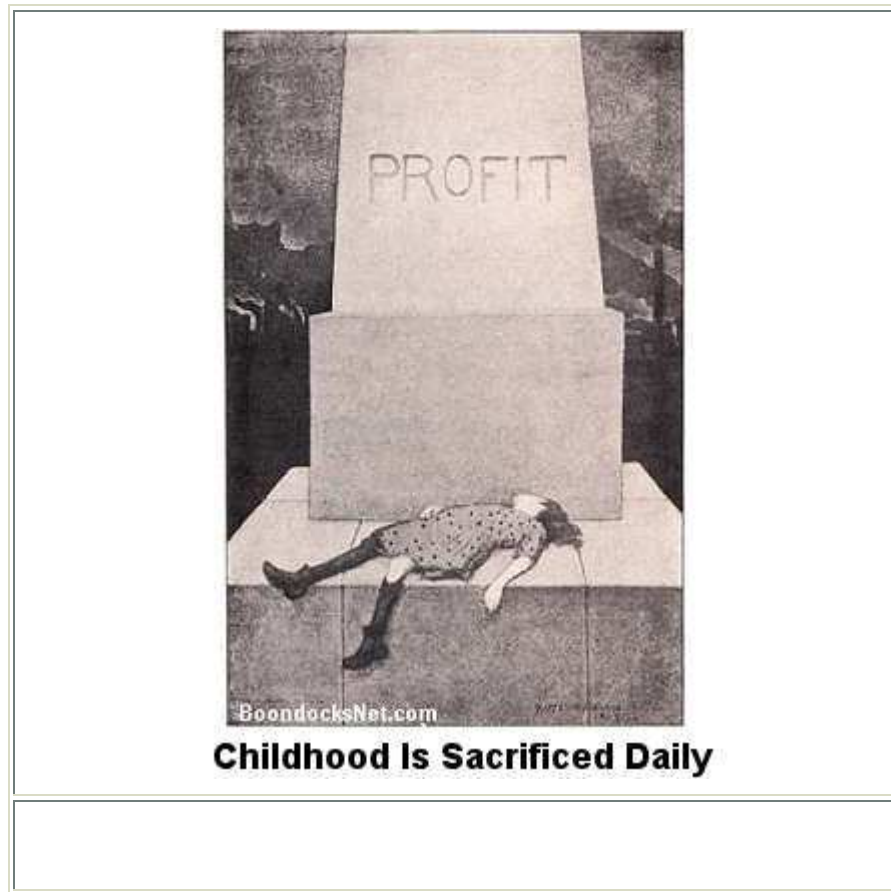


Roadmap for NGOs to reduce child labor
What lessons from Indian interventions?



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Abstract

Child labor is adversely affecting 246 million children in developing countries. Out of them, India has the largest child labor in world in absolute numbers. Several Northern and Southern NGO interventions are doing demonstrable work to reduce child labor. It is imperative to make strategic rather than only logical choices for effective contribution. In terms of priority, they should work with **conceptual clarity**, strive for **accurate data** in association with stakeholders, target **female child labor** for rehabilitation and decide whether to work in **urban slums or rural areas**. Implementation of modern **management techniques** in organizational structures would reduce overheads. The policy and management **Recommendations** would include demand for **liberalized school administration** under stricter government supervision, advocacy for **modified institutional design** for monitoring at national and state government levels, remind **private corporations** about their social responsibility and urge **flexibility** in school curriculum, timings and holidays. To overcome criticism, NGOs should enhance their credibility and responsibility through **self-regulation**. They may target **champions** in the system through fourth generation strategies.

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Highlights of Roadmap

Settings

- Child labor is adversely affecting 246 million children in developing countries
- India has the largest child labor in world in absolute numbers
- Thousands of NGOs are doing demonstrable work to reduce child labor
- It is imperative to have strategy for effective contribution by NGOs

Strategic choices for Indian NGOs

- Work with **conceptual clarity**
- Strive for **accurate data** in association with concerned parents
- Target **female child labor** for rehabilitation on priority
- Decide whether to work in **urban slums or rural areas**
- Implement modern **management techniques** in organizational structures

Policy and Management Recommendations

- Demand **liberalized school administration** under stricter Government supervision
- Advocate **modified institutional design** for monitoring by government
- Remind **private corporations** about their social responsibility
- Urge **flexibility** in school curriculum, timings and holidays
- Enhance credibility and responsibility through **self-regulation**
- Target **champions** in the system through fourth generation strategies

Chapter One

Background

Many developing countries are experiencing child labor. Underscoring the ill impacts of the same, U.N. Human Development Report 1996 states, "Child labor frequently leads to chronic illnesses, destroys eyesight, physical and intellectual stunting and in many cases, even premature death. The worst consequence is that child labor keeps child out of school thus preventing the development of their capabilities- a priority for a long run solution to poverty and exploitation"¹. United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education elaborated this further in her annual report, "The right to education operates as multiplier, and it unlocks all other human rights when guaranteed and forecloses them all when denied."²

Experts from all disciplines, therefore emphasize that child labor needs to be abolished. It is therefore imperative that policy makers attempt to reach a consensus on what constitutes child labor, or definition of child labor, magnitude of the problem, i.e. how many children are economically active, causes of child labor and policy options and measures to reduce it. Can the State achieve this task in an efficient and effective manner alone? Research shows that State can do it in collaboration with civil society.

Definition

Different scholars interpret the age of child in a variety of ways. According to some, any person below the age of eighteen is a child, while according to

¹ Cited in Report of India's Second National Commission on Labor; Chapter 9 Para 229 Pg. 1016:
http://labour.nic.in/lcomm2/nlc_report.html

² <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/hrcn1067.doc.htm> 2004-03-31

others a person below fifteen or fourteen is to be treated as child. International Labor Organization (ILO) attempted to create a workable definition of child labor, but has preferred to have considerable flexibility about the issue depending on the level of development of the country. Convention No 138, the Minimum Age Convention, 1973, specifies that for most member states the minimum age for employment should not be less than 15 years, but less developed countries may initially specify a minimum age of 14 years. If the work is risk to health, safety or morals of a young person, the minimum age should be 18. But it may be lowered to 16, provided the health, safety and morals of these young workers are fully protected and they receive proper vocational training.

This definition suggests that work that is detrimental to children should be considered as child labor. But experts have considerable differences on what is beneficial and not detrimental to children. Human rights activists argue that work by children even in household tending younger children deprives them from study, and self-development. Economists contend that all economic activity, irrespective whether it is good or bad, is child labor. Some others assert earning while learning benefits children and more importantly their poor parents. According to these scholars only exploitative and most harmful work should be considered as child labor. Social activists point out all children who do not complete formal school up to secondary level are potential victims and hence be treated as child labor.

Reaching universal definition, which would be acceptable to all thinkers is an illusive task, as there are considerable differences in the level of development, social beliefs and attitudes and variety of country contexts. The bottom line is that children should be considered as doing labor when (a) children up to the age of fourteen, work in

an exploitative condition; and (b) either they do not go to the school or attend it occasionally. The 1999 ILO Convention bans ‘worst’ forms of child labor and condemns “work which, by its nature, or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children”³.

