

# Child Labor in the Rural Setting: Voices of Toil from Indigenous Youth Learners

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**Abstract**— this phenomenological research was conducted at DepEd, Bislig City Division for the school year 2014-2015. The participants were the 18 students of San Jose National High School who were engaged in child labor. An In-depth Interview and Focus- Group Discussion were employed in order to find out the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of the child laborers. Responses of the participants revealed that their experiences as child laborers were the pressing need for labor, the underpayment of the services by their employers, the trivial participation in school activities since they could no longer attend regularly to their classes, they had divergent outlook in life and experiences also of the unhealthy physical condition. In order to cope with their situation, the participants generally embraced self-denial of the hardships they experienced, they did medication when ill and they also uphold their ambitions. Furthermore, their insights shared to their peers were to value the importance of work and school in order to survive the challenges of child labor.

**Index Terms**— Educational Management, Child labor, Indigenous Youth Learners, Rural Setting, Voice of Toil, Philippines.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

THE International Labor Organization (ILO) establishes and administers the application of international labor standards including child labor standards. Under a certain age, children are barged to engage in an economic activity. Child labor is one of the most common yet urgent problems of almost all schools, most particularly in public schools. Children are supposed to be the future of our nation. However, some of them are deprived of their rights to education, and soon become the unseen workers. Children become victims of economic exploitation with harmful effects to their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development. And worst, child labor intervenes to the child's pursuit of education. That is why, most of the schools have reported a high drop-out rate, student's tardiness, absenteeism, and lack of interest in school. Children involved in domestic work may have difficulty in combining work with schooling. Work hazards are compounded by the fact that many children are found working in the informal sector where they are beyond the protective reach of labor legislation, inspection and enforcement. (ILO, 2006)

In DepED Bislig City Division, Child Labor issue is one of the problems presently faced by schools which caused high drop-out rate. Students have different reasons why they were at risk of dropping out. Some, because of illness or physical impairment, early marriage and distance from home to school. The problem is rampant especially to one of the schools in Bislig City, San Jose National High School, where there exist small scale coal mining which is an alternative livelihood of many families especially the Indigenous People living in that Barangay. This public high school is a hilly terrain situated at Barangay San Jose, Bislig City. It is surrounded by portals of small scale mining that is why it is always prone to landslides. The school personnel has nothing to do to control the situation or to stop the students from choosing work over schooling because it is the only way for them to survive. Existing interventions are not enough to save them to become one of the out-of-school youths. Their voices of toil must be heard.

The school is offering Alternative Delivery Mode(ADM)-Open High School Program(OHSP) to cater those students

who were not able to enroll the regular class. But despite of the offering, still it was ranked as third for high drop-out rate last School Year 2012-2013 among the Eighteen (18) High Schools of Bislig City Division. Most of the reasons why it is high in drop-out rate is because, most of the male students were attracted to work in the small scale mining in that Barangay.

Nevertheless, not all children engaged in Child Labor are being forced by their parents or guardians to work. Some of them are enticed to work and give up their education because they need also to survive. San Jose National High School have strived to offer Open High School Program to lessen the problem, but, the school is still suffering in high drop-out rate. It is contrary of what is being pronounced by Rosati (2008) that flexible schooling programs are designed to make school more accommodating of the exigencies of work and to increase school attendance and reducing drop-out among child laborers..

I was previously the Teacher-In-Charge and School Head of San Jose National High School. Most of the students in this school are from Mandaya Tribe. I observed that after a year of my stay in the said school, most of the teachers were complaining about student's absenteeism, tardiness and low performance level when they are in school. The teachers of San Jose National High School used to visit those problem students. However, most of the reasons, students were already engaged in work. The worst, their parents just answered that their children really have to work because they have no choice. When we ask on the children's side, they were hesitant to answer in front of their parents which becomes a struggle to teachers because they could not find proper interventions to save those students at-risk of dropping out.

This is the reason why I was motivated to conduct the study to find out the situations of the IP students of San Jose National High School who are engaged in Child Labor practice, their experiences, coping mechanisms, insights and why it is a no choice for them. The issue is common, yet, I have not encountered a study that is the same like this.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to find out the experiences of the child laborers of San Jose National High School and to determine as well their coping mechanisms and insights as they engaged in child labor. The other focus of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to understand the causes and consequences of child labor, and to review the existing theoretical, empirical, and historical literature as to why children work, To know and understand some of the views and perceptions of Indigenous People students who are engaged in child labor practice in one identified high school in DepED- Bislig City Division, San Jose National High School. By adding so, ideas on how to deal these students with problems in absenteeism, tardiness and lack of interest in school be dealt .

## 1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of high school students engaged in child labor?
2. What are the coping mechanisms of these children who are engaged in child labor?
3. What insights can be shared by the children who are engaged in child labor?

## 1.3 Theoretical Lens

This study is anchored on Republic Act No. 7658, which is also known as: "An Act Prohibiting the Employment of Children Below 15 years of age in Public and Private Undertaking", stating that children shall not be employed in either public or private entities. But the issue becomes prevalent and continue to affect the lives of many families across the country. Furthermore, child labor is obviously undesirable, but for the very poor households, it is not a matter of compulsion. Children itself have no choice, they have to work rather than to choose starvation. It poses questions if they really have another choice, to choose education rather than to be employed early or they really need to work like donkeys in a responsibility that should be by their parents.

In support, the International Labor Organization (2006) mentioned that children who are most vulnerable to child labor are often those who are also subject to discrimination and exclusion, including girls, ethnic minorities and indigenous and tribal people, those of low class or caste, people with disabilities, displaced persons and those living in remote areas. For these kind of people in the community, they believe that the returns from child labor activities are significantly higher than those from education. Parents who are struggling to make ends meet for family survival may resort to child labor if they have no other alternative.

The children's income for some families is an important resource for the family. However, some of those children also were forced by others to work, the rest reporting that they started working on their own initiative. Their financial contribution is vital for the family's survival, as most of the families live below poverty line. Both parents and children think that the child should make a financial contribution to the family income. Many thought that child labor was a positive thing

and that a child should work. Nevertheless, our government made some commitments to education and at least, child labor may decrease if not eliminated. One has to get to the root of child labor which is linked with poverty and lack of decent and productive work. While we strive to keep children in school and away from child labor, one needs to ensure decent and productive work for parents and basic social protection for families ( Reyson, 2012) .

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study may benefit the Department of Education. In the field of education, administrators may use the result of this study to plan for a program to cater the child workers need so that they can still continue their education even if they are working, to minimize the drop-out rate of students, and to increase the enrolment rate.. To the teachers, this will help them to understand how important is work for them, to know the status of students who are victims of child labor practice, and to plan for intervention program to encourage them to pursue schooling. To the Barangay Council, it may stabilize a relationship of cooperation and coordination among the Barangay Council, the Local Government Unit and the City Social Welfare and Development (CSWD) may identify, recognize, and discern the vital role of these child workers in their Barangay. And plan a quality programs if not to stop but at least to minimize the child labor practices, and help them improve their lives.

Moreover, to the Child Workers, the study is conducted for them to let everybody know their situation as young laborers. For the Employers, the output of the study will encourage them to ensure the protection, safety, health, and dignity of every child worker, and formulate and implement a continuing program for trainings and development and honing of skills of their young workers. The City Social Welfare and Development (CSWD) will determine, analyze, and review the existing theoretical views and the flexibility of the department to handle child labor cases. Design a policy that can exacerbate poverty that these laboring children face.

The outcome of the study will furnish Local Government Officials an information to craft up decrees and arrangements to aid children who are in desperate need of assistance purposely to allow them to carry out their vision to continue their education without any impediment whatsoever. This may guide every parent and guardian to realize that children have all the rights to acquire what have to be assimilated for their welfare through their comprehensive and thorough support despite adverse and undesirable situation the household has encountered. It is the duty of the parent/guardian, as the law of the land mandates, to value the education of children for them to become a whole person someday.

And also for the community as a whole, the study may augment our understanding that children are the backbone of the society. Children should be taken care of and should be given precedence. It must protect them to become a good resident in the vicinity. Finally, this study will be a springboard for another research which is related to their study.

## 1.5 Definition of Terms

*Child labor* refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives children of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, and endanger their whole being; i.e. mental, physical, social and moral existence.

*Indigenous Youth Learners* refers to the indigenous students engaged in child labor who are the participants of this phenomenological study.

*Rural Setting* refers to the coal mining area of Bislig City, province of Surigao del Sur particularly at San Jose National High School where the IP students engaged in child labor are enrolled.

*Voice of Toil* refers to the experiences of the child laborers, as well as their coping mechanisms and their insights as engaged in hard work

## 1.6 Limitations and Delimitations

This study was conducted in the City of Bislig particularly in San Jose National High School, a school with high drop-out rate even if they are offering Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM)- Open High School Program. The research was designed to determine the views and perceptions of 12 IP student-participants engaged in Child Labor Practice coming from San Jose National High School. In other words, the purpose of this study is not to find solutions to stop child labor issue but to investigate the reasons why these students have to choose to work and sacrifice their education and to find out their insights, hopes and aspirations as engaged in the child labor

Although the researcher has reached its aim, it appeared that there were some unavoidable limitations to consider. The sample size of the participating children was relatively small; the process is not considered a broad view, therefore, not a general concept.

## 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In order to understand some factors associated to child labor in DepEd Bislig City, one needs to understand how these factors are intrinsically linked. There are several articles and related studies that enlightened my mind about the facts of the study. This helped me conceptualize this very important study to encourage the students engaged in child labor practice to continue and finish their education.

Child labor practice like in the other places, still exist in Bislig City. The authorities on minors are one in the appraisal that child labor exists worldwide in astronomical figures. No one knows exactly how many child workers exist in the world today because they are statistically hidden even in the modern sector. Moreover, many governments and employers deny that they exist. Nevertheless, the International Labor Organi-

zation (ILO) estimates that throughout the world, around 215 million children under 18 work, many full-time (ILO 2010). It continues to harm the physical and mental development of children and adolescents and interfere with their education (UNICEF 2011).

Hindman (2006) mentioned that on the history of social attitudes, economic development, and public policy in the United States to illuminate the subject. Questions like at what age is someone considered a child, what kind of employment are harmful to children, and what has been the impact of public policies designed to repress the use of child labor. These questions have already answered, the problem remained unanswered, maybe because some children really have their own reasons why they have to work.

