

**At Your Service:**  
**Combating Child Labor in the Tourism Industry\***  
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## **Introduction**

Children's rights to protection from abuse, exploitation and discrimination have been articulated in several declarations, codes, and laws such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Child and Youth Welfare Code, and Republic Act 7610. These and other proclamations recognize that children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Such vulnerability often makes the children the objects of exploitation, abuse, and discrimination.

According for the Council for the Welfare of Children, child abuse refers to the maltreatment, whether habitual or not, of the child, which includes any of the following: (1) psychological and physical abuse, neglect, cruelty, sexual abuse and emotional maltreatment; (2) any act by deeds or words which debases, degrades or demeans the intrinsic worth and dignity of a child as a human being; (3) unreasonable deprivation of his basic needs for survival such as food and shelter; and (4) failure to immediately give medical treatment to an injured child resulting in serious impairment of his growth and development or in his permanent incapacity or death (Section 3 (b) of R.A. 7610). Simply stated, child abuse refers to the infliction of physical or psychological injury, cruelty to, or neglect, sexual abuse, or exploitation of a child.

In the Philippines, the rights of the child are compromised because of social, cultural, and economic factors. The violation of child rights is particularly pronounced in many forms of child labor, which is the participation of children in a wide variety of work situations, on a more or less regular basis, to earn a livelihood for themselves or for others.

Child labor does not refer to all the types of children's work. Strictly speaking, it may refer to only those activities which are socially useful and remunerable, requiring manual and/or intellectual effort, which result in the production of goods or performance of services (Ballescas, 1987 in Duran, 1994). Child labor does not include household chores for one's own household or family. It excludes mendicancy, which is not a socially useful means of livelihood, and does not entail the production of goods or services. It includes work in family enterprises (in agriculture, services or industry), debt peonage, employment, and self-employment.

While all these activities encompass child labor, the concern of the International Labour Organization focuses on forms of child labor which are exploitative. Exploitation occurs under two general conditions (Rodgers and Standing, 1981): the extent to which part of the products of workers are expropriated by others, often by members of another class or generation; and the extent to which the children suffer discrimination relative to their abilities, rights and developmental needs.

*\*This is an excerpt of the study "At Your Service: Combating Child Labor in the Tourism Industry"\**

Based on a special tabulation done by the National Statistics Office, the number of children between the ages of 10 and 14 in the labor force in 1989 totaled 815,000 with an average labor force participation rate (LFPR) of 11.1 percent. This number is 12.6 percent lower than the figure recorded in 1980 (932,700) but slightly higher (2.2%) than the number in 1984 (797,100).

On the other hand, economically active children under the age category of 15 to 17 during the same year numbered 1.37 million or 32.0 percent of the population in this age group. This is 13.9 percent higher compared to the 1980 level of 1.20 million and 9.7 percent lower compared to the 1984 data of 1.52 million.

Together, the number of economically active children under the ages of 10-14 and 15-17 in 1989 stood 2.18 million, posting an 18.8 percent labor force participation rate for all working children aged 10-17 years old.

Employment data of children reveal that some 790,700 children between the ages of 10 and 14 were employed in 1989. This represents 97.0 percent of the total labor force for the same age group. The nominal figure is lower by 9.7 percent compared to 1980. However, in percentage terms, the 1989 employment level is higher than the 93.8 percent employment rate posted in 1980. Employed children under the 15-17 age category, on the other hand, numbered 1.26 million in 1989, posting a 14.1 percent increment over the 1980 level.

Meanwhile, the combined number of children from both age groups who were at work in 1989 totaled 2.05 million, with an aggregate employment rate of 93.9 percent. This is higher than the 90.9 percent employment rate of the regular workforce (15 years old and over) for the same period. This indicates that almost all children between 10-17 years old who wanted to work were able to find jobs.

