

LABOR EXPORT ACROSS AGE AND GENDER : AN EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

This paper discusses the whole essence of Labour export as the main framework within which the problem raised in this study are analyzed. The trending nature of human trafficking is alarming . Human persons are trafficked for labor exploitation, sexual exploitation and the emerging trend of harvesting human organs for sales abroad. It is in this regard that this paper analyzed the type of persons that ordinarily engages in export of Labour and the purpose or objectives of Labour export using content analysis as methodological instrument. The paper concludes that while Africans are trafficked abroad for laolabor and sexual exploitation, the Asians exports human labor to reduce unemployment and earn foreign exchange for their countries.

KEY WORDS : Labor Export, Exploitation, Foreign Exchange

Introduction

Essentially, Labour connotes all human efforts of body or mind which is under taken in expectation of reward. Jhingan (2005) perceives of Labour as including both physical and mental work done for monetary reward. Workers in factories, and other services provided in the tertiary sector of the economy such as Teachers, Doctors, Lawyers, Bankers and Musicians are all involved in Labour. Conversely therefore, any work involving physical or mental ability without getting income or is simply for pleasure cannot be considered as Labour. (Caporaso and Levine,1992, Cohen, 1986)

In this connection therefore, the boundary of Labour provision is simply immaterial as both males and females, slaves or free men etc could at some point be involved in such paid activities. Most recently however, a new dimension into the debate about Labour export has been discovered, namely the employment of the under aged children in a number of work environment ranging from farms, factories to homes. It is a class phenomenon because those children involved in child labor are mostly children of the lower economic class (Ekweke,1986)

For example, young bus conductors, domestic service providers, organized child begging, child prostitution, child trafficking (UNICEF, 2001, Emerson and souza,2003). A girl child for example who is transported outside her immediate environment to work in a secluded domestic environment in return for monetary reward is involved in Labour. If the same girl child maintains a shop without monetary attachment cannot be considered as Labour.

In cognizance of the above, it is instructive to add that historically, societies had engaged the Labour of others that was both domestically sourced as well as exported from an environment external to that community or country. Labour export is multi faceted; however, within the context of this study, it is a function of economic inequality manifested by economic repression which those involved have to grapple with.

In antiquity people provide communal Labour to produce for the common good of the society. But with epochal changes in human history Labour power particularly under capitalism has become a commodity that can be bought and sold. A worker therefore, sells his Labour power for definite period either for a day, a week or a month and gets his wages on daily, weekly or monthly basis. Marx (1982) was explicit when he said we live today under the domination of capitalist production in which a large ever increasing class of population can live only if it work for the owners of means of production in return for wages. Consequently, Labour export is the mobility of Labour from one geographical location to another within the same country or outside the shores of a country cutting across age and gender.

Labor Export as Foreign Exchange Earner

Sovereign countries have historically exported Labour to other countries. Asian countries such as Philippine, Vietnam, China etc depend greatly on Labour export for reduction in unemployment and development of their economy through foreign exchange earned from Labour export. They have many of their citizens living and working abroad and remitting back home some percentages from the proceeds of their Labour. Neil (2004) depicted that the government of Philippine officially declared that more than 7.3 Million Filipinos or eight percent of the country's population reside abroad. He said from 1999 to 2001 official recorded remittance alone averaged 20.3 percent of the country's export earning and 5.2 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) providing succor for many poor families. Remittance from Labour export has become a formidable economic force in Philippine that cannot be discarded. It has raised the income of Filipino worker and their families with resultant effect of increased investment in education and training. This is a country with meager per Capital Gross National Income of One Thousand and Thirty US Dollars (US\$1,030,00)(Neil, 2004). They also have high unemployment rate for both skilled and unskilled workers. Filipinos abroad sent back home over Six Billion Dollars, about 8.4 percent of National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) via formal channels in 2001.

