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## Child Labour Eradication Programmes: An Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

This area of concern that many children engage themselves in labour activities still remains a challenge before the nation. Thus, Government has been implementing various measures in order to prevent this problem. On the basis of the GURUPADASWAMY COMMITTEE, the C & RL ACT-Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) act was passed in the year 1986. According to the Act, employment of children has been banned in some of the specified 'banned' occupations and activities and their working conditions in other occupations and activities deemed 'permitted' have been prescribed.

The constitution of Nigeria has made provisions which protects the children from engaging in economic activities or avocations that are not befitting for them and this is under the chapter on the Right to life (Article 24).

SOP prepared under the Ministry of Labour and Employment required to act as a reference point source of information for the trainers, practitioners and monitoring agencies meant for total elimination of employment of children in any hazardous employment and adolescents from hazardous employment aiming to make India a Child Labour Free Country. It is pertinent to mention that the NCLP Scheme has been integrated into "SamagraShikshaAbhiyan" Scheme. The students' educational rehabilitation also require a corresponded economic rehabilitation for the families of the children. There are directions issued by Supreme Court of India which have given various directions to the State Governments from time to time.

**Key Words: Child Labour; Protection of Child; Poverty; Socio-Economic**

### INTRODUCTION

It is one of the social vices that deny the rights and needs of the millions of children across the globe. According to the ILO it means work that is hazardous to children's health, impairs their growth and/or which is likely to affect their education. Although there have been many attempts made globally to eradicate child labor, it still continues to exist. The problem is most prominent in the third world countries where poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and other social prejudices create a corner for the abuse of children. According to the ILO there is an estimated of more than 163 million children involved in child labor and many of them exposed to dangerous jobs that affect their young lives and future.

Due to these reasons the issue of child labor requires a complete complimentary strategy towards its eradication. Measures taken towards preventing this problem include the legal, educational, economic and cultural changes. According to the above findings, the success or failure of these programs is highly rooted on the theory used in the formulation of these programs. The Human Capital Theory is an economic theory that claims that if children can be provided with education and vocational trainings, then children will not be required to work in future. Neoclassical Economic Theory on the other hand focuses on economic rationality and economic incentives and posits that the eradication of poverty is the key determinant of child labour.

Sociological theories provide other explanations to the continued use of child labour in the society. Organization Culture Theory underscores the impact of culture or the values of a society on child labor and Employment Organization's Structural/Functional analysis seeks to establish how structures in a society and their functions help to perpetuate child labor. Targeting these social and cultural facets is highly important in formulating coherent elimination programs to eliminate the problems.

Rights-Based Approaches add a significant angle of analysis since the emphasis is presented on children's rights. According to Human Rights Theory child labour is a violation of children's rights and hence the need to implement International Instruments like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Capability Approach as conceived by Amartya Sen focuses on freedom to promote children's capabilities and develop them in a proper manner.

This paper aims at identifying the various theoretical frameworks that guides the child labor eradication programs and examining the various strategies that have been implemented in eradicating the problem. Through discussing the results of these programs and taking into account recommendations for improvement, the analysis will try to help to learn how to fight child labor more efficiently. Only by critically analysing current initiatives and looking

for better solutions to the problem this paper aims at contributing to the worldwide child labour elimination campaign and promoting a better future for children all over the world.

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## Theoretical Frameworks

This means that, it is essential to assess several theoretical frameworks that informs child labor eradication programs. Human Capital theories including Human Capital Theory post that education expenditure helps to improve individuals' productivity and therefore the economy. From this point of view, concern is placed on the children farming as being denied an education that they should be receiving in a bid to help them secure better paying jobs in the future and therefore contribute to overall economic enhancement. Similarly, Neoclassical Economic Theory hold that child labour continues to be used because the gains in money for families usually offset the costs. Applications of this theory generally comprise monetary rewards for families to retain the children in school and economic growth interventions for poverty eradication.

Sociological theories work to explain other information about child labor. According to Socialization Theory, child labour is conditioned by cultural and values of a given society. According to this theory, many programs focus on modifying the perceptions of people in the society for example through awareness created. At the same time, Structural Functionalism analyzes how the structures of a society support or undermine the society's stability. With reference to this perspective, it postulated that child labour continue consuming because it has a certain role to play in the family and the economy. Consequently, the eradication programmes could direct efforts to changing structural conditions implying that efforts could be directed towards enhancing labour laws and social interventions for children.

Rights-Based Approaches present a rather rationale perspective of how best to approach the issue of child labor. Human Rights Theory stipulates that child labour is against human rights and stresses the need for the legal regime for children irrespective of the codification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Capability Approach that was pioneered by Amartya Sen lays more emphasis on increasing the capabilities and the freedom of citizens. This approach in the case of child labor means the attempt to establish the appropriate conditions that would allow children to become all they are capable of becoming and to prevent them from being exploited.

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## Strategies for Eradication

Generally, eliminating child labor requires both, legal and policy changes as well as raising consciousness, changing child's economic status, and other activities. Some of the legal measures are; increasing and implementing laws that ban child labour and making certain that there are repercussions in case of violations. Other measures that are also essential to establish a sound legal base include; Compliance to international standards including ILO Convention No. 138 concerning minimum employment age and ILO Convention No.182 concerning the prohibited worst forms of child labour.

