as being because of an impoverished family, and the lifestyle of impoverished families, or because of the current economic system of the country, state or society. The international laws and regulations which exist to better the life of children and child labourers are unfortunately not reinforced completely, as there are few repercussions for not adhering to them. Moreover, the laws and regulations might simply be too utopian, as, for example, countries such as India face massive difficulties in finding and punishing most of the employers of hazardous child labour, even if India has implemented many laws relating to this; which will be discussed further in chapter 2.

Another important idea of education which Freire pointed out, is that if the syllabus is so foreign and abstract to the students, the schools might ultimately scare away the students. Spivak furthered this idea and added that the student should be taught in a ‘native’ way, in which the educator learns the way of the students, and can teach the student in a way in which the student will gain a voice to be heard by the mainstream community. Though, what might be the most important thing is,

whether it is possible and realistic – because if the world community, the international organisations, NGOs and governments are not on board, this will not be possible, no matter how urgent and vital it is. Moreover, if the NGOs are silenced, their work will be hindered and less effective, thus the trust and ears of the government are vital for a good cooperation. Specialised teachers and schools will be much costlier in the short run. Moreover, the NGOs which often work together with the governments, might not be able to fundraise on specialised schools, if the global North where the NGOs generally fundraise, might not want to support the idea if it is too foreign to them. This has not been discussed in depth here, as the research and discussions could fill a library of books, and many years of conferences – I have thus decided to narrow it down to purely the Indian Government, West Bengal and especially Kolkata, to understand and analyse how they tackle child labour, and the rights of child labourers, and how they work with the diversity, multi-ethnic and caste challenges which exist.

2 KOLKATA AND NCLP

2.1 INTRODUCTION

India is a unique, enormous country, with a massive population and many children. – India has ratified the CoRC; the government is bound by moral obligation, and thus it is important to know the government and state governments, which responsibilities they have, and what their moral foundations are which will be discussed in the chapter. Within India, the state West Bengal and Kolkata are very interesting to look at in terms of education, child labour and culture; as West Bengal is bordering on five states and three countries, and Kolkata is the third largest city of India. India, West Bengal and Kolkata are all part of a government scheme called the National Child Labour Project (NCLP), where they aim to mainstream the child labourer to attend ‘normal’ schools. This programme has its pros and cons, and has, as the main child labour scheme in India, been widely discussed.

In this chapter, the reason for choosing Kolkata and West Bengal will be explained in the first section, followed by a section that examines the different laws of India and West Bengal, and how they, to some extent are implemented in Kolkata. This will be followed by the cooperation which Kolkata, West Bengal and India have with different forms of NGOs, trailed by the introduction and explanation of the NCLP, and ending in a short conclusion.

2.2 KOLKATA

West Bengal is significant for several reasons – the implementation of the laws on child labour and education, the geographical uniqueness, the diverse culture and people, and the collaboration between NGOs and the West Bengal Government.

West Bengal is the fourth most populated state in India with more than 91 million people living there, located next to Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, and housing the third largest city in India, Kolkata (India Census, 2011). West Bengal is 88,752 km², more than double the size of Denmark, and has more than 15 times as many inhabitants as Denmark (Worldometers.info, 2017) with climate and geography

from the Himalayan hill regions of Darjeeling to the mangrove forest coastline of Sundarbans. The majority population is Bengalis, with Bengali and English as main languages, and Nepali in Darjeeling, but Hindi, Santali and Urdu are also common. West Bengal is split into 23 districts (Maps of India, 2017). With this diverse nature and people, the cultures of the people are extremely different, which means that what might be right in one district of West Bengal might not work in another district, making implementing or ratifying any laws on child labour more difficult. I.e. if one district has an issue with children working on tea plantations, the solutions for this will be probably be completely different from the solutions of another district with children working in tea stalls. West Bengal has had a communist government for more than 30 years, but in 2011 a coalition between All India Trinamool Congress and Indian National Congress won the state over; this is a coalition between ideologies of nationalism and socialism. The NGOs which work within West Bengal play a major part in everyday life; with more than 1,000 registered in West Bengal (West-bengal.ngosindia.com, 2017), working in different industries and districts. These NGOs range from being very small with only a handful of employees, to being international NGOs such as UNICEF or SOS Children Villages.

Kolkata has an interesting history as it was the capital of Colonial India until 1911, with the infrastructure and buildings showing the architecture of England, mixed with Indian styles. The capital of West Bengal has a population of 4.5 million people in the city, and 14.1 million in the suburbs (Surabhi, 2013), and will for this thesis be included in what I regard as Kolkata, as many live in the suburbs but work in the city of Kolkata. Kolkata is known for having one of the lowest costs of living and lowest wages in India (Times of India, 2014) and many children and families are sent from the surrounding states and countries to West Bengal and especially Kolkata to work, as living conditions are so cheap, that many will try to send money home. This, thus, also brings in many trafficked children to Kolkata and in recent years Kolkata has seen an increase in trafficking and child labour (Peebles, 2013). In Kolkata 5.3% of the children are child labourers (Samantroy et. Al, 2017, p. 116) which is much higher than that of the other big cities such as Mumbai, 3.3% (ibid,

p. 122), and New Delhi, 1.7% (ibid, p. 107), and much higher than most other cities in India (ibid, pp. 102-126). Since Kolkata is a big city, the types of child labour tend to be domestic work, manufacturing work, working in shops and workshops as well as collecting garbage and sorting it.

As will be mentioned in the methodology, relevant statistics of West Bengal and Kolkata are difficult to find, and often there will only be relevant statistics for either West Bengal or Kolkata; which is why this chapter sometimes jumps from West Bengal to Kolkata and back to West Bengal.

Education in Kolkata is mandatory and free, as it is in the rest of India. The inserted Article 21-A to the “Constitution (Fifty-Sixth Amendment) Act, 2002” states that every child in the age range of six to fourteen has the right to free elementary education, and that the school should be in the neighbourhood of the child, so that they will not spend an outrageous amount of time travelling, as well as saving travel expenses. Within West Bengal 89% of the urban children are literate, meaning 11% are illiterate. This data is from 2008. There has been a tremendous improvement for children, as in 1991 urban males were 64,7% literate and urban females were 59.3% (UNICEF, 2011, p. 97), which means much could have improved in the last 9 years, if the improvement was consistent.

Kolkata and West Bengal are, as statistics show, also concerned with education, and 70.7%, of the children in the labour force have attended school and learned the basic reading and writing skills. What is more interesting or concerning, is that 67.8% of all the child labourers are at secondary school level or below, meaning only 2.1% of all the children have attended education above secondary level, where the child is above the age of 14 (ibid, p. 37). These child labourers will often be working while they should attend school, meaning that if they work, they will not attend school.

2.3 LAWS

Without laws, rules and regulations, any change is difficult if not impossible. Though even if all the right laws are made, if they are not implemented completely, improvement will happen at a very slow pace. West Bengal and Kolkata have followed the different laws and implemented the laws which India has made about education and child labour. Kolkata, as the capital of West Bengal has implemented all the laws and follows them as much as possible (Wblc.gov.in., 2017).

From 1890, almost a century before the CoRC was written, and until 1947 when India became independent, Colonial India started to be concerned about children and child labour, and introduced laws which would build the foundation for the child labour laws today. Laws such as “the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890”, “The Factories Act of 1948” forbid children under the age of 14 to work in factories, and define the working conditions and working hours of 15-18-year olds. After independence, India continued the process of drawing the lines of law for child labourers in “The Mines Act of 1952” which forbids children below 18 years old to work in mines; “the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956” which forbids children under the age of 18 to be prostitutes, and if caught, the client would be prosecuted – this law was amended in 1986, where anyone who knowingly or unknowingly has been involved in child prostitution, such as landlords, will also face consequences. “The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986” which stated that anyone under the age of 14 is a child, and prohibited several different forms for work, has been amended several times, recently in 2016, and now states that working hours should not hinder education; and the “National Policy on Child Labour, 1987”, all of which sketch up the rights children had and have, and define the punishment for violating these Acts.

West Bengal has hired inspectors, who travel around and monitor child labour (West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights Rules, 2012). However, the programme is not very transparent, and finding any relevant data on these inspectors, how many there are and what they have achieved, is not publicly accessible. The idea of this programme is good; as the monitoring of child labour

and child labour violators is the way forward, but without the correct amount of, and consistent work towards, eradicating child labour, there will be multiple loop holes, where the violators can slip through and continue their work. The issue of transparency might not necessarily be unique to this branch of government, but might rather be a general issue which India has with transparency. If this is a correlation with bureaucracy, I cannot tell, but it is an issue throughout the sector; be it private, NGOs or public.

After the introduction of the CoRC, India has introduced more Acts about children's rights such as: "Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000" (JJ Act 2000), "The Right to Education Act 2009" and "Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015" which deal with new issues and update them. The JJ Act 2000 is split into two parts; the first part outlines the target groups – children who need care and protection and juveniles, and defines the rights the children have in terms of prosecution. The second part examines the laws, and demands that a state funded board will oversee that the acts are carried out and that no juvenile is wrongly treated, as well as overseeing different NGOs that receive state funding to help children (JJ Act 2000). In 2015 two things happened: The Act was expanded by introducing NALSA (National Legal Services Authority), which provides legal services (West Bengal State Legal Services Authority, 2016), and a new act, JJ Act 2015, came into force. The Right to Education Act of 2009 states that education is to be compulsory and free within the age range of six to fourteen, and first to eighth grade (Right to Education Act, 2009, article 2.b and 2.c). The entire Act looks very good on paper; but despite education being free, there are many hidden costs; such as transport to and from school, school supplies such as pencils, books and notebooks, uniforms, extracurricular activities etc. (International Labour Organization, 2004, chapter 4).

All these laws and Acts have several flaws, as they are not fully implemented (Bhattacharya et al, 2012, pp. 653-654). Politics and bureaucracy also play a vital part in eradicating Kolkata of child labour. The bureaucracy and internal work hierarchies have a lot to say, as well as the work ethics. Coming from a

Scandinavian perspective, the global South tends to work less and have longer breaks, talk more privately and in general be less punctual. Moreover, the work culture of the employees; saying what they think the boss, or in this case the government, would like to hear, rather than what is the actual truth will also have a say in the overall efficiency of West Bengal and Kolkata (Philip & Ganguly, 2014).

