

A young girl with dark, curly hair tied in small pigtails with blue ties. She is wearing a bright red turtleneck sweater. She is carrying a large, heavy bundle of dry sticks or reeds on her back, which is secured with a red cloth. She is looking over her shoulder towards the camera with a serious expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

The Stakeholder Mindset on Child Labor in the Indian Textile and Clothing Industry

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“Because of that what I have suffered and what I have seen in my life, I believe that no child should suffer like me. Every child should have a better childhood, every child should have good education and they should have a dream in their life” (Manan Interview, 2019, Appendix 17)

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Abstract

Child labor is one of the leading contemporary problems in today's globalized world, particularly in developing countries. This paper aims to examine this issue in the context of the Indian textile and clothing industry, as India is home to the largest number of child laborers in the world. Based on quantitative data consisting of six in-depth interviews of identified stakeholders significant to child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry and prior research on child labor, this paper investigates the foremost contributing factors. This is done through the use of a content and a descriptive analysis. The results of this paper indicate that it is not only previously acknowledged tangible factors that contribute child labor, but also intangible factors such as the mindset of the Indian populace and the Western consumer. Thus, this paper recommends further emphasis on consumer education and the creation of awareness.

1. Introduction

Millions of children, some as young as five-years-old, are kept from school in order to toil long hours throughout India in stone quarries, carpet factories, rice mills, etc. Many end-up with crippling injuries, respiratory disorders, and chronic pain. Left illiterate, they face challenges to find employment as adults, causing an endless cycle of slavery, illiteracy, and poverty (Freedom United, 2015, p. 1)

India is home to the largest number of child laborers in the world, with approximately 11.7 million children between the age of 5 to 14 years old working under hazardous occupations and processes as marginal and main workers, according to the Census of India Survey 2011 by the Government of India (Kumar, 2015). The 11.7 million comprises about 4.5 percent of the total children in the age group in India. Child labor in India can be found across almost all industrial sectors, but most commonly it appears within the agriculture (here within sugarcane, coffee and cocoa industries) and the textile and clothing sectors (Moulds, 2015). According to a report by Save the Children, a nongovernmental organization operating in India with the purpose of eradicating child labor, is the textile and clothing industry one of the most rapidly growing unorganized workforces in India (Kumar, 2015). Furthermore, within the textile and clothing industry, child labor is primarily utilized in two broad categories; embroidery and embellishment, and finishing. These categories are

both types of labor within the industry which require low-skill and nimble fingers. Children can, to a lesser extent, also be found throughout the textile supply chain in areas, such as yarn and spinning mills and the ‘cut-make-trim’ stage of the production (Moulds, 2015)

The Government of India has taken widespread legislative and policy steps in order to protect children from the harmful repercussions of child labor. These legislations and policies include the Child Labour Protection and Regulation Act, the Factory Acts and the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, the Constitution of India entitles every child the right to protection and development, stating;

The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that the citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength; that the children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that the childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment (The Constitution of India, Article 39, Subsection e & f).

However, despite these initiatives and steps taken by the government, which date back to the Factory act of 1881, child labor in India continuous to pose challenges for the Indian children as to realize their right to protection and development. Thus, millions of children are compelled to drop-out of the education system at an early age and therefore grow up to join the unskilled workforce. According to the Indian Minster of Women and Child Development this is primarily due to, “economic constrains and lack of access to quality education” (Kumar, 2015), Foreword).

As illustrated above, child labor remains a large challenge in the Indian textile and clothing industry, despite extensive legislation on the subject for more than a century. Therefore, this paper will aim to identify the causation of why the challenge still persists in Indian society today. To that extent, the following research question and sub-questions have been established;

In lieu of India’s extensive legislation on child labor, why is child labor still present in the Indian textile and clothing industry today?

Sub-questions:

1. How does the mindset of relevant stakeholders affect child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry?
2. To what extent has the Indian Government had an impact on child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry?

