

CHAPTER VIII

PANCHAYAT TOOFAN OF THE CONCERNED FOR THE WORKING CHILDREN : A CASE STUDY

Section I The Organisation

History of the organisation:

The Concerned for the Working Children (CWC) was set up in 1986 with a goal of eliminating child labour. Its operations were spread across the city of Bangalore with a focus on children working in hotels. During the course of its work, the organisation realised that the children working in the hotel industry of Bangalore primarily came from the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka. Hence it started a rural programme called 'Gramashrama' in 1989 in Kundapur taluk of Dakshina Kannada district, Karnataka. This programme was aimed at preventing migration of children to the cities in search of employment, primarily in the hotel industry. The programme was designed to strengthen the rural economy which was weakening due to deforestation, use of out-dated technology by the rural artisans in the manufacturing process, improper marketing of the goods that were manufactured by the village artisans and lack of unity among the various artisan groups in the villages. Towards this end, the Gramashrama organised groups of women, artisans and children in their project areas. Bhima Sangha, a movement for and by the working children was launched in 1990. It has grown to a membership of nearly 13,000 children working in the rural and urban areas of Karnataka. There are about 80 centres of Bhima Sangha which offer a platform for the working children to share their concerns and problems and also fight for their solution. Bhima Sangha has been actively taking up issues of the working children at the community level. Namma Gumpu which means 'Our Group' was also started with the village artisans. These artisans were able collectively discuss their problems with respect to the procurement of raw materials, production, transportation and marketing of the finished products. Out of this was born an initiative called the 'Namma Angadi' or

'Our Shop' which collectively marketed the finished products in the rural as well as the urban markets. Besides this, the Gramashrama also started 'Namma Bhoomi' which means 'Our Land'. Namma Bhoomi is a training centre and children from the surrounding villages come for approximately one year to receive education and vocational training. The courses imparted to the children include construction, pottery, weaving, cane work, wood work, agriculture, leather work, basket and mat weaving. They are taught the theory and practice about the given trade in addition to general knowledge classes which are also conducted. The organisation believes that providing children with these forms of vocational training enables them to stay in the villages and pursue their traditional occupations.

In 1995, the CWC realised that the activities of the Gramashrama were scattered and needed consolidation so as to be effective at the village level. Thus, the 'Panchayat Toofan' programme was started by reworking the existing strategies in the context of decentralisation at the local level. The present study reviews the Panchayat Toofan (PT) project and analyses the impact of the strategies used in the elimination of child labour from the perspective of the rights of the child.

Ideology of the organisation:

The organisation believes that the problem of child labour is closely linked with the developmental model that benefits a few at the cost of the others. It believes in the Gandhian principles of village development by creating self-sufficiency. It works towards ameliorating the children's working conditions immediately and in the long run eradicating child labour. In other words, it strives to convert 'child labour' into 'child work' until the conditions for the eradication of child labour are created. The organisation also believes that 'child work' can empower the child by contributing to the child's growth and development.

The CWC believes that children are capable social actors and not dependent, ignorant beings in need of protection and care. It believes in the child's right to education as a critical right to be fulfilled in order to achieve the elimination of child labour and that the formal education should be appropriate, relevant and based on the needs of the community, family and the children. The teaching methodology should make links between the local culture, history, environment, knowledge and practice. Children's parents, teachers, craftspersons and educators need to come together to design this methodology and implement it and make the system accountable. The holidays and the timings should be adapted to the local needs. The potential drop-outs should be identified and given special inputs so that they can be retained. The NFE approach should cater to the needs of children who for various reasons such as absence of a school, discrimination, economic necessity or lack of resources are unable to attend the formal schools. In addition, children should be referred to a regional residential education centre for career training and life skills.

The PT believes in giving priority to all sections of children at the village level. It defines children as those who are below the age of 18 years as the age of attaining political maturity is 18 years. Thus all children below the age of 18 years, whether working or not, are covered under the PT project. The rationale for covering all children is that children who are presently in school are likely to drop-out and join the workforce. Besides this, the organisation believes that all children who are out of school are actually workers in some capacity without their realising it. These ideologies are reflected in the programme design and execution.

Context of work:

The 'Panchayat Toofan' project is spread over three districts of Karnataka. It initially began with Dakshina Kannada district and later moved to Shimoga and Bellary districts of Karnataka. In Dakshina Kannada, the

project operates in Kundapur taluk and covers Uppunda, Balkur, Alur, Keradi, and Belve panchayats. In the Hosanagar taluk of Shimoga, it covers Yedur and Sulugodu panchayats. In Hoovinahadagalli taluk of Bellary, it covers Holagundi panchayat and in the Harpanahalli taluk of the same district, it covers Mattihalli panchayat. A Rapid Rural Appraisal conducted by the organisation of the project area revealed that each of these project areas were unique in their physical, geographical, and human characteristics. Yet all of them recorded a very high rate of child migration and consequent child labour. Belve panchayat is a traditional agricultural community with the population consisting of Kudubi and Koraga tribes. Balkur is made up of small and marginal land-holders and agricultural labourers. There is a high incidence of children and women working in the beedi sector. Alur panchayat consists of the traditional artisans engaged in pottery, jaggery-making, oil-crushing and other forest based occupations. The Keradi panchayat is inhabited by the Koraga, Haslaru and the Harijan communities. Being in the interior regions, it is extremely backward without any transport and communication. Uppunda panchayat is a coastal region with fishing as the main occupation of the inhabitants.

Initially, the organisation contacted 25 panchayats to gauge their willingness to join the PT. It decided to take up the above mentioned panchayats because of their diversity and response from the panchayats. Among the panchayats that are now a part of the project, Uppunda and Keradi panchayats are entirely new as they were not covered by the organisation earlier. Both the panchayats were taken up as they have women presidents.

