

Developing World Is Not the Only Custodian of Child Labor

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Abstract

The study attempts to look into the menace of the child labor around the contemporary world while also tracing its history. The study endeavors to find traces of child labor in the developing as well as developed world. The worst forms of child labor including armed conflict, trafficking, slavery, sexual exploitation, and hazardous work which absorb three-fourth (3/4th) of the total child labor force. Menace of child labor continued either under inappropriate laws or unwilling implementers. The facts reveal that children's having ages 7-14 years is 145,000 in Italy. Approximately 1.5 million child labor force is estimated in Italy. Although, unpleasant but child labor was considered desirable, at times. Child labor is an established fact in Europe. Reasonable extent of child labor in Europe is not documented; however, 50% of rural child labor worked under 3 hours a day with only 18% worked more than 8 hours. Child labor is fundamentally dangerous as it adversely affects the child's productive age.

Keywords: Child labor; Developing countries; Developed world.

1. Introduction

To qualify the definition of child labor, the work that a child carries has to have risks for him of being hazardous, harmful, barring him from school, and resultantly having potentials to devastate chances of him becoming a responsible, healthy, and skilled citizen of the societyⁱ (Bennett and Sherer, 2004). Gravest of these work types are covered under the United Nations convention on the worst forms of child Labor in 1999. Worst forms are defined in article 3 of the convention in 4 of the following categories i.e., (a) All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labor, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; (b) The use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; (c) The use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; (d) Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of childrenⁱⁱ. Invariable characteristics of child labor among various definitions are the child slavery, forced labor, debt bondage, illicit activities, and violation of minimum age laws of the subject state, injurious to physical, mental, moral, social or emotional well-being of the children, barring school education, using them as escape goat to undermine labor standardsⁱⁱⁱ.

The objective of the study examines the incidence of child labor either in the World and more specifically developed world. For this purpose, the present study finds the traces of child labor by different facts and figures which are available in different repositories and argued them accordingly. The present study divides in the following sections; after introduction which is presented in Section 1 above. Section 2 contains deliberate talk on the incidence of child labor in the world. Section 3 discusses tracing child labor in the developed world. Final section concludes the study.

2. Incidence of Child Labor in the World

International Labor Organization (ILO) in a global study on child work in 2002 found 246 million child laborers-majority work in the developing world i.e., 179.4 million of them in worst forms of child labor, 2/3rd of the latter between 5-14 years of age, out of the former, 70.4% in agriculture, fishing and hunting^{iv} (Bennett and Sherer, 2004). A large majority, being family workers-specially in rural areas, do not get any pay. Even if paid, depending on age and gender instead of skill, it is much lesser than the adults and males. Domestic child work is one of the most common and traditional form of child labor. They typically work for extended hours, 15 or 16 hours a day, even at times around 24 hours. They are provided left-over meals, and receive little or no pay, suffer physical or sexual abuse, are separated from their family thus deprived of natural parental care, affection and love, rarely attend school or play with peers. Children as young as 5 years have been on record in domestic servitude. Forced labor traps 5.7 million children. Bonded labor or debt bondage captures children for their parental failure to pay off the debt. Manipulating lenders makes it impossible to pay it off in whole. Thus succeeding generations inherit the loan, once taken. Child trafficking is rivaling drugs and arms smuggling in

illegal trade with estimated revenue of \$12 billion a year; amount required to achieve Education for All children by 2015. Children are often tricked into different forms of commercial sexual exploitation, such as prostitution and pornography^v. 'Economically active' child refers to regularly paid or market oriented work carried by the children^{vi}. Micro studies indicate a shoot up in the estimates considering the unpaid work, such as within household, and with no market outlets. Javaraj and Subramanian (1983) conducted a research in Indian state of Tamilnadu. They estimate 13% and 33% child laborers using strict ILO definition and a more liberal one respectively^{vii}. The fact that it is under reported makes it difficult to address the menace more comprehensively. A range of laws exists in different countries ranging from outright ban on child labor to a ban on very small children and hazardous industries such as in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Being poverty driven, parents and guardians tend to hide information of illegal work of their children. This outcome is inherited in such circumstances. Despite all these stipulations and scattered information, Kebebew Ashagrie (1993) was first to collect international data on child labor^{viii}. He reported about 79 million child labor force, 57 million in Asia alone; however, a declining trend has been noted in Asia since last decade whereas in America and Africa, it is rising especially in the latter it's a sharp increase. Huge population is also responsible for Asia's daunting figure (see, Table 1).

