



JMUNESCO'20



SPECIAL FOCUS 2: CHILD LABOUR





ISSUE: Increasing inspections and laws prohibiting child labour in agriculture, with emphasis on India and Philippines.

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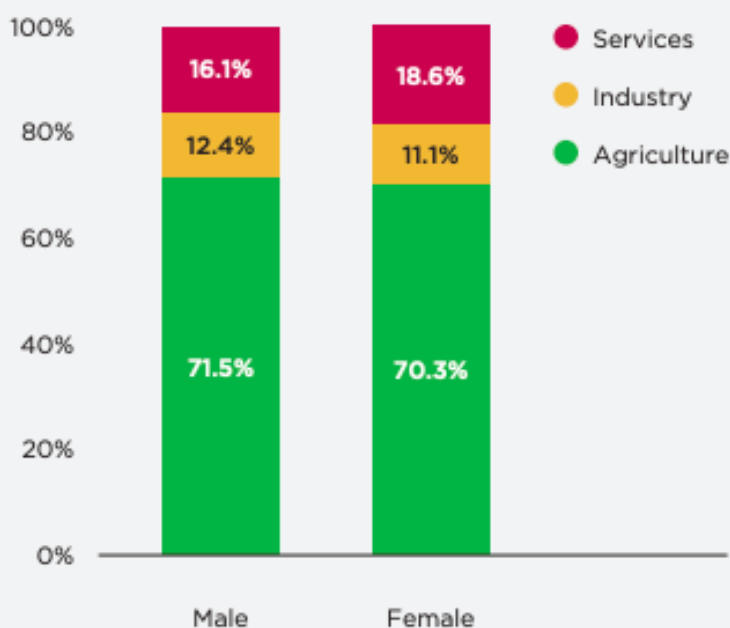
Introduction:

In stark contrast with the global advancements occurring in the current age, the problem of child labour, importantly in unorganized sectors such as agriculture, still proves to be a pressing matter that is yet to be dissolved. Children working in agriculture make up 70.9% of the population of child labourers, amounting to more than 108 million boys and girls, as of 2016, and 59% of all children in *hazardous work* are found in the agriculture sector.

Global estimates results at a glance								
			Children in employment		Of which: Children in child labour		Of which: Children in hazardous work	
			2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016
World (5-17 years)		Number (000s)	264 427	218 019	167 956	151 622	85 344	72 525
		Prevalence (%)	16.7	13.8	10.6	9.6	5.4	4.6
Age range	5-14 years	Number (000s)	144 066	130 364	120 453	114 472	37 841	35 376
		Prevalence (%)	11.8	10.6	9.9	9.3	3.1	2.9
	15-17 years	Number (000s)	120 362	87 655	47 503	37 149	47 503	37 149
		Prevalence (%)	33.0	24.9	13.0	10.5	13.0	10.5
Sex (5-17 years)	Male	Number (000s)	148 327	123 190	99 766	87 521	55 048	44 774
		Prevalence (%)	18.1	15.0	12.2	10.7	6.7	5.5
	Female	Number (000s)	116 100	94 829	68 190	64 100	30 296	27 751
		Prevalence (%)	15.2	12.4	8.9	8.4	4.0	3.6
Region (5-17 years)	Africa	Number (000s)	--	99 417	--	72 113	--	31 538
		Prevalence (%)	--	27.1	--	19.6	--	8.6
	Americas	Number (000s)	--	17 725	--	10 735	--	6 553
		Prevalence (%)	--	8.8	--	5.3	--	3.2
	Asia and the Pacific	Number (000s)	129 358	90 236	77 723	62 077	33 860	28 469
		Prevalence (%)	15.5	10.7	9.3	7.4	4.1	3.4
	Europe and Central Asia	Number (000s)	--	8 773	--	5 534	--	5 349
		Prevalence (%)	--	6.5	--	4.1	--	4.0
	Arab States	Number (000s)	--	1 868	--	1 162	--	616
		Prevalence (%)	--	4.6	--	2.9	--	1.5