The CWC also found that the children in these areas were forced to work due to the pressure of poverty which was precipitated by environmental degradation, parental pressure, adult unemployment and underemployment, irrelevant education system which does not guarantee a job and does not prepare the child for self-employment.

About the programme:

Despite the decentralisation of the political structure through the Panchayat Raj System, the decision making mechanisms remained largely within the hands of a few male adult representatives. As children in any other typical Indian setting, children in the project areas also neither had any opportunity to voice their opinions nor their specific needs were taken care of. The CWC thus realised the intense need to re-orient the objectives of the administration at the local level. It was felt that the local administration should formulate its policy on the basis of felt needs and only then could the complex problems affecting the society especially the children could be effectively tackled. For this purpose, the scheme called Panchayat Toofan later renamed as Makkala Panchayat Toofan¹ was formulated and implemented.

In 1994, the CWC tried to influence the State government to look into the issue of child labour. The foundation for Panchayat Toofan was laid when the State Government asked CWC to formulate a plan of action to eradicate child labour and stem migration. The action plan was formulated by the organisation with the involvement of the children of the Bhima Sangha for five panchayats of Kundapur taluk of Dakshina Kannada. The programme was intended to bring about a radical change in the lives of the people especially that of children in the panchayats. The main criteria was to sustain the actions undertaken and to replicate the model. It also intended to ensure people's participation in achieving the goal of eliminating child labour and arresting the rate of migration to the cities. The CWC realised that in order to make a significant impact, the size of the area should be significant and the project should continue for a reasonable period of time. Thus it was decided to take the Panchayat as a unit for intervention and a confirmation of the Panchayats' support to the programme was sought at the beginning.

Panchayat Toofan is a programme of comprehensive development, a combined initiative of the Bhima Sangha, Gramashrama, the rural project of the Concerned for the Working Children and the local self-government. It was started in the five panchayats of Kundapur taluk on June 1, 1995 and in two panchayats of Bellary district on January 27, 1996. The thrust of this developmental programme is ensuring the best interests of the child. The programme intends to strengthen the infrastructure with education, health and child care in every village. Children are directly involved in planning and implementing at all levels of those processes which affect their lives. The programme has a broad objective of preparing the children to play effective roles in the future as representatives of the local self government. The broad goals of the Panchayat Toofan Project are:

1. To stem the trend of migration of rural children to urban centres as child labour;
2. To relieve children from work that prevents them from participating in activities that enable them to grow and develop to their full potential, by establishing supportive infrastructure;
3. To make education appropriate, exciting and relevant to children, their lives and their communities;
4. To expand opportunities of livelihood by strengthening the traditional sector;
5. To design, implement and manage with the communities all the above to be sustainable and so that they may be transferred to the people to manage themselves.

Thus, the Panchayat Toofan pursues a holistic approach by addressing the de-marginalisation of certain groups in society like women, children and handicapped people and tackling problems like child care, improvement of infrastructure, health care and education. Panchayat Toofan has a time frame of five years. The first three years are under the

co-ordination of the CWC after which the Panchayats are expected to take over. The specific objectives of Panchayat Toofan are:

1. To empower children to become useful members of the society by participating in the decision-making processes, and;
2. To motivate the Panchayats to realise the value of wealth in the form of empowered children in the rural areas

The Makkala Panchayats or the Children's Panchayats are parallel local self-governments run by the children of the village. They are the voters, candidates and the elected members of the panchayat. The objectives of the Makkala Panchayat are:

1. To enable, in an cross section of villages, the effective participation of working children in the decision making processes concerning themselves at the level of local self-governments through enabling the formation and running of Makkala Panchayats;
2. To act as an ombudsman for children of the village;
3. To strengthen working children's capacity as protagonists so they may identify their problems and strategies to solve them;
4. To enable children to have a voice in the process of village planning and allocation of the resources;
5. To help children to use existing social and political space to highlight issues concerning them so that they are addressed as part and parcel of mainstream issues;
6. To help the children understand the political processes and prepare them to participate in the same as children and later as adults;
7. To enable children to make rational assessments of the resources that are available in the villages and find ways to preserve and optimize them;
8. To create in adults, especially the panchayat, the awareness of children's needs and difficulties so that they may become the central focus of planning, and;

9. To set up in a cross section of villages models of working children's participation and protagonism that are replicable.

At the time of data collection for this study, the Makkala panchayats were not constituted but lists of children voters and candidates were being compiled by the activists working for the organisation. Besides the Panchayat Toofan project, the CWC continues to have the Bhima Sangha groups, women's groups and artisans groups in 10 hamlets other than those where the Panchayat Toofan project exists. These hamlets could not be involved in the PT because of certain constraints faced by the organisation².

Strategies of work: The strategies adopted by the organisation are:

Community organisation: The organisation believed that if the community faces a problem, it need not wait for the government to come and solve it for them. The communities need to be made self-reliant so that they can solve their own problems. In all the panchayats, the organisation runs Bhima Sangha centres for working children and Namma Gumpus for adult artisans. These groups identify the problems faced by the children as well as the community as a whole and take it to the panchayat for discussion. When the villagers are involved, it is difficult for the Panchayat to avoid the problems that are brought up. The organisation realised that education is the easiest point for seeking entry in the panchayats. So it organised the Bhima Sangha children and the Namma Gumpu members to advocate for improving the education system that existed at the local level. In Alur village, the community realised that the main factors for children not enrolling in the school was a small stream which prevented easy access to the school from the village. A demand for constructing a foot-bridge was therefore made. The community also offered to put in the labour if the panchayat offered other resources. When the foot-bridge was constructed, the rate of school enrollment increased. Similarly, the communities have been looking into the basic needs and infrastructure

that need to be provided for improving the conditions of women and children. The entire exercise of problem solving involves women and children. Saving facilities are also available wherein the Bhima Sangha children save 25 paise per week and the Namma Gumpu members save Rs. 5 per week. There are bye-laws worked out by each group. Two signatories operate the account. The organisation intends to get the groups to receive the benefits of the schemes such as DW CRA on an experimental basis.

