The worst forms of child labor

Child Labor, employing children who are underage in reference to the Minimum Working age law set by the international labor organization, started mainly in United States in 1700s because of the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution brought a huge change to society by shifting the focus from agriculture to manufacturing. Factories started recruiting children because lack of experienced adult labor and factories believed that children are fast pace learners with abundance of energy. Recently, protest against and concern for child labor has increase because of the amount of physical and mental pressure factories and organizations impose on children. Society has narrow knowledge regarding child labor where they believe the myth that child labor means children working in manufacturing area. In reality, children are being used in the worst forms of child labor.

According to International Labor Organization (n.d), “Labor that jeopardizes the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child, either because of its nature or because of the conditions in which it is carried out, is known as “hazardous work” (para. 6). The four worst forms of labor affects the mental and morals of children and leaves a depressing imprint in their lives. “The four worst forms of child labor are form of slavery and forced recruitment in armed conflict, procuring of a child for prostitution, trafficking a child for illicit activities, and work that harm health and safety of children”(para. 5). In reference to United Nations (2015), Total of 215 million children in the world are working either force or voluntarily. Child labor is a very important issue that must be addressed and cared about because working under the age of 15 can have a hazardous affect on children. It is very important to have a deep understanding about the worst forms of child labor.
The first worst form of child labor is slavery and forced recruitment in armed conflicts. In this form of child labor, children are forced to join armed forces to fight wars. Many unofficial armed groups are formed in many countries and in order to have soldiers they abduct children and train them. According to International Labor Organization (n.d.), children under the age of 15 are not allowed to participate in hostilities. Children participating in wars and using arms can impact a child’s brain psychologically. According to U.S department of labor (2002), In Philippines 5.9 percent children are working and most of them are recruits in either agriculture or armed opposition groups (p.276).

Another worst form of labor is to force children in prostitution. It means that engaging female and male children in sexual activities in exchange of money. Many adults engage in illegal activities by sexually exploiting them. Sexual exploitation leaves a negative impact on children because it directly affects their innocence and purity. International labor Organization (n.d.) lists out couple of illegal activities that are child sex tourism, child pornography and boys and girls trafficking. According to U.S department of labor (2002), India is the country with highest number of children being sexually exploited (p.176).

The third form of worst labor is trafficking of children for illicit activities. Many illegal organization use children as their workers to complete some tasks. Their main motive behind is that no one doubts children because of their innocent look and age. In order to smuggle and sell drugs, children are being targeted, but organizations do not feel the negative effect on children. Some children are not acknowledging about the product they are selling and some children even use it that harms their health. For example, Kids are being used to smuggle drugs across borders because of
their height and age. According to U.S department of Labor (2002), Russia is a country where the labor department could not calculate number of children in child labor. In most of the cities, children are selling drugs in empty blocks or trading the products between groups.

The last worst form of child labor is engaging children in work that can affect their health. According to International Labor Organization (2002), “An estimated 85 million children under 18 years old are doing work which poses a physical, psychosocial or moral danger to them”(para.1). Factories and organizations are taking advantage of children’s helplessness where they are in need of money to run their family. The reason children are being targeted is that unlike adults, children are fast learners and very productive. Work places that provide unhealthy and unsafe conditions to work may cause injuries that can result in lifetime disability. Children working for hours will not feel the negative affect when they are in their young age but they will face many diseases when they will grow up into adults. For example, In India children are being engaged to work in bangle making industries and firework factories, which can cause a child to become blind or have asthma problems. In China the productivity labor is very high and in order to maintain it they require children to work and daily working in manufacturing industries and dealing with machines can sometimes cause accidental injuries and some of them can even be deadly also. It is very important to stop engaging children doing labor tasks that will affect them mentally and physically.

In order to combat worst forms of child labor, Klein (June 12,2013) has specified certain ways that are “Laws and regulations, Labor inspection and enforcement systems, Social protection programs, Public Awareness, Education and
training, Decent Work, Trade unions and other civil society groups, Empowerment of women, Company Engagement, and Consumers’ Buying Power”(p.1). Strict laws imposed by the government and if not being followed then the consequence will be closure of the work place or fine will help reduce work labor. The important way is to provide education and training, many countries have started to provide to free primary education that will help engage children and would not have any excuse of having no money for education. Social protection programs handled by the government and non-profit organizations, they will support families and will provide them the basic necessities for living, which are food, clothing and shelter. In order to maintain strictness of laws and regulations labor inspection systems will be created to monitor manufacturing industries. Following these ways can create a possibility of reducing child labor.

Children are the most innocent souls and their families should nurture them with care. They have the right to get educated, learn, and experience how the society works step-by-step rather than to start working at a very young age. Throughout the world there are 215 million children working full time in place of attending school, playing and enjoying their childhood. Child labor is a type of discrimination for children of lower castes who have to work and undergo physical and mental pressure. Government and nonprofit organizations are trying their best to support them and rescue them from this loophole that will destroy their future. But is it possible for child labor to stop completely?
References

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