

## Evaluation of Global and National Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

### Abstract

This study investigates global and national actions to eliminate child labor. The research method is descriptive-analytical and uses library resources. Studies show that in different countries, the role and participation of non-governmental organizations against child labor vary according to the political tradition and culture. NGOs have complained about lacking the managerial and executive capacity to achieve their goals in some countries. Insufficient resources show that they cannot implement their programs unless they receive financial support. In general, NGOs aim to promote the children's welfare and well-being through campaigns and hold workshops for different stratum of society. These organizations are well-positioned to empower parents and children to make appropriate decisions about this phenomenon. NGOs can talk to parents about child labor problems and consequences and inform the dangers. They can also educate parents and children to understand children's rights and encourage them to ask for their right to education and a childhood free from exploitation. NGOs usually work with governments and receive significant financial support.

**Keywords:** *Child labor, Global action against child labor, National action against child labor, Co Introduction*

**Mohammad Reza Kouchaki Rasteh Kenari**  
*MA, Department of Student Sociology, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran, Email: sved586692@gmail.com*

### Introduction

Generally, there is no public-accepted definition for child labor. International organizations, non-governmental organizations, and trade unions use various definitions for this term, but it is often unclear what definition is used. The term "child labor" is commonly used to refer to exploitation. This theory is presented because children are too young to work or are given a job with unfavorable and dangerous conditions. It is stated that there is no opportunity to profit from the time and world of childhood when the child is working. In addition, such a person is deprived of his natural rights. Education and the normal course of a child's development are among the most obvious violated rights.

The key actors' sustained effort is required internationally and nationally to combat child labor. These key actors include international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, labor and employers' organizations, and governments. International participation helps to create an environment in which child labor can disappear. International organizations have a significant role in increasing child labor awareness, involving governments and other social actors to combat child labor, and facilitating the poor countries' access to the resources needed to combat child labor. Child labor is effectively eliminated, and immediate action against its worst forms will be successful when widespread participation is nationally and internationally. The actors can have a much greater impact on the child labor combat when they are together. This international partnership plays an important role in promoting education role to eradicating child labor.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies play an important role in combating child labor.

Therefore, the first topic discusses the actions and activities of various UN bodies such as the General Assembly, the

Security Council, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Council, and UNICEF, which has a global responsibility to promote the children situation and plays an important role in this area.

This research discusses other international organizations' governmental and non-governmental activities that are somehow active in combating child labor. The International Labor Organization is the most responsible for combating child labor. Therefore, this research discusses the extensive actions and activities of the International Labor Organization in the framework of the international program for Child Labor elimination, the office of working and employment activities, and the monitoring system of this organization. The International Labor Organization considers labor and employers organizations as its social partners, and these organizations play a significant role in combating child labor. Therefore, this research considers some labor and employer organizations' actions and activities in combating child labor. Governments are among the key players in child labor combat. Therefore, the best efforts of other international and national key actors are not significantly effective when there is no serious government commitment to combating child labor. Then, the research discusses the role and responsibility of governments and practical practices of some countries to combat child labor.

### Theoretical foundations of research:

UN action to eradicate child labor

#### **1-United Nations' main pillars actions to eradicate child labor**

In 1976, the United Nations General Assembly declared 1976 "the International Year of the Child and subsequently issued Resolution A / 31/169 on 21 December 1976. This year's general goals were to promote the welfare and well-being of

children, pay attention to their special needs, and encourage national actions to support children, especially working children. The year 1979 was involved with widespread support so that more than 150 countries set up national commissions to achieve the goals of the International Year of the Child. Most countries surveyed their children and developed short-term and long-term plans to improve them such as India, Egypt, and Colombia. On the International Year of the Child in 1979, the UN Secretary-General declared that child labor is a universal and destructive problem. In addition, the Secretary-General stated that the International Year of the Child needs to provide an opportunity for all governments to evaluate working children's situation and take steps to establish operational plans to combat this phenomenon.

In 2002, the UN General Assembly held a special session about children. The declaration and operational plan "A World Suitable for Children" was accepted at this special meeting, which was about the international community's commitment to creating a better world for children. The declaration and operational plan state that children have the right to be protected against abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence. Communities should eradicate all forms of violence against children.