In order to answer the research question, this paper will examine and analyze child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry and how the mindset of important stakeholders play a role in its existence. Thus, four in-depth interviews have been conducted with various stakeholders, such as brands, NGOs, manufactures operating in India. Furthermore, two interviews with victims of child labor in India have been conducted to gain a clearer understanding of the realities of child labor and its effects on the individual.

The following chapter (2), will include a review of relevant literature and establish a theoretical framework for the research of this paper. In chapter 3 will the methodological approaches utilized in this research will be presented, consisting of the chosen research philosophy, data collection methods and analysis procedures. Chapter 4 will consist of the data presentation and data analysis and lastly, chapter 5 will be comprised of the discussion and conclusion.

2. Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

2.1 Child Labor

Child labor is a universal issue under increasing scrutiny with the exploitation of children, and while child labor is forbidden by law in most countries, it continues to be present in some of the poorest countries of the world (Aggarwal, 2008). The International Labour Organization (ILO), which is the only tripartite U.N. agency since 1919, holds that there is a distinction between ‘child work’ and ‘child labor’ and that children work in both hazardous and non-hazardous activities (ILO, 2004). The term ‘child work’ refers to children in employment, which is not necessarily viewed in a negative manner, given that children’s or adolescents participate in the kind of work that does not affect their health and personal or interfere with their schooling. Examples of these types of activities include, house chores, assisting family businesses and earning pocket money outside of

school hours (Ibid). On the contrary, the term ‘child labor’ refers to hateful and explorative work and is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity while being harmful to their physical and mental development (ILO, 2004). While this distinction amongst these terms exist, some of the work that children are exposed to are difficult and demanding and others are hazardous and even morally reprehensible. Thus, this thesis will follow the definition of child labor from the ILO, stating that child labor:

Refers to work that:

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
- interferes with their schooling by:
 - depriving them to leave school prematurely; or
 - requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work” (ILO, 2004, p. 10).

The newest numbers and prognosis estimate that a total of 152 million children are involved in child labor globally with the distribution of 88 million boys and 64 million girls. These numbers account for almost one in ten of all children worldwide, where nearly half of all those in child labor can be found in hazardous work that directly endangers their health and safety and hinder their rights to education (ILO, 2014). ILO furthermore holds that, the largest share of those in child labor and involved with hazardous work, are the children between the age of five to fourteen years-old. Given that there are 24 million more boys than girls in hazardous work, the gender gap has prevailed to increase with the factor of age (Ibid).

The exploitation and employment of child labor are predominantly due to the cheap labor and obedient nature of the children. The factors that contribute to child labor primarily involves the poverty and illiteracy of the children’s family and social and economic circumstances. Therefore, the children are often forced into child labor due to a family indebtedness. Moreover, these children are most often forced to drop out of school or not attend at all and can easily be drawn into work by being more vulnerable and exposed to exploitation (UNICEF, 2019). In its most extreme forms, child labor involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illness and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities often at a very early age (Ibid). Given that child labor is not standardized, it takes several forms and whether or not

particular forms of ‘work’ can be referred to as child labor therefore solely depends on the child’s age and sex, the type and hours of work performed and if they work independently or with families (ILO, 2004). Due to this complex nature of child labor, there is no one single strategy that can be used to eliminate this worldwide issue (Ibid).

Nonetheless, UNICEF holds that child labor have changed over the recent years. This is due to the enforcement of legislation of governments and governance mechanisms, awareness amongst buyers about child exploitation and more international pressure. However, due to this, child labor has become more invisible because the location of the labor has shifted and changed from the more formal setting of factories, to business owners’ homes, furthermore, known as the home-based and the informal sector (UNICEF, 2019). The home-based and informal sector has increased with child labor due to their work not being “official” given that there is no government employment agency or tax authority that know that children are working because they are not officially employed. The children working in the informal sector furthermore suffers under no job security, no payment receive if they get injured or become ill and no protection if they are mistreated by their employer. Hence, many children work even though their country’s child labors laws prohibit them from doing so (ILO, 2004). Furthermore, according to most sources the situation is improving. The ILO estimates suggest child labor declined by 30% between 2000 and 2012. However, 11% of the world’s children are in situations which deprive them of their right to go to school without interference from labor responsibilities (Moulds, 2015).