2.4 NGO COLLABORATION

There are several thousand NGOs working with various issues, NGOs are aiding the government and state, and often will be able to provide a more qualitative service and education than the state would provide (D.L. Sheth et Sethi, 1991, pp. 64-67). International organisations, such as the UN, ILO and UNICEF play a major and vital role for child labourers; they set the international discourse, and through debate and diplomacy, conjure the ‘new norms’ which, if not followed, or attempted to follow, will be frowned upon (International Labour Organization, 2004, chapter 7 and 8). An example is the UN which made the CRC, and the ILO, the World Bank, UNICEF and hundreds of other NGOs, as well as many countries started to claim that the CoRC was the mere foundation of Child Rights, which needed to be upheld. Smaller local NGOs tend to have a smaller scope than the international NGOs, but will be more specialised regarding the needs of the recipients. Grass-root movements can start off with local NGOs, and move upwards in more regional, national and international groups. However; small local NGOs and big international NGOs can both have governments as donors. Big NGOs which receive donations from various sources will not be affected much by the needs and wants of the government, whereas smaller NGOs can be dictated to in regard to following the wish of the government.

There is much debate on NGOs within the social studies, as to what the roles of NGOs are, and whether they take over the role of the government, or take away the responsibility of the government (Krishnan, 2007, pp. 252-253). Moreover, transparency, corruption, neoliberal ideology, validity, checks and balances, and many other factors are combined and are not alone in making a good case of

undermining NGOs (Reimann, 2005, pp. 49-50). The local culture will also have a large part to play in determining the quality of the NGO's work. India has 3,100,000 NGOs (Anand, 2015), which means a significant part of the population is working within the NGO sector. This means consequently, that the passion which many western-led NGOs have, might be lacking, as NGO work in developing countries provides job opportunities and financial income rather than being something the people are dedicated to (ibid).

NGOs are a vital part of developmental work; child labourers stand a much better chance of improving their rights, rehabilitation and gaining an education because of NGOs (Sanghera, 2016, pp. 277-278).

One of the state initiatives we will consider is the National Child Labour Project (NCLP), a state funded project with the cooperation of local NGOs. The goal of the NCLP was to eliminate child labour in hazardous industries by 2010, but it is now a slow but steady objective of the NCLP.

2.5 NCLP

In 1988, a year before the CoRC was concluded, India introduced the NCLP scheme to eradicate hazardous child labour. The scheme is purely government funded, but works through NGOs, organisations, academics and other players in the field of child labour. The base of the scheme is to open special schools, where the selected children, who either worked in hazardous jobs or are at risk of working in a hazardous job will receive special education to become mainstreamed, and be able to attend regular formal school. The programme is by entrusted chosen NGOs and voluntary organisations. The special schools have teachers who have received special training, and the students enrolled receive a monthly stipend of 150 Indian Rupees (Rs), compared with the salary of an adult domestic worker which is Rs 7,000 a month (Bellman, 2016), as well as medical care and mid-day meals. During its 29 years in existence, 271 districts, and more than 6,000 special schools have been opened, and 895,529 children throughout India have been mainstreamed. In West Bengal alone, 30,649 children have been mainstreamed since the programme

started officially in 1995 (Barman and Roy, 2012, p. 5; Government of India, 2017, “Children mainstreamed”), and between 2009 and 2012, 22,858 children were mainstreamed, more than 2/3rds of the total amount (Labour.nic.in. A, 2017; Khadilkar, 2015, p. 51). The overall numbers are improving, but this is a very small program considering how many children in India are working, with an official estimate of more than 12 million children working, and unofficial estimates of 20 million children working (Friends of Salaam Baalak Trust, 2017).

The NCLP has been revised twice, once in 2013 and at the latest in 2016, where there has become more of a focus on the quality and length of education of the teachers; as they will now be instructed in how to teach age appropriate material, and will receive training for between three months to two years. The general idea of the NCLP is to identify children who are working or are at risk for working in hazardous jobs, and empower them through education, and in that way, motivate them to stay in school, as well as giving their families an alternative income, and a general alternative to making their children work. The program also hopes for long term benefits, as the children who have been enrolled in their schools and completed the program, will, because of the schooling, be less likely to send their children into hazardous labour (Augeraud-Veronü and Fabre, 2004, pp. 17-18). In Kolkata, the government has appointed a board to monitor child labour, as well as NGOs, and the government is working closely with several NGOs by funding them, and trying various ways to educate and rehabilitate child workers.

The project also entices the programme officers to register employers who employ children, and police officers are encouraged to act. Moreover, the project also urges the police to carry out raids and inspections, to catch more offenders, and for the offenders to be discouraged from employing children.

2.5.1 Special Schools and Children

The NCLP begins by a state hiring NGOs to make a base line survey in their district to identify the children, then contacting them and withdrawing them from labour, by offering them a transitional training in the NCLP special schools before the children continue in mainstream schools. The programme also offers training for

the parents and families, and even when the children have entered the mainstream education, the NCLP NGOs will continue tracking the children to help and prevent the children from going back into hazardous labour.

The children are prioritised with regard to how much the child is deemed to benefit from attending an NCLP school, if they are between the ages of 8 and 14. Children who are above the age of 14 and identified as working in hazardous work, will be referred to an appropriate centre for skill training. The schools' curriculum is designed according to the circumstances of the target group of children, with flexible hours to fit the children, and the curriculum tries to avoid any long holidays, so the children will not get the leeway to go back to work. The main aim of the schools is to mainstream the children, which is why the curriculum is focused on both academic and social skills, and the curriculum is made so that there are multiple opportunities for children to enter and exit the education, between three months and two years. These children receive free "*textbooks, notebooks, stationery, uniform, schoolbag, games and craft material*" (NCLP, 2016, p. 24), a nutritious midday meal, and doctor and medicine if necessary (ibid, p. 24). Possibly more controversial, the child also receives a stipend of Rs.150 a month, if a child attends a minimum 75% of the month's education.

The schools are regularly monitored by a state department and central level monitoring, and the inspector should make a report and hand it to the district chairperson who in turn will submit that and his/her observations to the state. These inspections will happen at intervals, which are decided by the state government and the district administration. The NCLP is purely funded by the government, and has a fixed budget for each school, and expects to receive financial documents regularly. The NCLP acknowledges that if the programme is to make a real change in society, the entire public, from the child to employers to society, should all recognise that child labour is bad. The special schools are also part of the plan to generate awareness, and the NCLP has a 'nice-to-idea' to develop "*Social Mobilization and Communication Strategy*" (ibid, p. 33), though this is under construction.

2.5.2 Implementation

The NCLP has had almost thirty years to find root, and is substantially present in 17 different states. Out of these states, the NCLP has been most successful in Andhra Pradesh with 285,285 children mainstreamed since 1988, and in Uttar Pradesh and Orissa with respectively 134,377 and 108,309 children mainstreamed. However, there is still plenty of room for growth. The majority of child labour throughout India happens in rural areas, and the most common form of child labour in India is agriculture, which is viewed as hazardous work. The programme will be different throughout India, and vary with regard to the different forms of labour which the target children have done.

2.5.2.1 In West Bengal

The NCLP was implemented in 1995 in West Bengal, and did not include Kolkata until the ninth five-year plan in 1997, meaning that the NCLP has been operating in Kolkata for 20 years (Barman and Roy, 2012, p. 5). West Bengal has embraced the programme, and is supporting the organisation of awareness campaigns for the parents of the children who work, as well as sporting events. According to the West Bengal government of 2015; West Bengal had 929 NCLP schools and enrolled 43,702 children. West Bengal spends Rs. 750 per child per month, which is an increase from 2010. Kolkata has 38 special schools, and 1,900 children enrolled in these schools, many of these children working with fireworks, automobiles, doing domestic work, cinder picking, and vending street food. What should be noticed is that the government has registered exactly 1,900 children attending the NCLP schools in Kolkata; it seems very unlikely that the number is so precise, and what is more likely is that there is a high turnaround of students in the schools (West Bengal Government, 2015, pp. 125-132).

2.5.2.2 Reviews

The NCLP has been severely criticised by different reports, journalists and NGOs, as many of the special schools fail to provide much of the bare necessities which are required, also they fail to provide what the programme promises. An example is that, according to Prognosys, 20% of the schools do not provide drinking water,

and 20% do not have toilets, as well as only 40% of the children receiving midday meals, and 50% do not receive their monthly stipend (Prognosys, 2012, pp. 32-33). Though, this statistic is based upon only 30 districts which the NCLP operates in, and none of these districts are in West Bengal. Other researchers, such as Bhattacharya (2008, 2012), have analysed how the NCLP programme is doing within West Bengal, and have found that the funding in West Bengal has been coming with severe delays, sometimes as much as 19 months, which in turn makes running a programme difficult. Moreover, it found that many of the schools did not use the money in the way that they were supposed to, as, according to the agreement, each school receives Rs. 244,000, and out of that 32% was to be used for midday meals, and 25% to be used for the stipends to the students. The study showed that the schools did not allocate the funds as such, and spent much less money on the students and the student stipends (Bhattacharya et al., 2012, pp. 658-661). Bhattacharya criticised the NCLP, saying that the national NCLP survey from 2008 showed that there was an attendance of less than 75%, and that the basic functions of the school were in general below the base line; that the infrastructure was found wanting, that 62% of the schools only had one classroom, and only 72% of the schools had access to drinking water. Moreover, only 45% of the urban area schools followed the curriculum. Bhattacharya also points out, that when the national poverty line is Rs. 599 a month, the stipend is not close enough to this amount to be adequate (ibid, pp. 661-669).