Filipinos have a long history of Labour export to United States of America and other parts of the World. However, government intervention in Labour export began in the mid 1970s resulting from oil boom in the middle east. The government of Philippine, under the dictatorship of Marcos Ferdinand, first encouraged Labour export to reduce unemployment created by the country's stagnant economy. In the Philippine, there was a synergy between the private sector and the government to recruit and export Labour to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other part of the world. The Philippine government issued several Licenses to private organizations registered for the purpose of Labour export. On the other hand, the government created an agency known as the Philippines overseas employment administration (POEA) to provide contract Labour directly to interested foreign employers, Maritime agencies and governments. This action whether under taken by government or the private sector, has been gazetted under Philippine law.

Labour Export in Africa

Labour export in most African countries is not officially gazetted as it were in the Asian countries ab-initio discussed. Within the continent of Africa, people fend for themselves resulting from inadequate provision of basic necessities of life facilitated by the growth approach to development always pursued by those in control of the coercive instruments of the state. In view of this, people migrate to new locations within their own countries or outside the shores of their own countries in search of greener pasture without any official arrangement for the benefit of the immigrant and the state at large. In most cases in Africa, intertribal wars and communal clashes encourage migration of labour to other places.

However, in southern African countries, labour export is facilitated by white men that own large plantation or estate farms. In this regard, both child and adult labour is mobilized to leave their rural abodes to areas where the white men have their farms located. It is a common practice in countries like Zimbabwe, Malawi, Muzambique etc for the natives to supply labour on the farms of white settlers including their children regardless of age and gender.

In Malawi, for example according to Banda (2008) Kirana is one of 250 Million children across the world involved in work that is damaging to their mental, physical and emotional development. Some 57 Million of these endangered children live in sub-Saharan Africa with an estimated 1.4 Million child labourers. Malawi, a small Southern African nation has the highest incidence of child labour. Banda continued that Kirana was Eight years old when he started work. White settlers that owns farm estates transported him and his parents from their home village Mulanje with Fourty Five other families traveling over One Thousand kilometers to a tobacco farm in Rumphu, Northern Malawi.

Banda quoted Kirana's mother saying the family left home seeking a better life. Four years later, my whole family is still struggling with poverty. My son has to work as hard as everyone else, if we are to afford the basic necessities. The money that my husband and I receive from the tobacco estate is not enough. That her son has never been to school. For the past six months, his health has been failing as such he cannot work as hard as before. The little boy is malnourished exposing him to different infections easily. The family work twenty four hours in all weather conditions and often survive without a proper meal for three days. Banda concluded that this family struggle is replicated throughout Malawi's tobacco industry where poverty ensures that every member of a family must contribute to the work load.

According to the 2006 report of center for Tobacco control research and education (CTCRE)Up to two million Malawians, mostly poor depend on tobacco and related industries for their income up to 900,000 adult growers are smallholder farmers, tobacco tenants and casual farm workers.... when monthly allocations runs out, workers and their children go hungry. Many also lack basic necessities like medication, proper housing and safe drinking water.

Further more, a release by catholic organization in 2007 stated that minimum of 78,000 children are working on full or part time basis on tobacco field. About 45 percent of the child workers are 10-14 years old and 55 percent 7-9 years old. While the tobacco companies receive nearly 40 Million US Dollars in revenues over four years through the use of unpaid child labour in Malawi. Conversely, labour export in the West African sub region is illegally done by traffickers of women and children and also by wish full adults. It is carried out through illegal routes through desert paths to North Africa across the sea to Spain. A journey that claims several lives of younger, energetic and desperate Africans. According to U. S state department for trafficking in persons report of June, 2008, Nigeria is Notorious for this illicit act because she is a source, transit and destination country for women and children trafficking for the purposes of forced labour and commercial sexual exploitation.

Child Labour Export

As stated in the introductory section of this paper, child labour export has become an important subject of interest to both scholars and policy makers. It is a new dimension that has gain currency in the whole debate on labours export. In the first instance, export of child labour in the long run is retrogressive because it prevents children from acquiring education as a stepping-stone to becoming useful adult in future. Secondly exporting children to provide labour both within the community or across communities or regions or even across the ethnic divides tends to create cultural as well as class antagonism. In recent time, the elite of southern kaduna extraction frowned at such act because they see it as being perpetuated by the Hausa/Fulani Muslims to further entrench their dominance. Importantly, child labour export is facilitated by the demand of employers for cheap and flexible labour force. A child labourer can be moved from place to place and they work for longer hours obediently without any complain because in most cases they don't know that they are been exploited.