The UN General Assembly accepted the Third Optional Protocol on Communication Procedure on 19 December 2011. This protocol allows children to personally complain to the United Nations about violations of the fixed rights in the Convention on the Child's Rights and its two optional protocols.

The Security Council severely condemns child labor in armed conflict, and they consider international responsibility for those who recruit and employ child soldiers. The Security Council accepted its first resolution on children and armed conflict in 1999. They also expressed concern about armed conflict's harmful and far-reaching effects on children and its long-term consequences. In each resolution on children and armed conflict, the Security Council calls on the UN Secretary-General to report on activities and progress in children's protection. In September 2012, the Security Council also held a meeting in New York on "Free Debates on Children and Armed Conflict." The Security Council accepted a resolution at this meeting condemning violations of the child's rights in armed conflict and recalled all governments to take serious action against violators of the child's rights.

## **2-UN subsidiaries' actions to eradicate child labor**

The Human Rights Commission established a working group on slavery in 1974. The working group presented an operational plan to prevent child trafficking, prostitution, and

pornography. In 1992, the Human Rights Commission employed a special reporter on children's trafficking, prostitution, and pornography to study national and international progress in combating the phenomenon. In addition, they issued various letters of recommendation in this regard. Since then, three more reporters have been appointed. The rapporteur visits various countries reports on countries where child trafficking is possible, and submits annual reports to the Human Rights Council.

Based on the 16/12 resolution in 2011, the Human Rights Council also called on the High Commissioner for Human Rights to study the existing approaches to protecting the rights of street children and report if these rights are violated.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child decided to dedicate its first day of public debate to "Children in Armed Conflict." at its first meeting in September / October 1991. At this meeting, the Committee on the Rights of the Child encouraged member states to take the necessary and appropriate actions to guarantee children from armed conflict. The Committee on the Rights of the Child emphasizes that quality education is important in promoting social cohesion and peace in the "Day of Public Debate on the Right of Children to Education in Essential Situations." Quality education also protects children from exploitation and employment in armed conflict or commercial sexual exploitation.

## **3. UNICEF Actions (the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)**

The International Labor Organization and UNICEF (1994) had a meeting in New York City to institutionalize their relationship between basic education and child labor and reach a common framework and strategy. This meeting was introduced as an important step in the cooperation between UNESCO, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization.

In 1996, UNICEF Presidents organized a high-level group work in New York to correct attitudes toward child labor and support international progress, such as the new ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor and the preparation of the 1997 World Child Status Report, which focused on child labor. The working group accepted a special policy on child protection entitled "Children in need of special protection."

Due to the lack of technical expertise in formulating anti-child labor strategies, UNICEF established a "Capacity Building Training Program to Combat Child Labor" in 1996. The Luxembourg government contributed \$ 320,000 to the program. This program aimed to regulate UNICEF policies to solve child labor.

In 1997, UNICEF supported two international conferences on child labor with International Labor Organization in Amsterdam and Oslo. The Oslo Conference ended in 1998, in

which UNICEF could implement the global program "Education as a Preventive Strategy against Child Labor." One of the clear goals of this global program was effective communication with IPEC. The Child Labor Program is part of the development of UNICEF Child Protection, which continues until 2002.

Child Labor Understanding Project has an active role in increasing awareness and facilitating the information exchange about child labor. In this context, the project has organized seminars and workshops to present findings on child labor and policy discussions. The first seminar was held in April 2007 in Washington, the second in December 2007 in Paris, the third seminar in 2008 in Madrid, and in 2009 in Istanbul.

Activities of other international organizations for child labor eradication

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization called UNESCO was established in 1945 and is a specialized organization associated with the United Nations.

According to the United Nations Charter, this organization contributes to world peace and security through international cooperation in education, science, and culture to increase respect for justice, the rule of law, and human rights.

UNESCO established a program in 1992 called "Education for Children in Need." In this program, they helped working children, war victims, children with disabilities, and children living on the streets. In addition, this program seeks if the schools have a role in preventing child labor, removing children from the labor market, and rehabilitating them.

In 2005, the High-Level Group launched a "Global Task Force on Child Labor and Education for All" in Beijing in China. The task force includes the International Labor Organization, UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, the International Organization for Education, and the Global March against Child Labor. The above Task Force was created to achieve the goal of education for all by eliminating child labor and helping developing countries to achieve the desired goal.