Table 1: Number of Child Labor in below 15 years (in thousands)

	1980	1985	1990
World	87, 867	80,611	78,516
Africa	14,950	14,536	16,763
Americas	4,122	4,536	4,723
Asia	68,324	61,210	56,784
East Asia	39,725	33,463	22,448
South East Asia	6,518	6,079	5,587
South Asia	20, 192	19,831	27,639

Source: Ashagrie (1993)

So percentage of participation may give a clearer picture where alarming 27.87% of African children in the age group of 10-14 were laborers in 1990 against 15.19% in Asia. These statistics are available from ILO (1996a), which has now compiled inter-country data on child labor from 1950 to 1995, along with projections, up to 2010 (see, Table 2).

Table 2: Participation Rates for Children, 10-14 Years

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995	2000	2010
World	27.57	24.81	22.30	22.90	19.91	13.02	11.32	8.44
Africa	38.42	35.88	33.05	30.97	27.87	26.25	24.92	22.52
Latin	19.36	16.53	14.69	12.64	11.23	9.77	8.21	5.47
America & Caribbean								
Asia	36.06	32.26	28.35	23.42	15.19	12.77	10.18	5.60
Europe	6.49	3.52	1.62	0.42	0.10	0.06	0.04	0.02
Ethiopia	52.95	50.75	48.31	46.32	43.47	42.50	41.10	38.79
Brazil	23.53	22.19	20.33	19.02	17.78	16.09	14.39	10.94
China	47.85	43.17	39.03	30.48	15.24	11.55	7.86	0.000
India	35.43	30.07	25.46	21.44	16.68	14.37	12.07	7.46
Italy	29.11	10.91	4.12	1.55	0.43	0.38	0.33	0.27

Source: ILO (1996a)

A sharp decrease of child labor in China, India, and especially Italy is encouraging. China's decrease is coincided with its significant economic growth since 1980. However, economic growth must accompany conducive schooling opportunities, better adult labor, advanced, sophisticated, and appropriated technologies for a volunteer withdrawal from the child labor force. Levy noted in 1985 that change in the crop pattern can bring decline in child labor. ILO fact sheet of 2005 on child labor notes that the menace is threatening every 6th child in the world with physical, mental and emotional threats. These include almost all types of child work ranging from prostitution, domestic work, peddlers or running errands, street vendors, and factory workers to agriculture, exposed to different health hazards and deprived of safe and real childhood, education, or a better life. Worst forms of child labor including armed conflict, trafficking, slavery, sexual exploitation, and hazardous work

absorb 3/4th of the total child labor force. Apathy obliges these folks to continuously struggle for survival of their families and themselves. Fortunately, in many countries, human conscious is taking its due course and certain forms of child labor are becoming the immediate target to eradicate. An ILO study encouragingly suggests that economic benefits of elimination of the child labor will be 5 times more than its cost. Child labor poses an urgent challenge to its effective abolition. Alternatives to family income sources are pivotal in elimination of child labor as in many cases they are the primary and contributing factors of their family incomes. Better earning provisions to parents can be a good way of supporting this mechanism. ILO being the prime organization in the fight against child labor presents following rich chronology.

The Minimum Age Convention for Industrial Sector (No. 5)^{ix} in 1919 was followed by Forced Labor Convention (No. 29) in 1930^x and adoption of the Minimum Age Convention for Industrial Sector Revised (No. 59)^{xi} in 1937. ILO adopted in 1957 the Abolition of Forced Labor Convention (No. 105)^{xii} followed by the adoption of Convention Minimum Age for Underground Work (No. 123) in 1965^{xiii}, and Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) in 1973^{xiv}. Legal reforms, assessment studies, awareness raising and social mobilization, prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation of children trapped in hazardous sectors, and creation of the alternatives for the families of child laborers were the main aspects of ILO-IPEC initiative of 1992^{xv}. Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action came in 1996 which declared a crime against child in one place was a crime anywhere. In another three years time, ILO codified it into an international standard through a convention spelling out role of enforcement and penalties^{xvi}. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work was adopted in 1998: where all ILO Member States pledged to uphold and promote the principles of freedom of association, abolishing forced labor, non-discrimination in the workplace, and elimination of child labor^{xvii}. It followed in 1999 with the adoption of Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (No. 182)^{xviii}. ILO established 12th June as World Day Against Child Labor in 2002^{xix}. ILO is supporting more than 80 countries in the formulation of their own programs to combat child labor. Benefits of eliminating child labor were estimated to be US\$ 5.1 trillion by the first global economic study in 2004^{xx}.

