

## Chapter 4 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF CHILD AND YOUTH

### 4.1 CONCEPT OF CHILD AND YOUTH LABOUR

Child labour is recognized as an issue to be eliminated in the world. Children's labour participation reduces their chances of receiving education and adversely affects their health or personal development. The United Nations (UN) is implementing many programs to reduce it. Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs) publicize the target of 'Decreasing the proportion of working children' (Target 1.3).

The definition of child labour by International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC<sup>1</sup>) states that 'Not all work done by children should be classified as child labour that is to be targeted for elimination.' The activities 'such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays' are generally regarded as being something positive. According to the definition of child labour of IPEC, 'whether or not particular forms of "work" can be called "child labour" depends on the child's age, the type and hours of work performed'.

To discuss child and youth's labour, we should begin with defining who is a child and who is a youth. There are several definitions on child and youth. For example, the UN General Assembly defines 'youths' to be individuals who aged between 15 and 24 years, and 'young people' to be ones who aged between 10 and 24 years (UN General Assembly, 1995). Cambodia's Youth Department at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) defines youths to be those who fall between the age of 14 and 30. One of the CMDGs targets for reducing child labour defines children as the age of 5-17. This chapter reviews a legislative framework for young generation at first, and later, defines children and youths for the sake of analytical purpose.

Cambodia has already ratified the ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and Work, and No. 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour. And, Cambodia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The legislative framework on child and youth labour is listed in Table 4.1.

On the one hand, Cambodia's compulsory education mandates nine years for those who aged between 6 and 14. On the other hand, the minimum age for employment or work is 15 years old. The one for hazardous work<sup>2</sup> is 18 years old, and the one for light work<sup>3</sup> is 12 years old. Furthermore, in labour statistics, population of productive age (or working age) is generally defined as the population between the age of 15 and 64.

Unfortunately, the frame of the Census has not been designed to obtain the detail of economic activities or working hours performed by each person. Taking these limitations into account, the report defines a child to be an individual aged between 5 and 14 and a youth to be one aged between 15 and 24.

Figure 4.1 shows two statistical concepts of child and youth. The target of CMDGs related to child labour defines children as the age of 5 - 17 (the left side of Figure 4.1), while the definition of a child in this report is drawn in the right side of Figure 4.1. That is why we cannot use the results of the Census to check the

<sup>1</sup> IPEC is one of the departments of ILO. (URL: <http://www.ilo.org/ipeclang--en/index.htm>)

<sup>2</sup> 'Hazardous work' indicates any work which is likely to compromise children's physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals. In general, It may include work underground, under water or in confined spaces, work which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads.

<sup>3</sup> 'Light work' is a work it does not threaten child's health and safety and does not interfere their education or vocational training.

status of achievement for CMDGs regarding child labour. This report discusses child labour in section 4.2 and youth labour in section 4.3 on the basis of the results of the Census.

**Table 4.1 Legislative Framework about Child and Youth in Cambodia**

<b>Ratified Conventions Relating to Child Labour</b>		
Convention	Ratification	Entry into force
The Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) (minimum age specified: 14 years)	23-08-1999	23-08-2000
The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182)	14-03-2006	14-03-2007
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	15-10-1992	14-11-1992

<b>Relevant National Legislation</b>		
The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, of 21 September 1993 (as amended 1999);		
Labour Law, promulgated by Royal Order No. CS/RKM/0397/01 of 13 March 1997;		
Prakas* No. 106 on the Prohibition of Hazardous Child Labour, dated 28 April 2004		

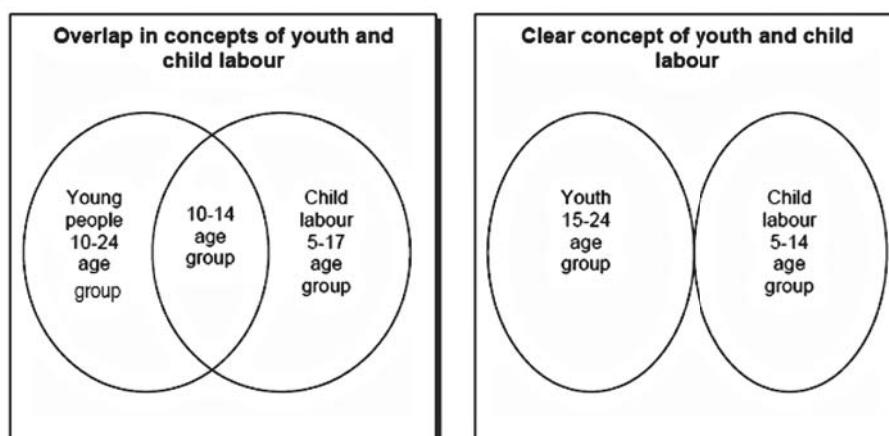
<b>Regulation of Work for Persons below 18 years</b>		
Regulation of work for persons below 18 years	Age	Legislation
General minimum age for admission to employment or work	15 years	Section 177 (1) of the Labour Law
Admission to light work activities	12 years	Section 177 (4) of the Labour Law
Admission to hazardous work	18 years	Section 177 (2) of the Labour Law Types of hazardous work determined Parkas No. 106 MosSALVY on the Prohibition of hazardous child Labour, dated 28 April 2004

