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# 100 Years of Eradicating Child Labor: A Review of ILO's Policy

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## ABSTRACT

*Nearly 1 in 10 children are subjected to child labor worldwide, with some forced into hazardous work through trafficking – UNICEF*

*The global fight against child labor began in the year 1991 with the Minimum Age (Industry) Convention that sealed the age of employment as fourteen years. Since the commencement of this convention, nations have time and again made serious efforts to combat child labor. The countries have diligently enacted laws on the lines of the ILO conventions and have achieved rather remarkable success in implementing measures against child labor. Now, the year 2021 being declared as the International Year for Elimination of Child Labor represents a foothold in the long journey that began 101 years ago. This foothold represents a fanfare of success that the international community has had in eliminating and preventing child labor. But the larger part of this fanfare serves as a reminder that despite constant efforts globally and domestically, we still have many miles to go. This paper will dwell upon the milestones that have been achieved the International Labor Organization in prevention of child labor till now. The paper will simultaneously seek to identify the reasons as to why some countries still struggle to deal with the issue of child labor. Lastly, an attempt will be made to understand whether absolute prevention of child labor can become a reality or is it still a distant dream.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

*“The concern of nations towards child labor, derive its essence, from the fear of unimaginable adversities that ensue, when a child is compelled to conform to the growing wrath of the economic sectors.”<sup>3</sup>*

ILO has played a groundbreaking role in putting an end to the adversities of child labor. However, the global commitment towards child labor began even before the establishment of ILO. This part of the paper will deal with the international action towards prevention and

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abolition of child labor from the date when it was mentioned for the first time.

## II. KARL MARX ON CHILD LABOR: PRE-ILO

One of the earliest attempts to safeguard the interests of children engaged in work-place was by the members of *International Workingmen's Association* which was founded in 1864. Karl Marx who was one of mainstays of the Association<sup>4</sup> had drafted *Instructions for the Delegates of the Provisional General Council* in August 1866. Clause 4 of that document spoke of juvenile and children's labor.<sup>5</sup> He emphasized on the importance of compulsory education and proposed restriction in the working hours of children. He focused on education and training as a must for juvenile workers. This Marxian concept of child labor will be discussed in detail in the coming part. Moving ahead, in the year 1913, the International Association for Labor Legislation (IALL) which is referred as the forerunner of the International Labor Organization – was established with its headquarters in Basle.<sup>6</sup> It became responsible for drafting the first international convention on child labor and prohibiting night work. However, with the advent of the First World War, all these efforts were rendered futile.

## III. THE ILO REGIME

The conventions and regulations enacted by ILO when analyzed together, happen to fall into four major categories. These four categories taken together form ILO's policy in curbing child labor.

### (A) Sealing minimum age of employment

After the establishment of the International Labor Organization, the international community became active in working towards the prevention and regulation of child labor. ILO came into existence in January 1919 and enacted The Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 5). The convention sealed the age of employment as fourteen years. Article 2 of the convention prohibited employment of children in an industrial undertaking but exempted the ones in which only members of the same family are employed. The convention can be conceived as a weak one as it still allowed for employment of children in undertaking where the family of the child was employed. Thereafter in 1933, the Minimum Age (non-industrial employment) Convention (No. 33) was codified that widened the scope of protection of child

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<sup>4</sup> INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION, (November 12, 2020, 5:45PM) [https://marxists.ar.chitexturez.net/archive/marx/works/download/Marx\\_The\\_First\\_International.pdf](https://marxists.ar.chitexturez.net/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_The_First_International.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Karl Marx, *Instructions for the Delegates of the Provisional General Council*, Clause 4 "The right of children and juvenile persons must be vindicated. They are unable to act for themselves. It is, therefore, the duty of society to act on their behalf." Pg157

<sup>6</sup> ILO, *Tackling Child Labor, 100 years of Action*, ISBN: 978-92-2-133451-4 (Published 2019) [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms\\_709665.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_709665.pdf)

from labor by emphasizing on compulsory education. The convention allowed for light work for over 12 years of age that could be committed towards only post school hours.<sup>7</sup> This convention provided an opportunity for children to attend to their educational needs while simultaneously earning livelihood. However, since these were the very first attempts against child labor, the ratification was less and new labor standard took time to be accepted by the world. Much of the world and child labor in it remained outside the reach of the new standards.<sup>8</sup> After this, the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) further expanded the protection against child labor by sealing the minimum age of employment in any activity as either 15 years or till the age of completion of compulsory schooling.

