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Universal Ratification to Child Labour Convention

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Why in News

Recently, **International Labour Organization (ILO)**'s convention on **Worst Forms of Child Labour** also known as **Convention No. 182** received **universal ratification** after the **Kingdom of Tonga** ratified the same.



Key Points

- **Universal Ratification:**

It means ratification by all the members of an organisation. **Convention No. 182** has received ratification from all the 187 members of ILO.

- **Child Labour:**
 - The ILO **defines** child labour as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development.
 - In the least developed countries, slightly **more than one in four children (ages 5 to 17)** are engaged in labour that is considered detrimental to their health and development.
 - The eradication of child labour is part of the **Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7**.
 - The **UN General Assembly** has declared **2021 as the year for the elimination of child labour**.
- **Convention No. 182:**
 - The convention was **adopted by ILO** member states meeting in Geneva **in 1999**.
 - It **aims to protect children from the worst forms of child labour**, which include slavery, prostitution, trafficking, deployment of children in armed conflict and other conditions that compromise their overall well-being.
- **Other International Laws on Child Labour:**
 - **The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989:** It contains the idea that children are not just objects who belong to their parents and for whom decisions are made, or adults in training. Rather, **they are human beings and individuals** with their own rights.
 - **Minimum Age Convention 1973:** It aims to prevent the employment of children below a lower age threshold.
 - Both **Convention No. 182** and the **1973 Minimum Age Convention** are among the **eight core ILO Conventions** regarded as embodying the spirit of the 1998 declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work.
 - **India ratified the Convention No. 182** and the **1973 Minimum Age Convention** in 2017.
- **Impact of Laws on Child Labour:**
 - According to ILO, **incidence of child labour and its worst forms dropped** by almost 40% between 2000 and 2016 as ratification rates on child labour increased and countries adopted laws and policies.
 - The conventions have resulted in **significant increases in enrolments in primary education**.
 - These conventions also **provide the necessary framework to counteract the predominance of informality** in the conditions of work and ought to be a priority for governments.

- **Challenges Related to Child Labour:**

- The Sustainable Developmental Goal (SDG) aims at **complete abolition of child labour by 2025**. However, still an **estimated 152 million are trapped in child labour and 72 million of them are engaged in hazardous work**.
- The **Covid-19 pandemic** is also threatening the reversal of recent gains, with widespread job losses, deterioration in conditions of work, decline in household incomes and temporary school closures.

Way Forward

- The **cycle of poverty and its implications must be addressed** properly, so families can find other means to survive. Many **NGOs like Bachpan Bachao Andolan, ChildFund, CARE India**, etc. have been working to eradicate child labour in India.
- Right kind of focus and orientation with state level authorities is also needed to avoid the practice of child labour. **Forced Child Labour** requires an urgent action from governments and the international communities.

Source: TH