

# EVALUATION OF THE ROLE AND PROGRAMS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH A VIEW TO THE LAW ON THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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## Abstract

*Considering the centrality of the activities of non-governmental organizations and the emphasis of the empowerment approach on the dimensions of educational support, paying attention to the protection of the rights of children and adolescents is a human-social duty that is the responsibility of each individual, organization and institution, and in this regard, the importance of organizations The people of the organization that work in the field of these children are twofold. Undoubtedly, there is no hope of achieving a better world without paying attention to empowering children and investing and planning in education, health, employment and improving their living standards. Considering the importance of the performance of the government and non-governmental organizations in supporting these children, it highlights the necessity of investigating the role and consequences of the interventions of these organizations in solving the problems of children and adolescents.*


**Keywords:** children and teenagers, Child Protection Law, Government, Non-governmental organizations.

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, humanity has exhibited hubris and observed the infringement of numerous personal and societal liberties and rights as a result of ambition. Children and adolescents, owing to their susceptibility, have consistently been situated at the center of the realm of corruption and subject to a range of hazards. The safeguarding of children's rights on a worldwide scale has been a prominent area of interest for both governmental and non-governmental organizations in recent decades. The Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents has prioritized safeguarding the rights of minors by delineating various instances of offenses committed against them. This comprehensive approach sheds light on the significant concerns in the domain of children and adolescents. The government bears significant responsibilities concerning children and adolescents who are deemed vulnerable. The creation of effective protective legislation serves as a crucial foundation for executive support initiatives. In this [context](#), the enactment of the Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents represents a noteworthy example. The Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents has delineated the responsibilities of organizations that cater to children, including but not limited to the Ministry of Education, Welfare Organizations, and Municipalities, through a series of [articles](#). Meanwhile, the responsibilities of non-governmental organizations have been explicitly defined. The present article aimed to examine the role of government and non-governmental organizations in protecting the rights of children in Iran, with a specific focus on the law on the protection of children and adolescents.

## 1. EXAMINING PROGRAMS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN THE LAW ON THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

The Convention on the Rights of the Child outlines several rights regarding the growth and maturation of children and adolescents. These include the right to identity, citizenship, protection, minimum welfare, family, socialization, protection against injustice and abuse, restoration of the victim, and education. It is incumbent upon member states, including the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to enact legislative and executive measures to ensure the realization of these rights. To optimize the attainment of



this objective, it is imperative to establish pertinent protective regulations that are forward-thinking in this domain. It is incumbent upon this legislation to explicate the perilous circumstances and mandate diverse entities, including but not limited to welfare, law enforcement, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Interior, to identify and provide assistance to vulnerable children. From a legal perspective, it is evident that official and government entities must [implement](#) measures for the attraction, identification, and referral of children who are at risk to welfare organizations. These entities are accountable for executing measures in this domain. The welfare of children and adolescents is a matter of concern, and the proposed regulation and its subsequent executive action represent a novel and efficacious approach to safeguarding this vulnerable population. Before the enactment of this legislation, the focus was primarily on addressing the needs of children who had been subjected to abuse or were involved in delinquent behavior. However, it appears that additional measures are necessary to ensure the successful implementation of this highly progressive law (Mehra, 2004: 1).

### **1.1. Executive Actions Focusing on Children and Adolescents**


The imperative to monitor the efficacy of non-judicial entities, such as welfare organizations, concerning matters concerning children and adolescents, to curtail the government's involvement in the judiciary by delegating responsibilities through an executive and preventative framework, underscores the inadequacy of the judicial system in addressing preventive concerns. The assertion is substantiated by the fact that in the program for judicial development, there is a concerted effort to decrease reliance on judicial bodies as a means of enhancing overall quality. To enhance the efficacy of child-centered prevention, it can be advantageous to explicate the fundamental principles of executive actions undertaken by non-governmental organizations in this domain. Subsequently, the legal provisions that have conferred an executive mandate upon non-governmental organizations will be elucidated. In the field of criminology, the term "victim" is utilized, while in social contexts, the term "harmed" is employed to refer to the same concept. As such, the designations "child at risk" and "child in danger" evoke identical meanings and do not represent distinct categories. The program designed for the growth and development of children and adolescents is grounded on the premise that childhood represents the most pivotal phase in shaping an individual's character. This perspective prioritizes the family unit and recognizes the interconnectedness of maternal and child health. The interdependence of health components such as nutrition, healthcare, education, and parental support has been well established (Almarshad et al., 2021). Any neglect or deficiency in one of these areas can have a cascading effect on other sectors. Hence, it is imperative to acknowledge that the scope of education extends beyond that of children alone. Non-governmental organizations prioritize the provision of social services to young children, with a focus on promoting their integrated growth and development. This approach is characterized by its emphasis on upholding the rights of all children without any exceptions. As such, it takes into account the needs of children living in unique circumstances. This perspective posits that every child must undergo holistic development that encompasses well-rounded physical, mental, and social growth.