### **(B) Recognition of rights of children**

In 1959, a United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child was adopted for safeguarding the interests of children all over the globe. The declaration gave due recognition to various rights and freedoms of child such as a right to social security and adequate opportunities for a harmonious development of his personality.<sup>9</sup> Later on in 1989, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was enacted that gave a stronger recognition to children's right. In the context of child labor, Article 32 of the convention established *the right 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*. This Convention defined child as anyone under the age of 18 years.<sup>10</sup> A year after this, a historic event in the field of child rights protection took place in the year 1990 at the UN World Summit for Children. It was the largest international gathering of its time with 71 state representatives.<sup>11</sup> The summit led to drafting of Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. Simultaneously a Plan of Action for implementing the Declaration was adopted in the 1990s with an objective of providing better future to every child.<sup>12</sup>

In 1998, Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) was adopted by the ILO. The declaration established universal rights that were applicable irrespective of

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<sup>7</sup> Minimum Age (non-industrial employment) Convention (No. 33) Article 3

<sup>8</sup> ILO, *Tackling Child Labor, 100 years of Action*, ISBN: 978-92-2-133451-4 (Published 2019) [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---ipecd/documents/publication/wcms\\_709665.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipecd/documents/publication/wcms_709665.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Principle 6

<sup>10</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 *Article 1*: For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF, Plan Of action from World Summit for Children, NY 1990 [https://www.unicef.org/about/history/files/WSC\\_declaration\\_first\\_call\\_for\\_children.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/about/history/files/WSC_declaration_first_call_for_children.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF, Plan Of action from World Summit for Children, NY 1990 [https://www.unicef.org/about/history/files/WSC\\_declaration\\_first\\_call\\_for\\_children.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/about/history/files/WSC_declaration_first_call_for_children.pdf)

ratification to labor conventions by nations.<sup>13</sup> The four major concerns were : *the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining; the effective abolition of all forms of forced or compulsory labor; the elimination of child labor; and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.*<sup>14</sup>

### **(C) Segregating labor from its worst forms**

The 1998 International Labor Organization adopted the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention No. 182. The Convention altered the definition of child as one below 18 years of age and defined as to what are the worst forms of child labor. According to Article 3, worst forms of child labor included slaver, prostitution and pornography, illicit activities such as drug trafficking and all kinds of activities affecting the health, safety and morals of children. The convention proved to be one of the strongest ones as expressly established the protection of children from acts that were extremely exploitation. The convention focused on the importance of free basic education and prioritized the protection of girl child. The convention recently received universal ratification which is an important symbol in the global fight towards child labor<sup>15</sup>. It signifies the commitment of the member states to protect children from the worst forms of child labor by establishing stringent domestic laws. More recently in 2014, Protocol to the Forced Labor Convention No. 29 (1930) was adopted to further strengthen action against forced and compulsory labor.