Effects of Child Labor

Child labor is not a new phenomenon and is well known to cause harm and endanger children whom have been working for decades. According to several studies, child labor has been associated with various physical and mental health issues. While child labor is most often interlinked with maternal illiteracy and poverty, children who work are more susceptible to malnutrition, which expose them to various diseases (Ibrahim, Abdalla, Jafer, Abdelgadir, Vries, 2018). The most common diseases and illnesses found with these children include watery eyes, musculoskeletal pain, HIV infection, systematic symptoms, infectious diseases, tuberculosis and eyestrain, chronic cough and diarrhea and furthermore major injuries (permanent loss of an organ, hearing loss, bone fractures, permanent disability) (Ibid). Moreover, the studies showed that these children are associated with higher prevalence of mental and/or behavioral disorders and abuse. Child labor

subjects' children to abuse, whether verbally, physically or sexually which ultimately results in psychological disturbances and behavioral disorders. Moreover, peers and colleagues at work can affect the behavior of children on psychological health can be long lasting and devastating to the future of children involved. Long working hours have been associated with poorer physical outcomes. It was also reported that the likelihood of being sexually abused increased with increasing working hours. This reflects a failure of policies not only to eliminate child labor, but also to make of safer. Although there is a decline in the number of working children, the quality of life of those still engaged in child labor seems to remain low (Ibid).

Conventions towards Child Labor

In 1919, the ILO was created with the eradication of child labor as one of its fundamental objectives. The ILO spawned two conventions on child labor, namely, the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and The Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Given that these two conventions are fundamental, they are furthermore binding upon countries that are members of the ILO, regardless of ratification (ILO, 2004).

The Minimum Age Convention (No. 138), was created with the solely aim to pursue total abolition of child labor worldwide. The convention was developed to regulate child labor by implementing a minimum age for admission to employment or work to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of children (Ibid). The Convention of Worst Forms of Child Labor (No. 182), recognized for the first time in 1999, the need for an international legal instrument to protect children from being used to commit crime and to make it clear that this is a form of exploitation and abuse (ILO, 2004). The aim of the convention is for member countries to implement effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor as a matter of urgency. The convention furthermore requires immediate and comprehensive action to remove the children involved from all such work and to provide rehabilitation and integration. For this convention, the term child applies to all persons under eighteen. The convention holds hereof: "All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labor, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict" (ILO, 2004, p. 31). Besides the ILO, the United Nations has also taken action towards various issues confronting humanity, by emphasizing on the eradication of child labor.

In 1989, the United Nations made a Convention special for children namely, the Convention for the Rights of the Child. The Convention was established to bind the governments to take the necessary steps to ratify it (Hammarberg, 1990) The United Nations Convention is furthermore the most comprehensive human rights treaty and legal instrument for the promotion and protecting of children rights. According to the Convention, a child is someone below the age of eighteen unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. Under the provisions of this Convention states, parties are legally obliged to fulfil the rights of every child. The Convention is based on four core principles: non-discrimination, best interest of the child, the right to life, survival and development and respect for the views of children (Ibid).

2.2 The Textile and Clothing Industry

According to the European Commission, the Textile and Clothing industry is a diverse and heterogeneous industry covering a large range of activities from the transformation of fibers to yarns and fabrics and from these into clothing, which may be either fashion or non-fashion clothes (European Commission Enterprise and Industry, 2012). The textile and clothing sectors are closely related both technically and in terms of trade policy and due to the main fact that textiles are the major input to clothing. Thus, creating a vertical linkage between the two (Ibid).

The estimated number of people working within this industry are difficult to determine, due to the large number of small firms and subcontractors being active in the areas where boundaries are drawn by the sector (Allwood, Laursen, Rodriguez & Bocken, 2006). According to statistics made by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, approximately 26.5 million people are directly working within textile and clothing industry worldwide (ILO 2004). The 26.5 million are furthermore divided by 13.5 million in textile and the remaining 13 million in clothing and only constitute the number of people employed in manufacturing and not retail or other supporting sectors (Ibid). The significance of this industry is dominated by the developing countries, particularly in Asia and especially China. The developing countries account for half of the world's textile export and almost three-quarter of the worlds clothing export. Due to the size of the industry and the historical dependence of clothing manufacture of cheap labor the industry is subject to

intense political interest and has been significantly sharpened by international trading agreements (Allwood, Laursen, Rodriguez & Bocken, 2006).