Magnitude

The estimated number of child labor needing immediate rehabilitation depends upon the definition adopted by individual scholar. According to ILO, there are 246 millions child labor in developing countries. In other words, forcing children to continue working - affects one out of every six youngsters.⁴ As per this study, 61 percent of child workers are in Asia, 32 percent in Africa, and 7 percent in Latin America. “India has the largest number of children engaged in child labor in the world in absolute numbers. While the 1991 census puts the number at 11.28 million, the 50th round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) conducted in 1993-94, estimated the child labor population at 13.5 million. The Operations Research Group in a study in 1980 estimated 44 million children below the age of 15 years to be working in economic, non-economic and household activities”⁵. For the year 2000, ILO projects 13,157,000 economically active children in India. A word of caution is necessary about these numbers as ILO counts only children from ten to fourteen and relies for the most part, on official estimates from the member countries. The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) argue that the real numbers far exceed the official estimates. India-based Campaign

³ ILO, Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention

<http://ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/publi/ipecc9915.html>

⁴ <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=9650&Cr=child&Cr1=labour>

⁵ Report of India’s Second National Commission on Labor; Pg. 1018

Against Child Labor (NGO coalition) puts estimates of child workers as high as 77 million. According to MV Foundation an NGO dedicated for eradication of Child Labor in India; the number of children working is likely to be in the range of 44-100 million.⁶

Causes of child labor

Economists, sociologists and policy analysts identify different reasons for the existence of child labor. Child labor might have existed since long time, but industrialization “redefined the concept of child labor and transformed it from a social “good” into a social and economic “problem”. Child labor came in the forefront “with the shift in household economy from production for consumption to production for markets”. According to Hindman, “A perfectly free and open labor market assumes individual workers, not families or other groups, vying for the available opportunities”⁷. According to economists, “poverty is the main explanatory variable”. Empirical evidence does not corroborate this proposition. According to Hindman, “while poverty undoubtedly motivates child labor, the role of custom, habit, and tradition probably plays as decisive a role”⁸. According to anthropologists, multiple factors are responsible for child labor. Kabeer states, “child labor can be partly due to sheer poverty, partly due to unresponsiveness of the schooling system on offer, partly due to social discrimination (on caste and gender grounds) and partly due to cultural exclusion (tribal and religious status)”⁹. On the other hand, while analyzing causes of child labor in India, policy analyst Myron Weiner emphasizes, “low per capita income and economic situation is less

⁶ Vazir Rekha: 2002 MV Foundation Monograph 1, page 2

⁷ Hindman Hugh D. 2002 Child Labor An American History M. E. Sharpe Armonk, New York Pg 22

⁸ Ibid Pg 324

⁹ Kabeer N, 2003 Needs versus Rights? Child Labor, Social Exclusion and the Challenge of Universalizing Primary Education, CHILD LABOR AND THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA NEEDS VERSUS RIGHTS? Kabeer N (Ed.) Sage, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London 2003 Pg 17

relevant as an explanation than the belief system of the state bureaucracy, a set of beliefs that are widely shared by educators, social activists, trade unionists, academic researchers, and, more broadly, by members of the Indian middle class”¹⁰. These different perspectives demonstrate that “poverty does have a role to play in shaping the demand and supply of child labor, but its role varies among different contexts, socio-economic groups and over time”¹¹. Many schemes target poor parents presuming that monetary grants/loans and enhancing of alternative income schemes would be sufficient encouragement to send and retain children in schools rather than to labor. These schemes are useful, but not enough unless the targeted children are rehabilitated from economic activities.

Agents for change

According to many scholars, it is the sole responsibility of the state authorities to devise necessary legal, economical, political and administrative measures to counter the phenomenon of child labor. They attribute child labor to the failure of the state in delivering the public services effectively. According to them, absence of suitable macro-economic policies results in poverty of masses. Absence of legal measures to prohibit child labor, non-enactment for compulsory education and porous enforcement of existing enactments banning child labor in exploitative conditions encourages prevalence of this practice. Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen advocate gradual introduction of compulsory schooling, beginning with the more prosperous states in India¹². Non-

¹⁰ Weiner Myron 1995 *The Child and the State in India and Pakistan* OUP, Karachi, Pakistan Pg 5

¹¹ Kabeer Pg 27

¹² Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, *India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity*, 1995, OUP, Delhi, P.132 Cited in Perkins H Dwight and others 2001 *Economics of Development* W.W. Norton & Company, New York Pg 286-7

provision of suitable resources to provide adequate facilities in the form of proximate schools, teachers, learning material contributes to the continuation of this practice. Thus the first choice is to improve delivery of educational service by the government. According to others, it is the monopoly of the state in delivery of social services such as education, which is the cause of this present failure.

The second option prescribes pluralistic agencies such as state, private businesses and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in synergy to deliver this service. Healthy competition and collaboration among these multiple agencies would bring in necessary qualitative improvement and access to education in remote areas. According to Esman, “The formula [for service provision] is one of pragmatic pluralism in which the state establishes and enforces the rules, but at the level of operations it performs as one of many actors participating in the production and provision of economic and social goods and services”¹³. While recommending the second option, this paper attempts to search a roadmap for NGOs in achieving this task.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders in removal of child labor are industrialized as well as developing country governments, multinational organizations and donors, private industrial houses, teachers, parents, children, social activists, academicians and NGOs. According to economists, the industrialized countries today are facing the problem of over production in the manufacturing sector. Unless these countries promote markets in developing countries, the prosperity in the developed countries is likely to wane away. Revolution in communications is making poor people in developing countries aware

¹³ Esman J. Milton 1991 Management Dimensions of Development: Perspectives and Strategies, Kumarian Press, Connecticut Pg 93

about prosperity in the developed world. But if they do not have a share of the same, they are likely to be driven to frustration creating serious security risks not only for the countries they live in, but also for the developed countries. This has been amply demonstrated by failed states such as Afghanistan, which became the incubator for terrorist activities culminating in destruction of the World Trade Center at New York on September 11 2001. Sustainable prosperity of the world and international security is thus at stake.

It is a shortsighted view when a section of formal and informal employers take the plea that by providing employment to children; they are helping poor families. In fact, if these children undergo formal education, they would not only contribute substantially to the improvement of industrial products but would also acquire necessary purchasing power to buy these goods and services. Child labor is a reminder of the problems created by lop sided industrial revolution. It is a challenge to the ability of teachers to involve children in learning, making them interested in attending school regularly and enable them to pass out successfully. Parents have the greatest responsibility in empowering children by providing them necessary atmosphere to get educated and improve life. Promotion of human rights and democracy is essential for healthy development of the mankind. Can this goal be attained when a sizeable section of children continue to languish in harmful and exploitative conditions in several parts of the world? Social scientists, academicians and activists have to come forward with pragmatic solutions to this serious problem, as it has the potential to turn a state into a failure and eventual disintegration.

