

# Child labor in egypt essays examples

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## **Child Labour in Egypt**

Child labour is considered to be a type of work that is injurious to children. The worst forms of child labour are those types that include forced labour, which exposes children to illegal type of actions, and labour that risks the lives, physical conditions or morals of children. Moreover, children who are under 11 years of age having some type of economic doings are thought to be labourers. Children in the age range of 12 to 14 years may be involved in light work (Ragab, n. d.). It was reported in 1995 that Egypt's rates of economic activity for children in the age range from 10 to 14 years was 11.2% that was more than the local mean for Latin America, where it was 9.8% (Wahba, 2006). However, that rate was lower than that for Africa and Asia, where the rates were about 26.2% and 12.8%, respectively (Wahba, 2006). The problem of street children and their labour in Egypt has gained much attention in the last few years, mostly due to the hard work of Egyptian NGOs (Hussein, 2005).

Child labour in Egypt is usually caused by structural inequalities. An increased rate of unemployment is also considered to be a cause of child work and labour in Egypt. However, one of the most disturbing facts in this case is that the minimum wage has not changed much since 1981. There is also a high rate of labour migration abroad (Grimsrud & Stokke, 1997).

Among Egypt's most significant causes of child labour are the failed educational system and the high expenses that are related to it.

Overpopulation is also contributing to child labour, probably due to poor social safety nets. The most damaging thing is that child labour is met with a

high level of acceptance from society due to its low cost and easy control.

Sometimes, children in orphanages face abuse and laborious work.

According to children's rights groups and NGOs, the absence of appropriate funding and improper training of staff are hampering the work on orphanages (BBC, 2014).

The population of children in the age range of 5 years to 14 years in 2005 was 15, 247, 673. The approximate percentage of children working in Egypt was 6. 7%, approximate percentage of working boys was 9. 5%, and approximate percentage of working girls was 3. 7% (Bureau of International Labor Affairs, 2009). It has been reported that parents who were child labourers themselves have a 10% greater chance of sending their own children for labour (Wahba, 2006).

Working sectors of children include informal sectors such as home servants, the carpet market (in which mostly girls are working), agriculture, the leather tanning industry (in which mostly boys are working) and the textile industry. Children are also found to be working in the cotton fields, where they are involved in removing pests and picking buds (Brown, 2012).

Child labour produces some problems, such as a reduction in Egypt's human capital, the production of a huge gap in education, an effect on the mental and physical health of the young generation and the complication of the State's international trade affairs.

The school attendance of children from 5 to 14 years of age was reported to be about 88. 1% (Bureau of International Labor Affairs, 2009). Most of the lowered school attendance has been reported for children from poor families. It has also been reported that about half of children in the age range of 12 to

15 years do not attend school. Children face long working hours, which may extend to 11 hours (UNICEF, n. d.), and this is one of the major barriers in the education of children. Nearly 25. 7% of the poor population is illiterate, about 33. 2% of the overall population has only a basic education (or worse), and only 1. 9% of those people have university education and above (Abu Gazaleh, Bulbul, Hewala, & Najim, 2004).

One of the major problems in Egypt is poverty, which contributes greatly towards child labour. Poverty is considered to be the deprivation of basic capabilities (Abu Gazaleh et al., 2004). It has been estimated that about 12 million Egyptians are unable to satisfy their basic food needs and other requirements. About 66. 4% of children contribute all their wages to their families. It has been estimated that a child contributes from 22. 8% to 30. 7% to his or her family's total income (Abu Gazaleh et al., 2004).

The Egyptian Government has worked for the welfare of children (i. e. to minimise child labour). In 1990, the Convention on the Rights of the Child inspired the “ Child Law”, which was adopted in 1996. The government regulated the child labour age and hours through the law. Child employment is considered illegal before the age of 14 years, except in the case of occupational training, which can begin at the age of 12. Moreover, children below the age of 17 years are not allowed to be employed in hazardous occupations. The government also established limits on the timing of working (i. e. allowing working only from 8 am to 7 pm). Children are also not allowed to work for more than four consecutive hours. There must be one hour-long break every four hours (Ragab, n. d.). Further steps were taken by the Government in June 2008, when the minimum age for employment was

changed from 14 to 15 years (Bureau of International Labor Affairs, 2009). Child labour can be reduced by decreasing the poverty of a nation. It has also been recommended that the minimum wage of adults must be increased. It was reported that an increase of 1% in adult female wages decreased child work hours by about 2.7% for children in the age range of 6 to 11 years, and by 1.5% for children from 12 to 14 years of age (Bhalotra & Tzannatos, 2003). Another study has shown that only a 10% rise in the market wage for illiterate males reduces child labour by 22% for boys and 13% for girls (Wahba, 2006).

Schooling must be made easy for all social classes of Egyptian people. It has been reported that over 50% of working children in Egypt are working along with schooling (Wahba, 2006). Education is expensive because of all its necessities, such as books, uniforms, fees, food and tutoring. This expensive educational system contributes to child labour because school is not perceived as a worthy alternative to labour. Moreover, strengthening of the education system in areas of Egypt with high rates of unemployment and in rural areas could also help to reduce child labour.

The worst forms of child labour must be removed completely. This can be accomplished by passing new laws that accept only adult applicants for available work and decrease the amount of children in the labour force. It is also recommended that a high school diploma should become the minimum requirement for young employees.

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