Education and Training: The organisation conducted a survey in 1993 of 2000 children between the ages of 10 to 14 years. They found children could not cope with their studies, had to take care of their siblings and due to school related reasons such as the distance etc. The organisation therefore decided to work on the issue of education.

Appropriate Education in Schools: As part of strengthening the formal school system, a series of Appropriate Education workshops were held for the teachers of the government schools. The main objective of the workshop was to adapt the school to the children by improving the learning environment, learning materials and teacher-children interactions so that more children attend school and receive 'appropriate education'. The sub-aims were: to increase the enrollment and the retention rates of the children in the schools, to increase the attendance of the girls, develop learning materials that are gender sensitive. Out of 29 schools, 21 schools were covered under the Appropriate Education Workshop. In three phases, a total of 60 teachers were trained. In Bellary, 19 teachers belonging to 10 schools were trained. This system of appropriate education in the government schools involved the training of government teachers, providing learning material, monitoring and assisting the teacher whenever required. After field tests, the new methods of teaching and learning have been implemented in 18 schools of Kundapur taluk and in 4 schools of Bellary. In schools where the new method of teaching was

introduced, there was an increase in the attendance rate of girls, and the pace of learning also improved.

Extension schools: The organisation has also enabled the communities to approach the panchayats for starting extension schools so as to enable the children to learn while they work. The extension schools cover the syllabus and curriculum of the formal system and also prepare the children to appear for the public exams and receive certification. Presently, the Gramashrama has set up two extension schools on a pilot basis.

Day care centre: Gramashrama with the help of the local panchayats has converted the State-run part-time day care centres into full-time centres. It has also started pilot extension day care centres where they are absent. This has helped the children of working parents who would have remained at home for minding their younger siblings. The PT has two extension anganwadis in Balkur, Keradi and Alur each and one in Uppunda.

Vocational Training: In the work of PT, if the children are to be given the vocational training, they are sent to Namma Bhommi. After the training of the child, the panchayat conducts follow-up of those children. The Namma Bhoomi has a capacity of accommodating 100 children at a time. However, at the time of data collection, there were only 90 children in Namma Bhoomi. Of these, 40 children were from the panchayats that are covered under the PT. Among this, almost half (48%) of the children are from Uppunda, 12.5% are from Alur, 30% are from Belve, and 5% each from Keradi and Balkur. The remaining 50 children belong to the other villages. About 16 children are from places not directly covered by the CWC. There are as many as 10 children who are school going and two children who do not do anything. There is a balance of girls and boys with 48% of the beneficiaries being boys and 52% of them being girls. Among the beneficiaries, there are only 2% of children below 10 years of age, 36% of the children between 10 to 14 years and 48% of the children above 14 years of age. In most of the cases children are brought to

Namma Bhoomi by the activists. In certain cases, the parents come to see Namma Bhoomi and like to get their children enrolled there. Such children are interviewed before giving admission.

Constitution of the Task Force: The Panchayat Toofan programme functions through a tripartite task force that plans, implements, monitors and evaluates at every stage. By involving the state level officials and the local self-government authorities, the sustainability of the programme is ensured. There exists a shared responsibility between the CWC and the State government and both the bodies are equally responsible for the systematic running of the programme. Moreover, after five years of its implementation the programme is designed to be entirely a programme of the government. Hence it was considered important to create structures at the panchayat and the taluk level which could not only evoke participation of the concerned individuals and offices but also ensure continuity of the project after five years. Thus, the first Task Force was set up at for Kundapur taluk in June 1995.

The Taluk Task Force (TTF) consists of the following: State Minister In-charge of the District, the concerned legislatures, concerned Zilla/Taluk panchayat members, Gram panchayat president, vice-presidents and secretaries (from all the panchayats where the PT is in action), core group members of the Bhima Sangha, representatives from the CWC, Assistant Commissioner and Executive Officer of the Taluk Panchayat and Block Education Officer, and other Taluk level officials as per the requirement. The TTF has mainly three functions: mobilising the resources for the programme; allocation of the resources and monitoring and evaluating the programme.

The Panchayat Task Force (PTF) consists of the President, Vice-president and all the elected members of the Panchayat, members of the Zilla panchayat and the Taluk panchayat, all government officials in the panchayat including the school head-master, core group members of the

Bhima Sangha, representatives of the CWC, representatives of the local youth groups, representatives of all active groups of the panchayat, both registered and unregistered; representatives of the women's groups, representatives of other local NGOs, and representatives from the community. The functions of the PTF are: collecting relevant data to make a situation analysis through surveys and other means; identifying the problems collectively through analysis and discussion; making decisions regarding the possible solutions; preparing plans for action; mobilising financial and other resources; mobilising people's participation; implementing, monitoring and evaluating the plan of action; and interacting with both the community members and the TTF.

The organisation found that before constituting the Task Forces, the panchayats had priorities that benefited the men and the businesses in the village. However, the main criteria of the PT was that the priority of any action should be the interests of the children. The panchayats are asked to justify their actions to the beneficiaries who were represented in the Task Force. The Panchayat Task Force meets once in two months though it is not scheduled and the Taluk task force meets once in three months.

Political participation: Since the organisation was to deal with the local government body, it was important to provide information to the panchayats and the children of the Bhima Sangha about the role of local self government under the Panchayati Raj Act. The organisation conducted workshops to disseminate knowledge on decentralisation of power through local self-government and responsible use of political rights where the communities were conscientised about the political system, and their political rights and duties.

