

**A STUDY ON THE SITUATION OF CHILD LABOUR IN
ETHIOPIA: *REVIEW OF EXISTING STUDIES AND BRIEF
ASSESSMENT***

PEOPLE IN NEED ETHIOPIA



**July 2009
Addis Ababa**

Contents	Page
Acronyms	3
Introduction	4
I. Historical perspective	5
II. Legislation – adopted conventions and laws	7
III. Child Labor in Ethiopia	10
A. Sectors	10
1. <i>Child Labor in Formal Sector</i>	11
2. <i>Child Labor in Informal Sector</i>	12
B. Age groups	14
C. Causes of child labor	15
D. Working hours	17
E. Remuneration and the Contribution of Child Workers' Income for Household Survival	17
F. Child Labor and Gender	19
F. Child Labor and Access to Education	20
G. Impact of Child Labor on Children's Lives	21
1. <i>Short-term impact</i>	21
2. <i>Long-term impact</i>	23
I. Conclusion	24
J. The Interventions of NGOs to Eliminate Child Labor in Ethiopia	25
K. Activities of Czech Republic in Ethiopia and Contribution to Child Labor Elimination	26
L. Recommendations for tackling the problem	27
Annexes	
Annex A: Reference Materials	
Annex B: List of Informants	

Acronyms

AU: African Union

CHaDET: Children Aid Ethiopia

CSA: Central Statistic Agency

CSO: **Civil Society Organizations**

FDRE: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

FSC: Forum for the Street Children Ethiopia

HIV/AIDS: Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

ILO: International Labor Organization

INGO: International Non-Governmental Organization

LNGO: Local Non Governmental Organization

MCDP: Multi-Purpose Community Development Project

OVC: Orphan and Vulnerable Children

PIN: People In Need

SCD: Save the Children Denmark

SCF: Save the Children Finland

SNNPR: The Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region

UN: United Nations

UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNICEF: United Nations Children Fund

Introduction

People in Need (PIN) is a Czech Republic based non-governmental organization founded in 1992 in response to the needs of the post — Soviet countries. PIN operates worldwide in areas of relief and development interventions. Amongst others, program interventions of PIN also focus on the improvement of education service, advocating for the protection of human rights and supporting the democratization process in countries where there are totalitarian and despotic governments. Organization also engages in the protection of the rights of children who are exposed to different forms of exploitations of child labor.

As part of its strategic interventions in the protection of the rights of children, PIN is one of the members of the European Campaign Stop Child Labor – School Is The Best Place To Work. This campaign addresses the general public, decision makers, schools consumers and corporate sector to create awareness to join hands for the elimination of child labor. Under the motto: *Stop Child Labor - School is the Best Place to Work* the campaign promotes education as a strong tool for tackling the child labor. The campaign urges all governments, non state actors, corporate bodies and other prominent stakeholders to act for the elimination of all sorts of child labor and to ensure that children get proper formal education.

PIN first established its office to actively and permanently pursue its mission in Ethiopia in year 2003. Having established its headquarter in Awassa town in the Southern Nations Nationalities and Regional State (SNNPRS), PIN introduced different programs in the region. The program interventions of PIN in the SNNPRS include Education, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program, Livelihoods Program and Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children. As a part of the OVC support, PIN has also introduced a new project on the Prevention of Child Trafficking and Rehabilitation of Victims.

PIN has undertaken this study on the issue of Child Labor in Ethiopia which is rather a compiling of existing studies on the issue with more information obtained through semi-structured interviews, to contribute to the Stop Child Labor Campaign in Europe and also assisting PIN project planning section by providing a handy resource for future designing of an intervention in this thematic area.

It is the duty of the researcher to acknowledge the fact that some information in the document are directly taken from other research findings and in no way the findings of the researcher. This is due to the nature of the study as it intends to review and compile existing data regarding the scope, trend and challenges of the issue of Child Labor in Ethiopia.

I. Historical perspective

Child labor around the world

Child labor is becoming a structural part of many economies in both the formal and informal sectors. Many types of work are done by children including agricultural work, domestic service, home-based work, work in factories and shops, street selling, mining and quarrying, construction, sex industry, and a wide range of other activities (UNICEF, 2006).

The global figure in relation to child labor around the globe ILO disclosed its report entitled *The End of Child Labor: Within Reach*, in the year 2006,

- 218 million children were involved in child labor the figure shows a decline from the 2004 report that disclosed 246 million were involved in child work
- 126 million children were involved in the worst forms of child labor (including hazardous work, debt bondage, soldiering, prostitution and pornography, and illicit activities) again the figure shows a decrease from the 179 million for the year 2004
- The report also discloses that about 122 million children in the age group of 5-14 are engaged working around the globe¹

It is a common practice for many children in Africa to work at home or in the fields rather than be educated. Even though Africa accounts for only one-third of the working children in the developing world, labor force participation rates exceed 30 percent in many areas (ILO, 1997; UNICEF, 1997).

Situation in Ethiopia

There is no reliable research finding that clearly sheds light on the trend and nature of child labor in Ethiopia. However it is evident that it has been customary in Ethiopia that children have always been part of the productive and reproductive role of societies since time immemorial. The fact that there have not been legal or customary laws in the long history of the country that define the age that should have been categorized as working force, has made the society to continue to use children's labor to sustain families both socially and economically. The available scanty information in relation to child labor in the country reveals a disturbing picture. Like in many other sub-Saharan African countries, a large number of children in Ethiopia join the labor force usually below the age of 15. This ranks the country among one of the countries with highest rates of child labor in the world. A survey conducted in 2001 has reported that one-half of all Ethiopian children within the age of 5 to 14 years were engaged in one or another form of child labor.²

Though the available literature on the pattern of child labor in Ethiopia shows existence of a strong correlation between different forms of child labor and vulnerability to different forms of violence, the situation of child workers in Ethiopia and the nature of the work that they are forced to be engaged in have been not yet adequately studied. The few studies conducted on violence against child workers in Ethiopia provide only blurred information that is not sufficient to understand fully the extent of the problem and its impact at national level. This therefore has impeded the development of a viable strategy to address the actual problems that resulted from child labor in the country.

¹ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc95/pdf/rep-i-b.pdf>

² *Situation Analysis of Child Workers in Meskan and Butajira Woredas of the Guraghe Zone; Save the Children Finland Ethiopia; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2008; P 1*

The scope of child labor in Ethiopia varies among a range of sectors and in both urban and rural contexts. Nevertheless the available documents and observations assert that, child labor in Ethiopia is not recognized as one of the major social problems that are contributing to the extreme poverty which in turn exacerbate the problem of child labor. In the rural parts of the country children are considered as valuable assets. The more children (male) one family has the more respected it is! This social value for children uphold by societies in almost all parts of the country has both economic and social motives.

More than 85% of the population of Ethiopia resides in the rural parts and live on subsistence agriculture. The way of production in the subsistence agriculture is extremely backward that call for amassing as much labor force a family can command as possible. A family with small number of children usually remains poor as there is less labor force to enhance the productivity of the household to sustain it.

The report on the annual workshop on child labor in Ethiopia organized by ILO in 1995, indicates that values uphold culturally by the society in rural Ethiopia are strong factors for perpetuating child labor. Parents quite often believe that sending their children to school is simply wastage of valuable time that can otherwise be used for other economic activities that benefit the household. They feel that the time that the children spend in school could have been used in economic activities thereby enabling them to acquire the necessary skills in agriculture or other kinds of economic sector to lead their future survival.³

Among many, some of the major areas that parents in the rural Ethiopia use the labor of their children are;

- Domestic work i.e. washing, cooking fetching water from afar, taking care of young siblings and animals
- Productive activities i.e. cultivating, planting, weeding, harvesting, post harvest activities and marketing etc...
- Children being hired out as laborers to others as agricultural laborers to pay the debts of their parents⁴

It has been argued whether the first category of activities carried out by children in both rural and urban settings are exploitative. What makes them exploitative is the fact that especially in the rural Ethiopia, children do these activities for long hours as a result of which they usually fail to attend their education or play with their peers that prevent their safe growth and personal development. Children especially girls are occupied by the household chores for more than 14 hours per day on average. As a result of this very long hour occupation with household tasks children in rural Ethiopia especially girls drop out from school at lower levels of the education system.