In 1990, the employment rate reached an average of 93.9 percent, with 71 percent of the children working in agriculture. However, while about half of all employed workers in the regular labor force were wage earners in 1991, 56 percent of child workers were classified as "unpaid family workers".

The employment profile which emerges from these comparisons indicates that more children than older persons work, especially in agricultural production, but their labor is often unpaid. In many instances, child labor becomes a substitute for adult work because the profitability of any enterprise would increase with the employment of unpaid family workers.

Official figures of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) indicate very low levels of child employment among inspected establishments, probably because a large percentage of child workers are in the informal sector.

From January to December 1999, the DOLE, through its 15 Regional Offices, inspected a total of 49,370 establishments for general labor standards compliance. Out of the total establishments

inspected, 51 were found to be employing 133 young workers (below 18 years old). Comparing previous years' inspection data, a yearly decrease in the number of employed young workers was noted. In 1996, DOLE recorded 1,716 employed young workers from the inspection reports submitted by the different Regional Offices. In 1997, it decreased to 379 while in 1998 it went down to 186. In 1999 it was only 133. Of the 133 young workers employed in 1999, only 25 or 18.8 percent were below 15 years old and 108 or 81.2 percent belonged to the 15-17 years old bracket. The report showed that there were more young male workers (68) than young female workers (65).

Working children are practically found in all sectors. They cut across all major occupational groups and cover a wide range of economic activities. Based on the NSO figures, more than three-fourths (80.1%) of the children aged 10-14 in 1989 were found in the agricultural sector. About a fifth (16.5%) were in services, while only 3.5 percent were in industry. Of those in services, majority (58.4%) were into wholesale and retail trade, while 95.6 percent of those employed in industry were concentrated in the manufacturing subsector. In Metro Manila, most of the occupations available to children were in services (80.8%), while 9.6% each were in sales and production.

In the 15-17 age category, only 65 percent of the total employed children were in the agricultural sector. For the rest, 25 percent were in the services sector and 9.9 percent were in the community, social and personal services subsector, with the majority probably working as domestic helpers. On the other hand, almost three fourths (73%) of those in industry were employed under the manufacturing subsector.

Among the employed children between 10-14 years of age in 1989, 69.9% were classified as unpaid family workers, 25.2% were wage and salary workers, while 4.9% were own-account workers. For the 15-17 age category, 46.8% were unpaid family workers, 44.8% were wage and salary workers, and 8.4% were own-account workers. This indicates that as children grow older, more of them become interested in seeking jobs that will give them remuneration.

The statistics show that while almost all children who wish to work do find employment, a large percentage do so without remuneration—as family workers. These data validate the framework which points out that family expectations—and children's internalized feelings of obligation to the family—predispose them to join the workforce (Duran, 1994).

Uneven urban-rural development strategies, which lead to urban population increase, coupled with the inability of urban industries to absorb a high percentage of the labor force, lead to the upsurge of the informal sector as a buffer zone to absorb excess labor, on the one hand, and to provide affordable products and services to impoverished urban households, on the other (Ballescas, 1987 in Duran, 1994). These conditions combine to produce child labor.

The informal service sector, which is unregulated by provisions of the Labor Code, absorbs many child workers. By definition, the informal sector includes family-owned small-scale operations which depend heavily on indigenous resource, simple technologies and cheap labor

(Ballescás, 1987 in Duran, 1994). Its production requirements hinge on simple skills, a situation well-suited to the utilization of unskilled children still in their elementary grades.

Children of the cities work on the streets—in the marketplace and food stalls, in small-scale industries, or in the tourism industries. Children in rural areas work in the family farms, haciendas, uplands, and along coastal areas. Rural children also work in small industries which entail traditional skills for crafts, or utilize natural resources of the community to produce newly-developed marketable commodities. These enterprises may be in their own homes, or in small workshops within their residential communities.