When the government declared elections to the panchayat bodies to be held in December 1993, the Bhima Sangha launched into a hectic activity to ensure that right candidates are elected. They chose 28 candidates to

contest for the elections who were deeply committed to children's concerns. They engaged in campaigns in favour of these candidates. Among the 28 candidates who were elected, as many as 18 candidates were those supported by the Bhima Sangha. The Bhima Sangha also participated in orienting the candidates at the Assembly elections to take up children's issues. The Bhima Sangha is involved in all the problem solving efforts that are undertaken with the panchayats as a part of the PT project. It is involved in conducting surveys (Participatory Rural Appraisals) in every village to assess the resources available and the problems faced by the children. A plan of action is prepared based on this and it is defended by the children in front of the Task Force. The greatest outcome of the PT according to the activists is that the Panchayats recognised the children's problems as the problems of the village and were prepared to accept children's participation through the Bhima Sangha³.

Funding:

The Ministry of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development has allocated a special grant-in-aid to each village level Task Force. It consists of Rs. 1,00,000 which is paid directly to the Task Force of the village and the manner in which the amount has to be utilised is to be decided by the Task Force. It was decided in each of the Task Forces that at least 50% of the allocation will be reserved for activities related to children's education. The entire budget reflects child centred planning at every stage. The pre-condition is that the money given to the children would be used only for the benefit of the children. One of the panchayats, Balkur, had already exhausted this amount at the time of data collection.

Staffing:

The PT project consists of a staff of 13 workers including two members for the Bellary project and one education activist.

Section II Profiles of the beneficiaries:

The researcher interviewed children who were a part of the Bhima Sangha in their respective villages and were also involved in fighting for their rights at the panchayat level. She also collected data from children who were referred to the training centre at Namma Bhoomi from the villages that were being covered under the Panchayat Toofan project. The data collected from children reveal the following:

Personal Profiles:

Age: Among the children interviewed, the minimum age of the child was 9 years while the maximum was 19 years. The average age of children was 15.37 years. This age wise distribution of the children is in line with the organisation's ideology of considering persons below 18 years as children. Even the focus on children from a higher age group can be understood in terms of their strategy of enlisting children's participation.

Sex: Among the children interviewed, 12.5% of the children were boys while the remaining 87.5% of the children were girls. This indicates a greater focus on girls as the beneficiaries of the programme.

Level of education: Among the children interviewed, 68% of the children had been enrolled in the schools whereas only 32% of the children had never been to the school. The children who had never been to the school gave multiple reasons for not getting enrolled in the school. Lack of money for education was stated to be the reason by 15% of the children while chronic poverty was also stated to be a reason by 15% of the children. There were 8% of the children who had not joined school because of their ill-health while 15% did not enroll in the school as there was no school in their village. As many as 70% of the children could not join schools as their parents had engaged them in labour at an early age. Among the children who were enrolled in the school, 30% of the children had studied till primary level, 56% till Class 7 while 15% had studied till

SSLC level. The children were school drop-outs for an average period of 3 years. The children gave multiple reasons for dropping out of the school. They were as follows: poverty was indicated by 26% of the children, parents were not interested in educating their children further by 11%, illness by 15%, illness or death in the family by 7%, the families needed their labour for doing household occupations by 19% and 11% of the children indicated that they had dropped out in order to look after their siblings. About one-fourth (26%) of the children had not continued with their schooling because there was no school in the village beyond a particular class while 22% of the children had dropped out for reasons such as long distance of the school, long absence due to illness or social functions, lack of interest etc. The data revealed that proportion of boys not joining school was higher (60%) than the proportion of girls not joining school (29%). However, the proportion of boys who had studied beyond Class 7 was higher (40%) than the proportion of girls who had studied beyond Class 7. The proportion of eldest children not joining school was lower (11%) than the proportion of non-eldest children who had not joined school (39%). The proportion of children from families with a monthly income of less than Rs. 1500 not joining school was higher (41%) than those from families with income above Rs.1500 (22%). Similarly, only 35% of the children from families with income less than Rs. 1500 studied at the secondary level while 59% of the children with families with income above Rs. 1500 studied at the secondary level.

Religion: All the children interviewed were Hindus.

Ordinal position in the family: Among the children interviewed, 22.5% of the children were the eldest children of their respective families while the remaining 77.5% of the children were not the eldest children of their families.

Family Profiles:

Family size: Among the children studied, 5% of the children came from families with 2 to 4 members, 35% children had 4 to 6 members in their family, 45% had 6 to 8 members in their family while 15% of the children came from families with 8 to 10 members.

Family income: The average income of the families of these children was Rs.1758 per month. Twenty percent had family income of less than Rs. 1000, 58% had a family income between Rs. 1000 to 2000, and over 20% had income between Rs. 2000 to 3000.

Parental education: Only one-fourth of the fathers of the children were literate while three-fourth of them were illiterate. Among those who were literate, 50% were educated till the primary level, 20% had studied till Class 7, another 20% had studied till SSLC and 10% of them had studied till graduation. On the other hand, only 18% of the mothers of the children were literate, while 82% of them were illiterate. From those mothers who were literate, 57% had studied till the primary level, while the remaining 43% had studied till Class 7.