This approach is characterized by its focus on the child and family, with an emphasis on the family as the central unit. It also takes a multifaceted view of the child, prioritizing durability and stability over any particular phase of the child's life. Additionally, it involves policy-making for the childhood period, as well as the development of measurement indicators and methods for collecting information about children's mental and social development (Latfi, 2014: 60). Non-governmental organizations engage in child-oriented activities, which include the following:

- Establishment of kindergarten centers
- Social support plan for those suffering from a gender identity disorder
- Development of university courses with child and adolescent orientation

### **1.2. Novel Approaches to Executive and Judicial Procedures**

The topic of child-centered and executive programs of non-governmental organizations is currently being studied and investigated. These programs are following the law and aim to identify and empower children at risk. Additionally, these organizations provide intervention in the areas of litigation, research, and support measures. The discourse surrounding the critique of previous legislation regarding the welfare of endangered children and the elucidation of hazardous circumstances is not isolated from the matter of how governing bodies intercede and implement safeguarding and preemptive measures to [mitigate](#) the risk or




the fundamental origins of the risk for the individual experiencing a challenge or difficulty. The Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents, which was ratified in 2002, represented a significant and commendable step towards safeguarding the rights of children and adolescents (Polevoy, G. G., & Sablin, A. B. 2022). Subsequently, the Council of Ministers approved the Regulations for the Organization of Child Labor and the Street Child Phenomenon in 2005, which to some extent clarified the roles and responsibilities of relevant organizations and institutions in this regard. In recent years, the Convention on the Rights of the Child has also played a crucial role in protecting the dignity and rights of children in Iran. However, these initiatives have been marred by several shortcomings, most notably a lack of coordination. Besides, they exhibit significant weaknesses in their structural design, theoretical foundations and definitions, and the efficacy of announced punishments as a deterrent. Additionally, the role of social work in the implementation of the law from its inception to the point of punishment is deemed inadequate. All these weaknesses have been significantly resolved in the new legislation.

The prior legislation lacked explicit organizational responsibilities and solely constituted a criminal offense (Morjani et al., 2021). Subsequently, the Council of Ministers authorized the Regulations for the Organization of Child Labor, which provided a degree of structure to the regulations that were ratified in 2005. As a result, twelve organizations were assigned duties for organizing child labor and street children. An analysis of the bylaw in question reveals that the committee responsible for its implementation has experienced fluctuations in its formation over the years, with periods of both growth and decline. Additionally, some members have assumed more prominent roles, while others have not made significant contributions. Recent legislation has refined the selection process for responsible organizations and assigned them more significant responsibilities. The text of the law, as approved by the parliament, enumerates the responsibilities of the organizations rather than relying on regulations. Furthermore, certain organizations that were deemed ineffective under previous regulations have been eliminated, while new organizations, such as the Prisons and Security Measures Organization and the Civil Registry Organization, have been introduced.

One notable modification to the aforementioned legislation involves the transfer of legal accountability to a novel entity within the judicial system. The guidelines about the management of labor children and street children fall under the purview of the cultural and social working group of the governorate. However, the organization in charge of the implementation and monitoring of this legislation is the newly established Office of the Protection of Children and Adolescents. The newly enacted legislation has assigned six crucial and fundamental responsibilities to this particular office. These duties are anticipated to significantly influence the implementation of the law, and the office is expected to be established with suitable organization and structure in various cities, as per the directive of the judiciary's head. Determining whether the establishment of this office is time-sensitive or not and [expediting](#) its establishment can effectively expedite the realization of the legislator's intent to enhance the welfare of children. An additional alteration in structure involves the specification of particular responsibilities, such as identification and introduction, acceptance, referral, support, maintenance, and empowerment of children, as well as monitoring activities. These duties are carried out by various entities, including welfare organizations, the police force, prison organizations, education and training institutions, ministries of the interior, civil registration agencies, and cooperative ministries. The domains of work and social welfare are characterized by distinct and well-defined responsibilities. The current legislation and regulations about labor and street children do not refer to the matter in question.

The lawmaker's recent actions demonstrate a heightened sensitivity towards the well-being of injured children, as evidenced by the expanded scope of criminal offenses against their interests (Shahmars, A. K., & Valiev, S. 2022). Additionally, there has been a notable increase in attention paid to the interests of children and adolescents, with many provisions of the law being detailed and certain actions being clarified in specific cases. The aforementioned action has resulted in the constriction and restriction of personal preferences and diverse viewpoints, amplifying potential hazards for children and adolescents in a total of 14 instances. Besides, the establishment of a well-defined framework and the allocation of responsibilities have enhanced the enforceability of the law. The implementation of measures to safeguard the well-being of social workers during their active service, as well as the identification and mitigation of hazardous circumstances that may pose a threat to the safety of children, are commendable strategies. Meanwhile,



the segregation of children and adolescents from adult inmates in the Juvenile Detention Center is a positive step toward ensuring the welfare of children. It is also crucial to consider the needs of individuals who lack proper identification. The allocation of responsibilities to labor department inspectors for monitoring child labor in workshops, facilitating access to support institutions for children, and emphasizing insurance coverage for labor teenagers aged 15-18 represents a shift in approach. The prioritization of children's education by the law, particularly for adolescents until the completion of their secondary education, and the establishment of penalties for parents who impede their children's school education, indicate a shift in perspective. The increasing significance of media in the areas of production, broadcasting, control, coordination, and executive services has been recognized by lawmakers, leading to a fresh perspective on the matter. Haghdadi (2020) argues that a progressive perspective involves prioritizing the adoption of measures and reforms by legislators, as well as promoting the presence of children and adolescents within their families rather than resorting to separation and referral to welfare organizations.