The Multifibre Agreement was established in 1995 and had an enormous impact in the developing countries. When the Multifibre Agreement phased out in 2005, the shift towards more flexible production and lower prices was accelerated in the textile and clothing industry (ILO, 2006). The Multifibre agreement provided a framework under which developed countries imposed quotas on exports of textiles and clothing from developing countries. These quotas were applied on a bilateral basis were product specific as defined by fiber and function. This furthermore led to discrimination not only against specific fibers and products but also amongst the exporting countries (Kar, 2015). The end of the quota system that had governed trade since 1974 exposed the industries to global competition, and to greater rivalry for foreign investment and employment generation opportunities among production countries. The clothing industry was impacted most directly, with less dramatic change in textiles production because it is less prone to quick shifts in production locations. Industrial textiles production is capital intensive, and production and handling processes require access to large amounts of energy and natural resources, such as water, whereas textiles generally requires more skilled workforce. Advances in the technology and materials used for clothing production have undoubtedly provided more comfortable, cheaper and attractive items to a larger proportion of the population (Ibid).

According to Breward (1995), “The twentieth century has repeatedly been characterized by cultural, social, design and art historians as the age of ‘mass’” (Breward, 1995 p. 182). He furthermore argues that mass-production and mass-consumption have both been identified as characteristics of the western society since the 1990s, and can be viewed from a perspective of fashion history that claims to have been made that the specific nature of a mass society has been unavoidably, imprinted upon its clothing and its attitudes top dress and identity. In the 1990s the textile and clothing industry started expanding their product range, with the combination of more fashionable designs, the development of distinct brands and lower production costs overseas which proved to be a profitable formula. The strong competition pushed retailers to consolidate, which enhanced buying companies negotiating power. Clothing brands and retailers began to move production offshore and to outsource manufacturing in search of low-cost labor and production opportunities. Today, competition between brands and retailers is sharper than ever, and most clothing companies design

and market their products in developed countries and subcontract production to manufactures in developing countries. The number of collections per years has increased significantly in the past 25 years, with some fashion brands offering up to 20 collections each year (ILO, 2004).

In 2000, the worlds consumers were estimated to spent around US\$1 trillion on clothing divided roughly by one-third in the western Europe, one-third in North America and one-quarter in Asia. Seven per cent of total world exports are within the textile and clothing industry (Kar, 2015). Today's global economy, and specifically the textile and clothing industry is characterized by geographically dispersed production and rapid market driven changes. In the modern society, many companies and large retailers in the industrialized economies have moved their production offshore in search of low-cost advantage, which can be seen as the key to satisfy consumer's increasing demand for affordable fashion (Azuma & Fernie, 2003). The globalization process of fashionable textile and clothing has furthermore given consumers easier access to clothes at low prices with modern and stylish images. The changing dynamics of the so-called "fashion industry" has therefore increased the number of fashionable seasons and structural characteristics in the supply chain. This has forced many retailers to strive for more flexibility in design, speed to market and key strategies towards maintaining a profitable position in the constantly demanding industry. In addition to speed to market and design, marketing and capital investment have furthermore been identified as the driving forces of competitiveness in the textile and clothing industry (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010). Thus, a combination of globalizations and fast changing dynamics has led to the concept known today as fast fashion.

Fast and Slow Fashion

Fast fashion has emerged as a global tendency, with brands such as H&M, Zara and Forever 21 dynamically entering international markets and achieving success in the global marketplace by embracing the philosophy of "fast fashion" retailing (Jung & Jin, 2016). The success has furthermore been sparked by the firm's capabilities to quickly respond to fast-changing fashion trends with enhanced product design capabilities to both design "hot" products that captures the latest consumer trends and exploit minimal production lead times to match supply with uncertain demand, while maintaining low prices (Ibid).

