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Essay

Criminal neglect of child Labour and its consequences

Outline

I Introduction

The neglect of child labour is, indeed, a grave crime. It has serious social, economic, cultural, environmental and political consequences.

II Elaboration of child labour

III Manifestation of neglect of child labour

- (i) Low priority given to the issue of child labour.
- (ii) Lack of laws to protect against child labour.
- (iii) Failed government child labour policies
- (iv) High number of out of school children
- (v) Acceptance of child labour as a

Social reality.

- (vi), Insufficient knowledge about the rights of children.
- (vii), Hiring of children as household help.
- (viii), Lack of incentives to discourage child labour.

IV Consequences of the neglect of child labour

- (i) Stunted mental and physical growth of children.
- (ii) Increase in the illiteracy of children.
- (iii) Adverse effect on the economy
- (iv) Rise in inequality in the society.
- (v) Exploitation of children in domestic and public spheres

(vi) Early deaths of children

(vii) continuation of the poverty cycle.

V Conclusion

In a brick kiln factory, a ten years old boy is carrying heavy bricks on his shoulders, he places the bricks, with a heavy breath, on the rack and ^{then} moves outside to collect another bundle. This is not an uncommon sight in developing countries like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh and also in African countries. The curse of child labour looms large in these nations. The unfortunate truth, however, is that child labour is abysmally neglected in these parts of the world, which leads to dire consequences for the countries in particular and the world in general. The neglect of the issue of child labour can be witnessed from the low priority given to this issue, the lack of child labour laws in the developing countries, ineffective government policies with regard to child labour, a high number of out of school children, acceptance of child labour as a norm, and several other phenomena. The consequences of this neglect are seen in the stunted mental and physical growth of children, which also contributes

to their lack of education and has an adverse impact on the economy.

Other major consequences of the neglect of child labour include rise in inequality in the society, exploitation of children, early deaths of the children, and perpetuation of the poverty cycle. Hence, child labour is an illegal activity and its neglect is a crime which has dire socio-cultural and economic consequences.

Child labour is the use and exploitation of under-age children in physical labour. This exploitation occurs in different forms. Young girls and boys hired for domestic help is a form of child labour. Children working in factories, coal mines, and industrial units, ^{are} also indulging in child labour. These children should be in schools, but find themselves performing labour intensive activities. This makes child labour a serious social, economic, and political issue to be addressed.

One of the major manifestations of the neglect of child labour is the law

priority given to this issue. The child labour issue does not surface near the top issues on the priority list of the concerned authorities. It is considered an issue of low relevance and importance in the larger scheme of things. This reflects the lack of attention given to the gravity of the issue of child labour and contributes to its aggravation.

Moreover, there are a lack of laws to protect against the incidence of child labours. This can be witnessed from the child abuses which children have to face while working for their employers. Iqbal Mashish's case is a stark manifestation of how the lack of child labour laws can lead to extreme situations. A labourer in a carpet factory, Iqbal Mashish died while protecting himself against the cruelty of his master. This shows that missing child labour laws ~~are detrimental to the society~~ ^{lead to increased vulnerability of children}. Thus, the lack of laws indicate the neglect of the issue.

Furthermore, the neglect of the issue of child labour is visible through the failed

government child labour policies. The government does not have concrete and well-directed policies to address the issue of child labour. This perpetuates the occurrence of child labour in the society. The policymakers do not focus on the issue of child labour and let this bare compromise human existence. Hence, ineffective government child labour policies have contributed to the neglect of child labour.

Moving on, the high number of out of school children shows the neglect of the issue of child labour. There are millions of children in the developing countries who do not go to school as they are either engaged in domestic, agricultural, or industrial labour. These children stay deprived of acquiring an education and carry on with their labour-intensive activities. Therefore, low enrolment in schools represent the neglect of the issue of child labour.