ILO Facts sheet indicates 246 million children trapped in labor force, 73 million of them are less than 10 years of age^{xxi}. Informal sector with no legal or regulatory protection absorbs most children: 70% in agriculture, forestry, fishing and commercial hunting; 8% in wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels; 8% in manufacturing; 7% in community, social and personal service, such as domestic work. About 8.4 million children fall prey to prostitution, pornography, debt bondage, slavery, trafficking, and other illicit activities. Trafficking trapped 1.2 million of these children^{xxii}. "Child domestic service has been a widespread practice in Asia and may have even worsened in recent years with growing income inequalities and rural poverty. Children in domestic service, consisting largely of young girls, perform a wide variety of tasks traditionally done by women in the household, such as looking after children, preparing food, house cleaning, washing and ironing, and caring for the sick. These young women make an important economic contribution as they free their parents or employers, especially women, to pursue more remunerative employment in the national workforce. Ironically, the value of their contribution remains unrecognized and overlooked. In fact, even though children in domestic service are likely to be among the most vulnerable and exploited of all, they are also the most difficult to protect. While their economic participation is largely unrecognized, young girls are increasingly subjected to work-related hazards and exploitation. Sexual advances and physical and verbal abuse instigated either by employers and co-workers are common. As children, they are being deprived of their right to childhood, and opportunities for self development and education."^{xxiii}

University of Iowa in a global report compiling different initiatives across the globe stated that in Brazil, where industries like footwear, garments, plantation, mines, notwithstanding the informal sector, regularly employ children, largest labor federation of the country (the CUT) was carrying out a nationwide program, educating local trade unionists on child labor menace and mustering community support for proper implementation of the child labor laws. 'Goat-to-School' is an initiative of Union of Rural Workers where if parents remove their children from labor and send them to school, they receive goats in loan to generate income. Brazil's National Confederation of Workers in Agriculture (CONTAG) imparts training to its union leaders to help limit child labor ensure employers provide schooling to their child workers. Building and Woodworkers' Federation and the Metal Workers Union in Bangladesh have withdrawn children, and enrolled them in education and assistance program, from most hazardous workplaces, like automotive and welding workshops, through a program. Peru's National Labor Federation launched a program, to fund, train, and staff, to make education programs available to children working in street markets. A 1996 survey indicates 4.3 million child laborers in Peru. All India Trade Union Council organized a visit to slate mines, where many children performed hazardous work, to mobilize their members to organize a campaign against child labor. Child labor is common in tea plantation in Uganda. National Union of Plantation and Agricultural Workers in attempt to control it has signed an agreement with the Uganda Tea Association prohibiting child labor under the age of 18. The resulting Memorandum of Understanding states, "UTA and NUPAW agree that employment of children under the age of 18 years is not condoned and therefore management shall not directly employ or allow employees to bring children in the Estates to work their task." Similarly, in the Ivory Coast, where 15,000 children aged 9 to 12 are sold into a form

of slavery to work on cocoa, coffee, and cotton plantations, the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (IUF) is signing agreements with employers requiring them to commit to ending child slavery^{xxiv}. Mostly child labor is associated with the developing world. Following passage peeps in the developed world to see if it is free of this menace, which it is not.

