



# Globalisation, Poverty and the Child Labour Paradox

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# Overview



- Matters of concern
  - i) Why is child labour an issue?
  - ii) Where does it occur?
  - iii) The context within which i & ii, above need to be considered (the global context)
  - iv) Causes of child labour
  - v) Recommended solution to child labour

# i) Why is child labour an issue?



- i) Why is child labour an issue?
  - Is all type of child work bad?
  - What are the motivations behind the concern over child labour?
- Economics based approach
  - Concern over the unfair advantage child labour gives to certain producers.
- Rights based approach
  - Only work that is exploitive and impedes the development of the child should be abolished.

# Analysis of i)



- The economic based approach premised on unproven theory, causes unnecessary debates and tensions. According to the rights based approach, not all child work is unacceptable, only exploitative work which is work that impedes the development of the child should be addressed.
- A demarcation between child work and child labour

## ii) Where does it occur?



- 90% of child labourers are in developing countries.
- Child labour is not a recent phenomenon as they have occurred in developed countries.
- free market view (market forces will phase out child labour).
- Child labour is not a market inefficiency, concerns in developed countries over child labour arose when demand for it increased leading to excessiveness and poor conditions due to their vulnerability.

# Analysis of ii)



- Elements regarding child labour in developed countries was based on the need to protect children who are easily exploited due to their vulnerability. Same pattern is assumed for developing countries.

# The global context



- Technological advances has also facilitated data collection on child labour
- By 2020, 90% of new workers will be from developing countries
- Globalisation has caused an increase in the mobility of factors of production.
- Prosperity from globalisation will not automatically distribute equally

# The global context



- Poorest people's share in global income decreased in the last 20 years
- Job losses in the west as production shifts to the east
- Cultural identities become at risk
- According to the WTO, the world economy grew by 4%, but in Africa, per capita income has been shrinking over the past twenty years.

# The global context



- The richest 20% have 74% of income, the poorest 20% have 2% of income. 19% of the world's population lives below the poverty line.
- Africa with a population of 630 million had 66% of its population living below the poverty line and the OECD countries with a population of 130 million had 0% of its population living in poverty.
- Africa left out of the developmental triangle.

# The global context



- The gap in development caused by the unequal distribution of benefits in the past is far too wide and will take 100 years for the more integrated of developing countries to catch up with developed countries, whilst countries in the African region would take approximately some 230 years to close the gap
- 40% of the world's population live on income so low that they are precluded from fully participating in wealth creation

# Causes of Child Labour



- Poverty versus full time work
- The dynastic/poverty trap
- Economic structure
- Weak state intervention vis a vis compulsory education
- Parental residency, migration and disintegration of the family
- Fertility rate and child labour
- Gender typing
- Culture/tradition

# The possible solution to Child Labour



## Solutions: Governmental policy intervention

- An outright ban on child labour
- A wider policy approach for a sustained eradication of child labour through having the requisite infrastructure in place
  - addressing low adult wages
  - addressing family attributes to break the poverty trap
  - adequate accessible schools

# The possible solution to Child Labour



- Putting the infrastructure in place will cost a government who has not been able to address the problem before due to a lack of funds
- Understand what it is about child labour that is objectionable
- Due to the global back drop it implicates and affects everyone
- We must be mindful of the need to extract balanced benefit from the international trading system