Additionally, in the article from International Labor Organization (ILO) entitled "World Day Against Child Labour 2008 Education: The right response to child labor", it is mentioned that Child labor is closely associated with poverty. Many poor families are unable to afford school fees or other school costs. The family may depend on the contribution that a working child makes to the household's income, and place more importance on that than on education (ILO 2008).

**Definition of Child Labor.** Before one can even begin to grasp the issue of child labor, its definition should first be examined to acquire a better understanding of the problem.

In the Philippines, a child is defined as a person below the age of emancipation which is 18 years. As soon as a person reaches 18 years of age, he/she is no longer considered a child and becomes automatically entitled to do all acts of civil life, such as contracting marriage or transacting business deals with corresponding legal effects (DOLE 2010).

Likewise, the term child recently acquired a new meaning upon the enactment of R.A. 7610 in 1992, otherwise known as the Child Protection Law. The new law, which devotes an entire chapter on working children, expanded the definition of children to mean persons below eighteen (18) years of age or those over but are unable to fully take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition (RA 7610).

Also, the term child labor is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling. That is, depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or by requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work (BASU, 2005; Giao and Alfresson, 2005).

In addition, the State, through the Department of Labor and Employment, defines child labor as the illegal employment of children below the age of fifteen (15), where they are not directly under the sole responsibility of their parents or legal guardian, or the latter employs other workers apart from their children, who are not members of their families, or their

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work endangers their life, safety, health and morals or impairs their normal development including schooling. It also includes the situation of children below the age of 18 who are employed in hazardous occupations. This definition was taken from the existing child labor statutes of the country and clearly pertains only to the work situations of children which under Philippine laws are considered illegal (DOLE 2008).

The International Labor Organization also mentioned that children above 15 years old but below 18 years of age who are employed in non-hazardous undertakings, and children below 15 years old who are employed in exclusive family undertakings where their safety, health, schooling and normal development are not impaired, are not considered as child labor under the law. Hazardous child labor is defined as being likely to harm children's health, safety or morals by its nature or circumstances. Children may be directly exposed to obvious work hazards such as sharp tools or poisonous chemicals (ILO 2012).

In its strict sense, child labor does not refer merely to any form of economic activity, as described above, but to a form of economic exploitation damaging to the child. In this light, the International Labor Organization - International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-IPEC) defines child labor as "work situations where children are compelled to work on a regular basis to earn a living for themselves and their families, and as a result are disadvantaged educationally and socially; where children work in conditions that are exploitative and damaging to their health and to their physical and mental development; where children are separated from their families, often deprived of educational and training opportunities; where children are forced to lead prematurely adult lives (ILO-IPEC 2006).

This stricter definition throws caution to those child advocates who tend to equate all forms of child labor with exploitation, thereby hiding the real issues, through playing more on emotions rather than on reason. The types of child labor which are really exploitative should first be identified instead of lumping all forms of child labor and in the process, lose sight of the forms of child labor that should be fought. What is economically exploitative, however, is essentially a cultural decision depicted in the community's daily practices. The State formalizes this decision through the formulation of national standards which become part of its laws (ILO-IPEC 2008).

Conversely, in the Basu and Van model, child labor is effectively undefined. The child is either a child laborer or the child is not. The modeling assumption is that a child participates in child labor to help the family meet their subsistence needs and stops when the family's adult only earnings are sufficiently high so that subsistence is met without the child's contribution (Basu, 1999; Basu, 2005; Basu, 2006; Tzannatos & Zafiris, 2003; Genicot, 2005; Rogers and Swinnerton, 2007).

Child Labor Situation in the Philippines. The Philippines is a country in Southeast Asia that is commonly called the Republic of the Philippines. Poverty is definitely very present in the Philippines, and due to the financial suffering of Filipino families, children are forced into work to help support their

families. That is why, Child labor is a no choice for them. This is the basis for the existence of child labor in the Philippines, and sadly it is rampant (ILO 2005).

Child labor in the Philippines is not an uncommon sight. Children between ages five and seventeen number 22.4 million, comprising a third of the overall Philippine population. Out of these 22 million, 1 out of 6 children are currently partaking in some form of labor. In the third quarter of 2007, the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) estimated that there were 777,000 Filipino workers between the ages of 10 and 14, and 1.4 million between 15 and 17 years. These figures exclude the large number of working children below the age of 10. In a recent article, however, DOLE reportedly acknowledged that, altogether, at least five million children work in commercial and industrial sectors in the Philippines. These figures coincide with UNICEF and ILO estimates of 5 to 5.7 million working children (DOLE 2008).

Philippines still partake in these practices of using children as disposable tools. This is why it's important for us to try and take as much action as individuals as we can, and hopefully one day we can end the abuse with our combined efforts. It is emphasized that many of these children also balance their duties to their school, their homes, and their family farms. In contrast to our own childhood, this should seem an unbearable workload. Yet the amount of work isn't the sole problem; these children faced severe and inhumane conditions (Santiago, 2010)

The law on child labor prohibits the employment of children under the age of 15, except under the direct and sole responsibility of parents or guardians, or in cases in which employment in cinema, theater, radio, or television is essential to the integrity of the production. The law allows employment of those between the ages of 15 and 18 for such hours and periods of the day as are determined by the Secretary of Labor, but forbids the employment of persons under 18 years of age in hazardous or dangerous work (DOLE 2008). However, it conceded that child labor remained a problem, and a significant number of children were employed in the informal sector of the urban economy or as unpaid family workers in rural areas—some as bonded laborers. The most recent government survey reported at least 4 million working children, approximately 2.4 million of whom were exposed to hazardous working environments, such as quarries and mines, docksides, and fishing boats. Although child labor can be found in almost every country, it is more prevalent in developing countries, especially in the Asian Region. In the Philippines, which is reputed to have the worst poverty incidence among ASEAN countries, the phenomenon of child labor is prevalent and is still spreading.

On the other hand, Edmonds and Sharma (2006) exemplified that corruptness of the child labor conditions in the Philippines, which need to be corrected immediately. Despite all the existing instances of child abuse through labor in the Philippines, there are in fact efforts to clean up the situation. On December 19, 2003, Republic Act No. 9231 was passed, which amends R.A. No. 7610 by embodying the State policy to provide special protection to children from all forms of abuse,

neglect, cruelty, exploitation and discrimination, and conditions prejudicial to their development, including child labor and its worst forms. It also provides stiffer penalties for their commission. This is just one of the recent attempts to end the existence of child labor in the Philippines, and hopefully in the future there will be continued efforts to end the reign of child abuse. Nevertheless, their studies showed that in this sector, children are mostly found in agriculture, in the garments and handicraft sectors working for subcontractors, in the street-vending trade, in illegal trade such as prostitution, and in domestic or bonded labor wherein children are pledged to landlords in payment of debt.

The 2011 Survey on Children, Child Labor in the Philippines of the National Statistics Office (NSO) revealed that of the 29 million Filipino children, aged 5-17 years old, there were roughly about 5.5 million working children, of which almost 3 million were in hazardous child labor. This is seconded by a news release from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) that the preliminary results of the survey showed that there are 5.492 million working children 5-17 years old as of October 2011 (Andrei Medina, June 27, 2012). The survey is one of the evidences that child labor in our country still exist and remain a problem. The efforts extended by our government to decrease this kind of practice remains impossible because children themselves need it to meet their necessities (DOLE, 2013)

Some people have argued that the Education For All (EFA) would eliminate child labor. But at the same time, child labor is one of the main obstacles to Education for All. Those who hold this view reason believe that children will be less available for full-time work at least during schools hours. However, many experts argue that compulsory schooling alone cannot overcome all the social and economic obstacles and in the labor force. If children really choose to work, school drop-out, absenteeism, tardiness and repetition rates tend to increase (EFA. Rosati, 2006).

UNICEF (1997) elaborated that the elimination of the worst forms of child labor stating, it is now a priority for UNICEF and other international agencies to take action to end the worst forms of child labor. But until now, this remains an issue. Child labor is considered as one of the tremendous problems in any country and it is really a big challenge for our government how to reduce this problem if not eliminated. In order to discern child labor, we must determine the forces that give rise to it. Poverty is on the top. Many children have looked for work or were forced to drop out from school due to economic reasons, including the cost of schooling. Because every individual have to eat and have to provide their basic needs, children have no choice, they have to stop schooling and work and sometimes not aware that they were already victims of child labor (Matsuno and Blagbrough, 2005)

**The Implications of Child Labor.** There is a large group of critics that disapproves child labor for a range of reasons, including: allowing children to work means stealing their childhood from them, the child laborers are subject to economic exploitation because they are paid at the lowest rates, and sometimes not at all, children often work under the worst

conditions which can cause physical deformations and long-term health care problems, some child work can perpetuate poverty because child laborers, deprived of education or healthy physical development, are likely to become adults with low earnings prospects. Children often replace adult labor, employers prefer them because they are cheap and docile. The widespread use of child labor may result in lower wages for all workers. And countries that allow child labor are able to lower their labor costs; thus they attract investors and also benefit from "unfair trade" due to their low production costs. (Arat, 2005).

Child labor is a significant phenomenon, large in scope, and with very important social and economic implications. It takes a variety of forms, from children working on family farms or in family businesses to children engaged in sweatshop labor, prostitution, armed conflict, or other illicit activity. It also has serious implications on human capital accumulation and in perpetuating poverty and therefore is closely linked to progress against the MDGs, especially the goal of achieving universal primary education. Given the connections between child labor and schooling, the efforts of the Education For All partnership will not be fully successful without addressing child labor. In addition to being an economic issue, child labor has important psychological and sociological dimensions as well. Most children do not have the rights to decide whether they enter the labor force. Parents are usually the people that make decisions for their children. Some children are voluntary to work and others are not (Hindman (2006)

Further, the economic literature on child labor essentially concerns a set of empirical studies. Some authors provided theoretical analysis for this, plus a serious test of it with strong empirical support. It could then be that among poor families, the substitution effect on education first dominate, then the income effect (Canagarajah and Coulombes, 1997; Rimmar, 1992; Jensen and Niel, 1996; Blunch and Verner, 2000; Ray, 2002; Cockburn, 2001; Opukpara, 2006 Mwebaze, 2007).

