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The Portrait of Child Labour in Turkey

Burcu DOGAN¹

¹ Hitit University, Department of Economics, Center, Çorum, 19000, Turkey,
Tel: 90 0541 523 63 56, E-mail: burcu_dogan90@hotmail.com

Abstract: For the fact that children represent a country's future, studying on the issue of child labor in Turkey is necessary. In the study the portrait of child poverty in Turkey is drawn, the legislation on child labor in Turkey is explained and the statistics on child labor in Turkey is evaluated. The fact that Turkey accepting international standards on child labor does not have a favorable rate in child labor, seems very interesting. For this reason this study has a great significance.

Keywords: Child poverty, child labor, distribution of income, Turkey, combat with poverty.

JEL classification:

1. Introduction

Today there are about 250 million working children in the world. Although the problem does not bear the characteristics of developing countries as a whole, the fact that it exists largely in these countries shows that it stems from structural problems associated with the deficiency in development such as increasing young population, poverty, unemployment, low education level and distorted urbanisation. In countries with less developed industrial structures, high young population, families generally approach education under the pressure of poverty. The problem also stems from the lack of confidence in the quality of education. The fact that the system of education in developing countries is not well adjusted to the system of production, one tends to think that it will eventually create large numbers of unemployed people in the near future and in an unfavourable economic and social structure children are driven into labor life. Turkey's Gross Domestic Product was \$820,827 billion (nominal) in the year 2013 and Turkish economy has been the 17th biggest economy (according to nominal value) among 30 OECD countries in the same year. However there have been problems in the distribution of income equitably and the portrait of child labor in Turkey have been unlikable considering that Turkey has been the candidate member of European Union since December 1999.

For the fact that children represent a country's future, studying on the issue of child labor in Turkey seems necessary. In this study, the portrait of child poverty in Turkey will be drawn, the legislation on child labor in Turkey will be explained and the statistics on child labor in Turkey will be evaluated. In this study, document scanning is used for data collection and discourse analysis is used for the elaborations. The fact that Turkey accepting international standards on child labor does not have a favorable rate in child labor, seems very interesting. For this reason, this study has a great significance. It is thought that the study will be a serious contribution to the literature on child labor in Turkey.

2. Child Poverty in Turkey

Child represents a country's future and this is an obvious reason for societal concern with child well-being. Children are unable to take full responsibility for their circumstances and are dependent on others to look after and raise them. Their vulnerability provides a powerful moral imperative in favour of collective action in general to help them and a welfare state in particular. To implement this requires prior knowledge about the nature of child poverty and knowledge of what the causes are (Bradbury and Jenkins and Micklewright 2001).

The definition of child poverty is based on four interrelated aspects of poverty experienced by a child (Marshall 2003). The first aspect of the definition of child poverty is "growing up without an adequate livelihood" which means child is grown up without access to the financial and nutritional resources needed for survival and development. The second aspect of the definition is "growing up without opportunities for human development" which means child is grown up without opportunities such as an access to qualified education and life skills, water and sanitation to develop as a healthy person who will fulfill his/her potential in life. The third aspect is "growing up without family and community structures that nurture and protect himself/herself" which means child is grown up without having parents or guardians with time, ability and desire to care for himself/herself; without an extended family or community that can cope if parents and guardians are not able or not there; without a family that cares for and protects child and meets the emotional, personal and spiritual needs of child. The fourth aspect is "growing up without opportunities for voice" which means child is grown up with powerlessness including the lack of political resources underpinning the lack of economic, physical, environmental, social and cultural resources.

The definition of childhood is multi-dimensional and cannot be reduced to definition such as "child poverty is the income poverty experienced during childhood by children" merely. Child's well-being cannot be separated from his/her family's opportunities to attain economic, physical, environmental, social, cultural, political resources which are essential for all the members of a family to fulfil their potential. However the assumption that the policies good for household will be good for the children is objectionable. Children may need more targeted policies (Gürses 2010). Moreover the assumption that the policies toward families will be beneficial for children in the long term is inconvenient. Children are growing up during the short term and they will lose opportunities that they may not be able to regain in later life, for this reason policies addressing the short term situation should be implemented with the policies bringing long term positive changes simultaneously.

Everyone in the world is a child or has been through childhood and poverty experienced in childhood is poverty suffered during a stage of life which is crucial development of child. While child poverty shares causes and manifestations with poverty experienced by adults, there are important causes and effects peculiar to child poverty. Crucially, child poverty may have lifelong consequences. There are a number of factors that cause child poverty. The fundamental causes of child poverty are economic trends and policies, social institutions, political system, diseases such as HIV/AIDs or malaria, environmental stresses such as drought, floating or earthquakes. These factors can be both causes and outcomes at the same time (Gürses 2009).