The fast fashion system consists of two combined and main components: 1) short production and distribution lead times, enabling a close matching of supply with uncertain demand (Also referred to as quick response techniques) and 2) highly fashionable (“trendy”) product design (referred to as enhanced design techniques). Nonetheless, due to this system, fast fashion makes people buy multiple clothing items at a time and then quickly discard them not long after to follow the newest trend and thus shortening the lifespan of clothes deliberately which in the end results in increasing fashion waste and resource consumption (Jung & Jin, 2016).

In contrast to fast fashion, the concept of slow fashion has spawned amongst consumers over the years, emphasizing on quality through a slower production and consumption cycle. The term *slow fashion* was first introduced by Fletcher (2008), with in the broad perspective of sustainability by including a slow pace for the fashion cycle (Fletcher, 2008; Jung & Jin, 2016;). As indicated by the terminology, slow fashion can be viewed as an alternative to socially and environmentally unsustainable practices, which is the result of the practice performed in the fast fashion system. He argues that, by slowing down the production cycle of the clothes, this will enable the environment and people and further improve the quality of life for all workers, guaranteeing their fundamental rights by removing the time pressure of the cycle. This will provide the workers with more time on each item and thus improve the quality of the product produced (Ibid).

Furthermore, when slowing down the production cycle and producing a smaller quantity of high-quality products, the prices of slow fashion become relatively higher than the fast fashion commodities produced by mass production systems. By requiring a higher price per item, consumers perceive more value for the money and furthermore encourage them to keep the item longer rather than discarding it shortly after the purchase (Fletcher, 2008; Jung & Jin, 2016;). By employing this strategy, a shift in consumer mindset from quantity to quality purchasing will reduce resource consumption levels and contribute to being ethical (Ibid).

Ethical Fashion

Ethical fashion is mostly referred to as “fashion with a conscience” as it concerns labor conditions and the environment. This has furthermore become a means by which brands and companies fulfill their social and environmental duty and responsibilities while matching the increasing desire from consumers in terms of sustainability (Shen, Wang, Lo, Shum, 2012). The term ethical fashion is

furthermore, a new approach in the market and refers to a growing number of ethical companies that strive to attract young mainstream consumers by producing fashionable clothes. According to Joergens (2006) ethical fashion can be defined as: “fashionable clothes that incorporate fair trade principles with sweatshop-free labor conditions while not harming the environment or workers by using biodegradable and organic cotton” (2006, p. 361). He furthermore holds that the principle of ethical fashion is to source garments ethically with providing good working conditions to workers and to provide a sustainable business model in the clothes’ country or origin. Furthermore, organic material is used to minimally impact the environment (Ibid). This is due to the increasingly demand and concern about the social consequences from buyers, in accordance to their purchases, especially in relation to the human rights violation in sweatshops (Shen, Wang, Lo, & Shum, 2012). Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the material content of the apparel they buy. Some are even investigating material suppliers, demanding that the fashion supply chain be transparent and ethical (Ibid).

2.3 Monitoring and Compliance

To a further and further extent, organizations are facing the challenge of their organizational transactions growing in complexity and volume and thus becoming difficult to oversee in today’s highly regulated business environments (Marques, Santos & Santos, 2012). Therefore, controlling and monitoring mechanisms are needed to larger extent, in order to evaluate and validate transactions and business activities to meet regulations and controls. According to Rui Pedro Marques, Henrique Santos and Carlos Santos, risk management scholars, the issue with auditing is that it typically is done after the transaction or business activity, “the traditional audit process occurs mostly after the completion of transactions, since it is not feasible to audit them in time. Thereby it makes it possible to inhibit the risk associated to their execution” (Marques, Santos & Santos, 2012, p.191). Therefore, organizations must be prepared for any number of risks associated to their industries by implementing compliance systems (continuous assurance) designed in accordance with applicable regulatory and legislative frameworks.