Summing up the aforementioned specific measures one can state that educational initiatives are important in combating child labor. Some of measures include initiation of construction of schools in view of the poor areas, provision of essential materials, and the eradication of school fees. Also, it indicates that vocational training for old children is useful as they provide skills for the future thereby eradicating child labor. Another very important area is economic support. Conditional cash transfer programs are those that would ensure that families are given some amount of money in order to help them out with some of the basic needs that could force a child out to work. Moreover, micro financing and economic development can assist the creation of job for adults which would considerably decrease demand on the child labor.

Short-term and long-term tactics for organizational development are also applied while social and cultural change strategies are critical to adoption. Some of the measures that can be employed for the change of societal perspective include the., Putting up campaigns that can be used to educate the society on child labor and the significance of education. It is important to work with local communities in an effort to identify customer acceptable samples that yield high program impact and is culturally appropriate.

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## Implications and Challenges

The process of putting into practice programs that are aimed at eliminating child labour has some difficulties. Resource limitation is a major problem with funds and resources being a major challenge in many program implementation. Further, carrying out laws can be challenging especially in the developing countries where corruption or lack of sufficient legal framework or human resource is rife.

The benefits and costs of such programs to the society in terms of socioeconomic factors are numerous and complex at the same time. In the short run, families may suffer from some economic loss, for instance when children are taken away from work thus may resist any fight against child labor. However, the sad news is that these long-term implications are very positive, depending on how it is used. With such programs in place, the future generations are likely to have better education, health as well as better employment prospects.

Another one is cultural sensitivity that should be taken into account when selecting organizations to support. It is equally important to consult local culture and community values that endorse or encourage the use of children in such productive processes. Working with communities in coming up with the programs also makes it easier to implement and pragmatically viable because chances of failure are reduced greatly.

Therefore this end we have seen that the problem of child labor elimination involves the use of theoretical work derived from a number of approaches and workable strategies. It requires that on balance, economic, social, and cultural considerations are taken into account coupled with the defense for and

promotion of children. It then becomes the call of governments, international organizations, NGOs and local communities to come up with collective efforts towards sustainable progress of this important aspect.

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## Findings

The following are the numerous conclusions made in the process of the analysis of the programs that have been implemented to eliminate child labor. First, from the theoretical approaches of development and economic theories, it is apparent that education is a tool to deal with child labor. Efforts such as education improvement programs and offering of financial incentives to families' helps in the fight against child labor. Neoclassical economic theory states that economic factors are the root cause of child labour implying that eradicating poverty is the solution.

Hypothesis generated from sociological theories show that there is an influence of culture and social values in the promotion of child labor. Awareness campaigns and educational programs that involve changing society's perception regarding the issues are rather successful in some situations, but they are not permanent and demand constant work from the whole community. Also, Structural Functionalism highlights the need for change in the laws regarding employment and services that ought to be delivered to the child workers to eradicate child labor.

Rights-Based Approaches stress that child labor is against several core human rights, and ensuing international treaties will assist in defending the children. The Capability Approach underpins this by an encouragement of context that strengthens children's capabilities for education and protection against harm.

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## Suggestions

To address the persistent challenge of child labor, several suggestions can be made: To address the persistent challenge of child labor, several suggestions can be made:

1. **Strengthen Legislation and Enforcement:** The governments should intensify efforts in the implementation of child labor laws and ensure that the penalties provided are appropriately served on the offenders. International conventions should be respected, ringfenced and incorporated in to the domestic law.
2. **Expand Educational Opportunities:** Invest more on school development especially in the hard to reach areas so as to ensure that every child gets the best education. This entails issues of costs including school fees, as well as provision of other essentials like books, and stationaries.
3. **Implement Comprehensive Economic Support Programs:** Disseminate and scale up cash transfer program for supporting families in need and pulling out the children from child labor activities. Moreover, micro-finance solutions, local economy development can also open new working places for the adults and, therefore, help to prevent the utilization of children as the economical assets.
4. **Promote Social and Cultural Change:** Socialization should be done to change the attitudes and perceptions of the society and especially employers towards children at work and the essence of schooling. Involve culturally appropriate strategies for identifying the most profound measures of evaluating local communities' concerns with regards to the intervention strategies to be adopted.
5. **Enhance Community Involvement:** This entails engaging the local people in the development and implementation of child labor eradication and prevention programs since the programs are more likely to be culturally sensitive with the community's blessings. Support and monitoring of these programmes can also be done through other community based programmes.

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## Conclusion

Last but not the least, child labour removal is not a simple problem to solve and needs solution from economic, sociology and rights point of view. Hence, all the programs should put into consideration the issue of incentives for using child labor through education and providing for families. Further, one has to change people's perception and make it mandatory for governments to protect children from being exploited in the process.

As noted earlier, there has been improvement in the fight against child labor but more is still needed to be done to fight the systems and cultures that promote it. To effectively address the issue and ensure that measures put in place are sustainable successful initiatives need to be implemented through the cooperation of governments, International organizations, NGOs and communities in the affected countries. So if these factors are tackled holistically then it will be possible to achieve a future where all children can go to school and no child will be forced to work.

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