This act is mostly accommodated by small scale family enterprises that cannot afford to pay for adults. The absence of regulatory mechanism, coupled with weak law enforcement allow the phenomenon to flourish in many parts of the world. According to International Labour Organization (ILO.2002, 2000,) Three Hundred and Fifty Million children between the ages of 15 to 17 years are exported for

economically active Jobs. By implication more than 10 percent of the world 2.2 Billion children are engaged in child labour. They are mostly found in agricultural farms working with chemicals and machineries that are hazardous to their health and physical development. About 10 Million children are trapped in domestic slavery, while some are trafficked for prostitution and armed conflict.

Asia has been noted for the largest number of child workers between the ages of 5-14 years. In African continent, sub-saharan Africa has the highest proportion of child labourers. ILO (2002) further stressed that about 171 Million of children work in hazardous conditions. About 8.4 million are involved in the worst form of labour. In the breakdown, trafficking has 1.2 Million, armed conflict, 0.3 Million, prostitution and pornography, 1.8 Million and illicit activities has 0.6 Million. The same report confirmed that in sub-Saharan Africa there are 200,000 children for trafficking, 210,000 in bonded labour, 120,000 on armed conflict and 50,000 in prostitution and pornography. (ILO, 1996, 2004)

Child Labour Export in Nigeria

The phenomenon of child Labour export in Nigeria has recently become a highly controversial issue largely due to its nature and the pattern. In the first place, child Labour export has tended to reflect both economic as well as cultural dimensions. For example, Nigeria has been depicted by the U.S. Department of trafficking in person report of 2008 as a source, transit and destination for women and children trafficked or exported from the rural areas to cities within Nigeria and across the borders of Nigeria. The women and girls are trafficked or exported for the purpose of forced Labour, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation. While the boys are trafficked between Nigeria and Gabon, Cameroon, Benin, Niger, the Gambia and Ghana for forced Labour or domestic servitude. The report stressed further that Nigerian women and girls are trafficked to North Africa, Saudi Arabia and Europe. In Europe, they are mostly taken to Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Norway and Greece. Edo state was categorically depicted as a primary source for women and girls trafficked to Italy for sexual exploitation. In 2004 Nigeria's National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in person (NAPTIP) reported that 46 percent of the Nigerian victims of transnational trafficking are children, majority of them being girls trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation. According to Ockiya (un) girls from Four Southern Nigerian States of Edo, Akwa-Ibom, Anambra and Delta told NAPTIP officials that, one Osagie arranged with their parents to take them to Libya to work as maids for \$1.272 US Dollars each and they would pay him in installment from their wages. It was however a deceitful promises to take them to Europe for prostitution. According the International Labour Organization (ILO) the incidence of child labour in Nigeria for persons aged 10-14 years is approximately 12 Million. A greater number of girls in southwest end up in prostitution while in the East; boys are mostly affected because they are trafficked into agricultural, domestic and apprenticeship Jobs. In Northern part they are exported to urban cities for begging on the street or from house to or office-to-office as a new dimension added to it.

Conclusion

It is not a crime to genuinely export labor for the purpose of earning a living and also remit some percentages back to one's country. However, the dimension of labor export in recent times, particularly in Africa, is worrisome. Human beings are being trafficked which is the worst form of labor export. The trend has assumed the form of slavery in the 21st century where people are recruited, accommodated and transported to Europe, Asia and some African countries for the purpose of sexual exploitation, servitude and sells of human organs. While Governments of Asian countries officially aid migration for economic benefit of their citizens, Africans are left to the mercy of traffickers moving through dangerous desert routes to North Africa for onward shipping to Europe.

This dangerous trade is orchestrated by insufficiency of basic needs. Adequate balance diet, shelter, clothing's and medical care eluded people, particularly Africa and Asia. It is in this regard that this paper made the following recommendations : Government should create enabling environment that would direct the energies of young men towards genuine economic ventures at their traditional homes. : not only that Government should empower anti human trafficking agencies to enable them effectively carry out their functions. and any human trafficker caught should be sentenced to life in prison

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