As found within the definition of child labour, the employment of minors in agriculture hinder their education, physical and psychological development, and leave them vulnerable - unknowing of their rights, handling precarious tools and machinery. Furthermore, as perhaps the most notable and detrimental perpetuator of rural poverty, child labour in agriculture leaves children devoid of education, and unable to develop skills vital for future endeavours. Often starting at the early ages of 5-7, child labourers in agriculture are exposed to perilous chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides, as well as handling dangerous appliances. Laborious physical exertion is yet another hardship children are forced to face. With high rates of child labour, approximately every 1 in 14 children in Asia and the Pacific are in child labour. Child laborers in the area surmount to make up nearly 18.8% of the population of children between the ages of 5-14. This trend in child labour is also seen in India and the Philippines. In India, 56.4% of children in labour work in agriculture for a variety of products, some as a result of human trafficking. Philippines is no different, with 54.1% of children working in the agriculture sector out of the 7.5% working population between the ages of 5-14. Child labour in agriculture, which can be both be employed within a family and outside of one, is a major global issue that detains global progress, and consitutes rural scarcity, impacting both the lives of children engaged in unsuitable work, and unemployed adults.

(a) Sectoral composition of child labour, percentage distribution, 5-17 years age range, by sex



Definition of key terms:

Hazardous work: Jobs that are considered “dirty, dangerous, and difficult”, that can harm a child both mentally and physically.

Stakeholder: Any organization, government, person or institution that can both directly and indirectly affect and be affected by a business, as well as have an interest in it.

Child labour: The working of children in unsuitable activities that deprive them of their education, and hinder their development,

with a risk of causing physical and psychological harm.

Worst forms of child labour: The use of children in illegal activities such as drug trafficking, sexual exploitation of children, and slavery that harms a child’s physical and psychological well-being and safety as well as moral

Bonded labourers: A form of slavery in which a person is tricked into labouring to repay a debt, hence being trapped in the work.

Background Information:

Child labour has been combatted with new legislations and regulations over the years, but the unorganized sector of agriculture creates many problems in the eradication of this issue. With 59% of all children in *hazardous work* being in agriculture, due to the lack of regulations and enforcement, many children are facing danger while working in inadmissible jobs. There has been an increase of 10 million in child labourers in agriculture between the years of 2012 and 2016, proving that the issue is far from resolved, and contrastingly, is escalating.

Many reasons further enhance the reach of child labour in agriculture, a vital one being poverty. With

Child labour by sector

Sectoral composition of child labour by region, sex and age range, 2016

Agriculture		
% share		
World		70.9
Region	Africa	85.1
	Arab States	60.3
	Americas	51.5
	Asia and the Pacific	57.5
	Europe and Central Asia	76.7
Sex	Male	71.5
	Female	70.3
Age range	5-14	78.0
	15-17	49.3

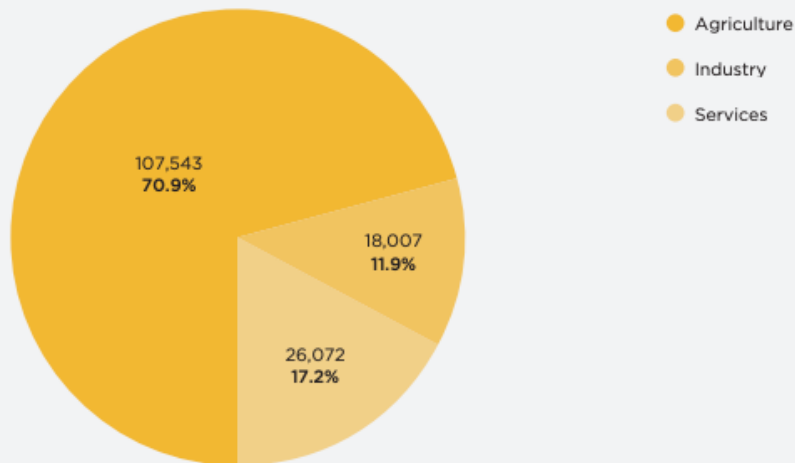
financial insecurity and indebtedness, families encourage their children to work in agriculture under severe conditions to help support the family. A lack of access to education and adult workeres further prompt child labour in agriculture, as well as a lack of sufficient agricultural machinery. The lack of education of the families also prompt them to adopt traditional and out-dated views on child labour, ignorant of its hazards and negative impacts, as well as the inability to distiguish the discrepencies between child work and child labour, further add on to the problem. The lack of law enforcement and legislations governing agriculture in regards to child labour also create an absence of consequences, hence allowing the issue to flourish freely and dangerously. Gender roles and cultural patterns likewise normalize child labour in agriculture, making it harder for individuals to identify the issue and notice it for what is truely is.