Additionally, child labour has come to be accepted as a social reality. People

are not usually shocked by small children working as caregivers and waiting tables in different parts of the world. They have accepted child labour as a part of the functioning of the society. In effect, the affirmation of child labour by the society has contributed to its no longer being considered an issue. This, in turn, is a cause for concern.

Insufficient knowledge about the rights of children is also a manifestation of the neglect of child labour. People and communities, especially in the developing parts of the world, are unfamiliar with the concept of protecting children rights. They in some cases are not even aware that children have rights. This makes various communities continue on with their child labour practices. Children are also exploited and badly treated as a result of this lack of knowledge and awareness. Hence, lack of knowledge about the rights of children showcase the neglect of the issue.

Further, the hiring of children for household and agricultural help is

also on the rise. Children are being continuously enlisted to perform labour intensive activities in the domestic spheres such as that of cooking, cleaning, care giving, etc. They are also being used in agricultural practices to help with crop cultivation, supervision, and harvest. This indicates that the issue of child labour is a non-existent one. Thus the appointment of children for help exacerbates the neglect of child labour.

Lastly, there is a lack of incentives to discourage child labour. The government, the private sector, and the civil society do not have enough incentives to prevent people from resorting to child labour. There are no monetary and logistics benefits for sending children to schools, so parents utilize them in performing labour intensive activities. This allows child labour to continue unabated. Thus, the lack of incentives to discourage child labour contributes to the neglect of the issue of child labour.

There are several dire social, cultural, economic, and environmental

consequences of the neglect of child labour. One of the major consequences is that of the stunted mental and physical growth of children engaged in child labour. These children are not able to grow to the fullest, hence, they are prevented from performing to the best of their abilities. Moreover, these children do not get to contribute to the society in a meaningful manner.

Another major consequence of the neglect of child labour is the increase in the illiteracy of children. Children who indulge in child labour are unable to even acquire primary education - This keeps them deprived of their basic right to education - children who do not get a chance to study are not able to become beneficial members of the society and their lives remain deprived and downtrodden.

The neglect of child labour also has an adverse effect on the economy. Children who remain uneducated

and ignorant as a result of child labour during the formative years of their lives do not contribute to the economy in a positive manner. As opposed to this, they become a burden on the economy of the country they reside in. Uneducated children means uneducated youth and this youth is not able to find employment opportunities to sustain themselves and contribute to the economic well-being of their country.

Moreover, there is a rise in inequality in the society as a result of the neglect of child labour. The families who are able to send their children to schools and colleges are able to improve their standards of living. On the other hand, families which force their children into bonded and child labour remain poor and are further pushed into the whirlpool of misery. In effect inequality in society increases as a result of neglect of child labour.

Further, children are unabashedly exploited in the domestic and public

spheres owing to the neglect of child labour. These forsaken children are abused and mistreated by their masters and employers. The quality of their lives is compromised and they end up losing their self worth and place in society. Hence, exploitation of children is a concerning consequence of the neglect of the issue of child labour.

Early deaths of children is also a major consequence of the neglect of child labour. Children who partake in labour intensive work are not able to grow and learn like normal children. This makes them vulnerable to various diseases and their health is also compromised. The ultimate result of all this is high mortality of these children, in other words, their early deaths. Further, the early deaths of children has an adverse effect on the demographics of a country.

Additionally, as a result of the neglect of child labour, the poverty cycle

continues. children who are subjected to the curse of child labour and their families continue to stay poor. They are unable to lift themselves out of poverty and improve their standards of living. The net effect of this on the society is highly adversarial and detrimental. The impoverishment of the society translates into the poor performance of the country on the whole.

In conclusion, the criminal neglect of child labour feeds in to the perpetuation of this illegal phenomenon. Children continue to be treated as a means to an end and their fundamental rights are kept away from them. Moreover, the consequences of the ignorance of the problem of child labour are multi-farious and highly detrimental, not only for the society in which child labour is present but also for humanity as a whole. Thus, this issue must be addressed on an urgent basis.