In Turkey, the most important causes of child poverty are economic trends and policies. Since 1980s, economic policies in Turkey have been based on neoliberal implementations including measures of reform such as privatisation, opening up of markets to foreign investors, liberalising financial systems, promotion of foreign direct and indirect investments, currency arrangements, restrictions on public expenditure especially in education and health due to debt management, stabilisation packages, and immediate action steps for economic growth. These liberalisation policies in Turkey have resulted in great poverty among low-income groups and fostered child poverty and the measures to combat with the negative effects of the implementation of liberalisation policies such as the application of poverty reduction strategy have not given desired outcomes. According to child development index (CDI) in the years 1995-1999, Turkey -with the score 15.25- is the 73rd in the country ranking in the world. In the same period, according to CDI, Syria is the 52nd and Egypt is the 65th although both Syria and Egypt are lower middle income countries. In the same period, China -with the score of 8.23-which is the most populous country in the world, is the 42nd in the country ranking in the world. In the years 2000-2004, CDI score of Turkey decreases to 8.86 and Turkey becomes 56th among all countries in the world. Though this improvement is favorable for Turkey, it should be reminded that in the same period, China -with its score 6.39- is the 39th among all countries in the world.

In the years 2005-2010, CDI score of Turkey decreases to 5.70 and Turkey becomes 47th among all countries in the world. The efforts of governmental instructions, UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emerceny Fund) and civil society initiatives in the first half of 2000s to eliminate the child poverty under the programs or/and projects namely "The Girls' Education Company, Regional Primary Boarding Schools, Conditional Cash Transfer and Green Card, Early Childhood Development Project" (Hablemitoğlu, and Özkan, and Purutçuoğlu 2010, 234) resulted in the fall of child poverty rate in Turkey. However all these programs or/and projects have not been sustainable.

When the scores of all countries in the period 2005-2010 are elaborated, it is seen that the portrait of child poverty in Turkey is worse than the portraits of other Middle Eastern countries such as Kuwait and Jordan. And Malaysia -whose economic performance has been compared with Turkey's economic performance in the last decade has a better portrait of child poverty. Moreover, Latin American countries such as Peru, Brazil and Argentina and Eastern European countries such as Romania, Czech Republic and Croatia have all better portraits in comparison with Turkey. Considering that Turkey's CDI score has changed from 15.25 to 5.70 for fifteen years, the rate of decline as 1/3 in fifteen years is promising. However there are still many disadvantageous children in poor households whose asset bases are limited with their labor in Turkey. The uneven distribution of resources has not been solved yet. Today, inequality in Turkish society, the gap between the richest and the poorest is still vast and deep and Turkey's CDI score of 5.70 seems not

be decreased via simply awareness raising measures. In more clear terms, in Turkey, the indicators of child poverty such as poor health, low educational attainment, lack of life skills, homelessness, social pressure into early marriages, victims of violence and abuse, crimes, legal or illegal forms of child labor are all at serious point that simply awareness raising measures are insufficient to combat with child poverty.

In all countries, the well-being of children is determined by three broad sets of factors: demographics, labor markets, and government policy. By demographic or family factors, there are four effects: the average age of parents, the education of parents, the number of children per household, family structure as indicated by whether the child is living with a single parent or not. The impact of the labor market in child poverty rates is measured by two variables, binary variables indicating whether the parents are working, and the annual earnings they each obtain. These are influenced by broader forces determining employment growth and the distribution of income. The impact of government policy (or state) is measured by changes in the amount of transfer income received by the household (Chen and Corak 2008, 539). It should be noted that the measurement of child poverty rates inherently involves value judgements; however the findings are important to put the focus of attention of the governments toward the issue of child poverty.

In Turkey, children under 19 years of age make up %38 of Turkey's population (70 million in 2003) and children under 15 years of age represent 29%. Depending on the assumption that households in income share held by lowest 20% are the poor and the individual below 15 is child, 40 children of every 100 children live in poor households. In other words, the households in income share held by lowest 20% own the 40% of the children in Turkey. The average number of children in households in high-income share is behind the average number of children in households in low-income share (Durgun 2011,149).The reason of the fact that the poor households are inclined to have many children in Turkey arises from the fact that poor families see the children as the contributors to income of the household. In this case, child labor as one of the causes of child poverty seems to be also the outcome of child poverty. The gap between the opportunities presented for children by the households in income share held by the lowest 20% and the opportunities presented for children by the households in income share held by the highest 20% is remarkable. The calculations made by TEPAV (Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey) are stated in Table 1:

Table 1: Living Conditions of Children in Turkey

Questions Asked to Households (Children)	Answers	The Lowest 20% Income	The Highest 20% Income
Wearing new clothes	No	70.3	14.0
Having two pairs of new shoes	No	74.7	13.4
Eating fresh fruits and vegetables at least once a day	No	69.3	13.1
Eating three meals a day	No	28.5	03.4
Eating meat, chicken or fish at least once a day	No	88.9	33.1
Presence of age-appropriate books at home	No	65.6	09.1
Having tools (bike,skate..) to spend spare time	No	77.6	17.4
Having educational toys (lego,checkers..)	No	78.8	16.9
Special day celebrations (birthday,feast..)	No	65.2	15.5
Visiting medical doctor if necessary	No	66.3	08.2
Suitable environment for studying courses at home for the children going to school	No	66.3	15.0

(silence,sufficient light...)			
Presence of safe area for playing games outdoors	No	52.7	41.8
Regular activities in spare time (summer school,...)	No	72.1	26.6
Possibility of invitation of friends for eating meal	No	61.8	12.8
Participation in school trips requiring Money	No	69.6	19.8

Source: Calculations made by TEPAV based on the data of Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat)

In Turkey, child poverty rates change region to region. The highest rate is seen in the south east region of the country where great majority of population is Kurdish. The calculations¹ made by TEPAV (Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey) are stated in Table 2:

Table 2: Regional Differences in Child Poverty in Turkey

Regions in Turkey	Child Poverty Rate(%)	Number of Poor Children
South East Anatolia Region (Gaziantep-Şanlıurfa-Mardin)	53.0	1,403,089
Middle East Anatolia Region (Malatya-Van)	45.7	569,838
North East Anatolia Region (Erzurum-Ağrı)	42.3	290,879
Mediterranean Region (Antalya-Adana-Hatay)	23.6	549,669
Middle Anatolia Region (Kırıkkale-Kayseri)	21.5	208,651
West Black Sea Region (Zonguldak-Kastamonu-Samsun)	21.5	220,513
West Marmara Region (Tekirdağ-Balıkesir)	15.7	95,439
Aegean Region (İzmir-Aydın-Manisa)	11.7	221,608
East Black Sea Region (Trabzon)	13.7	77,465
West Anatolia Region (Ankara-Konya)	09.1	143,108
East Marmara Region (Tekirdağ-Bursa)	06.4	92,819
İstanbul (as a province)	04.1	116,410

Source: Calculations made by TEPAV based on the data of Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat)

It should be noted that economic growth does not necessarily reduce child poverty. According to data of Turkish Statistical Institute(TurkStat),in the year 2011, Turkey's GDP(Gross Domestic Product) is \$ 772,298 which suggests that Turkish economy is the 16th biggest economy among 30 OECD countries. Turkey's GDP grows by 8,5% in 2011. GDP per capita in 2011 is \$ 10,444 at current prices. Among 193 countries which are the members of United Nations (UN), Turkey -with its GDP (per capita income) in 2011- is the 62nd biggest economy in the ranking of International Monetary Fund (IMF), the 64th biggest economy in the ranking of World Bank (WB) and the 66th biggest economy in the ranking of World Factbook of CIA (Central Intelligence Agency of USA) and these scores prove that Turkey is a upper-middle income country. However there have been problems in the distribution of income equitably and child poverty can not be reduced without equitable distribution between different classes as well as between disadvantaged groups and geographical regions (Kidd, 2012).

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child contains 54 articles covering almost every aspect of the rights and well-being of children. It is a comprehensive legal text negotiated and agreed by all member states of UN. Two articles of the Convention - article 27 and article 4- are directly related to the well-being of children. According to article 27 governments recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. It states that parents or

others responsible for the child, but the governments should assist parents, support programs particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing. Article 4 of the Convention notes that these rights shall be fulfilled by each country to the maximum extent of their available resources. In this context, it is seen that the elimination of child poverty is not only as a policy objective, but the elimination of child poverty takes top priority (Corak 2005).

To sum up, the portrait of child poverty in Turkey is unlikable especially considering that Turkey is candidate member of European Union whose members have better portrait of child poverty than Turkey. Accordingly, Turkey should eliminate the child poverty immediately.

3. Legislation on Child Labor in Turkey

Child labor is work that harms children or keeps them from attending school either by violating the minimum age laws or by threatening the children's physical, mental and emotional well-being. Underage children working under conditions that are considered illegal or extremely exploitative usually because they and their families are extremely poor.