The NCLP will be looked at in more detail in the next chapter, as I have interviewed a prominent NGO in Kolkata which is a part of the NCLP.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The international community is very focused on the rights of children, and the prevention of child labour. India is one of the largest countries in the world that has problems with child labour, and the monitoring of it, and there are several reports of severe hazardous child labour such as trafficking, mining and such. However,

India has, since before the CoRC, also been focused on the need to help children, and make sure they have safe working conditions (Child Labour Act, 1986), and is to this day dedicated to improving the life of child workers. The NCLP has several severe issues, and statistics on how well the scheme is doing do look bleak, yet the NCLP is still better than nothing – the collaboration between the government and NGOs might also be a way to extend the government resources, so that more child labourers can be helped. International organisations are also working with the government, as well as alone, to help child labourers.

India is a complicated country which cannot change overnight; West Bengal and Kolkata are diverse, and with the power imbalance between the state and its collaborators, that change will take generations. Though, on an optimistic note, when comparing the India Census of 2001 with the India Census of 2011 there is a noticeable fall in the number of child labourers in West Bengal from 857,087 to 550,092 (Samantroy, 2017, chapter 5), a 35.8% decrease. If this continues, the issue of child labour will in the next century be history in West Bengal.

One thing is certain; officially the Indian Government wants to decrease the number of child labourers in hazardous work, but it remains to be proven if they are willing to dedicate the resources necessary for such a big change.

3 METHODOLOGY

For this thesis, I have decided to use a mixture of primary and secondary sources, as well as theories on education for vulnerable, subaltern children, to reach a balanced conclusion. My initial wish was to interview two NGOs, but unfortunately, one of the NGOs no longer exists. The idea of writing my thesis on children originated from my 6 months internship in Kolkata in the autumn of 2016, where I worked in a project comprised of three NGOs, one of which worked with a government scheme on Street Children called Open Shelter. This NGO, NGO X I visited, I spoke several times about the government, the programme and the way the NGO world functioned in Kolkata with both NGO X and my co-workers on the project I interned with. During my stay in Kolkata I got an insight into the everyday life of Kolkata, from where to order street food, how much food, taxis and products should cost, the general culture and I learned some Bengali phrases. During my internship, where I worked with Street Food Vendors in Kolkata, I got to attend meetings with the government as well as field visits. I arranged with the NGO X, that when I returned to Europe I would use them as a case study together with another NGO, which would also work with street children in Kolkata. Though, upon my return I quickly realised that I should write about child labour in Kolkata instead, which meant that my interviews with the NGO X were obsolete, but NGO X and the people I had spoken with, fortunately also worked with the NCLP programme. I started my research with secondary research, understanding the mechanism and laws of India, West Bengal and Kolkata, as well as the theory upon which I would base my interviews and analysis. Unfortunately, during the autumn of 2017, when I started to write my thesis, I could not get in touch with NGO X which I previously had visited – their website was shut down, and the people I previously had spoken with had stopped replying, and I later found out NGO X no longer exists. I have chosen to keep NGO X anonymous, as the West Bengal Government will have a record of the people who used to be employed in NGO X, and I do not wish to put these peoples' careers at stake. Thus, I only interviewed one NGO, Shashti, which was chosen because it is an old and acknowledged NGO

which has worked with the West Bengal government on several schemes and projects, but also big enough to receive international funding, and because it also worked with the NCLP and was based in Kolkata. Though, the issue of a powerful government which does not listen to NGOs, I was introduced to first by NGO X, and later in my interview with Shashti.

My foundation for the thesis was a core belief that child labour is wrong, and something which needs to be eradicated, as well as the understanding that education does help child labourers, and prevents future child labour. Through the theories applied in this thesis on the education of the subaltern, as well as the research of the laws in India and West Bengal, I used these to analyse the interview of the case study NGO.

3.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH

I chose to use secondary research in the form of the data and statistics which were available on child labour and education in India and in Kolkata. Most of the statistics are from, or are a bi-product of the Indian Census of 2011, which 6 years later may be outdated. India has produced several laws and acts in favour of children and child labour, which I will analyse. The Indian Government Scheme NCLP will have a special focus and will be looked into with appropriate statistics on how well the scheme has been implemented. I have also looked at interpretations of the laws, so that I could check and balance my understanding of the laws.

Another major form of secondary research which I have used are the journals, books and theories written by other academics in the field, both in India and also throughout the world. As these forms of references all contain some forms of analysed knowledge, I made sure that the writers and organisations behind the texts were academics, major newspapers or reliable NGOs, to prevent any unnecessary bias.

3.2 PRIMARY RESEARCH

The NGO I have interviewed I had found online, and I have emailed back and forth with them about their consent to the interview, as well as sending them a week prior to the interview the draft interview. The interview was a semi structured interview, which was based on the NCLP, which children attended the scheme, what their backgrounds were, how the NCLP was effective, and how the cooperation with the government was. I have, in chapter 2 built up a deductive coding system on the NCLP, which can be seen by the sub-headlines, and I tried to find information for each point to get sound evidence for each point. The NGO agreed to be interviewed through Skype, as I was not able to go to Kolkata for an interview. Skype has both the flexibility of geography, but also has some limitations in the shape of disruptive background sounds, lack of or poor internet connection and difficulties reading body language (Janghorban et al. 2014, pp. 1-2). This interview especially had internet connectivity issues, so the screens and sound would freeze twice, which meant that some information was lost. The NGO provided me with three employees, who had all been there for between 12 and 20 years, and the interview lasted 1 hour and 15 minutes, though with some informalities and some switch between the interviewees, meaning the official interview was 1 hour. The interview was semi structured, where I would ask about a topic, and the interviewee would answer – though often they wanted to share much and strayed into other topics and issues. After the interview, the NGO asked to be anonymous. I made an edited transcription, where I've edited out any incriminating details of who the people of the NGO are, and about the NGO itself. I also edited the transcription so that I have removed any repeating half-sentences. The denaturalised transcription has both its benefits and limitations, as the wish is to stay true and keep the integrity of the interview but meanwhile to remove involuntary wordings, and keep "*the meanings and perceptions created and shared during a conversation*" (Oliver, 2005, p. 1277). I analysed and coded the interview primarily in the context of the findings of chapter 1 and 2.

3.3 DEDUCTION

To analyse and code the interview, I have created a deductive coding based on some requirements of the NCLP, and I have framed my interview to be able to code them. My basic coding words are “Government, Monitoring and Salaries”, where I have researched how the government is to work with, how the monitoring works, as well as how the budget and salary work out. “Background of the children” I use to get a basic understanding of the children, who they are and how they have arrived in such a position. “Curriculum” to understand if the school was following the curriculum assigned by the NCLP, to what extent, and the reasoning behind this. “Stipends” was to understand if this form of compensation for children is given, used and the quality of it. “Midday meal and supplies” to check up and understand the system which was promised of the NCLP. “Drop out” where I found out who the drop outs tend to be and why they do so. “Follow up” to understand the mechanism the programme upholds or fails to uphold to make sure the children will not be abandoned. “Future”, where I tried to understand the improvements in and recommendations of aid to child labourers to aid their future.

I believe that despite the small sample of one NGO, from personal experience with the Indian NGO environment, the findings from this interview can be duplicated with most other NGOs who work with NCLP in Kolkata. I analysed empirical evidence with the background of deductive coding, and with the theoretical terms from my theoretical framework, chapter 1. This allowed me to combine the idea that a differentiated education is necessary for a quality education, with how the international government and the Indian government support the eradication of child labour, but leaves little room for improvement in the programmes which can help the goal being reached. Moreover, the interview with the NGO, which is on the ground, provided me with the first-hand narrative of what aids child labourers and what hinders them from being mainstreamed. Though, my hypothesis did in fact not turn out to be completely correct, as the main issue with the NCLP is not the quality of the education, but the budget of the scheme. Yet the quality of education is also a big issue.

3.4 LIMITATIONS

This research does have some limitations, of which I am aware. I have only one interview with one NGO, the reason for which I explained at the beginning. Though, despite having only one interview, I believe based on my previous experience with Kolkata, the government and the NGO branch, that the answers I gathered in the interview are not unique to this NGO alone, but are a general experience for the NGOs working with the NCLP. I also believe that the NGO, because it is anonymous, has been honest. Another limitation, I can argue, is the fact that I am writing about Child Labour, but I do not interview any child labourers. I have chosen not to do this for several reasons, amongst these being the ethical reason that the children, even with consent from their parents, might not realise the impact of their participation, and there will be a power imbalance because I would as an adult have more social respect than a child (Eder and Fingerson, 2001, p. 181) When I started to research for this thesis, I decided to narrow it down, so that I have excluded any focus on economics, as well as external influences such as internet, international consumer and corporations. I also decided not to focus on any geographical areas outside of Kolkata. Though, the access to recent and valid statistical data about Kolkata has also been a limitation to this study, as it was difficult to find much data – though I did find what I needed.

3.4.1 Subject Limitations

When writing this thesis and conducting interviews, it is important to note that I come from a Western well-educated white background, which means I have a different stand point to the children and local NGOs in Kolkata. This privileged white background will also mean that there could have been a power imbalance between the NGO, child labourers and me. I have, in my interview and in my emails taken all the necessary precautions to be neutral and objective (Brutus et al., 2013, p. 50-52).

I have also been limited by not being able to visit Kolkata and NGO. My experience in Kolkata will also be a limitation, as I might have a bias based on my privileged observations. Another limitation is the fact that I do not speak Bengali, and we had

to conduct the interview in English, which meant that one of the people I interviewed needed a translator, and the another one was not very good at English, so I had at times some issues understanding his accent and wordings.

4 CASE STUDY OF NCLP AND NGO

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Many researchers and academics, such as Bhattacharya, have analysed the NCLP. They have looked at the latest NCLP report, which was released in 2008 – this chapter differs, as it has a more bottom up approach, and listens to an NGO which has first-hand experience with handling the NCLP. In this chapter, an anonymous NGO has been interviewed regarding their NGO's running of a special school in the NCLP, and how their experience with the programme has been, as well as what the situation for children and child labours is in Kolkata. They have previous experience with the government, and are running several of the government funded programmes, some of which have been successfully implemented, compared to the NCLP, where they have several issues with, for example, the budgeting. The interview was quite startling, and the information which was passed was not what I had imagined, as the government discourse did not resemble the NGO discourse.

