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Q5(d)

Do you agree that the issue of child labour raises questions about and beyond the informal sector ? Give reasons.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Industrialization and Urbanisation in India
Industrialization and Urbanisation in India: Evolution of modern industry in India; Growth of urban settlements in India; Working class: structure, growth, class mobilization; Informal sector, child labour; Slums and deprivation in urban areas.

Core demand of the question

- Do you agree that the issue of child labour raises questions about and beyond the informal sector? Give reasons
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Child labour clusters in informal farms, workshops, and homes.

Formal firms often buy through those chains.

Caste and unpaid girl work sit outside a narrow 'sector' definition.

School failure and migration feed the supply of child workers.

The issue is informal and also a whole social structure.

Introduction

Yes. Child labour is concentrated in the informal sector, but it also questions the family, caste, school, and the formal firms that buy cheap inputs. Treating it as only a slum-workshop problem hides those links.

Body**Informal sector as the obvious site**

- Workshops, farms, domestic service, and rag-picking absorb children because law, unions, and factory inspectors barely enter.
- Poverty wages of parents in A. R. Desai's incomplete development path make the child's income a household need.

Beyond the informal

- Formal brands and builders subcontract to informal chains, so 'organised' capital lives on child-cheap parts.
- Caste assigns scavenging, loom, and farm work to Dalit and Adivasi children as a hereditary duty, not only as a market.
- Girls' domestic labour inside the home is often unnamed as labour, a Seed-and-Earth privatisation of work.
- Failed or humiliating school pushes children out; education policy is therefore a labour policy.

- Migration splits households so children work in destination towns or replace adults in the village field.

Why the wider questions matter

- A ban that only raids workshops, without wages, school, and caste remedy, relocates the child.

Flow diagram

Informal workshop farm -> Child labour

Formal subcontract -> Child labour

Caste school family -> Child labour

Migration poverty -> Child labour

Conclusion

Child labour raises informal-sector questions of inspection and wages, and questions beyond it: **subcontracting**, **caste occupation**, unpaid girl work, and school failure. Agreement with the statement is therefore sociological, not a denial of the informal site.

Facts & figures

Subcontracting

Link that lets formal capital use informal child labour without putting children on the payroll.

Domestic girl labour

Household work that law and census often miss.

Caste occupation

Hereditary dirty work that turns some children into labourers before the market does.

Right to education

A school entitlement that, if real, would compete with the workplace.

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