**Child Labor and Education.** Theoretical studies defined child labor as time outside of schooling because children are supposed to be in school, not in work (Chakraborty and Das, 2005; Das, S. and D. Mukherjee, 2007; Doepke and Zilibotti, 2006; Emerson and Souza, 2007; Grossmann and Michaelis, 2007; Jafarey and Lahiri, 2002; Lopez-Calva, 2001; Pallage and Zimmerman, 2007; Sylvain Dessy and Stephane Pallage, 2005).

While other authors considered education as an efficient alternative to child labor (ILO, 2004; Lachaud, 2005; Yacouba, 2001), the time in economic activity significantly affected the probability of children reporting missing classes and reporting feeling tired in class (UCW and ILO/IPEC 2005). This issue will lead to students at-risk of dropping out. Again,

dropping out of school is a worldwide phenomenon with drastic mental health consequences for children, families and society.

Raluca Zaharia (2006) cited that Education Office, UNICEF Romania, the rarely debated issue of school dropout in the Romanian education system requires immediate action. It is a phenomenon so widespread and so serious that it

should be a priority for all those involved in education: politicians, decision makers, parents, teachers and students. Based on her study, employment is one of the factors that may cause dropout in connection with pupils and their families. Making money through unskilled work, bar work, prostitution or begging during term time almost always results in early school dropout. One solution, where work is necessary for financial reasons, would be to adopt models from Western countries, such as high-school pupils taking a holiday job or working just a few hours a day, for example baby-sitting. School Dropouts: School Dropouts: Examining the Space of Reasons

**Health Status of Working Children.** The consequence of child labor may extend beyond schooling attendance and attainment. A survey on the psychological ramifications of work as a child, and it is not obvious how one should view the psychosocial impacts of child work. Research also observed on the effects of child labor on child health. There are guidelines on how to identify and assess hazardous occupations and situations for adults, but those for children are still not well-known. Children are not just small adults. They are particularly vulnerable from a developmental point of view – physical, psychological and social. (Woodhead 2005).

There are, however, many hazards as added by (Woodhead 2005) where specialist knowledge or the advice of experts is essential. These include explosive, flammable, toxic or other chemicals, solvents which have deleterious side-effects, electrical hazards, and the hazards of specialized industries such as mining. Specialist knowledge is also required in formulating certain precautions and preventive measures.

Potential hazards at work involves Biological hazards which includes exposure to bacteria, parasites, viruses, dangerous animals, insects and plants. Second is physical hazards which includes exposure to extreme heat or cold, noise, vibration and radiation. Third is chemical hazards which includes exposure to toxic substances such as solvents, flammable or explosive substances and agro-chemicals e.g. pesticides, herbicides and fungicides. Another one, which is commonly happened to the participants of my study is the ergonomic hazards that includes carrying heavy loads, fast or repetitive movements, badly designed workplaces resulting in awkward working positions, etc. Also, psychological hazards which includes isolation, threats, overwork, the lack of control or choice, abuse and harassment, sexual or otherwise. The working conditions involving long hours, night-work, low pay or lack of adequate contracts, and working environment involving work underground, underwater, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces, or working in places that are badly maintained, unsafe because of dangerous machinery, equipment or tools (Rosati 2008).

On the other hand, Special risks to children is referring to children and young people who are particularly vulnerable to risks because they are physically immature, weaker than adults and can be more sensitive to toxic substances. In addition, they tend to react differently to imminent danger such as fire; lack life experience, knowledge of risks and appropriate reactions; are almost always untrained or inadequately trained in safety matters; tire sooner with attention

lapses resulting in vulnerability to injury; require closer supervision which is often not given; are subject to bullying (physical, sexual, etc.) and exploitation because they are easily intimidated and therefore more compliant; and are regularly given work to do that is too difficult or too dangerous for them; are given dirty work that adults do not wish to do. (Derrien, 1993).

Much of the literature focuses on the injury and morbidity risks associated with the child's work environment. For example, Graitcer and Lerer (2008) list morbidity, injury, and hazard risks faced by children in different occupations and industries. While manufacturing draws a lot of popular attention, family work, including work on the farm, also poses risks.

Moreover, Forastieri (2005) points out that the increased nutritional needs associated with arduous work may exacerbate malnutrition, leaving the child stunted and impairing the child's productivity into adulthood, and Parker emphasizes that children who start work at a young age will be exposed to environmental hazards in the workplace for longer, perhaps at time when the effects of these hazards on development are more substantive (Parker 2007).

In recent years, more attention has been paid to the fact that there is typically not one decision-maker in the household, and empirical studies uniformly reject the unitary household model. Decisions about child time allocation will be influenced by mothers, fathers, extended family, and perhaps even children themselves. Edmonds and Sharma (2006) consider an extreme example of how child time allocation can be affected by multiple decision-makers. In studying a population in Western Nepal with a high intrinsic risk of bondage, they argue that child labor is increased and schooling reduced in part, because neither parents, children, or bondholders have security over the returns to investments in children. They argue their case can be read as an extreme representation of the classic parental agency problem (Edmonds and Sharma 2006).

Theoretically, there are many reasons why there might be a negative connection between family incomes and child labor. First, child labor may be a bad in parental preferences so that as incomes improve, the family chooses to have children work less. In fact, in the seminal child labor paper by Basu and Van, they posit the "luxury axiom": children only work when the family is unable to meet its basic needs. Beyond subsistence, the luxury axiom posits, families always opt to keep children out of work (Basu and Van 2005).

**Actions of Governments and International Organizations on Child Labor Issue.** Governments, parliamentarians, ministries and other public agencies are critical actors in the fight against child labor. Labor inspection is a public responsibility of government, which should be organized as a system within the context of a larger state system (Richthofen 2006).

In 2012, the House and Senate approved the revised domestic workers bill, Republic Act No. 10361, and An Act Instituting Policies for the Protection and Welfare of Domestic Workers was signed into law in January 2013. The Act, also referred to as the Domestic Workers Act or Batas Kasambahay, prohibits the employment of children below age 15 and requires that children ages 15 to 18 receive minimum wage and

all benefits and protections afforded in the Act. The Act also stipulates that employers allow domestic workers the opportunity to complete their basic education (DOLE 2012).

In September 2012, the Government ratified ILO Convention 189, Decent Work for Domestic Workers, which requires signatory states to take specific measures to prohibit child domestic labor. Specifically, ILO Convention 189 requires states to ensure that domestic workers above the legal working age are not deprived of educational opportunities and to establish a minimum age for domestic labor that is consistent with the ILO Conventions 138 and 182. The Philippines ratification was only the second by an ILO member state, and served to enter the Convention into force (ILO 2012).

In 2012, Congress passed the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012, which was signed into law in February 2013 as Republic Act No. 10364. This Act amends Republic Act No. 9208 of 2003 to establish a permanent Interagency Council Against Trafficking with a staffed Secretariat to carry out the mandate; creates a database on trafficking cases; expands provisions to protect victims of trafficking; and establishes stronger penalties for violations, including those against children. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, Republic Act No. 9208, prohibits trafficking in persons, including the recruitment, transfer, or harboring of children for prostitution, pornography, or forced labor. The Anti-Child Pornography Act, Republic Act No. 9775, protects children against exploitation in pornography and establishes strict penalties for persons responsible for the production, distribution, and publication of child pornography (DOLE 2012).

In 2012, the Cybercrime Prevention Act was signed into law. The Act increases the punishment for crimes of child pornography using a computer. The Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act, Republic Act No. 9165, prohibits the use of children in the production and trafficking of drugs (CCPA 2012).

Military recruitment is voluntary at age 17 for training and at age 18 for service. The recruitment, transport, or use of children under age 18 in armed conflict, including as guards, couriers or spies, is prohibited in the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act, Republic Act No. 7610; the Providing for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor Act; and the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (RA 7610).

The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2012 was approved by both houses of Congress between November 2012 and February 2013 and was signed into law by the President in May 2013. The Act extends formal education from 10 to 12 years; however the Act failed to make secondary school compulsory. The Kindergarten Education Act, Republic Act No. 10157, passed in 2012, extends free and compulsory education to children for one additional year, starting at age 5.

Primary and secondary education is free for all children; however, school attendance is compulsory only at the primary level, from ages 5 to 11. Children ages 12 to 14 are particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, as

they are not required to be in school and are not legally permitted to work (EBEA2012).

Most child labor occurred in the informal economy, most often in family settings, and the Government rarely sought to prosecute a poor family because it had a working child. Nevertheless, the Government, in coordination with a number of domestic NGOs and international organizations, implemented programs to develop other, safer options for children, return them to school, and offer families viable economic alternatives to child labor (DOLE 2011).

Although the Government made attempts to devote more resources to child labor programs, resources remained well below what was needed. The Government and NGOs implemented programs to prevent the engagement of children in exploitative child labor. DOLE worked with domestic NGOs to educate communities on child labor and provided counseling and other activities for children. DOLE and the Department of Education worked with NGOs, UNICEF, and the ILO International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor to assist children to return to school. The Government also implemented fines and criminal prosecutions for child labor violations in the formal sector, such as in manufacturing (DOLE 2011). DOLE continued its efforts to rescue exploited child workers, rescuing 43 minors in 249 different operations during the year. The Employers Confederation of the Philippines pursued an active and highly visible program against child labor.

On January 7, 2013, press release from the Department of Labor and Employment Sec. Baldoz: Four-year P9B convergence program on child labor ready for roll out Secretary of Labor and Employment Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said that the government is ready to roll out its convergence program on child labor, H.E.L.P. M.E., which will provide focused, converged, and synchronized strategies to effectively address the problem of child labor in the country. H.E.L.P. M.E. is a community-based approach against child labor and has a proposed budget of P9 billion to be implemented in four years, or from 2013 to 2016 (DOLE 2013).

The convergence strategy calls for bringing down the government's child labor programs and services in the barangay level, the lowest tier of governance. H.E.L.P. stands for health, education, livelihood, and prevention, protection, and prosecution, while M.E. stands for monitoring and evaluation. H.E.L.P. M.E. by 2016 we aim to have freed at least 75 percent of the 2.9 million child laborers in the country. H.E.L.P. M.E. was conceived by the Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cluster (HDPRC), with the DOLE and the Department of Social Welfare and Development as lead agencies, upon the instruction of President Benigno S. Aquino III for a deliberate, harmonized, and convergent approach in addressing the problem of child labor in the country (DOLE 2013).