Working children are exposed to specific health risks by the nature of the work they do. Among the most physically exacting for the children are those in agriculture, where children are exposed to heavy loads, different chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides, and to natural elements such as rain, sun, and strong winds. Children engaged in prostitution, on the other hand, are vulnerable to physical pain and injury especially when maltreated by sadistic customers. They are constantly exposed to contagious diseases, particularly those which are sexually transmitted. Psychologically, they are likely to suffer from low self-esteem and other problems like distorted sense of values and materialistic world view. Many are extremely sexually promiscuous.

While several references on child labor point to poverty as its cause, relating the phenomenon of children at work to their impoverished conditions fails to answer the “why.” Poverty is merely symptomatic of larger societal problems—an effect rather than a cause. Child labor may be indicative of poverty but is not a result of it (Duran, 1994).

The International Labor Organization point to the structure of the economy, as well as the pace of development, as influence factors over child labor. Exploitative child labor in the Philippines is caused by factors such as parental neglect, peer influence, family expectations from children, the need to save money to continue their education, and opportunities to work in their respective communities.

In the case of many Filipino working children, work is perceived as a means to move up in the social ladder because it can help educate them for future jobs. Many Filipino working children are enrolled. Nevertheless, some have dropped out from school for a year or two due to financial constraints. They then work to be able to finance their studies in the succeeding year. For children who are enrolled, work enables them to buy the needed school materials, and to cover transportation and meal expenses in schools.

Child labor is seen to be most problematic under conditions in which the production of goods and services by children benefit the employer (or adults) more than themselves; thus discriminating against their personal development, in violation of one or several of their rights as children. This is particularly true in the tourism industry.

## **The Tourism Industry**

Tourism has been defined differently by different countries, causing some problems in comparing tourism statistics across nations. Nevertheless, some initiatives in this direction have been taken in the last few years by the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Today, internationally comparable statistics are available for international tourist arrivals, receipts from international tourism, as well as for tourism consumption (direct and indirect) and related investment, net export and government expenditures.

The WTO defines travel and tourism as those activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year, and whose main purpose of visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the travel and tourism industry is defined by the economic activities (personal, investment, government, business and net exports) associated with travel as measured by the wide variety of current and capital expenditures made by or for the benefit of a traveler before, during, and after a trip.

The International Labor Organization (ILO), on the other hand, has a classification known as the *hotel, catering and tourism sector* (HCT). The HCT is a complex group of economic activities, and encompasses many other economic sectors. For instance, it makes use of agricultural, industrial and handicraft products; it incorporates transport, safety, cultural and health services and it includes activities such as lodging, catering, leisure and business travels, parks, zoos, ecotourism, etc.

The *hotel subsector* groups various types of lodging units (hotels, motels, resorts, clubs, inns, rural lodging units, pensions, flat-hotels, health resorts, etc.) of different sizes and standards located both in urban and rural communities.

The *catering subsector* groups together numerous enterprises of different sizes, types, categories and standards. Two main groups can be distinguished: commercial or open-market and non-commercial or contracted enterprises. The first group includes all types of restaurants and eating places that are either independent or part of a hotel (classic a la carte restaurant, ethnic restaurant, specialized cuisine, fast food, coffee shop, snack bar, cafeteria, table d'hote, etc.) Generally small or medium-sized, they are similar in management structure to hotels (integrated chained or voluntary groups, independent chains or voluntary groups, independent, franchised etc.) and they may be part of almost any type of lodging unit.

The second group includes some very large catering enterprises. In addition, there are private sector canteens for workers near their place of work with favourable conditions in terms of quality and price. There are also public sector canteens such as those serving the armed forces, schools and even prisons. Similarly, public hospitals are generally equipped to serve diet meals as well as traditional food.

The *tourism subsector* covers a wide range of different travel-related activities, but refers mainly to travel, broken down into two main components: travel agencies and air travel. Other areas such as car hire, train and sea travel, etc, are not covered .

