

# Topic: Criminal Neglect of Child Labor and its Consequences.

## Outline:

### 1. Introduction

Thesis Statement: The cases of child labor are soaring across the globe in general and in developing world in particular. The criminal neglect of child labor has dire consequences. However, certain remedial measures can be adopted in order to deal with this menace.

### 2. Decoding the Phenomenon of Child Labor

### 3. Factors leading to the Criminal Neglect of Child Labour

- (a) Overpopulation and extreme poverty leads to criminal neglect of labor.
- (b) Lack of implementation of laws and policies due to weak political and administrative structure.
- (c) Neglect on the part of companies regarding the practice of child labor in supply chain.
- (d) Consumers' ignorance and lack of awareness regarding ethical information.
- (e) So called distinction between good and bad work.

#### 4. Consequences of the criminal neglect of child labor

- (a) Threat to the physical and mental well-being of children
- (b) Children are more prone to abuse in guise of work.
- (c) Increased risk of bonded-labour
- (d) Sexual and Economic exploitation of children
- (e) Increase in School drop-out rate and illiteracy
- (f) Increased inclination towards criminal activities.
- (g) ~~Poor emotional and physical~~
- (g) Distrust on state and humanity
- (h) Stagnant social status, due to life long labor starting from childhood.

#### 5. Remedies to curb the menace of Child labor

Maintaining the

- (a) Record of Child labour cases
- (b) Effective mechanism for child protection
- (c) Ensure compulsory education for child irrespective of class
- (d) Implementation of rules regarding child labor and check on employers.

#### 6. Conclusion:

Amid attempts to protect elephants from ivory poachers and dolphins from tuna nets, the rights of children go remarkably unremarked. These are the eye-opening words of American journalist and activist 'Anna Quindlen', that reveal the ignorance of world with respect to child rights. One of the gravest violation of child rights is evident in the form of 'Child labor'. Child labor is widely practiced across the globe but still this social issue is criminally neglected. There are various causes leading to the neglect of child labor, including, poverty and overpopulation. The flawed political and administrative structures also result in the poor implementation of laws and regulations related to child rights. In addition to this, the giant companies and also the consumers are ignorant of the prevalence of child labor in the supply chain. The distinction between the 'good-work' and 'bad-work' by a certain group in <sup>the</sup> society results in multiplication of ~~of~~ the cases of child labor. The continuous and unchecked prevalence of child labor in society yield dire consequences like threat to the physical and mental well-being of

of children. Child labor makes children more prone to all forms of abuse. It also aggravates the risk of bonded-labor and slavery. Children involved in child labor are at increased risk of economic as well as sexual exploitation. Due to child labor school-drop out rate is increased which impacts the overall literacy rates negatively. Due to illiteracy children often get indulged in illegal activities. Due to the harsh and exploitative working conditions young people began to distrust state and humanity. Child labor does not allow individual to improve his/her social status. The menace of child labor can be curbed by adopting certain measures including, maintaining the record of child labor ~~some~~ cases; carving an effective mechanism for child protection; ensuring education for all and implementing the laws regarding child labor. The cases of child labor are soaring across the globe in general and in developing world in particular. The criminal neglect of <sup>child</sup> labor has dire consequences. However, certain remedial measures can be adopted in order to deal with this menace.

According to the International Labor Organization child labor refers to "the work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and

that is harmful to the physical and mental development." Child labor is practiced in various countries, particularly in countries where economic conditions are not good children ~~become~~ the source of meeting family's needs.

The most worst forms of child labor include child trafficking, sexual exploitation, drug trafficking using children, debt bondage i.e bonded labor, forced labor, Organizational child begging and slavery. Even though child labor is one of the major reason of various social problems, it is still neglected.

There are various factors leading to the criminal neglect of child<sup>labor</sup>. The foremost factor is overpopulation and poverty associated to it.

Over population results in demand of more 'good' resources. These resources can not be provided by adult members of society alone so children are compelled to perform paid work, in order to meet the needs of family.

UNICEF report suggests that "in world's poorest countries more than one in five children are in work". For instance, in countries like Somalia and Ethiopia there is extreme poverty hence child labor cases are most commonly reported

in these countries. So, overpopulation and poverty directly influences the child labor in society.

Another major cause of the ignorance regarding child labor is the ~~late~~ lack of implementation of laws and policies due to poor political and administrative structure. As Daren Acemoglu and James Robinson argue in their book "Why Nations Fail?" that there is a link between extractive state institutions and the various social problems like unemployment, poverty and inequalities etc. in the developing world. ~~The rise of~~ So weak political and administrative structure of a state lead to various problems including poverty which ~~it~~ creates a conducive environment for child labor. For example, Pakistan lag behind in the administrative and political reforms so there is an increase in social problems and child labor is one of the symptoms of these social problems. Hence, flawed political and administrative structure leads to insufficient implementation of laws regarding child labor.