Based on the 2011 Survey on Children conducted by the National Statistics Office, there are 5.492 million working children 5-17 years old as of October 2011. Of this number, 2.993 million, or 54.5 percent, are reported to be exposed to hazardous child labor. Nearly 45 percent, or 2.46 million Filipino child workers are considered engaged in permissible

work that is not classified as child labor, according to the survey. The good news is that the survey also showed that of the total number of child laborers, 69.5 percent, or 2.106 million, are attending school. "Retention in school of the 69.5 percent of the child laborers and bringing back to school the 30.5 percent require a very focused and serious effort (DOLE 2011).

Programs and actions against child labor also exists in other countries. IPEC is dependent on voluntary donor contributions to assist countries. The Program is a key expression of international solidarity - including facilitating increasing South-South cooperation - set out in Article 8 of Convention No. 182. In this regard, IPEC is primarily a field-based program that delivers practical support to countries through its projects. These projects are either centralized or decentralized or, and in most cases the later. IPEC works primarily through Ministries of Labor but is increasingly promoting the engagement and networking of other key ministries, especially Education, national statistical offices and national social partners. IPEC project work with national stakeholders to implement one or more of the following interventions to target child labor in different sectors: Direct Action, Legislation & Policy Development (Including Statistical Survey, Rapid Assessments, Baselines), Advocacy & Awareness Raising, Institutional Development, Social Services, Livelihood Schemes and Poverty Alleviation (ILO-IPEC 2005).

In the article dated January 18, 2013 of Ms Jodelen Mitra, Programme Officer for Monitoring and Evaluation ILO International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC). The National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) unanimously voted to adopt good practices criteria in programs to eliminate and prevent child labour as presented by the ILO-International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor. Mr Jess Macasil, Senior Program Officer discussed the primary good practices criteria which include effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, responsive/ethical soundness and sustainability while secondary criteria which are not mandatory are replicability, involvement of partnership, innovativeness and creativity and political commitment (Mitra 2013).

The Knowledge Management Sub-Committee of NCLC, represented by its Chair, Mr Jay Cainglet of the Federation of Free Workers, strongly supported this standardization practice. It will be the basis of the sub-committee in reviewing and approving good practices shared to the Child Labor Knowledge Sharing System. Macasil further stressed that having standard set of criteria will also influence programme implementers to improve their practices by learning from the experiences of what approaches work best (Macasil 2008).

IPEC Project Manager Giovanni Soledad also shared that, "The ongoing work for child labour elimination in the country can learn a lot from successful models that have been developed by the different Philippine Programme against Child Labor (PPACL) partners. With the NCLC's adoption of this process for identifying and documenting good practices, these models and stories can finally be accessed and replicated by anti-child labor advocates thereby strengthening our overall work as a movement". The presentation of the good practices criteria was part of the NCLC meeting held on 18 January

2013. The meeting was facilitated by the Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Recio of the Department of Labor and Employment, with former NCLC Chair and now retired Undersecretary Lourdes Transmonte (ILO-IPEC 2013).

In the Philippines, the government implements programs to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable families and children and to reduce child labor. Through the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, DSWD provides cash transfers to households, conditional upon their children's achievement of a monthly school attendance rate of at least 85 percent and regular medical checkups and immunizations. In 2012, the budget was increased to 960,000, from 570,000 in 2011, benefiting 3.1 million households and 7.4 million children through age 14. A 2010 assessment of the Program demonstrated an increase in school enrollment and attendance among beneficiaries; however, results also showed that child labor persisted among beneficiaries (DOLE 2013).

In January 2013, DOLE announced that the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program would be expanded and modified through the Conditional Cash Transfer Program for Families in Need of Special Protection to specifically target households of child laborers. This initiative was in response to the new Convergence Action Plan under the PPACL. Child eligibility was expanded from age 14 to age 17. The additional conditionality prohibiting hazardous child labor was added to the program requirements as a mechanism to reduce the worst forms of child labor. The 2013 budget will be further increased to \$1.08 million (DOLE 2013).

However, for many child laborers, this program may serve as one of the few available options to earn an equivalency certificate, which is required to gain access to formal institutions, such as those that provide higher education, vocational training, or workforce development. no assessment of the impact of this program on reducing child labor has been identified (DOLE 2012). DOLE's Livelihood for Parents of Child Laborers (KASAMA) program provides funds to parents of working children for projects such as raising livestock, producing souvenirs, food vending, and other service professions. The KASAMA program is one mechanism under the DOLE's Campaign for Child Labor-Free Barangays. In 2012, the KASAMA program provided livelihood support to 270 parents of child laborers, with a budget of \$56,000. Another initiative, Project Angel Tree, redistributed shoes, school bags, toys, and other supplies donated by private sponsors to 6,271 children at risk of, or engaged in, child labor.

Previously, more than 26,000 adult sugar workers received support for livelihood projects. Data were not available for 2012. no assessment of the impact of this program on reducing child labor has been identified. As part of the SAP, DOLE's Integrated Services for Migratory Sugar Workers Program (I-SERVE SACADAS) seeks to improve the livelihoods of migrant sugar workers and their families and increase their income (DOLE 2011).

Under the Phil. Pedophiles Against Child Molestation (PPACL), the Government of the Philippines is implementing a number of programs designed specifically to reduce child labor, including the DOLE Child Labor Prevention and Elimination



nation Program (CLPEP). In 2012, DOLE launched a new Child Labor-Free Barangays campaign to transform 89 targeted villages nationwide into child labor-free communities through Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (DOLE 2012).

At the community level, the program implements local awareness-raising campaigns, institutes child labor monitoring mechanisms, and requires barangays to develop child labor elimination plans with short- and long-term objectives. The Program encourages convergence of services from different Government agencies, including education services to child laborers and livelihood assistance to their households. During the year, the Program was piloted in 6 villages, and it will be expanded to an additional 10 villages in 2013. DOLE reports that between July and December 2012, 4,863 children and 1,849 households benefited from program services. Most of the child beneficiaries were reportedly engaged in hazardous work, such as scavenging, deep-sea fishing, farming, mining, domestic work, hauling logs, loading ships, and production of fireworks. During the year, DOLE regional offices reactivated and provided support to 171 Barangay Child Protection Committees (DOLE 2013).

Additionally, DOLE regional offices allocated at least 5 percent of their Workers Income Augmentation Program (WINAP) funds, approximately \$295,000 in total, for implementation of CLPEP activities. WINAP improves the livelihoods of workers through training and material support for income-generation activities.

The department of Social Works implements the new comprehensive Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons (RRPTP) with an allocated budget of \$615,000 to provide services to victims of trafficking and to raise awareness in vulnerable communities. In 2012, 285 child trafficking victims received services through Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons. In 2012, DSWD established a new shelter near Manila for male victims of trafficking, a critical improvement, as most centers provide services only to women and girls. DSWD provided services to victims of exploitive child labor and CSEC, including crisis intervention and residential facilities. Supplementing wider efforts to raise awareness on trafficking, IACAT funded school-based and community-based awareness campaigns that target children. Although the Government has implemented programs addressing the commercial sexual exploitation of children, particularly those in situations of prostitution, research found no evidence that it has carried out programs to identify and assist children exploited for pornography (DSWD 2012).

DSWD also provided Special Social Services for Children in Armed Conflict to protect and rehabilitate children after their direct or indirect involvement in armed conflict. In 2012, the budget was \$60,000, and 59 children received services, including 40 who were used as couriers, medics, spies, or combatants and 19 who were affected by armed conflict through cross-fire or displacement.(53) Services include emergency

evacuation and rescue; family reunification; provision of food, clothing, and shelter; and psychosocial rehabilitation. However, reports indicate that children continued to be recruited into armed conflict, and the reach of this program does not appear to be sufficient to prevent children's recruitment into anti-government and terrorist organizations (DSWD 2012).

During the year, the Government of the Philippines participated in programs to reduce child labor; these programs were funded by international donors and implemented through international organizations or NGOs. USDOL funded a \$4.75 million project, implemented by ILO-IPEC from 2009 to 2013. This project aims to withdraw and prevent 9,350 children from the worst forms of child labor through the provision of educational and noneducational services in Quezon, Masbate, Northern Samar, and Bukidnon (ILO-IPEC 2009).

As of October 2012, a total of 6,533 children had been withdrawn or prevented from participating in hazardous child labor. The project targets children engaged in farming, mining, fishing, and domestic service. The project developed an Internet-based information system that promotes communication on child labor issues among government and nongovernmental agencies, improved program monitoring, and automated child labor case referrals. With the NCLC, the project is assessing project models and documenting best practices to be replicated (ILO- IPEC 2009).

United States Department of Labor (USDOL) funded a \$15 million project in 2011 to reduce child labor in sugar-producing areas in 11 provinces of the Philippines, and this project will be implemented through 2015. It will provide education services to 52,000 children engaged in, or at risk of engaging in, the worst forms of child labor; it will also provide livelihood assistance to 25,000 households of targeted children. The project engages the sugar industry in raising awareness of child labor among sugar workers and their families. During the first year, the project provided educational services to 10,592 children working in sugarcane (ILO- IPEC 2009).

In 2012, the Philippines participated in the USDOL-funded, 4-year Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues project, which is active in approximately 40 countries. In the Philippines, the project aims to build the capacity of the national government and develop strategic policies to address the elimination of child labor and forced labor; improve the evidence base on child labor and forced labor through data collection and research; and strengthen legal protections and social service delivery for child domestic workers. The project is conducting an analysis of legislation regarding worst forms of child labor, focusing specifically on child domestic labor. It is also strengthening child labor legislation enforcement mechanisms, with a focus on child domestic labor. During the reporting period, the project made preparations for a national rapid situational analysis of child domestic workers as well as a gap assessment of social services for child domestic workers (DOLE 2012).

The Government of the Philippines participated in a program, with \$29,550 funded by the Eliminating Child Labor in

Tobacco Growing Foundation, which provided educational services to 94 children and livelihood assistance to 100 parents during the year. Through DOLE, the project also conducted awareness raising through activities for youth, teachers, and school administrators, as well as through comic strips and other advocacy materials (DOLE 2012).