One of the specialized agencies of the United Nations is the World Health Organization, which acts as an organizing authority on world community health. In 1981, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the relationship between health and child labor is not satisfactorily mentioned. In addition, the World Health Organization's goal was "Health for All by 2000," which can be met if child labor is more considered. Consequently, the World Health Organization immediately ordered immediate action to consider the child labor problem. In the 64th session in 2011, the General Assembly of the World Health Organization accepted the Declaration on the Harm of Children. They highlighted that child labor is a source of harm to children. As a result, this organization encouraged member states to take a multi-sectoral

policy and action plan to prevent child harm, increase internal standards for child labor prevention and education, enhance public awareness of child labor's health consequences, and promote occupational hazards related to children.

The World Bank is among the newest international player against child labor. The World Bank can help reduce child labor by giving loan to the needed countries. One of the ideal tools for addressing child labor in government development programs is the World Bank's strategy to reduce poverty. It is required to pay more attention to poverty reduction strategies to combat child labor because poverty is a cause and a consequence of child labor. In addition, the World Bank plays a key role in promoting education. At the Dakar Conference, the World Bank declared that all countries would profit from World Bank funding for "education for all." Therefore, the World Bank launched the Global Partnership Initiative for Education in 2002 as an agreement between recipient and donor countries. The Global Education Partnership invests in all developing countries and teaches them technical expertise. Donor countries contributed about \$ 1.9 billion between 2003 and 2010 to the Global Partnership for Education.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is an international organization working on agricultural development. The FAO was founded in 1945 by 44 member states of the United Nations. The FAO has always been engaged with poverty as one of the main reasons for child labor. FAO played a leading role in launching the International Partnership for Child Labor Cooperation in Agriculture in 2007, which was one of the FAO's clear actions to combat child labor. In 2010, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labor Organization cooperatively held planning and awareness-raising workshops in Malawi with key stakeholders. The partners agreed on recommendations to combat child labor through these workshops' legal and executive measures, policies, and practical actions.

#### **Activities of international non-governmental organizations for the eradication of child labor**

One of the most independent international non-governmental organizations is the Human Rights Supervisor, which aims to protect and defend human rights. The Human Rights Supervisor studied child labor countrywide and provided recommendations to countries on banning it in its reports. For example, the Human Rights Supervisor conducted a study in 2012 in Morocco and found that thousands of children worked in other people's homes as domestic workers, most of whom were girls. They are often hired from urban slums for urban families and are responsible for cooking, washing dishes, washing clothes, washing hall floors and carpets, and doing daily shopping.

Amnesty International is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1961.

According to the New Zealand-India Free Trade Agreement, Amnesty International recommends that the New Zealand government prohibit the importation of goods made by child laborers to protect the child's rights and ban child labor. In addition, India and New Zealand governments have not yet ratified the ILO Convention on the Minimum Age for Employment. Therefore, Amnesty International advises them to ratify the Convention as soon as possible and incorporate its provisions into national law.

The International Anti-Slavery Organization is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1839 in the United Kingdom. Currently, the International Anti-Slavery Organization is working with NGOs to cease the forced begging of Talibe children in Senegal. In addition, this organization cooperates with NGOs to protect working children as domestic workers against abuse and exploitation in six countries: Peru, Costa Rica, Philippines, India, Togo, and Tanzania.

The global march against child labor is a global network of trade unions and international organizations. This organization strives to protect and promote the rights of all children, especially the right to free education, liberation from economic exploitation, and doing anything harmful to the health and physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development of children. The global march against child labor has the following goals: encouraging countries to implement the ILO conventions on the minimum age of employment and the worst forms of child labor, implementing the provisions of the Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child, implementing the Education Action Plan for All, achieving the organization's Millennium Development Goals Nations and eliminating the worst forms of child labor by the end of 2016. The International Education Organization represents 30 million teachers in more than 170 countries and has more than 390 member organizations. The International Education Organization has focused on child labor more than other activities since its founding in 1993. The International Education Organization and its members support eliminating child labor in various ways. As the trade union movement leader, the International Education Organization can unite its partners on child labor. Consequently, the International Education Organization can reflect teachers' sights on child labor and education. The International Education Organization encourages its members to call on governments to ratify the Convention on the Minimum Age of Employment and the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The International Education Organization can combat child labor through the international trade union movement and the Education for All campaign. In addition to membership in the International Labor Organization, UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, and the

**Global March Against Child Labor**, International Education Organization is a member of the Global Working Group on Child Labor and Education for All. In addition, the International Education Organization is an active member of the Global March Against Child Labor. The International Education Organization also inspires its members to establish awareness-raising activities on World Day Against Child Labor on 12 June.