### **(D) Providing institutional support to the countries**

- i. International Program on Eliminating Child Labor (IPEC): IPEC was one of the most important initiatives established by the ILO in monitoring and supporting member states in the prevention of child labor. The major task of IPEC is to strengthen the capacity of countries by giving institutional support and promoting a worldwide movement to combat child labor.<sup>16</sup> ILO through its IPEC strategy works in collaboration with countries to combat child labor at ground root level.<sup>17</sup>
- ii. Decent Work Agenda: Decent Work Country Programs (DCPW) is a child of ILO that is vested with the task of providing support system for nations in adoption of ILO

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<sup>13</sup> Supra note 28

<sup>14</sup> Fundamental principles and rights at work: From challenges to opportunities, ILO 106<sup>th</sup> Session, 2017 (November 17, 2020, 9:43PM), [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_549949.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_549949.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> ILO Child Labor Convention achieves universal ratification, (Published on 04 August 2020), [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_749858/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_749858/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>16</sup> ILO, IPEC, (December 1, 2020, (9:32PM), <https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/programme/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>17</sup> IPEC's major priority concerns include focusing on education as a weapon against child labor, developing income generation and decent employment opportunities to better compliment livelihoods, targeting the most vulnerable and hard to reach children who are victimized under various forms of child labor, and most importantly focusing on children affected by conflict and war

guidelines. It is an integral part of the ILO's field operation.<sup>18</sup> More specifically speaking, Decent Work Agenda works toward providing the organizing framework for the ILO to support its Members at the country level.<sup>19</sup> In simple words, it promotes decent work agenda by directly incorporating it in the policies of the country.

#### **(E) Reinforcement of Commitments:**

Apart from enacting conventions and providing direct country support, the ILO has taken various other initiatives to promote wellbeing of children and preventing child labor as far as possible. One such instance is the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs are a set of 8 declarations where each one speaks of a commitment on part of the country to promote and improve the wellbeing of all mankind and were intended to combat major global concerns. The first and the second goal speaks of Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and achievement of universal primary education.<sup>20</sup> These two goals taken together speak of a commitment to fight against child labor. Followed by the MDGs, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals or the Global Goals that consisted 17 targets that are to be achieved by nation states. More specifically speaking, Target 8.7 inter alia demands eradication of forced labor, slavery, human trafficking, and complete elimination of worst forms of child labor. The IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labor held in Buenos Aires in 2017 is the most recent step towards child labor eradication<sup>21</sup>. The Conference called for an action to accelerate efforts to end child labor by 2025 and forced labor by 2030<sup>22</sup>. Recently in 2018, the International Labor Organization published a document titled *Ending child labor by 2025: A review of policies and programs* that spoke of the present global estimates and policy prescriptions by ILO in line with child labor eradication. The document spoke of reinforcement of ILOs Policy on complete eradication of all forms of child labor by the end of 2025.

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<sup>18</sup> International Labor Office, *Progress in implementation of decent work country programs*, GB.297/TC/1 297th Session, (Published November 2006) [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_mas/---program/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_561922.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---program/documents/genericdocument/wcms_561922.pdf)

<sup>19</sup>ILO Decent Work Country Programme, Practical Guidebook, Version 4 (Published 2016), [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_mas/---program/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_561025.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---program/documents/genericdocument/wcms_561025.pdf)

<sup>20</sup>B. Grimsrud, *Millennium Development Goals and Child Labor*, Oct 2003, UNICEF UCW (November 30 2020, 4:32PM), <http://www.ceistorvergata.it/public/CEIS/image/UCW/PaperUCW/Research%20paper/68.%20Millennium%20development%20goals.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> IV Global Conference on Sustained Eradication of Child Labor, Buenos Aires, (November 30 2020, 5:30 PM), [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---ipecc/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_597667.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipecc/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_597667.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> ILO, *Ending child labor by 2025: A review of policies and programs*, Geneva 2018, (December 07, 2020, 8:30PM), [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---ipecc/documents/publication/wcms\\_653987.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipecc/documents/publication/wcms_653987.pdf)