The evolving social situation appears to be broadening the scope of responsibilities for individuals in the roles of helpers and social workers. Hence, the significance of social workers' functions has been underscored in other sections of this legislation. The significance of the welfare social worker's report and attendance in the family court proceedings has been underscored. The function of social workers in the welfare organization has been elucidated due to their awareness of the perilous circumstances that children may face. They can conduct interviews with relevant individuals to gather information about the child or adolescent in question. In the event of encountering severe and imminent danger, individuals are authorized to take prompt action within the confines of their legal obligations and authority, or with the assistance and involvement of parents, to mitigate the danger and minimize any resulting harm. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to relocate the individual from the hazardous environment and transport them to appropriate centers. Subsequently, it is imperative to notify the prosecutor within a 12-hour timeframe. Subject to authorization from the judicial authority, social workers are authorized to conduct visits to individuals' places of residence and employment to obtain reports. Based on the recommendations of social work experts, the prosecutor may remove a child from an environment deemed hazardous and relocate them to a secure and safe facility, such as a welfare center or a foster home. In situations where the welfare of a child or adolescent is at stake, legal action may be necessary to secure custody, guardianship, visitation rights, the removal of a forced guardian, transfer to a substitute family or welfare organization, or placement in a rehabilitation or safe house facility. It is important to seek the counsel of a trusted individual in such matters. In some instances, the social worker may be required to provide testimony in court. Social workers' opinions can be influential in judicial decision-making processes, particularly in cases where the court is considering issuing an order to suspend prosecution, replace it with an alternative sentence, issue a sentence, or suspend the execution of punishment. Social workers have the authority to oversee the implementation of court orders and are empowered to request a review and subsequent decision from the court that issued the final order in the event of any reported errors or deficiencies in the execution of said order. The specialized and significant roles of social workers can be attributed to the influence of the social approach and the perception of children and adolescents as victims, as opposed to the judicial security approach that regards them as offenders (Haghdadi, 2020).

### **1.3. The Utilization of Non-Governmental Organizations**

To engage the community in matters about youth and leverage local resources for the execution of preventive interventions, it is recommended to involve civic institutions and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of such programs (Aelita et al., 2021). International organizations are focused on utilizing civil society as a potent tool to safeguard the diverse rights of children. The Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents places significant emphasis on the involvement of popular organizations. Specifically, the Supreme Council for the Protection of Children and Adolescents is tasked with developing guidelines and programs to facilitate the organization, empowerment, and strengthening of popular participation and institutions (2015: 87). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are entities that are not established through international agreements and encompass groups that admit government-appointed individuals as members. They work on the condition that individuals do not impede the liberty of operation of said organizations (Azadi, 2016: 12).

Numerous non-governmental organizations exist in the realm of providing support for children who work,



both domestically and internationally. International and domestic non-governmental organizations have implemented strategies aimed at safeguarding the welfare of children and adolescents. NGOs can be categorized into two groups, namely international and domestic, depending on the extent of their involvement in safeguarding children against labor exploitation.

At the global level, initiatives have been implemented to assist children who are engaged in labor activities, as follows:

- Declarations No. 1 and 2 about the rights of children (1959 and 1924)
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- The principles of triple strategies as outlined in the Beijing Rules of 1985, the Riyadh Guidelines of 1990, and the Havana Guidelines of 1990
- 1994 and 1995 resolutions passed by the United Nations regarding the regrettable circumstances surrounding street children
- The World Children's Summit of 1990 was held in New York.
- 1995 Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development
- 1993 World Conference on Human Rights
- World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, 1996, Stockholm
- 21st-century youth charter, 1999, Paris
- International Labor Conference 1999, Geneva
- Charter of the International Federation of Associations of Travel Agents, Tourism, and Child Operators, 1999
- Global Movement for Children and Adolescents, 2001
- The international program to eliminate child labor, 1992

The international struggle to end child prostitution in Asian Tourism, 1991 (Ghasemzadeh, 2006: 260)

In Iran, various measures have been implemented to provide support for children who are engaged in labor activities. These measures encompass:

### **1.3.1. UNICEF Initiatives**

UNICEF has undertaken various initiatives in this domain, including conducting a study on child labor in 1998, organizing a workshop aimed at exploring the prospects for street children in 1999, devising strategies to assist governmental and non-governmental organizations in addressing the educational and financial needs of working children, furnishing resources and information about working with this demographic and dispatching a delegation of experts from governmental and non-governmental organizations to examine and evaluate the measures implemented in Iran regarding street children in 2001.