Scheme of the paper and statement of the research problem

Till a few decades ago, the State had monopoly in implementing development measures. There is increasing realization that the State alone cannot perform this task effectively. The state is emerging as a partner, supervisor, facilitator and regulator than as a single actor. Private entrepreneurship and civil society are being acknowledged as important agents for change. They are the new partners in delivery of social goods and services. The number as well as resources at the disposal of NGOs is growing exponentially and is likely to dominate the radar of development for next few decades. This contribution attempts a roadmap for NGOs and uses case studies of intervention by NGOs in reducing child labor in India. This paper would be relevant to NGOs as well as for governments, international donors and multinational organizations interested in reducing child labor.

The NGOs in these case studies are engaged in rehabilitation of child labor. In addition they attempt to retain children in schools and prevent them from turning into potential child labor. These NGOs are: Save the Children Canada, India Field Office, member of the International Save the Children Alliance; M.V. Foundation, Southern NGO funded by international donor agency; Children In Needs Institutes (CINI-ASHA) funded by Save the Children, UK; and Pratham, Southern NGO, sponsored by international organization namely UNESCO. Lessons learned from these interventions would form the basis of the proposed roadmap for NGOs in India. They can be applied successfully in other developing countries.

Chapter Two

Case Studies

Save the Children Canada India Field Office

Save the Children Canada (SCC) is a member of Save the Children Alliance (an international organization working for promotion of Rights of Children). SCC has been associated with children of India since 1967. The India Field Office of SCC (SCCIFO) works in partnership with 11 partner non-government organizations, those operate in three states of India namely Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamilnadu for providing development opportunities to around 12000 children in difficult circumstances.

In 1999, SCC launched a five-year project known as Child Workers Opportunities Project (CWOP) with financial assistance from Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). This Project aimed to work towards reducing the incidences of damaging and exploitative forms of child work by providing developmental opportunities for 9900 (5100 girls and 4800 boys) child workers and was implemented in three states of India. The CWOP adopted a multi-pronged strategy with multiple interventions, which complement and reinforce each other.

The action areas of CWOP include

- Opportunities for participation in quality education programs (non formal/ formal/ life skill oriented education);
- Opportunities for adopting sustainable livelihoods through vocational training and income generation;
- Provision of alternate support such as short stay homes, health services and recreational facilities;

- Raising awareness for changing the attitudes and practices amongst policy makers, employers, parents and children regarding social acceptance of child work.
- Advocacy at both the local and national levels for the Rights of the Child as defined in the UN Convention; and
- Capacity building of the partner organizations to manage and implement child focused development programs with rights approach.

Achievements of CWOP

The cumulative effect of this five year intervention on children in the age group of 6-14 has been as following:

- “2930 Children (1402 girls, 1528 boys) have stopped working.
- 2827 children (1349 girls, 1478 boys) enrolled in formal school and 2,299 children (1087 girls, 1212 boys) have continued their formal education.
- 1002 children (462 girls, 540 boys) have completed vocational training.
- 121 children (86 girls, 35 boys) have appeared for standard 8th and 10th examinations.
- 3504 families of child workers have received livelihood support under income generation.
- 905 community-based groups (435 self help groups of women, 196 village education committees, 162 children's groups, 75 youth groups and 40 village councils) are operational on children's issues”¹⁴.

¹⁴ Baseline Data for Child Workers Opportunities Project, 1999-2003, Pune, India, SCCIFO, 2003

SCCIFO made significant contribution in remote, rural, backward communities or tribal belt, which was culturally and socially deprived from education. Selected children were first generation learners and their parents had no history of sending child to school. It has achieved its success through cooperation of children and committed grassroots activists. There are no charismatic leaders in these grassroots NGOs.

M.V. FOUNDATION, ANDHRA PRADESH

Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation or MV Foundation started its functioning from Ranga Reddy district of the state of Andhra Pradesh which has the highest number (1,662,000) of child labor in India.¹⁵ The foundation is partially financed by Danish International Development Agency. Functioning from 1991, the program has expanded over 500 villages in eight districts of Andhra Pradesh and in 400 of these every child in the age group of 5-11 is in school. It has the support of 8,000 youth volunteers; 1,600 education activists; 1,500 government schoolteachers; 50 women's groups, and countless elected representatives and members of school education committees who are actively involved in its activities. Nearly 100,000 children have been enrolled and retained in schools, more than 8000 bonded laborers have been released, and 168 villages are now child labor free.

Denying poverty to be the main determinant of child labor, it believes that all children must attend formal full time day schools. Shantha Sinha, the prime mover in MVF and winner of Magyasaay award for community leadership for 2003 argues, "Poverty doesn't lead to child labor. It is demand for child labor that is causing

¹⁵ Press Trust of India 12/9/2000

poverty”¹⁶. She feels any child out of school is considered as a child labor. According to her all work/labor is hazardous and harms the overall growth and development of the child. The Foundation strives for total abolition of child labor.

It achieves these objectives through inter-linked strategies. The program starts by creating awareness and demand for education among the poor. This demand is not restricted to parents of poor children alone but includes all stakeholders such as teachers, employers of children, youth groups, women’s groups, elected local representatives, and district and state government officials. MV Foundation does not believe in setting up a parallel school system and in keeping with this philosophy it works towards strengthening the existing government school system.

At the core of MV Foundation’s strategy for transforming children from laborers to students are the bridge camps. These are residential camps where children who have never been to school are prepared to enter the formal school system in classes appropriate to their age. At the end of this process the working children are given a space of their own with no demands on their time and ample opportunity to learn and play. This continues till the working children are ready to access the school system in a meaningful and sustainable manner. A special attempt is made to recruit girl children and retain them in the formal school system and to involve the community in developing solutions for the difficult-to-reach group.

To retain these children in schools and to prevent them from dropping out, additional teachers –trained in pedagogy, mobilization and motivation techniques- are assigned to enable the school to cope with the influx of students who enroll as a result of the Foundation’s efforts. Considerable attention is paid to creating a feeling of ownership

¹⁶ Indian Express, 8/ 1/ 2003

of the school in the entire village community. They are encouraged to collectively define the needs of the school, and raise the funds required to pay the salary of an additional teacher, buy furniture or teaching materials and undertake building repairs.

In a short period of time, the program has firmly taken root in 500 villages and continues to expand. The response of the community has been overwhelming as one village after another declares itself to be ‘child-labor free’ and boasts a hundred per cent school enrollment rate. The Foundation has been able to build a consensus amongst stakeholders that children must be in school and not work.

Much of the Foundation’s success in achieving this is a consequence of the active involvement of the community in the management of the program. In every village, local volunteers have internalized and adopted the basic philosophy asserting local ownership of the program. The strong conviction among the volunteers has led to intensive lobbying efforts, as a consequence of which MV Foundation has been successful in conveying its message to the education bureaucracy and to politicians, resulting in tangible changes in government policies and programs. These changes are visible both at the local level, where the education bureaucracy interferes with the working child and its family, and at the level of state –wide policies.

