

# NGOs and International agencies' in Eradication of Child Labour: An overview

Mr. Devaraja R \* Research Scholar, Department of Studies in Social Work, University of Mysore, Mysuru.  
Dr. Shivappa R \*\* Associate Professor and Chairman, Department of Studies in Social Work, University of Mysore, Mysuru.

**ABSTRACT:** NGOs are playing a very significant and vital role in the task of elimination of child labour. NGOs may initiate certain measures of creating awareness among the employers and parents regarding the evils of child labour. The existing penal provisions of child labour laws may be highlighted among the erring employers. NGOs may add to the efforts of the Government in elimination of child labour. The enforcement staff must seek the involvement of NGOs at all stages. Thus NGOs must be encouraged to become partners in elimination of child labour along with Government. The intervention of NGOs are in the areas of counselling awareness, creating social mobilization, encouraging community participation, rescuing children from work, providing vocational training, enrolling children in schools and ensuring their retention by minimizing dropouts, monitoring the functioning of schools, bringing children from informal rehabilitation schooling system into the formal main streaming schooling system, preparing educational kits and facilitating interaction between the various stake holders, like Government Officials, Teachers, Employers etc. Even the international organisations like, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, World Bank and other organisations are working at international level to eradicate the issue of child labour. Here the researcher tries to identify the efforts of both NGOs and International organisations in eradication of the child labour at global and as well national level.

**Key words:** NGOs, International Organisations, Eradication of Child Labour.

## INTRODUCTION

NGOs have been working to find a solution to the problem of child labour. Many NGOs have grown in size and capabilities conducting research and training while developing effective and innovative programmes to shift children from work to school. The work of NGOs in the field of primary education, micro financing and alternative income generation programmes have also made an important contribution in the effort to eradicate child labour in both urban and rural India. NGOs make significant improvement in their performance in promoting sustainable development and livelihood for the poor.

The NGO's are believed to be better motivators than the government machinery with respect to any problem concerning child labour and child abuse. The National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights while submitting the strategy paper for elimination of child labour to the Planning Commission for the Eleventh Five Year Plan suggested the revamping of the National Child Labour Programme 1988, so that child labour can be identified and working children can be successfully rehabilitated and mainstreamed. In order to achieve this, NCPCR recommended that an army of social mobilisers be trained, who can conduct successful 'rescue' operations and enrol the children in Transitional Education Centres. The NCPCR envisaged these to be both residential and non-residential and as stepping stones towards full and successful rehabilitation and absorption of erstwhile working children in to the formal education processes of the country. Thus, NGOs served as active and enthusiastic partners in the way of elimination of child labour through their various approaches.

## NGOs which are working for the elimination of Child Labour across India

### 1. Action Aid India

Action Aid India has been working with poor and marginalised people in India since 1972. It works in 25 states and one Union Territory reaching out to over 6 million people every year, those of whom belong to the most marginalised and excluded groups. The major focus area of Action Aid India is education and 'left out' children (including street and working children). It reaches more than 5 million of the most poor and marginalized people, supporting them overcome their poverty and marginalization by accessing their right to food, shelter, work, education, healthcare, human security and a voice in the development decisions affecting their lives and livelihood.

### 2. CARE India

CARE is a not-for-profit organization working in India for over 65 years, focusing on alleviating poverty and social injustice. CARE works hand-in-hand with vulnerable families, especially women and girls, to help them access their rights. Care India is associated with the issue of gender and sexuality and empowering communities to fight HIV/AIDS. One of the main areas of activity of CARE in India is girls' education. The NGO works in 11 Indian states.

### 3. Child Relief and You (CRY)

In 1979, Mrs. Rippan Kapur and her 6 associates were started CRY with Rs. 50 as fund for the organisation. CRY believes that permanent change in the lives of children is only possible when we tackle the root causes that continue to keep the children uneducated, hungry and vulnerable. All children are equal, with equal rights guaranteed to them in the Constitution of India. CRY targets underprivileged Indian children, including child workers. The NGO carries out child development initiatives all over India. It is based in Maharashtra.

### 4. Global March against Child Labour

The Global March against Child Labour is a global movement against child labour. It is a movement to mobilize worldwide efforts to protect and promote the rights of all children, especially the right to receive a free, meaningful education and to be free from economic exploitation

and from performing any work that is likely to be harmful to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. It has partners in over 150 countries and is based in New Delhi.

#### 5) CINI

CINI was founded in 1974 in Kolkata West Bengal, India. In the early 70's, it was started treating malnourished and ill children, whose numbers were rampant in villages and slums areas, with an aim to contrast high child mortality. Field research backed by medical practice progressively revealed a fundamental truth about childhood malnutrition. CINI is an Indian non-government organisation (NGO), regarded as one of the most influential institutions working for poor children in India. Over more than four decades, The NGO seeks to improve the quality of life of socially disadvantaged children living in urban areas through education, health and social mobilization. The Primary beneficiaries of CINI programmes are street children, children living in slums, squatter colonies and children of sex workers.