Statistics on scope of child labor

Despite the limitation of obtaining reliable statistical data to establish the number of children who are in the labor force and exposed to child labor in Ethiopia, the National Child Labor Survey conducted in 2001 shows that the total number of children in the age group of 5-17 was

³ Ibid

⁴ Report of the National Workshop on Child Labor in Ethiopia, International Labor Organization (ILO), Novemebr, 1995, Addis Ababa; P.7

18,197,783. **Out of this figure it was indicated that nearly 9,483,611 children had been involved in productive activities of the country in different sectors of the economy. The figure shows that nearly 52.1% of the total children population in the country is engaged in the active workforce.**⁵

The issue of child labor is largely embedded in the ever prevailing extreme poverty in the country. The fertility rate that is estimated at 6.7, according to the 2007/8 report of the CSA, coupled with the subsistence agriculture with backward farming techniques force the population to use the labor of children in both rural and urban settings to survive. The fast growing population that pushes the available cultivable land to the ages results in the shortage of cultivable land in densely populated areas of the country that forces the disintegration of families. Children under such circumstances are therefore left vulnerable for labor exploitation as they migrate into urban centers.

Despite the fact that some NGOs both national and international attempt to intervene to stop child labor in the country, their efforts are not well coordinated making it difficult to obtain reliable information regarding the trend and scope of child labor at national level. However, the interview conducted with the key informants who are mostly experienced experts in the area of child labor, reveal that the trend of child labor exploitation is increasing in time. Simple observation in the big cities and towns also confirms the fact that the number of children who are entering into the formal and informal labor is on the rise in recent years. Especially children under the age of 14 are increasingly observed in the streets of Addis Ababa the capital of the country and in other regional big towns, as beggars, street children, shoe shiners, porters and as domestic servants. The migration of children from rural areas is now affecting wider geographic areas which were not previously known as sending regions. Therefore one can safely conclude that the scope and trend of child labor in Ethiopia is on the rise from time to time.

II. Legislation – adopted conventions and laws

Ethiopia as a member of the United Nations, African Union, ILO and other international agencies, has signed many international conventions and laws. Among the many conventions that Ethiopia has ratified and incorporates in its constitution is the protection of children from labor exploitation and denial of their rights. With regard to the legal frameworks that exist in the country for the protection of the rights and safe growth of children, there are working legislations both internationally and nationally developed in the country.

International Legislations on Child Labor

Encouraging efforts have been made to improve the plight of children in Ethiopia especially their vulnerability for extreme forms of child labor. In this respect positive, and in some respects, commendable measures have been taken by the existing Ethiopian government. In 1991, Ethiopia ratified the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**. Following ratification of the Convention, the government issued proclamation no. 335/2003 for adaptation of the Convention into the Ethiopian legal system.

⁵ Child Labor in Ethiopia with Special Focus on Child Prostitution; Save the Children Denmark Ethiopia; 2003, Addis Ababa. P.9.

The Ethiopian government has also ratified the **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child** and **Convention 182 of the International Labor Organization on the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor**. But as with the UNCRC the text of neither have been reproduced and promulgated in the *Negarit Gazeta*⁶.

Despite Ethiopia's ratification of these international conventions as integral parts of its national laws their implementation however suffers a continuous set back. A research conducted on the topic by Save the Children Denmark in Ethiopia, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Women's Affairs Office of the FDRE in 2008 reveals the causes of failure to implement the conventions fully or partially in the country. According to the findings of the research, 1) *the absence of an official translation of the conventions that is approved and signed by the government of Ethiopia*, 2) *because the text of the Convention is not reproduced and promulgated in the Negarit Gazeta, the official Ethiopian instrument for publicizing laws.*⁷ As a consequence of that judges usually refrain from using the articles of the conventions to prosecute violations of rights of children. The same is true in regional governments of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

For example Article 32 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly states that, "*Sate parties recognize the rights 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.*"

In almost the same manner the ILO Convention 182 states that tackling the worst form of child labor should be prioritized in every country and immediate action should be taken as a matter of human rights, saving lives and building the nation's future. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child has articles that are similar to the articles in the other two international conventions. The challenge of implementing the Minimum Age Convention of the ILO in Ethiopia remains severe. One bottle-neck for this failure of implementing the proclamation is that, the responsible Ministry for the children issue is not yet clearly delineated. Both the Ministry of Women Affairs and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs are equally responsible for children issue. The implementation of proclamations and laws to protect the rights of children in the country usually fails to materialize because of this kind of poor institutional structure to undertake the responsibility of executing laws and proclamations to ensure the safety of children at national level.

National Laws

Apart from the international and regional (in Africa) conventions that Ethiopia has ratified as a member of the international community, there are no distinctly separate legal provisions (Codes of Law) that are exclusively made national policies for child rights protection. However, laws and policies on the protection of child rights exist in a rather scattered manner in both Federal and Regional legislations. The most important legal provisions that exist in the country to protect the rights of children include;

⁶ *Negarit Gazeta* is the national newspaper of the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on which proclamations and laws are officially declared. Laws and proclamations can not be endorsed unless they are published in this newspaper.

⁷ *A Study on Violence Against Girls in Primary Schools and It's Impacts on Girls' Education in Ethiopia*; Save the Children Denmark Ethiopia, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Women's Affairs; 2008, Addis Ababa, P.82

A. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution of 1995

The Constitution of the FDRE in its 36th Article provides the protection of child rights in the country. The full contents of the Article are as follows;

1. Every child has the right:
 - (a) To life;
 - (b) To a name and nationality;
 - (c) To know and be cared for by his or her parents or legal guardians;
 - (d) Not to be subject to exploitative practices, neither to be required nor permitted to perform work which may be hazardous or harmful to his or her education, health or well-being;
 - (e) To be free of corporal punishment or cruel and inhumane treatment in schools and other institutions responsible for the care of children.

2. In all actions concerning children undertaken by public and private welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the primary consideration shall be the best interests of the child.

3. Juvenile offenders admitted to corrective or rehabilitative institutions, and juveniles who become wards of the State or who are placed in public or private orphanages, shall be kept separately from adults.

4. Children born out of wedlock shall have the same rights as children born of wedlock.

5. The State shall accord special protection to orphans and shall encourage the establishment of institutions which ensure and promote their adoption and advance their welfare, and education.

The Constitution of FDRE in its Article 36, Sub Article 1-d is very specific about the issue of child labor and the protection of children from labor exploitations. This sub-article is directly linked to the UNCRC.

B. The Civil Code

The existing Civil Code of Ethiopia has been in use since 1960. The Civil Code has useful provisions to protect children from violation of their rights especially in duress. Generally speaking the Code has been destined to govern relationships between citizens whether between two private citizens or state organs and citizens. The Civil Code makes it crystal clear that the securing of agreements through duress might result in invalidation of the agreement. Sub-Article 3 under Article 1706 of the Civil Code reads, "The nature of duress shall be determined having regard to the age and positions of the parties concerned."

A child of either sex whose consent was vitiated may invoke this provision, and where the victim of the duress happens to be a girl child, she can avail herself of both her age and sex to have the contract invalidated.⁸ There are however some articles in the Civil Code that can create concern as they allow some forms of physical punishments by parents or guardians. The Code also revokes the liabilities of parents or guardians when they inflict some damage on children when they physically punish them (Article 2067 (2) and Article 258 (2) can be cited).

⁸ Ibid. P.64

C. The Federal Family Code of Ethiopia

The Family Code is another very important legal framework in the country that is useful to protect children (girls especially) from rights violation. The Family Code regulates the age of spouses. Under Article 7 Sub-article 1, the Revised Family Law states that "*Neither a man nor a woman who has not attained the full age of eighteen years shall conclude marriage.*" This legal provision can provide protection from coercion of underage girls to establish a married life. This contributes to the protection of sexual abuses (exploitation).