The program has also sparked off a ripple effect going beyond its project base in Ranga Reddy district. MV Foundation is very active in assisting and training NGOs across the country to replicate its program strategies. It also provides support to individuals aiming to bring about changes in their own areas.

The potential impact of these local efforts linking together in a movement against child labor and in favor of universal education can be quite significant. While

many agencies are effective in mounting rousing mobilization campaigns and in uncovering the latent demand for education, few succeed in converting this advantage into a program that has the potential to make a dent in child labor and education statistics as well as influence policy.¹⁷

Sinha argues, “There is nothing inevitable about the existence of child labor”. With adequate support from the school most parents of working children are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to enroll their children in school and thereafter retain them there. Enrolling children in formal schools and retaining them there is probably the best way of withdrawing children from the work force.

According to Sinha, the long-term solution to the problem of child labor lies in the government passing an act guaranteeing education as a fundamental right to every child by passing the Act on Compulsory Education. This would bind the state to ensure that an adequate investment in education is made. She further cautions increasing the supplies such as more teachers, quality teaching, better curriculum and textbooks alone is not a guarantee for the universalizing of education. Unless the link between the issue of abolition of child labor and strengthening of school system is recognized, no matter what the commitments are, it is not going to yield the desired results. It must therefore, first of all work towards creating a social norm that no child must work and prepare the schools to be more sensitive to the specific needs of poor children.¹⁸

¹⁷ Vazir R: 2002 MV Foundation (Executive Summary in a Monograph) Secundrabad, India v- viii

¹⁸ Sinha S. 2003 Schools as Institutions for the elimination of Child Labor: The experience of the M.V. Foundation in the Ranga Reddy District, in CHILD LABOR AND THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA, NEEDS VERSUS RIGHTS? Kabeer N (Ed.): Sage Publications, New Delhi 321- 334

CHILD IN NEEDS INSTITUTES: CINI-ASHA

CINI operating from Kolkata works with the mission to improve quality of life of socially disadvantaged children living in the urban areas through education and social mobilization.

CINI-ASHA believes that all children between the ages of 6-14 years should be in school. So it considers any child out of school in the age group 6-14 years as child labor or potential child labor. These out of school children in the slums were either engaged as child labor or were spending time playing, watching movies and gambling. CINI has adopted following strategy to combat child labor:

- “Sensitizing the immediate community, larger public, policy makers and media to create an enabling environment for children to study
- Preparing children out of school in community based Preparatory Centers for one year so as to place them in local formal schools next year as per their age
- Coaching support to children placed in formal school for retention
- Weaning away other children away from work to Residential Education Camps for about 6 months for intensive coaching before placing them in local formal schools. Presently CINI-ASHA has 23 preparatory Centers, 48 Coaching Centers spread over slums of East & Central Kolkata. Its efforts have enabled to place 32170 children in formal schools. In the year 1998-99 more than 1200 Child Laborers attended these centers”¹⁹.

The experiment by CINI-ASHA addresses two specific questions: how families make up for the loss of a child’s income and how they pay for education related

¹⁹ Ramchandran Vimla: “Backward and Forward Linkages that strengthen Primary Education” Economic and Political Weekly March 8-14,2003, Vol. XXXVIII No.10 Pg 959-968

costs.²⁰ Since 1989 CINI- ASHA focused on providing basic needs for and mainstreaming street children, child laborers, and children of sex workers into formal schools. This was a six-year project. Target communities had 84 per cent children out of school. Children in these communities worked or did not go to school for reasons including family need, lack of faith in education, poor quality local schools and parental belief that work is more practical.

Earlier studies in the target communities indicated that most children contributed an average of 16 per cent of the family's income. CINI-ASHA's study confirmed this observation as the majority of children (65 per cent) reported earning less than Rupees 200 (approximately 4-5 U.S. D) a month or earning in kind and spending most of their money on themselves. These children used their wages for movie, candy and contributed small amount to their parents, usually their mother. A minority of children working for wages (less than 25 per cent) reported that they contributed all the money they earned to their mother. Mothers stated they usually used this money to pay for food and other household maintenance expenditures.

CINI ASHA staff tried to determine the cost of education for the family. The annual cost of sending a child to primary school (class 1-4) was Rupees 600 not including maintenance expenses for supplies. The cost of schooling from class 5-8 was estimated at nearly Rupees 1,000 per year. These expenses fell into five areas: school fees, notebooks, textbooks, lunchbox and uniforms. Families also needed to change their schedules to accommodate a school-going child. Mothers also needed to change cooking schedules to accommodate the child's school schedule.

²⁰CINI-ASHA, 2003 Family Adjustments for Mainstreaming Child Laborers into formal Schools in Calcutta: The experience of CINI-ASHA in CHILD LABOR AND THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA, NEEDS VERSUS RIGHTS? Kabeer N (Ed.): Sage Publications, New Delhi, 335-348

A majority of families increased their wage work hours (70 per cent) after their child began going to school. While in a few cases families cited the loss of a child's wages, the primary reason stated was to cover educational expenses. Most families decreased their expenditures on expensive items, religious functions and used the difference for present or future school expenses. To cover educational costs and maintain their life style, many families sought outside sources of funding. Excluding CINI-ASHA funding, many families received support from families, particularly maternal brothers underlying the importance of social capital. In 1992, before CINI-ASHA's intervention, an assessment survey in these areas revealed that only 8 per cent of the parents surveyed thought education was valuable for their child. After CINI-ASHA worked in this area for seven years, 100 per cent of the mothers surveyed believe education is important for their child.

Mothers cited a variety of reasons why they thought education was valuable. Many mothers hoped that their children could get better jobs. Others hoped that education would allow their children to obtain a better marriage match. In some cases, mothers simply wanted their children to be literate because they thought literacy was a crucial survival skill. CINI-ASHA program underlines that even extremely poor families adjust in a number of ways to support their children's education. Encouragement and access to education are the limiting factors.

PRATHAM, MUMBAI

Following initiatives by the government, the number of enrolment in primary schools has increased manifold. But the retention rate has gone down considerably. Empirical studies indicate that in urban as well as rural areas these children

add to the army of child labor. As per UNESCO press release (see text box below), “although more children are attending school than ever before in the countries of South and East Asia, vast numbers drop out before the end of the primary cycle, and the region still accounts for the world's largest share of out-of-school youth”²¹. To counter this trend and prevent dropping out by children, Pratham, an NGO from Mumbai launched a novel program and was sponsored by UNESCO.

Children of slum-dwellers and migrants find private schools beyond their reach. There is a perception that municipal schools are unattractive. Pratham based in Mumbai is doing remarkable work in municipal schools. Pratham has chosen to be a supporter rather than a critic of the government. Intervention ought to be directed at

²¹ United Nations Feb 11 2004

MORE ASIAN CHILDREN THAN EVER ATTEND SCHOOL BUT VAST NUMBERS DROP OUT - UN

Although more children are attending school than ever before in the countries of South and East Asia, vast numbers drop out before the end of the primary cycle, and the region still accounts for the world's largest share of out-of-school youth, according to a new United Nations report.

