

Globalisation and the Resulting Labour Exploitation in Business Operations and Supply Chains

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Abstract : The integration and expansion of the global economy have indeed brought about a number of positive changes such as access to new goods and services and the opportunity for individuals and businesses to migrate, communicate, and work globally. Nevertheless, the interconnectedness of world economies is not without its negative and shameful side effects. The subsequent overabundance of goods and services has resulted in heightened competition among firms and their supply chains, fuelling the exploitation of impoverished and vulnerable individuals who are unable to equally salvage from the benefits of the integrated economy. To maintain their position in a highly competitive arena, the operations of many businesses have adopted unethical and unscrupulous practices to maximise profit, often targeting the most marginalised members of society. Simultaneously, in a consumerist obsessed society preoccupied with the consumption and accumulation of material wealth, the demand for goods and services greatly contributes to the pressure on firms, thus bolstering the exploitation of labour. This paper aims to examine the impact of business operations on the practice of labour exploitation. It explores corrupt business practices that firms adopt and key labour exploitative conditions outlined by the International Labour Organization, particularly, paying workers low wages, forcing individuals to work in abusive and unsafe conditions, and considers the issue regarding individuals' consent to exploitative environments. Further, it considers the role of consumers in creating the high demand for goods and services, which in turn fosters the exploitation of labour. This paper illustrates that the practice of labour exploitation in the economy is a by-product of both global competitive business operations and heightened consumer consumption.

Keywords : globalisation, labour exploitation, modern slavery, sweatshops, unethical business practices

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