

Iran's battle against child labor lacks effective monitoring

Social Desk

The Iranian Parliamentary Research Center has released a report emphasizing the critical importance of effective monitoring in combating child labor. According to the report, approximately 8 percent of children in Iran are trapped in exploitative child labor, and when including those who work at home, the figure rises to about 15 percent of the country's children. Additionally, it reveals that around 10 percent of child laborers are unable to attend school. The report, titled 'Challenges in Monitoring Effective Elimination of Child Labor,' sheds light on the various reasons why some chil-

dren are forced into child labor, often due to poverty in their households. These children engage in different forms of labor, such as working in workshops. Child labor, as defined by the study, involves work that robs children of their "childhood, potential, and dignity," and significantly "hampers their physical and mental development." It's concerning that despite child labor being legally prohibited and deemed a crime according to both international and domestic laws, including Iran's Labor Law (1990) and the Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents (2020), reports indicate that children are still being exploited and used in economic activities.

This highlights the "inadequacy of law enforcement and the absence of effective monitoring mechanisms" to prevent child labor. Insufficient enforcement of laws and a lack of supervision in workshops are major contributing factors to the persistence of this problem. The report brings to attention the challenges in monitoring and eliminating some of the worst forms of child labor. Activities such as domestic work, illegal practices like drug trafficking, hazardous labor in remote and unmonitored areas including "cross-border labor", and child sexual exploitation in various fields are particularly difficult to monitor and address. For



● Hamshahri online

example, enforcing labor laws regarding domestic work is challenging as it occurs within private settings. To combat such practices, efforts must focus on tackling poverty and raising awareness throughout society.

Iran has acknowledged and accepted several international agreements aimed at prohibiting child labor, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. In addition, the country has enacted domestic laws to address and forbid child labor. Despite these legal measures, the unfortunate reality is that children are still engaged in different forms of child

labor, including some of the worst and most exploitative ones.

The parliamentary report highlights that the involvement of children in such labor practices is a clear indication of weak law enforcement. While the Labor and Social Affairs Inspection General Directorate is tasked with overseeing workshops to prevent child labor, and the Ministry of Interior is mandated to ensure access to education for all Iranian children and citizens, and the Welfare Organization is responsible for regulating street children, the effectiveness of these supervisory bodies has been questionable.

In particular, the Labor and

Social Affairs Inspection General Directorate and other authorities often fail to adequately penalize employers who violate child labor laws. Their supervision of workshops tends to rely on bureaucratic processes and relies heavily on reports from non-governmental organizations rather than conducting direct on-site inspections. As a consequence of this lack of effective monitoring, children continue to be exploited and subjected to various economic activities against their best interests. The absence of rigorous supervision in workshops remains a significant contributing factor to the persistent problem of child labor in Iran.



Ta'zieh holds an eternal place in my heart



By Mahdieh Ghazvinian
Staff writer

Iranian traditional music has been preserved through the revered art of ta'zieh. Apart from its remarkable performance aspects, this art holds immense religious and cultural significance. The presence of esteemed masters like Abolfazl Saberi and the nurturing of talent contribute to the preservation and propagation of this art form.

Saberi, an esteemed figure in Iran's ta'zieh tradition, was born in 1977 into a family with deep roots in the city of Tafresh – a city that has come to be known for its traditional rituals concerning Muharram. From the tender age of six, despite being illiterate, he memorized copies of ta'zieh with his father's guidance and portrayed the role of Hazrat-e Ruqayya (the daughter of Imam Hussein).

Saberi and his group have performed at numerous domestic festivals within Iran as well as international festivals held in countries

such as England, Russia, and South Korea. Last year, their group secured first place among 24 participating nations at the International Festival of the Sahara in Africa.

Saberi possesses strong convictions about ta'zieh and urges officials to pay more attention to this art form while providing it with more support.

He says, "God willing, ta'zieh will attain its rightful position within national media." Regarding current conditions for hosting ta'zieh events compared to previous years, Saberi expresses gratitude.

"Thankfully, both quantitatively and qualitatively speaking, conditions for holding ta'zieh are very favorable now. One positive aspect is that young people have shown great interest in various aspects related to foundership roles or participation as singers or musicians dedicated to ta'zieh arts. Despite recent challenges posed by COVID-19 during these past two or three years, ta'zieh events continue extensively throughout the country; even online platforms en-



able people to watch some performances."

Saberi firmly believes that ta'zieh holds the power to influence teenagers and young individuals.

"When ta'zieh is performed, the front rows are often occupied by young people and teenagers. We find joy in their attendance, as they observe, reflect, and engage with this art form. I consider ta'zieh as the most potent medium for preserving the rich culture of Imam Hussein. It is not merely an acquired skill; a ta'zieh performer must possess the essence and spirit that can be further honed through learning music and literary discussions under experienced teachers."

Regarding the reception of ta'zieh among its audience,

Saberi explains, "Those who deeply love ta'zieh feel it coursing through their veins. They attend these gatherings wholeheartedly, immersing themselves in every aspect of this art. Every art form has its own following, and ta'zieh is no exception. However, beyond artistic appreciation, it holds a unique popularity due to its connection to the beliefs regarding the culture of Ashura."

Saberi shares his personal experience when performing ta'zieh compared to everyday life.

"When I don the attire for a ta'zieh performance, my mind becomes solely focused on embodying my role while chanting with utmost dedication. My thoughts revolve entirely around giving

my best within that character's portrayal. This interest began during childhood and remains unwavering; God willing, I hope to wear this badge of honor until my last breath."

He emphasizes that engaging with ta'zieh requires preliminary steps from all individuals regardless of their field or position. They should strive towards upholding Imam Hussein's

sacred legacy.

To Saberi, ta'zieh represents an enduring love that never fades throughout his lifetime. "Ta'zieh goes beyond historical reenactment; it carries profound messages encompassing love, politeness, self-sacrifice, chivalry, self-confidence, forgiveness, and altruism. Even religious traditions such as marriage find their reflection within the tapestry of ta'zieh."



● COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Iran ranks first in computer game production in region



● IRNA

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Gaming industry is one of the most exciting technological industries because of its importance to culture, entertainment and technological advancement.

There were about 23 million video game players in Iran as of 2015. And by 2023 this number has increased to about 32 million, according to Press TV.

The average age of players in Iran has reached 23 years while this number in US is 33 years which shows that gaming is getting more and more popular among Iranian families, according to Eco News.

While the gaming industry is booming worldwide, expected to be worth \$321 billion by 2026, it is time to formally recognize it as a career choice in Iran, beyond the realms of fun and recreation since video games are among the most popular hobbies of Iranian youth.

Managing Director of Iran Computer and Video Games Foundation Mohammad-Amin Haji-Hashemi said that based on the studies carried out by Tabriz Islamic Art University, Iran ranks first in the region and 18th in the world in terms of computer games production.

"Iran has made a significant progress in the field of producing computer over the past years," he stated.

"We are making efforts to organize an event in which Iranian game producers and their sponsors can cooperate with one another and commercialize their products more easily," he added.

Haji-Hashemi continued that although economic sanctions imposed on Iran have created many problems for Iranian video game developers and prevented the country's gamers from playing some foreign games, fruitful developments have been taken place thanks to efforts made by Iranian knowledge-based companies in the field of producing mobile and computer games.

"Attempts are made to prepare condition for Iranian companies involving in the production of computer games to cooperate with their foreign counterparts," he concluded.