This chapter is split into two parts, the first describing the NCLP, what it does, what its results have been, how it's been implemented in India and West Bengal and how it has been received by the public. The second part deals with the interview of the NGO, and how they feel about the NCLP, and what their view of the reality of the NCLP is. This is all summed up in the conclusion and analysis, where I analyse what the different realities of the Indian government and the NGO working with the NCLP are. This is followed by a discussion and analysis where I bring together this chapter and the two previous chapters.

4.2 NGO - SHASHTI

For this thesis case study, I chose an NGO which had been working with child labourers for many years, and one which had been working since the beginning with the NCLP programme, which in Kolkata is called Kolkata National Child Labour Project (KNCLP). The programme is the same, except for the geography. I have together with the NGO decided to keep it anonymous so that they will be able to tell the truth. I will refer to it for the rest of this thesis as Shashti, after the Hindu Goddess, who is the protector of children. Shashti is a 30-year-old grassroots NGO, which was founded to aid rag pickers. Shashti has worked with the West Bengal Government several times, but has also become a medium size NGO with international donors. Shashti is well renowned, and has been applauded locally, nationally and internationally for its work in the slums and with rag pickers, children and women. They have been working with the NCLP since 2002-2003, and have, since then, had around 300 children entering the programme. I have spoken with three of its employees, all three who had worked for 12-20 years in the NGO. Shashti has very good relations with the government, and they have never complained about any issues with the KNCLP.

After the interview, I have read and re-read the transcript to find out how to code the interview, and found some general topics and headlines, in which I am presenting the data.

4.2.1 Interview

4.2.1.1 Government, Monitoring and Salaries

In Kolkata, according to Shashti, there are more than 100,000 child labourers, who work in several different industries, some where they are very visible to the public eye, such as tea-stalls. Rarely will anyone interfere, and rarely will any NGO work with these children. In Kolkata, and in most of India, there is an issue of child labour. And the programme of NCLP is not seen, in the NGO world, as a good, well running programme. The programme is made from top-down with little real knowledge of the situation which it deals with, and with a budget and salary which

frankly are ridiculous. The programme is not on a scale with the true situation of Kolkata, and Shashti estimates that the programme only impacts 20-30% of the community and child labourers. This leaves 70-80% of the child labourers out, and what's worse, they're not acknowledged. Though, as Shashti says:

“That's why I doubt the real intent of the government, whether they really want to eradicate the child labourers.”

The entire programme is founded and funded by the government, and run by different NGOs which run the programme for the government. When the government needs to find NGOs and volunteer organisations to run the special schools, the government uses its website. An NGO needs to be at least two years old and have some back up funds. A good budget is vital for any programme to make sense, and for it to be successful. When I met with Shashti, I was introduced to one of the major issues they had with the NCLP, if not the biggest issue of the NCLP. The government does not pay up front, but rather the money is paid in return after around 1½ years. This means that if an NGO is not big enough, and does not have a fund which allows it to work for 1½ years, including rent of the building, wages for the teachers, vocational training, school supplies and the stipends, they are not eligible to run the programme. Moreover, the Shashti, as well as other NGOs did not know exactly when they were going to be paid. This has resulted in some of the teachers not being paid enough, or not being paid on time. It has also meant that Shashti has not been able to follow the curriculum completely, nor have they been able to supply children above class 5 with school supplies.

It states clearly in the NCLP that it should monitor the schools frequently, and according to Shashti, this is every 6-12 months. Though, what should be noted, is what Shashti says about being monitored:

“They never complain, we have a good relationship with the government. We NGOs know how to make good relations with government and government people. That's how we survive, our survival strategy is very strong, so they don't have any complaints,

until we have some disputes, conflicts or challenge the government for something. What we're sharing with you, you cannot share with them. We say everything is going well, and all their programmes are very fantastic, and all the children love it, like that. We know, that NGO people know that”.

The NGOs simply do not tell the truth to the government, and they might make sure to prepare the schools before an inspector comes.

4.2.1.2 Background of the Children

For the KNCLP school that Shashti run, the children have a wide range of backgrounds, with different kinds of family backgrounds as well as job backgrounds. According to interviewee Man 2, the children have worked as:

“Rag pickers, shoe makers, hand gloves makers, motel, mechanics, 2-wheeler repairing, hotel, snack, eating house, tea-shop. Sometimes help their parents doing mobile business like that. At home the children do the domestic work. Different types of things”.

Some of the children have parents who are addicted to alcohol, drugs or gambling, some parents or family members are abusive, some families molest their children, some families have too many children considering the income of the family. Sometimes the child will lack one or two parents. Man 2 claims that the reason so many parents and people living in poverty are addicted is the result of living the dry life of poverty, with addiction as a form of escape. The way Shashti finds these children, is done by a range of different approaches, such as having a poverty survey, followed up with interviews, and with meeting the families. The team inspects how safe the children are in the family, and in the communities, and they try to understand these children. The team members of Shashti look for vulnerable children; children who are not enjoying being children. According to man 2, 99% of the children have attended school, but he came out with a vital point that just because a child has been enrolled in school; it is not the same as being schooled. These children will typically be the first generation of learners in the family, if they

enter the programme, and therefore, the families will also need to know why education is valuable.

4.2.1.3 Curriculum

With the premonition from what Bhattacharya said in his studies, Man 2 confirmed that the school is not completely following the curriculum of the programme. Though the reasoning for not doing so is a result of the funding of the project from the government side – Shashti simply does not have the funds to afford the raw materials to collaborate with the curriculum. Moreover, the lack of funding also means that the teachers might not get a good salary nor get enough training. Instead of the curriculum, the children are taught e.g., drawing and sewing.

4.2.1.4 Stipend

Another issue is the stipend which the children receive, which is Rs. 150 a month and is paid into their own bank account. In the 2016 revision the stipend increased from Rs. 100 to 150, which is a 50% increase. Though, one of the key complaints which one of the leaders had, was that this amount of Rs. 150 was frankly ridiculous. As he said

“In a nice good restaurant, when the programme was founded [red. in Kolkata, 2002], the Biryani cost Rs. 60-70, now it is Rs. 200. You get my point. The cost has gone up three times. Even though Kolkata is a very cheap city, with Rs. 150 you cannot do anything. Nothing remarkable, you cannot do anything which can have an impact. It cannot have an impact on somebody’s life.”

He makes the point with these prices; that the general budget of the programme was made in early 2000, and has not kept up with inflation – what could be just enough to run a programme then, is barely enough for half the programme today. The man from Shashti also put this amount into context, when he explained that a child working in a tea-stall would earn Rs. 200 – 400 in a week, and after some years, and learning some skills, the child could be paid up to Rs. 500 a week. These children would also receive midday meals. This means that the Rs. 150 a month are

not even close to being competitive for a child labourer. The second man of Shashti came up with the example of a rag picker in one day, without any prior investments could earn Rs. 150 – 200 in a day – the same which the child could earn in a month through the programme.

4.2.1.5 Midday Meal and Supplies

The children who are enrolled on the programme are promised and supposed to get free school supplies, uniforms, books, pencils etc, as well as a free midday meal every day. Though, after speaking with a lady from the Shashti NGO, she said that the children only receive the school supplies until class 5, which is roughly when the children are 10 years old. After this they will have to pay themselves, and often this money comes purely out of their stipends. This can be very problematic, as the Rs. 150 stipend will not go towards the child's future, but to the school. Though, the meal is for everyone enrolled in the school, which is a necessity. The medical doctors are free – the bill is not covered by the NCLP but rather by the school health programme under the government.

4.2.1.6 Drop out

On the NCLP website, on the government's and West Bengal's website, there is a lack of statistics, as there is no information on what the drop-out rate is, nor any follow up on the children who have completed the programme. Shashti relies on other donors to help their schools, and to support the children. According to Shashti's man, their drop-out rate is more than 50%, because of various reasons:

“If you only depend on NCLP, it's very difficult to expect that these children would not drop out, the families rarely have the resources for the children, or wish that their children attend school. But the number [red. 50%] is much less. Sometimes the families will starve. The children feel this too, a child might feel “I cannot go to school, because otherwise my sister, my mother, my grandmother and suchlike will die, without any medical treatment and food.” These children drop out. “

Moreover, the children who have completed the programme will not necessarily continue studying. If for example, they enter the school at the age of 8, and complete it by the age of 11, they are only in class 6. To complete primary school, they need to finish class 10 – this will mean that if the children drop out at the age of 11, the schooling will not have much impact on their future.

4.2.1.7 Follow up

The children in the programme are, when and if they complete the special school, left alone. The programme has not considered the idea that it could be necessary to follow up on the children, continue to give them guidance, and not just let them leave. The salary of the teachers and the people involved with the programme means that they do not have the time or money to follow up on the children. An unofficial estimate of Shashti is that only 20-30% of the children who graduate from the programme continue education and finish class ten. This means, that even out of a batch of 50, if 50% drop out, 25 children are left, and from that only 20-30% finish class 10, only 4-7 children continue their education. Shashti is fortunate in the way that they have international donors, who help them to finance the NCLP, and that way make sure that 30-40% complete the programme. Even with this, 30-40% is a very low success rate. According to Shashti, the timeline of the programme is fine, and should be enough for the children to be mainstreamed – but if the education is poor, and all the teachers and staff are not paid or poorly paid, and there is no supportive mechanism, these children are not truly helped. This is also shown on the NCLP website, as there is much information on how many children were mainstreamed, but there is no follow up information.

4.2.1.8 Future – How to Combat Child Labour

From the first-hand experience of the second man from Shashti, there are several solutions for preventing and combatting child labour. To combat child labour, the government should invest heavily in projects for child labourers – moreover, these programmes should be live-in institutions and schools, with as little holidays as possible, as this would make sure that the child would have a supportive environment, and leave little of the stress and issues which made the child work in

the first place. In relation to preventing child labour in the future, he stressed that the most prominent way to prevent child labour is

“to ensure the livelihood of the parents. Because poverty leaks. The orientation and commitment of the parents is also vital. And good quality education, and a real implementation of the right to education and the right to be free. Then you can remove the child labour.”.