The South and East Asia Regional Report, published by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, shows that an estimated 46 million children are out of school in the region, 32 million of them in South and West Asia. The agency calls for recruiting more teachers to cut these numbers.

The study presents the latest education data for a region ranging from the Philippines in the East to Afghanistan and Iran in the West, and including five of the world's most populated nations.

It notes that enrolments for boys and girls rose substantially in most countries over the decade from 1990 to 2000. In Laos and Bangladesh net primary enrolment ratios for boys and girls rose between 15 and 20 percentage points.

But enrolments are only part of the picture. The *Report also reveals that only half the children who enter primary school in India, Laos and Myanmar will reach grade five.* [Italics added] Nepal, Cambodia and Bangladesh follow closely behind with between 35 and 38 per cent dropping out before the end of the primary cycle.

This trend is confirmed by data showing that even though many children are enrolled in primary education, very few will have a chance to enroll in lower secondary education. An estimated 233 million pupils of all ages are enrolled in both lower and upper secondary education with girls making up some 43 percent of the total.

The report estimates there are about 13 million primary teachers throughout the region, including 9 million in East Asia. This means that, on average, there is about one teacher for every 21 pupils in primary school in East Asia, compared to one for every 40 in South and West Asia.

East Asia includes Brunei, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Laos, Macao (China), Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. South and West Asia includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

reform and improvement through consultation and participation of all involved parties rather than on designing alternative or parallel systems. Since revitalization of the government system requires both financial and human resources, Pratham has sought to forge a triangular relationship between community, government and corporate donors. Municipal teachers, corporate sector personnel, NGOs, social workers and academics have been brought together in a partnership to rejuvenate the school and help the child. Starting with community based balwadis (nurseries) which function both as play-schools and crèches to create an environment permeated with the intent to learn, Pratham has gone on to introduce a cadre of balsakhis (friends of the children), work on teacher training and initiate bridge courses to prepare children to join regular schools. Both enrolled and non-enrolled children are helped to improve their capabilities and their progress is regularly tracked, all through involving both the municipal teacher and the community to ensure that the child does not drop out.

Over the last seven years, Pratham, Mumbai has managed to involve over 5,000 people, run 2,800 balwadis and 350 study centers, and conduct over 500 bridge courses affecting over 100,000 children in all municipal wards. The program has now spawned an India-Education Initiative that has spread to many cities in different states. In brief, it has become “a social mission”²².

Pratham was formed as public trust in Mumbai in 1994 and is working as a partner with the municipal primary school system to improve access, increase

²² Ramchandran V: “Backward and Forward Linkages that strengthen Primary Education” Economic and Political Weekly March 8-14,2003, Vol. XXXVIII No.10 Pg 959-968

attendance and raise achievement.²³ To help the government bring every child to school and ensure that every child learns well, Pratham believes that it is essential to mobilize citizens from all walks of life to actively work towards realizing this vision. Structurally, key members of Pratham's board of trustees are senior government officers- the municipal commissioner of Mumbai and the secretary of education, Government of Maharashtra. Both were active participants when the trust was initiated.

Study indicated that at least 18 per cent students in class III and IV do not have numeric or literacy levels expected of class II students. To rectify the situation, Pratham devised seven-week intensive crash program. Teaching and learning was to be accomplished primarily through mathematical games and interactive activities, rather than via textbooks. Teachers were required to concentrate on the progress of every child and pay special attention to academically weaker students. Such large-scale systematic routine and frequent monitoring of children's progress had never been attempted before in Mumbai's municipal schools. Pratham collaborated with the education department of the corporation at every stage.

The program was potentially beneficial for the academically weak students but it still would not have brought them up to speed with children who were performing at grade level. Pratham also launched Balsakhi program (child's friend or teacher's helper). Under this program 1) a helper is placed in each school to work under the guidance of a regular teacher to help academically weak students, and 2) teaching/ learning materials are provided to such children in every school. Both these inputs are provided only if the school requests the help. Through these steps Pratham facilitated

²³ Banerji R., 2003 Revitalizing Government Provision: Partnership between Pratham and Municipal Primary Schools in Mumbai, in CHILD LABOR AND THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA, NEEDS VERSUS RIGHTS? Kabeer N (Ed.): Sage Publications, New Delhi 267-291

Education Advisory Committees to encourage willing citizens to come forward and act as a bridge between the parents and teachers to improve the performance of the children.²⁴

The teachers' union resisted the influence of external resources. This explains the success of the program by young local women in helping young children enjoy learning. It also threatens the position of 'experts' (highly trained and qualified municipal school teachers) in the education system.

The intervention created certain bottlenecks where the numbers of out of school children were large and the existing schools overcrowded. The corporation authorities are unable to find large sums of money needed for construction activity. While there is high-level policy acceptance that outside the government -citizens, community and corporate support – are valuable, the mechanisms to channel the support are not in place or the ability to target the resources exactly at the point of need is not available.

²⁴ Chavan M.: 2000 Building Societal Missions for universal pre-school and primary education The Pratham Experience, UNESCO <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001202/120282eb.pdf>

Chapter Three

Lessons learned from case studies

The intervention by SCCIFO is unique in many ways. Not only withdrawal of children from labor, but also support to parents of such children with income generating schemes and encouraging them to send children to schools is the focus of SCCIFO's activities. The project helps children to adopt their own ways in deciding what is best suited for their future. SCCIFO realized early the need to focus not only on the beneficiaries namely children and parents, but also on the NGO staff and leaders. It has wisely invested considerable efforts in educating them about different management tools particularly about financial and institutional sustainability. It has ensured right from the beginning that the associated NGOs would become self-financed and even at the end of funding from international donor; the project would continue its momentum. It has been successful in ensuring rotation of invested funds by providing sound counseling to children in the selection of professions.

Most significantly, SCCIFO has made strategic decision and focused on tribal, rural and female children in the society. This is particularly hard to reach group and if the CWOP volunteers had not targeted them, at least a few children would have probably turned into insurgents. Activities by such elements are causing incalculable harm to the common public good. Thus the project run by SCCIFO is making slow but steady impact in the rural and remote areas. SCCIFO leadership has been successful in creating skills in social entrepreneurship among grass-root activists.

M V Foundation has demonstrated charismatic leadership in addressing the problem of child labor. It has been successful in sharing the vision of the leadership not only among the activists, but also amongst other stakeholders such as parents, youths, school teachers, employers, elected representatives, women's groups and the children engaged in labor. It has conceptual clarity and firm belief that half hearted measures would not be adequate. It has successfully motivated its volunteers and pursued its efforts till the children are completely rehabilitated. It has demonstrated strong technical capability through innovative ideas such as bridge camps till children are mature to undergo formal education, involving local community elders and local body representatives. It has trained its activists to counter queries such as:

- a) Will education guarantee a job?
- b) How is the family to cope with the loss of income when the child stops working?
- c) Who will do the work, which the child was performing within the household?
- d) What will happen once the child is educated and he refuses to work in the field or even in the village and ends up becoming a 'good-for-nothing'.