3. Tracing Child Labor in the Developed World

Although industrial revolution brought it to the surface, child labor always existed, though not as factory workers. Peter Dorman reflected in 2001 in his research titled *Child Labor in the Developed Countries*. He further noted that children carries out domestic work, contributed in agriculture, engaged in craft learning. Activities almost always taken for granted without any debate on their morality, both economic and social. Industrial revolution challenged this proposition, ironically by employing children in British, the first of the industrialized countries. Several investigations of the parliament in early 19th century questioned children in textile mills, plight of the children cleaning the inside of the chimneys etc. Factory Acts of 1833 and 1844 were the first of much such legislation to take place over the time. They aimed assurance for child education^{xxv}. Education Act of 1918 and subsequent legislation sought the operation clean up for the child labor from the labor force. The Young Person's Act 1933 furthered the process by injecting the ideas of minimum age for work and hazardous labor. Impacts have always been put to question. Menace of child labor continued either under inappropriate laws or unwilling implementers^{xxvi}. Even the decline in the child labor in Britain is claimed as consequence of other changes in the society rather than any role played by the legislation. Fyfe believed it was the easy access to education and increased awareness of the British families that caused the decrease in the child labor force. Many politicians, trade unionists, and some entrepreneurs were instrumental in passing legislations and concrete efforts to check the menace during last of 19th and early decades of 20th centuries. Whereas, people like Nardinelli consider the rising family income to be primarily at work in checking the child labor^{xxvii}. Simplifying these contemporaneous and interrelated factors is a difficult job. Other industrialized countries also experienced similar transition, although each having distinctive history^{xxviii}.

Children played important role in the early days of industrialization, with the exception of a few countries like Japan where child play was given more cultural value. Eventually, public conscious aroused and protective legislation took its place, notwithstanding the role played by awareness and increased income. Until recent there was, however, no systematic attempt in the developed countries to monitor the economic activity of children. Although in lesser numbers, but the west is not child labor free even today. In USA alone some 300,000 underage children, including 230,000 in agriculture and some 13,000 in sweatshops, are estimated to be illegally working^{xxix}, more than half in commercial farms. Children aging 6-14 years numbering 35,000 are economically active in Portugal, nearly 40% of them work 6 or even 7 days a week^{xxx}. Children aging 7-14 years and having some work experience number 145,000 in Italy^{xxxi}. Even though these figures include permissible light work, the menace cannot be simply ruled out from developed countries. Employment of quite young children in the developed countries is infrequent, although the extent is unknown. This includes 6 years old children involved in onion picking in Rio Grande Valley (USA) in 2000^{xxxii}. Certain low-income pockets are found in almost all the developed countries where certain work type resemble the informal sector associated normally with the developing countries. Children in sweatshops, is not a very remote incident in USA. Children are also employed sometimes in southern Europe in the footwear industry, mainly working at home, and clandestine workshops on the suburbs of the major cities. However, such work in developed world is normally part-time and does not constitute a hindrance in their schooling. The extravaganza of combining schooling and work, affordable in the developed world, is not that easy a proportion in the developing world owing to many reasons. Similarly, working conditions in the developed world are far better conducive than the developing world. Although this marked improvement came over centuries.

Since not every developed country has collected accurate or comparable data on child labor, exact number of child labor force in the developed world is difficult to gauge. "It is likely that, whatever the published figures, more than half of all teenagers below the age of 18 are in the labor force in every industrialized country. In countries for which there is more detailed evidence, children commonly begin work by the time they are 15, although the type of work they do changes as they grow older"^{xxxiii}. Available literature reveals that majority of the children in USA who work are neither from minority nor from the poorest strata, rather they tend to generate money to pay for college or consumption goods. Contrary to the developing countries, USA offers the opportunities for some discretionary income. Minimum wage laws are another example which ensures some non-g income for the younger single person. This makes teenagers attractive to marketing companies and retailers. Often, though, their work types are not as 'dignified'; many work for around 17 hours a week in agriculture production, construction sites, janitors and cleaners, or domestic work. Such works and time limits are considered relatively less harmful. Whereas in the developing countries, spending 12-14 hours work a day for similar jobs is pretty much a possibility. Huge research literature on work hazards, health risks, accident and mortality rate of children indicate agriculture as the least protected and most risky type of work, USA included. Tractor accidents often prove fatal, and at times occur on the parents' farms, exempted from government safety

regulations. They are also exposed to pesticides, without having any training or protection. Dangerous equipment, chemicals and exhausting work processes at farms should also be scrutinized as any other^{xxxiv}. Agriculture has also been identified as health risk occupation in the Scandinavian countries^{xxxv}.

