

On this Children's Day.....

In fact children of a lesser god are treated as labourers and to be more accurate as slaves in modern era. They are out on the busy roads, footpaths, streets and inside the unprotected atmosphere of houses where they remain busy in performing different domestic chores as well as bearing the shunning and abuses of their employers. Most of them are the victims of overpopulation in houses. The parents are in every effort to increase the number of their families and resultantly, these labouring children have to face the moon. **By Farooq Munawar**

The most pleasant period of childhood never vanishes away — it remains, it lasts if not in years then at least in memories. Many innocent wishes and desires swell up in a child's mind who stares at the world's facts with pleasure and awe equally.

In our part of the world, for last many decades our country is confronted with the grave issue of child labour. As we are poised to enter the new millennium with countless dreams, resolutions and a determination to rectify the evils that had had quite an adhesive power and marred the whole scenario, we have to pause for a moment and see how the most innocent of sections of our society has been in a

ticklish situation. In fact children of lesser god are treated as the labourers and to be more accurate as the slaves in modern era. They are out on the busy roads, footpaths, streets and inside the unprotected atmosphere of houses where they remain busy in performing different domestic chores as well as bearing the shunning and abuses of their employers. Most of them are the victims of overpopulation in houses. The parents are in every effort to increase the number of their families and resultantly, these labouring children have to face the moon.

The fate of such children can be well observed at the workshops and

shops where they are bound to bear the mental agony and physical torture, given to them by their employers who later on turn to be the masters of their past, present and future — the future which is though painful and dejecting yet is unavoidable.

According to careful survey launched by the Department of Social Work in Punjab University, by the end of the present century, the increase in the ratio of child labourers in 1990 would be doubled. Out of the whole children population in our country, 40 per cent would be the child labourers towards the end of the millennium. The figure although is shocking but invites serious consideration on the part of the parents, society and the policy makers.

Those selling different items in big

markets of the country are deprived of any fundamental rights. Their nutrition needs, shelter places and above all education becomes a dream — a dream that is likely to remain unfulfilled haunting their childhood as well as spoiling and ruining their youth and rest of the years in their lives. The society is engulfed into the demonic effects of child labour as this very class is bound to endure all that is unwanted and unethical, too.

In order to meet the needs of families, they have to feed them with their personal efforts; they work over times to fully cope with the poor circumstances. When the whole country observes holidays on Sundays or special occasions, they are busy striving against the odds as their loud

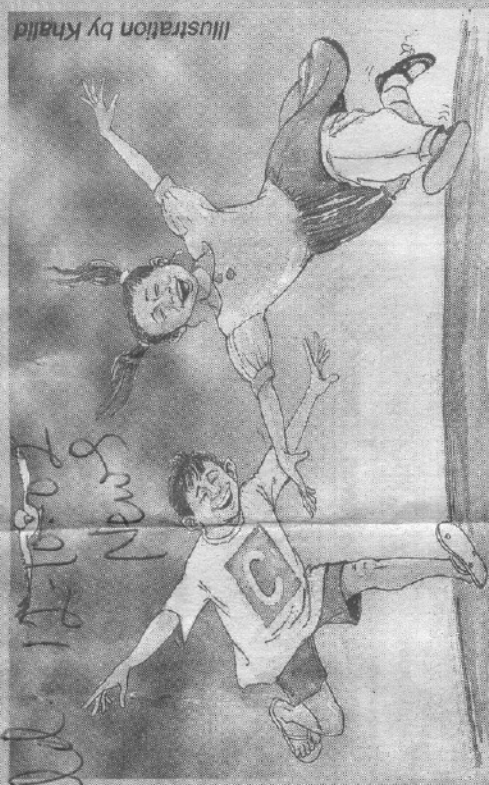


Illustration by Khalid

voices follow the customers at Sunday Bazaars and special shopping galas.

Consequences arise — some bitter and some pretty hard to digest as the one which stunned not only the society rather the whole world. A criminal and abductor lifted 100 children reportedly and their massacre forced the world to be attentive towards the general lot of the children once again.

The human rights activists had tried to do much for child labourers in Pakistan and many NGOs are all busy to achieve something for them yet the situation seems disastrous. No signs of improvement have been visible as the scale of such children is on enormous increase in different cities of the country. Their education which must be a part of every government agenda is still over looked. Even after labouring like and animals they do not find a single moment of relaxation — a moment that can either impart some words of knowledge and information to them or provide them a bit of enjoyment to sooth their weary and work-alcoholic minds.

Days are spent in making money for their needs and nights pass planning for the next day — the next labour, the next task and the next employment.

"No child labourers with his will and so are we. Dreams and desires are but the part of our lives but these remain here in our hearts for whole life," children at a motor workshop became the live picture of disappointment and depressions while stating about their wishes.

"I will work as much as to enable my younger brother to just study and not labour." A child on Universal Children Day reveals his determination on a private channel but the question arises as are we ready to enable him complying with his promises?

where she was seen
sanitation, or education; many
ditches in rural villages are
World, and its incidence has
children in its factories. The