
Modern Day Slavery: Causes And Precautions

Perhaps among the many global issues we face today, modern slavery is undeniably one of the most vile and unfortunate problems in the world affecting millions. While many people do not realize the magnitude of this global problem, slavery affects individuals all over the world given that it exists in almost every country and takes on many different forms such as forced labor, domestic servitude, debt bondage, sex trafficking, child soldiers, child brides, and several other forms as well. The facts are horrendous, but in order to fight it, we need to educate ourselves on the matter.

When most people think of slavery, they think of pictures of the past with those being brought over in ships to work as domestic slaves on large plantations. The terrible truth is that there are more people captured into slavery today than at any other time in our history. In fact, according to an article titled 'One in 200 people is a slave. Why?' written by The Guardian, it reads, "today, an estimated 40.3 million people – more than three times the figure during the transatlantic slave trade – are living in some form of modern slavery, according to the latest figures published by the UN's International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation," (The Guardian, 2019). These numbers are astonishing. What's more is that the article goes on to explain that "women and girls comprise 71% of all modern slavery victims. Children make up 25% and account for 10 million of all the slaves worldwide," (The Guardian, 2019).

Slavery is an issue that dates back all the way to ancient times, however it has left lasting impacts. This is especially true for impoverished countries with those who are more vulnerable and susceptible to this horrible practice. These conditions exist in many industries such as factory work, farming, fishing, mining and in production of various goods. The cause of slavery arises out of greedy individuals who exploit people for their own selfish desired purposes. This can be for the use of production, free or cheap labor, or for the illegal sex trade. It is said that per 2017 reports the "forced labor annual profits amounted to \$150 billion," according to the International Labor Organization. Then there are state sanctioned forms of slavery such as the prison camps in North Korea where these citizens are punished through these means. Many North Koreans try to escape, and even if they do, they often face horrible treatment in China where they are abused there too leaving them in an unending vicious cycle. These individuals often have no recourse. North Korea is of the most prevalent in slavery followed by Eritrea, Central African Republic, Afghanistan, Mauritania, South Sudan, Cambodia, and Iran.

In the Sub-Saharan African regions, according to an article titled 'Democracy Dies in Darkness' by The Washington Post, "one in every 140 people are enslaved. This is because of the extreme poverty, high levels of corruption, and toleration of child "marriages" of young girls to adult men who pay their parents a "dowry," (Washington Post, 2013). They are also home to many natural valuable resources which exploits people through physical hard labor such as mining.

It is important not to forget that the US has a problem with slavery too, though not as prevalent as in other countries, it is still very alarming and an issue we need to take seriously. According to the Global Slavery Index, "The Global Slavery Index 2018 estimates that on any given day in

2016 there were 403,000 people living in conditions of modern slavery in the United States, a prevalence of 1.3 victims of modern slavery for every thousand in the country,” (Global Slavery Index). A huge problem in the United States tends to be the sexual trafficking and exploitation of minors. Some victims have faced arrest for crimes they committed while they were enslaved. This has made it difficult for many victims who live in extreme fear to come forward and seek the appropriate help they need in order to escape.

In order to end slavery, we must first educate ourselves on the matter, then we must make steps towards an effective plan of action. It will take a global effort with human rights groups assisting to advocate for these changes as well as cooperation from governments. This is difficult to do with such a worldwide issue so prevalent through the work of hidden crimes. The International Organization has laid out a plan to hopefully help to eradicate modern slavery by the year 2030. They specifically suggest taking actions such as prevention in the first place, international cooperation & partnership, promoting protection for the victims, strong adherence of criminal and labor justice through law enforcement, and a more balanced political discourse. “Neither piecemeal approaches nor treating the symptoms while ignoring the root causes will do. And even if we can — as we must — agree on the need for policy coherence and for cooperation at all levels to put those policies into practice, another watchword must guide us — urgency,” (International Labor Organization).

I have chosen modern day slavery for my research project because I believe that it is more prevalent than most people realize. By understanding the issue, we can learn how to look for signals that will help us identify possible victims around us which tend to be mostly women and children. We need to help be their advocates when they are clearly living in distress and cannot do so for themselves out of fear and worse treatment. Now days, in many bars and restaurant bathrooms, businesses are attempting to help victims by posting a note telling them how to receive help via a “secret” alert system, for example, a code word of some sort. This has been an excellent tool in helping others, but much more work needs to be done. I believe that this is an issue that we as parents need to teach our children about so that they can know how to get help. This is an important step in taking precautions and being vigilant. By doing this, we can help protect them as well as teach them to be aware of their surroundings.

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