If the children are not offered a quality education where they learn, the education will not be much more than an enrolment. Shashti believes that the entire programme should be rewritten, in collaboration with small grassroots NGOs, so that the government would understand the needs of the child labourers in a way they would not know, simply by sitting in their offices. A programme where the NGOs work closely together with the local shops which hire the children, and with a higher budget, which can, if not completely cover expenses, then at least be of use, so e.g., with higher stipends. Because as Shashti says:

“Yes of course it is bad. It takes away your childhood. It takes away everything. But unless you guarantee an income to the family, of what the child has been earning, if you can increase the income of the family then you tend to be more successful.”.

Another perspective he mentioned is changing the perceptions of the middle and upper class, and creating a new norm. In Kolkata, and most likely in the rest of India, it is the norm for all the classes of Indians to meet child labourers in their everyday life. They are in the food and tea stalls, they are at the market places, in the hotels, on the streets. And if a new norm was to happen, and every time anyone saw a child labourer they would report it to the police, the government employees and politicians, the politicians and government would soon know that this is not just an issue which can be solved with a half-hearted patch-up programme, but present a real game changer.

4.2.2 Comments

The NCLP has both good sides and bad sides. The fact that the budget is outdated, even after the review in 2016, questions the quality of the entire programme – because if it does not reflect inflation and follow the times, how can the programme be viable? Moreover, if taken into consideration that Kolkata is one of the cheapest cities of India, how will the programme fare in more expensive places such as New Delhi or Mumbai? The idea that the programme does not pay the NGOs and volunteer organisations until after 1½ years, the stability and quality of the programme is not secured by the government's or district's side, but needs the good will of the organisations. Though, the idea of paying the children a stipend can be a very good and possibly correct way to help the children, and their families out of child labour, as the children, in that way can take care of, or help their families, all whilst getting an education. But if the sole reason for the child to start to work was to have some money to help their families, the amount of Rs. 150 is not going to make the children attend the programme, if they can earn the double of that in a week, or the same amount in a day. The basic reason for this programme is to mainstream the children, so that they can finish grade 10, and possibly continue to study. It is troubling to hear from Shashti that these children do not receive the education they are supposed to receive, not because of the teachers or students, but simply because of lack of funding for their school supplies. These children are willing to learn, despite their background and home situation, but cannot learn as all the necessities are not provided by the programme. Another major issue, which I believe is not unique to the NCLP, is that the transparency and communication between NGOs and the donors or government in Kolkata, and maybe in all of India, is not honest or straightforward. If the NGOs do not tell the true situation to the government, the government will not be aware or know that the programme does not go well, which issues the NGOs faces, and what to change about the programme. Though this issue is a two-way-street, as if the Indian government is used to being told beautiful lies, they might not handle the truth very well, and punish the NGOs which does not cover up the issues which they have.

4.3 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

NGOs such as Shashti are made to aid and speak on behalf of the children who are not fortunate enough to have a voice. But if the NGO itself does not have a voice, this job becomes much more difficult. Drawing upon the decoding of the interview, what the government has stated in their websites and their revisited NCLP guidelines, the truth they display is not the same truth for the NGO which is working on the NCLP. Analysing and discussing the situation of the NCLP through the lenses of state discourse and NGO discourse, we can apply the theories of Spivak and Freire to understand how the NGOs become voiceless, and how the voiceless are supposed to protect the subaltern child labourers.

4.3.1 State Discourse vs NGO Discourse

The discourse of Shashti and NGOs differ from that of the state, which brings a further challenge to the issue of child labour – since the NGO world and the government are not ‘equals’, the discourse of the government does ‘conquer’ in this situation. Freire and Spivak’s thoughts have both been developed within the framework of Marxism (Spivak, 1988, p. 67-69; Allman, 1994, p. 144), which brings a basic distrust of the government and of the elite. Though, what it also brings, is the idea of giving a voice to the people who do not have a voice, who are not being heard. In this case, we can identify two groups of people who are voiceless. The children who work have no voice, not in their society and not very much in their families. The NGOs such as Shashti who try to help them, on the other hand, do have a voice, but this voice is not used, nor is it truly heard. Freire provided us with the idea that the elite only wants small superficial changes, which do not challenge the status-quo (Freire, 1971, pp. 33-34), which can help to explain why the government wishes to have a programme such as the NCLP, but when examining the NCLP we are faced with severe flaws within the programme. Moreover, the Indian work culture, where the employee, or in this case the NGO, says what they think the employer or government wants to hear rather than the truth, is a dual-edged sword – just as the second man from Shashti said, if every case of child labour was reported to the government, the government would feel the

urgency from the people to do something about it. If every NGO working with the NCLP did tell the truth, the government would, hopefully, understand to what extent the NCLP is lacking, and revise the programme. But because of the massive number of NGOs in India, and because of the culture, if only a few NGOs told the truth to the government, the NGOs would risk losing the funding and the right to do the NCLP, and possibly every other government project. Therefore, I argue that the NGO's society has become the '*culture of silence*' as a result of the elite power system (Freire, 1971, p. 3), whereas, apart, the NGOs are marginalised by the system, but if they stood together, they could make a difference (Freire, 1971, pp. 10-11). It can be argued that the government truly does wish for the child labourers to be mainstreamed but they are faced with internal and external challenges, such as budgeting and resources. Though, the role of the government compared to the role of NGOs should be noted – NGOs should not be doing the job of the government, and neither should they be above the law or law makers. If an NGO is contracted to the job of carrying out a government scheme, and the rules and regulations are laid out to start with, the NGO should follow them, and inform the government if it is not capable, and why. This is necessary for the government to know, to either regulate the programme if too many NGOs who are attached to a scheme have had the same issue, or to remove that NGO to find another NGO which can follow procedures. If the NGOs purely say what they believe the government wishes to hear, the government will have no chance of knowing the issues, or improving them. From the state's discourse, it is important to notice what the role of the government is by looking at the laws which have been written – the laws on the rights of the child, as well as the laws of child labour are very clear, and they are revised every so often. Though, when the government is met with disobedience from many sectors of the different affected industries and communities, by employers who have child labourers who go to extremes to dismiss the inspectors, by NGOs who do not tell their true feelings about the government's programme, and by communities which hide the fact that children work; the government is faced with many troubles. It is difficult to determine whether it is the government who

are to blame for the NCLP failing because of its elite and authoritarian outlook, or because of a lack of collaboration with the NGOs, or perhaps a mixture of the two.

The children who work, are truly the subaltern, according to Spivak (Spivak, 1988, pp. 76-79), as they are a minority who fall outside of the mainstream and the norm, and who are not heard – others who are within the mainstream speak on their behalf, telling them that they should get an education without asking them themselves. Though, for argument's sake, these child labourers who are subaltern are nonetheless children, and children are often told what to do regardless of their own opinions, as children are not deemed to know what is always best for them. I believe, and it is supported by Shashti, that child labourers do want to go to school, get an education, and have a chance to change their economic situation for themselves and their families. But these children will put their families before an education, meaning that if a family lives in deep poverty, and the family is dependent on the child being a breadwinner, the child will sacrifice his/her education for food on the table.

Freire, and Spivak, both believe that the way to give the subaltern and the voiceless a voice is through education, which is made by the subaltern or voiceless to the subaltern or voiceless (Spivak, 2002, p. 561; Freire, 1970, p. 34). This idea they have, I believe Shashti and many other NGOs might share, but reality does not make it permissible. As the curriculum prescribed by the government, and top-down approach, is not even possible, as the funding to the NCLP is both delayed and the budget overall is very small, meaning that the school supplies, the books, uniforms and salary will either not live up to the standard set by the government to the NCLP, but also that the teachers might need to go to extraordinary measures to be able to teach the children.

4.3.2 Future – general NGO-Government relationship

The NCLP needs to be severely revised to benefit the child labourers. The entire budget of the NCLP does not work – the uncertainty of when the NGOs will receive the funding, which then results in delayed salaries, and money being found elsewhere is not sustainable. The idea of the children being compensated should be

either dismissed or the stipend should be increased, in order to make sense. Moreover, if the children who have entered the 5th year have to use their money on school supplies, it could be argued that the children should not receive such a stipend, but rather be given the equipment for free. Moreover, NCLP is a qualitative scheme, meaning each NGO can only help 50 children. From the estimate of Shashti, that more than 100,000 children are child labourers in Kolkata, and 38 special schools (West Bengal government, 2016, p. 130), only 1,900 children are being helped at any time, and of these, if the numbers of Shashti are trustworthy, only 9,500 children are being mainstreamed every three years or so. This is a very small fraction of the actual child labourers in Kolkata who receive help.

Child labour will not easily be eradicated, and I fear I dare not believe that it will be completely eradicated for the next 30 years, perhaps even in my lifetime. There are several issues which should be resolved before Kolkata and West Bengal can reach this goal. The unequal power balance between the government and the NGOs should be more equalised, not as in the government should be equal to the NGOs, but the government should be able to listen to the NGOs without firing them. The government could benefit from having a larger budget on schemes to aid child labourers, but it should also be a part of a general increase of living standards, so that the families would not need to depend on child labour. Moreover, by listening to the NGOs, the government could gain some valuable information from the field itself – i.e. that if a child labourer has been found, the only way to truly be able to mainstream the child, is by putting the child in a boarding school or institutional home, where they have no contact to what made them work in the first place. This school, as well as every school, needs to provide free quality education, which is in keeping with the culture and the students. Moreover, any programmes the government initiates need to have more monitoring, more true monitoring, but most importantly, it will need to follow up on the students, to make sure these children are not falling between the cracks of bureaucracy, but can become a part of the society, and have a chance to heighten their standard of living.