The International Save Children Alliance is a self-regulating international organization with more than 100 operational programs for the child's rights. This organization protects children by returning them to their families and campaigning to inform the public about child trafficking. The direct participation of the children is an important part of this organization's child protection programs.

### **Conclusion**

Child labor is nearly a new category for labor organizations. Traditionally, labor and employer organizations are mainly concentrated in the formal sector of the economy, and child labor performs in the informal sector. Recently, labor organizations have noticed that child labor needs serious attention because child labor can also affect the lives of many members of labor organizations, such as adult workers.

Trade unions or organizations are responsible to society and workers to ensure that all employers respect labor standards and laws. The labor organization's main role is to protect human and workers' rights, but child labor violates both the rights of children and adults. Working children are cheap, abundant, and exploitative labor resources that affect reducing adult workers' wages. Children work at a lower wage; therefore, child labor increase youth and adult unemployment. Therefore, child labor endangers both children's and adults' futures by depriving children of education and depriving adults of work. Trade unions and organizations are uniquely positioned to fight child labor because they also have access to more adult workers and their families. They can also inform about the importance of educating children, protecting children from hazardous work, and starting work early. A comprehensive approach by several partners at the international, national, and local levels is needed to effectively combat this problem because child labor crosses international borders and occurs in all sectors of society. Trade unions can play an important role in these multiple approaches.

### **Acknowledgments**

None.

### **Conflict of interest**

None.

### **Financial support**

None.

### **Ethics statement**

None

### **References**

Ghayor, Sabour, Sarmad translator, Gholam Ali, child labor or deprivation of the natural right to education? *Journal of Culture*, 1999, No. 31, p.175.

Amnesty International, Human Rights Concerns relevant to the Joint Study Group for the New Zealand- India Free Trade Agreement, 2008, pp 9, at 5.

Back, Lucien R, Evaluation of the Capacity Building Programme on Child Labour, UNICEF Division of Evaluation, Policy & Planning, Unicef, New York, 2000, pp 1-105, at 1-2,

Barooah, Pramila Pandit, Handbook on Child with Historical Background, Published by Ashok Kumar Mittal, Concept Publishing Company, India, 1992, pp 1-389, at 248-253.

Committee on the Rights of the Child, Report on Forthly ninth Session, 15 September-3 October 2008, pp 1- 13, at 11.

FAO-ILO Good Practice Guide for Addressing Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture: Policy and Practice, ILO, Geneva, 2011, pp 1-75, at 26\_.

Fyfe, Alec, The Worldwide Movement against Child Labour- Progress and Future Directions, International Labour Office, Geneva, 2007, pp 1-102, at 30

Give Girls a Chance: End Child Labour, ILO and Education International, Geneva, 2009, pp 1-16, at 9.

IPEC, Tackling Child Labour: From Commitment to Action, International Labour Organization, Geneva, 2012- vol.1, pp 1-32, at 5

IPEC, The Tripartite Process of Determining Hazardous Child Labour- Guide for Facilitators, ILO, Geneva, 2012, pp 1-136, at 7,

Making Decent Work an Asian Goal: Combating Child Labour in Asia and the Pacific, Progress and Challenges, ILO, 2005, pp 1-65, at 5.

Quality Education is the Right Response to Child Labour, ILO and Education International, Geneva, 2008, pp 1-4, at 2.

Tabatabai, Hamid, Mainstreaming Action against Child Labour in Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies, IPEC-ILO, Geneva, 2003, pp 1-16, at 5-6.

Third Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure.

Training Kit on Child Labour, Child Labour Resources Centre, IPEC and Labour & Human Resources Department Government of Punjab, pp 1-238, at 1.

Zerrougui, Leila, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict to the United Nations, Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict, 2012, pp 1-4, at 1-4,