\* Ministerial ordinance / Proclamation from minister

Source: United Nations (2009), Situation Analysis of Youth in Cambodia,

([http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session6/KH/UNCT\\_KHM\\_UPRS06\\_2009\\_document3.pdf](http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session6/KH/UNCT_KHM_UPRS06_2009_document3.pdf))

**Figure 4.1 Statistical Concept of Child and Youth**



Source: United Nations (2009), Situation Analysis of Youth in Cambodia,

([http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session6/KH/UNCT\\_KHM\\_UPRS06\\_2009\\_document3.pdf](http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session6/KH/UNCT_KHM_UPRS06_2009_document3.pdf))

**Table 4.2 Population of Child and Youth by Sex, 1998 and 2008**

Age Group	Number of Persons					
	1998			2008		
	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>11,437,656</b>	<b>5,511,408</b>	<b>5,926,248</b>	<b>13,395,682</b>	<b>6,516,054</b>	<b>6,879,628</b>
0-4	1,466,792	747,292	719,500	1,372,615	703,058	669,557
5-14	3,431,016	1,755,115	1,675,901	3,141,177	1,611,748	1,529,429
15-17	871,803	436,957	434,846	973,916	510,851	463,065
18+	5,668,045	2,572,044	3,096,001	7,907,974	3,690,397	4,217,577
15-24	2,089,945	1,018,284	1,071,661	2,988,492	1,503,759	1,484,733
25-34	1,671,222	797,058	874,164	1,926,596	940,752	985,844

Age Group	Percentage of Age Group					
	1998			2008		
	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
0-4	12.8	13.6	12.1	10.2	10.8	9.7
5-14	30.0	31.8	28.3	23.4	24.7	22.2
15-17	7.6	7.9	7.3	7.3	7.8	6.7
18+	49.6	46.7	52.2	59.0	56.6	61.3
15-24	18.3	18.5	18.1	22.3	23.1	21.6
25-34	14.6	14.5	14.8	14.4	14.4	14.3

Table 4.2 shows the population of children and youths by sex by age group. Here, child population and youth population, on which child labour statistics is based, are presented. The child population is around 3.1 million in 2008 (23.4 percent of the total population of Cambodia), and the youth population is around 3.0 million (22.3 percent) in 2008. These figures were 3.4 million (30 percent) and 2.1 million (18.3 percent), respectively in 1998. During the decade, the number and the proportion of children who aged 5 - 14 have decreased, and those of youths who aged 15 - 24 have increased. The population who aged 15 - 24 in 1998 has become aged 25 - 34 in 2008, so the report sometimes refer to the age group of 25-34 in 2008 for comparison.