CONCLUSION

The global South has put in a big effort to eradicate child labour. During the ten years between 2001 and 2011, West Bengal has seen a 35.8% decrease in child labour, which today hopefully will have continued, an impressive feat. Nevertheless, many children continue this day to work, and to work in hazardous environments, which is why the Indian government in collaboration with national and international organisations and NGOs works continuously with helping child labourers and to combat the causes for a child to start working. Education has the potential to raise the living standard, and to make children attend schools rather than to work, but as this thesis established, education is not the same as enrolment. If a child is purely enrolled in school, but does not learn anything, or does not learn the curriculum, the child is not receiving a proper education. An education, according to Freire and Spivak, should also be made for the children, and especially for the children who are not within the mainstream sphere, but rather the voiceless subaltern sphere, and this education should aim to teach the children to be analytic and critical, and of a certain standard. India has acts which states that education should be free and compulsory for all, but this is unfortunately not the case for all, as there are many costs related with education and schooling, as well as there is no consequence for the children, the family or the communities if the children does not attend school. Thus, many children, especially the most vulnerable children are lost in the system, and end up not receiving an education but end up working, though fortunately, this number of children is dwindling. Officially, India has procured many good acts to combat child labour, but when examining the NCLP in details, many flaws and issues pop up which can be split into two: the issues of the programme itself, and the issues of the NGOs which are also a result of the issues of the programme. The NCLP does not allocate enough funds for the NGOs which are running the special schools to be able to carry out the specifications of the programme – some NGOs did not pay the stipend, or did not give the students the midday meal, or the school supplies. Shashti confirmed this, and established that the delayed payments meant that it was impossible for the NGO to follow the

curriculum prescribed by the programme, which was meant to ready the children to attend mainstream schools. The programme failed to budget realistically, and the scheme itself suffered so much for this, that the entire objective of the scheme can be questioned. The idea of the stipend is excellent, but when comparing the amount of the stipend to what the national poverty line is, as well as what the children would receive if they worked, the idea to compensate the child falls flat. Moreover, if the child has to buy the school supplies for the stipend, the stipend is not even used as it was supposed to be used. The programme is also flawed in the lack of monitoring and following up on the children, as the children who are enrolled in the programme are especially vulnerable, and will need some extra help to make sure that they will attend the school every day, to make sure they do not drop out, and to make sure once the programme has ended that the child will not go back to the same environment of hazardous labour, but rather will attend a “normal” school – to expect vulnerable children to attend the school without any support system is not realistic. The NCLP is very flawed, but if the Indian Government was willing to truly listen to the NGOs which have the field experience, as well as the experience with the NCLP in action, the NCLP could be revised to make a vital difference. It would require a much bigger resource allocation, both for hiring more monitoring inspectors, but also to make sure that the budget would allow the NGOs to follow up on the scheme, regardless on which state they were in. The entirety of the NCLP, the analysis done by external academics, available for the government to read, as well as the documentation on the programme which the government has gathered itself; can all question the sincerity of the government, if the aim of the NCLP is to publicly and internationally show a prop to prove India makes an effort to eradicate child labour, or if the aim is to truly mainstream child labourers and eradicate child labour.

Though, for the NGO to be able to tell the truth to the government, it would take a confrontation with the entire NGO-Government relationship, as the deep structured imbalance has created two completely different discourses. The power imbalance keeps the NGOs from being able to share their discourse with the government, and

if this does not change radically, the change will take much longer than if the government accepted to hear the discourse of the NGOs.

Addressing the title of the thesis, “How can child labour schemes help mainstream child labourers back to school? A case study of NCLP in Kolkata”, child labourers could be more effectively mainstreamed if the children were removed from the situation that drove them into working, and they were put in institutionalised homes, where they did not have the worry of poverty. If these institutional homes had a budget which allowed the NGOs to take proper care of the children, made sure that they ate healthily, that they had the proper school supplies, uniforms and that they attended a school where the curriculum was specialised to fit the children’s unique needs, such a government scheme would experience a higher success rate than the current NCLP is experiencing. Nevertheless, the issue of child labour is not solved purely by mainstreaming the children who are working, but will also need a focused effort to eradicate the reasons why children start to work, as well as strengthen the remedies that help prevent children from starting to work. Hereby the thesis underlines the necessity of a truly free and compulsory education for all, where the children and family would not be left alone if the child did not attend, but the government or district would follow up on the child, if the child did not enrol a school, or if the child dropped out. Unfortunately, an effort this great is not realistic in India currently, as the massive force would be extremely costly. Another way to help eradicate child labour is to lessen and eradicate severe poverty – if the economic gains from child labour are not needed by the families, the children will not be forced to work.

This thesis merely touches upon the issues and the different solutions, as this thesis was primarily based upon secondary research, literary analysis, one qualitative interview and empirical analysis, and the empirical data could be a limitation, if the data collected did not show the same results and the same issues, but in this thesis the empirical data underlines and supports the secondary data available. If this subject should be extended to a PhD, it would be interesting to expand the research to include qualitative interviews from the part of the government who are

responsible for the NCLP nationwide as well as in West Bengal and in Kolkata, to truly understand their discourse and add a new level of depth to the research. It would be very interesting to talk to many of the NGOs which work with the NCLP in Kolkata, and to conduct a survey on the children who attend the schools, as well as the children who used to attend, but either completed the programme or dropped out, to get some proper statistics on the dropout rate, as well as the success rate. Though, this will require at least one year of continuing fieldwork, and require sponsorship or funding to pay for a translator, for the NGOs extra time used as well as for bribery to be allowed to conduct this form for surveying.

Since there are 3,100,000 NGOs in India, the power-imbalance between these NGOs and the government is not unique to the child labour sector. I would recommend that the Indian government got a faction for whistle-blowing and for complaints, to combat and align the different discourses.

From the results of the empirical analysis, one thing is certain – the NCLP is not the primary reason for the drastic fall of child labourers. The government and the acts and laws will have had an impact on this, but much has happened in India these years, such as many people who got out of poverty, the rise of the internet and thereby an increased connection to the surrounding world, and international consumers are increasingly aware of the ethical horrors of child labour. To make sure that no child in India works in a hazardous environment, the Indian government will need to improve its efforts on the child labour area, otherwise children will continue to slip through the cracks of the system.

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APPENDICES - INTERVIEW

L: Linnea, the interviewer

M1 = Anonymous man 1

M2 = Anonymous man 2

W = Anonymous woman

M1: Hi Linnea

L: Hi, How're you? Thank you so much for taking the time and meeting with me.

M1: It's a pleasure. You can go ahead.

L: Ok, thank you

M1: Are you planning to be coming to Kolkata any time?

L: I was in Kolkata for half a year, last autumn.

M1: Oh, so you we didn't meet each other.

L: I worked with NGO X, an NGO also working with NCLP. Is it ok that I'm recording this interview?

M1: Definitely, that's not a problem.

L: Thank you. How long time have you been working with Shashti?

M1: I've been working here for 12 years, since my college days I used to come here. This organisation is [X] years old, and since childhood I used to volunteer work, teach to students, since I have always been loving to teach all the students, you

know? So, I still teach when I get free time. So now I'm more in to fundraising, and you know corporate connections, networking, and managing the volunteers, so I'm managing all this stuff.

L: OK, so you've been doing this since you were a child. You've been working with child labour?

M1: Yes, child labour was there, but our organisations focus was initially with rag pickers, the waste pickers, the children who collect waste garbage from the road side. They're the primary clients of the organisation. So, they've also come under child labour, because they've also done some child labour work. So, rag pickers are the focus of the organisation and working children. Yeah, so women and children, we work very close with women and children.

L: ok, and, do you enjoy it?

M1: Yes, I love my work. It is challenging, but since I left college. The best thing about this organisation, is that it is a very grassroots organisation, and we started this work from the **hill** area, and then we expanded in to other areas as well. Like the east, you know, east Kolkata you can say. North-East, east. So, we're expanded through very difficult situations, you know. Especially the unauthorised colonies, unauthorised by the government, you know. So, you can say those were the you know? Living along the river tracks. Living along the dirty canals from there, sewers, the sewer water, the drain water, flow through the canal sites. There's a big chunk of big boutiques, and around 800 families that are staying there. So, we're also working in that area as well. So primary focus of the organisation was to withdraw the child from the rag picking profession, and they take them in to schools, and also after schools to take them to special classes for the children, because these are the first-generation learners in the family, and to motivate the family because they've never valued education the way we value it. And also the most important thing was livelihood. And this presentation of livelihood and opportunities to the families, unless the income goes up, it's very difficult to

eradicate child labour. Otherwise, like west countries, you know people say like child labour is bad. Yes of course it is bad. It takes away your childhood. It takes away everything. But unless you guarantee an income to the family, what the child has been earning, if you can increase the income of the family then you tend to be more successful. You're talking about the KNCLP programme, we're also running the KNCLP programme, but we're also run other programmes. Other bigger programmes. Because the KNCLP programme is a very small programme of the government of West Bengal, and it is NOT, unfortunately, it is not that effective. Let me tell you. I would say, it has hardly it has 20-30% impact on the community. What we do is on a very big scale, you know. Our biggest supporter is from a roman catholic church in Germany.

L: What's the name of it?

M1: [name removed] And they've been supporting for the last 21 years. So, we get very big support from this organisation, and all their staff are from the community themselves. Which makes our work very easy, and we can easily penetrate in to their communities and the communities have been welcoming us for all these years, and we can see a lot of considerable change, with the lively hood, programme, you know we have a small grand programme, livelihood grand programme, then we've formed the CIGs, Credit Interest Groups, each group has five women, and they decide among themselves, how much loan they want, and each person in the group is responsible for repaying the loan, for another person. And if you pay, you are now reliable to get another loan also, and this programme has really is doing excellent. We started this in 2015, Global giving money, do you know Global giving? It's god friendly god fund. It's an international God friendly platform in UK and US. Right now more in US. So, the HQ is in US, it's called Global giving online platform, and we have enlisted our livelihood programme, global giving, till now we've covered around 300 beneficial, and you'll be happy to know that there is 95% recovery rate for the loan. So, Global giving has really helped a lot because when we have the repayments, we can give it to more people.

L: Yeah. Can I ask some questions about the KNCLP? Why did Shashti apply to the programme?