D. The Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2004

The Criminal Law of Ethiopia has dedicated one full chapter to criminalize harmful traditional practices that harm the wellbeing of citizens. The title of the Chapter reads: "Crimes Committed against Life, Person and Health through Harmful Traditional Practices". Most harmful traditional practices in Ethiopia are committed against children without their consent and will. The criminalization of such practices can provide the opportunity to prevent the violation of the rights of children.

There are other rules drafted by different ministries like the "Blue Book" rule by the Ministry of Education to protect school children from violence and the Bail Right to protect school girls from perpetrators of violence.

Despite the fact that there are sufficient legal grounds to protect children from incidences of child labor exploitation, the country lacks a separate policy that exclusively addresses the issue of child labor. Article 36, Sub Article 2 of the Constitution of the FDRE affirms that "In all actions concerning children undertaken by public and private welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the primary consideration shall be the best interests of the child." All actions of the judicial system in dealing with the issues of rights violations or criminal nature related to children are based on this constitutional law. All courts in the country are therefore expected to have a bench that is meant for juveniles issues. In rural areas and some urban centers however there are no juvenile courts due to very low level of institutional capacity of the judicial system. The low level of community awareness about the provisions of the national and international laws that the country has ratified for the protection of the rights of working children has made it difficult to implement the laws at all levels of the judicial systems. The informants in the study also express their experience with the juridical system and say that the level of awareness among the law professionals serving in the judicial system regarding the proclamations and international conventions regarding child labor is at low level further exacerbating the problem of prosecuting child labor issues.

II. Child Labor in Ethiopia

A. Sectors

In the face of extreme poverty in Ethiopia, especially in the rural areas, coupled with the rapid growth of population, survival for families can be possible through labor intensive subsistence farming where children at young age take part vigorously. It is therefore evident that in Ethiopia children join the world of labor at an early age for different reasons. Some of the major factors that

force children to become laborers at their early ages include extreme poverty, death of parents/guardian, indifference of parents for their safe growth, changing family structure, harmful traditional beliefs, peer pressure, gender imbalance and rural urban links in terms of push and pull factors that contribute massively for the voluntary and force migration of children from rural to urban centers and others. The nature and scope of child labor in Ethiopia vary in between rural and urban settings, between the sexes and among different sectors.

1. Child Labor in Formal Sector

The formal sector of the economy in Ethiopia is relatively less developed as there are no many industrial establishments. Even cottage industries are not that much developed in the country and the existing ones do not face shortages of labor. This has been the case in Ethiopia for a long time. In recent years however, the situation is changing fast as the economy starts to attract more investors in all sectors. Industries both small and big ones are rapidly expanding especially in the urban centers and even more so in the metropolis Addis Ababa.

Despite the fact that little is known about the scope and magnitude of child labor in the formal sector of the economy, it is evident that a growing number of children beginning from the age of 8-10 and even more so with youth are employed in the formal sector in urban centers. According to a paper presented on the Annual Workshop on Child Labor in Ethiopia organized by ILO in 1995, these children and youth are employed in small scale / cottage industries privately owned. Although the nature of the governing contract of employment may vary most children are employed in these small scale industries as casual workers. They are therefore vulnerable for all kinds of labor exploitations by their employers and usually denied of their basic rights that should have been respected according to the labor laws of the country and even more so by the Constitution.

On the annual workshop on child labor organized by ILO, it was indicated that, although the study presented by one researcher in the area of child labor failed to give concrete evidence about the magnitude of child labor in the rural formal economy, children under the age of 15 are reported to work in big plantations in different parts of the country. Participants of the workshop reveal from their own experiences that children work in big plantation farms to assist their parents who have employment contract as laborers with the plantation and this is mainly the case during pick agricultural seasons.⁹

In the formal sector of the economy, small scale industries commonly prefer to employ children, who are under the age of 18. This is absolutely a calculated move by the employers as children can not negotiate the terms of employments such as wage and benefits.

Some of the most common sectors that are known for employing children for different reasons include **the construction sector (road, real state etc), small scale manufacturing industries (wood and metal works, shoe factories) and agro-industries**. These are sectors of the economy with small capacity to invest. Therefore they exploit the labor of children to maximize their profit margins as that enables them to reduce the labor cost significantly. Children employed in such kinds of small scale industries in the urban centers work extremely arduous activities to both their physical as well as psychological wellbeing. Most children working in such enterprises are

⁹ ILO Annual Report on the Situation of Child Labor. P.6

usually forced to undertake heavy tasks that do not match their physical and psychological strength. Most infrastructure development projects under the implementation of the government like road constructions are contracted out to the national and international construction companies that are usually difficult to control their human resource management and contract procedures. The low capacity of the government ministries opens the room for most of these companies to use the labor of children to reduce their labor costs. Although there is no study conducted in this field, observations can illustrate the magnitude of the problem that is increasing from time to time. Especially in the road construction sector, both the government owned and private corporations undertaking the road construction projects across the country contract adults for their projects. However, the adults who have made the employment contract bring their children to assist them to do the arduous tasks along their sides. The government has failed to monitor such kind of child labor exploitations by all parties.

Although there is no reliable source of information regarding the situation of working children in the formal sector of the economy, it is however evident that their rights are commonly violated by employers. According to the research paper presented on the National Workshop about the issues of child labor in Ethiopia, the absence of trade unions or the very low capacity of the existing ones exacerbates the situation of working children in the formal sectors of the economy at national level.¹⁰

Simple observation can tell the fact that the formal economic sector in the country in general and urban centers like the metropolis tend to use the labor of children with the age group of 12-17. This helps employers to determine long working hours that is usually the average of 12.5 hours a day. Children in that age group can also not negotiate the terms of remuneration and the employers simply enjoy very low wage for the labor of the children being exploited in the sector.

2. Child Labor in Informal Sector

Agriculture in Ethiopia is predominantly subsistence farming and pastoralism. In both sectors of agriculture, the production techniques are extremely backward that hinder productivity. To compensate for the backward farming and animal husbandry techniques the sector remains characteristically labor intensive. All members of a household, regardless of age and sex are expected to play a role in the production process of the subsistence agriculture.

According to respondents, particularly children in rural areas work in farms either independently or supporting their parents regardless of their sex. Usually girls fetch water for the family or for their employers mostly from distant places, collect firewood, herd cattle and participate in harvesting crops. After doing all these activities, female children have additional responsibilities of doing household chores once they return home.¹¹ In fact the kind of on farm activities that children are actively participate are similar for both sexes. The difference lies in the fact that girls usually have additional responsibilities as they are expected to take care of household cores after they complete the on farm activities along side their parents.

¹⁰ Ibid. PP.56-57

¹¹ Situation Analysis of Child Workers in Meskan and Butajira; P.42

Male children in the age of 4-7, assist their parents by herding cattle and other domestic animals. They also fetch water from ponds or water points which are quite often located in far away places from the villages in rural Ethiopia. Male children also collect firewood which otherwise is considered the role of their female counterparts.

Children in rural parts of the country work under hazardous conditions and most commonly for a long time. The problem lies however in rural Ethiopia child labor is not considered as hazardous, rather it is considered as one aspect of educating children to socialize in the community and learn the essentials of life skill as they grow adults. In reference to the above argument a research paper presented on ILO annual report entitled "Child Labor in Rural Ethiopia; The Case of Two Peasant Societies; P.29) reads;

"... the work of children in the home or on the family farm under the guidance of parents is an essential part of socialization and development in traditional societies. Where access to education is limited by other factors, and where poverty requires the contribution of children's work, the work of children in traditional family and community occupations may be on balance positive both in its contributions to family welfare and in the social and psychological development of the child."¹²

The baseline survey conducted in the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) by a local NGO called Multi Purpose Community Development Project (MCDP) indicates that the most common work children do starting from the age of 4-5 is herding cattle. They keep the cattle from dawn to dusk in the pasture fields. This is to free the adults in the family to do the hardest work of subsistence crop production. The children are also engaged in tilling the land together with their parents or doing the traditional weaving which usually causes physical deformity on the children.¹³

The informal sector of the economy in urban areas like the agricultural sector massively uses child labor in Ethiopia. Since the expansion of industries is at its infancy stage and the low level of the large scale commercial farms, children starting at the age of 5 get themselves employed in the informal sector that has a variety of forms.

