

# Essay: Criminal neglect of Child labour and its consequences.

## Outline

### 1. Introduction.

Thesis statement: Criminal neglect of child labour is a grave violation of human rights posing severe consequences including perpetuating cycles of poverty, hindering educational opportunities, and compromising physical and mental wellbeing of children.

Addressing this issue requires comprehensive approach, encompassing strict enforcements, awareness campaigns, and educating the masses.

### 2. Criminal neglect of child labour: A grave violation with far reaching consequences.

### 3. Causes of criminal neglect of child labour:

a) Failure to comply with laws.

b) Illiteracy among masses

c) Lack of resources

d) Discrimination and social inequality.

e) Unemployment

f) High population growth

4. Consequences of Criminal neglect of child labour

- a) Education deprivation
- b) Poor physical and mental health
- c) Stunted societal development
- d) Lack of self esteem: damaged reputation
- e) Perpetuating cycle of poverty
- f) lack of self-respect and confidence.

5. Transitioning from negligence to vigilance:  
Remedial measures to combat child labour

- a) Strict implementation of law.
- b) Promoting access to quality education
- c) Raising awareness
- d) Poverty alleviation programs
- e) Promotion of Vocational centers offering skill development programs to tackle unemployment.

6. Conclusion.

"Child labour is an evil that scars the face of humanity." (Malala Yousofzai)

Child labour is the grave violation of human rights posing long term consequences. Malala Yousofzai, nobel laureate, has rightly said that child labour is an evil damaging the face of humanity. Child labour refers to exploitation of children through any form of work that deprives them of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend schools, and is mentally, physically, socially, or morally harmful. Criminal negligence of child labour is a prevailing issue worldwide. It poses severe consequences including perpetuating cycles of poverty, depriving children from education and other basic rights, and compromising their mental and physical well-being. This grave issue requires comprehensive approach encompassing strict enforcement of laws, educating the masses and spreading awareness.

According to International Labour

Organization (ILO), "approximately 152 million children were engaged in child labour worldwide, with half engaged in hazardous work." The data reveals a large number of children being exploited. Childhood is the golden time of one's age, where a child, free from any responsibility, enjoys his/her life and learns. If a child is deprived from his childhood, then it would be a serious issue having long term consequences on the lives of children. Chimamanda

Ngozi Adichie has rightly said that child labour is a sad reality, a global tragedy that reflects the darker side of our progress.

Negligence of child labour has complex and interconnected causes, often rooted in socio-economic, cultural, and systemic factors. Failure to comply with laws is the primary cause of criminal ignorance of child labour. There is a wider gap between theory and practice of legal frameworks depending on children's rights.

The laws require letter in spirit implementation. laws about protection and safety of children exist at national and international levels but the real issue lies behind strict compliance to those laws. Poor governance, lacking checks and balances, and accountability are the hurdles in the strict implementation of the law. According to research society of international law, weak law enforcement contributes to the persistence of child labour in Pakistan. Thus, weak legal frameworks and their failure to compliance with law are the reasons behind neglect of child labour.

Massive illiteracy is another cause of neglecting child labour. Mostly parents are not aware of the consequences of child labour. They are not even aware of the child rights. Poor and illiterate families consider child labour necessary for survival. lack of awareness, accompanied by financial constraints lead to child labour. According to International Labour Organization (ILO), one in every four household in the country

employs a child - predominantly girls between the ages of 10 and 14 - in domestic work. The illiteracy rate and lack of awareness is the major factor behind neglecting child labour. Poor parents do not take into consideration the far-reaching impacts of the child labour on the lives of their children.

Lack of resources is another major cause of criminal negligence of child labour. Children may be sent to work to assist family income, contributing to the perpetuating cycle of poverty. According to the documents seen by the Express Tribune, more than 700,000 children between the ages of 10-14 are subjected to labour in brick kilns and the agriculture sector across the country. Thus, poverty stricken families rely on their children for an extra source of income, neglecting the consequences of child labour.

Discrimination and social inequality also contributes to child

labour. Social stratification, widening the gap between the rich and the poor, deprive the poor from their <sup>basic</sup> rights.

Discrimination and biasness exist in all the sectors including education, health, and other facilities making resulting in the worst conditions of the poor.

According to UNICEF, "Child labour compounds social inequality and discrimination.....

(it) limits access to education and harms a child's physical, mental, and social growth. Thus, discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status can increase vulnerability to child labour.

Furthermore, unemployment contributes to negligence of child labour. Unemployed or underemployed parents compel to send their children to work. The poor families, who are illiterate, find no job and thus have no access to resources, compel their children to work neglecting its effects on the well-being of their children.

Moreover, high population growth is another cause of neglecting child labour. Rapid population growth can strain resources and opportunities, making it difficult for governments to provide adequate social services, including education, leading to child labour. Unchecked population growth can create a fertile ground for poverty, inequality, and the exploitation of the most vulnerable, including children in the labour force.

UNICEF data reveals that the number of children in child labour has risen to 160 million worldwide - an increase of 8.4 million children in the last four years. Thus, population growth is the contributing factor behind the criminal neglect of child labour.

The criminal neglect of child labour has severe consequences, both for the individual child as well as for the whole society. Although there are numerous impacts of neglecting child labour, education deprivation is the chief among them.