## **4.2 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF CHILDREN**

### **4.2.1 Usual Economic Activity of Children**

#### **ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE CHILDREN**

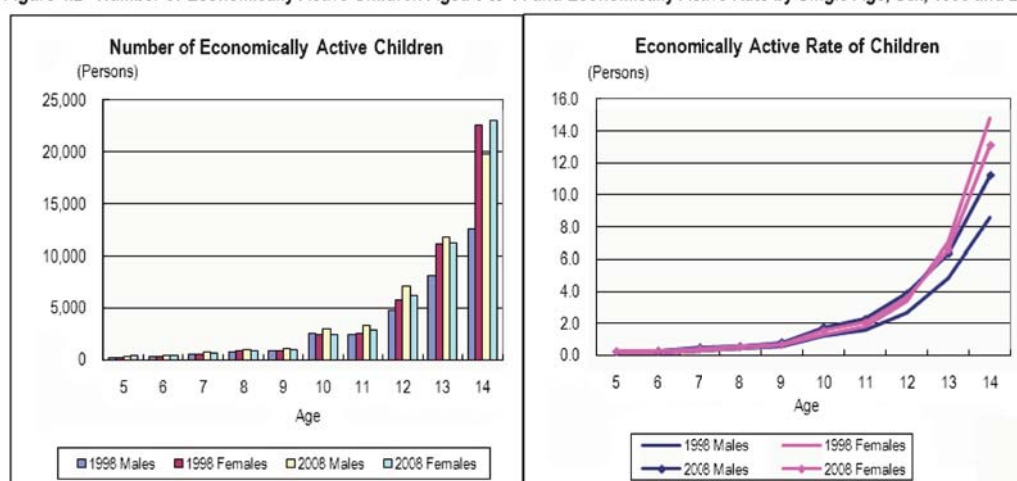
As shown in Table 4.2, the number of children decreased by approximately 0.3 million from 1998 to 2008. However, number of economically active children has increased by 17 thousand. Although the rate of economically active children has only increased by 0.5 percentage points, the number has increased by 20 percentage points (Table 4.3). The reduction of child labour has not been achieved in number and in proportion during the period between 1998 and 2008.

**Table 4.3 Age Specific Labour Force Participation by Single Year of Age from 5 to 14 and Sex, 1998 and 2008**

Age	Total Population			Economically Active Population			Economically Active Rate		
	Both sexes	Males	Females	Both sexes	Males	Females	Both sexes	Males	Females
<b>1998</b>									
<b>5-14 Total</b>	<b>3,431,016</b>	<b>1,755,115</b>	<b>1,675,901</b>	<b>80,563</b>	<b>33,264</b>	<b>47,299</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.8</b>
5	381,823	193,695	188,128	511	258	253	0.1	0.1	0.1
6	363,420	185,852	177,568	555	286	269	0.2	0.2	0.2
7	365,599	186,880	178,719	1,152	592	560	0.3	0.3	0.3
8	365,431	185,871	179,560	1,635	797	838	0.4	0.4	0.5
9	296,547	151,678	144,869	1,806	903	903	0.6	0.6	0.6
10	391,664	203,020	188,644	4,923	2,510	2,413	1.3	1.2	1.3
11	291,829	151,615	140,214	4,960	2,412	2,548	1.7	1.6	1.8
12	349,525	181,060	168,465	10,572	4,802	5,770	3.0	2.7	3.4
13	324,980	167,892	157,088	19,231	8,080	11,151	5.9	4.8	7.1
14	300,198	147,552	152,646	35,218	12,624	22,594	11.7	8.6	14.8
<b>2008</b>									
<b>5-14 Total</b>	<b>3,141,177</b>	<b>1,611,748</b>	<b>1,529,429</b>	<b>97,758</b>	<b>48,604</b>	<b>49,154</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>
5	293,165	149,290	143,875	774	378	396	0.3	0.3	0.3
6	294,786	151,230	143,556	860	411	449	0.3	0.3	0.3
7	300,872	153,827	147,045	1,434	771	663	0.5	0.5	0.5
8	315,677	161,357	154,320	1,797	939	858	0.6	0.6	0.6
9	266,172	136,632	129,540	2,080	1,127	953	0.8	0.8	0.7
10	327,322	170,795	156,527	5,486	3,010	2,476	1.7	1.8	1.6
11	280,085	144,590	135,495	6,126	3,293	2,833	2.2	2.3	2.1
12	354,675	182,441	172,234	13,315	7,076	6,239	3.8	3.9	3.6
13	355,786	184,866	170,920	23,036	11,762	11,274	6.5	6.4	6.6
14	352,637	176,720	175,917	42,850	19,837	23,013	12.2	11.2	13.1

As for sex differences, the number of female economically active children is greater than that of males both in 1998 and 2008. But the sex difference in number has shrunk from 14 thousand to 1 thousand during the decade, because the increase of girl labour force was smaller than that of boy labour force. The increase of child labour force was mostly caused by the increase of economically active boys (Figure 4.2). The growth of girls' school attendance may have contributed to this phenomenon. Although both the demand for expanding a household economy and expansion of job opportunities are considered to be the factors that increased boys' economic activities, the detailed analysis on this point is difficult, based on the census data.

**Figure 4.2 Number of Economically Active Children Aged 5 to 14 and Economically Active Rate by Single Age, Sex, 1998 and 2008**



## ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE CHILDREN

Most of economically inactive children are students (Table 4.4). The proportion of students has obviously increased, and the proportion of being dependent has fallen during the decade between 1998 and 2008. The decreased proportion of being dependent is caused by the increased proportion of students. (Figure 4.3)