Employment Profiles:

Age at starting work: Among the children studied, 15% had started work when they were six years of age, 32.5% had started work between 6 to 8 years, 17.5% had started work when they were between 8 to 10 years, 20% had begun work when they were between 10 to 12 years of age and 7.5% of the children had begun work while they were between 12 to 14 years of age. Another 7.5% of the children had started work when they were between the ages of 14 to 16. Thus the average age at which the children began work is 9.5 years. All the children who began work at the youngest age group of 5 to 7 years were girls. Only 9% of the girls began work after the age of 13 while 60% of the boys began work after the same age. All the children who worked from 5 to 7 years of age came from

families with a monthly income of less than Rs. 1500. The proportion of children with higher income (above Rs.1500) starting work at a higher age was greater than the proportion of children from lower income families. The proportion of the non-eldest children beginning work at an early age (between 5 to 9 years) was higher (48%) than the proportion of eldest children (33%) beginning work at the same age.

The percentage of children who had been working for less than a year was 12.5%, while 22.5% of the children had been working since 2 to 4 years and another 22.5% of children had been working since 4 to 6 years. About 25% of the children had been working since 6 to 8 years and the remaining 17.5% of the children had been working since the last 8 to 10 years. The average duration of the years spent by the children in employment were 5.5 years.

Change in the occupation/employer: One-fourth of the children studied had changed their occupation while three-fourth of the children had not changed their occupation. The children who changed their occupation gave multiple reasons such as: 30% of the children had changed because of low wages, 50% had changed because they did not like the work, 10% had changed on being told by their parents, and 10% had changed because children were no longer employed in the place where they had worked. The proportion of boys changing their occupation was higher (40%) than the proportion of girls changing the occupation. Among the children who had not been enrolled in the school, 23% had changed their occupation, 38% of those studied up to primary level had changed their occupation while 21% of the children who had studied between Class 5 and SSLC had changed their occupation.

Only 15% of the children had changed the employer while 85% of the children had not changed the employer with whom they worked. All the children who had changed the employer had changed them for more than 2 to 3 times. About 17% of the children had changed the employer

because of low wages, 17% of them because they did not like the work allotted to them and 17% as they were abused by the employer. As many as 83% of the children took up work wherever it was available and thus worked with different employers. The proportion of boys changing the employer was higher (40%) than the proportion of girls changing their employer (11%). Among the children who had begun work between 5 to 9 years, 11% changed their employer; 20% of those starting work between 9 to 13 years changed their employer while 17% of those starting work between 13 to 17 years changed their employer.

Nature of work done: With respect to the nature of work undertaken, the children gave multiple responses. About 20% were engaged in agricultural work on their own farm whereas 15% of the children were engaged as wage labourers on farms owned by landholders. Half of the children (50%) were engaged in collecting fuel wood for domestic purposes while 18.5% of the children were engaged in fishing related activities such as cleaning, drying and selling of fish. About 65 % of the children were engaged in doing their own domestic chores whereas 13% of the children worked in other houses as domestic servants. One tenth of the children were engaged in pottery while another one-tenth were engaged in rolling beedis. About 8% of the children were engaged in descaling cashewnuts, 5% of the children were involved in making jaggery and 3% of the children were engaged in areca cleaning. There were 8% of children engaged in plantations while 5% of the children were engaged in mechanical workshops. None of the children were engaged in any odd jobs at their workplace.

Mode of recruitment: Eighty percent of the children were recruited through their parents and family members while 7.5% were recruited through their relatives and 7.5% through the contacts of other children. Only one child secured the employment on his own and one child was recruited through an agent.

Indebtedness: Only 5% of the children's families were given loans by their employer while the remaining 95% families of the children were not indebted to the children's employer. An average amount of Rs. 2000 was advanced as loan to the children's families. Acute poverty in the family was the main reason for the indebtedness among the children studied. None of the children's families with family income below Rs. 1500 had taken loans from the children's employer whereas all the children's families who were indebted had family income above Rs. 1500 per month. None of the children whose parents were indebted to the child's employer were the eldest child of the family. In addition, the data revealed that all the children whose parents were indebted were girls. Presently, all the children who were indebted, are being trained at the training centre run by the organisation.

Attitudes towards employment: Only 7.5% of the children had positive feelings about being employed while 92.5% of the children has negative attitudes towards being employed. All the children working at home felt negative about being employed whereas 20% of the children who worked outside felt positive of their status as working child. None of the children who had been working since 4.5 years felt positive about their employment, whereas 21% of those working since less than 4.5 years felt positive about their employment. None of the children who had studied till primary level felt positive whereas, 11% of those who had studied above the primary level felt positive. In addition, 8% of the children who had not enrolled in the school felt positive about being employed. None of the children who were indebted felt positive about being a working child. The proportion of boys with positive attitudes towards their work was higher (40%) than the proportion of girls having positive attitudes (3%). None of the children who began work before 13 years of age felt positive about their work while 50% of the children who had started work between 13 to 17 years felt positive about their work. None of the children from families with income of less than Rs. 1500 felt positive about being employed

while all those who felt positive came from families with income of more than Rs.1500 per month.

Training received: Only 7.5% of the children had received some kind of training in their workplace whereas 92.5% of the children were not trained during employment. All those who were trained, were trained by either the adult co-workers or their employers for a period of less than a year.

Location of work: About 38% of the children interviewed were employed outside their family settings while a majority of 60% of the children were engaged in activities in their family settings. Only one child was employed both outside the family as well as in the family based occupations. None of the children with families with less than 6 members work at home. The proportion of children working at home is higher among non-eldest children (64%) than among the eldest children (44%). None of the boys were found to be working at home. Among those children who have studied till primary level, 75% of the children work at home whereas 53% of those who studied above primary level work at home. As many as 61% of the children who were never enrolled in the schools work at home.

Services received from the organisation:

One-fifth (20%) of the children were beneficiaries of the organisation for less than six months while 27.5% of the children were beneficiaries since 6 to 12 months. More than half (53%) of the children were beneficiaries of the organisation since 12 to 18 months. The average duration of being a beneficiary was about 12 months.