The Government, at the national and regional levels, also coordinates with the Kasambahay Program to provide immediate services to trafficking victims and child domestic workers including shelter, psychological support, and reintegration. Information on the activities, beneficiaries, and funding level in 2012 was not available.

Given the scope and magnitude of child labor in the Philippines, the limited reach of these programs is not sufficient to significantly reduce child labor, especially in the agriculture and domestic service sectors.

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The goal of reducing exploitive child labor is included in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (2011-2016). The Plan specifies government commitments to strengthen mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of child protection laws, to develop strategies to respond to child trafficking and pornography, and to implement an enhanced program for preventing children from being engaged in armed conflict (MTPDP 2011).

The goal of reducing exploitive child labor is mainstreamed into the Labor and Employment Plan (2011-2016).<sup>(5)</sup> Child labor is also included in the following national development agendas: Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015), Education for All National Plan (2004-2015), Basic Education Reform Agenda, and UN Development Assistance Framework (DOLE 2011).

In addition, the Government of the Philippines has primary policy instruments to prevent and eliminate child labor. The Philippines National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children, 2000-2025, also known as "Child 21," sets out broad goals to achieve improved quality of life for Filipino children by 2025..

The tripartite Philippine Program Against Child Labor (PPACL) Strategic Framework lays out the blueprint for reducing the incidence of child labor by 75 percent.<sup>(19, 58, 59)</sup> To achieve this goal, PPACL identifies five strategic approaches to prevent, protect, and reintegrate children from the worst forms of child labor.<sup>(58, 60)</sup> To translate this strategic framework into action, the Implementation Plan (2011-2012) identifies concrete objectives such as improving the access of children and their families to appropriate services to further prevent incidence of child labor and the reintegration of former child laborers. In 2012, the PPACL was extended through 2016, and Secretaries of NCLC member agencies signed an agreement to strategically scale up its implementation (PPACL 2010).

In 2012, the President tasked the Human Development Cabinet cluster, led by DOLE and DSWD, to develop a Convergence Action Plan, called HELP ME, to reduce the worst

forms of child labor by 2016 under the PPACL. The directive included a funding allocation of \$220,000,000 over 4 years for implementation, from 2013 to 2016. The Convergence Action Plan is designed to remove 893,000 children from hazardous child labor across 15,568 target barangays. The HELP ME plan focuses on outcomes that include a multilevel information system, more accessible education and livelihood services, child labor agendas mainstreamed in policy development at all levels, a compilation of policies and laws, and strengthening of enforcement (including prosecution of child labor offenders). HELP ME was launched in January 2013.(DOLE 2011).

In June 2012, the NCLC launched the Batang Malaya Child Labor-Free Philippines campaign. Campaign objectives include the institutionalization of the Survey on Children to be regularly implemented by the Government; mainstreaming child labor into local development plans; adding child labor elimination as a conditionality in conditional cash transfer programs; strengthening the labor inspectorate to monitor child labor; improving enforcement of Republic Act No. 9231; and strengthening the NCLC through a legal mandate, budget, and dedicated secretariat.(NCLC 2012).

A revised National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (2012-2016) was launched in December 2012 and contains specific provisions on the prevention of trafficking of children, including awareness raising and local programs to prevent children from being lured by traffickers .(NCLC 2012).

The Department of Education implemented a new program in 2012 that extends the education system from 10 to 12 years, ahead of the approval of the draft Enhanced Basic Education Act, which would formally legislate the extended education.

**Gender Differences on Child Labor.** Gender differences may sometimes link to the number of child laborers engaged in domestic and market work. This will give us ideas as to why some of the child laborers in market work are boys. Gender differences in activities can be considerable in some countries. Boys generally have higher participation rates in market work than girls and lower participation rates in domestic work. That is why, most of the girls are not counted as child laborers because most of them are on domestic work only .Estimates of gender differences tend to be extremely sensitive to what types of activities are considered in a study. The misleading picture that omitting domestic work can create for analysis of the determinants of child work (Assaad, 2007; Levison and Moe, 1998; Levison, Moe, and Knaul,2001) .

As in the paper by Erik Edmonds (2005), the question to be asked is whether differences in activities reflect a fundamental difference in how girl time allocation decisions will be made with respect to the household's economic environment? As a matter of fact, girls seem to allocate less time in economic activities than boys. Girls work on average 5 hours less than boys.

In contrary, Murray (2004) point out that in many developing countries, a vicious circle links child labor to sexual discrimination. The relations and the sociocultural roles of sex are

key factors structuring the nature and the importance of child labor. For some people, the gender discrimination follows a sociocultural logic. These sociocultural factors act upon the behavior of individuals. As a matter of fact, in many developing countries, a great value is given to male children. This is the case in patriarchal societies. Children do not have the same value for the parents. Some parents recognize that an appreciation difference of their children is due to the fact that girls, contrary to boys will leave the family when they will get married; consequently, investment in girls' education will be to the advantage of the husbands and the family in-law (Murray, 2004).

**Worst Forms of Child Labor.** There are four types of child labour that the international community has declared to be particularly heinous: slavery, sexual exploitation, illicit activities, and hazardous work. A large number of children work in extremely hazardous occupations or dangerous conditions such as construction, mining, quarrying and undersea fishing. Some are trapped in virtual slavery, bought and sold for the debts of their parents. They are trafficked across national borders, and commercial sexual exploitation of children is on the rise. The employment of very young children is a particularly alarming problem. The younger the children, the more vulnerable they are to hazards at the workplace and to economic exploitation. ILO surveys show that in some areas up to 20 per cent of child workers are under the age of 10 (ILO 2007).

On the other hand, the situation of young girls deserves particular attention because of the nature of their work and the conditions under which they work. For example, work that is hidden from public view, such as domestic service (a major sector of girls' employment) may keep them isolated from other children and exposed to violence and sexual abuse (ILO-IPEC 2005).

Children doing piecework in the home are often expected to work long hours in order to gain even minimal pay. Few get a chance to play. It is not easy to point to a particular sector or occupation and declare it to be a "worst form". Even where children do not suffer the worst forms of abuse cited above, many are forced to work without sufficient rest, in cramped spaces, with poor lighting, seated on the bare ground, using tools that are too big for them, without adequate drinking water or toilets, and - particularly damaging to their future - no chance to go to school. Even the many millions of children who work in traditional agriculture as part of the family unit are exposed to risk from a wide variety of hazards. (ILO Conventions 2005).

The ILO's SIMPOC estimates that a total of 8.4 million children are involved in child trafficking, in forced or bonded labor, are soldiers, are prostitutes or involved in pornography, or participate in illicit activities (ILO, 2005). An important aspect of students' access to education is the amount of time actually spent in school. When students are absent from school, arrive late, or cut class, they are reducing their opportunities to learn. These opportunities are violated through child labor. This is actually an international concern because it damages, spoils and destroys the future of children. Child work may be a necessary economic or cultural practice; and removing all

children from work may not be in the best interest of the child. But what is the most important is that we should be aware of the conditions of the school children engaged in this kind of practice and their works needs to be examined.

The recent boom in empirical work on child labor has substantially improved our understanding of why children work and what consequences of that work might be. This survey aims to assess what we currently know about child labor and to highlight what important questions still require attention. In general, the abovementioned data about child labor helps a lot to fully understand why child labor practice still exists, the experiences of other child laborers in their work, and the reasons why children are enticed to work rather than to go to school. These information will give the researcher a preliminary idea on how to deal with these children. It may be easy for the researcher to deal with her participants during the FGD and in-depth interview. Thus, the related literatures are an avenue for a proper conduct of the study. Hence, from the review of related literatures presented above, it can be concluded that different studies have been conducted.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This study documented the voices of the toil from the indigenous youth learners. It involved gathering of data on the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of the participants through an in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion. The variety of techniques used by this approach included observation, interviews, focus groups and the collection of children's life stories. It also constituted an important component of the EFA objectives, and an in-depth analysis of the link between quality of education and student achievements is contained in the 2005 EFA Report (UNESCO, 2005). I.

#### 3.1 Purpose of the Study

The study was qualitative phenomenological in design. It determined voices of the toil from the indigenous youth learners of San Jose National high School. It focused on the experiences of the students engaged in Child Labor, their coping mechanisms in overcoming the challenges and the insights that they shared to their peers and friends..

As defined by Creswell (2007), phenomenology is a research strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants. As described by Moustakas (1994), phenomenology seeks meanings from appearances and arrives at essences through intuition and reflection on conscious acts of experience, leading to ideas, concepts judgments, and understandings". As such, the focus of this phenomenological research study will be to understand the situation of children engaged in child labor practice. A phenomenological research design provides an understanding of the themes and patterns portrayed by the study's participants. The participants in the study will be asked open-ended interview questions, such that their specific experiences can be identified. The empirical phenomenological approach involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the es-

sences of the experience”.

According to Groenewald (2004), the operative word in phenomenological research is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts. The phenomenologist is concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved”. A variety of methods can be used in phenomenological research that includes interviews and focus group discussion (FGD). This research used these methods to address the research questions.

For this research study, the researcher conducted the In-Depth Interview and Focused Group Discussion with students of San Jose National High School who were at-risk of dropping-out because they already engaged in child labor practice. The interview questions were directed to the participant’s experiences and perceptions towards their works as child laborers. At the root of phenomenology, the intent is to understand the phenomena in their own terms to provide a description of human experience as it is experienced by the person allowing the essence to emerge” (Cameron, Schaffer, & Hyeon-Ae, 2001). This research method correlates well with the intent of the study to understand the experiences and perceptions of students of San Jose National High School towards their work in a coal mining industry. Though small qualitative studies are not generalized in the traditional sense, some have redeeming qualities that set them above the requirement (Myers, 2000). The research value of qualitative studies was based on the participant’s responses in context to the research questions, as such, the issue of generalization of the research finding needs to be explored.

According to Yin (2003), qualitative research can be generalized. Analytic data can be generalized to some defined population that has been sampled, but to a theory of the phenomenon being studied, a theory that may have much wider applicability than the particular case studied. In this, it resembles experiments in the physical sciences, which make no claim to statistical representativeness, but instead assumes that their results contribute to a general theory of the phenomenon..

