

## DARKER SIDE OF THE SOCIETY-CHILD LABOUR

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### I WANT TO . . .

I want to cry out to the world the rage of chained children.

I want to cry out to the world the pain of abused girls.

I want to cry out to the world the unutterable sadness of abandoned babes.

I want to cry out to the world the fear of maltreated kids.

I want to cry out all this to the world.

But who will cry out with me?

*Poem by Michele Bedulli, age 13 "Children's Solidarity Concert"<sup>1</sup>*

Child labour is an age old concept which became rampant during the industrial period .With increase in the number of factories and machines as urbanization was the new term coined children were put through hardships and difficult times .This system grew abundantly as a raging forest fire as the workload was less than that of an adult and children could be managed with a much lesser pay .In ancient India the number of children in a family were many as there could be more hands to help in the fields thus increasing there productivity . The concept of childhood was not prevalent and the children's were known as small adults. The term labour was added as the working conditions where not good and moreover they were not payed much .They were exploited to work for 12 -16 hours and 6 days a week giving them only a dollar. These miserable conditions made life very difficult as children began to suffer from various diseases .By 1810 there were more than 2 million school children working for more than 50-80 hours a week .

Noteworthy differences exist between the kinds of work the children do . some of them are hazardous and even morally unpardonable , and a lot of them are difficult and demanding.

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<sup>1</sup> Child Labour: A Textbook for University Students

Generally the term child labour is defined as work that interrupts in the development of a child and is harmful to physical and mental development, and majorly deprives children from their childhood. On one side Child labour is harmful for physical and mental development and on the other side it creates a barrier which affects children mentally, socially and morally. The most extreme forms of child labour involves children being enslaved, taken away from their families, being tortured, exposed to serious hazardous places, left to beg on the streets of large cities at a very early stage.

## HISTORY

During the period of late 1700's and in the early 1800's, with the increase in capital intensive technique, power driven machines superseded the labour intensive for manufacturing items. Meanwhile when factories began to spring up everywhere, first in England and then in the united states by that time factory owners found a new source of labour to run their machines "CHILDREN". Operating the power driven machines didn't require adult strength, and children could be hired more cheaply than adults. By the mid 1800's, child labour had become a major problem. children always worked, but especially used to work in farming. Factory work was hard as they had to work for 12 to 18 hrs a day, to earn a dollar. The factories were often damp, dark, and dirty, some children worked underground, in coal mines under hazardous condition due to which they often became ill.

By the time of 1810 nearly 2 million of children of age not more than 12 were working for 50 to 70 hrs weeks. Most of them came from poor families as their parents being unable to support them, usually turned them over to a mill or factory owner.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout most of human history Children had been servants and probationer. But suddenly child labour reached new extremes during the industrial revolution. As the children often use to work long hours in dangerous factory conditions for very little money. Importantly children

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<sup>2</sup> A History of Child Labor, 2016 Scholastic Inc.

could be paid less than adults and <sup>3</sup>children were useful as labourers because their size allowed them to move in small spaces in factories or mines where adults couldn't fit and it was easy to manage and control children as compared to adults.

### **REASONS FOR CHILD LABOUR**

- Poverty
- Parental illiteracy
  - Tradition of making children learn the family skills
  - Absence of universal compulsory Primary education
  - Social apathy and tolerance of child labour
  - Ignorance of the parents about the adverse consequences of Child labour
  - Ineffective enforcement of the legal provisions pertaining to child labour
  - Non-availability of and non-accessibility to schools

### **CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHILD LABOUR FACE**

- Full-time work at a very early age
- Dangerous workplaces
- Excessive working hours
- Subjection to psychological, verbal, physical and sexual abuse
- Obligated to work by circumstances or individuals
- Limited or no pay
- Work and life on the streets in bad conditions
- Inability to escape from the poverty cycle —no access to education .

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<sup>3</sup> The fight to end child labour <http://www.history.com/topics/child-labor>

### Conclusion:

In our day to day life every one of us come across child labour in our society but a very few among us actually take steps to help them out. While conducting my survey I came across different aspects of life that we can say is the darker side of the life. which none of us can even imagine. Only they can understand who has actually suffered. where we people keep on making choices of what to eat and what not to for each of our meals , on the other side of the world people don't even get a square meal per day. it's not that we never knew , it's just we never thought of that because all the time we were busy in making our own choices.

The fact that there are people who realize the gravity of the situation but the majority does not understand the seriousness of child labour and its effects. It also shows that poverty is not necessarily the only cause for child labour, although it plays a pivotal role. And reducing poverty isn't necessarily the first step that must be taken to fight child labour. Awareness on the subject is something that is lacking and it is something that can be created .This shows the importance of the contribution from governments, NGOs, Business organizations and the media towards eliminating child labour. They all have an equal part to play and only if all these parties play their respective roles ,then only child labour can be eliminated from the society.

#### Child Labour and Poverty

Poverty and economic shocks clearly play an important if not a key role in determining the market for child labour. Child labour in turn contributes to the perpetuation of poverty. For example, recent empirical findings by the World Bank from Brazil demonstrate that early entry into the labour force reduces lifetime earnings by some 13 to 20 per cent, increasing significantly the probability of being poor later in life.

However, poverty in itself is not a sufficient explanation of child labour, and it certainly fails to explain some of the unconditional worst forms of child labour.<sup>4</sup>

Steps have been taken to eliminate child labour but their implementation has been poor.

Those who realize the gravity of child labour need to educate others on it and only if the society as a whole starts performing their responsibilities, then only we will be able to

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<sup>4</sup>World Day Against Child Labour on 12 June: <http://www.un.org/en/events/childlabourday/background.shtml>

solve the problem of child labour. At present, in spite of policy of the government regarding removal of child labour. The various steps taken in this direction and the laws passed about it haven't controlled the ongoing child labour. This is possible only with the co-operation of all sections of the society and the law enforcement agencies and by removing or minimizing the causes of child labour. The main thrust should be on controlling the population of the country, education of the children and providing sufficient funds for its removal from the gross domestic product of India as Children are the future of the country and to develop our country we have to develop our future citizens. So it is our duty to safeguard their rights and help them from being exploited and making them realize the value of education. As education is the direction in breaking the vicious circle of poverty.