There were multiple responses given to the question on the kind of services received from the organisation. A majority of 85% of the children stated that they were Bhima Sangha members, 45% of the children were receiving training, 67.5% of the children stated that they were given a chance to participate in the meetings, while 40% of the children were

working towards solving the problems of the community. About 55% of the children were receiving non-formal education while 20% of the children stated that they were a part of the Panchayat Toofan. About 8% of the children were released from employment while another 7.5% of the children were saving money with the help of the organisation.

With respect to the impact of service delivery on the conditions of children, children provided multiple responses. About 60% of the children stated that their level of confidence had increased as a result of CWC's intervention, 45% of the children stated that they were improving their skills through the vocational training offered by the CWC while 25% of the children said that they were now able to get their problems solved with the help of the organisation, 63% of the children stated that they could now participate in different meetings and programmes, 25% stated that they got a chance to make friends through the activities of the CWC and 55% of the children stated that they were able to read and write due to the organisation's activities.

Forty-five percent of the children wanted the organisation to support them with their education, while 2.5% of the children wanted it to provide loans to their families. The remaining children did not respond to this question. Only 10% of the children intended to continue with their education while the remaining 90% plan to work in the same occupation in which they were employed.

Section III Impact of the work on the child beneficiaries:

Present status of the children:

Fifty-five percent of the children studied were undergoing non-formal education while 45% of the children were undergoing training at the organisation's training centre. From those children who are presently in the NFE, 40% are from Alur panchayat, 32% are from Uppunda, 27% are from Belve, and none are from Keradi panchayat. From those in the

training centre, 22% are from Alur, 6% are from Keradi, 17% are from Uppunda, 44% are from Belve and 11% are from the panchayats covered under the Bellary District. As much as 80% of the children working at home are presently in the NFE while only 6% of those working outside are presently in the NFE. Thus the emphasis of getting children into the training camp appears to be on those who have been working outside the family setting than in their homes. The present status of the children from Panchayat Toofan can be presented in the following table:

Table 13. PT - CWC : Distribution of children according to their present status

Present status of the child	No. of children	% of the total
Work and NFE	22	55
Training	18	45
Total	40	100

A regression analysis was done to determine whether the child's present status as being in the non-formal education centre (as a dependent variable) is influenced by the independent variables such as the child's age, sex, family size, family income, level of father's education, age at starting work, duration of being a working child, duration of being a beneficiary and level of mother's education. The regression analysis revealed an F-ratio of 10.06 which is significant at 1% level of confidence and an R Square value of 0.75. This indicates that whether the child is in the non-formal education centres or not is determined up to 75% by the independent variables in combination. The sex of the child, level of mother's education and age at starting work have poor t-ratio and do not affect the dependent variable in a significant way. The other independent variables with the t-ratio such as child's age with t-ratio=2.4 (significant at 5% level of confidence), family size with a t-ratio of -2.9 (significant at 5% level of confidence), family income with a t-ratio of 2.6 (significant at 5% level of confidence), level of father's education with a t-ratio of 2.15

(significant at 5% level of confidence), duration of being a working child with a t-ratio of -2.37 (significant at 5% level of confidence) and duration of being a beneficiary with a t-ratio of -3.5 (significant at 5% level of confidence) significantly influence the dependent variable when the other variables are constant.

For the children who are presently working on a full-time basis and undergoing the non-formal education provided by the organisation, the scores on the child labour-child rights continuum are as follows: The mean survival score of the children before the intervention was 3.36 out of 8 and had remained unchanged even after the intervention. This indicates that there has been no improvement in reduction the violations that occurred with respect to the survival rights of the children. The mean score on protection before the intervention was 10.5 while the present mean protection score is 9.45 out of 14 points. This indicates that there has been a reduction in the violation of the protection rights of the children. This could be due to the provision of the evening centres which reduce the number of hours spent on work by the children. The mean score on development reduced from 4.95 points to 1.95 points after the intervention. This can once again be attributed to the education and recreation opportunities that the children receive in the evening classes. The mean participation score has remained unchanged at 3 out of 3 indicating that the children are still not given an opportunity to express and decide the matters relating to their employment by their employers. The participation of children in the panchayats has not made any impact on the children's participation rights in their own workplace. Thus the mean total score of the past was 21.8 out of 30 points and it reduced to 17.76 points after the intervention indicating a reduction in the overall violation of the rights of the child, largely due to the evening centres run by the organisation.

The past scores of the children who are presently undergoing training are as follows: The mean survival score was 2.7 out of 8, the mean protection

score was 8.1 out of 14, the mean development score was 4.8 out of 5 points and the mean participation score was 3 out of 3 points. Thus, the mean total score was 19 points out of 30 points.

This indicates that the children who are presently receiving training had better scores on survival, protection and development than the children who are not undergoing training presently; indicating that their rights to survival, protection and development were relatively better protected than those of children who are not undergoing the training. Thus, children who were already at a relatively better position have received the best possible benefits from the organisation.

Difference in the time spent on various activities:

The number of hours spent by the children on various activities were recorded. The results are as follows.

With regards to employment: The differences in the time spent on employment after the intervention of the organisation can be presented in the following table:

Table 14. PT-CWC: Difference in the time spent on employment

Time spent on employment	Average number of hours
Prior to the intervention	14.2
After the intervention	8.1
Average reduction	6.1

The mean number of hours spent on work by children before the intervention of the CWC was 14.2 hours per day while the mean number of hours spent on work after the intervention of the organisation was 8.1 hours per day. Thus there was an average reduction of 6.1 hours spent on work by the children. This could be attributed to the Bhima centres that conduct activities for children in the villages. The children in the training

camps do not spend any time on work and this too could have influenced the reduced average of hours spent on work by the children after the intervention of the CWC.

