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Child Labour: Causes and Rescue Measures

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ABSTRACT

For a nation to develop there must be an overall development of the youth and children. In India, children are considered as representatives of God and are treated with love and reverence. The Issue of child labour is not a positive factor for the growth of a nation. According to a report by UNICEF in 2019 around 1 in 4 children in developed and developing countries, and about 3 in 5 children in underdeveloped countries must work in some or other way to survive and fulfill their basic needs. This situation gets more alarming in poor and underdeveloped countries because there are usually no proper labour laws to prohibit child labour. Children are the assets and the future of a nation. Every child has the right to a comprehensive childhood and a basic education. In this paper, we will see the causes of child labour and the measures to reduce it in the society.

Keywords: *Child labour, Children, Society, Labour laws.*

I. INTRODUCTION

What is exactly the meaning of the term “Child labour”? Child labour may be defined as the work that includes children without their consent, who must forcefully work to fulfill their basic needs. It can be part-time or even full-time work. From the sociological point of view, parents and elders of the family play an important role in the development of a child. But, in the most cases, parents themselves play an important in promoting child labour as it provides an additional source of income. Children are made to work in dangerous and unsafe conditions, the work is usually strenuous in nature. This also prevents them from getting the basic education which is supposed to be their fundamental right. Such kind of child labour hinders the overall physical as well as the mental growth of the child which is a very negative aspect for the society. Most of them directly conclude to a gross violation of human rights. These include long working hours, negligible payment, no safety measures taken; in most cases there are illegal activities conducted such as child trafficking, prostitution, physical abuse, etc.² (Mahima, 2020, April 18)

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² Mahima, *Child Labour: Types, Reason and Solution*, SOCIOLOGY GROUP (Apr. 14 2021, 10:25 AM), <https://www.sociologygroup.com/child-labour-meaning-types-reason-solution/>

(A) Literature Review

Many Researchers and organizations have pointed out the devastating effects of child labour prevailing in a society. According to The International Labour Organization, the term “Child labour” is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to the work that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children, or interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. They further elaborate it by saying that child labour is a negative phenomenon which is very dangerous and harmful, not only for the children bonded to it, but collectively to the whole society. Such labour may also include drugs trafficking, prostitution, all forms of slavery, hazardous work or any kind of work which is against the health, safety, or morality of the children.

According to UNICEF, Child labour is not the product of only factor, it includes many factors, such as poverty, social norms condoning them, the lack of proper education facilities, low standard of living, lack of awareness about benefits of letting a child study, etc. These are only some of the reasons behind child labour. As UNICEF says, “Children belong in schools, not in workplaces.” The vicious circle of child labour gives a threat to the nation’s economy and has many short term and extremely negative effects on the mental health of the children trapped in it.

II. FINDINGS

According to the data presented by provided by UNICEF, which was taken from the 2011 census conducted in India, estimates there are about 10.1 million child labourers in India. Out of these, 5.6 million are boys and 4.5 million are girls. India, according to some reports, has one of the biggest children labour population in the whole world, accounting to approximately 20% of child labourers. There are about a total of 152 million children all over the world who are trapped into forced labour in some way or another which makes it that, roughly 1 in 10 children are child labourers in the world. Despite the efforts of international organizations and NGO’s all over the world, the trend of forced child labour does not seem to be slowing. Children are still used in severe forms of child labour by making them work in dangerous factories, industries, child trafficking, drug abuse, prostitution, etc. These have become common methods of forced child bondage and labour. When we closely examine the reasons for such illegal activities, there comes into the picture many different circumstances due to

which children are forced to work in such conditions. These include socio- economic factors such as poverty, illiteracy, lack of decent work conditions and especially discrimination in the society. (Omokhodion, F., & Uchendu, O. (2009, September 14). There are some suggested measures to control and limit child labour; of course, the proper eradication of this social evil would need a proper strategy,³ but this can be something upon which governments and agencies of the world have been and can work upon. These measures include proper education system in rural areas, scholarships, and subsidies to help the child and his family. These may be some indirect measures. Direct measures can include checking of the employee age before employment; more stringent laws regarding Child labour, awareness among parents in rural areas about the benefits of education; periodically checking of factories and industries for small children; food can be made available in schools to attract the children into attending classes regularly.

III. DISCUSSIONS

There are some unexpected findings from the overall research. It is true that the world data regarding child labour is poor, the worst thing is that the data concerning India is the most terrible. India has the largest population of child labourers in the world. Our Constitution prohibits child labour, as is given in Article 24 of the Indian Constitution. It prohibits child labour of any kind, the age criteria set to 14 years and below. But, even then, there is a gross violation of child rights and they are forced to do work against their wish. Here, we also need to understand that this type of work is different from “child work.” The society encourages children to help their parents at home. In some countries, children are encouraged to help people in the society, get independent so that they learn to cope up with the world. Such a thing should be supported in the society because it will provide the children with a sense of maturity. This would surely help in the overall growth and development of the children.

IV. CONCLUSION

Child Labour is a major social issue that needs to be eradicated as soon as possible. The problem is on the increase even though there are legal sanctions and constitutional provisions against it. A happy childhood is the fundamental right of every child and providing this is the duty of each member of the society including the child’s parents, elders, and others too. Making a child work against or even with his wishes is a very immoral thing. There is no denying that

³ Perception and practice of child labour among parents OF SCHOOL-AGED children in IBADAN, Southwest Nigeria. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2009.00988.x>)

in earlier times child labour was a common thing. But the nature of it has evolved over the ages. In today's world, it has transformed into something disastrous. Today, child labour has become a means to exploit innocent children where they are made to do dangerous work. The children are paid very low wages and usually abused daily. We, as a society need to ensure that this does not happen and there must be some collective conscience to stop it. After all, the youth and the children are the future of our country and it is our duty to keep them safe and happy.

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