The tourism industry is a major contributor to the world economy. According the estimates of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), international tourism alone generated \$381 billion in receipts (1.46 per cent of the world GDP) in 1995. Estimates of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), on other hand, put the impact of tourism on the economy at a much higher level because they include domestic tourism.

As reported by the WTTC, tourism in 1995 created employment for 212 million persons or one in ten workers, produced 10.9 percent of world gross domestic product (GDP), and contributed a global amount of \$ 1.6 trillion in wages and salaries, or 11.4 percent of the global payroll. The WTTC estimates for 1995 showed that tourism sector accounted for 11.4 percent of the consumers expenditures, 6.6 percent of all government expenditures, 11.4 percent of all capital investment, and 11.7 percent of all business sales.

According to WTO, tourism activities earned visited countries a total of \$381 billion worldwide in 1995. in 1993, worldwide tourism receipts were as high as 8 percent of total merchandise exports and 30 percent of export services. Tourism therefore ranked first among world export groups, ahead of petroleum, motor vehicles and electronic equipment.

The WTTC estimates that the industry will produce more than \$7.1 trillion in gross output in 2006 from as estimated \$3.5 trillion in 1996, and that it will provide 385 million jobs in 2006 as compared to the estimated 255 million in 1996. The WTO predicted that international tourism receipts would reach \$621 billion in the year 2000 to as much as \$1.55 trillion by the year 2010.

### **Tourism in the Philippines**

Tourism is one of the major industries in the Philippines, which, the WTTC noted, is positioned at the epicenter of global travel and tourism growth and development. In 1997, tourism contributed 8.7% of the country's GDP, generating 2.3 million jobs (or one in every nine nationwide), and accounting for some 10.5% of Philippine investments. The trade surplus from tourism in 1997 was estimated at P22 billion, driven mainly by visitor spending. The WTTC expects tourism to contribute 10.9% of the country's GDP by 2007, and to generate as much as 1.4 million more jobs between 1998 and 2007.

According to the Department of Tourism, international arrivals in 1998 stood at 2.15 million, a slight decline from the previous year's total of 2.22 million visitors. Because of the economic crisis suffered by its Asian markets, the Philippine's foreign exchange receipts from tourism declined by 14.77% from \$2.83 billion in 1997 to \$2.41 billion in 1998. the Philippines enjoyed the highest repeat visitors in Asia at 54.35 percent indicating that the tourism sector can survive external threats and competition in the region.

In terms of market share, the USA continued to supply the biggest volume of arrivals at 21.81 percent, followed by Japan and Taiwan, which accounted for 16.83 percent and 8.65 percent of the total traffic, respectively. Other high yielding markets include Hong Kong (7.57%), UK (4.55%), Australia (3.99%), Korea (3.81%), and Canada (3.11%).

It is important to note that because tourism is spread throughout the economy in response to dynamic traveler demand for goods and services, the economic benefits also flow across the economy as a whole, particularly in such sectors as manufacturing, construction, and agriculture.

### **Child Labor in Tourism Industry**

Around the world, more and more children and young people are being absorbed into the activities that take place in and around tourism, hotels, catering and entertainment. Their involvement is a reflection of increasing child participation in earning, especially in semi organized and informal occupations. Because of extraordinary degree or irregularity of the industry, the low pay and status of most employees, and the lack of controls operating in its unofficial fringes, young people are found everywhere within it, especially in the developing world. In fact, the International Labor Office (ILO) estimates that at least 100 million children worldwide perform tasks classifiable as “labor” to earn money for themselves or their families.

A simple reason for the employment of children in work related to travel and entertainment as opposed to other types of earning activity is opportunity. Those seeking work – or parents seeking jobs for their children – naturally gravitate towards establishments with a demand for unskilled work. Work that has to be performed at odd times – such as in the evening and at weekends and during the holidays when school-goers are released from their classroom – may be perceived as an advantage. For city dwellers or those living around a resort, proximity of workplace is an attraction. And although pay is low and volatile, tips may be considerably enhance it.