The difference in the hours of work was analysed with the child's age, sex, family size, family income, level of father's education, age at starting work, duration of work and duration of being a beneficiary of the CWC as independent variables. The regression analysis showed an F-ratio of 15.34 which is significant at 1% level of confidence and an R Square value of 0.79. This indicates that the differences in the hours spent by children before and after the intervention from the organisation can be determined up to 79% from the set of independent variables mentioned above. Among the variables only the child's sex was not a significant variable with a poor t-ratio. The other independent variables such as the age of the child (t-ratio=4.16), family size (t-ratio=3.04), family income (t-ratio=2.85), level of father's education (t-ratio=3.99), age at starting work (t-ratio=-4.04), duration of work (t-ratio=-4.28) and duration of being a beneficiary of the CWC (t-ratio=-3.28) were significant at 5% level of confidence indicating that they had a significant impact on the differences in the hours spent on work by children, when other variables were constant.

With regards to household work: The differences in the time spent on household work after the intervention of the organisation can be presented in the following table:

Table 15. PT-CWC: Difference in the time spent on household work

Time spent on household work	Average number of hours
Prior to the intervention	1.27
After the intervention	1.08
Average reduction	0.19

The mean number of hours spent by children on the household work before the intervention was 1.27 hours per day whereas after the intervention the mean number of hours spent by the children on household work was 1.08 hours per day. This indicates a reduction of 0.19 hours per day which is very marginal. This difference reflects an inadequate focus on reducing the household work done by the children.

The differences in the hours of work was analysed with the independent variables such as child's age, child's level of education, sex, family size, ordinal position of the child, family income, parental education, age of starting work, duration of work and the duration of being a beneficiary. However, the F-ratio obtained was 1.07 which is not statistically significant at 5% level of confidence.

With regards to the developmental activities: The differences in the time spent on developmental activities after the intervention of the organisation can be presented in the following table:

Table 16. PT-CWC: Difference in the time spent on development

Time spent on development	Average number of hours
Prior to the intervention	0
After the intervention	6.07
Average increase	6.07

None of the children interviewed had spent any time on developmental activities including recreation and education before the intervention from the organisation. However, the mean number of hours spent on developmental activities by the children after the intervention was 6.07 hours per day. This difference can be attributed to the children's placement in the training school and the Bhima Sangha activities conducted at the village centres.

A regression analysis was done to understand whether the differences in the hours spent on development was determined by the independent variables such as the child's age, sex, family size, family income, level of father's education, level of mother's education, age at starting work, duration of being a working child and duration of being a beneficiary. The F-ratio obtained was 9.6 which is significant at 1% level of confidence and the R Square value was 0.74. This indicates that the difference in the hours spent on development can be determined by the independent variables in combination. The independent variables of level of father's education, level of mother's education and sex of the child were insignificant with poor t-ratio. However, the child's age (t-ratio=2.46), family size (t-ratio=-2.57), family income (t-ratio=2.01), age of starting work (t-ratio=2.05), duration of being a working child (t-ratio=-2.45) and duration of being a beneficiary (t-ratio=-3.45) were significant at 5% level of confidence indicating that they significantly influenced the behaviour of the dependent variable which was difference in the hours spent on development work, when the other variables were kept constant.

Protection/Violation of the Rights of the Child:

The scores of the children on the child labour-child rights continuum were calculated. The data with respect to the violation of their rights reveals the following:

Survival Rights of the Child: The past mean score of all the children⁴ on survival rights was 3.05 out of 8 points with a standard deviation of 1.1. The past scores of the children on survival were analysed as a dependent variable with the following independent variables: child's age, level of education, sex, family size, ordinal position, family income, level of father's education, level of mother's education, age of starting work and duration of work. The regression analysis revealed an F-ratio of 2.42 which is significant at 5% level of confidence and an R Square value of 38. This indicates that the past scores of the children on survival can be

determined up to 38% by the independent variables in combination. However, only the child's sex was statistically significant with a t-ratio of 2.92 which is significant at 5% level of confidence indicating that it had a significant impact on the independent variable when the other variables were constant.

The mean survival score of children⁵ after the intervention of the organisation was 3.36 out of 8 points (standard deviation 0.7). The present survival scores of the children were analysed with the independent variables of child's age, level of education, family size, ordinal position, family income, level of father's education, level of mother's education, age of starting work, duration of being a working child and duration of being a beneficiary. The regression analysis revealed an F-ratio of 1.4 which is statistically insignificant at 5% level of confidence. Thus the present scores of children on survival cannot be explained by the given variables.

Protection Rights of the Child: The past mean score of all the children⁶ on protection rights was 9.37 out of 14 points with a standard deviation of 1.8. The past protection scores of the children as a dependent variable was analysed with the child's age, level of education, sex, family size, ordinal position, family income, level of father's education, level of mother's education, age of starting work and duration of work as independent variables. The F-ratio obtained in the regression analysis was 2.59 which is significant at 5% level of confidence and an R Square value of 0.47 indicating that the past protection scores of children can be determined up to 47% with the help of the independent variables in combination. Only the duration of work with a t-ratio of 2.4 was significant at 5% level of confidence indicating that it significantly determined the behaviour of the dependent variable when the other variables are constant.

The mean protection score of the children⁷ after the intervention of the organisation was 9.4 out of 14 points (standard deviation 1.0). The present protection scores of the children were analysed against the independent variables of the child's age, level of education, family size, family income, level of father's education, level of mother's education, age at starting work and the duration of being a beneficiary. The regression analysis results showed an F-ratio of 3.76 which is significant at 5% level of confidence and an R Square value of 0.69. This indicates that the present protection scores can be determined up to 69% by the independent variables in combination. However, only the age at starting work was significant at 5% level of confidence with a t-ratio of -2.26 indicating that it would influence the present scores of children on protection even when the other variables were constant.