Agriculture in India is used for the production of hybrid cottonseed and hybrid vegetable seeds, the cultivation of rice and cotton, and the farming of other products such as sugarcane, tobacco, tea, seafood and cashews. For obtainment of these products, child labour is utilized, due to its cheapness, and the lack of knowledge of their rights on the child's part. The harvesting of sugarcane and hybrid cotton by children is under the catogory of *the worst forms of child labour* as decreed by the government, because it is commonly a result of human trafficking.

India has had a long lasting, and still commencing, struggle with child labour in general, and with the absence of policies and enforcement, in agriculture. Tradition plays a significant role in the acceptance and ignorance of child labour in India. With children beginning to work from young ages to promote productivity and experience, child labour was common to teach children how to perform their obligations and duties within soceity, from an early age. The caste system also helped perpetuate child labour. In the Medieval period, farms were common and widespread in the region, causing children to work alongside their family in agricultural work. Rural poverty, as much as it is a result of child labour, also caused child labour, and over 70% of child workers were, in actuality, laboured by their families. In the late 1600, with the growing economy, the demand for artisanal products had risen, causing more children to be employed with their cheap labour. Likewise, with the growth of the European industry, the production of agricultural products such as tea and coffee has increased, once again making child labour an easy and cheap option with minimal regulation and consequences. Even though child workers were protected by the Indian Factories Act, agriculture was not included, leaving child workers in agriculture vulnerable and unprotected. With lack of control of the rural areas, as child labour was made harder in industiral sectors, and increase in agricultural child labour was seen, since there was no law enforcement. The growth in population and need for money in the rural regions still perpetuates child labour along with a lack of policies and mandates.

Sectoral composition of child labour

Percentage distribution of children in child labour by sector employment, 5–17 years age group, 2016^(a)



Agriculture in the Philippines consists of harvesting bananas, coconuts, corn, sugarcane (which includes sugarcane being grown, weeded, harvested, cut, carried in bundles), tobacco, cultivating rice, and growing fish and hog. The production of sugarcane is under the category of hazardous work.

Child labour in the Philippines has been an issue of importance since the beginning of the 1900's, though it has been present since before the Spanish Colonial Period. During this period, children were worked on the farms, and often sold as slaves to pay off the debt of their families. When independence from America was established in 1946, the Philippines created their own laws regarding child labour. An important law was that the Secretary of Labour was invested with the power of granting a child permission to work, even if they were underage. This enabled all of the children to work. With the conventions adopted by the ILO, three conventions were ratified, that prohibited children working night-shifts, and made the minimum of age of working in the industry 15, even though this has exceptions. In the present day, children work on fields to help gain the survival wages for their families, who are impoverished, and the problems remain. Children working in agriculture are exposed to chemicals and other dangerous aspects of labour. Children are expected to pitch in to the income of the family and contribute to the wages due to tradition, and children working is considered to be vital for "childhood socialization". In the agricultural sector, families usually make up the workforce, and regardless of age jobs are split up evenly between the members. The social and financial aspects contribute to the high rates of children labouring in agriculture in the Philippines.

Involved countries and organizations:

International Labour Organization (ILO): UN agency that advocates social justice and fair labour, as well as supervise governments to ensure that they follow through with their ratified conventions.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO): Provide information as well as guidance, and provide agricultural technology to reduce the employment of child labourers. They also support governments to ensure that their policies about agriculture align with the aim of child labour prevention.

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD): It is an organization that aids rural people, specialized by the UN, that conducts projects to help people that live on agriculture. With the help they grant in the sector of agriculture, they aim to reduce poverty and improve the lives that depend on it.



Consultative Group for International Agriculture (CGIAR): It is global cooperation that conducts research and aims to decrease poverty in rural areas, to better the lives of people in the rural areas whether that be in regards to nutrition or well-being, through its various research centers.

International Union of Food (IUF): Organization that represents workers in agriculture, the preparation of food and tobacco, as well as other food distribution and production services. It is a Geneva based organization that defends the rights of the workers and the trade.

Childfund: Organization that has operated in the Philippines since 1954, that aims to stop child labour and acknowledge the issue's roots and causes. It has implemented certain policies to reduce child employment in certain areas of agriculture, such as the sugarcane production industry.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): Organization that provides skills necessary for employment to rehabilitate child labourers and drop-outs back into society.

Timeline of events:

Date	Event	Description
1973	Minimum Age Convention	The minimum age of 15 was adopted for child labour by ILO.
1986	Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act (India)	Defined the child as a person below the age of 14, and prohibited their employment, though agriculture was not included.