Rather than providing any monetary incentives to parents to encourage children to withdraw from labor, it has concentrated on educating them and creating social pressure on parents and children as well as on employers to ensure that they do not work.

These lessons from MVF experience are noteworthy: (1) "Abolition of child labor and universalization of school education are practically synonymous. (2)

Parents of working children are willing to make the adjustments to enable their children to go to school. (3) The income of a working child is not the motivating factor in most cases for the parents to send their children to work. (4) There is no alternative to using government institutions in order to bring about universalization of education, as NGOs cannot provide the infrastructure on the necessary scale. (5) There is considerable scope for involving the village community in universalizing elementary education”.²⁵ Basing its advocacy measures on the strong lessons drawn from the field, MV Foundation has been very successful in influencing policy measures to a considerable extent at the state as well as at national levels.

CINI-ASHA study shows that the reply to the question “Can poor families live without their child’s income?” depends upon the adjustment made up for the lost income by spending less and earning more as needed. Similarly the reply to the question “Can poor families afford to send their children to school?” is that they can if they adjust their lifestyles to meet education expenditure requirements. The study confirms the contribution of social capital in enabling poor children to complete their education. Rather than moving children to non formal schools or giving out stipends that make educating a child profitable, the study argues the policy needs to empower schools to adequately provide for children without family contributions.

CINI –ASHA effort suggests that families should be given an opportunity to send their children to quality schools and then be able to decide for themselves whether they should work or study. In many ways, the primary issue in educating these children is giving them access to schools and knowledge to parents about education.

²⁵Public Report on Basic Education (PROBE) In India, 1999 Oxford University Press, New Delhi: 111

Resources should be used to build better educational infrastructure in areas habituated by poor people.

Intervention by PRATHAM demonstrates that it is possible to create synergy by bringing together NGOs, government agencies, community representatives, socially responsible corporations, international organizations and international donors. PRATHAM has been a catalyst in taking advantage of citizens' enthusiasm in improving performance of children in urban slums. It brings out limitations in the existing school system, when it reveals that after attending school for three years, many children continue to be weak in reading and arithmetic. Performance of these children, however, improves when tracked and targeted in a systematic manner.

Limitations

There are also certain limitations evident from these cases.

SCCIFO in its project of CWOP selected distant areas for operation. Consequently, there is little visible impact on the problem of child labor at the state level. The head office has to depend upon local initiative. If the local leadership is strong, it establishes contact with government officers and ensures smooth support from the system. But in many cases, there has been either a friction with local officers, or the NGO functionaries have been unable to convince district level government officials about the dependability of NGO programs in reducing child labor. In certain other areas, leadership of local NGOs has been considerably weak and has remained satisfied by targeting officers in the department of labor rather than constructively engaging government officers from several related departments. In several instances district officers have preferred to ignore these functionaries. As a result, committed workers felt disheartened

and collaborative efforts could not make much headway as seen from small number of children rehabilitated from child labor. Many children covered under CWOP are still not comfortable in reading and numerical skills.

In the field of advocacy, SCCIFO does not appear to be drawing upon its experiences from the field level. It is weak in demonstrating its technical capability to government officers either at the local, state or national level and thus its impact on policy formulation has considerable scope for improvement. SCCIFO is advocating amendment of Child Labor Act; 1986, National Child Labor Project and creation of National Commission for Children. These goals need to be connected to SCCIFO's ground level experiences pertaining to flexibility in using mother tongue for instructions to indigenous children, importance of vocational training and life skill education imparted to girl children.

While attention has been paid to making the project self-sustainable in terms of finance, organizational and technical capability, extra efforts are imperative to train government officers from related departments to achieve collaboration. The main purpose of converting child labor into students should not be overshadowed by the requirement to ensure sustainability of the project through adequate returns on funds invested in micro-credit schemes.

Motivated leadership as in MV Foundation is not common to find in other districts or other NGOs. This intervention is successful in Ranga Reddy district as it has the benefit of charismatic leadership of Shantha Sinha. That partly explains why the program has not replicated much beyond Ranga Reddy district in other parts of Andhra Pradesh, housing maximum number of child labor in India. The program believes that

motivation level of other persons in the community and activists in MV Foundation would be identical. It necessitates idealistic activists to ensure monitoring of the program. Rather than improving the design of the existing system, the Foundation relies on efforts by certain individuals in rectifying the situation. Following strong advocacy measures by Shantha Sinha and others, the Indian government has now decided to approve an Act for compulsory education. The Bill has a provision for fine of parents if they do not send the child to school. Implementation of the proposed Act depends largely on collaborative efforts between government officers and committed NGO activists.

MV Foundation lays stress on creating educational infrastructure by the government. In terms of resources, the government alone may not be able to achieve it. MV Foundation does not provide any scope for private corporations to contribute in this exercise. The Foundation creates a false sense of complacency that since children are in schools; they are away from child labor. It neglects the issue of quality of education. It does not appreciate that unless teachers in government schools are motivated, and provided training to reduce drop out rates, the apparent increase in enrollment is likely to be misleading in terms of outcome. From long-term perspective, these measures may not be adequate to create a sense of self-dependence among educated children, unless linkages are established with local industries for creation of jobs and opportunities for self-employment.

CINI-ASHA project was limited to families that were willing to participate in the experiment. Hence the conclusions drawn by it have limited value. In few instances relatives of children have helped in paying the cost of education. But that may not happen in many other cases. Women in low-income groups would have financial

security when they are provided access to micro-credit and are empowered with skills to repay these loans. CINI ASHA intervention does not focus on quality of education in the schools attended by rehabilitated children.

PRATHAM intervention does not institutionalize its efforts for long-term impact. No mechanism is suggested for bringing together resources from corporations to impact the shortage of funds faced by government agencies. Teachers are very important stakeholders in the business of retaining children in schools. Instead of involving them and motivating them to work in the same direction in a consensual manner, the intervention has made them resentful. This is likely to create adverse impact as the teachers may feel completely demoralized and would prefer to sit back rather than contribute. They would have no incentives to improve the performance. Thus the resources being spent on teachers are likely to be wasted. More over, the seven-week crash program is a one-time effort. It is doubtful, how far children would be able to absorb the same over a period. Rather than strengthening the system, the project has perhaps weakened it.