#### 6) CREDA (Centre for Rural Education and Development Action)

CREDA was started in 1982, as a non-governmental organisation it has been changed the lives of people in the eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh, India. CREDA is working as a grassroots organization for rural development. Its activities focus on child development from a rights perspective; and women's empowerment through economic development, an income generation programme, health and environment awareness and integrated rural development. The NGO's works on the issue of child labour as a special focus of child related activities. It has undertaken projects for the elimination and rehabilitation of child labour around Varanasi.

#### 7) Concerned for Working Children (CWC)

CWC was started in 1970 at Bangalore. CWC is working towards total eradication of child labour in all sectors and seeks to empower children so that they can gain control over their lives and be self reliant. The project targets children forced to work in unorganized and organized hazardous situations due to poverty, children from broken homes, neglected/forgotten children, orphans, etc. CWC is working at local, national and international levels through action, policy research, and lobbying and advocacy roles. CWC works in the field of child labour in Karnataka.

#### 8) Salaam Baalak Trust

Salaam Baalak Trust is an Indian non-governmental organisation working at New Delhi. The aim of the trust is to provide a sensitive and caring environment to street & working children and other children on the margins of society. It seeks to dissolve the barriers that rob children of the opportunity to realize their rights. It provides basic services to the children, including formal and non-formal education. Its vision is to restore the childhood, learning and the joy of professional life.

#### 9) Prayas

It is a Maharashtra based Non-Governmental Organisation. As a NGO it is working since 1988 for the welfare of street and neglected children, destitute and working children. It addresses issues related to lack of sensitivity and infrastructure for their rehabilitation, education and reintegration. Prayas covers Delhi, Bihar and the earthquake affected areas of Gujarat, It is working in the tribal population. Prayas is a ray of hope for the deprived of our society.

#### 10) Save the Children (UK) in India

Save the children is a global non-profit organisation which was originated in the year 1919 in U.K. Now, it is India's leading independent child rights NGO. In India it was started in 2008 and presently it works in 19 states of India. It has changed the lives of 10 million children. Save the Children works for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Save the Children specifically focuses on health, education, poverty and exploitation, as well as the issue of equality and justice as its priorities for the disadvantaged section of the society.

#### 11) M. Venkatarangaiya Foundation (MVF)

The Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation was started in 1981 as registered trust. At the outset it was started as a research institution on issues relating to social transformation. Later, it actively began to work with the issues of child labour in Andhra Pradesh. One of the fundamental goal of the Foundation is to eliminate child labour by universalizing school education. MVF also focuses on bonded labour and education, and more recently child marriages and other problems faced by the girl child. Strengthening of middle and high schools, training of all stakeholders and development of strong non-MVF groups are its major initiatives. MV Foundation has achieved remarkable success in the short period of time. In Andhra Pradesh, entire village communities are saying a firm "no" to child labour and opting to put their children in school.

#### 12) World Vision India

Robert Bob Pierce of China started World Vision in 1950. The child sponsorship programme began in response to the needs of hundreds of thousands of orphans after the Korean War. World Vision started operations in India and subsequently set up a single-room office in Kolkata in 1958. World Vision works with poor children providing education, food and health care. It also conducts special initiative programmes, targeting in particular, the street children, bonded child labourers and child victims of sexual exploitation. World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization working to create lasting change in the lives of children, families and communities living in poverty and injustice.

#### 13) Pratham

From its start in providing pre-school education to the children in the slums of Mumbai, Pratham has grown across India reaching over 4.7 million children across 20 states. Our flagship programs Read India, launched in 2007, reached over 33 million children in three years. Central to this success has been a whole new way of approaching the education problem to create a national impact. It focuses on universalization of pre-school education as an important strategy for achieving universalization of primary education. If every child can avail some kind of early childhood education, the chances are high that the child will go on to regular school. Moreover, the pre-school exposure

will enhance and strengthen the child's subsequent school performance, in terms of achievement and attendance. Its aim is to expose unreached children from low-income families to early childhood education.

#### 14) Butterflies

Butterflies provide alternative education, as well as basic services to street and working children in the New Delhi area. It also provides emergency services like Childline, night shelter, night reach or resilience centre, etc. Health care, advocacy and research are other areas where the Butterflies works relentlessly. The organization is actively involved in fund raising, communication, alliance building and training. Apart from the above, the NGOs like Bandhua Mukti Morcha, Centre for Concern for Child Labour, Bharat Siksha Sanstha, Campaign against Child Labour, Katha, Ankuran etc., are rendering yeomen service to the cause of child labour.