In the Philippines, the tourism industry has proven to be a lucrative one for child workers because of the great demand for their services as waiters/waitresses, cooks, dancers, bar hostesses, receptionist, janitor and prostitutes among others. While many of them do not earn regular wages, they earn from commissions (usually from drinks) or earn retainers per performance (usually as dancers). The lowest paid among the children in hotels and restaurants are those who have no direct contact with customers, the kitchen crew (i.e. cooks, dishwashers and other kitchen helpers). The highest paid are the dancers, bar hostesses, and receptionists, occupation requiring constant customer contact and where primary qualifications are physical appearance and youthful charm.

Insofar as the presence of child workers in the tourism industry is acknowledge at all, they are normally observed through one of two lenses, neither of which is specific to work or earning. One of these is sexual exploitation. This lens notices that commercial sexual activity may be associated with employment in a bar or as a night –club performer, or on the street as a survival strategy; but it fails to notice the primary occupation, motivation and self-image of the worker.

The other lens is a location, the “street”; children working in the informal, open-air economy – in markets. At tourist sites, on beaches, in amusement arcades, transport terminals and shopping malls – are described as “street children.” This term, consciously or otherwise, implies that they are vagrants, not that they work or earn.

Similar to other working children, those in the tourism industry come from families where adults occupy irregular and low-paying jobs, or are mostly unemployed. Many of these children are between the ages 13 and 15, although some (especially among the prostitutes) can be as young as seven years. Both boys and girls work in the tourism industry, although the comparative proportion is unknown.

A special category of working children employed in urban centers is child entertainers cum prostitutes. Because of the peculiarities of the industry, the no comprehensive study on the incidence of child prostitution has yet to be accomplished. Available researches tend to be case studies limited to areas known to harbor child entertainers and prostitutes. The presence of child prostitutes in the tourist belt and in other commercial areas of the metropolis has long been known. Specifically, the presence of child prostitutes has been noted in the Ermita area of Manila, Rizal Park, Robinson’s Complex, Harrison Plaza, Pasig, Caloocan, plaza Moriones and Araneta Center. They are also in Puerto Galera, Mindoro; Poro Point, San Fernando, La Union; Mactan Airport; Boracay, Aklan; Bacolod City; Buhi, Camarines Sur; Bulusan, Sorsogon; and in Angeles City and Olongapo City when the Usbases were still there (Duran, 1994).

Many children who are prostituted have run away from home to escape parental abuse, extreme poverty and neglect. In many cases, these children form their own child-headed households (Torres, 1991 in Duran, 1994). In some reported instances, children are prostituted because of trickery. There are also cases wherein children are pushed into the business by their parents, or else follow in their footsteps (usually of the mothers) into prostitution (Simbulan, 1992; Cruz, 1987; Magno, 1984 in Duran, 1994). Their parents “sell” them to recruiters supposedly to be employed as domestic helpers in the cities. Instead they find themselves working as sex slaves in what is called “white slavery” (Jocano, 1975; Simbulan, 1992 in Duran, 1994).

Some children, however, go into the trade willingly, as bar hostesses, waitresses or receptionists. They ‘graduate’ to prostitution in their desire to earn more than commissions from drinks or food. In addition to cash payments, child entertainers cum prostitutes receive tips, gifts, and enjoy other luxuries with their customers. To children whose home situation consist of single rooms in slum areas, to be able to sleep in cleaner hotel rooms with adequate food, and possess money are sufficient incentives to prostitute themselves.

Child prostitution include those kept virtually as prisoners in brothels or “casas.” Among these children are those who work in bars, clubs and beer houses. Officially designated as waitresses, hostesses, or receptionists, they render “extra services” to their customers for a fee. Another group would be the streetwalkers, those who are not attached to any establishment but hang around places where they are most likely to be picked up, with or without their pimps. This category has been estimated to number as many 20,000 (Simbulan, 1992 in Duran, 1994).