#### IV. THE PATTERN OF ILO'S POLICY

The elaborate discussion on conventions of child labor have facilitated in identifying five major strategies adopted by the International Labor Organization since the beginning until now. In order to sum up, the objectives of the first major conventions were to set a minimum age as a benchmark below which no child was allowed to work. Coupled with this was the emphasis of compulsory education. Herein, the focus was *age and education*. As we move ahead chronologically, we notice that ILO became extremely sensitive towards the general wellbeing of children and identified that overall safety, security and happiness of a child was a major contributing factor towards pushing a child into a detrimental environment. Hence, the ILO along with numerous initiatives of the United Nations recognized child rights as an integral part of its child labor curbing policy. The recognition of rights of a child gave a new turn to the global fight against child labor which worked successfully. Meanwhile various guidelines and regulations enacted by WHO and UNICEF stressed upon the physical and mental wellbeing of a child. A look at the demographics reveal that from 2000 to 2004, the number of working children from 5- to 14-years of age group declined by 20 million. Among 15- to 17-year-olds, 14 million fewer children were at work. The overall number decreased by 28 million from 246 to 218 million. The decline was higher in the category of more harmful and hazardous work<sup>23</sup>. The analysis we have also discussed that while stressing upon the importance of compulsory education ILO also allowed for some degree of light work post for children the fulfilling of the requirement of education. The pairing of education with simultaneous work allowed for a better environment for child development. The parallel recognition of rights such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989 provided a holistic protective environment for children. ILO went one step ahead of this holistic approach and provided for incorporation of child labor eradication measures within sustainable development goals. These goals serve as a constant reminder to nations to provide better environment to their children to grow & prosper.

We understand the dynamic and comprehensive approach of the international organizations in curbing child labor as far as possible. The policy that commenced on capping of age of employment gradually developed into complete protection to the children by keeping in mind their overall wellbeing. Education, health, moral and physical development of the child is

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<sup>23</sup>Frank Hagemann, Yacouba Diallo, Alex Etienne, Farhad Mehran, *Global child labor trends 2000 to 2004*, (November 25,2020, 7:00PM) Geneva April 2006, [http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_decl\\_wp\\_25\\_en.pdf](http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_decl_wp_25_en.pdf)

repeatedly emphasised. Moreover, state responsibility<sup>24</sup> is also established. However, ILO did not stop here. It went another step ahead and provided institutional support to the countries through IPEC & DWCP.

## **V. MARXIAN MODEL**

The starting of the paper discussed the idea of Karl Marx that was expressed as a product of his membership in International Workingmen Association. Marx focussed on the responsibility of an employer to avail juvenile labourers while ensuring the simultaneous fulfilment of their educational needs.

The Marxian Model stated education as foremost for child and juvenile protection. He classified them into three categories namely, Mental education; Bodily education, such as is given in schools of gymnastics, and by military exercise; and thirdly Technological training, i.e. teaching them all processes of production and practical use and handling of the elementary instruments of all trades.

He stated that a combination of these will result in rising of the working. He advocated for total abolishment of employment of all persons from 9 and to 17 years (inclusively) in nightwork and all health-injuring trades. When we compare the Marxian Model with the policy of International Labor Organization, they do in fact coincide and speak of the same things. The only extra step in ILO's strategy was raising awareness and providing institutional support to the nation states which forms part of the practical implementation of the existing models of child labor prevention. As regards mental and bodily education is concerned, all the ILO conventions that were discussed earlier focused on the importance of compulsory education as one of the means to combat child labor at its roots. Education inculcates a sense of dignity and perspective to the mind of the child that has an irrevocable affect of pursuing towards one's health and mental wellbeing. It automatically creates better opportunities for the child and stops him from getting trapped into child labor. Physical and Bodily Education was already emphasized by the Conventions and Declarations. As far as Technological Training is concerned, the international agencies have been providing vocational training in nations for the youth involved in labor. For example the initiative of ILO and UNICEF in Lebanon for training the youth involved in Labor Markets.<sup>25</sup> Marx also advocated for strict abolition of nightwork and health injuring work for children of nine to seventeen years of age that is in line with prevention from hazardous and worst forms for

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<sup>24</sup> United Nations Convention On Rights Of Child 1990, Article 6

<sup>25</sup> International Labor Organization, ILO and UNICEF join forces to improve vocational training for youth in Lebanon, (October 27 2020, 8:30AM)

child labor.