#### Child Rights Trust

It is a Bangalore based NGO and an aim of the organisation is to protect and to promote all the inherent individuals rights of the children through the training of various target groups, the preparation of actions plans, filing complaints and net working with other NGOs in the region. Apart from that it is also working in the area of children health, Education, media, children in conflict with law, children with disabilities, children without parents and with the sexually exploited children.

#### Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), New Delhi

Bachpan Bachao Andolan was founded in 1980 by Kailash Satyarthi, who has worldwide applauded as an anti-child labour activist. When Satyarthi started out with a small peer group, the issue of child labour was unappreciated by Indian legislation, in public discourse and by the media. Back then, fighting child labour was not only a seemingly insurmountable task; it was also an extremely dangerous endeavour. Though, while eradicating child labour remains one of the biggest challenges for India, BBA has been successful in changing the fate of over 82 000 children rescued from exploitation, in achieving important anti-child labour and anti-trafficking laws, and in raising awareness among the public. Some of our successes deserve to be further highlighted.

It is not a conventional NGO or a typical institution; it is the ray of hope in millions of hearts, the first dream in their eyes, and the first smile on their faces. It is the sky and wings together for innumerable children, excluded from human identity and dignity, with a desire to fly in freedom. It is the tears of joy of a mother who finds her rescued child back in her lap after years of helplessness and hopelessness. It is a battle to open the doors of opportunities, a fire for freedom and education in the hearts and souls of thousands of youth committed to wipe out the scourge of slavery and ignorance from the face of mankind. Its vision is to create a child friendly society, where all children are free from exploitation and receive free and quality education.

#### International Organisations

The following International organisations are playing a vital role in eradication of child labour.

#### United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

This was founded by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946 to help children after World War II in Europe, UNICEF was first known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. In 1953, UNICEF became a permanent part of the United Nations system, its task being to help children living in poverty in developing countries.

UNICEF is the only one that focuses exclusively on children. The rights of the child are at the centre of its mission and mandate and, along with UNESCO and the World Bank, it is one of the lead agencies responsible for basic education. Its entry point to child labour is, therefore, through its central concern with all aspects of child rights and through its key role in basic education.

#### Main Policies of UNICEF

#### United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in November 1989, is in principle the major policy instrument of UNICEF with respect to all aspects of child welfare. It is important to note that the CRC was an initiative of the United Nations but was adopted by UNICEF as the framework for its own policy formulation. The CRC makes recommendations on a wide range of issues.

The most pertinent to child labour include the right to education and the right to be protected from economic exploitation and work. The relevant articles are as follows:

#### Article 28

"1. States parties recognise the right of the child to education and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

(a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all."

#### Article 32

"1. States parties recognise 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 child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development."

The definition of child labour is quite clear in the CRC - it refers to work that is mentally, physically, spiritually, morally or socially hazardous or harmful, and interferes with the child's education. No distinction is made in the CRC between different kinds of work, i.e. between work that is hazardous and non-hazardous.

### **Education for All**

UNICEF was one of the main co-sponsors of the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) held in Jomtien in 1990. The World Declaration on Education for All that was adopted at this conference as well as the follow up Dakar declaration of 2000 would constitute the main policy instruments of the organisation in the field of education. The EFA Declaration took a rights-based approach to education by asserting that "everyone has a right to education". However, neither this document nor the Dakar follow up makes any reference to child labour.

Working with national governments, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), other United Nations agencies and private-sector partners, UNICEF protects children and their rights by providing services and supplies and by helping shape policy agendas and budgets in the best interests of children. UNICEF's governing body of 36 nations, representing all regions of the world, establishes policies, reviews programs and approves budgets for the organization. Headquartered in New York, UNICEF carries out its work through seven regional offices and 126 country offices covering more than 160 countries, territories and areas.

### **UNESCO**

UNESCO is the lead agency for education but it has been forced to play the role of junior partner to UNICEF and the World Bank on account of its limited programme budget and its weak presence in the field. However, it has a key role to play in policy formulation on education. It was one of the main co-sponsors of the Jomtien conference and holds the secretariat for EFA with responsibility for all follow up activities.

### **UNESCO and Child Labour**

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture. UNESCO's programmes contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in Agenda 2030, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

The issue of child labour is also evident in UNESCO's programme of action. While education forms a major strand in UNESCO's work, the organisation has not yet turned its attention to the related issue of child labour. The closest it gets to address this problem is through its programme on "street and working children" which is a part of the overall programme on children in difficult circumstances. This programme was set up in 1992 in collaboration with UNICEF directly after the Jomtien conference. It was a response to meeting the needs of certain groups of children who were seen to be left out of the educational process.