Meat processing and packing industry is another area in USA where some teenagers work in USA, often due to disadvantaged migrant work force from Mexico and Central America. Accident rates for both adults and teenagers are high in this field, making it more difficult and dangerous. Research of over 60 years, in USA, reveals that most illegal workers in the age of 15-17 are white males, especially in the Midwest and in the non-metropolitan areas. They also work more hours per week than the legal workers. Whereas a majority of teenagers legally work in wholesale and retail trade, "Illegally-employed youths are disproportionately likely to be in construction and manufacturing"^{xxxvi}. Child labor data is missing to gauge public awareness level. While employer is responsible to respect child labor laws, minors or their parents are not. This gives them freedom to avoid awareness of such laws, resultantly low level of awareness is recorded among them. 1996 figures estimate 290,200 illegal working children, 4900, and 285,300 respectively in agriculture and non-agriculture industries^{xxxvii}. Such illegal work constitutes an average 2 million hours a week, 113 million hours a year.

Child labor is an established fact in Europe. Society approves certain types of paid work and unpaid work in the family. Even in the presence of legislation designed to ensure a basic education and protect a child from exploitative employment in the all European countries, exploitation at some degree continues in most, if not all, of the European countries, though mainly remain invisible. Reasonable extent of child labor in Europe is not documented. The following examples are illustrative rather than inclusive.

The Census of England and Wales in 1861, reported 36.9% of boys in the 10-14 age-group were laborers and the statistic for girls was 20.5%^{xxxviii}. In UK, half of the children of age group 13-15 were reported part time working. Mostly, being illegal and unregistered, such work carries germs of exploitation. According to a survey in 1985, child labor was visible in wide range of jobs in service provision sectors and many had more than one jobs. Most homeless children fall prey to prostitution and same becomes their source of income^{xxxix}. In 1996, a factory was fined for hiring girls as young as 10 years old for a shift of 6 hours, "at the end of which time they were forced to line up for their employer to decide whether they deserved to be paid £2.50 or receive a box of chocolates"^{xl}. A trade union survey on school age labor "confirmed previous studies that illegal child employment is not only widespread but is simply not being tackled"^{xli}. Others estimate that by the time they reach 16 years of age, 70% children likely to have been in some kind of paid employment outside the family^{xlii}. Often work is combined with schooling, however, mostly work time constitute not permissible working hours i.e. early morning before coming to school or at evening^{xliii}. The Select Committee Report of 1831-32 in Britain reflects that the children worked for long hours, were frequently beaten and were paid a pittance. British census data reveal that the incidence of child labor was very high in the early and middle nineteenth century. Indian Institute of Delhi School of Economics indicated that working with parents in farms seems less harmful than long stretch work of 14 hours in a factory. Accordingly, rural work often being lighter allows schooling without undermining their work commitments^{xliv}. About 50% of rural child labor worked under 3 hours a day with only 18% worked more than 8 hours. Situation in factory workers and organized child labor, such as in match-industry of Sivakasi, is very different and bleak^{xlv}. Although Africa and Asia had higher rate incidence of child labor in 1950, no continental region has higher participation rate than what Britain had in the 1950s. Whereas Ethiopia has a much higher rate, such nations being least developed in modern times cannot be a comparison even with 19th century super power Britain, the greatest imperial state of the time. Unlike poverty in the developing countries, industrial revolution caused enormous increase in the 19th century Britain, though relative poverty might be at work even here. Other, such as the US, Japan and Belgium experiencing industrialization present similar experiences^{xlvi}. This revolution put such nations on great advantageous position, on one hand in accumulating the world wealth, and on the other, helped impose their neo-imperialism on the developing countries. Children from former Yugoslavia are smuggled in gangs to exploit through forced labor. Crime mafias in the big cities buy them, once they are trained by the smugglers^{xlvii}.

In major cities of Bulgaria, the UN Committee on the Rights of Child and the human rights organizations have recorded plight of predominantly Roma children working in the streets. Prostitution, theft, scrape collection, odd jobs, and begging are associated with these children. These children increasingly fall prey to abuse and torture rendered by both the law enforcement authorities as well as skinhead street gangs. Their vulnerability to abuse is associated with the illegal or unregulated work sector^{xlviii}.