As the construct of the research study would be that of a qualitative phenomenology design, the focus of this research was to understand how effective current practice helps child laborers of a particular school to complete their education successfully. The rationale behind the choice of phenomenological research was to understand the situation of these child laborers so that proper intervention can be addressed to them and that they will be able to finish their schooling despite of their situation. This information will be identified through inductive, qualitative methods such as focus group discussions.

It is the intended goal of qualitative research to offer a perspective of issues and provide reports that reflect the researcher’s ability to document the resulting phenomenon. To analyze the data collected, Focused- Group discussion was conducted to selected IP students of San Jose National High School who are engaged in child labor practice. Detailed notes were taken to collect the participants’ responses. To compile

and analyze the data, all of the responses were appropriately coded. Though the responses were qualitative, a classification coding system was developed that represents a theme for the responses, thus offering the ability to create a coding table allowing for data aggregation and analysis.

Phenomenological research methods facilitated the study of high school students’ experiences and perceptions towards child labor and determine their coping mechanisms in pursuing academic activities. It will measure the participant’s experience and the contexts or situations in which they experience it (Creswell, 2009).

This research illustrated both the understanding and experiences of high school students in engaging child labor practice and how their work affects in their academic activities. The research data will be identified from various data collection methods. Open-ended questions and written comments were solicited from the above-mentioned participants as well as testimonials through focus group discussion to produce data elements. Comprehensive data journals were kept such that all raw data can be identified and used for coding and data aggregation.

Alternative research methods such as quantitative research would not completely address the size and scope of the proposed research questions. Other methods would not offer a comprehensive review of the issues or offer the level of understanding of high school students experiences regarding child labor. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), quantitative research is confirmatory and deductive in nature, while qualitative research is exploratory and inductive in nature..

The value of the selected qualitative method is that the issues and phenomenon are viewed in its context, while a quantitative study is viewed through a narrow hypothesis employing closed end questions while verifying theories, it is evident that a qualitative study is best suited for this research.

This study patterned the philosophical investigation of experience which I counted on as the optimum design to delve into the perceptions of participants and describe in details their conscious experiences with regards to the circumstances that they were engaged in; that is, child labor, without reference to the question of whether what is experienced is objectively real.

In the same way, this is to describe and analyze information by means of inductive, qualitative method explicitly as conducting in-depth interviews, group or individual discussion or conference, and examination of participants in careful manner and interprets conscious perceptions of things setting aside such considerations as whether the phenomena are objective or subjective. This also reflects upon different observations and interprets them without preconceptions . It is evident that whatever views and examination in this respect are deliberately drawn and acquired from the participants’ perspectives.

However, the scheme of phenomenological inquiry is not to decipher problems rather its sole purpose is to misconceptualize a certain fact so that it could be understood. Phenomenological inquiry is also supplemented with analytical and diagnostic thinking which influence the totality of people’s

lives (Jurema, Pimentel, Cordeiro & Nepumoceno, 2006). Indeed, in phenomenological research allows contributor to state and squeeze out their own outlook through their peculiar terms and expressions (Coll & Chapman, 2000).

### 3.2 Role of Researcher

I have been in the service as a high school teacher for 15 in-exhaustible years wherein I spent 10 years in the private school and five years in public school where at present I am designated as School Head. As a school head, I design scheme and practices with the concerted assistance and support of my teachers, apply and implemented such designs, and appraise them to determine whether they benefit the interests of the school, the students, the teachers and the community.

Prior to my new assignment as school head in my present school, I had been assigned first at different stations in our division. In this circumstance, I noticed the identical problem faced by every school where I was stationed; that is, high drop-out rate, absenteeism and tardiness among students. There, I found out that one of the major reasons of their absenteeism, tardiness and even loss of interest in school is working to earn a living. With this, I came up with a research in my own accord to determine the causes what prompted our students to lie low in their pursuit of education. As a teacher and a designated school head, it is my sole responsibility to know and discover about every status of my clients purposely I can design and implement a program for their welfare.

Moreover, as a teacher, efforts have to be made to moderately cultivate an atmosphere that our students would feel they are always welcome in school despite of their situation of being a victim of circumstances. Through this qualitative research, I can surely bring the problem of our young children who are engaged in a desperate situation; i.e. child labor, in the open for everyone to ponder that these children are not supposed to be exploited.

Meanwhile, I took the following roles, which were designing, interviewing, transcribing, verifying, reporting, thematizing, and analyzing. Upon choosing the topic, I perceived that it is quite interesting. I chose a qualitative phenomenological approach as the design of my study. After giving some thought about the topic, I conducted personal in-depth interview to 12 students and a focus group discussion to six students using the same validated interview guide. I chose participants who could give me comprehensive information regarding those concerns, that is, IP students of San Jose National High School who are at risk of dropping-out because they are enticed to work in a small-scale coal mine in that particular place. The actual interview were audio recorded and field notes were also used to supplement the recorded review. A note taker, audio recorder/documenter were hired with honorarium.

The next thing I did was transcribed the audio recordings after the interview was done. The transcription was done in verbatim fashion for an easy and a manageable way of scrutinizing and probing the content. Analyzing the data is the next step, where the data gathered were coded and each participant was assigned to a code and aliases were also used to hide their identities. The data analyst did the final analysis of the data

including the documents gathered for the history of the child laborers.

The next task was the verification wherein it is based on the findings whether the study is reliable and valid.

Lastly, I need to have the reporting of the findings as shown in chapter 4, the results of the statement of the problems 1,2,3,4,& 5. The reporting was done to identify the themes from each specific question.

### 3.2 Research Participants

The participants of the study were the 18 students of San Jose National High School in Bislig City which have one of the highest drop-out rate in Bislig City, Surigao del Sur. The selection of participants was based on the children's performance in school, their reasons of engaging in child labor practice. There were 18 key participants who were involved in this study. Out of the 18 key participants, there are only six that were randomly selected to compose the focused group discussion.

In interviewing working children, it is important to remember that it is not the child who is violating the law; rather, it is the child's employer. I should see myself as asking a favor from the child, not the other way around, and the child must therefore be looked upon as a partner exploring a particular situation. In this way the child can perhaps see the benefits of participating in the interview rather than it being the researcher who demands cooperation and may intimidate the child laborer. If the child agrees to an interview, he/she is asked to recount aspects of her or his experience - both in the work environment and outside. The interviewer has to be sensitive to the child's emotional state, aware of the consequences of the questioning and must respect the child's right to speak or to keep silent. For satisfactory results, the interviewer created the right physical and psychological climate. Whatever the child's reaction, the interviewer must try to create a non-threatening atmosphere, adopt an empathetic and caring approach and encourage the child to talk by asking open questions. Most of all, the researcher listened to what the child is saying, but should also know when to stop if the child's memories and experiences are too intense or painful. Closed questions simply requiring the answer "yes" or "no" are sometimes necessary, but an open question is better because it enables the child to describe or explain, comment on or justify a view.

If the researcher cannot obtain an answer to a key question even after rephrasing it, it is sometimes better to return to the issue later on. It is also important to realize that, like all interviewees, the child may be adjusting his/her answers to please the interviewer or out of fear that what they reveal will be used against him or her. The interviewer should therefore be sensitive to these unseen and unexpressed elements. Questions can also be validated by asking the same thing in different ways at different times during the interview.

Indeed, the study employed the purposive sampling since it is the most effective technique when one need to study a certain family background with knowledgeable experts within participant's selection is highly relevant for this research as people are constantly looked upon for knowledge and information. Choosing the purposive sample is fundamental to the

quality of data gathered.

### 3.3 Data Collection

Before I decided to use interview as one of my methods, I had to make sure of the feasibility of data collection methods. I made sure that the persons I wanted to interview really were available and that I could get a direct contact with some participants. I made a letter to the Schools Division Superintendent and school head of San Jose National High School for him to allow me and to suggest at the same time students from the school who are at risk of dropping out because they are engaged in child labor practice.

At the beginning stages of my research project, the first move I underwent was to develop and facilitate positive relationships among the key participants, the parents, the school authorities, whose assistance and approval are needed for my study to be possible. I deemed that these relationships are the fundamental to the logistics of setting up my study. To acquire permission to have access to my potential participants, I sought a go signal from the Schools Division Superintendent with a request letter. After I obtained the approval, I set up a contact to the school gatekeepers on the probability of providing me a potential and a probable participants from their station. This constant communication created an ambience of understanding not only between me and the schools but also to my children-participants and the community.

After all the necessary requisites had been facilitated, it is essential that I had a personal appearance with the school authorities purposely to openly state my identity and my purpose. And to make personal commitment to protect the identities of the people involved with whom I have to interact. Confidentiality of information has to be maintained to ensure that particular individuals can never be linked to the data the schools have provided. (Mack, N., Woodstrong, C., Macqueen, K., Guest, G., Namey, E., 2005). Subsequently, with the help of the gatekeeper, I deliberately located the place, the time, and the dates where the event of interview and other methods be held.

That question and answer sessions thoroughly scrutinized the features of every child's experiences. It dug out the factors why they resorted to grind themselves into early employment. Furthermore, the interviews provide them the chance to unwrap their sentiments and helped me understand their stands and reasons.

The numerous outlines and devices that I applied during the conduct of the interviews furnished my participants supplemental awareness and discernment about their status. Everything that transpired during the course of conversation was put into record through audio recording which will verify the precision of the data collected. The recorded audios were copied out word for word to confirm the reliability and integrity of the interview.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

After the data were collected, the next step was to categorize the information. The objective was to identify any patterns representing concepts the participants represented during the data collection phase. Data were then organized into logical categories that summarize and bring meaning to the manu-

script of notes. Specific codes were developed allowing the author to categorize the responses into the above-mentioned construct, while identifying emergent themes. During this data aggregation phase, subcategories may be identified, which were not identified during the initial development of the research project. The data used was the interpretative approach, which is phenomenological in nature.

To transcribe is a beginning of the analysis process. To analyze means to separate something into parts or elements (Kvale, 2009). It is a process that involves making meaning of information that the researcher has obtain (Merriam, 1994).