Continuous assurance has been gaining traction within the organizational context as it is the application of emerging information technologies to standard systems of auditing. Thus, in this context continuous can be defined as effective, considering and consistent with each organizational

process and transaction. These developing aspects have, “propelled to create a new awareness of corporate governance and the growing importance of monitoring and controlling the various organizational transactions” (Marques, Santos & Santos, 2012, p. 191). Consequently, it becomes essential for organizations, such as firms, to find solution that allow organizations to evaluate, monitor and validates their business activities independently and continuously. Thereby, ensuring that the organization does not become involved situations with high levels of risk. An example of such auditing solutions is compliance programs (Loughman & Sibery, 2012). According to Lanny Breuer, previous Assistant Attorney General, “an effective compliance and ethics program is one that prevents fraud and corruption in the first place and, when it can’t, has in place clear policies to quickly detect, fix and report the violations” (Loughman & Sibery, 2012, p.129).

Monitoring enables a company to minimize risk by understanding the effectiveness of its compliance program, as well as indicating where future efforts should be focused. Accordingly, it can be difficult to, “determine what to measure, how to do it, and how to report the results in a way that stimulates action rather than fosters bureaucracy” (Loughman & Sibery, 2012, 129). Furthermore, compliance programs which are not audited and monitored are generally less effective than those with proper monitoring and validating systems in place. Therefore, in order to ensure effectiveness and reduce risk, an organization’s corporate compliance program should include a monitoring program. This can be done through risk assessment which allows an organization to, “rank it business units and locations by relative risk and assists in planning adequate audit coverage of those locations over a defined time period” (Loughman & Sibery, 2012, p. 130). For example, such risk assessment can be conducted by requiring each site or business unit to complete questionnaires which are self-assessing. Such questionnaire would typically solicit information concerning business activities and transactions, volume of sales, compliance to government legislation and regulations.

Compliance programs are in general tailored to fit the structure, size, resources and particular risks where organizations operate. Typically, firms task their compliance departments with enforcing compliance programs and their auditing department with performing periodic audit of the programs (Loughman & Sibery, 2012). In summary, monitoring is essential in order to mitigate risk and ensure proper procedures are in place and enforced. Various elements of monitoring programs include;

developing a program, monitoring training, monitoring policies and procedures, conducting audits, and lastly, reporting the results of audits.

Within the textile and clothing industry recent accounts of deplorable working conditions and the proliferation of 'sweatshops' have caused industrialized and developing countries to question the effectiveness of existing governance and compliance over labor practices (O'Rourke, 2003). Accordingly, stakeholders of labor practices, such as nongovernmental organizations, unions, consumers, brands and even some suppliers are criticizing, "current systems of labor standards and enforcement for their opaque processes, limited scope and coverage, weak capacities of regulations, limited leverage over recalcitrant firms, and general ineffectiveness" (O'Rourke, 2003, p.1). In recent years, these critiques have gained further traction in the face of new challenges of regulating the mobile supply chains of global firms. Therefore, many argue that, "traditional labor regulations and the government-implemented monitoring and enforcement systems on which they depend appear simply to be outpaced by changes in the global economy" (O'Rourke, 2003, p.1).

In response to this critique of the limitations of labor regulation, a number of strategies have emerged. They range from developing international systems of labor regulation to efforts to strengthen the capacity of local labor inspectorates. Specifically, one strategy which has gained momentum in recent years is the involvement of nongovernmental systems in the development and implementation of labor regulation. This nongovernmental regulatory strategy seeks to, "function along the lines of outsourced production: regulating firms across their supply chains through 'voluntary' standards, internal and external monitoring systems, and new sanctions and incentives" (O'Rourke, 2003, p. 2). These nongovernmental systems of labor regulation are expanding at a rapid pace across regulatory arenas and industries. However, it must be noted that very little research has been done on impact and implications of these systems.