M1: Initially when they started, because the Shashti is one of the oldest partners of KNCLP, so initially when the government launched the programme, we also applied. Because there are a lot of child labour issues, and we've felt, and we also hoped that the programme would upgrade, but the programme has not been upgraded for many years. You know that. There is a minor Rs. 150 stipend, where children get in their bank account every month, but you know, with 150 you cannot do anything. Anything in Kolkata, Nothing. So, if this amount was 1500 pr. month pr. child, this would have been a different case. But with Rs. 150 this is very difficult. But you can say there is some relief, some opportunity, some money, some vocational training, in that programme also. They get some food also in this project. So, the unfortunate thing with the government, has invested so much in other programmes, but in the social sector, in the social departments, the government has not allocated the way it should have allocated. That's why we feel the child labour programme is not that much effective. It would have made a big difference. It could have made a big difference, but unfortunately, the way the programme was designed, and also, we thought that it would upgrade, like the other programmes, that are running, we're running also, like the open shelter home. I think you're aware of that. Yeah. The open shelter home has been upgraded, and we're very happy. The government has really upgraded the open shelter programme, and the only challenge, I would say, in KNCLP and other government programmes that we get the money after 1½ year has past. The government does not pay in advance, on the contrary, they pay after 1½ year has passed. So your organisation should be having a reserve fund to run the show. If you do not have a reserve fund, you cannot run a government programme. So that's a very big challenge. And we're a medium sized organisation, so sometimes it becomes really difficult to run the organisation but those organisations are very, very small. Practically, the teachers won't get a salary for 1½ year. So you can understand that. If I'm not paying my teachers, if I'm not paying their salaries for 1½ years, you ask for the progress. can the others

accountable. It's very difficult. So for the government, that is the biggest challenge for the government, is the payment after 1½ year. So you have to financially pleaseable financially, financially sustainable, whatever you see it. You have to financially sound enough to run this programme, so that all the small NGOs and small programmes just run the KNCLP nothing else, only one or two small programmes, it's next to impossible to have a purpose, and let me tell you, in Kolkata think, less than 10% of NGOs has purpose funds. I think it would be much lesser, the capacity should be much much lower.

L: According to their website, the programme was updated in 2016. Or was revised. It's not come to effect?

M1: Yes, revised, but I'm telling you, the revision has not been up to the mark. You've been taking from the teachers' salary, taking from the stipend legate, it's not been revised the way it should have been revised, if they really wanted to make a difference. See there are two things. One thing is, you want to run a programme, you have to run a programme, the other thing is you want to run a programme, to do something really often. What we feel, the way the KNCLP is managed, and the way it has been done, we feel the government just want to do this programme for the sake of doing it. For the sake of doing it, but if they wanted to make a big impact they need to invest. You cannot expect a high return if your investment is very low.

L: No. I've been looking at the numbers, and their numbers are very, very low, considering how many child labours there are in India and West Bengal and Kolkata.

AM. In Kolkata also more than 1 lakhs, child labourers. And more that, in Europe you have proper towns and also. Here many child labours are never taken in to account. Many teashops, you know all these small shops, all local shops have child labours. But they don't follow a child labour policy. They're the policed of the government, but they don't follow it. How many NGOs work with local shops, how many police has come, you know, mental the shop keepers. How many has really

closed in to the shops? That's why I said, few NGOs has looked in to that. Few do. But I know many NGOs. This project is running in a very bad light. And also I'm not only bring the idea, but also the government as well. Because government, I think, should revise this this entire programme, and should work very closely with the local shops, where the child labours are employed. Each area where the NGOs belongs, but you need to put in a lot of money. If you increase that amount of work, the money should also be paid well to the staff. So another thing is the salary is also very bad in this project. That's why I doubt that the real intent of the government, whether they really want to eradicate the child labours.

L: What was the process of applying for the programme.

M1: whenever there is a government programme coming up, they're putting it on the website, and those networks, today there is a digital world. So, you go to the website, and you can apply and then it gets revived. After the application, they review the application and then they call the NGOs, and NGOs won't be doing that kind of programmes, are given priority, which is good. But the only question I would give, is the way this project was designed. The designing of the project was not good. That is the only reason why the project has been a failure. The designing of the project should have been done really well, keeping in mind todays costs, I cannot design a budget of what happened in 2005 and 2006. I have to design after what will happen in 2018. And the way it was designed, Rs 150 will make us raise a question mark. What can you do with Rs. 150?

L: You can get 6 lunches.

M1: ha, when you're talking about, keeping the money in a bank though, which means you're talking about making the future better. Depositing money in the bank account, which means anything being deposited in a bank account, making the future secure. But I know, something is better than nothing, but that something has to be better. 150 is not that big amount. In the end of the year you get 1800 in a year.

L: Considering Kolkata is one of the cheapest in India, imagine 150 in Mumbai og New Dehli.

AM. Maybe Kokata is cheaper than Mumbai and New Dehli, but still, 150, you cannot do anything, except for a few lunches as you said. Even if you were eating a proper lunch, in a nice restaurant, you cannot do it. Have you buiriani in a restuarant?

L: No

M1: In a nice good restaurant, when the programme was founded, the Biryani cost Rs. 60-70, now it is Rs. 200. You got my point. The cost has gone up three times. Even though Kolkata is a very cheap city, with Rs. 150 you cannot do anything. Nothing remarkable, you cannot do anything which can have an impact. It cannot have an impact on somebody's life.

L: If a child is working, for example in a tea stall, how much would the child get per month?

M1: See, the child would get weekly payments. So the children gets little [protection money - 20.55], I know a lot of places where there is a child worker. They get free lunches from the place, free meals, and they get Rs. a week. Rs. 300 a week. Depends, Rs. 400 a week, for a new child labour they get less, Rs. 300 a week, and they get all their food. That's how they compensates. So it's Rs. 200-400 within that range. And if you're skilled, you get 500 a week, only when you get skilled, so when you've spend a few years in that place.

L: How are you monitored by the government, the district or the programme?

M1: Monitored in which sense?

L: Monitored, are there any inspectors coming and monitoring you?

M1: Yes, sometimes of course, there is a visit from the government, but very less visits.

L: How often?

M1: Let me check with the coordinator

--- Change of Interviewee : Man 2 (M2)

M2: Hello

L: Hello, how're you?

M2: Very good. I'm one of the secretaries of the organisation, and I'm attached with this case, and have been with this project since the beginning, and when it was made, [bad internet connection]. In 2002, there was a dispute between the government of India and the general government. The general government wanted to complete the abolition of child labour, and the government of India wanted successful elimination of child labour in different stages. So this put a break on the project and a complete stop after evaluation the [ILO] project. Then the government launched again the NCLP. National Child Labour Project in 2002-3 something like that. So we've been participating this project also. This programme very much helps child labours, but you can say that we service child labours, we deposit some money in their bank account, some food, make their meals compulsory for all educational programmes, so talking about mainstreaming and monitoring their real school and right to education. What we've done, right to education, and it looks hopeless. Personally, I'm not satisfied. But we tell the people, we tell our donor, the donor government, you know this is the practice of the NGO, that we should say everything is going fine and stuff, but honestly speaking, since we believe in helping the issue and like that, and since you are a researcher, and when a person like you come to us, then we tell what we really feel. Anyhow, you can say, the child come for three or four hours of enjoyment of education and some health services, and midday meal and that. But what the government claim the

mainstreaming and really completing the secondary of class ten exams, I'm not sure of that. And most of the children drop out like that. Maybe 20-30% went for higher studies after they've completed the first education. You know, class ten is the first qualification for the government, and then you can go for class eleven, class twelve and graduate and all that. But 20-30% you can estimate go from this programme for mainstreaming, and really completing the studies after class ten, and then drop out. But most of the children, we've found drop out after 2 years, 3 years. It takes 3 years time to complete one batch. For 50 children you have to mainstream them, and show them that they're going to school and complete an education. After 3 years, gone. These children have gone from your course, 3 years they get money from stipends, and they go to school. We do not have any real figures available, and no study has taken place, to see what really happens to the children who attended in the last phase or before that, when the program was lost. So this is a clear gap. And I think if you could do it, it would be really nice, if what happened with the children attending the special training school. Now they call it a special training school for children like that. Sometimes they only have schools for child labour like that. So there is a conceptually, they want to satisfy themselves to call it a training school of this and that. But ultimately they really the vocational training they've started now. They're sending directly to the vocational trainer to train in some train. But not very useful and productive like that. Only time pass, maybe they're teaching drawing, they're teaching sowing, because there is no fund of raw materials and rarely money to pay for equipment and good salary for vocational training like that. So this is a programme for the very poor and vulnerable children, and you can say the government has nationally this child labour or street children. We have this street children programme in earlier times. It was Integrated programme for street children. Now they've changed it to a new programme Integrated programme for the protection of the children. Integrated child protection scheme. And there're some street children care facilities, with 45 children you have to take care of in 24 hours, also called Open shelters. No compulsory, but the children can stay with parents' permission for 24 hours, then you have to write to the child welfare committee and then JJ Act, you know there is a mechanism under JJ Act, there is a system, so you

have taken forward the steps. Rarely the children can be permanently placed in the government care home like that.

L: Going back to the NCLP, how often are you monitored by the government, how often will there be an inspector?

M2: Hahaha, it's hopeless. There is no, when they want. When some instruction comes from the government of India or the lead people came, they visited, I don't know officially what they maintain. That they have inspected our centres and they've said, "I've visited you centre and this and that" but practically we don't see their faces, even for months, maybe in 6 months, one year they visit like that.

L: Have you had any issues with the inspectors, where they complained or anything like that?

M2: "They never complain, we have a good relationship with the government. We NGOs know how to make good relations with government and government people. That's how we survive, our survival strategy is very strong, so they don't have any complains, until we have some disputes, conflicts or challenge the government for something. What we're sharing with you, you cannot share with them. We say everything are going well, and all their programmes are very fantastic, and all the children love it, like that. We know, that NGO people know that"

L: Do you believe that 3 years are enough? Do you have any contacts to the children once they've finished the programme?

M1: 3 years are enough, provided that you really have a holistic approach, depends which kind of approach you give. Honestly if you mobilise the sources from different part of government support, then that makes sense. But really if they're going to school or not what kind of support they need, what kind of support they need not to drop out, how the retention can be ensured, like that. So there many issues about the detention of the children in the school, or back to school then it doesn't make sense. 3 years, maybe 36 months is enough for the children to be

mainstreamed, provided if you really have some supportive mechanism apart the routine support of the government, then fine. Otherwise it's a problem.

