

Child labor in india and peru essays example

[Countries](#), [India](#)



Child labor is prevalent in India and Peru. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 138, a person in normal circumstances may participate in economic activities provided that he is older than 15 years old. Following this, a person within aged 15 and below is considered a child. The child is then referred to as a laborer if he is economically active. This constitutes being gainfully employed or working on a regular basis for which there is remuneration or that the output from his labor is intended for the market. Both these definitions serve as basis for most studies on child labor. It is most concentrated in Asia and Africa which account for 90% of total child employment. Most cases are present in rural areas where strict enforcement for minimum age requirement for employment and schooling is minimal. The most pervasive cause of child labor is poverty (Siddiqi et al., " Child Labor: Issues, Causes, and Interventions.") Others include social discrimination, inaccessibility to education, and human trafficking. Child laborers face significant health risks. Child labor also hampers child development including cognitive, moral, emotional, and physical growth.

Child labor was already widespread even in the early eighteenth century with records of children working alongside their parents on farms. However, it was only during the Industrial Revolution that it garnered particular attention due to the tiring environment of factories. Child labor in rural areas is considered light in that the children can be employed while getting their education at the same time. In the early nineteenth century, child labor kept increasing despite a lot of oppositions. By the latter half of that century, child labor was already declining as the employment practice got shifted from children to

the colonies of the industrialized nations (Basu, “ Child Labor: Cause, Consequence, and Cure, with Remarks on International Labor Standards.”). One of these nations who made use of colonies in Asia was Great Britain. During the British colonial era, some parts of India practiced bondage labor, a colonial legacy of false freedom, whose relationship is not primarily based on indebtedness but actually on a patron-client regime. This bonded servitude was referred to as Halipratha, a relationship between a dhaniamo (master) and a hali (servant). Bondage labor is most prevalent in the agriculture sector usually present in the rural areas. The servant works for the master as a means of economic security and the uplifting of his own social status. The culture of debt payment and domination in a bondage labor ensured that those belonging to the working social class still remain in that position (Breman, “ On Labour Bondage, Old and New.”). In effect, the reconstitution of slaves by British-approved contracts between landlords and laborers simply changed into a less defamatory debt bondage (Prakash, “ Conclusion: Freedom Bound.”).

Today, bonded labor and child labor are considered modern forms of slavery and meet the definition of forced labor in the Indian constitution. Most of the child laborers are employed in agriculture, followed by the service sector, and finally by labor-intensive industries such as mining. In urban areas, the separation of families due to unemployment and alcoholism also lead to the increased number of street children who eventually become child laborers. The working social class in India includes the Dalits, known as the untouchables. Inherent in their social status, the Dalits experience racial discrimination and socioeconomic differentiation in the society which lead to

their participation in bonded labor. Although the Indian caste system has no legal implications, the Dalits still continue to be abused and segregated by the upper class members and even, its government officials (Hanchinamani, “ Human Rights Abuses of Dalits in India.”). Due to India’s history of caste-based discrimination, unequal educational system, lack of employment opportunities, want of social welfare, poorly enforced laws on forced labor and debt bondage such as the 1976 Bonded Labor Slavery Abolition Act, the eradication of child labor practices by the Indian government was held in vain. (Human Rights Watch, “ The Small Hands of Slavery: Bonded Child Labor in India.”). Among the politicians within the Indian government, there is already the unspoken agreement against compulsory education. As education is usually linked to being one of the primary solutions to ending child labor, India actually lags behind most of its Asian counterparts when investing on primary education. Instead, India focuses on higher education which, although not entirely undesirable, only benefits the middle and upper classes.

In addition, the Western ideals on social responsibilities outside the bounds of family relations do not exist in India. In its place, there is the Hindu belief of dharma where responsibilities are not universal to all citizens but dictated by their social class. Through this, child labor is considered as a product of racial servitude and caste discrimination (Khan, “ The Dignity of Labor.”). Also, this places women as being inferior to men in the traditional hierarchy of social strata. This promotes the acceptance of an unjust status quo and absence of sincere concern for the welfare of an individual. This results to a lack of immediate attention to major problems of the Indian society such as

prostitution, poverty, and child labor. As such, social and governmental duties with regard to labor violations can be inconsistent with their proposed standing in society. Thus, generation-to-generation, low-caste Indians remain illiterate and in poverty while the remainder become more sophisticated and prosperous. (Finn, “ Bonded Labor in India”)

Peruvian children experience the worst forms of child labor. In rural areas, children are employed in hazardous environments in mining and agriculture. Particularly in gold mines, children are forced to carry heavy objects and work in places with poor ventilation. As a consequence, they are also vulnerable to drowning. Girls are often taken to work as domestic helpers that subject them to dangers of physical abuse. There are also reports of girls being trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation by deceiving them with false employment and education. This is a major child labor problem in Iquitos, Cuzco, and even, Lima. These children are also being exploited by terrorist groups and drug traffickers for mass production of coca. In urban areas, children work as street vendors, car washers, performers, fare collectors, scavengers, recyclers and beggars. These expose them to vehicle accidents and hazardous chemicals. It is difficult to solve the problem of child labor in the country because of the lack of coordination and sharing of information between the anti-child labor agencies and the government. As of 2012, Peru has made significant development and allotted funds in its strategies to eradicate the worst forms of child labor. (US Department of Labor, “ 2012 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor”)

In Peru, child laborers combine schooling and employment. With the lower count of Peruvian child laborers, studies have shown that with increased

investment in education and the provision of good schools, poverty can be reduced along with child labor. Also, it has been shown that the rising wages of men in Peru has a direct link to the decrease in labor hours of female children. This suggests that Peruvian families will only resort to child labor if family earnings fall to very low levels. However, it has also been shown that as children get older, their participation in the labor market also increases. (Ray, “ Child Labor, Child Schooling, and Their Interaction with Adult Labor: Empirical Evidence for Peru and Pakistan.”)

There is also evidence that in rural areas of Peru, boys significantly outnumber girls in school enrollment while that in urban areas do not suggest a gender bias. However, male employment of children in the rural areas of Peru is higher than that of females.

A large portion of Peruvian child laborers attends school and work simultaneously. In fact, that share is larger than those children who are only employed. Rural children make up the bulk of that portion. Since the schooling and working decision in the rural areas of Peru are affected by the trade-off in the access of practical and quality education, improving the state of education in the country can lead to increased enrollment and decreased child labor participation. Another barrier in sending children to school is the lack of credit to Peruvian parents for tuition fees. With improved child labor markets, there are more incentives for participation in Peru. This is the same for other countries in Latin America. There are deficiencies in educational supplies and facilities in both rural and urban Peru. (Ersado, “ Child Labor, Child Schooling, and Their Interaction with Adult Labor: Empirical Evidence for Peru and Pakistan.”).

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