Within the textile and clothing industry, brands and retailers have found themselves with the challenge of ensuring that merchandise is produced under equitable conditions which follow local and international legislation and regulations, whether it be local suppliers or distant markets outside the corporate umbrella. This is in part due to the increased governmental and consumer concern over the use child and 'sweatshop' labor in the production of goods (Emmelhainz & Adams, 2006). Thus, the industry and brands in particular have responded with initiatives such as the Apparel

Industry Partnership Agreement, Supplier Legal Compliance principles, as well as including such compliance in the codes of conduct (Ibid). However, the effect of such initiatives has been limited, although “codes and monitoring have led to some improvements in the payment of required wages and benefits, the reduction of child labor and improvement in health and safety protections” (Esbenshade, 2012, p. 542).

The textile and clothing industry is one of the most globalized industries in the world, reports estimate that there are around 200,000-300,000 factories in the export apparel sector, and if small workshops are included the estimate could be closer to a million (Esbenshade, 2012). These factories are spread across every continent, with the highest concentrations in Asia, specifically China and India. Brands typically contract out all their production to these networks of factories, with very few exceptions (Bonacich & Appelbaum, 2000). Furthermore, contract terms are short and very rarely do brands account for the majority of production in any given factory, consequently, “factory owners are catering to a variety of clients at once, with little to no assurance that any improvements they make within the factory will lead to a long-term commitment by the brand” (Esbenshade, 2012, p. 542). Brands set unreasonable prices and schedules which forces suppliers into non-compliance with local regulation and legislation. Thereby, by demanding quick turn-around, brands are in part responsible for low wages and sporadic hours and employment. According to Esbenshade, “codes and monitoring have not changed the pricing or sourcing structure of the industry because, while they were adopted in this context, they were not designed to alter these arrangements” (Esbenshade, 2012, p. 543).

Thus, it can be questioned whether these compliance codes and monitoring program are the correct way of tackling the issue. Furthermore, these codes allow brands to set standards for employment in which they are not party. According to Esbenshade, deregulation created by globalization has caused a void in labor rights enforcement, which brands are attempting to fill with independent monitoring attempts. However, these independent and commercial monitoring programs are often found to be inefficient,

Grave deficiencies were noted in the realm of commercial monitoring, by far the most common form, and even independent monitoring was found to have serious limitations in capacity and an inability to address the crux of the problem: the structure of the industry (Esbenshade, 2012, p. 545).

2.4 Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior can be defined as, “the behavior that consumers display in searching for, [acquiring], using, evaluating, and disposing of products, services, and ideas which they expect will satisfy their needs” (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1987, p. 6). The study of consumer behavior is an interdisciplinary one as it is not only economic behavior but also social behavior, as well as, “a means to an end, a way of reaching goals” (Henry, 1991, p. 1). Consumer behavior draws upon the foundations of four major theoretical areas; psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics (Robertson, 1970). Psychology, the study of individual behavior, is relevant to consumer behavior as it is essentially individual behavior. Therefore, “psychological concepts and theories of motivation, personality, perception, learning, cognition, attitude are major components in understanding the consumption needs of individuals” (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1987, p. 66).

Another essential area of study of consumer behavior is sociology which is the study of group behavior (Robertson, 1970). Sociology is significant as it provides concepts and theories of group dynamics, family structure, the role of symbols, group membership and social class which all influence consumer behavior (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1987). Anthropology, the study of groups of human beings and their behavior and productions, provides concepts of culture, acculturation, assimilation, innovation, diffusion, adaption that are also relevant for consumer behavior (LeClair & Schneider, 1968). Lastly, economics which is the study of “how a society chooses to employ scarce resource” (Robertson, 1970, p. 1). Economics are applicable to consumer behavior as it deals with the relationship between income and expenditure.

The decision to consume can be categorized into two major categories which affect an individual’s consumer behavior; external influences and internal influences (Henry, 1991). External influences are factors outside of the individual, which are either, “directed to or actively sought by the individual” (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1987, p. 635). An example of an external influence is marketing campaigns where the products itself, its price, its availability and/or distribution, and promotion is advertised. External influences can also come from informal sources such as friends, neighbors, ‘opinion leaders’ and the subculture in which the individual resides (Henry, 1991). In contrast, internal influences, are influences which arrive from within the individual. These influences are based on needs, “every individual has needs” (Henry 1991, p. 9). These needs can be driven by

motivation, “the driving force within individuals that impels them into action as a result of an unfulfilled need” (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1987, p. 67), perception, personality and attitude (Henry, 1991). Moreover, these needs can be stimulated through learning which is the process of how individuals gain the purchase and consumption knowledge and experience they apply to future behavior (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1987).