Answers of the interviewee were transcribed, translated, grouped and organized and the themes were presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4. The important phrases that emerged from the transcripts and comments were identified as thematic statements. They were listed and grouped accordingly to determine patterns and connections between themes. The first round produced more than ten themes for Table 3. Regroupings were done to reduce the essential themes. The main themes into fewer items. The process finally generated five essential themes. The process of numeration was adopted in the determination of thematic statements. Numeration is the number of times that the thematic statements or emergent themes occur in the transcripts (Smith et.al, 2009). In this study, a theme is identified when a particular idea or experience was highlighted by at least two participants in a group. Numerous thematic statements were obtained from the transcripts. The thematic statements were grouped. Similar views were categorized under a thematic statement which was consequently grouped to form an essential theme. Those occurred only once, were not included in the thematic statements.

Everything that transpired throughout the course of my research was supported and documented through audio recording and transcribed verbatim for an easy and a manageable way of scrutinizing and probing the content. By this procedure, interpreting data was so manipulative wherein to choose what to interpret and what to modify is an alternative.

**Trustworthiness and Credibility.** In my qualitative inquiry, I established the trustworthiness of my findings by employing the different strategies to meet the four issues of trustworthiness that demand attention: credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability (Shenton, 2004). Trustworthiness is the quality achieved in the study if the data collected is applicable and consistent. Trustworthiness of a qualitative study can be increased maintaining high credibility and objectivity (Gay & Airasians, 2003; Suter, 2006).

To address credibility, I employed the following techniques: First, I developed an early familiarity with the culture of the participants before the data collection. This was achieved during the preliminary visits. Letters were sent to the head of the schools stating the purpose of the study. Second, gather data of who among the list of students at risk of dropping are engaged in child labor practice. Only those who met the requirements were included in the list. Third is to apply the triangulation method where observation, focus group discussions and individual interviews were utilized. And fourth, was to apply the different techniques to ensure that the partic-

ipants will honestly give the information needed for the study. It is very important that the researcher developed a good rapport to the student-participant so that accurate information will be gathered. This was stressed by Shenton (2004) saying that these methods are useful to saturate data.

On the other hand, dependability is an assessment of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation. In order to address the dependability issue more directly, the processes within the study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same result. Thus, the research design may be viewed as a "prototype model". It is supported by Streubert(2000) that dependability is a criterion used to measure trustworthiness in qualitative research. Dependability is met through securing credibility of the findings.

Also, Siegle(2006) explained that dependability must provide its audience with evidence that if it were replicated with the same or similar respondents in the same context, its finding would be repeated.

**Conformability** on the other hand is a strategy that will get rid the study from any researcher bias. I confirmed that I had 12informants for the in-depth interview and six for the focus group discussion. They were selected because they were able to meet the criteria. Although I had my own predisposition of what the result would be, but the informants will give fresh ideas different of what is in my mind. Miles and Huberman(1994) considered the key criterion for conformability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions.

Lastly, transferability implies generalizability of the findings and results of the study to other settings, situations, populations, and circumstances. This is the quality we have been calling "external validity" or "generalizability" in our use of the term in intro to research design (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Also, Crotty (2006) elucidated transferability in the naturalistic researcher maintains that no true generalization is really possible; all observations are defined by the specific contexts in which they occur.

**Ethical Consideration.** In writing a research means that the researcher must take into account the various ethical issues, concerns, dilemmas and conflicts that arise during the process. Ethics define what is or are not legitimate to do or what moral research procedure involves. It is often a balance between two values; the pursuit of scientific knowledge and the rights of those being studied (Neuman, 2006).

The biggest challenge in conducting an interview that includes a discussion about peculiar experiences is getting a candidate to give honest and meaningful answers (Patricia Harnd, 1998). That makes behavioral approach best when deciding what interview questions to ask. Participants shall be handled according to the decent and honorable standards established in conducting interview. Hesitation to dispose reality in the first place was apparent probably because most of the participants fondled a sense of reservation. These circumstances are comprehended normal and considered part of the course. A wide range of considerations has been employed

purposely to guarantee protection and confidence. The participants are also given the right to pull back as soon as they feel they need not to play a part of the study.

In this study, I first asked permission to the schools division superintendent and after it was approved, I wrote letter to the school head of that particular school that I will be conducting study to the students of San Jose National High School who are at-risk of dropping out because of child labor issue. The school is the one who chose participants of my study. I used informed consent that explained all the things they needed to know. Two informed consents were made, for the students, and for their parents/guardians. It was clearly read and explained by translating to their own dialect. Both the participants and the researcher signed to the informed consent.

Before the data were collected, measures to protect the confidentiality of the participants in the study were taken. The participants were fully informed of the nature of the study and the purpose of their participation in the study. The interviewees were advised that they could withdraw anytime in their participation and that, it is voluntary. Without the signature in the informed consent form, they could not participate in the study. Another, to protect the identity and anonymity of my participants, I used numbers instead their names during the interview and in the transcription, I used aliases.

Lastly, Bineham( 2005),explained that the privacy with respect to information the key informants disclosed during participation in the study will be protected within the limits of the law. This means that the personal information of the participants was kept confidential.

## 4 RESULTS

The responses of the participants through in-depth interview and Focused Group Discussion have provided a clearer picture of the experiences, coping mechanisms and their insights as they engaged in child labor.

The students shared that that their experiences regarding child labor are triggered by the reasons of engaging in the child labor particularly in the mining area which include the pressing need for labor. Their experiences are labeled by their stories of under payment of the services they rendered, trivial participation in school activities, divergent outlook in life and unhealthy physical condition.

The participants also disclosed their strategies in coping with the problems they met. These include self-denial of hardships, medication when ill and upholding ambitions. Moreover, they also gave insights to their peers like considering the importance of schooling and importance of work.

Generally, the voices of toil from the indigenous youth learners have defined their diverse but beautiful experiences, in different situations, and settings, yet with similar struggles to survive the challenges of child labor.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the discussion of the results of the study as well as the conclusions and the implications for practice for future research which are anchored on the emerged themes of the investigation.

The objective of this phenomenological was to document the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of the students engaged in child labor. In the investigation, I did not only account the experiences of the participants but had considered also feelings, emotions, struggles and triumphs, fears and pains as child laborers. The participants through an in-depth interview and Focused Group Discussion shared their experiences, coping mechanisms and insights..

**Experiences of High School Students Regarding Child Labor.** Diverse and peculiar experiences defined the maturity of the child laborers in the world of work as they opened up their individual stories working in the mining area. Being convinced and motivated well to share their experiences, I can sense the sincerity and openness of the participants during the In depth Interview and Focused Group Discussion. There were mixed emotions involved, yet, I was able to entice them to contribute to the stories of everyone for me to come up with beautiful themes.

**Pressing Need for Labor.** The students were able to share their peculiar and individual experiences regarding child labor. Their stories were a narration of sad, happy and fearful experiences that they gained while working in the mining area. According to them, the experience was triggered by the pressing need for labor. The desire to help parents, and to support their personal needs are factors to consider. Also, some of the child laborers made it a choice to work in order to gain financial benefits in order to buy personal and school projects and requirements.

The result conforms to the statement of Blagbrough (2005), who stressed that many children have looked for work because of economic reasons, the fact that the family needs to eat and have to provide their basic needs. The financial contribution of the children is vital for family's survival as most of the families live in poverty line. Both parents and children think that the child has to make a financial contribution to the family.

**Under Payment of the Services.** A sad experience of the students regarding child labor was the bias treatment of giving compensation. They shared that they had received small salary, sometimes delayed and no salary at all.

The result is in conformity with the concept of Arat (2002) who stressed that child labor is stealing their childhood from them. They are subject to economic exploitation because they are paid at the lowest rates., and sometimes not at all. Children often replace adult labor, employers prefer them because they are cheap and docile. The widespread use of child may result in low wages in all market. Countries that allow child labor are able to lower their costs; thus, they attract investors and also from unfair trade due to their low production costs.

**Trivial Participation in School Activities.** Being engaged in child labor, the academic aspect of the students were affect-

ed. They narrated that they are always absent in their class, unable to attend school activities, cannot do assignments, and asked only their friends of their assignments so they can also do their past lessons.

The consequence of child labor may extend beyond schooling attendance and attainment. The time in economic activity significantly affected the probability of children reporting missing classes and reporting feeling tired in class. This leads to students at risk of dropping out ( UCW and ILO/PEC, 2005).

Child labor interferes schooling. That is, the children are deprived of the opportunity in attending to school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or by requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work ( BASU, 2005; Giao and Alfresson, 2005)

**Divergent Outlook in Life.** Different outlooks in life were disclosed by the participants as they experienced happiness, pains, fears and joys as child laborers. They had mixed emotions, sometimes happy, sometimes not. In their sharing, unhappy moments were due to unattained ambition, being unpaid, always absent in classes, no time for recreation. They had difficult situation also of working at the same time studying. Moreover, their fears included the risk for accidents, and health. However, despite all these, they are still happy, because they were able to buy things that they wanted and were able to help their parents.

In situations where children are compelled to work on a regular basis to earn a living for themselves and for their families are exploitative and damaging to the health, physical and mental development of the children who are often deprived of educational trainings opportunities, where children are forced to lead prematurely adult lives ( ILO-PEC, 2006)

**Unhealthy Physical Condition.** One of the sad experiences shared by the child laborers was the unhealthy physical condition faced by them while in work. They felt their vulnerability to injuries and accidents while they are inside the tunnel. The health condition became weak as they felt the ill and aching body, leading to the lost of energy and enthusiasm. There was also scarcity of food and the unjust salary paid to them.

Woodhead (2005) cited that research has proven the effects of child labor on child health.. There are already guidelines on how to identify and assess hazardous occupations and situations for adults, but those for children are still not well-known. Children are vulnerable to physical, psychological and social effects of labor. Potential hazards at work involve biological hazards which include exposure to bacteria, parasites, viruses, dangerous animals and other physical hazards.

Graitcer and Lerer (2008) also added that injury and morbidity risks are associated with the child's environment. Among these are morbidity, injury and hazard risks faced by children in different occupations and industries.

**Coping Mechanisms of Students Engaged in Child Labor.** Trying to survive in the situation of the so called child labor, the students revealed their ways of coping the challenges and problems they faced. In an In Depth Interview and Focused-Group Discussion, the participants expressed that young as they are, there are already peculiar ways that they embraced



for them to stand still and be able to survive the hardships of child labor.