In Turkey, child labor occurs in sectors such as agriculture, domestic works, services and industry. There are also children who work in illicit activities like the drug trade in Turkey. Children in agriculture face long hours in extreme temperatures, health risks from pesticides, little or no pay, inadequate food, water, and sanitation. Children working in agriculture are used in particular in farming and dairy. In Turkey, especially girls work in domestic services and can be the victims of sexual abuseⁱⁱⁱ. Work of children in hotels or cafes or restaurants is accepted legitimate in Turkey, but there are indications of considerable abuse. Child laborers in the sector of services are prompted to do the jobs such retail, hawking goods, load and transfer of goods, storage, picking and recycling trash. In informal urban industry, children are labored in operating machinery in small businesses and in large cities there are children working at polishing shoes in the streets. Low pay is the norm for children working at these sorts of jobs. Children involved in serfdom, forced labor and illicit activities such as producing and trafficking drugs are also extremely exploited.

Most of the child laborers are employed by their parents in Turkey, because income from a child's work is usually crucial for the survival of household. Some parents wonder if going to school is really worth, in the case of the quality of education is poor or the school is far away from the house and it is difficult to reach school for a child. Some parents although they are not in poverty think that work is good for the character building and skill development of children. In Turkish culture, child labor is thought as a means for male children to learn and practice the work life from a very early age by some parents. Similarly, in Turkish culture, girls are pushed into child labor such as providing domestic services to follow her mothers' footsteps in the way of being a matured woman. The most big problem within the female children in the rural areas of Turkey is the fact that the education of girls is less valued and girls are not expected to need schooling. For this reason the rate of child brides -which is one of the reasons of child poverty in Turkey- is high.

Poverty, unavailability of schools or lack of qualified schools (especially in south east region) explains the child labor in Turkey, but there is one additional reason which causes

child poverty more than the others: growth of low paying informal economy in the last decade. Because of the fact that the great majority of enterprises in manufacturing industry consists of small and medium businesses and these businesses are lack in high technologies and have labor-intensive production, the demand of child labor occurs in Turkey. If the informal economy is not eliminated or at least the size of it is not minimized and the small and medium sized businesses are not scaled up to big businesses and transform their production from labor-intensive to capital-intensive production, it is almost impossible to eliminate child labor under free market conditions where demand and supply of the products are flexible. Turkey -which is an upper-middle income country and has to surpass the income trap under the sharp competition of world market- has not been able to generalized the higher paying formal economy not to reduce the level of exports. In this context, Turkey seems unable to eliminate child labor, even has to bend the minimum age laws to increase the acceptability of child labor undermining the labor standards in the country.

In Turkish constitution according to article 50, no one shall be required to perform work unsuited to his/her age and capacity. In this article it is also stated that minors with physical or mental disabilities shall enjoy special protection with regard to working conditions. In Turkey, legislation on child labor is included in “Labor Act of Turkey” numbered 4857 which was published in Turkish Official Gazette on 10 June 2003 and some of whose articles were changed by the Law numbered 6270 on 17 January 2012. According to Law numbered 4857, employees under the age of 18 are divided into two categories as child employees and young employees. An employee at the age of 14 and 15 is accepted as child and an employee who does not complete the age of 18 is accepted as young in the law. The work is divided into two categories as light work and heavy and dangerous work according to the nature of the work in the law. Jobs which will probably not have a harmful effect on children’s development or health and safety and jobs that do not prevent children continuing at school, participating in vocational training and training programs ratified by the local official and their benefiting from these types of activities are accepted as light work. However works in underground exploration and drilling, industry of metallurgy, stone industry, industries of metal made and wooden made products, chemical industry, textile industry, paper and cellulose industry, alcohol drinks and cigarette industry, production of explosives, noisy workplaces, jobs done in very cold and very hot conditions, workplaces including radiocative substances, power generation industry, jobs related with transportation, jobs related with agricultural and animal husbandry, warehousing are accepted as heavy and dangerous works.

Provisions of the articles of Law numbered 4857 which are on the protection of child and young employees are in accordance with European Community Council Directive indicated as 94/33/EC on the protection of young people at work. For the proof of this claim, two examples can be given. For instance in article 3 of the Directive, it is said that “young person shall mean any person under 18 years of age” and “child shall mean any young person of less than 15 years of age or who is still subject to compulsory full time schooling under national law” and “adolescent shall mean any young person of at least 15 years of age but less than 18 years of age who is no longer subject to compulsory full time schooling under national law”. And in article 7 of the Directive, the works that are prohibited for young people are stated as “work which is objectively beyond their physical or psychological capacity; work involving harmful exposure to agents which are toxic, carcinogenic, cause heritable damage, or harm to the unborn child or which in any other

way chronically affect human health; work involving harmful exposure to radiation; work involving the risks of accidents which it may be assumed can not be recognized or avoided by young persons owing to their insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training; work in which there is a risk to health from extreme cold or heat or from noise or vibration” and these prohibited works are also prohibited for the young employees in Turkey by considering that these works are heavy and dangerous works.