## VI. WHY THE ISSUE STILL PERSISTS?

An elaborate discussion on how International Organizations dealt with the issue of child labor has been conducted thoroughly. Numerous laws were analyzed, fundamental conventions were studied and a comprehensive idea of child labor landscape was revealed. The discussion has pointed towards a holistic approach adopted by ILO, that covers all aspects of a child's welfare. The statistics have shown a positive decline in child labor cases across the globe. However, despite constant efforts, the number of children trapped in child labor sums up to a gigantic figure of 152 million out of which 73 million were in hazardous work in the year 2016. A total of 10.1 million fall in the Indian Territory. The study from 2012 to 2016 show that the progress was slowed as compared to the previous years. The 101 years of constant efforts by international Organizations have brought a considerable change in the demographics, yet the number that we are faced with today is nothing more that a challenge. But why has it become so difficult to implement absolute eradication of child labor from the globe?

While assessing the prevalence of child labor on a global scale, we find that there are countries who are still battling with the issue. An empirical study conducted by Thomson Reuters in Brazil disclosed the shocking state of children under 18 years of age, working in food delivery chains. The shutting down of schools and lack of employment forced the children to resort to meagre job pays<sup>26</sup>. The Global Estimates<sup>27</sup> also show that majority of children working as laborers lack any kind of educational opportunities. Even ILO has stated that when education is not given enough importance by the family, it becomes a driving factor in pushing a child in unhealthy labor conditions<sup>28</sup>. Poverty is another major cause of worldwide child labor. In fact, when both linked together, forms an unbreakable chain. Families living in poverty are forced to make the children work, as whatever little income they generate will be counted as a family income. The World Bank in 1998 released data that revealed the force participation rate of children aged 10 to 14 is 30–60 percent, in countries with per capita income of \$500 or less. But it declines quite rapidly, to 10–30 percent, in

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<sup>26</sup> Fabio Teixeira, *Children in Brazil found working for food delivery apps*, Thomson Reuters, (December 03, 2020, 3:35PM), <https://in.reuters.com/article/brazil-trafficking-apps/exclusive-children-in-brazil-found-working-for-food-delivery-apps-idUSL8N2I656O>

<sup>27</sup> ILO, *Ending child labor by 2025: A review of policies and programs*, Geneva 2018, (December 07, 2020, 8:30PM), [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms\\_653987.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_653987.pdf) pg 55

<sup>28</sup> ILO, *Causes*, (Nov 03, 2020, 2:00PM), [https://www.ilo.org/moscow/areas-of-work/child-labour/WCMS\\_248984/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/moscow/areas-of-work/child-labour/WCMS_248984/lang--en/index.htm)

countries with incomes between \$500 and \$1,000<sup>29</sup>. The ILO's program on Decent Work Agenda also indicates to another cause of child labor i.e. inadequacy of Decent Work. The fact that adults in a family are deprived of good working conditions, productive work and job security, it often becomes a reason why children in that family engage into hazardous labor conditions and get easily exploited. The constant demand for cheap labor and lack of responsibility on part of employers also becomes a major cause of child labor. Big businesses and companies hire child laborers in the name of cost cutting measures hence contributing to the growth of child labor. Lack of enforcement on part of countries also becomes a major cause that pushes children into child labor. Take for example, the Banana Industry of Ecuador involves children as young as 8 years old working in fields with sharp knives and toxic pesticides.<sup>30</sup>

## VII. THE WAY AHEAD: WHAT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE

According to the 2016 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, there were about 4.3 million children aged below 18 years in forced labor, representing 18 per cent of the 24.8 million total forced labor victims worldwide<sup>31</sup>. These figures estimate that there is still much work to be done both globally and at national levels to address the problem of child labor in a better and more productive manner. The following suggestions are made:

**1. Proper implementation of child labor laws in countries:** The mere existence of legal and regulatory framework is insufficient unless the same are regularly and strictly implemented with the objective of welfare. The administrative authorities at ground root level must assume the responsibility entrusted by the statutes and take proper action when necessary.

