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Stronger laws to end child labour urged

CHENNAI: Stronger laws and an active participation of the government are key to eradication of child labour in India, said speakers at 'Education for all', a meeting organised by Hand-in-Hand (HiH), an NGO, here on Saturday.

Neera Burra, Special advisor to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), said the percentage of children employed full-time had come down to 2.3 percent in 2001 from 4 percent in 1991.

"But we cannot be happy because the percentage of children working as marginal labourers has risen from 12.8 percent to 16.3 percent during the same period," she said.

Burra faulted the "lacunae" in the Child Labour (Prevention and Regulation) Act for this and said such loopholes allowed children to be employed as family workers.

Vasanthi Devi, former chairperson of the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women, said the Central Government had washed its hand of the Right to Education Bill.

Shanta Sinha, director of an Andhra-based NGO, M V Foundation, J Uma Maheshwari, director, Elementary Education, TN, and others spoke.

The Governor of Rotary International District 3230, J B Kamdar; president of HiH, Sweden, Johan Rodmark; Chief Executive officer of HiH, TN, Kalpana Sankar; and project director of the Child Labour Elimination and School Programme of HiH Kalyani Rajaraman also participated.