### **World Bank**

It was founded in 1944; with the name of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development—soon called the World Bank. Originally, its loans helped rebuild countries devastated by World War II. In time, the focus shifted from reconstruction to development, with a heavy emphasis on infrastructure such as dams, electrical grids, irrigation systems, and roads. With the founding of the International Finance Corporation in 1956, the institution became able to lend to private companies and financial institutions in developing countries. And the founding of the International Development Association in 1960 put greater emphasis on the poorest countries, part of a steady shift toward the eradication of poverty becoming the Bank Group's primary goal.

The World Bank is primarily a financial institution that gives loans for development and poverty reduction programmes. It approaches the issue of child labour from an economic perspective. According to the Bank, there are sound economic reasons for reducing child labour as involvement in work at an early age or for long hours prevents children from accumulating human capital and getting higher earnings in later life. In addition, economic growth is adversely affected by lower rates of productivity growth.

### **The International Labour Organization (ILO) and child labour**

The ILO was created in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice.

The Constitution was drafted between January and April, 1919, by the Labour Commission set up by the Peace Conference, which first met in Paris and then in Versailles. The Commission, chaired by Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labour (AFL) in the United States, was composed of representatives from nine countries: Belgium, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, France, Italy, Japan, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States. It resulted in a tripartite organization, the only one of its kind bringing together representatives of governments, employers and workers in its executive bodies.

The International Labour Organization, from its inception, has made child labour one of its central concerns. The ILO works on child labour over the decades has mainly taken its cue from the phrase "protection of children" in the preamble to its Constitution. The ILO's prime tool in pursuing the abolition of child labour has always been, and remains to this day, the labour standards that embody the concept of a minimum age to enter into employment. This approach responds to two concerns: to protect children from work that interferes with their full development and to pursue economic efficiency through well-functioning adult labour markets. Early minimum age standards were linked to schooling.

The Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), which built on the ten Instruments adopted before the Second World War, expresses this tradition by stating that the minimum age for entry into employment should not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling. By establishing such a link, the aim is to ensure that children's human capital is developed to its fullest potential, benefiting children

themselves, their families and communities and society as a whole by the increased contribution they can, when grown, make to economic growth and social development. Soon after the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in March 1995, had squarely identified the elimination of child labour as a key to sustainable social development and poverty reduction. The ILO governing Body approved, in 1996, the development of a new ILO instrument on the subject. The aim of such an instrument was to consolidate the growing consensus, fuelled in part by the ILO's own increasing work under its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), that certain forms of child labour demanded urgent, immediate action for their prohibition and elimination. Preparatory work began in earnest for a new Convention and Recommendation; and ideas for such instruments were subsequently discussed within the ILO and at other international meetings in Amsterdam and Oslo in the following year.

### ILO and IPEC

Child labour is one of the critical issues of our time, affecting an estimated 215 million children worldwide. The ILO has worked to eliminate child labour over its 90 year history, adopting internationally recognized labour standards on child labour and in 1992 establishing the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). IPEC has made significant progress in tackling the problem of child labour and is working in nearly 90 countries and benefiting millions of children. IPEC employs internationally recognized labour standards and technical cooperation projects towards achievement of its objective of eliminating child labour.

The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was created in 1992 with the overall goal of the progressive elimination of child labour, which was to be achieved through strengthening the capacity of countries to deal with the problem and promoting a worldwide movement to combat child labour. IPEC currently has operations in 88 countries, with an annual expenditure on technical cooperation projects that reached over US\$61 million in 2008. It is the largest programme of its kind globally and the biggest single operational programme of the ILO.

The number and range of IPEC's partners have expanded over the years and now include employers' and workers' organizations, other international and government agencies, private businesses, community-based organizations, NGOs, the media, parliamentarians, the judiciary, universities, religious groups and, of course, children and their families.

IPEC's work to eliminate child labour is an important facet of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. Child labour not only prevents children from acquiring the skills and education they need for a better future, it also perpetuates poverty and affects national economies through losses in competitiveness, productivity and potential income. Withdrawing children from child labour, providing them with education and assisting their families with training and employment opportunities contribute directly to creating decent work for adults.

### Conclusion

The recent ILO report on child labour pointed out that globally 152 million children engaged as a child labour, out of these 64 million girls and 88 million boys and this is accounting for almost one in ten of all children worldwide as child labour. In this estimate 71 per cent of children working as a child labour in agricultural and allied sector and 69 per cent work within their own family. Nearly half of all those in child labour 73 million children are in hazardous work that directly cause dangerous to their health, safety, and moral development. Children in employment, a broader measure comprising both child labour and permitted forms of employment, involving children of legal working age, number 218 million. To eliminate the problem of the child labour there are various international organisations and NGOs are working very effectively. Hence it is observed that the problem of child labour is global phenomenon and it requires a proper implementation of laws to eradicate the problem.

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