

Child labour in Pakistan

children
2/1/04
The Frontier Post

The child labour is a complex issue. It is not only a social but also an economic issue, as well. It has gained prominence in the last few years, after the Uruguay round of talks. Changing economic conditions are leading to a high rate of unemployment and declining real wage rate in developing countries. It has been generated pressure from trade unions of these countries for remedial actions. Trade restriction has been imposed by developed countries against developing countries where child labour exists. Trade sanction does nothing without understanding the condition of child work.

The term "child labour" generally refers to work performed by child (under age of 15) that prevents legally required school attendance and that is performed under condition hazardous to the physical and mental health of the child. Sometime word does not harm them and develop a sense of responsibility cannot come under child labour. When we talk about child labour we mean child work under situation defined above.

Over 250 million children are forced to work in order to survive whole generation are deprived of the chance to take their rightful place in the society and the economy of the 21st century. If recruitment of child labour ends now child labour will disappear in a decade. For this we first eliminate the causes of child labour. The causes of child labour are complex. Poverty is fundamental reason for child labour; while other factors are non-availability of educational institutions, large family size, unscrupulous employers, low literacy and absence of social safety net.

Many poor family need to keep all family members work-

ing as possible to ensure survival of family. This makes it very difficult for poor families to invest in their children education. Educating a child can be a significant financial burden on them.

Many children live in areas that do not have adequate school facilities, so they work. Due to low literacy rate among adult most parents have no or little desire to educate their children. Most (up to 25 per cent) children are not enrolled in primary school; due to absence of social safety. In case of death or major sickness of adult member of the family there is no alternative for children but join the labour market. Unscrupulous employers hire children because they can pay them less money; and offer poor working conditions. They think that children are less likely to complain.

A guiding principle of the convention on the right of the child, the most widely ratifies human right treaty in history is that best interest of child always come first in good time and bad time, in poverty and prosperity in war and peace.

The convention on the right of child asks every one to pay more attention to children to specific aspects of kids' lives and to expect more ourselves in how we treat children.

Drafting of the convention began in 1979, the international year of the child, and today the fifty four article treaty hold governments accountable in respecting the right of children.

Freedom from violence, abuse, and hazardous employment

Freedom from hunger

Suhaib Khan

and protection from diseases

Free compulsory primary education

Adequate health care

An equal treatment regardless of gender, race or culture background.

The convention has been ratified by every country of the world except Somalia and United State of America

Convention on the right of child adopted by united nations general assembly on 1990 says in.

child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Article 36 is in favour of protected child against all other form of exploitation.

Minimum age convention 132 adopted by international labour organization in 1973 bind ratifying countries to pursue a national policy for the abolition of child labour and rises minimum age for employment. This minimum age should be fifteen. In some developing countries like Pakistan it is fourteen.

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Article-1 Child means every human being below age of eighteen.

Article-32 State Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the education with the child education or harmful to child's health or physical mental, spiritual, moral or social development

Article 34 is about to protect

Worst from of child labour convention 182 which is adopted by international labour organization in 1999, which call for immediate and effective measures to prohibit and eliminate worst forms of child labour.

The issue of child labour in Pakistan gains prominence in early 90's when government of Pakistan started program to abolish child labour and take several measures to abolish child labour.

The Federal Bureau of Statistics (FBS) with ministry of

labour and manpower and overseas Pakistanis and the international labour organization took a nation wide survey during 1996 under International Program of Elimination of Child labour (IPEC). According to result, there were forty million children of 5-14 years reported on January 1, 1996. They represent thirty per cent of total population. Above fifty percent were in age of 5-9 year. Almost seventy two per cent live in ruler areas. Among forty million 3.3 million were economically active in which 2.4 million (73%) were boys and 0.9 million (27%) were girls.

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Article 11(3) of the country constitution and firm ordinance 1969 prohibits children employment below fourteen years in factories. Road transport worker ordinance 1961 prohibits children employment below age eighteen. It is the only law where minimum age is eighteen in Pakistan. In early 90's Pakistan National Assembly enacted two labour laws meant to curb such practices. first employment of child act 1991. prohibits the child labour in hazardous occupations and environments. The second bounded labour act 1992 indentured servitude and Peshgi system. Pakistan sign memorandum of

understanding (MUM) with ILO in 1994 on a national program to elimination of child labour with in IPEC framework and Minimum age convention.

In child labour act 1991 the minimum age of child work is fourteen, which is reduced from fifteen, is harmful for the child interest. To abolish child labour from Pakistan needs serious attention from leaders and policy makers. If they are serious about developing strategy that seeks to end child labour in Pakistan they must be aware the condition of child works.

The main cause of child labour is poverty. To implement child labour laws successfully they must come with anti-poverty plan give proper training to adult labour to increase their productivity and earning.

Since many children are too poor to afford schooling, any laws that aim to ban child labour must be simultaneously implemented with anti-poverty plan that eases poor families burden e.g. working children who attend school must at least be partially compensated for lost income.

Compulsory free education facility provided to children's. Because 24% of children did not attend school due to low quality of the education offered there did not teach them useful skills they could not practically use in the future. Enrolment of children would be greater if classroom teaching was linked with their life experiences as working children.

To implement child labour law successfully it is needed to make institution to keep check on firms where child labour used. There is also check on children who were able to go school and did not enroll in primary education and start court trial for them and punished them with fine or prison or both.