Child labour deprives children from their basic right to education. When children work instead of attending school, they miss the knowledge and essential skills for their future development. Although provisions about educating the children exist in the constitution of the states, yet 25 million children are not attending the schools. In the age of seeking knowledge and education, children are engaged in the labour. This is the time of their lives<sup>in</sup> which they should have pens in their hands. Instead of being equipped with pens, children are equipped with tools. Thus, the criminal neglect of child labour deprives children from education.

Criminal neglect of child labour is knowingly allowing child labour. It has severe consequences on the physical and mental health of the children. The Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2017-18, reported 13.7% of children aged 10-17 years as being engaged in child labour. Of them, around 5.4% were involved in hazardous

child labour. Child labour can result in extreme bodily and mental harm. (UNICEF) Stunted growth, anxiety, depression, sleep deprivation, chronic back pain, infertility, cancer etc are the impacts of hazardous child labour.

Stunted societal development is another impact of child labour. A society that neglects child labour is likely to face long-term consequences regarding human capital development. Children who are deprived of education and subjected to exploitative labour practices may not reach their full potential, hindering the overall development of the society. Christina Engela has rightly said, ~~that~~ "children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future. But not when they are working in sweatshop or begging on the streets." Thus, child labour deters societal growth and development.

Moreover, lack of self-esteem is the long lasting consequence of criminal

neglect of child labour. Child labour leads to damaged reputation. Children who work in mines and factories are labelled as labourers which hits their self-esteem. Emile Durkheim's labelling theory states that people come to identify and behave in ways that reflect how others label them. If children are labelled as servants or labourers then it would damage their reputation. <sup>This</sup> ~~such~~ damaged reputation has more severe impacts on the mental conditions of the children.

Perpetuating cycle of poverty is another consequence of the criminal neglect of child labour. Instead of breaking the cycle of poverty, child labour tends to perpetuate it. Children engaged in work miss out educational opportunities that could provide them with a chance for a better future. According to Grace Abbott, "child labour and poverty are inevitably bound together and if you continue to use the labour of children as the treatment

for the social disease of poverty, you will have both poverty and child labour to the end of time. Moreover, Kailash Satyarthi, while explaining the consequences of child labour stated, "Child labour perpetuates poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, population growth, and other social evils."

Thus, child labour has far-reaching consequences and poverty is the chief among them.

Lack of self-respect and confidence are also the major consequences of criminal negligence of child labour. Most of the working children are anti-social. They are not aware of their rights. They are labelled as servants and labourers which damage their self-respect. As a result, they lack self-confidence. They consider themselves as subordinates whose only task is to say yes without realizing their self-respect. They are not able to take stand for their rights. They are considered as marginalized who have no freedom of choice. In this way, their self-respect

and dignity is compromised. According to Justin Trudeau, "child labour is a form of modern slavery." Steinberg and Avenevoli in their study found that child labour diminishes children's self-esteem. Thus, lack of self-respect and confidence are the prominent consequences of criminal neglect of child labour.

Addressing child labour negligence requires a multi-faceted approach. Strict implementation of law is the most required remedial measure to combat child labour. Governments should enact and strengthen laws that prohibit child labour, setting clear age limits for employment. Implementation of robust mechanisms to ensure compliance with existing laws, including surveillance and penalties for violators ~~are~~ is the need of the hour. Moreover, support and adherence to International conventions like ILO is essential for transitioning from criminal negligence to vigilance of child labour.

Promoting access to quality

education is a major way forward to combat criminal neglect of child labour. Access to cheap and quality education is essential to confront the evil of child labour. Education should be incentivised, so that parents send their children to school instead of sending them to mines and factories. Article 25(A) of the Constitution of Pakistan provides free access to education to all children from 5-16 years. Besides free access, incentivization of education is necessary so that parents prefer to send their children to schools.

Raising awareness is very important to tackle child labour. Mostly, illiterate and children belonging to illiterate and poor families are engaged in child labour. Such parents are not aware of the long lasting consequences of the child labour. Therefore, special awareness campaigns regarding child labour need to be conducted. Families should be informed of the severe consequences of the child labour so that they do not consider it as a

solution to poverty or other social diseases like unemployment. Thus, awareness campaigns informing communities, parents, and employers about the consequences of child labour can eradicate child labour.

Moreover, poverty alleviating programs play an effective role in combating child labour. Implementing targeted poverty alleviation programs to address the root causes of child labour, focusing on improving the economic conditions of the families at risk are necessary to diminish the trend of child labour. Furthermore, social protection measures like cash transfer programs as BISP and smart card etc play role to encounter child labour.

Last but not the least, promotion of vacation centers offering skill development programs to tackle unemployment of the elders can be an essential step in confronting the evil of child labour. Poor and unemployed parents compel their children to engage in labour work. So addressing these root causes of child labour is essential through

vacation centers that empower <sup>people with</sup> skills which further open the doors of employment.

In conclusion, criminal neglect of child labour is a serious issue demanding comprehensive approach to combat long lasting consequences on the children's lives. Although there are various reasons behind this neglect, effective measures including educating the masses about the evils of child labour, strict implementation of legal provisions, poverty alleviating programs etc can ~~tackel~~ tackle the issue. Sometimes providing awareness is more important than taking steps, so in the case of criminal neglect of child labour and its consequences. Everyone needs to understand what Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Child labour is a burden on society that we must collectively shoulder and eliminate for a better future."

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