Strategic choices for NGOs

In the wake of these positive lessons and limitations, what strategic choices are imperative to ensure effective and efficient outcomes? The suggested options in the order of priority for implementation are as under:

Clarity of Concept

Conceptual clarity is a prerequisite for the visioning exercise necessary to achieve tangible results. A strategic rather than only logical decision is necessary regarding definition of child labor. The visioning exercise should take into account

financial, human and organizational resources at the NGO's disposal. In the absence of it, the problem of child labor would appear too big to solve. The way in which child labor is defined, that would have serious implications on strategies, policies and resources. M.V. Foundation for example considers all children out of school as child labor or potential child labor. On the other hand, according to children engaged in child labor 'harmful work' is any work that would lead to: 'physical damage-accidents; cuts; burns; sunstroke; body ache; diseases; bites, police harassment, no formal education, being paid less, long hours of work and irregular food timings, verbal, physical and sexual abuse, addiction, lack of play and entertainment'²⁶. Thus NGOs have to make a strategic decision in rehabilitating children suffering from exploitative and harmful conditions or target all children who are out of school. Edwards points out, "One of the strongest lessons to emerge from the research is that success is more likely when organizations identify a clear long-term goal at the outset and stick to it over time. Conversely, agencies, which change their goals too often, or try to follow too many goals at the same time, often lose their way"²⁷.

Data Collection

Advocating policy measures requires accurate data. Projects based on inaccurate data result in creation of estimates that call for mobilization of enormous resources and run the risk of being non-starters. According to Indian Labor Minister, there were, 20 million child laborers in the year 2000.²⁸ On the other hand, as per Campaign Against Child Labor, an alliance of several NGOs, there were 80-million child

²⁶ Report of the consultation with working children by Media Matters, Mumbai, 2002

²⁷ Edwards M 1999 NGO Performance- What Breeds Success? New Evidence from South Asia in World Development Vol.27, No. 2,p. 368

²⁸ Indian Express, 2/5/2000

labors in 1999.²⁹ M.V. Foundation estimates there are 100 millions child labor. Unless the goal is measurable in accurate numbers, the objectives cannot be realized in a fixed time frame. Hence after selecting the specific area for intervention, the NGOs would be well advised to prepare estimates of the children to be rehabilitated. This exercise may be undertaken in the beginning and preferably by associating local stakeholders such as teachers, parents and even some of the children engaged in labor. Avoiding making this strategic choice results in unending disputes over the estimates. The NGOs need to work in consensus with different stakeholders rather than antagonizing important sections such as teachers as seen in the case of Pratham. During and after executing the project, it is imperative to have precise documentation about a) the beneficiaries, b) outcome about rehabilitated children, c) the staff deployed and d) the amount spent on operations and e) administration separately. These details are essential to approach international donors for getting further assistance.

Focus on female children

“Child labor is keeping children out of school and contributing to the growth of illiteracy especially among girls. Employers prefer to employ young girls since they are paid lower wages than boys”³⁰. According to development experts, if females are provided micro-credit opportunities, they take keen interest in sending their children to school and thus improving the economic and social capital. To enable the females to be financially independent, it is necessary that they participate in schooling. A workingwoman is also considered an important contributor to family planning measures. However, according to researchers monitoring progress towards the Education For All

²⁹ CACL’s Report to UN CRC, “An Alternative Report on the Status of Child Labor in India”.

³⁰ Report of the Second National Commission on Labor: Paragraph 9.226 Pg 1015

(EFA) in UNESCO, 57 per cent of children not in school in the world were female in 2000.³¹ As per the report of the Indian National Commission on Labor, the distribution of child labor shows: there were 54.82 per cent male, and 45.18 per cent female. The concentration of female workers in the agricultural sector is quite high (83 per cent). More female children are engaged in low paid jobs as compared to males.³² In patriarchal societies, factors pulling female children out of school are rampant. Girl children are most vulnerable mainly because of cultural factors and social attitudes. Girl children remain deprived of adequate access to basic healthcare, nutrition and education. The problem is further compounded by early marriage of the girl and subsequent early motherhood. Hence as a strategy the NGOs may target female child labor for rehabilitation. Appointment of female teachers is highly recommended to overcome apprehension of sexual harassment by teachers.

Urban/rural focus

Selecting urban slums or rural areas for the project is another strategic decision. More than 90.87 per cent of the working children are in the rural areas and are employed in agriculture and allied activities and in household chores. Cultivation, agricultural labor, livestock, forestry and fisheries account for 85 per cent of child labor. Children working in manufacturing, servicing and repairs account for 8.7 per cent of the

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Gender and Education for All, The Leap to Equality Report Summary (pdf) UNESCO, 2003

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php@URL_ID=15006&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html,

³² Report of the Second National Commission on Labor; Pg 1021:

http://labour.nic.in/lcomm2/nlc_report.html

urban child labor force. Out of this 0.8 per cent work in factories. Developing countries including India are witnessing huge migration of poor rural people to urban slums.

Lack of opportunity to acquire requisite skills is one of the significant factors contributing to child labor. Launching schemes for non-formal education, life education skills and vocational skills creates confidence among parents as well as children about the success of the project. The skills required to empower these children in urban areas are considerably different from rural areas. In urban places, training programs developed in consultation with captains of industries can make the children proficient in vocational skills. Children who had worked in such apprenticeships along with formal education have been successful in starting their own business or in acquiring employment. Several of them are functioning as role models and were successful in convincing children working in hazardous industries to come out of them. On the other hand, in rural areas, many children work in agriculture related activities. As in most developing countries, agricultural activities are limited to a short season and are not profitable. If these children are to be productively engaged, they need to be provided rural technology techniques including improving bullock cart repairs, tractor repairs, pump-motor rewinding, and agricultural equipment repairs. Absence of this distinction runs the risk of educated children doing the same work as uneducated children and thus defeating the purpose of the project.

Modern management tools

CEOs as well as functionaries of NGOs have to develop acumen in running their activities as social entrepreneurs. They have to resort to methods, which

would ensure that the funds as well as staff available to them are used efficiently. No charity organization can run in a sustainable manner exclusively on donations. Many functionaries in NGOs argue that profit making would leave them with very little time to achieve their mission. A strategic decision is necessary. Importance needs to be given to the purpose for which NGOs are using these profits. In private enterprise, profits are governed by greed and distributed among shareholders. But NGOs make profits for a selfless mission to uplift the weak and downtrodden sections in the society. Profits enable NGOs to attain their cause effectively. NGOs should diversify their funding arrangements through direct revenue from selling goods and services, cause related partnerships with diverse businesses, grants, membership dues, and individual and corporate giving in many forms.

Adoption of modern management tools can enhance the output and outcome of NGO activities. Using software for fund raising, system consultancy, donor research, training of staff, documenting progress of beneficiaries and Internet services can reduce NGOs' overheads. This would also decrease their losses when select individuals leave the organization abruptly. Donations from diasporas is a valuable source and can be easily accessed if NGOs take advantage of information revolution and develop their own interactive website. Developing communication and dissemination strategy addressed to the target group of donors is crucial in broadening the support. Training their staff in management practices and international developments would improve their efficiency. SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis can help NGO functionaries in drafting collective vision statement, which is the starting point for later success. Encouraging past persons to give narrative of successful

stories helps in boosting the morale of fresh inductees. This is known as ‘Appreciative enquiries technique’ and many NGOs have benefited from resorting to it.

