

Human rights social responsibility essay



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Human rights violations are a major occurrence in many countries throughout the world. Human rights include being free from abuse, assault, and exploitation.

Major violations in these countries include human trafficking, exploitation of women and children, discrimination and abuse. The scope of this analysis includes human rights violation against women and children in Ghana, Columbia and India; three different countries on three different continents. The United States and large U. S. corporations have trade agreements and conduct day- to- day business in each of these countries. These powerful entities have an obligation to not only conduct responsible business but to also ensure the social welfare of the local population.

Ghana The United States is one of Ghana's primary trading partners and many U. S. businesses have market share in the West African country. The U. S. has maintained a trade agreement with Ghana since the year 2000, and has good political and business relationships with the country.

However, there is a startling amount of violence and abuse occurring with its society. Despite our country's close financial ties with Ghana, the population is suffering, without any attention or action being taken by the U. S. population. According to the Department of State, " violence against women and children; female genital mutilation...; societal discrimination against women, trafficking in women and children; and child labor, including forced child labor" are major issues in Ghana's society. Reports indicate that Ghana is a source, hub, and destination for trafficking of women and children for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.

Most of the destitute children bought and sold are either boys forced to work arduous hours in fishing communities or girls used as domestic servants.

Women are bought and sold while being promised education and steady work, but upon arrival in foreign locations, they are forced into prostitution.

Not only are women and children being bought and sold, those that stay in Ghana are being abused at an alarming rate. A recent study in Ghana on violence revealed that one in three women has been beaten, slapped or physically punished by a current or a previous partner.

The government is still trying to ratify domestic violence policy that would make it easier to actually prosecute offenders. Despite open protest from women's advocacy groups, proposed legislation ideas have not been turned into law. Along with abuse, women face considerable amounts of discrimination in the workplace and elsewhere. Women with skills and training are minimally discriminated against but, according to State Department findings, " Women, especially in rural areas, remained subject to burdensome labor conditions and traditional male dominance. Ghana appears to be doing little to protect its women and children, and the United States Government, along with many domestic corporations continue to conduct ongoing business there without rebuke or censure.

Columbia Marking the most significant trade contract in the Western Hemisphere in over a decade, the U. S. and Columbia signed a free trade agreement in February 2006. Columbia's economy is fueled by a plethora of natural resources and a highly educated population.

Columbia is the second largest agricultural market in Latin America, and the United States has significant economic ties with Colombia. The South American country is currently the 31st largest goods trading partner with the U. S. , with \$14. 3 billion in total goods traded during 2005.

The stock of U. S. foreign direct investment in Colombia was \$3. 4 billion in 2005, a 20. 7% increase from 2004. Unfortunately, our trading partner commits vast amounts of unchecked human rights violations that hurt the Columbian communities and weaken the society.

Child abuse, sexual exploitation of women and children, and active recruiting of children into paramilitary groups are common occurrences in Columbia. Guerrillas, fighting against the Columbian government, use impoverished children as soldiers. The Ministry of Defense estimated that 4, 620 Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) members and 1, 330 National Liberation Army (ELN) members were minors and that most guerrilla fighters had joined the guerilla ranks as children. Human Rights Watch reported that there were approximately 11, 000 child soldiers in Columbian rebel camps.

Along with forcible entry into militant organizations, children and woman are being trafficked out of Columbia for sexual exploitation and forced labor. Last year, Columbia was a major source for trafficking in persons, primarily for sexual and labor purposes. Trafficking prevention hotlines set up by NGO's in Columbia received over 250 calls. The majority of trafficking victims were young women, although children and young men were maltreated.

Destinations included Venezuela, Ecuador, El Salvador, Aruba, Panama, The

Netherlands, Chile, Costa Rica, Curacao, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Spain, Japan, Hong Kong, and the United States. Not only are women and children exported, they are trafficked within Columbia as well from rural communities to the cities.

The examples mentioned above are only a small sample of the abuses of women and children in Columbia that appear to be ignored by the U. S. Government and internationally active companies. India India is comprised by an enormous population of 1.

1 billion people. In the last ten years, India has profited from a large group of educated, English-speaking people, and trained professionals to become a great outsourcing destination for many different countries including the United States. With a large amount technical expertise and education, India has become a major exporter of software as well as financial and technological services as well. Although there is a great amount of financial and educational success, there is also a disturbing amount of discrimination and child exploitation as well. The caste system that exists within India creates immeasurable levels of discrimination and social disparity, with women absorbing the largest impact of the mistreatment.

