

context as the evidence referred to above suggests it is a global issue. Canadian foreign relations with all countries, developed and developing, need to take into account child exploitation problems.

The scope of the child exploitation and child labour challenge should not be underestimated. Complex social, political, and economic factors need to be taken into account. Emphasis on domestic legislation and a legal approach to child exploitation will likely prove to be inadequate. Labour legislation applies to the formal sector, which constitutes only a small part of child workers and exploited workers. Equal emphasis must be given to the informal sector - domestic household workers or small scale agriculture, where child labour is most common. It may well prove impossible to fully eradicate child exploitation as effective solutions imply significant changes in social attitudes and human behaviour.

Effective action against child labour is difficult because the practice is embedded in the socio-economic and cultural structure of many societies. Positive change is possible, but depends primarily on national and local commitment, supported/complemented by concerted international action. In some countries, certain groups hold far from egalitarian views. In India for example, some segments of society believe that children workers from lower-castes is perfectly acceptable, although the same segments of society would strongly object to, and resist having, their own children employed in substandard conditions. This type of social acceptance makes it difficult to attack child labour, particularly in cases where the political ruling class holds such attitudes.

Economic development is not a panacea for child exploitation. Reductions in poverty will work toward reducing the number of children vulnerable to exploitation, but will not eliminate it. The world as a whole has experienced unprecedented levels of economic growth in the post-war period. Exploitation in developed countries cannot be attributed to lack of economic development or only the options for the poor. Indeed, the whole of the exploitation category cannot be justified on development grounds. Nor is child exploitation a simple question of the distribution of income. It is really a broader question of who holds political and social power and the ends that those in power seek. Children are exploited because the exploiters find it in their best interest to do so. This is greed and selfishness which has at least as much to do with social attitudes as the level of economic development. While written in reference to labour conditions in early nineteenth century England: "For it was not merely bad employers but bad parents living on their children's labours, who required watching,"