### **13.2. Social Welfare Organization**

The welfare organization has implemented measures to provide support for children who are engaged in labor activities. These measures include the development of plans to establish centers for the identification, collection, and replacement of working children and beggars on a trial basis in 19 provinces since 1999, in collaboration with other government organizations. The purpose of this plan, which was approved in 1999, was to identify and diagnose working children, provide living accommodations for working children, acknowledge their abilities, educate working children academically and professionally, and create cities that are healthy for working children. The plan for the organization of working children formulated after the transfer of responsibility for the welfare of working children, was established under the resolution dated 6/11/1999. Since 2000, a plan has been put into action in various provinces, including Tehran, to provide support for working children. This initiative has resulted in the establishment of crisis intervention centers in Tehran and other provincial centers, as well as the creation of safe houses for women and girls. Additionally, a conference addressing issues faced by Iranian children and adolescents was organized in 1997.

### **1.3.3. Municipality**

The municipality has taken the following actions to support children:

- The establishment of organizing headquarters for street children, as well as the establishment of Sabz Houses in Tehran in 1999 for male street children and Reyhan House for girls in Tehran in the same year, were significant initiatives.



The Tehran Children's Support Association was founded in 2007. The primary objective of forming this organization is to assist children, particularly those who are underprivileged and those who are vulnerable to the adverse effects of emergencies, societal upheavals, and environmental calamities. Ghasemzadeh (2007) reports that the Tehran Children's Support Association was established as a non-governmental and popular organization to fulfill its social and human obligation to provide support to working children and children who are vulnerable.

The development of guidelines and programs is essential for the organization, empowerment, and strengthening of the involvement of individuals and non-governmental organizations in supporting the welfare of children and adolescents. Additionally, it is crucial to establish coordination and a unified approach in the issuance of licenses for non-governmental institutions and organizations that are involved with children and adolescents, as well as monitor their activities. Several people's organizations have been identified as potentially effective in protecting children under legal provisions. These include the Children's Rights Protection Association, the Working Children's Support Association, and the Association for Helping Children at Risk.

#### **1.3.4. Children's Rights Protection Association**


The Children's Rights Protection Association was established in 1994 as a non-governmental, independent, non-political, and non-profit organization to protect the rights of children. The primary objective of this association is to publicize and advance the Universal Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Children's Rights Protection Association tries to enhance the quality of life for children and adolescents through the utilization of collective and voluntary endeavors among its members. The aforementioned association operates in multiple domains, adhering to the legal framework of the Islamic Republic of Iran. These domains include education, information, training, healthcare, family counseling services, and the provision of practical aid to children who have been impacted by natural and social calamities and challenging living circumstances. The association's activities align with the International Convention on the Rights of the Child in Iran and encompass supporting working children, homeless children, children affected by floods or war, and children who have experienced abuse. This association is a non-governmental organization that actively identifies and provides support for children who are at risk, both in terms of legislation and operations. The legislative activities of the association involve the examination of civil laws about children and their rights, as well as the revision and amendment of existing laws to benefit children. Meanwhile, the presentation of plans for the approval of new laws is undertaken to protect the rights of children. This association has made notable accomplishments in this particular domain, including:

- Draft of the Law on Children and Adolescents (about child abuse) approved in 2002
- Plan to amend the Custody Law
- Efforts to eliminate the death penalty for underage
- Numerous negotiations were held with the secretary of the parliament's legal commission to eliminate the loopholes in the protection law

The Children's Rights Protection Association engages in cultural and social endeavors that involve disseminating information, promoting awareness, and instructing families, institutions, and social organizations that interact with children on the subject of children's rights. Moreover, endeavors are being made to mitigate and forestall instances of abuse, harassment, and all forms of maltreatment, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, and behavior that harm the physical and mental health of children and adolescents. The association's education unit and public relations committee are actively engaged in pursuing this objective. The Association for the Protection of Children's Rights engages in executive activities as part of its mandate. These activities encompass the implementation of laws aimed at safeguarding the welfare of children, as well as the removal of barriers that impede the effective enforcement of such laws. For example, one may allude to legislative measures such as the prohibition of child labor and the provision of tuition-free public education (Heidrian, 2015: 89).

#### **1.3.5. Association for the Protection of Children at Risk**

It is a non-profit and non-political organization dedicated to safeguarding children who are in vulnerable situations. Since 2007, the Association for the Protection of Children at Risk has been actively engaged in assisting vulnerable children. It operates voluntarily and has garnered significant public support. Its primary objective is to mitigate the risks faced by children in need. Besides, it provides educational initiatives and



supportive resources to disadvantaged and vulnerable youth populations, encompassing areas such as education, healthcare and therapy, child rights, counseling and aid, public relations, and research-based working groups.