Further In addition, to the negligence of administrative institutions the business giants and mighty companies also neglect the practice

of child labor in their supply chain. Companies like Apple, Samsung and Microsoft claim that whenever they find an underage worker in their supply chain they ensure the safe return of that child to their home and also fund his education. But ironically the Amnesty International uncovered a number of cases of child labor among suppliers linked to these companies. The report revealed that child labor is being used to mine cobalt in Congo that is used to make lithium-ion batteries used in tech-products. So, the negligence by the giant companies result in more cases of child labor.

Moreover, the consumers are also ignorant of the ethical information. The consumers are not aware of the practice of child labor in the manufacturer manufacturing of a product or as a study conducted by University of Texas revealed that even if consumers have product's ethical information right in front of them (e.g. whether it is made using child workers) they will still buy that product. As consumers continue to buy products ignorant of harsh reality of child labor, the manufactures and suppliers continue to hire child workers. Hence, the ignorance of consumers

regarding the practice of child labor in supply chain leads to the criminal neglect of child labor.

One <sup>of the</sup> most prevalent cause behind the criminal neglect of child labor is the so-called distinction between the 'good-work and bad-work'. The proponents of this concept favours the domestic labor as good work because it takes place in safe environment of home and they term the work in commercial setting as bad-work. This notion has <sup>led</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>the</sup> increased cases of underage domestic help especially in the South Asian countries like India and Pakistan. This concept of good and bad work is often a real factor behind child abuse in domestic settings. Therefore, the idea of good work and bad work results in child labor.

The ignorance towards the issue of child labor yield dire consequences. Firstly, it poses a serious threat to the physical and mental well-being of children. The cruel and harsh employers often influence the ~~very~~ psychological health of children. Moreover, the hard working conditions and ~~exposure~~ exposure to hazardous chemicals also affects their physical health. For instance, in 2016 Thomas Reuters Foundation revealed that in India from where majority of



Mica (a product used in make-up items) mines, the deaths of children have been reported. As child there were involved in mining of Mica, that causes lung scarring and shortness of breath. Also the well-being of these child is often not prioritized as they belong to lower class and cannot afford expensive healthcare facilities. So, child labor in this way result in deteriorated physical and mental health of children.

Secondly, children are more prone to also abuse in the guise of work. They are physically, sexually and emotionally abused by owners and co-workers. For instance, in August, 2023, a girl named Fatima was abused and killed. She was ten-years old and was working as domestic maid in haveli of local feudal in Khairpur Sindh, other cases include, Tayyaba Abuse Case (2020), and Rizwana Torture Case (2023) etc. All these cases of violence against minors are proof of the fact that child labor paves way for the physical and emotional abuse of children. Due to this abuse these children suffer from lasting physical and mental scars and in extreme cases the result is death that is often not reported.

Thirdly, the prevalence of child labor also results in the evil of debt bonded labor or bonded labor where children are considered as slaves and property of the owners. For example, children working in Brick kilns in Pakistan are among the country's most vulnerable workers. They are subject to debt-bondage. Debt-bondage or debt slavery, is the person's pledge by himself or by family member to work for creditor for specified or unspecified period either without wages or nominal wages. In case of children, they are forced into bonded labor by family or society. According to UNICEF, two-fifth of two-third of all the working children in Pakistan toil in brick kilns. The owners force the innocent kids to production of bricks under inhuman conditions where they are exposed to all sorts of violence. Hence, bond-labor is increasing due to the normalization of child labor.

Fourthly, child labor also causes the sexual and economic exploitation of children. During the work children are often not supervised by family hence they

feel prey to child predators. Due to the increased industrialization, the economic exploitation of workers is at its peak, among them child workers are most disadvantaged. This economic and sexual exploitation of child workers is evident in the form of child bondage and child prostitution. Children are often not paid for the amount of work they do - Moreover, it is immoral to expect financial gains from the children and to exploit them for ~~gain~~ financial benefits.

Fifthly, child labor is also increasing the school drop-out rate which consequently results in increased illiteracy in the society. Education is a fundamental human right and a major enabler to reduce the inequalities and build peaceful, <sup>and</sup> democratic <sup>and</sup> inclusive societies. According to the Child Labour Global Estimates, "160 million children were in child labour out of which 53 million children are not in schools". These statistics are alarming, as these children are either not ~~admitted~~ enrolled in school or are excluded from school due to work. Even children who work and <sup>also</sup> study, struggle to balance their daily routines, <sup>which</sup> result in poor

academic performance. Hence child labor results in the school drop-out and illiteracy.