1987	National Policy of Child Labour (India)	Focused on the rehabilitation and integration of child labourers.
1987	National Child Labour Project Scheme	Was ratified by India, aiming to rehabilitate children rescued from child labour, hence aiming to decrease child labour rates.
1999	Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention	Convention held by ILO, aiming to eradicate the worst forms of child labour.
2000	Juvenile Justice Act (India)	Defined a child as someone below the age of 18.
2000-2025	National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children (Philippines)	Goals to achieve were set out regarding the worst forms of child labour in the Philippines
2009	The Right to Education Act (India)	Made it mandatory for all children between the ages of 6-14 to go to school, recognizing education as a fundamental right.
2009	Integrated Child Protection Scheme	Was launched by India to provide for children in need, including children withdrawn from hazardous work.
2016	Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Laborers	Was implemented by India, and aimed to rescue both child and adult bonded labourers with funding by the government.
2017-2022	Philippines Program Against Child Labour (PPACL)	A minimum of 630,000 children were aimed to be removed from child labour. This policy is still on-going.
2017-2022	Philippines Development Plan	Aimed to reduce the number of children in child labour by 30%
2017-2022	Third National Plan of Action for Children	Was implemented in the Philippines to further strengthen policies and strategies for the protection of children.
2018	Measurement, Awareness-Raising, and Policy Engagement (MAP 16) Project on Child Labor and Forced Labor	Was implemented by ILO in India to improve surveying techniques, raise awareness and fortify government policies and strategies.

Previous attempts to solve the issue:

UNICEF in India has taken previous action to reduce child labour, as well as child labour in agriculture. Ensuring the coherence of subjects such as minimum age for labour in policies, as well as the fortification of pre existing legislations is one of the steps they have taken to battle this issue. They have also attempted to increase the accessibility of education, and have worked towards raising awareness. They have established certain social protection programmes to reduce poverty, and hence the

need to send children to work in order to contribute to the survival wage of the family. They have also implemented the Juvenile Justice Act, as well as fortifying existing child protection services and policies. To ensure that policies are put into action, they have also worked towards building cooperation amidst different governmental departments.

In the Philippines, the National Child Labour Committee (NCLC) and the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) has collaborated with other institutions and the government to remove children from hazardous work, under which agriculture is also placed, as well as rehabilitating them after they have been removed and protected. Additionally, ILO has supported the Philippines with the implementation of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

Official programmes and policies either from international ILO conventions or as national strategies and policies have been ratified both in India and the Philippines, though they lack enforcement and sustainability. Even though some policies gained coherence and specification over time, others still are absent of such clarification, and regulations are insufficient to see that the policies are in actuality being put to practice.



Possible solutions:

- Access to education in the rural regions where agriculture is widespread alongside rural poverty should be increased to ensure that children have easy access to school. Not only should the availability of education to minors be increased, but the validity and impact should be fortified as well. Children should be made aware of their rights, and acquire the necessary skills needed to become an individual that contributes to their society.
- After the rehabilitation from labour, skills development should be widespread and accessible to reintegrate children back into society.

- Law enforcement should be heightened to make sure that ratified policies become implemented in the unorganized agricultural sector in the rural regions, with increased regulations and monitoring. To further support the administration of legislation, penalties and consequences should be adjusted to discourage people from utilizing child labour. Rural areas should be periodically and closely monitored, and individuals that violate the law should face the reprimands of their actions. Accountability should be increased, whether that be of the government, the institution or the individual perpetuating child labour in agriculture.
- Education of females in rural areas should be encouraged and held in high esteem, since female child laborers are seen in high numbers in the agriculture sector. Due to the perception of women in societies in which child labour is widespread, female children are held back from receiving their rightful education, and are pushed into labour in the agricultural sector.
- Awareness regarding agricultural labour should be increased in rural schools, so children can identify labour, and distinguish between what is considered suitable work, and what falls under the category of child labour. Parents should also be educated on the matter to prevent them from working their child in an unsuitable fashion. Families should also receive education on the possible hazards of agricultural labour.
- Farmers in market should be supported to decrease the need to find cheap labour, and the involvement of children in labour to support their family. Rural livelihoods should be improved and the incomes of agricultural workers should be made sufficient.
- The rehabilitation of children into the education system after labour should be fortified and provided by the government and other institutions.

Useful links:

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575499.pdf
<https://www.ilo.org/manila/areasofwork/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm>
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/philippines>
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