## 2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL MEASURES

The primary objective of intervention in protecting the welfare of children and adolescents is to preclude instances of child abuse, as the efficacy of remedial measures for children and families after the occurrence of such abuse is constrained (Madani, 2001: 292). The concept of social harm pertains to a collection of circumstances and elements that impede the proper operation of societal structures and institutions, ultimately leading to their disruption. This term has been likened to the human body by certain sociologists, who draw comparisons between societal functioning and bodily health. Such behaviors are generally considered undesirable and have been associated with adverse social consequences. Consequently, the measures about non-governmental organizations will be initiated with a distinct outlook right from the onset of societal harm and will persist until the amelioration and perpetuation of the standard course of a qualitative life.

### 2.1. Giving Information and Gaining Awareness


As per the provisions of Article 42 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the member nations must ensure widespread and appropriate dissemination of the principles and provisions of the agreement to both adults and children. Thus, the promotion of children's rights can be accomplished through the implementation of public information and awareness initiatives. Advocating for the rights of children, particularly those who are underprivileged and those who are vulnerable to harm due to crises and social disruptions, is a moral obligation that falls upon every person, entity, and establishment. The attainment of a better world is contingent upon the adequate consideration of children's rights as well as the implementation of strategic measures aimed at enhancing their education, health, and overall living conditions.

At this stage, the primary objective of prevention is to strategize measures that prevent individuals from progressing to a higher stage of prevention. This preventive measure is akin to the concept of immunization. Currently, we are not confronted with the perilous circumstances of child victimization and delinquency. However, by implementing prompt, well-defined, and efficacious measures, we can forestall the need for therapeutic interventions in support services. At this stage of prevention, the organization's focus is on implementing targeted prevention programs aimed at safeguarding general audiences from potential harm. At this stage of prevention being discussed, the programs and measures implemented must be both engaging and relevant to the educational content. Additionally, the methods employed must be tailored to the specific circumstances of each target group (i.e., the recipients of the information) and their respective age demographics. When making considerations, it is important to take into account physical, educational, and cultural factors, as well as the individuals involved. For instance, it is not appropriate to utilize the same techniques for conveying information to both adults and children. Additionally, the methods employed should serve as a foundation for engaging the intended audience (Mousavi Chalek, 2011: 39).

The term "social harm" refers to actions, whether individual or collective, that deviate from the established moral principles and norms of formal or informal collective behavior within a given society. Such actions may result in legal sanctions or social ostracism (Tavajohi, 1999: 14).

The phenomenon of social harm is characterized by its diversity, relativity, and variability. Contemporary Iranian society is plagued by a range of social harms, such as aggression and crime, suicide, addiction and drug trafficking, prostitution, financial crimes, children running away from home, and juvenile delinquency. The prevalence and nature of these social harms are subject to variation based on temporal and spatial factors. Although social harms may exhibit diversity and relativity, they possess a genuine and liable nature, and their existence cannot be negated by a lack of awareness or understanding. The concept of legal liability for harm enables effective regulation and management of such harms. Hence, the prevention and treatment of social harms are contingent upon the scientific understanding of the characteristics and principles that govern their development within a given society, as well as the implementation of scientific discoveries in the planning phase (Tavajohi, 1999: 15).

Contemporary Iranian society is confronted with a multitude of cultural, economic, social, and political



challenges that have resulted in various forms of harm and adversity. These harms include issues such as illiteracy or low literacy rates, social disorder, identity crises, addiction, aggression, violence, suicide, runaway children, and drug abuse among teenagers. Moreover, the prevalence of child abuse poses a significant threat to the country's future in terms of environmental health, financial security, and intellectual well-being. A comprehensive national survey has yet to be conducted in Iran, which would enable the collection of information for policy-making, planning, and relevant executive organizations. Such a survey would provide a suitable scientific basis for conducting further studies, facilitate the comparison of data, and allow for the description and analysis of the evolution of harm (Tavajohi, 1998: 23).

## **2.2. Provision of Services and Implementation of Interventions**

At this stage of prevention, the aim is to promptly offer services to individuals who have encountered difficulties due to various factors. In this stage, the timely provision of services or implementation of interventions holds significant importance. It implies that expeditious accessibility of these services to individuals is imperative. The increased duration between the initial manifestation of the problem and the subsequent receipt of service may result in heightened difficulty in resolving the issue. Services ought to be dispensed in a manner that facilitates the resolution, mitigation, or regulation of various issues faced by individuals. Acquiring knowledge about the sources of service providers at this stage is significantly important. According to Mousavi Chalak (2004), being aware of available sources of assistance and making timely referrals can mitigate the severity and complexity of a problem, thereby facilitating its resolution (p. 8). The significance of individuals' engagement and motivation to address and resolve the issue at hand cannot be overstated. The appropriate provision of services is influenced by the adequate distribution and dispersion of service providers, including those from governmental and non-governmental sectors. Prolonged provision of services may result in individuals becoming reliant on them, thus rendering them less self-sufficient. The impact that individuals have acknowledged from a problem and the level of support resources accessible in the domain are contingent upon the severity, profundity, and longevity of the mentioned problem.

