

The slavery effect in today's society



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In the eighteenth century there were an estimated six million slaves in the world. That number, large as it was, does not come close to the number of slaves in today's society. The current worldwide estimates are over twenty-seven million. Every year seventeen thousand slaves are trafficked into the United States, of that number, eighty percent are women and fifty percent of those (seven thousand) are children. Seventy percent of the females are imported for prostitution. It is astonishing how even though slavery is not seen or heard of much in today's society it still exists heavily and quietly affects our everyday life. It is extremely sad, yet, regretfully true.

The history of slavery dates back to 1780 B. C. though laws have been passed in most countries that prevent, or at least lessen, slavery, it still exists today. By definition, slavery means the complete ownership and control by a master: to be sold into slavery. Slavery indicates a state of subjugation or captivity often involving burdensome and degrading labor. Slavery occurs when people -known as slaves- were placed in servitude as the property of a household or company. Slaves are deprived of their personal freedom and compelled to perform labor or services. Slaves are the properties of another person, household, company, corporation, or government and are unable to leave or have any freedom. Primarily slaves were sold amongst companies, corporations, governments, or people. The practice of exporting slaves is called slave trafficking. Slavery is currently found in many countries all over the world. In other countries, though known by another name, it is still slavery. In Canada slaves are called "servants" and in Nordic countries they are called "thralls." In the year 1670 the first African slave was introduced to America. The slaves of that time period were

treated poorly; most were beaten with whips for the slightest infraction.

Most, were simply tired, hungry or thirsty; some just too old to do the work and were brutally beaten to death. Many slaves would die of illnesses like malaria or yellow fever because of their limited immunities to these diseases. Others died from malnutrition, poor living conditions, and exhaustion; there was a very high mortality rate among slaves.

To this day slaves are still exploited all over the world even though we actually do not see it or hear about it. Although in most countries in today's society traditional slavery has been abolished, it still exists in some countries and much of the slavery that exists is done so illegally. Some of the countries that have abolished slavery are the United States, Africa, many European countries, and China. Though abolished, it still exists, just using a different title. The highest percentage of slavery that is seen in today's age is child labor. Many countries have enacted child labor laws, protecting the rights of children. Typically children are not allowed to work until they reach the age of fourteen. There are children as young as four working on plantations. Most child labor laws state that only children over the age of fourteen can work between the hours of seven in the morning until nine at night and no more than forty hours per week or eight hours in one day excluding school days in which they can work after school until 8: 00 PM. Children, prior to the age of 18 must get a work permit filled out by their school before they are allowed to work; these children must maintain at least a 2. 0 grade point average in order to continue their employment. In many countries this is not the case and the children's primary duty is work. These children do not have the chance of an education. Child labor is not the only

form of slavery still in existence. Some companies maintain a policy of only enslaving adults, while others only employ children. Many children who are put into slavery end up working in clothing manufacturing plants also known as sweatshops. A sweatshop is a factory where workers make products in very poor working conditions. Child labor is also abused in harvesting cotton, fruits, and vegetables. Many slaves also work in sugar cane and coffee factories.

The selling of females, as disgusting as this may sound, is still a common practice in some countries. Young women are often sold by their families for marriage, domestic uses, like cleaning and cooking, while others are sold into sex trafficking and were forced into prostitution.

Many children are taken from their families to become soldiers. Countries such as Lebanon and Colombia regularly enlist young children to carry guns and become soldiers of war. Rarely is this considered a form of slavery, yet by definition, it is.

As you can see there are many types of slavery that still exist today. The following exhibits how the name has changed but the practice is still the same.

Bonded Labor occurs when people have taken a simple loan for something such as medicine, food or housing for themselves or their family and to pay it back they are put to work by the lender creating a type of slavery. With bonded labor often the child of the debtor are put to work in order to pay the bond.

Early and Forced Marriage is the parental practice of selling off daughters as they reach adolescence. Daughters are sold for monetary gain. Frequently, there are also religious reasons for this practice. Their families give the girls into arranged marriages. They have no choice as to who they are to marry. Once married they are owned by their new husband.

Forced Labor is where a person is forced into work by the threat of physical harm. Much like the slavery that we read of in our history books, these slaves work out of fear of violence.

Slavery by Descent means simply that a child is born into slavery. The parents are slaves, thus the child is a slave. It just continues generation after generation.

Trafficking, according to the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (C. A. S. T.), is the recruitment and transportation of persons within or across boundaries by force, fraud, or deception for the purpose of exploiting them economically. Trafficked people most commonly work in sweatshops, restaurants, on farms, in manufacturing, prostitution and as private domestic workers

Sadly, many parents end up giving their child into slavery to pay off a debt or simply sell their own children for support their families. Many young women are raped by their owners ending up pregnant thus bring more children into the life of slavery.

This article could have been written in 1808, or 1908, but sadly, it is being written in 2008. You'd think that in today's civilized society that slavery

would truly have been completely abolished, however, the name has just been changed. Slavery affects today's society so much, even though we do not notice it, slavery is everywhere.

Next time you're in a department store, pick up some of the products and look to see where they were manufactured. It is highly unlikely that it will have the name of a country with strict child labor laws in place. There are U. S. companies that even move their manufacturing plants outside of the U. S. in order to employ children at a lesser cost. It is extremely hard to believe but most products we use on a daily basis were produced in countries that allow this type of slavery. Products such as sugar, shoes, tea, coffee, chocolate, fruits, and vegetable are made by modern-day slaves.

The U. S. Department of Labor disclosed that our country's largest retailer, Wal-Mart, was fined a measly 135, 000. 00 for violating child labor laws. The violation: Children operating chain saws and box crushing machinery. Toys-R-Us was cited for working 14-year-old children late into the night. The management for this huge corporations stated that they misunderstood the child labor laws pertaining to how long they could work a fourteen-year-old child.

While driving through a large city, maybe in the seedier part of town, notice the young girls on the streets. Where did they come from? Did slave traffickers transplant them here? Are they runaways with no other alternatives?

Think about the practices of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints. How is what was going on in Eldorado, Texas any different

than sexual slavery? Over 200 women and children were recently taken from this remotely located temple only after a teenage girl reported that she was being held there against her will and had been forced to marry a fifty year old man as well as have his child. Though illegal, it goes on unknown to most of us to this day.

Most of us, unknowingly, support these new forms of slavery. We buy the products from the companies that employ these workers. We, as a nation, do little more than smirk when we read about the religious organizations that condone arranged, under-aged marriages as well as polygamy.

In conclusion, though you may not see it, slavery still exists. It has taken on new forms. The name has changed. It doesn't look the same as we have read about in the history books but by any other name it is still slavery. Think about it next time you buy that cute tank top or stop in for your favorite latte'.