L: When I was in India, I was in Kolkata for 6 months, where I worked with another NGO who was a part of the open shelter programme. But they were complaining that the general government programme was too small, the fact you could only have 50 or 25 children at a time, when there were so many children out there needing help, but they had to say no to them. Do you think the programme would be better if you included more children?

M2: Yeah definitely, the right to education guarantees our children should go to school between 6 to 14 years, and at least up to class 3. When there is an act, there is a law. Children should not be deployed. But it depends on the political will and the government will [internet shortage]. Children should not be excluded from education, at least the basic training. At least UNICEF has always said that primary education is the best investment of countries like India. It's a very old proverb and slogan we know. So until class 10, the government has ensured the right to education. So I think it should be. Europe has done it 50 years back. So there is no reason why all children should not be covered. But government has some restricted funds, and they want to do it this way, and a more specific thing is problem, the government does not pay regular salary. in 1½ we get the money. After 1½ year we get the money. The government say on their website that if you don't have a holding capacity you don't accept this kind of government scheme. If you 2 year holding capacity, finances, resources, then you go for the government programme. That means you're intentionally exploding the medium and low level of organisations who can be a part of this scheme. for the very vulnerable children the middle class, middle NGOs, higher NGOs, grass root organisation is very much needed. We're always told you need to involve [inaudible] all kind of people, if you want to help street children, child labour in school. From the NGOs office you cannot reach their parents. They (red. the government) should have realised that if you don't involve the CBOs local groups, but in the systems, they don't want to involve this, so

medium level and lower level organisation cannot accept this programme, whereas they could run this show VERY effectively with great skill and expertise.

L: How do you find the children who will enter the school?

M2: Government claim that 99% we've done the job. 99% children has gone. But they don't have e record. And enrolment is NOT schooling. Government ensure the schooling, but it's still the right to education is better. So if schooling is the purpose of the right to education then fine, I say fine, 99%. Maybe after 2 years they've dropped out. So is it schooling really government has done if 99% persons or like that, but right to education is also a debate.

L: Ok, but for the programme, how are the children chosen?

M2: Children, vulnerable children really working child labour even in the domestic work in the family, so vulnerability, hardship, we have a poverty assessment too, and really from that tool we try to asses the vulnerability and hardship of the children in various angels. Not necessarily there is a mother or father, fine sometimes the father has abused the girls, children, daughter, you know that. We have experience with that. So how the children are chosen, they are unprotected. And really vulnerable even in their family units and in the community level, that is important.

L: Do you conduct your own surveys to find which children should enter the school?

M2: That, and other NGOs. NGOs survives on making these survey and data resource, and you people always prefer NGO data, and know that you can rely on NGO data. We do that, and we believe in that. Otherwise we cannot run our own families. If you tell the government the mechanical talks or the stereotype things, so you people will not like that. Because you like to have your own assumptions, and you know your own knowledge. So now you can understand my views. [personal]. You can say that Indian personnel has this kind of views.

L: Which kind of family backgrounds do the children have?

M2: They're single parents, sometimes father have died, sometimes mother has died, sometimes state, mother, sometimes more children, sometimes the parents are unemployed. Poverty is seen in different ways. Maybe parents are there, but the children are vulnerable. I've seen that. Father earns Rs. 1000 a day, Rs. 800 a day but is vulnerable. The girls and boys are vulnerable.

L: Are there a lot of parents who are abusing drugs or alcohol?

M2: yes, that happens, that's the routine of the dry life of the slums. Nobody can stop that. I tried to sponsor a girl living on the street, just 6-7 years old. And her family used alcohol. But I could never success. I took her and her siblings to the institutional care home for admission, but they cried so much that I got scared, and I brought them back. But God bless, one of her relatives did the job and brought one medical lady running a care home in Kolkata, so now the children are safe. I visited them, but I could not do the job even if I spent lot of money on this. This is the case for many roadside children, and children in difficult families to ensure education.

L: Are some of the children themselves addicted?

M2: It's the dry life. They follow the adults, their adult brother or adult communities, and [internet issues] even children has nothing to play with nothing to go to school like that, only begging on the street and staying on the street. What can you expect? Definitely they will go for this. Even the families like us. Children in our families lower middle class, middle class upper middle class they're sometimes frustrated in their life, and they become drug addicts.

L: Which kind of work did the children do before the entered you NCLP programme?

M2: Rag pickers, Shoe makers, gloves, hand gloves makers, motel, mechanics, 2-wheeler repairing, hotel, snack, eating house, tea-shop. Sometimes help their parents doing mobile business like that. At home the children do the domestic work. Different types of things.

L: So when the education in the special school is done, what happens to the children, are you still in contact with them?

M2: It's very difficult to answer, honestly. We do not have the infrastructure or staff to know that. Personally when I visit the communities, I ask what happened to the children, I ask the teachers. our teachers has been engaged from the beginning. Sometimes we ask the teachers, how many children from the earlier batches are continuing their studies, but no data is available. [personal] When I have a meeting with the teacher, I ask what happened to the children. They say, that one continues, that one there's no info about that child. Follow up is not a part of the programme, but rarely families in this community will have continued. So you know the staff we engage all are from the rural middle class, and the work for the job and for money, so we cannot expect this extra time consuming volunteering to find this out. So most of the time, this does not happen. When you people ask, we don't know, and there is not real data.

L: How do you chose these children, do you have any surveys or such?

M2: We do the poverty survey, we interview the families, we spend time with the families, and really to try and understand, what is the protection level of the children in the family, in the community level. So there are many perspectives and many angels we see. How safe they are, if they're really enjoying their childhood.

L: What age are the children generally when you get them?

M2: Sometimes they are 5 years old, they're rag picking, 6 years, 7 years, 8 years, but 5 years are the very lowest in rag picking profession, or doing some work with the family. Oldest, after 10, 11 years, we've gotten them, but after 14 years, you

cannot expect, 14 means they're ready to earn their livelihood. to earn a living. 10 years, hardly 12 years you can expect.

L: Ok. According to the governments website, and the law, if a child is found working in hazardous environment, when they're between the age of 14-18, the employer should be reported, and the child should be sent to s special school.

M2: The Law also says, that sometimes the government should also show some sensitivity about implementing this law, but they did not work any longer. It's a sensitive subject. So no implementation by the police, labour inspector or any concerned department dare to really challenge the families and communities that these children should be mainstreamed and should be sent to these institutional care home, or child welfare committee or juvenile board. But still the implementation agencies hesitated to go for that.

L: How many children have been in your programme from start to now?

M2: 50 children in 5 batches, so 250 children, and if you count 2002-2003, then 6 batches, 300 children like that.

L: How many children complete the course?

M2: more than 50% of the children drop out. It's a rough estimate, maybe more, so hardly 30-40% complete the education, since we have forces, we get sponsorship from European families. If you only depend on NCLP, it's very difficult to expect that these children would not drop out, the families rarely have the resources for the children, or wish that their children attend school. But the number [red. 50%] is very less. Sometimes the families will starve. The children feel this too, a child might feel "I cannot go to school, because otherwise me sister, my mother, my grandmother and like that will die, without any medical treatment and food." These children drop out.

L: Are children with a special background more likely to drop out? I.e. Rag pickers.

M2: Rag pickers, definitely, because they earn a lot of money. They earn Rs. 100-150 without investing anything. Other occupations are very exploitive. Tea stall, and other small businesses, are very exploitive business. Rag picking is easy, and you can get money immediately, so drop out is generally rag picking children. We've started alternative livelihood programme, vocational training programme, hardly rag pickers participated in that [internet issue] families are living in slums, or other economic backgrounds, their children participated. Now we have started a beautician course, so middle class and slum comes, but no one from the roadside and lower population is coming to the beautician course. So ultimately for the sake of the problem and the scheme, we accept girls from different areas, maybe they're poor [severe internet issues]. These are the things for very vulnerable population for child labour or integration child protection scheme. For home programme has [internet issues] the government has accepted it's hardly getting services. To help children on the road side and lower class is very difficult and a very difficult job. Maybe the urban poor are coming, not real street children or real child labour who are doing exploitive jobs are coming to the schools. Because they need money

L: Which way would be the best programme to help child labours?

M2: We have started an institutional care home in our current evaluation report, it has been applauded by ASK, Ass. for Stimulation Knowledge, it's a research and evaluation country. This is the only option where you can bring the street children for their permanent rehabilitation. For non-institutional care does not work for very vulnerable children like that. This is the ideal model. It has been appreciated by even donors and evaluation team and government. This is the only way to manage.

L: How would you suggest preventing child labour?

M2: to ensure the livelihood of the parents. Because poverty leaks. The orientation and commitment of the parents is also vital. And good quality education, and a real

implementation of the right to education and the right to be free. Then you can remove the child labour. To make a place where the children can enjoy their childhood. This is just for our children, in the evening and the morning, this is just little mechanism, to make these schemes affective. Not just for the international communities. One of the agenda of the political workers but hardly they have issues with child labour or right to education like that. If they can be made motivated, they can make changes, and see some results, because they interact with the employers, with the local situation and the parents, and the parents hear it from them. So, there are different push factors in it, so you can prevent. And sensitisation of the middle class. Middle class society who rarely view the day to day life watching tea shops and all their children. So, if they are sensitive and really complained to the government, then the government would really understand the hardship of the children and child labour. Then you could expect some results.

----- **New person, the researcher of the NGO, called R + translating for another worker who does not speak English, W**

W: I've been working for this organisation for 20 years, and work with the association of rag pickers RAP, and she's one of the leaders, that help to oversee and see what goes well.

L: Does she have any comments about the NCLP?

W: So they get Rs. 150 a month, but they cannot spend it on anything but for school, and they cannot spend it on their families, only school

L: But according to the NCLP plan, school supplies should be free, such as books and uniforms?

W: Only up to class 5, after you have to pay, so you get the uniform and kits, and after class 5 you have to pay. 1-5 it's free. The last 5 years cost money. Maybe the website has not been updated in a while?

L: I wouldn't know. Thank you very much for taking out the time to answer my questions.