In urban settings **the most common types of child labor are shoe shining, lottery tickets selling in the streets, vending injera (traditional bread), kolo and bread, peddling, working as taxi assistant (woyala in local language), begging, prostitution, weaving, baking and carrying goods for people.** Most of the researches conducted in the area of child labor in Ethiopia indicate that, most people feel that shoe shining, vending of injera/kolo, selling lottery tickets in the streets and working as taxi assistant are normal activities that can not be considered as child labor. The reason that people give for believing that those activities are normal has to do with the need for the children to contribute to household income as most families are extremely poor. These activities are justified in the eyes of most people in both urban and rural settings as they are believed to be no harm to the children who would otherwise suffer even more due to the deep rooted poverty of households.¹⁴

¹² Report of the National Workshop on Child Labor in Ethiopia; ILO, p.29

¹³ Assessment on Child Trafficking; In Chenchu Woreda, 2004, pp.28

¹⁴ Child Labor in Ethiopia: Save the Children Denmark; 2003, Addis Ababa, PP.23-24

What almost all groups of society regard as child labor and must be abandoned include the practice of **begging, prostitution, weaving, baking and carrying goods for people**. These lists of activities that are regarded as violent and extremely hazardous to children by communities due to their obvious physical and psychological impacts that present imminent danger to the lives of children.

B. Age groups

The Labor Proclamation of Ethiopia Proclamation No. 377/2003 stipulates that the minimum age for employment is 14 years. Children below the age of 14 are not allowed to work at all. According to the proclamation the 14 years age is put as a bottom line for the labor market in the country. Nevertheless children in the age group of 14-17, are only employed or enter into employment contracts with a list of conditions that are presented in the labor law. According to the proclamation in Chapter 2 Article 89 Sub-Article 3 "It is prohibited to employ young workers which on account of its nature or due to the condition in which it is carried out, endangers the life or health of the young workers performing it. Sub-Article 4 of the same Article lists the list of activities that the Ministry might prohibit child employees in the age group of 14-18 as follows;

"The Minister may prescribe the list of activities prohibited to young worker which shall include in particular:

- (a) work in the transport of passengers and goods by road, railway, air and internal waterway, docksides and warehouses involving heavy weight lifting, pulling or pushing or any other related type of labor;
- (b) work connected with electric power generation plants transformers or transmission, lines;
- (c) underground work, such as mines, quarries and similar works;
- (d) work in sewers and digging tunnels.

Due to various factors however children under the working age i.e. less than 18 years, engage in different sectors of the economy without having employment contracts.

Although it is very difficult to establish the exact age group of children involved in one or another form of child labor in Ethiopia, some studies sheds light on what the age of children who are involved in child labor in both rural and urban settings. The baseline survey conducted by MCDP in 2004 in the SNNPR indicates that children usually inter the labor market starting from the age of 6 years. This age can be used as a benchmark for the rural context in the country when most children start to work under the guidance of adults in the subsistence agriculture.¹⁵

The study conducted by Save the Children Denmark on Child Labor in Ethiopia in 2003 shows that nearly 65% of the working child population in urban areas join the labor market bellow the age of 15. The interview conducted with the director of FSCE that has rich experience in areas of child labor exploitation reveal the fact that in the rural areas children start working at the age of 4 to support their parents or guardians who usually are preoccupied with the subsistence farming in the extremely fragmented plots of land to sustain the family. The division of labor in rural households therefore is based on age group and gender. What is common according to the informant is all

¹⁵ Assessment on Child Trafficking; (MCDP); In Chencha Woreda,2004, p. 5

members of the peasant household must have a role even at the expense of the safe growth of children.

Survey also indicates that the participation rate of 5-9 year old children in “elementary occupations” (e.g. subsistence farming, water and firewood collection) was higher than that of 10-14 and 15-17 year-old children, indicating that younger children were more likely to participate in low-paying activities. The participation rate of working girls in elementary occupations was slightly lower than that of working boys in both rural and urban areas. Occupation groups of services and shop and market sales accounted for about 26% of urban working children, with girls (28%) participating more than boys (23%).¹⁶

C. Causes of child labor

A long list of factors can be made regarding reasons why children in Ethiopia are forced into the labor market in their early ages. From both the literature reviewed for this study and the interviews conducted with experts in the area of child labor, the outstanding causes that force children in the labor market include poverty, family problems and migration. The demand aspect in the labor market can not however be ruled out as it contributes its own share for the incidence of child labor. From point of view of demand in the labor market children labor is cheap and easy to access compared to the adult workers who have the relative advantage of bargaining the terms of employment in the labor market.

Poverty: Ethiopia as one of the poorest countries in the world suffers from socio-economic and political problems that are primarily embedded in the extreme poverty in which it has been trapped in its long history. As is the case in many aspects of life in the country poverty plays a major role for the ever growing involvement of children in the labor market that is characterized by exploitation and denial of basic rights of the working children.

In both rural and urban areas child labor is in one way or another attributable to poverty at local and national level. The national Child Labor Survey conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (CSA) provides data on the distribution of child work between rural and urban areas and among regions in the country due to the pressure created by poverty. About 52% of the children were reported to be engaged in productive activities. Girls were mainly engaged in domestic activities (e.g. collecting firewood and water, food preparation, washing clothes) while boys were involved in productive activities (e.g. cattle herding, weeding, harvesting, ploughing, petty trading, wage work). The participation rate in productive activities was 62% for boys and 42% for girls. For domestic activities, this figure was 22% for boys and 44% for girls. In rural areas, children were more frequently engaged in productive activities than in domestic activities, whereas in urban areas the opposite was true.¹⁷

In rural parts of the country household poverty is caused by large family size, increasing fragmentation of farm land that ultimately leads to low family income. The situation in urban areas is also so severe that, lack of employment opportunities that lead to low family income deprive

¹⁶ Child Labor, Gender Inequality and Rural/Urban Disparities: Young Lives an International Study of Childhood Poverty; Young Lives, Save the Children UK, London, 2005; P.16

¹⁷ Ibid. P.15

parents to send their children to school and provide their basic needs. Instead they tend to encourage and even sometimes force their children to enter into the labor market in their early ages so as to enhance the household income to sustain the families. Considering the extreme poverty in both rural and urban conditions, the use of child labor in on farm and off farm activities and in other sectors of the economy has become not a matter of choice. According to Girma Amemnete¹⁸ one of the interviewee who is a program coordinator in a local NGO, poor families in rural and urban settings use the labor of their children as a coping mechanism to enhance the family income.

Lack of Opportunity for Schooling: In a study conducted by Forum on Street Children (FSCE) on the situation of child domestic workers in Addis Ababa, it is indicated that the primary motivation for many children (both male and female) to work as domestic servants is the desire to get access to education which they did not have owing to the extreme poverty that their parents are trapped in coupled with lack of educational infrastructures in their home villages. According to the study most children especially in rural parts of the country fail to continue their education due to work load, inability to cover the costs related to education such as education materials and cloths.¹⁹ The inability of children to continue their schooling owing to the hard work they are forced to do brings frustration which culminates at the children's migration into urban areas where they aspire to get access to better schooling.

As Mulu Halile²⁰, the directress of MCDP working on child trafficking and child labor, describes, in adequate coverage of primary level education in the rural parts of the country or even sometimes complete lack of the service in some remote areas, make children leave move to fancy urban areas where they think can have easy access to the service. As a result most children migrate to the urban centers where they end up in extreme forms of labor exploitation and violation of their rights.