Very few studies have been conducted to shed light on the effects of work on children in the tourism industry. While there is existing literature on sexual exploitation of children, they rarely include a systematic analysis of the long-term impact of their sex work on these young people.

Among the negative effects stemming from work undertaken by child workers in the tourism industry are those that have something to do with strenuous tasks involved and long working hours. In establishments catering to “guests,” working hours tend to be long, irregular and include evening or night-time shifts. These characteristics of work in the sector represent hazards to the physical and mental development of young workers, particularly where there are no set rest periods, which is more often the rule than the exception. Waitresses and “receptionists”, who typically report for work between 6 and 8 p.m. and stop at 4 to 5 am., complain of fatigue and lack of sleep. Some don’t even have rest days; “rest” came only when business was slack.

Health and safety concerns in the workplace, especially in the kitchens, include noise, heat, poor ventilation, slippery floors and stairs, poor lightning, and the harmful effects of cleaning materials. Some child workers complained of headaches caused by cigarette smoke and a stifling atmosphere. Those involved in lifting heavy items (utensils, trays, basins) suffered muscle pains and legs and backs. Some experience cuts and scalding, accidents probably caused by the constant pressure to work fast and not keep customers waiting. In all cases, workers were under considerable stress. For those still in school, the demands of their work affected home study and classroom performance.

Apart from violence inflicted by sadistic customers, the main physical risk factor of sexual work is the likelihood of contracting a sexually-transmitted disease (STD), particularly of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes AIDS. Girls who contract HIV face the prospect not only of their own premature death, but have a 25 to 40percent chance of transmitting the virus to their future offspring in the womb or during delivery. Pregnancy itself is an important risk, but there is little information about pregnancy rates among child workers, including sex workers.

Accounts of children who engage in casual sex-for-cash on the street indicate their vulnerability to the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs such as solvents (Glue-sniffing), marijuana, and cocaine. This is done to dull hunger pains and block out the difficulties of street life, which may include prospective pain, fear, and self-disgust related to sexual soliciting.

Early induction into sexual activity also affects a child’s psychological health and his or her future emotional security. The degree of disruption will depend on a number of factors, including the circumstances of sexual debut and the child’s age. There is ample evidence to be found for complex types of disturbance, in the literature of child sexual abuse in the industrialized world, but similar studies are rare in the developing world. The indications are that girls suffer more psychological damage than boys from sexual abuse and from early separation from their mothers—a risk factor for live-in hotel workers and girls who leave home in search of jobs. Girls engaging in prostitution often feel powerless in the face of abusive-sex; and emotional starvation may lead them to depend on sex as a substitute for parental affection. This makes them

vulnerable to exploitation from pimps and temporary partners and can translate into low self-esteem and fatalism about all aspects of their lives.

The psychological effects of sex-related work include the impact of marginalization from society and stigma. In an earlier study of the ILO in the Philippines, girls who work as waitresses and jobs, which entailed entertaining customers, disliked their work, felt degraded by it, and had been forced to make compromises with their standards of decency and morality. Many develop a low level of self-esteem due to the sexual exploitation and abuse that they suffer. The psychological distress was heightened where the girl's family was in complicity with her situation.

By the nature of the industry, children in the tourism and entertainment industry work long, odd hours. Because of their work schedules, many children in these occupations are school dropouts. Aside from dropping out of school, these children have missed out on the joys of childhood because of the need to earn their keep.

Responses to child labor and exploitation fall into three categories: public exposure of the problem and advocacy on behalf of the victims; legislative or political action to eliminate children from the workplace; and programmable interventions to rescue or rehabilitate child workers, to provide them with education, health or other services, or to forestall families' needs or intentions to send their children out to work. One type of response often stems from, or is interconnected with, others.