Reports indicate that every six hours a married woman is burned, beaten to death or driven to commit suicide. It has been reported that a women is raped every 29 minutes, and there is a dowry related death every 77 minutes. Dowry is the payment owed to a family for their daughter upon her marriage. With the caste system in effect, there have been reports of upper

caste men mass raping lower caste women. Lower caste women are often harassed, stripped in public and paraded down streets.

Regrettably however, women of adult age are not the only ones being harmed in India. Reports on child welfare indicate that half of all young girls are being sacrificed into arranged marriages by age fifteen. Two-hundred forty girls a day die in India due to complications in child birth. Of these girls, reports indicate that most show signs of post traumatic stress related to sexual abuse. In addition to these children being abused sexually and emotionally, females in India can be in danger from the beginning of their lives. The United Nations reported that an estimated 2000 female fetuses are aborted everyday in India.

Children are not simply abused in many cases, but are exploited for labor. “ Children have small fingers, and so they can remove the buds very quickly” a cotton seed farmer in India explained. “ They worked fast, much faster than the adults, and put in longer hours and didn’t demand long breaks. Plus, I could shout at them and beat or threaten them if need be to get more work out of them.

” It is estimated by UNICEF that about 200 million children between the ages of five and fourteen are used in the labor force in India. These noted are just a few examples of the violations against women and children in India. It is appalling to think that the information above is a small fraction of the abuses of real people, written about in an abbreviated manner. The truth is that this is a brief overview of the horrible things that go on daily in these countries. Companies With the great deal of United States involvement in these

countries, what is stopping the Government and powerful corporations from attempting to mitigate and prevent these unfortunate situations? There are many domestic corporations that do have programs to encourage and strengthen the communities they operate in.

Currently, Coca-Cola, the largest producer, distributor and marketer of non-alcoholic beverages in the world has education programs about HIV/AIDS and scholarships they fund in the countries they operate in. South America, Africa and South Asia are no exceptions. Why not help the communities more by diversifying the aid they do give? It is not enough just to donate money for education when there are women and children being abused and exploited. These exploitations could be reduced with the help of Coca-Cola and other companies' influence. S.

C. Johnson, one of the world's leading manufacturers of household cleaning products, and operates in over 110 countries, including the Ghana, India, and Columbia. They are a shining example of multifaceted giving and social betterment. The company has extensive philanthropy and volunteer programs that helps communities all over the world. S.

C. Johnson not only helps the environment but has enacted community building programs like giving 5% of pretax profit to the local communities they operate in for social welfare projects. They also create low-cost cleaning supplies so even the most impoverished people can fight diseases. Within their scope, the S.

C. Johnson company does a fantastic job of helping communities and making life better for people, but they should attempt to do more to help the women

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and children in need of protection. Things like ensuring some of the 5% they give goes to women's shelters or child protection agencies in Ghana. Or perhaps they could fund a youth campaign in Columbia to give other choices to impoverished children besides joining militias. Stakeholders Some people may not think that the social welfare of different communities lies with the companies that conduct business there, but these companies flourish and prosper off of the labor, wages, and commitment that these communities dedicate.

Since the United States has a close economical relationship with these countries, they should take a stance on these issues. Working with the local governments and NGO's to aid and support remedies to these situations. The United States Government along with its internationally active corporations have the power and opportunity to sanction and censure any country's practices that appear to be in violation of basic human rights. If there was a greater possibility of lost import revenues for these foreign countries, they would likely attend to these social issues with greater zeal in order to maintain their position in the global marketplace.

As consumers of these companies' products, Americans should expect more from their large corporations. With the great amount of money and influence these corporations wield, they should be applying more of their attention and focus to the people that are least able to defend themselves against harm, the women and children. They spend millions marketing their positive images by giving money to education or the environment, but the women and children trafficked, abused, and exploited need attention as well.

Companies will develop respectable reputations if they diversified the causes

they contribute to. Companies tend to focus on the issue they can throw money at or easily remedy. By illustrating examples of things that are additionally damaging communities around the world, hopefully some attention from major corporations will be spared for others in need.

It only makes sense to make these types of issues central to social welfare campaigns. Education money for children doesn't really help the impoverished younglings working in sweatshops for hours a day. Nor does a cleaner environment mend the heart of a woman who has been bought, sold and abused. There is more to social welfare and community giving than education and our environment, which are two very important things that pale in comparison to people's lives. When people actually realize the enormous scale these women and children are being exploited, raped, and abused, they will begin to demand action to be taken on the part of those with the opportunity to make greater change.

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