



They are the daughters holding another sibling in their lap and moving in fields, the invisible worker in house and most deprived section of the world. Yes we are talking about girls.

#### **Invisible and Hidden Girls**

Girls work is largely ignored from child labour discussions due to a number of factors. Probably, the most important reasons are the hidden and invisible nature of their work.

They are hidden because, unlike children who work in marketplaces, on streets, in cafes and other places where they come in contact with the public, girls' work is either hidden due to its immoral or illicit nature or behind the locked doors of people's houses, where they cannot be seen.

They are invisible because most of their work is in the informal economy. Girls are sold or contracted as bonded labour and trafficked as prostitutes or domestic servants where they may repay their families' debt with the performance of abusive and intolerable work which they are not free to leave. Because it is illegal, unpaid or, in the case of domestic work, it is often not even considered work, the burdensome labour of girls is rarely counted in official figures.

The most glaringly obvious example of the hidden and invisible nature of girls' work is behind the locked doors of other people's homes, where they cannot be seen, in domestic child labour. Domestic child labour deserves specific attention in relation to the situation of girls, with around 90% of all child domestic workers being girls.

Many child domestic labourers work very long hours with few breaks and feel isolated and lonely. Child domestic workers are also often victims of verbal, physical and sexual abuse, this can occur partly because they are hidden from the public eye, by the privacy of the house they work in.

### **Why girls are still held back?**

- > Household dynamics
- > The power of tradition
- > Hidden domestic labourers
- > Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS
- > Adding up the school bill
- > Enduring stereotypes
- > High achievers
- > Labour market inequalities

There are, however, many barriers to girls' access to school. These unequal gender relations propel a vicious cycle of underinvestment in girls from generation to generation, starting at the earliest stages of their lives and continuing throughout their life cycles. Today, over two-thirds of the world's 860 million illiterates are women. Girls take on a great deal of unpaid household work for their families, including childcare, cooking, cleaning, and gathering water and fuel. Many girls in poor communities are expected to contribute to household income. If girls are attending school, there is precious little time for study. They may also be pushed into work as domestic labourers or other forms of work, even trafficking and prostitution. It's important to put the rights of the child at the forefront.

Early marriage massively impedes the educational progress of girls, whether it occurs so as to lighten a family's economic burden or to secure a daughter's future. In Nepal, 40% of girls are married by the time they are 15. In Ethiopia and in some countries of West Africa, marriage at 7 or 8 is not uncommon. Changing the legal age of marriage is unlikely to alter local practices if underlying conditions are not changed. This is why promoting the importance of girls' education through campaigns, role models, improving conditions of safety and security, and working directly with adolescent girls to strengthen their voice, are important measures to allow them to complete an education. Traditional practices around adolescence and rites of passage can often be to the detriment of education, particularly for girls. In some societies, girls can be enslaved to atone for the sins of a male relative or to provide security for their family in other ways. Social pressures on girls and boys are particularly strong during puberty. In many countries, adolescent pregnancy almost always results in girls interrupting their education. Inadequate information about sexuality in many schools reinforces the hold of these practices.

### **Poverty, Low Status and Lack of Education: A Vicious Cycle.**

The situation of the girl child labourer mirrors the low social and economic status of women. In many cultures, girls are viewed as members of their birth family for only a few short years and as economic liabilities. This is nowhere more evident than in the case of education. Parents are reluctant to invest in the future training or education of their girls'. When this situation is taken

together with a situation of abject poverty, it is the girls' in a family that will be first to be sold for their labour, or sent to work in another house for little or no money.

Girls are systematically deprived of their right to education by family expectation, society's norms or the lack of attention to their specific needs in education. The majority of out-of-school children in the world are girls' and two-thirds of the 860 illiterate adults around the world are women. As long as girls' are toiling in exploitative and harsh conditions they will never be free to enjoy a quality education and grow into empowered women.

The early discrimination that girls face, results in their growing up to be women with greater constraints and fewer choices and opportunities. They in turn are less able to positively influence the lives of their daughters (and sons), thereby perpetuating the vicious cycle of poverty and exploitation from one generation of women to the next.

For girls, as well as boys, to develop and use their capacities, to have choices, to contribute to society as leaders, nurses, doctors or teachers, they must be fully participating in the larger world. If they are relegated to work of a submissive passive nature, with little or no education they can never grow to their full potential.