Approximately 1.5 million child labor force is estimated in Italy. Many are reported in agriculture and industrial workshops, working in unsafe conditions risking health^{xlix}. Most children work more than 6 hours a day in Naples with only one third of the pay of their adult counterparts, according to a survey sample of 100,000 children. They are not entitled to any other benefits, which their adult counterparts receive. The leather industry stands out as most hazardous^l. Similarly, in Romania, 6% of children worked more than 6 hours a day in domestic, delivery work, loading and unloading goods, agriculture, and begging. In addition to prostitution, street children are employed in these professions too^{li}.

While child labor was realized as a menace during the industrial revolution, its history is traced back to 18th

century by some scholars. However, such claims are impressions based rather than the statistics. According to them, child labor was comparably widespread even in the early eighteenth century, though the children did not work in factories at that time. Surprising us today, child labor, strikingly has not always been condemned. Although, unpleasant but child labor was considered desirable, at times. "Parents, whose childhood was spent in idleness, have contracted every absurd prejudice against the employment of children, as unnatural, cruel and unprofitable", writes an 18th century writerⁱⁱ. Hutchins and Harrison traced a document of 1770. This indicates that early age work is helpful in instilling the attitude in future employment, thus training and consistent labor would help lower the labor price^{iii-iv}.

However, the intellectual discourse on this menace since the last century can benefit us today^{lv}. Findings disprove the claim that children benefit later in life from working at a young age. Those who did not work in childhood compete better than child laborers in health and production^{vi}. Research in Brazil shows that, adults who worked earlier as child laborers recorded 13-17% reduced lifetime income and had greater chances of being trapped in the poorest 40%. Early work can lead to adult poverty later on^{vii}. With the increased child labor during industrialization, opposition to it also increased. Resultantly, the incident was recorded on decline at the end of 19th century, at least in the developed world. Laws banning the child labor, compulsory educations, and increased income level resulting from industrialization, were some important contributing factors. Whereas, Manchester owed child labor decline in its Cotton mills mainly because of legislation^{viii}, Belgium witnessed similar decline without any legislation^{ix}. The US experienced both legislation and economic prosperity being the main reasons in child labor decline during 1880 and 1920, though the latter had stronger role^x. Compulsory education, being easier to monitor child, carries more weight as being effective in curbing the menace rather than just banning the child labor^{xi}. Others claim that compulsory education and laws banning child labor cannot be compared with the economic prosperity, the latter being far better. Improper implementation of such laws can reduce the significant impact on the employment, like it did in the US^{xii}. Hence law and its implementation should be separately assessed in case of the state intervention.

Recent times has witnessed increased awareness and concern for child labor, mainly because of the abundant information, due to increased globalization, to the factions directly concerned and the consumers of such products who are indirectly concerned. Thus, protectionists as well as child labor activists, important but opposing actors, have stepped in. Banning child labor imports and setting international labor standards to aware the consumer of products made by the child labor are the resultant interventions of these two groups.

4. Conclusion

In nutshell, child labor daunting the developing countries of the day has done so in the developed world while it was transiting through agricultural phase to industrial one. No one is immune from the heavy responsibility to tame the menace. If the developed world has witnessed presumably decrease of child labor over the years, developing world is still struggling to overcome this menace. Despite the fact that recent ILO report suggests decreasing trend in the incidence of child labor, large number of children working in the informal sectors is not normally covered in the surveys, i.e. ILO Child Labor survey of 1996 in Pakistan did not cover informal sectors. It is also worth noting that the developed countries tapped the child labor drain only after going through the transition from agricultural to industrial states, hence taking full 'advantage' of child labor during the transition. Considerable comparative advantage it is enjoying, enabling it to easily afford relatively expensive adult labor to work on technical and scientific gadgets, is due the huge child rights violations incurred during the revolution. Furthermore, child labor do not constitute good candidates to work on modern highly technological machinery which makes it essential to hire skilled labor, able to operate the machinery. Child labor is fundamentally dangerous as it adversely affects the child's productive age.

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This point is reinforced at the all-India level by Weiner (1996, p. 3007) who argues that “most of the 90 million children not in school are working children”. See also Labenne (1995) for alternative definitions of child labor and how different variables affect them in India. Some economists adopt the convention of distinguishing between “work” and “home care”, classifying children who do not attend school and are not formally employed as “home care laborers” (Cartwright and Patrinos, 1998)

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