## **3. SECURITY MEASURES FOR CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' SAFETY**

To optimize the establishment of support programs, it is imperative to take into account that children, as individuals who have not yet fully developed their personalities and are still undergoing evolution, are exposed to various stimuli from their surroundings. These stimuli may originate from the family, educational institutions, media, and peers. Subsequently, the individual analyzes the aforementioned messages, taking into account their characteristics. The outcome of this analysis is then manifested in their behavior. Specifically, children and adolescents acquire information from their surroundings, which encompass familial, educational, and peer-related contexts. The individual assimilates the information from various media sources and subsequently interprets and evaluates the data following their unique disposition, including temperament, personality, and personal and social competencies. The behavior of children and adolescents is a direct outcome of knowledge processing and acquisition. The broad range of personal and temperamental traits, coupled with insufficient social skills, can increase the likelihood of deviant behavior, delinquency, or personality deficiencies, which may subsequently lead to victimization. The extent of these disorders and the potential remedies to address them are extensive.

### **3.1. Protection against Disability and Physical Risk Factors**

To maximize protection for children with disabilities, it is imperative to initially acknowledge their requirements. Disabled children require a considerable amount of security and comfort as a fundamental necessity. To establish a sense of security in another individual, it is imperative that the individual creating the sense of security feel secure. Regrettably, a significant number of parents with disabled children do not experience this sense of security. A significant number of parents express concern regarding their ability to adequately realize the unique requirements of their children with disabilities due to a perceived lack of requisite expertise. Most of these parents experience feelings of guilt and shame, and some of these caregivers may lack access to the requisite knowledge. Parents who have children with delayed learning and limited abilities may experience significant stress due to the demands and expectations of modern life (Pringill, 2001: 197).

When children with disabilities are acknowledged and encouraged to keep pace with their non-disabled



peers, they are less likely to experience feelings of inadequacy and defeat. Furthermore, the longer this approach is maintained, the less apparent the specific nature of their disability may become. Provided that these children's teachers possess the requisite expertise in the relevant domain, and assuming that the children are enrolled in specialized educational institutions that are tailored to their unique needs, they are likely to experience reduced vulnerability to various forms of social harm, particularly victimization. The provision of adequate resources for identifying and assessing the requirements of this particular cohort of children and subsequently catering to their needs is a crucial measure in extending support to them. Furthermore, it is imperative to provide children with praise and motivation. Unfortunately, their behavior is frequently compared to that of regular people, and they receive less genuine support (Sardari, 2005: 193).

### **3.2. Protection against Psychological Risk Factors**

According to psychologists, having a balanced, flexible, and reversible personality is one of the most crucial requirements for assisting and supporting children and adolescents who are at risk (Tabas, M. Y. et al., 2023). The process of a person's healthy development, which produces social, academic, and professional aptitudes in him, is the definition of personality balance. Contrarily, flexibility refers to the capacity to engage in non-normative activities before ceasing to do so and adhering to the norms. Positivity in attitudes and personality traits, such as cognitive ability, interpersonal communication skills, and positive mood and temperament traits, are crucial components of developing personality balance and flexibility. Having a high sense of self-esteem, a positive attitude toward life, a sense of connection, a sense of humor, and responsibility are a few examples. When they are in danger, adolescents with a balanced and flexible personalities rely on their personality qualities to prevent any risk factors and eventual misbehavior and victimization. Enhancing certain skills can contribute to the development of a balanced and flexible personality. These skills include:

#### **3.2.1. Creating a Sense of Optimism**

The ability to maintain a positive outlook is a crucial factor in surmounting obstacles and attaining success. This statement suggests that an individual can surmount obstacles by exhibiting composure and adopting an optimistic perspective, thereby transcending the impediments. In the face of an adverse event, certain individuals may engage in a search for the responsible party, ultimately attributing blame to an external source. Conversely, individuals who adopt a positive outlook tend to view such incidents as occurring beyond their sphere of influence at a particular moment in time. The individuals in question have exhibited a lack of self-blame and possess a sense of assurance in their ability to surmount the present challenging circumstances.

This issue also applies to children to a large extent. Pessimistic children and teenagers get frustrated when faced with danger or try to blame others and take revenge on them. In any case, the possibility of pessimistic children and teenagers tending to deviations is much higher than that of optimistic children and teenagers (Shokouhi Yekta, Mohsen, and Parand, 2005: 70).