Migration and Child Trafficking: Due to the pressure on the farm land in the rural areas caused by the rapid growth of population and lack of basic social services specially education, it is reported that a large number of children migrate into the urban areas especially Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia year after year. It is however evident that both the push and pull factors which are interrelated that exacerbate the migration of children from rural to urban centers. On the side of the push factors as it is explained poor living conditions of rural families especially in the three major regions namely Amhara, Oromyia and SNNPR, coupled with limited access to education force children to leave their place of origins in urban areas especially in Addis Ababa.

The role of child traffickers can also be considered as one major push factor that results in increasing magnitude of induced migration of children into urban areas. Traffickers use the relative opportunities in urban areas especially in Addis Ababa to get access to education as means to cheat the children and quite often their poor parents to traffic them to urban areas where the children end up being laborers in arduous conditions. The assessment conducted by MCDP in the SNNPR on the issue of child trafficking reveals that most parents willingly give away their children to the traffickers with the hope that their children will get better education and will economically

¹⁸ See Annex B the list of informants

¹⁹ Rapid Assessment on the Situation of Child Labor Abuse with Special Emphasis on Child Domestic Labor in Kebele 10/11 of Addis Ketema Sub City, Merkato Area; Forum on Street Children Ethiopia (FSCE), 2008; P.14.

²⁰ See annex B

assist them in the long run. The promises of the traffickers however will never come true and parents and children may not be reunited again as the children will eventually disappear in the urban informal economic sector as laborers.²¹

D. Working Hours

The average number of working hours of children involved in productive activities was 33 per week. One-third of children involved in productive activities worked for more than 40 hours per week. The intensity of work in productive activities was higher for boys (36 hours) than girls (33 hours) in rural areas, whereas in urban areas it was higher for girls (31 hours) than boys (28 hours). The survey also revealed that the highest proportion of children (35.6 per cent) involved in domestic activities worked about 3-4 hours per day.²² However, different studies conducted on child labor in Ethiopia show different pictures regarding the number of working hours for working children. The assessment on child trafficking conducted by MCDP indicates that the children involved in weaving activities in Addis Ababa whose place of origin is in Gamogofa Zone of the SNNPR, are forced to work starting from 5 am in the morning until 1 am in the night. According to the result of the assessment, the working children are expected to deliver the work given by their employers within the stated time scale every day except on Sunday and the wholly days. These are the only days that the children can enjoy rest and get the time to play with their peers.²³ The average working hour for the children according to this assessment is 14.5 hours per day.

Ato Asebe, the program coordinator on child labor program in Save the Children Finland Ethiopia, said that the number of hours that children under the age of 18 spend working varies in different sectors of the economy and different environments. According to him, it is difficult to correctly indicate the number of hours rural working children spend on the work that they are forced to carry out on daily basis. However, on average a working child spends more than 8 hours a day on work in rural settings. The hours are even greater for girls than boys as they are expected to do additional household chores like cooking, washing and cleaning houses and animal dung.

The ILO annual workshop on the issue of child labor in Ethiopia indicated that on average the laboring children work 5-9 hours a day. The woyalas (taxi assistants) work for about 13 hours a day followed by maid servants (usually girls), porters and street workers who work for about 12 hours a day.

E. Remuneration and the Contribution of Child Workers' Income for Household Survival

Although there are some research materials on the issue of child labor in Ethiopia, the implication of the subject on both household and community level economic status is not assessed very well. This scarcity of research findings has left most experts in the field to speculate whether or not the meager income generated by child workers is indispensable for the survival of households. The research conducted by Save the Children Finland Ethiopia indicates the wage of child workers in the sample woreda (district) where the study was conducted. The following is quoted from this study;

²¹ Assessment on Child Trafficking (MCDP), P.55

²² Child Labor: Save the Children UK, P.16

²³ Assessment on Child Trafficking; MCDP; P.6

Child workers receive financial remuneration that is generally low. For example, housemaids who participated in the focus group discussion indicated that they usually receive financial remuneration in the range of Birr 30 to 50 per month which is equivalent of 2.5 to 4.5 USD per month. They also stated that they do not often receive this amount in full; their employers often pay them after deducting some amount of money for broken glasses or other alleged mistakes committed by housemaids. A key informant from Meskan Woreda, on his part, told us that in small towns in Meskan Woreda, many children are hired to serve in tearooms for financial remuneration as small as Birr 10 per month which is less than 1 USD. Supporting what the housemaid mentioned above, another key informant from Butajira town confirmed that "if and when the children break glasses or other furniture, no matter how long the housemaid served in the household, the employer would deduct the price from the child's salary."

Information obtained from the different sources (child workers, teachers and key informants) also indicates that many child workers do not even know their salary. Because parents or other relatives were the ones who enter into agreement with the employer, mostly the parents/relatives rather than the child workers are the recipients of the financial remuneration. Even when the child workers themselves receive the financial remuneration, many of them send the money to their parents or grandparents and they would get very little benefit, if any, from it. Although they know keeping some portion of the money with them will be of help in time of problems, they fear that their parents will curse them if they do so and God will punish them. Thus, more often than not, child workers do not get full advantage of the financial remuneration they should have received in return for their work or labor.²⁴

This finding suggests that the income generated by the working children in Ethiopia is not that much crucial for the survival of the families. The informant, Ato Assebe from the same organization, articulated in the same fashion that child labor is rather embedded in the cultural beliefs than it is economically significant for the society. According to him it is culturally uphold that children learn basic life skills as they perform duties that are meant for adults. This is mainly the case in the rural parts of the country. He however said that since there are no significant studies conducted on the issue, it is difficult to generalize that the income generated by child laborers does not significantly contribute for families' survival.

From observations and practical experiences however significant portion of child laborers in Ethiopia ultimately support the survival of their families through the income they generate. Most child headed households in both rural and urban areas survive with the income generated by the elder child (male or female) who shoulders the responsibility to support younger siblings. The increasing disintegration of families due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other socio-economic factors, child headed households are many in the country and their survivals depend on the hard labor that due to the labor with minimum economic returns. The contribution of children in the subsistence agriculture can also be considered as indispensable for the productivity and ultimate survival of farmer households. It is however imperative that a full-fledged study must be conducted

²⁴ Situation Analysis: Save the Children Finland Ethiopia; PP.43-44

to analyze the economic contributions of working children at household and societal levels in Ethiopia.

F. Child labor and Gender

As one of the most traditional societies in almost all corners of Ethiopia, people usually segregate activities in the economic, social as well as political spheres on the basis of gender. This kind of division of activities in societies not only based upon gender but also age groups. In this division of labor however women are the most disadvantaged as they are deprived of most socio-economic as well as political privileges unlike their male counterparts. Nonetheless, simple observation can reveal the fact that women are usually forced to take care of the arduous parts of the activities in all sectors without being able to enjoy the full test of the fruits of their labor. This type of unfair division of labor in both urban and rural, agricultural and pastoralist communities cut across the age groups.

A study conducted in Ethiopia indicates that the economic activity rate of male children exceeds that of female children although this difference does not take into account the performance of household chores such as water and fuel wood collection, typically considered as the domain of female children (Guarcello, Lyon & Rossati, 2006).²⁵

A research conducted by Children Aid Ethiopia (CHaDET), which is a local NGO known for its extensive interventions in areas of protection of children, affirms that girls starting from the age of 10 migrate from their place of origin to urban centers. The study was conducted in the Amhara region especially in Wollo, Gondar and Gojjam. Among the push factors the research indicated that the prominent ones are household poverty due to the increasing fragmentation of the farm land in the region coupled with the ever increasing population growth. The practice of early marriage is also one of the immediate push factors for the girls to leave their villages. Most informants participated and quoted in the research firmly speak about the impact of work load on the children especially for the girls' forces them to flee their places of origins. However, boys are also among the largest population of migrant children from the rural areas to urban centers in the northern parts of the country. One local government official is quoted in the research paper as saying;