### **Global March Calls For Action**

- Ratify and implement ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age of Employment, ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, and the Convention of the Rights of the Child and its two optional protocols, within a timeline;
- Amend national laws, if necessary, to comply with the content of the Conventions above, and ensure that the national laws on the age of completing compulsory education and the minimum age of employment correspond with each other;
- Make education compulsory up to the age of 16 years; Make education free for all, including uniforms, syllabus books, school meals, transportation, and any other hidden cost of education;
- Give a second chance to child labourers and other out-of-school children who have missed out on their opportunities to begin compulsory education at appropriate age,
- Form a National Committee on Child Labour and Education in order to coordinate efforts to ensure basic education for all and to end child labour, including Ministries of Labour, Education, Finance, Social Welfare and other relevant ministries, law enforcement agencies, civil society and children;
- Invest, at least 6% of GNP for ensuring basic education for all children.
- Providing adolescent girls with quality formal and non-formal educational programmes, including vocational training, that would lead to their empowerment and to more opportunities for decent work in their adulthood;
- Addressing gender stereotyping in education leading to unchallenged views on occupational segregation and women's unpaid work, including through a gender analysis and reform of the education curricula;
- Encouraging girls to study subjects and skills that are in high demand and would command better pay in the labour market;

- Proposing that female dominated and male dominated occupations are evaluated so as to determine equal pay for jobs of equal value, thus contributing to gender non-discrimination in future employment;
- Ensuring the quality training and subsequent employment of adequate numbers of female teachers; sharing international good practices on strategies to enrol and retain girls in school.

**The Global March calls on Donor Countries and the International Community to:**

- Commit their programs and policies to ending child labour;
- Meet the financial commitment made in the Dakar Framework of Action to ensure all children are in primary school
- Provide debt relief and do away with conditionality on overseas aid, allowing the
- developing countries with a time-bound and effective national plans to invest more efficiently in their children;
- Invest more than 0.1% of their GNP for the overseas aid aimed directly at benefiting children, especially in ending child labour and ensuring education for all

**Global March Calls all the businesses to:**

- Ensure that there is no child labour involved in any segment of supply chain.
- Give minimum wages to the adult workers and ensure that labour laws are upheld in their businesses.

**Global March Calls on all people to:**

- Educate themselves on the issue of child labour and report any incidents of such crimes to appropriate authorities and to concerned NGOs.
- Boycott products and commodities that are likely to be tainted by the sweat of child labourers
- Strengthen the movement of Global March by participate in the activities organized by Global March partner in your region.
- Spread the word around.

**Action Guide**

**Lists of Activities**

1. **Human Chain** – Make human chain at the centre of the city having call upon all to support the rights of the child.
2. **Friendship Band** – Send a friendship band to the girls who are not going to school .
3. **Information Tables-** Information tables placed in markets, public squares, musical events, theatre performances, religious centres, festivals, school hallways and many other places help to spread information about the Child labour issue and importance of education collect petition signatures, publicize

events, attract supporters and organise Worst Forms of Child Labour a event in the evening on the main street.

4. **Hold schools quiz** - Ministers sit as competitors and children ask question
5. **Organise a talent show**- A talent show for former child labourers to show their skills and make people realize if given chance they all can perform and develop all kind of leadership. So it's important to make special provisions for the former child labourers by the government so that they can catch up on what they have missed.
6. **From Exploitation To Education** - March in which school children and former child labourers walk hand in hand one dressed in school uniform and one not. Marching outside a location, holding signs, chanting and passing out information to take concrete steps on child labour issue.
7. **A hand of change**- pass on the hand marks with messages on elimination of child labour and good quality education. What should be done by government officials to provide education to all children. Schools, Colleges etc could be targeted to send "hand of change" in various countries to ministers and local leaders.

**The above enlisted activities are just few examples which could be adopted by the organization and any other new activities according to the region**

#### **Role of Global March Against Child Labour International Secretariat**

- GMIS would also design all the communication material to be used during that period.
- GMIS would put partner activity on the website ( so it would be important for the partners to in touch with GMIS so that they can highlight the information as soon as possible)

#### **Media Coverage**

- According to the regions need some media centric activity should also be planned so that the movement could recognized globally.
- GMIS would also help in writing the press release and circulate the news all over the world.