

Child labor in western africa

Sociology



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Child labor in Western Africa

According to the International Labor Organization, child labor is work that can be proven to deprive children their childhood, dignity and potential, and which is harmful to the mental and physical development. It is any form of working activity that is socially, mentally, morally, or physically harmful and dangerous to children. They interfere with their education by depriving them the chance to attend school, requiring them to combine school activities and heavy work or in some cases obliging them to leave school prematurely.

Body

Children of West Africa are faced with intense poverty that has forced them to begin working at an early age so as to support their families. The chocolate industry has grown over the years and thus has resulted in an increase in the demand for cheap cocoa. The two factors have forced children to engage in child labor where they earn an average of less than \$2 per day. Most children laboring in these farms are estimated to be between the ages of around 12 to 15 years, and in some cases as young as five years old. It is estimated that approximately 40% of the children are girls. The unpleasant problem that is seen in West Africa has made many people want to understand the culture in this region that accepts such behaviors

People in this region are known for their collectivistic nature where people value solidarity, conformity, family cohesion, and corporation (Goldberger, N. R., & Veroff, J. 1995). Just like any other collectivistic society, people at West Africa focus on other people desires or the desires of a group. It can explain why children in this region feel the desire to work in the fields so as to help their families. It can be assumed that they feel responsible for their family.

Collectivistic nature is also evident from their conformity in terms of

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accepting to be underpaid.

The people in this region are known for their high-context cultures where people are intuitive, rational, collective, and contemplative. They are driven by trust and not reason. It can explain why the group accepts to work under such condition. Their nature of collectivist clearly explains why many children are found in these firms.

Western Africa has various cultural values that shape the way they do things. One of the most common cultural values that are based on the foundation of the past and present is respecting the elderly. Children are expected to acknowledge their Enders and not question their decisions. The West African culture also expects people not to be frustrated, impatient, or angry. Collectivism demands people to be careful not to shame or offend another in public. Collectivism also encourages the culture of gaining and maintaining relationships. Long relationships are always cherished in this region.

Conclusion

Child labour in West Africa has been a great issue that has gained the attention of many people and especially child activists today. The issue deprives children of their freedom to enjoy their childhood and in most cases in interferes with their education. It also increases their responsibility at the early age of their life. Child labour has increased the curiosity for many people to understand the culture of people in this region that accept such acts. The analysis shows that people in this region are known for their collectivistic, high-context cultures, and their strong values.

Bibliography

Goldberger, N. R., & Veroff, J. (1995). *The culture and psychology reader*. New York: New York University Press.

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