

## Chapter 21

# Child Labor

### ABSTRACT

*Child labor is a social problem invading the world and especially the less developed countries where educational levels are low. Despite the laws that are enforced each year by international agencies to prevent child labor, reality does not reflect the efficacy of these laws. Two cases, one international and one local, reflect how abused children are being treated around the world and how their rights are being invaded. Illiterate poor families as well as businesses contribute in taking advantage of child labor in serving their own profits, especially with the lack of strict regulations that abolish this issue. Child labor is an issue that cannot be neglected and a human right concern. It is affecting children negatively because they are being exploited and forced to work at a very early age, while other children are getting educated and having a proper childhood. This chapter explores child labor.*

### INTRODUCTION

Child labor is defined as the employment of children when they are below the legal age. The International Labor Organization (ILO) describes child labor as “some types of work” prepared by children under 15 years of age and states that it prevents them from getting educated and affects their health. Child labor is a social concern, precisely in rural areas. Moreover, the educational status of working children is very low. There are many causes that provoke children to work such as poverty, poor access to education, low social awareness and inadequate enforcement of child labor laws. The different components that make up child labor and caused its rates to rise are:

poverty, government policy failure, high cost of education and living, parents who want more income, weak laws to protect these children and the wrong intention of factories. The reasons that stand behind child labor could be associated to poverty, the social situation, and the economic situation in developing countries. The family situation of the children and the schools are two of the main reasons for children labor. Moreover, the violence that the children are facing at both home and schools create unfavorable condition for the children to peruse their education.

Child labor has been observed all around the world, especially in poor and developing countries. The International Labor Organization states that about 215 million children whose ages range be-

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tween five years and seventeen years are forced to work. This phenomenon is recognized in regions such as India, Nepal, Cambodia, and sub-Saharan Africa, where people live in poverty and can't afford getting educated. Moreover, child labor can also be observed in wealthy and developed countries but in a lower percentage compared to developing countries. Child exploitation is being done in very various and diverse fields. Children can be used for military purpose, polishing shoes, prostitution, cleaning factories, selling goods in the streets, slavery and many other informal jobs. This problem has become a big challenge worldwide.

### **BACKGROUND**

Child labor hinders children's development and leads to severe effects on their well-being. Moreover, working children tend to have a very poor low-leveled education, and are more subject to crimes and drugs. Many nations and social acts started to address this issue aggressively. Many acts developed to fight child labor. Moreover, Several Unions along with families and community members and organizations are joining hands to stand against child labor. A lot of workforces in the United States as well as other countries are showing support of efforts to terminate child labor by pushing coalitions with unions in other countries that hold companies accountable for labor practices.

There should be more intervention by the municipalities of villages, since they are the closest form of authority to the villagers. In addition, Non Governmental Organizations should attempt to supply laborers of the legal age to replace the abused children. Furthermore, the Labor Union should conduct regular auditing visits to make sure the workforce has no underage workers, along with the UNICEF who should present to the parents the potential success of their children

if they are given the chance to excel like normal students. Finally, the government should encourage farmers to switch to safer crops like fruits and vegetables through promoting the farmers goods, thus decreasing the amount of harmful exposure children endure.

### **CHILD LABOR**

Many social phenomena shaped our world throughout centuries. Some of these issues vanished and many are still present today. Child labor is one of the most important concepts present in many regions around the world. It refers to the employment of children when they are under the legal age. The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines child labor as "some types of work" done by children under 15 years of age and states that it prevents them from getting educated and affects their health.

Child labor is a social problem linked with the growth of manufacturing production and capitalism. It was first visible in early agricultural societies. However, in the course of the International Revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it started being attacked. Later, it became one of the largest scandals of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, scattering to other countries as they industrialize. The problem appeared when young kids were hired by factories. They were obligated to work for long hours under hazardous conditions in return for very little pay.

It was practiced from historical times when throughout the industrial revolution, youngsters had jobs in factories in unfavorable conditions. Those who were engaged in child labor came from poor low-income families. Generally, child labor attacked underdeveloped countries and occurred at lower rates in more developed regions. This topic drove the attention of people around the world and it is considered a crucial threat to many societies.

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