**2. Honoring the International Commitments:** The countries have ratified various conventions adopted by ILO and have undertaken to inculcate the same in their domestic laws. The current situation calls for a stronger commitment towards International Standards and their consequent implementation in the domestic laws and policies. It signifies a stricter and stringent mechanism for curbing child labor. The SDGs and MDGs form a part of a greater determination towards making the world a better place for humanity. It is inevitable that the nations keep in mind these goals when making policies.

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<sup>29</sup> Kasur Zahid Aqil, *Nexus between Poverty and Child Labour: Measuring the Impact of Poverty Alleviation on Child Labour*, Good Thinkers Organization for Human Development February 2012,

<sup>30</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Tainted Harvest: Child Labor and Obstacles to Organizing on Ecuador's Banana Plantations*, UNHCR (Dec 4, 2020 4:00pm), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/45cc342f2.html>

<sup>31</sup> ILO, *Global Estimates of Child Labor*, International Labor Organization (November 21, 9:00 AM), [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_575499.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575499.pdf)

**3. Collaboration with international agencies:** The nations must abide by the international conventions and must be in continued collaboration with the International Organizations. There are several programs that provide national support such as IPEC strategy and Decent Work Agenda.

**4. Creating Awareness:** It is extremely important to understand the consequences of involving a child into all forms of labor without giving due importance to his education. SCREAM(Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media) is one such initiative by ILO to create awareness of child labor. Awareness creation must be done at ground root levels targeting low income families that have the tendency to push their children into labor. This will sensitize them towards the importance of education. It has the potential to reduce child labor to a very large extent, reason being that anything that deviates and obstructs a child from education will directly or indirectly become a cause of child labor.

**5. Addressing the factors that directly affect child labor:** It becomes a responsibility of the nations to devise policies and schemes to curb these issues. If these issues are addressed in a proper manner, the living standard is bound to rise hence, stopping children from going into forced labor on the cost of their education.

### **VIII. A DISTANT DREAM**

By now, we all understand the policy of ILO and other international organization in eradicating child labor. It cannot possibly be denied that the policy measures taken, the conventions adopted and various other initiatives have failed to address the issues of child Labour on a global scale. The statistics have revealed a decline in the number of children involved in child labor. Today we stand on the 101st anniversary of the international Labour organization and witness a gigantic figure of 152 million children involved in child Labour. What does this tell us? Are we to believe that it will take 100 years more for the world to eradicate Worst forms of child Labour completely and permanently? It is agreed that the decline in the graph cannot be overlooked. The nations deserve appreciation for the work they have done. The current scenario is much more challenging and different from the previous ones. The covid19 pandemic has put the world into adversities and obstacles. It is difficult to answer whether child labor can be permanently eradicated from the world. The history of ILO has shown us that it is rather a gradual and slow process as it involved not only a concerted effort on part of the nations but also a change in the mindset of households at micro level.

At this stage, it is relevant to mention the 1997 report of UNICEF<sup>32</sup> that spoke of definition of child labor. It stated that although children across the globe are involved in all kinds of activities and work, sometimes, the work is beneficial and promotes a child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development without interfering with schooling, recreation and rest. At times, it is exploitative. If we abolish all kinds of work calling it child labor, it will become even more difficult to prevent it. Hence, it is important to distinguish between beneficial and intolerable work and to recognize that much child labor falls in the grey area between these two extremes. This is more of a balanced approach that is being suggested over here where education and work both are given importance, and the hazardous activities and completely avoided. This way, the child can fulfil the criteria of compulsory education while simultaneously become a bread earner for the family. The focus shall be on complete eradication of labor that hampers the development of a child– both physical and mental.

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<sup>32</sup> G. K. Lieten, *Child Labor: What Happened to the Worst Forms?* E and P Weekly, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Jan. 14-20, 2006), pp. 103-108