Policy and management Recommendations

Liberalized school administration

Advocacy by NGOs is a very important aspect of third generation NGOs. Many NGOs are advocating for substantial increase in government resources for the primary education and running these institutes by the government. Government should definitely increase the resources for primary education, but management of these institutes by government has resulted in their deterioration. Absence of cash flow for operations and maintenance purposes has forced many government schools to close down. The remedy is stricter regulations and supervision of these schools by government. But day-to-day administration of these institutes should be by elected representatives of parents/community, charitable organizations, and NGO functionaries. NGOs need to advocate increased government support in financial and administrative terms in running these endeavors by partnering with civil society. United Nations’ Human Development Report 2003 emphasizes, “Governments need to encourage NGOs and the private sector to expand supply while maintaining control over standards and centralizing data on the number and quality of private schools.”³³

³³ <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/> Overview: Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty Pg 7

Modified institutional design

Institutional design in the government is critical for creating enabling environment for NGOs. For example in India, NGOs may consider insisting on the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister at the national level and Secretary to the Chief Ministers at the States to monitor the progress of various schemes and action plans. Location of the monitoring authority is very crucial for coordinated efforts amongst officers from all ministries and departments. Cabinet Secretary at the national level and Chief Secretary at the states should be the Secretary General of this monitoring body. Secretaries of all-important departments should be ex-officio members of this group. Representatives of NGO alliance, private sector, academicians and teacher bodies should be given adequate representation in this monitoring body. This body should co-opt representatives from children rehabilitated from labor to reflect voice of children.

Involving private corporations

There are very few instances of organized sector employing child labor. But instances are replete when many of the even transnational corporations encourage outsourcing of the parts to reduce their responsibility. When these products are outsourced and manufactured in households, there is empirical evidence to indicate that they were done with the help of child labor. It is necessary to remind private corporations about their social responsibility. Through sustained campaign in several cases, NGOs have successfully tamed many powerful transnational corporations, as they are most afraid of adverse publicity against their products. It is imperative to impress on the corporations that firstly, they do not employ child labor in any form, and secondly they contribute substantially to the efforts being made by NGOs to reduce child labor. Encouragement

from corporations could be in kind such as supply of learning material, construction material for schools or in cash. They need to be reminded about long-term benefits, as better education to workers would improve quality of their products and increase purchasing capacity of the public to buy their products.

Ensuring flexibility

The four case studies underline the need for flexibility in curriculum, textbooks, timing of the formal schools and holidays depending upon the requirement of children. They successfully prove that textbooks that relate children to their day-to-day experiences are able to prevent drop out percentage. To cater to the vast differences in the level of development in different parts even within India, NGOs need to advocate increasing flexibility rather than standardization in government measures. Empirical evidence shows that instead of launching countrywide program, it is appropriate to target hard to reach segments. Efforts on above lines would definitely create visible impact in seven to ten years.

Self regulation through credibility

Success of the NGOs depends upon their credibility, accountability and transparency. There are certain malpractices noticed among some NGOs. Efforts by the government to control or regulate them are not desirable. Attributing motives to such efforts, NGOs decry them severely. To avoid charges of high handedness from the government, it is advisable that NGOs apply self- regulatory methods through following seven integrity tests:

- *“Representation test:* membership, constituency, participatory decision making
- *Merit test:* track-record, demonstrated positive impact, strong local knowledge
- *Credibility test:* whether acknowledged authority, links with credible partners
- *Values test:* proven commitment to ethical values, ethical in its internal practices
- *Governance test:* clear accountability, open, democratic decision making
- *Responsibility test:* accurate, honest, recognize the need for issues-balance
- *Partnership test:* work openly with other civil society organizations, empower Southern capacity/voice”³⁴.

Target champions in the system

Finally, NGOs alone cannot mobilize the necessary resources for achieving this task. They cannot work in isolation. They need to identify government servants, who can champion the cause being advocated by NGOs. The focus should be to enhance the number of advocates for the purpose from within. The success of NGOs would depend on how they use existing resources and make the best use of the present system to achieve the desired goals. As pointed out by Keane, “importance of Global

³⁴Clark J 2003: *Worlds Apart, Civil Society and the Battle for Ethical Globalization*, Conn. Kumarian Press, 178

Civil Society would depend on its ability to become more democratic, better integrated into governance institutions, and invested with universal values”³⁵.

Conclusion

Developing country governments alone cannot accomplish the challenge of eliminating child labor. If they enter into active cooperation with NGOs that would certainly expedite the pace of change. Similarly NGOs also need to engage government agencies through constructive criticism. Increasing number of government servants are showing sensitivity to the social problems and showing innovativeness in rehabilitation of children engaged in labor. “Fourth-generation strategies [of NGOs] may [therefore] not be limited to pressuring the government from the outside and may increasingly include individual government employees, if not portions of governments.” According to Fisher, ‘individual government employees can behave “out of character”, given innovative networking models, which could be further promoted by international NGOs and donors’³⁶.

Poverty is an important cause of child labor, but not the only one. Focus of government measures, and NGOs activities is mostly on providing support to poor parents. This is done with the belief that consequently parents would send children to schools. Empirical evidence does not support this. It is therefore imperative that NGOs should also focus on modification of ‘attitudes of the people at all fronts among trade

³⁵ Keane J. 2003 *Global Civil Society?* New York: Cambridge University Press: Book Review from Recent Books on International Relations in *Foreign Affairs*. New York: [November/December 2003](#). Vol. 82 Issue 6; pg. 153

³⁶ Fisher J 1998 *Non-governments: NGOs and the Political Development of the Third World*, Conn.: Kumarian Press 128

unions, the media, human rights activists, trade associations, employers' organizations and even among children, to build public pressure against hiring children'³⁷.

Imposition of sanctions through World Trade Organization is likely to be counter-productive. Continued financial, technical and material support to developing country governments and southern NGOs would gradually usher the desired change. The process can be effectively evaluated and technically supported by various U.N. organizations including the ILO. According to 'Investing in Every Child: An Economic Study of the Costs and Benefits of Eliminating Child Labor' released by ILO, "Forcing children to continue working - a practice that affects one out of every six youngsters, or 246 million children - will cost \$5.1 trillion from now until 2020. But if they receive an education instead, that figure drops to just \$760 million - an amount that is more than offset by other social gains"³⁸.

NGOs making strategic choices of having conceptual clarity, preparing estimate of the target group in consultation with stake holders, working in favor of girl children, and focusing on urban slums or rural areas for their operation are likely to be far more effective. Adoption of modern management tools and imbibing information technology will enhance their capacity. Self-regulation, accountability, legitimacy and transparency in discharge of their activities will increase their credibility as development partners.

³⁷ Second National Commission on Labor Report Para 9.234 P.1017

http://labour.nic.in/lcomm2/nlc_report.html

³⁸ Investing in Every Child: An Economic Study of the Costs and Benefits of Eliminating Child Labor 2004, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=9650&Cr=child&Cr1=labour>

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