The provisions related with child labor are in the articles 71,72,73,85,87,104,105 of Law numbered 4857. In article 71 entitled “Working age and restrictions on the employment of children”, it is stated that employment of children who have not completed the age of 15 is prohibited. However, it is also said that children who have completed the full age of 14 and their primary education may be employed on light works that will not hinder their physical, mental and moral development, and for those who continue their education, in job that will not prevent their school attendance. According to this article, in the placement of children and young employees in jobs and in the types of work where they are employable, their security and health, physical, mental, psychological development as well as their personal suitability and capability shall be taken into consideration. In the article it is stated that the job the child performs must not bar him/her for attending school and from continuing his/her vocational training, nor impair his/her pursuence of class work on a regular basis. It is also stated in the article that the working time of children who have completed their basic education and yet who are no longer attending school shall not be more than 7 hours daily and more than 35 hours weekly. However, in the article it is said that working time may be increased up to 40 hours weekly. According to article 71, the working time of school attending children during the education period must fall outside their training hours and shall not be more than two hours daily and ten hours weekly. According to article 53 of Law numbered 4857, both child and young employees shall be allowed to take annual leave with pay and the length of annual leave with pay must not be less than 20 days and annual leave with pay must not be divided into more than two parts.

In article 72 entitled “Restrictions on underground and underwater work”, it is stated that boys under the age of 18 and women irrespective to their age must not be employed on underground or underwater work like mines, cable-laying and the construction of sewers and tunnels. In article 72 entitled “Restrictions on night work”, it is stated that children and young employees under the age of 18 must not be employed on industrial work during the night. In article 85 entitled “Arduous and dangerous work”, it is stated that young employees who have not completed the age of 16 years and children must not be employed on arduous or dangerous work. According to Regulation on Heavy and Dangerous Works dated 2004, employees completed the age of 16 but under the age of 18 are not allowed to works in sectors “underground exploration and drilling, industry of metallurgy, stone industry, industries of metal made and wooden made products, chemical industry, textile industry, paper and cellulose industry, alcohol drinks and cigarette industry, production of explosives, noisy workplaces, jobs done in very cold and very hot conditions, workplaces including radiocative substances, power generation industry, jobs related with transportation, jobs related with agricultural and animal husbandry, warehousing”. However, young employees completed the age of 16 and graduated from vocational schools and acquire profession on heavy and dangerous works are allowed to work on heavy and dangerous works related with their profession provided that their health, security and morality are under protection in full.

It is required to underline that there are works and working relationships in which Law numbered 4857 is not applied. In the article 4 of this law, these works are stated as “sea and air transportation jobs, agricultural and forestry businesses where the number of employees is below 50, construction works related with agriculture in family economy, handicrafts made at homes under the supervision of relatives, houseworks, works of apprentices, workplaces with maximum three employees that are subject to the Law of Craftsmen and Artisans.” Child and young employees working in shipping, professional sports, cultural, artistic and advertising jobs are subject to Public Sanitation Law dated 1930 and law of obligations (Bakırcı 2007). Exclusion of some works from the application of Law numbered 4857 because of either the nature of work or the necessity of work, can be evaluated as the deficiency of legislation on child labor in Turkey. Here, it is required to remind that Ministry of Labor and Social Security, labor and employers’ unions and the public have identified three worst forms of child labor in Turkey, namely, children in seasonal and/or mobile agricultural work, in small and medium sized manufactories, and in the street (Gülçubuk 2010, 1389).

Ministry of Labor and Social Security(MOLSS) declared that for the year 2012 net minimum wage for the children who have not completed the age of 16 is 643,14 Turkish liras (\$ 358) and net minimum wage for the children who have completed the age of 16 is 739,79 Turkish liras (\$ 412). However according to researches made by trade unions in Turkey, it is seen that child laborers below 16 have been paid 1/3 of the net minimum wage and young laborers have been paid 1/2 of the net minimum wage and they work informally, out of record.