**Self-Denial of Hardships.** Emotionally yet with pride, the students stressed that they just ignore the difficulties of being a supporting student, and pretend everything is just right. They continued working, ignoring the pains despite the meager and delayed salary given to them by their employers.

Creating and maintaining a positive outlook in life includes striving for excellence in the future. Learning from successes and failures, having respect for others and keeping a healthy and balance life are attitudes that would make a person stronger and better ( Larcombe,2013)

**Medication When Ill.** The child laborers cannot avoid getting sick when they were at work. This was a painful experience shared by them, which barred their desire to work efficiently. In times of unhealthy physical condition, the child laborers mentioned that they just do self medication, giving massage to oneself, and sometimes asked parent to accompany them for check-up., but above all these strategies is the endurance to injuries and pains when accidents occurred.

Childhood is a critical time for safe and healthy human development. Because children are still growing they have special characteristics and needs, in terms of physical, cognitive (thought/learning) and behavioral development and growth, that must be taken into consideration. Child laborers are at a high risk of illness, injury and even death due to a wide variety of machinery, biological, physical, chemical, ergonomic, welfare/hygiene and psychosocial hazards, as well as from long hours of work and poor living conditions. Sometimes, despite the unhealthy environment that made children sick, they just do some home medication instead of going to hospitals and clinic for proper treatment( Sumavia, 2014)

**Upholding Ambitions.** What makes the child laborers able to cope with the challenges of their situation is their ambition which they uphold. Despite being unable to cope with their classes and lessons, their desire to continue schooling, study harder to finish schooling, and come professionals are being upheld by the students. Moreover, they shared that if there is only a chance, they would stop working and just attend to schooling.

The UN Declaration of Human Rights notes that all children have a universal right to education. Thailand, for example as a member state of the UN is also obligated to protect the rights of the child which include: the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development ( Karen, 2014)

**Insights Shared by Students Engaged in Child Labor.** Having shared their experiences, the students also expressed their insights and views that they wanted to share to their peers and fellow child laborers.

**Importance of Schooling.** Having the fervent desire to finish schooling, the participants advised that their peers should not engage in child labor as full time to give time to their studies and should find time to attend classes and study harder. They also emphasized that if there is still a way to avoid work-

ing, then one should not engage with it to give time to education.

Solis (2011) mentioned in his article Hope in the Fight Against Child Labor that every young person deserves the chance to be in school and learning—not sacrificing their childhoods working in life-threatening jobs. Children across the world who are forced into labor are risking their health, their future and their lives. Through ILAB's programs to combat child labor, educating parents about the importance of sending their children to school rather than to work is the main concern. But awareness is not enough, it also includes strengthening the capacity of education systems to support children removed from child labor—or at risk of entering it. This includes developing quality curricula to meet the needs and life experience of these children. The department is working closely with school administrators, teachers, parents and communities to ensure that education is seen as relevant to the socioeconomic needs of the community.

**Importance of Work.** At early age, the child laborers shared that they still value work despite the difficulties they encountered. They disclosed that engaging in child labor is giving them benefits like the provision of what one wants and to aid the family. They also raised that working is not bad so that at early age, they would experience working and eventually value work.

Karen (2014) cited that children do not go to school anymore and work instead because they realized that the importance of money to pay for family needs like electricity, water and house rent. Moreover, children work unnoticed, working long days to help support their families and for their personal needs.

## 5.1 Implication for Educational Practice

This study provides insights to various groups for educational practice. The Department of Social Work and Development may look into the programs for child laborers for possible enhancement that would possibly eliminate child laborers in our country. Governments, parliamentarians, ministries and other public agencies are critical actors in the fight against child labor. Labor inspection is a public responsibility of government, which should be organized as a system within the context of a larger state system (Richthofen 2006).

Moreover, Edmonds and Sharma( 2006) exemplified that corruptness of the child labor conditions in the Philippines, which need to be corrected immediately. Despite all the existing instances of child abuse through labor in the Philippines, there are in fact efforts to clean up the situation. On December 19, 2003, Republic Act No. 9231 was passed, which amends R.A. No. 7610 by embodying the State policy to provide special protection to children from all forms of abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation and discrimination, and conditions prejudicial to their development, including child labor and its worst forms. It also provides stiffer penalties for their commission. This is just one of the recent attempts to end the existence of child labor in the Philippines, and hopefully in the future there were will be continued efforts to end the reign of child abuse

For the Department of Education, the personnel can strengthen their campaign for the Drop-out Reduction Program. The house to house visit as part of their campaign shall be strictly implemented in order to monitor the activities and progress of the child laborers and for the parents as well to be given reminders on their roles on the educational journey of their children. Some people have argued that the Education For All (EFA) would eliminate child labor. But at the same time, child labor is one of the main obstacles to Education for All. Those who hold this view reason believe that children will be less available for full-time work at least during schools hours. However, many experts argue that compulsory schooling alone cannot overcome all the social and economic obstacles and in the labor force. If children really choose to work, school drop-out, absenteeism, tardiness and repetition rates tend to increase (EFA. Rosati,2006).

On the other hand, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2012 was approved by both houses of Congress between November 2012 and February 2013 and was signed into law by the President in May 2013. The Act extends formal education from 10 to 12 years; however the Act failed to make secondary school compulsory. The Kindergarten Education Act, Republic Act No. 10157, passed in 2012, extends free and compulsory education to children for one additional year, starting at age 5.

Primary and secondary education is free for all children; however, school attendance is compulsory only at the primary level, from ages 5 to 11. Children ages 12 to 14 are particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, as they are not required to be in school and are not legally permitted to work (EBEA 2012).

For the School Administrators to re-visit their plans and programs in the areas of intellectual, social, cultural and emotional student development undertakings, in order to entice the students to value more education than work and labor. While other authors considered education as an efficient alternative to child labor (ILO, 2004; Lachaud, 2005; Yacouba, 2001), the time in economic activity significantly affected the probability of children reporting missing classes and reporting feeling tired in class (UCW and ILO/IPEC 2005). This issue will lead to students at-risk of dropping out. Again, dropping out of school is a worldwide phenomenon with drastic mental health consequences for children, families and society.

For the Parents, there shall be strong collaboration between and among various authorities for them to bestow to their children their love, support and care, and for the child laborers, if these children will feel they are supported well, they would strive hard to value education and see their worth as individuals.

In the Philippines, the government implements programs to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable families and children and to reduce child labor. Through the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, DSWD provides cash transfers to households, conditional upon their children's achievement of a monthly school attendance rate of at least 85 percent and regular medical checkups and immunizations. In 2012, the budget was increased to 960,000, from 570,000 in 2011, benefiting 3.1

million households and 7.4 million children through age 14. A 2010 assessment of the Program demonstrated an increase in school enrollment and attendance among beneficiaries; however, results also showed that child labor persisted among beneficiaries (DOLE 2013).

## 5.2 Implications for Future Research

The study focused only on the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of the 6 participants for In Depth Interview and 12 participants for the Focused Group Discussion, which could not be generalized to all child labors of other locale. Therefore, future research may be done in other locale with another set of informants to find out they shared the same accounts of experiences..

The participants involved in this study were the high school students, this implies that future research may be conducted related to the cases of the child labor, however the informants may be elementary students.

The Kindergarten Education Act, Republic Act No. 10157, passed in 2012, extends free and compulsory education to children for one additional year, starting at age 5. Primary and secondary education is free for all children; however, school attendance is compulsory only at the primary level, from ages 5 to 11. Children ages 12 to 14 are particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, as they are not required to be in school and are not legally permitted to work (EBEA 2012).

Most child labor occurred in the informal economy, most often in family settings, and the Government rarely sought to prosecute a poor family because it had a working child. Nevertheless, the Government, in coordination with a number of domestic NGOs and international organizations, implemented programs to develop other, safer options for children, return them to school, and offer families viable economic alternatives to child labor (DOLE 2011).

In addition, a study on the success stories of the professionals who were once child laborers may be conducted in order to inspire the students that poverty is not considered a hindrance to become successful in the future.

Further research may be done also that would re-interview the informants to validate their insights and thoughts whether they have changed over a period of time. Edmonds and Sharma( 2006) exemplified that corruptness of the child labor conditions in the Philippines, which need to be corrected immediately. Despite all the existing instances of child abuse through labor in the Philippines, there are in fact efforts to clean up the situation. On December 19, 2003, Republic Act No. 9231 was passed, which amends R.A. No. 7610 by embodying the State policy to provide special protection to children from all forms of abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation and discrimination, and conditions prejudicial to their development, including child labor and its worst forms. It also provides stiffer penalties for their commission. This is just one of the recent attempts to end the existence of child labor in the Philippines, and hopefully in the future there were will be continued efforts to end the reign of child abuse

Finally, in order to hear also the voices of the parents of the child laborers, a study may be done that would solicit the sen-

timents and accounts of experiences of the parents.

### 5.3 Concluding Remarks

This phenomenological study has given me the chance to fulfill my desire to hear the voices of the child laborers of the mining area. The situation in the mining area with the young workers toiling for their family and personal needs has caught my attention that I really wanted to listen to their voices and determine their experiences, sentiments, coping mechanisms as students and their shares of the insights for their peers and friends

The stories they shared to me during the conduct of the In Depth Interview and Focused Group Discussion has challenged me to conduct intervention program that would somewhat help the students to finish schooling by tapping individuals that can help ease the unhealthy environment they faced in the mining area. These people may be from government and non-government agencies and most importantly, the parents who are playing the most important role to settle the cases of the child laborers.

As a teacher, school administrator and mother, I can feel what my informants want to be, and in my own little contribution, I can be an instrument to inflict change their lives for the better. The conduct of this study will heighten the campaign of the learning community that the parents shall take a vital role in molding the students towards better individuals through fulfilling their responsibilities as parents. This will enhance the desire of making family members active partners in the completion of the child's education. Moreover, the school's work force shall make concrete measure in tapping the government and non-government linkages to minimize if not to totally abolish the child labor in our locale. By doing so, I can sincerely extend my desire to be of help to the students in considering them as valuable individuals worthy to be guided, cared, supported and loved by the family, school and community.

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