Furthermore, child labor exposes children to criminal activities. Children get involved in various illegal crimes to earn more money. The International Labour Organization revealed that children might get involved in illicit activities e.g. the production and trafficking of drugs. Children might do this against their will or with the belief that this will give them status and money. Children who are involved in this act are at increased risk of abuse and drug addiction. These children are also involved in other crimes like shoplifting, burglary, pocket picking etc. either willingly or by threat and violence. They are also pressurized by families to earn more money, hence these ~~less~~ children indulge in criminal activities. Juvenile Delinquency i.e. involvement of children in crimes is also a consequence of child labour. So, child labor also results in children being involved in criminal activities that are dangerous for their physical, social and mental health.

In addition to this, the continued prevalence of child labor creates distrust on state and humanity among these children. These children often believe that there is no authority to protect them from the shackles of bonded labor. Children feel helpless so they find refuge in crimes and drugs and often get involved in anti-state activities when they grow up. They believe that if no one cares for them, then why should they care for others. Due to child labor and harsh realities associated to it these children become anti-social and tend to harm themselves or others.

As child labor is associated with the violation of human rights, so it results in children disbelieving humanity and state institutions and laws.

Finally, the child labor also snatches the opportunity from children to learn skill, get educated and improve their social status. Most of the individuals who work as child laborers, are born poor and die poor because they are unable to find ways to improve their social status. They

who begin to work at early age <sup>and</sup> are  
either not enrolled in schools, hence they  
cannot compete <sup>with</sup> their peers when they  
grow up. They spend their entire lives  
in poverty, insecurity and helplessness.

In order to curb, the menace of  
child labor certain remedial measures  
can be adopted. The foremost step to  
deal with the child labor is to maintain  
the record of the cases of child labor.

Unfortunately, many ~~our~~ governments in  
the world don't pay attention to this  
grave issue e.g. Government of Pakistan  
has not collected any detailed data on  
child labor since 1996. This shows lack of  
prioritization on the part of government.

The detailed record of child labor cases  
is helpful in policy making, its implemen-  
tation. It also helps in the proper and  
just allocation of resources to deal with  
issue of child <sup>labor</sup> hence, ~~pro~~ keeping and  
updating the record of the child labor  
is mandatory to deal with is social evil.

Another, important means to cope  
with the child labour is to draw and

and to implement effective mechanism for child protection. Countries like Somalia, Central African Republic and Sudan etc have poor child protection mechanisms which leads to increase case of child labour and child bondage. Fortunately, Pakistan has decent child protection system (institutions) which protect children from all forms of abuse including child labor. The most significant organizations <sup>include</sup> Punjab Child Protection Bureau; Edhi homes; Pakistan Sweet Home and SOS Village etc. But still Pakistan needs to further improve its child protection system in order to <sup>save</sup> safe children from the clutches of poverty, insecurity, violence and child labor.

Education, in addition to child protection system, can be beneficial to deal with child labor. The Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to education". But ~~still~~ today, many children are unable to attend schools and acquire education due to child labor associated with poverty. Government and private sector should join hands to increase the enrollment rates

by offering free education and incentives to children and families who attend school.

Moreover, the effective implementation of laws and policies must be ensured in order to curb the child labor. Many nations across the globe have laws for child protection against child labour, but they lack in implementation due to lack of resources and stable administrative structures. For instance, Article 11.3 of the Constitution of Pakistan states "No child below the age of fourteen years shall be engaged in any factory, mine or any other hazardous employment". But due to frequent political upheavals these laws are seldom implemented in their entirety. As UNICEF estimates that about 3.3 million of Pakistani children are trapped in child labor. So, effective and transparent implementation of laws is need of the hour to deal with child labor. and ~~the~~ <sup>and employers.</sup> the institutions and personnels responsible shall be held accountable in case of the violation of these laws. particularly by <sup>the</sup> employers.

In a nutshell, the instances of child labor are increasing across the world due to the poor socio-economic condition



There are number of the causing causes of the criminal neglect of the child labor.

The poor economic condition associated to overpopulation compell families to send their children to work. The lack of implementation of laws, primarily due to the flawed political and administrative setup, result in the multiplication of the cases of child labor. Also the neglect on the part of Companies and ignorance at the ~~side~~ consumers' end regarding the presence of child labor in supply chain, also leads to the strengthening of child labor in society.

The professed distinction between good and bad work i.e. good work is work in domestic setting and bad work is the work in commercial setting, also leads to the increased child labour and exploitation in domestic settings. The criminal neglect of child labor results in the threat to the physical and mental of health of child.

It also expose children to crimes and all forms of abuse and exploitation. Due to child labor the distrust on humanity and state is also increased as people

continue to live in dire conditions. Through out these times and are unable to change their ~~socail~~ social status due to lack of education and opportunities. Over the times, many nations have worked to curb child labor but still measures like maintaining the record of the cases of child labor; adopting effective mechanism for child protection; ensuring compulsory education for all and proper implementation of laws regarding child labor and check on employers can be adopted to deal with child labor. Iqbal Masih, a Pakistani children rights activist, who escaped bonded labor at the age of ten, asserted; "Children should have pens in their hands, not tools."