Locally and internationally generated activity on behalf of children in especially exploitative circumstances has helped to generate a sense of national and international solidarity around the situation of sexually exploited and work-burdened children. This has led to involvement by the wider non-governmental community: religious groups, humanitarian development NGOs, children's societies, medical and lawyers' associations, and the mass media. Extensive press and media exposure of children young people in sexual work or entrapped in servitude has helped promote public concern; politicians in many countries have been made aware both of the issue and of the force of popular opinion against child sexual abuse.

Much current advocacy undertaken by NGO activists focuses on exposure of gross abuses of human and child rights, and is often anecdotal and centered on the stories of specific victims. The ILO suggests more effective advocacy specifically targeted to different groups of investors, employers, and customers in the hotel and tourism industry.

Appeals to humanitarian instincts and calls for the rediscovery of moral standards which uphold the sanctity of human life have an important role to play in creating a climate of opinion which repudiates child exploitation as an evil; but sufficient practical attention has not yet been paid to how to translate such calls into large-scale policy-making and programmatic action.

Various studies indicate that those engaged in tourism, accommodation, catering and the entertainment world have an important potential role to play in reducing hazard, especially the hazard of sexual exploitation, among young people in the sector. However, the service industry where prostitution is found "has not been called upon sufficiently to exert peer-group pressure upon those members of the industry who would otherwise abuse the system." Where investors,

employers and workers in hotels and tourism permit or encourage the sexual exploitation of children, they cooperate in a form of commerce, which offends laws and universal notions of morality, and brings disrepute on the entire sector.

In the area of legislation and law enforcement, efforts are being undertaken by government to minimize, if not altogether, eradicate, its ill effects on Filipino children. Legislation, executive orders, attendant policy guidelines, as well as direct action programs have been implemented, seeking the elimination of exploitative child labor in the country.

The Philippines established a minimum age of employment at 15 under the 1987 Constitution, unless under the responsibility of parents or guardians and in such a way as the work does not interfere with schooling. Under the Labor Code, no woman regardless of age is permitted to work in any non-industrial undertaking between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m. No person under the age of 18 may work in an undertaking, which is hazardous or “deleterious in nature”. Government has enacted other laws such as Child and Youth Welfare Code, which further elaborate the legal framework—hours, rest time—within which child is permitted, the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, the Exploitation and Discrimination Act (R. A. No. 7610), and the Prohibition of the Employment of Children Below 15 Years (R. A. No. 7658), which amended the controversial provision of R. A. 7610 which legitimized employment of children below 15 years old.

Unfortunately, the enforcement of these laws, while clearly charged to specific agencies, has suffered from mediocre implementation, largely due to the lack of effective monitoring mechanisms and the dearth of enforcement personnel and resources.

On another plane, government, in cooperation with non-government and international organizations, has also implemented a number of child labor programs whose components range from awareness-raising, policy advocacy and social mobilization, community organization, delivery of basic and alternative services including non-formal education services and values formation child care and placement, youth welfare, family and community welfare, child rehabilitation, research, and institution/capability building. A wide range of projects exists to provide care and services for “children in especially difficult circumstances”, including child workers, street children, and child casualties for whom family reintegration is not a possibility. Most of these programs however have been oriented toward welfare, with strategies that do not necessarily alter the conditions of child workers (Duran, 1994). Moreover, the proportion of these projects directed at child workers generally is relatively small; and of those, the number, which reaches children involved in the tourism industry, is negligible.

Child labor seems to be a reality of life not only in the Philippines but also in many parts of the world, with the number of child workers growing every year. Many child workers, particularly those in the tourism industry, suffer from socio-psychological stigma, aside from the physical hazards that they face. Given these alarming conditions, various sectors such as government, non-government organizations, trade unions, professionals, and media have undertaken courses of action to eliminate the exploitation of child workers. By the same token, this research on child

workers in the tourism industry in Metro Manila is another effort to contribute in combating child labor.