#### **3.2.2. Enhancing Self-Esteem**

Diminished self-confidence is a significant contributing element that renders children and adolescents susceptible to both delinquent behavior and victimization. There is a positive correlation between a child's or adolescent's self-perception of their character as beneficial to society and their likelihood of engaging in delinquent behavior or becoming a victim of such behavior. Any measure that undermines a child's sense of moral goodness raises the likelihood of the child engaging in deviant behavior. The children's self-esteem may be weakened by blaming, humiliation, and excessive objections, which can hinder their ability to effectively navigate challenging situations. In such instances, the children may become disoriented and resort to deviant behaviors as a means of demonstrating their competence. Conversely, any behavior that fosters a sense of adequacy and self-worth in children is likely to enhance their inclination to adhere to prevailing values and norms. When a child is subjected to excessive scolding and disrespect, it can have a detrimental effect on their behavior. If these actions exceed a certain threshold, the child may perceive them as repugnant and be more inclined to engage in deviant behavior. The significance of self-esteem and interpersonal respect for children is apparent. Notwithstanding, it is feasible to enhance the well-being of minors and adolescents through the provision of instruction in areas such as assertiveness, efficacious training, constructive management of anger and conflict, the acquisition of life skills, and techniques for

bolstering self-confidence. Alternative methods for enhancing self-esteem have been proposed by psychologists. One approach to empowering teenagers involves utilizing various tools, such as active listening to their perceptions and emotions, demonstrating respect for their thoughts and feelings, and acknowledging their achievements. Additionally, emphasizing the positive impact that teenagers have on the empowerment of their families can further enhance their sense of efficacy. Enhancing the adolescent's sense of personal agency through self-relevant pursuits, fostering proficient interpersonal abilities to facilitate constructive social interactions, and imparting knowledge regarding societal mechanisms to enable legitimate pathways to success and accomplishment. Involving adolescents in decision-making processes and facilitating the evaluation of the outcomes of their actions at the societal level can enhance their self-esteem by augmenting their sense of accountability (Mahdavi, 2011: 374).

#### 4. THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN PROTECTING CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Children and adolescents have historically been vulnerable to various forms of harm due to their unique circumstances, resulting in instances where their rights and liberties have been infringed upon. Hence, the provision of assistance to children and adolescents, who are considered susceptible segments of a democratic community, is significant. Human rights are fundamental entitlements that are inherent to every individual, regardless of age or status. However, owing to their heightened susceptibility, children are protected by most nations worldwide and granted specific rights under international agreements, such as the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. Therefore, governments bear distinct obligations toward children. Among the fundamental rights afforded to children, the most significant include the right to engage in communication with both parents, the right to human identity, the provision of necessities such as physical protection, food, education, and healthcare, and the implementation of criminal laws that are commensurate with the child's age and developmental stage. Additionally, children are entitled to equal protection of their civil rights and freedom from discriminatory practices based on their race, gender, gender identity, national origin, religion, and disability.

Non-governmental organizations play a variety of roles in addressing the challenges and concerns faced by vulnerable children. These functions can be broadly categorized as follows:

- Assisting in the advancement of human and social development by addressing the requirements for all-encompassing growth, education, and children's health within the framework of sustainable and balanced development
- Establishing a foundation for community collaboration and mobilization in the realm of child protection
- Establishing a communication channel between the government and the public to realize the children's rights through the application of critical and constructive strategies, directing, insisting, adjusting, working together, and other ways based on the situation and other appropriate methods that are tailored to the prevailing circumstance
- Monitoring the operations of governmental entities regarding children
- Programming to execute suitable interventions in the realm of children's requirements in alignment with their objectives
- Empowering children and families through training in the required fields
- Facilitating poverty reduction in the domain of child labor
- Contributing to the cultivation of cultural development and effecting suitable modifications within the scope of one's pursuits
- Assisting in the promotion of social well-being owing to its significance in social development
- Fostering initiative, creativity, and self-confidence in people to realize children's needs
- Facilitating the advancement of liberty and democratic principles within a society is a fundamental prerequisite for the establishment of non-governmental organizations.
- Assisting in the promotion of behaviors like cooperation, acceptable communication techniques, conversation, involvement, understanding, tolerance, and trust while taking into account the need for these behaviors in social life as well as the problems and shortcomings in these situations (Saghi, 2014: 52).

Non-governmental organizations encounter numerous challenges due to their diverse areas of operation.



These entities, regarded as intermediaries between the government and the populace, face the risk of being rejected by either party. In numerous authoritarian countries, government support is not extended to organizations whose primary objective is to disseminate information about citizens' rights, challenge governmental authority, and promote democratic ideals within society. Hence, the government is endeavoring to impede the progress of these institutions by erecting barriers. Conversely, the advent of these establishments has led to a lack of familiarity among the populace regarding their operations, resulting in a dearth of information on their undertakings (Mozaffari, 2010: 36).

