

Article Id  
AL04299

## ROOTING OUT CHILD LABOUR: STRATEGIES FOR A SAFER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Email

[parthadutta972@gmail.com](mailto:parthadutta972@gmail.com)

Partha Protim Dutta

Dept. of Genetics and Plant Breeding, School of Crop Improvement,  
College of Post Graduate Studies in Agricultural Sciences, Umiam, India

**F**or many years, child labour has been one of the biggest obstacles to social development. It is a challenge and long-term goal in many countries to abolish all forms of child labour. Especially in developing countries, it is considered as a serious issue these days. Child labour refers to children who miss their childhood and who do not have the basic comforts that a child should have. They are often mistreated and work long hours in very poor conditions. This can affect their physical, mental and emotional health. These children lack basic rights such as access to school or healthcare.

Estimates suggest that 160 million children worldwide, or one in ten children in total, are involved in some form of child labour. These numbers are increasing due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, war and climate change. In fact, the number of children involved will reach almost 9 million by the end of 2023. This is the first increase in 20 years (End Violence, 2023).

In fact, agriculture is the sector where child labor occurs the most worldwide. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), more than 112 million children work in agriculture, including agriculture, fishing, aquaculture, forestry and livestock. This is the case for 70% of child labor worldwide (FAO, 2023). Child labor in agriculture is largely invisible because most children work as unpaid family workers on small farms or scattered rural enterprises, which are hidden or hidden by employers. In rural areas, the scope of labor inspectors is limited (FAO, 2020).

By far the largest share of child labor is in the agricultural sector, 71 percent or 108 million children. Most child laborers are in Africa, where 20 percent of all children suffer and where child labor dominates agriculture. In agriculture, child labor is usually used in subsistence and commercial agriculture and animal husbandry. However, the agricultural

sector also extends to fisheries, forestry and aquaculture. Most of the children's agricultural work is unpaid and takes place within the boundaries of family members.

Not all agriculture should be considered child labor. It is important to distinguish between light work, which is not harmful to the child, and child labor, because of the time required and working conditions, which interfere with the goal of learning and disrupt the health and personal development of the child. Children's participation in non-hazardous activities can be beneficial as it contributes to intergenerational skill transfer and food security.

Age-appropriate activities that are low-risk and do not interfere with children's schooling and free time are a normal part of growing up in rural areas. In fact, these activities increase confidence, self-esteem and work performance. Children working in agriculture from a young age (ages 5 to 11) is a risky occupation, as it is a field that is very vulnerable to dangerous environments. Hazardous work can result in death, serious illness or injury due to poor health and safety standards.

### **The Causes of Child Labour in Agriculture**

Progress in eliminating child labor in agriculture has been slow for several reasons. In general, domestic labor laws have limited coverage of agriculture and family businesses, union cohesion is low, workers are fragmented and labor inspectors are weak, everything is hidden.

Poverty and inequality are the main causes of child labor in agriculture, as in other sectors. However, other reasons include limited access to quality education, poor infrastructure, lack of social protection, low crop yields, inadequate agricultural technologies or practices, lack of resources for paid adult work, climate and other vulnerabilities, women's empowerment and traditional attitudes. etc. Our goal is to encourage children to participate in agriculture.

### **Recommendations for Eradicating Child Agricultural Work**

While many of these challenges can be traced back to root causes like poverty, lack of knowledge and awareness and sociocultural factors, these root causes are complex and require all available resources from governments, civil society and the private sector to be tackled (Gaffar, Kämpfer, 2023). To do so, it is important to establish and reinforce

partnerships and initiatives between governments and corporate actors, aligned with international conventions, standards, guidelines and national policies (INTPA, 2023).

The government is at the forefront of efforts to eliminate child labor in agriculture, starting with strengthening social protection. By protecting households from extreme poverty, parents can prevent their children from sending them to work for economic reasons, thereby increasing their children's chances of continuing their careers (OHCHR, 2022).

As a practical solution, voucher transfers in the education sector are a good option to consider. It is a widely used social policy tool aimed at promoting inclusion and educational continuity. Families are paid for their children's school attendance (Gaffar, Kämpfer, 2023).

On the other hand, it is crucial to implement social behaviour change communications on child labour elimination and raise awareness of the harmful effects of child labour (ILO, 2023). As mentioned above, the situation of child labor in the agricultural sector is also a consequence of socio-cultural factors, so it is important to increase the visibility of children's rights and promote them at all levels of society. In this sense, it is important to encourage opportunities for discussion and debate at the local level to understand and promote local knowledge, attitudes and practices in relation to child labor in agriculture (FAO, 2022).

## **Conclusion**

Eliminating child labor in agriculture is a long-term effort that requires the commitment of governments, communities, businesses and civil society. It is important to prioritize the lives and rights of children, work to break the vicious cycle of abuse and poverty, and create opportunities for children to grow and develop. It is important to address the economic, social and cultural factors that contribute to child labor and ensure that children have the opportunity to grow and develop. Finally, the elimination of child labor is a moral obligation and a prerequisite for justice and sustainability. This requires hard work, persistence and a holistic approach that focuses on the root causes and respects the rights and dignity of each child. By working together locally and internationally, we can create a world where every child is free to learn, grow and develop without the burden of discrimination.

## References

- Addressing child labour in agricultural programmes.* (n.d.). Socialprotection.org. Retrieved November 4, 2023, from <https://socialprotection.org/addressing-child-labour-agricultural-programmes>
- Braga, A. (2023, September 5). *Child labour in agriculture: a hazardous but common practice worldwide.* Humanium. <https://www.humanium.org/en/child-labour-in-agriculture-a-hazardous-but-common-practice-worldwide/>
- Child labour in agriculture (IPEC).* (n.d.). Retrieved November 4, 2023, from <https://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Agriculture/lang--en/index.htm>
- Reducing child labour in agriculture through agricultural projects.* (2015, March 31). Rural21.com. <https://www.rural21.com/english/a-closer-look-at/detail/article/reducing-child-labour-in-agriculture-through-agricultural-projects.html>
- To eradicate child labour we must focus our attention on agriculture.* (n.d.). International Partnerships. Retrieved November 4, 2023, from [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/stories/eradicate-child-labour-we-must-focus-our-attention-agriculture\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/stories/eradicate-child-labour-we-must-focus-our-attention-agriculture_en)