*Besides girls, young boys also arrive in Dessie and Kombolcha (major towns in Wollo) in exodus from the same communities in West Wollo and turn out to be vagrants in the urban environment. Deprived of shelter and other necessities, these young boys are compelled to do menial jobs mostly as porters to ensure their day-to-day survival. They are present in Dessie town in such abundance and so cheap is their labor that residents call around for porters by saying 'Wdlie' or 'Saintae'. The words refer to the names of the rural villages (Wadla Delanta and Sayint) where the laborer children have largely come from.*²⁶

The type of work girls and boys carry out in rural parts of the country differ only in that girls add household chores like cooking, cleaning and feeding the families. Otherwise both girls and boys work in the farmland together with the adult members of the household to assist in the subsistence

²⁵ Situation Analysis of Child Workers (SCF); P.24

²⁶ *Migration Patterns of Children Exposed to Sexual Exploitation in Selected Zones of Amhara Region and Subcities of Addis Ababa*; Children Aid Ethiopia (CHaDET); 2005; PP.19

crop production. Both also fetch water from very far away pond, springs or other type of water source although girls are more responsible for this activity. Collecting fire wood is also shared by girls and boys. It is a custom that household chores are divided among the sexes and the listed activities are usually considered girls' roles. Boys have excuses to skip shrug off these responsibilities as it is believed that it is the duty of the girls to undertake those activities. This however does not mean that boys do not perform these activities at all. Boys on the other hand are sometimes responsible to till the land with oxen to assist the adults with the guidance of the adults. This is quite often considered as a platform where and when the boys should acquire the necessary life skill for the life that lies ahead of them.

Once the children migrate or trafficked into urban centers the girls end up in being commercial sex workers or domestic servants. The above mentioned research by CHaDET reveals that almost all of the migrated girls from the different provinces of Wollo, Gondar and Gojjam employed as domestic servants in the urban centers or end up as commercial sex workers and street life. Those who get employed as domestic servants are ultimately exposed to extreme forms of child labor exploitation that often includes sexual exploitation by members of the employing family.

The boys on the other hand work as porters with minimum pay. They also involve as shoe shiners, shop keepers and other forms of casual employments where their labor is exploited and their rights violated.

G. Child Labor and Access to Education

The 2002 national survey on Child Labor by the Ethiopian Central Statistics Agency (CSA) indicates that 33 % of the total child population in the age group of 5-7 attended formal schools while 5% of children in the same age group attended informal (religious) schools. The survey has shown a disturbing figure of 56% of children in that age group never attended school neither formal nor non-formal. Drop out rate in the survey year was reported 5% with the rate higher for boys than for girls. According to the survey report produced by CSA, the most common reasons for not attending school include:

- children are too young for schooling (31.9 per cent);
- children are needed to help with household chores (18.7 per cent);
- a school is not available for them (10.4 per cent);
- children are needed to generate household income (9.5 per cent);
- parents cannot afford schooling (8.7 per cent); and
- families do not permit schooling (7.5 per cent).

It is clear from the responses above in the survey that child labor plays the major role (combining the percentage of responses under the second, fourth and sixth bullets i.e. about 35.7%), in depriving most children from schooling. The level of education achieved by child workers is very low. The literacy levels among child domestic workers are low, with many either being illiterate or dropouts from school (UNICEF, 2006). The ILO baseline study revealed that 54 percent of the child workers interviewed had completed primary school, 27 percent had never been enrolled and 14 percent had dropped out of school (ILO, 2003).²⁷

²⁷ Situation Analysis: SCF-E, P.26

The assessment on the situation of working children conducted by Save the Children Finland the Guragahe Zone of the SNNPR reveals almost similar result regarding the relationship between child labor and education. According to the assessment report, 50% of the sampled child workers in the study were not attending school while the remaining 50% are somehow attending school. The report also indicates that the drop out rate among working children is very high given the fact that the proportion is still higher for girls than the boys. The main reason given by most child workers for not attending school is poverty. That is, because they come from poor family background, they have to abandon school so as to work and support themselves and their family. They may decide to do so either on their own free will or their parents or relatives may require them to be employed somewhere and to support their family.²⁸

The Child Labor, Gender Inequality and Rural/Urban Disparities study conducted by Save the Children UK indicates that one of the reasons that child labor raises concerns is that where it undermines children's development it is a violation of children's rights and further, can limit children's capacity to take advantage of education in order to increase their employment possibilities in the future, thus raising the risk of intergenerational poverty transfers.²⁹

H. Impact of Child Labor on Children's Lives

The safe growth of children is the only way for any society to thrive and ensure future survival. In the middle of extreme poverty however the safe growth of children largely remains at risk which has negative bearings on national development as children are the next generations to chain the past with the future through their productive role in society. Children who enter into the labor market in both the formal and informal economic sectors in the country suffer tremendously. The vulnerability of working children for various forms of rights violations and health related problems are evident. The impacts of child labor on the life of working children could be discussed as short term and long term.

1. Short-term impact

The short term impacts of child labor on the working children are mainly have the nature of basic rights violations. Regardless of what the CRC, the African Charter on the Rights of the Child and the ILO Conventions that Ethiopia has come to ratify and amalgamated into its national policies, the rights of working children are subject to violations by employers, parents or guardians, and the society at large. According to Ato Meseret (the Executive Director of FSCE), these violations of rights committed against working children include the denial of the rights of the working child to access to education, to get basic health care services, the right to play, the right to remain in his/her place of origin and the likes.

Lack of Access to Education: The qualitative data gathered through the in depth interview with experts in the area of child labor working in different national and international NGOs revealed that, most parents in especially in rural parts of the country tend to discourage their children from going to schools to attend their education. This is mainly because of the deepened household poverty that force rural household to mobilize the labor source they can command in the family to produce

²⁸ Ibid. P.51

²⁹ Child Labor: Save the Children UK:P. 22

enough on the subsistence farming to sustain the family. According to Ato Alemu (Program Director in CHaDET, a national NGO), rural households use the labor of children to maximize productivity on the increasingly fragmented plots of agricultural land. As the children involve massively in the subsistence agricultural productions there is little room for them to pursue tier education. The informants also capitalize on the fact that, even areas where educational faculties exist in rural parts of the country most peasant households found it difficult to send their children to school. Most of the peasant households do not afford the costs of education³⁰ that i.e. to buy education materials and cloth for their children who usually are more than 5 per a peasant household. The poverty situation in both rural and urban settings therefore prevents most of the working children from accessing education at their early stages of development.

Basic Health Services: Most of the studies in the areas of child labor in the country reveal that working children are forced to work under arduous conditions by their employers or parents/guardians. As a result they are exposed to various types of health problems in their place of work. Despite their contribution to maximization of the household income in rural as well as urban contexts, they can hardly get treatments when they face health related problems caused by their involvement in hard labor. Their employers in the urban formal and informal sectors do not provide them with the necessary health care service enough time to rest that exacerbates their ill health conditions. In rural households the family level poverty does not allow parents to take their children who support the family by involving in hard labor in the agricultural fields. What is more, according to Ato Letsa Lela (a project manager in MCDP, Chenchu Child Trafficking Project) is that in the rural parts of the country coverage of basic health service is still at low level and the and is not readily accessible for the working children in peasant households. The impact of child labor on the children is therefore pronounced when it comes to the immediate need of the children to get access to the health service.

The Right to Play and Protection: Children are entitled to play with their peers as it is the natural right of the children in their early developmental stages. The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the African Charter on the Rights of the Child and above all the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia affirm that children have absolute right to play with their peers during their formative age. Child labor however deters children from enjoying this unfringeable right to play. As a result of their occupation with hard work to assist their families in income generation or in an attempt to sustain themselves, working children do not have time to play and nurture their whole social and psychological development with their peers and become productive citizens.

The Right to Remain at Place of Origin: Most of the literatures on the issue of child labor in Ethiopia indicate that, children are usually forced to leave their place of origin to become bread winners. The migration of children voluntarily as well as forced by traffickers and brokers, from their place of origins is set off primarily by the need for child labor in urban as well as rural areas. As children move out from their place of origin, Ato Asebe said, will face a totally alien environment where they can hardly socialize and feel safe. The new environment in which the children are forced to work arduous jobs exposes them different health problems and abuses by adults. The severity of the situation is even harsher for the girls than the boys. The extreme forms of child labor

³⁰ Education service is free in Ethiopia except for higher level of the education system.

exploitations result in the deprivation of children from getting appropriate adult supervision and affection of parents and society at large.