Development Rights of the Child: The mean development score of all the children⁸ before the intervention of the organisation was 4.9 out of 5 points (standard deviation 0.3). A regression analysis was done to determine whether the past scores of the children on development were influenced by the independent variables of the child's age, ordinal position, family size, level of father's education, age of starting work and duration of work. The F-ratio obtained was 1.2 which is statistically insignificant at 5% level of confidence indicating that the past scores of the children on development could be determined by other variables that were not included in the present study.

The mean development score of the children⁹ before the intervention of the organisation was 1.95 out of 5 points (standard deviation 0.2). The present scores of children on development as dependent variable were analysed with the following independent variables: age of the child, age of starting work, duration of being a working child, family size and level of father's education. The regression analysis revealed an F-ratio of 1.03 which is statistically insignificant at 5% level of confidence. This indicates that the independent variables do not sufficiently determine the behaviour

of the dependent variable and there could be certain other variables that were not covered under the study which might determine the dependent variable.

Participation Rights of the Child: The mean participation score of all the children¹⁰ before the intervention of the organisation was 3 out of 3 points. The mean participation score of the children¹¹ after the intervention was also 3 out of 3 points.

Total Scores of the Children: Thus the mean of the total score of the children¹² in the past was 20.32 out of 30 points with a standard deviation of 2.66. The past total scores of the children were treated as dependent variable and analysed with the independent variables of the child's age, level of education, sex, family size, ordinal position, level of father's education, level of mother's education, age of starting work and duration of work. The regression analysis revealed an F-ratio of 2.40 which is statistically significant at 5% level of confidence with an R Square of 0.41. This indicates that the past total scores of the children can be determined up to 41% with the help of the independent variables in combination. However, only the variable of child's sex is statistically significant at 5% level of confidence with a t-ratio of 2.4 which means that only the child's sex as a variable can determine the total scores of the children before the organisation's intervention when the other independent variables are constant.

The mean of the total scores of the children at present¹³ was 17.7 out of 30 with a standard deviation of 1.37. The present total scores of the children were analysed with the independent variables of child's age, family size, ordinal position, family income, level of mother's education, age of starting work and duration of being a beneficiary. The regression analysis revealed an F-ratio of 3.64 which is significant at 5% level of confidence and an R Square value of 0.64. This indicates that the present total scores of the children can be determined up to 64% by the

combination of independent variables. However, only the variables of the child's age and the family income are statistically significant at 5% level of confidence with t-ratio of 2.5 and 2.34 respectively, indicating that the dependent variable can be significantly influenced by these two variables when the other variables are constant.

Findings:

Thus, the Panchayat Toofan project has made an entry in the panchayats of the villages that have been identified under the project. There seems to be very little immediate impact on the lives of the working children presently as their scores on the child labour-child rights continuum do not indicate much reduction in the violation of the rights of the children. Moreover, the children who are placed in the training centre also appear to be those whose rights were least violated indicating that for the most deserving children the conditions are more or less unchanged. What is most striking is that children have been given a chance to voice their views at the panchayat level and the organisation hopes that this participation from the children will not only help them to improve their own working conditions but also prevent the children from joining employment from their villages. A lot remains to be evaluated about the children's participation and status when the organisation decides to withdraw from the panchayats.

Endnotes

¹ Panchayat Toofan was renamed as the Makkala Panchayat Toofan which are parallel children's panchayats. However, the content of programme remains largely the same with an addition of the Makkala Panchayat representatives in the various Task Force. At the time of this study, the Makkala Panchayat had not come into existence.

² The researcher was informed about constraints such as those with respect to logistics, motivation of the panchayats, etc.

³ Among the Bhima Sangha children there exists a core group which is called a 'Gatti Gumpu'. This mainly consists of children who have completed their training. It meets every week while the Bhima Sangha meets monthly. This core group is involved in the decision making process and participating actively in the meetings of the panchayats.

⁴ These past survival scores are computed for all the children before the intervention of the organisation and thus include children who are still in employment and those who have been removed from employment.

⁵ The present scores of the children on survival are computed only for those children who are still in employment i.e. 55% of the respondents as 45% of the respondents have been removed from employment presently. The past survival score for the cohort of children who are still in employment was 3.36 out of 8 points.

⁶ These past protection scores are computed for all the children before the intervention of the organisation and thus include children who are still in employment and those who have been removed from employment.

⁷ The present scores of the children on protection are computed only for those children who are still in employment i.e. 55% of the respondents as 45% of the respondents have been removed from employment presently. The past protection score for the cohort of children who are still in employment was 10.45 out of 14 points.

⁸ These past development scores are computed for all the children before the intervention of the organisation and thus include children who are still in employment and those who have been removed from employment.

⁹ The present scores of the children on development are computed only for those children who are still in employment i.e. 55% of the respondents as 45% of the respondents have been removed from employment presently. The past development score for the cohort of children who are still in employment was 4.95 out of 5 points.

¹⁰ These past participation scores are computed for all the children before the intervention of the organisation and thus include children who are still in employment and those who have been removed from employment.

¹¹ The present scores of the children on participation are computed only for those children who are still in employment i.e. 55% of the respondents as 45% of the respondents have been removed from employment presently. The past participation score for the cohort of children who are still in employment was 3 out of 3 points.

¹² These past total scores are computed for all the children before the intervention of the organisation and thus include children who are still in employment and those who have been removed from employment.

¹³ The present total scores of the children are computed only for those children who are still in employment i.e. 55% of the respondents as 45% of the respondents have been removed from employment presently. The past total score for the cohort of children who are still in employment was 21.77 out of 30 points.