In article 87 entitled “Medical certificate for employees aged under 18 years”, it is stated that before being admitted to any employment, children and young employees aged between 14 and 18 (including those in their 18th year) shall be examined by the medical practitioner attached to the establishment or by an employees’ health service, or in the absence of either, by the medical services of the nearest Social Insurance Organisation, health center, government or municipal medical practitioners, in that order, and shall be certified as being fit physically fit for the job to be performed, taking into consideration the nature and conditions of the work. It is also said that until employees have reached the age of 18, they shall be subject to medical examinations at least every six months to determine whether or not there is any drawback in their continuing their employment; all certificates shall be filed in the establishment and produced by the employer on request by any competent official and Social Insurance Organisation may not refrain from conducting the first examination before the employee’s admission to employment.

In article 104 entitled “Violation of provisions on organisation of work”, it is stated that an employer or his/her representative shall be liable to a fine of 1,200,00 Turkish liras (\$ 669) if he/she fails to comply with the provisions of the articles 71,72,73. In the article 105 entitled “Violations of the provisions as to health and safety”, it is stated that an employer or his/her representative shall be liable to a fine of 1,200,00 Turkish liras (\$ 669) if he/she employs in contravention of article 85, children under the age of 16 in arduous and dangerous work or if he/she violates the age limits prescribed in article 85. In article 105 it is also said that an employer or his/her representative shall be liable to a fine of 220,00 Turkish liras (\$ 122) for each child involved if he/she does not procure medical certificates for the children in accordance with article 87.

Turkey which signed Constitution of International Labor Organisation (ILO) in the year 1932, accepted international standards on child labor by ratifying Underground Work (Women) Convention no.45 in 1937, Minimum Age (Sea) Convention no.58 in 1959, Minimum Age (Trimmers and Stokers) Convention no.15 in 1959, Radiation Protection Convention no.158 in 1968, Maximum Weight Convention no.127 in 1972, Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention no.77 in 1983, European Social Charter of the European Council in 1989, Minimum Age (Underground Work) Convention no.123 in 1991, Minimum Age (Industry) Convention no.59 in 1992, United Nations Children's Rights Convention in 1995, Minimum Age Convention no.138 in 1998, Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention no.182 in 2001, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography in 2002, European Social Charter(Revised) of the European Council in 2007.

Turkey, in which compulsory basic education has been 8 years since February 1997 and school beginning age has been the age of 5,5 (66 months) since September 2012, seems to accept the age of 13,5 ($8+5,5=13,5$) as the age of starting work actually. However, before September 2012, school beginning age was the age of 7 (84 months) and from 1997 to September 2012, Turkey accepted the age of 15 ($8+7=15$) as the age of starting work actually. In this connection, it is possible to claim that Turkey has provided the opportunity for the violation of the limits of age of employment since the last change in school beginning age. The governing party (AK Party) which has been in power since 2002 objects this fact and argues that in recent years industrialised countries tend to use the issue of child labor as a barrier in international trade against developing countries, in particular against Turkey. According to governing party, rich countries with more industrialised economic structures have taken further action to establish a link between child labor and international trade in the form of social standards and this approach disregards the existing socio-economic structure of Turkey and will harm Turkey's economy.

4. Evaluation of Statistics on Child Labor in Turkey

Turkey, which has accepted international standards on child labor, does not have a favorable rate in child labor. This is not because of lack in laws and regulations, but because of lack in enforcement or lack in coordination between institutional mechanisms.

The Disadvantaged Groups Department (DGD) of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security(MOLSS) is the primary agency coordinating the child labor efforts of the Ministry of Education, the Social Services and Child Protection Institution, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice and non-governmental organizations. The DGD acts as the secretariat of the National Guidance Committee which monitors child labor and the activities of the government to combat with the problem of child labor. MOLSS conducts labor enforcement in workplaces that are covered by the labor law including medium and large scale industrial and service sector enterprises. MOLSS inspectors are responsible for enforcing the child labor legislation and are instructed to prioritize complaints alleging child labor. There are nearly 850 labor inspectors, all of whom are authorized to conduct inspections on child labor.