2. Long-term impact

The long term impacts of child labor on the working children far more abhorrent and follow the short term impacts. Basically the long term impacts of child labor on the children can be discussed from two perspectives that are physical impacts and psycho-social impacts on the children.

Physical Impacts of Child Labor on Working Children: According to the study conducted by MCDP on the situation of working children who are involved in traditional weaving activities, the working children face physiological problems in the long run as they work in suitable conditions necessary for the kind of job they are forced to do. According to Mrs, Mulu Haile, the Directress of MCDP, the weaver children have developed skin rashes, site problems, physical deformity with their appearance as they bow down for long hours working on the traditional (backward) weaving loom.

The home maid girls also face the same kind of physical problems as they work heavy duties that are not suitable for their age in households. Ato Girma, the program manager in CHaDET, explained that young girls employed in households as maids are expected to work for more than 12 hours a day without having sufficient rest. This causes different physical damages on the girls especially as they wash with their hands heavy clothes of the family.

The situation is even worse for the porter boys corroding to the informant. The working boys carry heavy baggage to transport for their customers. The physical damage of transporting such heavy goods for their age is quite unbearable especially when they can not get treatments.

In the formal sector of the economy both in rural agricultural sector and urban industrial sector the physical damage that working children face is abhorrent. The children work in a very dangerous working environment where they can be easily exposed to accidents. In on farm activities children might get hurt while tilling the land together with their adult relatives. In urban cottage industries the child workers sustain injuries quite easily as they are not able to handle machines like the adult workers. They will never be compensated for the physical accidents inflicted on them while working under such circumstances.

The girls involved in child labor usually exposed to sexual abuse by their employers especially when they are working as maid servants in households. The girls are often raped by adult men and they usually suffer from fistula. The chance of contracting HIV/AIDS due the raping is so high and according to Ato Asebe (the program coordinator in Save the Children Finland Ethiopia) there are so many cases of such abuses committed against young girls in urban centers.

Psycho-Social Impacts of Child Labor on Working Children: The working children suffer from different types of abuses that inflict severe damage on the psychological make up of the children. According to the study conducted on the child domestic workers by FSCE, most child domestic workers had shown strong signs of depression, frustration and anxiety during the study. This is mainly caused by the severe mistreatment of their employers and frequent abuses committed against the child domestic workers by members of the employing families. According to the study

the types of works that child domestic workers engaged in and the conditions in which they perform their duties are so depressing that the children's self assertiveness and competence eroded over time. The denial of the right for education further exacerbates the problem of the child domestic workers and forces them to believe that they are worthless in the society at large.

Observations can illustrate that most child laborers in urban areas are considered threats to the society and usually considered robbers, vanguard and thieves by the community. This perception of the society towards the working children creates negative attitude on the part of the working children towards the society and tend to be violent and criminal. Working children often consider themselves as worthless and outcast by the community.

The negative implications of child labor in Ethiopia, according to Ato Meseret from FSCE, are not limited to the working children. He argues that child labor has a devastating impact on the future development of the country as its existence is dependent on the wellbeing of children who will take over the future of the country. According to the informant, the long term impacts of child labor are more severe than the short term impacts, as they will ultimately destroy the social fabrics in the country by producing youngsters who are unemployed, uneducated and desperate to make a living even by committing serious crimes.

I. Conclusion

The findings of the study clearly indicate that child labor in Ethiopia is not recognized as a big development challenge due to the perception of the society at large and the lack of government capacity and commitment to implement the existing laws, policies and international conventions in the country to prevent child labor exploitation.

As the findings reveal the most crucial contributing factors for the practice of child labor exploitation is the extreme poverty that has forced most rural and urban households to use the labor of children to enhance family income to sustain the families. Poverty is the prominent factor for exposing children for extreme forms of labor exploitations regardless of their sex and age. Families in both rural and urban areas found difficult to support the large family size with their meager income. In the rural areas of the country the ever increasing population number due to low level of family planning leads to the increasing fragmentation of cultivable small holdings of agricultural land that ultimately requires the contribution of children in generating alternative income for the survival of families. Children are therefore forced to work arduous jobs in the agricultural field along side with their adult family members or get employed to generate income. Those children who can not afford to live in the rural areas either due to passing away of their parents or due to the practice of Harmful Traditional Practices flee to urban areas where they end up in hard labor exploitation by employers, street life and commercial sex work for the girls.

The other significant factor that forces children to enter into the labor market in their early ages is the fact that there is low basic service delivery in the rural parts of the country especially of primary level education. The findings of the study indicate that most children migrate from the rural areas into urban centers aspiring for getting better chances for education. The low coverage of the education and health services in the rural areas of the country has played major role in exposing children for labor exploitation and other forms of violence that endanger the lives of the children.

According to the findings of the study cultural values that embedded the social structure in the country contributes its part for the exploitation of child labor. It is believed that children should engage in productive activities especially in the rural agricultural economy in order not only to assist their families but also it is believed by the adult members of the community that they would acquire the necessary life skill to prepare themselves for their future life. Therefore the use of child labor is a commendable act justified by the traditional thinking of the society at large.

Last but not least the issue of policy making and the policy implementation capacity of the government at all level contribute to the perpetual exploitation of children's labor in both rural and urban areas. Ethiopia as a member of the international community through its membership of big international institutions such as the UN, the ILO, the AU and others, has accepted and ratified different international conventions regarding the rights of children. It is not only that the country has ratified these international conventions but also has made it a constitutional right for children to be protected from all forms of violence and labor exploitations that endanger their safe growth. However, due to lack of executive capacity and lack of commitment most of the rights violations committed against children left unpunished. The findings in the study show that the country needs clear policy directives to guide the prevention effort of child trafficking at national and regional levels.

J. The Interventions of NGOs to Eliminate Child Labor in Ethiopia

Not many national and international NGOs in Ethiopia are currently involved in the child labor prevention programs. The pioneers in the launching of the issue of child labor as pertinent project are local NGOs namely Multi Purpose Community Development Project (MCDP), Forum on Street Children Ethiopia (FSCE) and Children Aid Ethiopia (CHaDET). Some international NGOs operating in the country also have projects to prevent child labor. However, the INGOs implement their projects in partnership with the local NGOs. Among the INGOs Save the Children Norway, Save the Children Denmark, Save the Children Finland, Concern Worldwide and COPI are the prominent ones.

The major activities undertaken by these NGOs in Ethiopia for the prevention of child labor focus mainly on the following key areas of intervention;

Awareness Raising: Most NGOs that are undertaking projects to prevent child labor in Ethiopia adopted strategies to aware the society, policy makers and children about the consequences of child labor. As it was indicated one of the aggravating factors for the practice of child labor in Ethiopia is misconception and cultural practices. The NGOs therefore design awareness raising strategies such as community conversation program, community radio listening groups, media advertising, establishing school clubs and others to raise the level of awareness among the different social groups.

Advocacy: The other most important intervention of the NGOs on the issue of child labor is policy advocacy nationally and internationally. As a member of the international community Ethiopia has ratified and incorporated most conventions on the rights of children into its own national law. Still there are gaps in implementing the provisions of the laws and conventions in the country. Therefore all organizations national and international involved in child labor prevention efforts lobby and advocate for the enforcement of the laws. The advocacy effort also incorporates the drafting and enactment of new laws and guidelines that can help the judiciary and the police to protect

children from labor exploitation. The available mass media both electronic as well as printed are used to advocate for the protection of children from rights violations and labor exploitation. National and international forums and networks are also organized frequently to facilitate the advocacy effort.

Income Generation Activities: This component is introduced by many of the child labor project implementing NGOs to economically empower parents especially women to generate more income and provide their children with their needs. The major cause of child labor is the extreme poverty. All intervening NGOs recognize this fact and they tend to incorporate IGA projects in their interventions. However compared to the severity of the cause the NGOs' interventions remain insignificant.