In addition to other significant issues, it is noteworthy to mention the endeavors of governments to exert influence on the operations of these establishments. In certain societies, governmental bodies endeavor to impede the productive operations of certain organizations, steering them away from their intended course and towards the government's objectives through covert assistance and even overt takeover of said organizations. In certain instances, it is plausible that variations in preferences may give rise to rivalry and animosity among these establishments, leading to a scenario where these entities engage in efforts to undermine one another rather than provide mutual support. One of the hazards that these institutions face is the potential alteration of their status and objectives. While these organizations are initially established to promote and protect human rights, they may gradually veer off course and alter their objectives, potentially resulting in the mistreatment of their members. Undoubtedly, it is imperative to acknowledge the significance of financial and material concerns. As these entities rely on human resources and member contributions, they are compelled to generate revenue through various means, including but not limited to offering consultation services, engaging in commercial ventures, and creating and distributing informational materials such as pamphlets and educational literature. Consequently, it is plausible that the cessation of work may occur as a result of the inability to generate revenue. In societies where institutions receive governmental support, their activities have experienced a notable surge, and consequential measures have been implemented by said institutions. Hence, non-governmental organizations must strive towards garnering governmental backing while upholding their autonomy and fulfilling their responsibilities. It is unrealistic to anticipate that these establishments will directly challenge the government and endeavor to confront this formidable entity. Instead, it is recommended that they assume the role of intermediaries between political leaders and the general public, while also striving to establish a level of trust with the government, thereby demonstrating their capacity to effectively address administrative challenges. These organizations can aspire to promote the democratization of societies and guarantee the enforcement of human rights.

### CONCLUSION

Addressing the concerns surrounding children and adolescents in all societies holds significant importance from multiple perspectives, as children represent a crucial human resource that shapes the future of society, and their well-being serves as a reflection of the future of the nation. Hence, providing support to this susceptible demographic and striving towards their advancement and proficiency as the paramount human capital contributes to the advancement and excellence of the nation. Conversely, if children diverge from the trajectory of favorable development and socialization, the nation will encounter numerous predicaments in the forthcoming years as a result of inadequately proficient human capital. The investigation of children's rights, particularly those about juvenile criminal justice, has prompted a shift in the discourse surrounding children's rights. As such, it is imperative to undertake further research in this area. Currently, there is a significant emphasis on the legal rights of children and adolescents, as it is widely recognized that they possess fundamental rights from an early age that enable them to effectively discharge their future responsibilities. As per the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an individual who has not attained the age of 18 is classified as a child. Therefore, while some experts categorize an adolescent as someone between the ages of 12 and 18, others extend this range to include individuals between the ages of 12 and 20. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, childhood necessitates particular attention and aid, with the family serving as the primary constituent of society and the milieu assuming the principal responsibility for upholding the child. All children and adolescents possess certain rights, such as the right to engage in communication with their guardians and to possess a distinct human identity, as well as the requirements for safeguarding, education, food, and medical care. If children are deprived of their



rights, it is plausible that they may experience various disorders, potentially contribute to societal issues, or engage in criminal behavior. Individuals require various forms of security, such as physical, mental, and economic, to ensure their well-being within a social context. The early years of a child's life are critical for their physical, mental, and social development, necessitating specialized support and care to accommodate their unique physiological and psychological state. The measures in question ought to possess a suitable conceptual framework and structure. Given the limited capacity of children to directly realize their rights, these measures must incorporate extensive support mechanisms. This will ensure that adults are fully cognizant of their responsibility to provide support. The issue of children's rights is a constituent aspect of human rights that necessitates substantial backing from the global community.


Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have the potential to mitigate the rigidity and inflexibility of laws during their implementation, particularly in cases where children and adolescents are affected. This is because NGOs are rooted in society and emerge from the people themselves. By engaging such organizations in legal proceedings about the human rights of children and adolescents, it becomes feasible to leverage the full potential of existing laws, notwithstanding the inability to modify or revise them, for the betterment of this vulnerable demographic. If such scenarios come to fruition, they have the potential to enhance the efficacy of legal proceedings involving minors by establishing a formalized legal process. The topic of crime prevention and the rehabilitation of offenders through social assistance, psychology, and criminology is a subject of significant interest. The existence of such organizations, coupled with the enactment of legislation aimed at safeguarding children and adolescents, has proven to be efficacious in furthering the objectives of the judiciary.

In the Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents, cases such as guardianship, homelessness, parental incarceration, continuous violence, failure to register births, abuse, exploitation, intentional neglect of children's mental and physical health, preventing their education, and buying and selling children are mentioned. And the juvenile exhibits indicators of criminal behavior. In addition, children can register a complaint under this law, and parents who commit the offense of child abuse will lose custody of their child. In this law, this age has been meticulously defined, and the line between childhood and maturity has been established to protect children. In this regard, the age of 18 marks the transition between infancy and maturity, and individuals under this age are protected by this law. Although this is a judicial law, it takes a social approach, and social workers and welfare organizations play the most significant role in its implementation.

The objective of the legislation is to enhance the neighborhood-centered approach by leveraging the potential of non-governmental organizations, social workers, municipalities, and rural districts. It involves identifying, accepting, maintaining, supporting, and rehabilitating individuals while prioritizing a neighborhood-centered approach. Social workers assume the function of bailiffs, and in instances where they perceive potential peril, they may execute entry without a court-issued mandate. Another aspect of this legislation pertains to the diverse range of instances in which individuals under the age of 18 may receive assistance following its provisions.

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