According to governmental official reports, in 2010 Labor Inspection Board conducted 46,969 labor inspections which revealed 22,271 employed youngs and no child younger than age of 15 were found in heavy and dangerous work. According to official reports,it is said that in 2010 MOLSS implemented a special child labor inspection project in the

province Ankara in Ivedik Organized Industrial Zones and 230 workplaces were inspected and only three underage workers were detected. This seems not true considering the findings of non-governmental organizations in Turkey. For instance, on the day of combat with child labor on 12 June 2012, a labor union in Turkey, DİSK declared that an extensive research has been made. With the assumption of people at the age between 5 and 17 are children, it has been found that there are 1 billion 586 million children in the world and 306 million of this population is child labor. According to DİSK, there are 958 thousand child laborers in Turkey. DİSK emphasized that the striking finding of the research is the increase in the number of child laborers in industrial works in Turkeyiv. While the percentage of child laborers in industry in 1994 is 16, this increases up to 28% in 2006. And the number of children working in trade has been increasing according to research of DİSK. The increase of the percentage of child laborers in trade (from 8% in 1994 up to 22% in 2006) seems unfavorable, because the economic relationships in trade are very flexible and irregular and the irregularities in workplaces pave way to the exploitation of children.

Complaints about child labor can be made by phone to a hotline operated by the Social Services Institution or to the web site of Prime Minister's Office Communications Center in Turkey. However, as the child labor is a kind of strategy for households to combat with poverty, it seems useless. The Turkish National Police (TNP) employs nearly four thousand officers tasked with addressing children's issues and TNP also investigates cases of human trafficking but there is no any information on the number of criminal investigations, victims, court cases or convictions for violations of the regulations. The Rural Development Plan (2010-2013) prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, addresses child labor in agriculture and focuses specifically on seasonal migrant labor. But all these polices held by different branch of government seems not to address the problem of child labor. The reason seems to be the lack in coordination of the governmental departments and unsuccessful to give a start to implement a comprehensive program to combat with the problem.

According to data of Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) for the year 2006, the number of children aged 6-17 in Turkey is 16,264 and 60,9% of this population is in urban areas and 39,1% of it is in rural areas. And 84,7% of 16,264 children attend school and 15,3% of 16,264 children does not attend school. Girls constitute 58,8% of the children population in Turkey for the year 2006. The most striking data is that 68,5% of female children does not attend school. According to TurkStat data, most of the child laborers (40,9%) work in agriculture. According to UNICEF for the year of 2003, children under 19 years age make up 38% of Turkey's population (70 million in 2003) and children under 15 years of age represent 29% and Turkey's population growth rate is falling but the size of the population of children is expected to be unchanged by 2015v. According to UNICEF in the same year, 37% of children under 15 years of age are living with food and non-food poverty and this means that their parents and care givers have insufficient means to feed, clothe, shelter, educate and protect them properly. Children most at risk of poverty in Turkey include those who are born into large families with only one breadwinner; who grow up in dry, mountainous rural areas where outmoded farming techniques and limited access to major markets threaten livelihoods; who are from single-parent families; whose families have recently migrated to urban areas; whose parents work in informal and casual employment and have no regular income as a result; whose parents have little or no formal education are often unskilled and have a lower than average earning capacity; whose parents are

underemployed and unable to earn enough; whose parents are long term unemployed living with a disability or caring for a disabled person.

According to ILO statistics of September 2012, labor force participation rate in Turkey for the year 2011 is 49,8%. However 71,6% of this annual average is men and 28,8% of it is women. Labor force participation rate for the year 2011 by youth is 39,2%. Estimates of child labor made by national or international institutions or/and governmental or non-governmental organizations vary because different working ages are counted. It ranges between 250 to 300 million, if children aged 5-17 involved in any economic activity are counted. If light occasional work is excluded, ILO estimates there are 153 million child laborers aged 5-14 worldwide in the year 2008. According to ILO statistics, nearly 60% of the child labor is involved in agricultural activities such as farming, dairy and forestry and nearly 25% of child labor is in service activities such as retail, hawking goods, restaurants, load and transfer of goods, storage, picking trash, polishing shoes, domestic help. The remaining 15% of child labor is in informal economy, small business, operating machinery in medium businesses and such kind of operations. Child labor accounts for 22% of the workforce in Asia, 32% in Africa, 17% in Latin America and 1% in USA, Canada and wealthy European countries. Because of the fact that the accurate child labor information is difficult to obtain and there are disagreements between data sources as to what constitutes child labor, all the statistics about child labor should be evaluated with doubt.

According to report entitled "2010 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey" which was prepared by USA Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs and dated 3 October 2011, working children between the ages 5-14 constitutes 2,6% and children attending school between the ages 5-14 constitutes 92,4% and the children combining work and school between the ages 5-14 constitutes 1,6% of total population of children in Turkey. In 2010, Turkey's population is 73,722,988 and 22,5 million of this population is below the age of 18 constituting 30,7% of it. However the children between the ages 0-14 constitute 26% of the population. In this report, it is stated that children who are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, particularly work in agriculture and urban informal sector. It is said that children are involved in the agricultural production of cotton, tobacco, hazelnuts and sugar beets and children in agriculture often work long hours and are involved in activities such as using potentially dangerous machinery and tools, carrying heavy loads and applying harmful pesticides. In the year 2009, according to Turkish government, the number of children working in the streets is 8,298. In the report it is emphasized that parents force the children to shine shoes, sell tissues and food and children working in the streets may be exposed to many dangers including severe weather, vehicle accidents and criminal elements. According to report, 57,1% of child laborers works in agriculture, 14,3% works in manufacturing and 27,1% works in services, however 1,5% is indicated as other works.