Skill Trainings and Rehabilitation: Victims of child labor are supported by the NGOs in different ways. Mostly skill trainings are provided for the victims to support themselves. The skill trainings are useful strategies to rehabilitate the victims of child labor as they are physically and psychologically affected by the harm inflicted against them by their employers and the society.

Challenges NGOs Encounter

The issue of child rights in which the issue of child labor falls has become politically sensitive in Ethiopia. The FDRE has recently enacted a newly drafted legislation to administer the NGO (Civil Society Organization) sector in the country. The legislation has banned all International NGOs and National ones from working on issues of rights, advocacy, conflict resolution, gender and disability issues in the context of human rights protection. The legislation will be effective starting from the new Ethiopia year i.e. in September 2009. The issue of child labor will be a subject that is politically sensitive in the country if it is to be linked with rights issues and intended to be implemented with the fund obtained from foreign sources.

K. Activities of Czech Republic in Ethiopia and Contribution to Child Labor Elimination

Czech Republic contributes for stopping child labor in Ethiopia through interventions in education sector. In Ethiopia Czech government implement its development aims by providing funds to NGOs working in the country, particularly to People in Need. Czech development cooperation has long track of supporting education in Ethiopia, starting in 2003.

PIN believes education is the key to development and tackling poverty. Serious lack of schools, overcrowded classrooms, shift system of education, daily walking for long distance, absence of teaching aids, teaching based on memorizing instead of comprehension, absence of the link between the education and the life of the community – all these factors contribute to situation where communities and families are not sending their children to school or cause their drop out.

PIN projects increase access to education for remote rural communities by building primary schools. The Alaba Experimental School, the first project implemented by PIN in Ethiopia, provided an example of how a school could be the center of community life. Another project entitled "Let's Build a School in Africa!" is a public fundraising campaign held yearly in the Czech Republic with the Association of Czech Scouts and Guides and has brought quality facilities to rural areas. Within

this project already 7 primary schools have been constructed and 2 are currently under construction.

Many schools in Ethiopia are constructed of wood and mud; classrooms are not conducive to learning or even durable. PIN has introduced the cost-effective and environmentally friendly technology of soil stabilized blocks (SSB) to selected rural communities. All construction efforts strive for environmental sustainability; SSB are used whenever possible.

To improve the quality of education in Ethiopia PIN runs an ongoing modern teaching methods program, for teachers in SNNPR, Addis Ababa and Oromiya. This brings critical thinking and active learning to the forefront of the Ethiopian education system. In-service training is tailored to the Ethiopian context, and addresses issues such as large class sizes and a lack of teaching materials. In addition an emphasis is put on relevance of provided education, education should respond to the needs of the community and the community should benefit out of it. PIN believes that this way of educating children can bring about the change of the whole community, including mitigation of harmful cultural patterns such as child labour.

L. Recommendations for tackling the problem

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations have been put forward to all concerned institutions and stakeholders:

- The study confirmed the strong power of poverty in exposing children to child labor and the abuses that accompany it. Bearing in mind that the family has the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child, income-generation programs should be designed for parents whose children are vulnerable to the incidence of child labor. Increased family income may also encourage the parents to send their children to school rather than to expect support from the children.
- Continue establishing schools nearer to villages and provide hostels (low cost houses built of mud walls and thatched roofs that could be built with the contribution from parents and communities) to female students who attend schooling in areas far from parents. Although there are limited experiences in the country in this regard, it is a feasible strategy that can be scaled up and replicated in other parts of the country.
- Train all teachers in non-violent methods of disciplining students. This subject should also be included in the education of teachers at teachers training colleges.
- The study has revealed a very poor educational profile of child workers in the research sites. Of course, it is unlikely to totally relieve these children from work in the short term. It is not a viable decision for the poor households to leave their children free from work. Therefore, intervention programs that would make the combination of working and school attendance possible for poor children should be designed and launched. Establishing basic education centers particularly in key rural areas where there is no education service operating on flexible schedule or which offers education during the time convenient for child workers may be one option in solving this serious problem. Programs need to be designed that help to ensure the right of all children to free and compulsory basic education and school-related costs are not barriers to children's enjoyment of formal education.

- Involve NGOs and CSOs in community mobilization and creation of child protection structures (including the way to and from school) and in general awareness raising and mobilization for the promotion of human and child rights and the abandonment of child labor in both rural and urban settings. Extensive community conversation could be one of the right strategies to create awareness in the society especially among the sending communities in the rural parts of the country to minimize the ever increasing trend of children migration to urban centers and in the communities with high prevalence of working children. Apart from the CC strategy media campaigns (both electronic and printing) are useful strategies to raise the awareness of the wide public and influence policy makers to protect children from child labor. Awareness raising workshops, trainings, panel discussions among professionals, policy makers and the law enforcing bodies can also be a fruitful strategy to protect children from labor exploitation.
- Establish and strengthen child rights clubs for children in lower primary schools.
- Establish and strengthen Child Protection Units at all levels of regional Police Commission and generally improve the knowledge and attitudes of law enforcement authorities in regard to violence and abuse against working children.
- Lobbying and advocacy for the drafting and enactment of national laws and policies for the prevention of child labor in Ethiopia
- Abolishing or at least alleviating all forms of violence perpetrated against child workers requires strengthening the support systems as well as empowering the children themselves. The results indicate that whenever the rights of the working children are violated by their employers or any individual, a child worker tends to seek help from their parents/guardians. However, the parents/guardians often provide no support for the children. Nor would the children go to another person or the police to disclose the abuse. This means that the perpetrator would not appear in court. To alleviate this problem, programs should be launched to sensitize the community notably mothers so that they can provide help for their children at times of crisis whenever the latter need it. Empowering the children is also helpful in the fight against perpetrators. Empowering the child workers would give them the strength or courage to report incidences of child rights violations.

Annex A

List of Reference Materials Used in the Study

_____ (1995) *Report of the National Workshop on Child Labor in Ethiopia, Eastern Africa Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (EAMAT)*, ILO; Addis Ababa.

Sentayehu Tadesse (PhD) and Abdella Muzein (2008) *Rapid Assessment on the Situation of Child Labor Abuse with Especial Emphasis on Child Domestic Labor in Kebele 10/11 of Addis Ketema Sub City, Merkato Area*; Addis Ababa.

_____ (2004) *Assessment on Child Trafficking; Multi-Purpose Community Development Project*; Addis Ababa.

_____ (2003) *Child Labor in Ethiopia with Especial Focus on Child Prostitution*; Save the Children Denmark Ethiopia; Addis Ababa.

Ayalew Gebre (PhD) (2005) *Migration Patterns of Children Exposed to Sexual Exploitation in Selected Zones of Amhara Region and Sub-Cities of Addis Ababa*; Children Aid Ethiopia, Addis Ababa

Seleshi Zeleke (Ph D) and Wondimagegnehu Tuji (2008) *Situation Analysis of Child Workers in Meskan and Butajira Woredas of the Gurage Zone*; Save the Children Finland Ethiopia; Addis Ababa

_____ (2008) *A Study on Violence against Girls in Primary Schools and Its Impacts on Girls' Education in Ethiopia* Save the; Save the Children Denmark, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Women's Affairs; Addis Ababa.

Tassew Woldehanna, Bekele Tefera, Nicola Jones and Alebel Bayrau (2002): *Child labour, gender inequality and rural/urban disparities: How Can Ethiopia's National Development Strategies be Revised to Address Negative Spill-over Impacts on Child Education and Wellbeing?* Young Lives Project; Save the Children UK,

Annex B

List of Informants

Name	Organization	Title
Assebe Getahun	Save the Children Finland	Program Officer
Alemu Hailu	CHaDET	Program Director
Girma Ammente	CHaDET	Program Officer
Letsa Lela	MCDP	Project Manager
Meseret Tadesse	FSCE	Executive Director
Mulu Haile	MCDP	Executive Directress