In Turkey, necessary laws and regulations exist related with the issue of child labor. However there is lack in coordination among relevant institutions to combat with the problem and there is lack in enforcement of the present laws and regulations on child labor. Although legislation on child labor in Turkey complies with the international standard in the legislation on child labor, Turkey does not have a favorable rate in child labor. It is thought that creating sensitivity toward the issue of child labor or increasing interest of public view toward the issue or consciousness raising activities seem not to be solution. However, the only solution to decrease the rate of child labor in Turkey under 1% as in the case of wealthy countries, seems to extend the time period of compulsory

education from 8 years up to 12 years and at the same time increasing the school beginning age from 66 months up to 96 months.

Conclusion

Turkey which is a developing country, has ratified most of the necessary international regulations on child labor and the protective legal regulations to prevent the exploitation of children are sufficiently strong. However, child labor is existent at high level in Turkey considering the levels of child labor of member states of European Union. It is thought that creating sensitivity toward the issue of child labor or increasing interest of public view toward the issue or consciousness raising activities seem not to be solution. However, the only solution to decrease the rate of child labor in Turkey under 1% as in the case of wealthy countries, seems to extend the time period of compulsory education from 8 years up to 12 years and at the same time increasing the school beginning age from 66 months up to 96 months.

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ⁱ The calculations are made by researcher of TEPAV, Ozan Acar. According to Ozan Acar, there are two main reasons of the high rate of child poverty in the south east region of Turkey. First one is low level income in the region and the second one is high rate of the average number of children in the region. He emphasizes that the great gap between the eastern and western regions of Turkey in the context of child poverty is one of the most serious problems of Turkey. Please look at his article entitled "Geleceğin Güçlü Türkiye'si ve Yoksul Çocuklarımız"<http://www.tepav.org.tr/tr/kose-yazisi-tepav/s/3287> Accessed February 8, 2013.

ⁱⁱ Miles Corak, Michael Fertig and Marcus Tamm prepared a discussion paper (no.1528) entitled "A Portrait of Child Poverty in Germany" for UNICEF Innocenti Research Center in February 2005 and in this study it is said that "Despite half a century of considerable economic growth and large increases in per capita income, child poverty is still prevalent in the world's most advanced countries. According to Corak (2005) the proportion of children living in households with less than one-half of median income in the OECD countries ranges from less than 3 per cent to more than 25 per cent and in the majority of countries is above one in ten. At the same time many observers fear that growing up in poverty undermines the well-being and opportunities of children, possibly leading to learning difficulties, lower levels of schooling, higher probabilities of delinquent behavior and unemployment, and ultimately to a self-enforcing spiral of poverty across generations." Please look at "Portrait of Child Poverty in Germany", <http://ftp.iza.org/dp1528.pdf> Please also look at for the report entitled "Child Poverty in Perspective: An Overview of Child Well-Being in Rich Countries" UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, report card no:7, <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/ChildPovertyReport.pdf> Accessed February 8, 2013.

ⁱⁱⁱ According to article 227 of Turkish Penal Code, prostitution for persons younger than age 21 and the sexual exploitation of children in the production of pornography is prohibited. Article 80 of Turkish Penal Code outlaws trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor. Please look at <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k5237.html> for Turkish text of the code. Accessed February 8, 2013.

^{iv} DİSK argues that with the decrease in school beginning age from 84 months to 66 months, the rate of child labor will increase as the graduate age from compulsory basic education is thought to be the the age of starting work. DİSK offers to be extended the time period of compulsory education from 8 years up to 12 years. Look at the offers of DİSK from its own website. <http://www.disk.org.tr/default.asp?Page=Content&ContentId=1317> Accessed February 8, 2013.

^v Fertility rate in Turkey vary from region to region. The highest rate is in the eastern region. It is 3,26. In other regions the rate ranges between 1,73 to 2,20. The data has been taken from newsletter (no:10923) of Ministry of the Interior of Turkey, Gneral Directorate of Civil Registration and Nationality, <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=10923> Accessed February 8, 2013.