Ethical Consumer Behavior

In recent years, there has been a growth in concern for ethical issues, encompassing social and environmental concerns, among consumers globally (Shaw & Clarke, 1999). An example of this development of ethics in consumer behavior is the emergence of ‘green’ consumerism and ethical consumerism (Brown, 1992). Green consumerism focusses primarily on environmental issues, whereas ethical consumerism is concerned about areas such as child labor, animal issues, irresponsible selling, armaments and oppressive regimes (Shaw, Shiu & Clarke, 2003). Ethical consumer behavior is a challenging concept as, “ethical concerns are, for example, often ongoing and irresolvable. Arguably, substantially more effort is, therefore, required on the part of the consumer in decision making” (Shaw, Shiu & Clarke, 2003, p. 1). Scholars in ethical consumerism conjecture that ethical obligation and self-identity are two additional supporting factors to consumer behavior.

Ethical, or moral, obligation is, “an individual’s internalized ethical rules, which reflect their personal beliefs about right and wrong” (Shaw & Shiu, 2003, p. 5). As the importance placed on ethical concerns grows, consequently does the measure of reflectiveness on ethical obligation for the individual (Sparks & Frewer, 1995). Self-identity is relevant to ethical consumer behavior as, “ethical consumers may make ethical consumption choices because ethical issues have become an important part of their self-identity” (Shaw, Shiu & Clark, 2003, p. 3). Furthermore, ethical issues which are often interrelated emphasize the importance of examining self-identity to ethical obligation (Shaw & Clarke, 1999).

An area where ethical consumer behavior is most visible, is the fashion industry. In today’s world consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the material content of apparel they buy, “some are even investigating material suppliers, demand that the fashion supply chain be transparent and ethical” (Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum, 2012, p. 1). In the 1980s, with the increasing awareness of child labor, terrible labor standards and sweatshop labor employed by companies such as Gap, Levi and

Nike, the concept 'ethical fashion' emerged. Ethical fashion is driven by consumer concerns, causing corporation to become increasingly aware of the need to be environmentally friendly and socially conscious (Brown, 2010). The concept of ethical fashion can be defined as, "fashion clothing that is produced under fair trade principles in sweatshop-free labor conditions, with efforts made to reduce the environmental harmfulness of the process" (Joergens, 2006).

Additionally, ethical fashion is pushing brands and retailers to take action and become involved. For instance, some brands are creating initiatives such as using organic cotton or recycled synthetic material for reusable shopping bag. Global fashion chains such as H&M and MUJI have launched organic collections and fair-trade products (Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum, 2012). Another excellent example is, "international trading companies such as Li & Fung have established corporate sustainability strategies for their supply chain to responsibly manage the consumption of the plant's resources" (Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum, 2012, p. 2). The examples mentioned above illustrate how consumers' concerns, knowledge of, beliefs about and encouragement of ethical issues can effectively improve their reception of ethical fashion and furthermore shape their purchase behavior (Hill, 1981).

According to a study by Paulins and Hillery (2009), knowledge about ethical fashion assists individuals to be responsible and make positive contributions to society. In addition, the study illustrates that consumers' knowledge about products and their impact is a major factor that contributes to ethical consumerism, "the more consumers understand the ethical dimension of products, the more likely they are to purchase those products" (Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum, 2012, p. 4). As illustrated above, knowledge is one of the main factors contributing to ethical consumerism and in this case ethical fashion, "a lack of knowledge of ethical fashion practices prevents consumers from translating their concerns into actual purchase" (Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum, 2012, p. 6). Therefore, corporate social responsibility and ethical consumerism plays a significant role in achieving a sustainable fashion industry.

Consumer Education

To a larger and larger extent, consumer education is needed in society due to significant changes in markets and services, "the number of products and public and commercial services on offer has multiplied enormously, while increased globalization has made it even more difficult to obtain a

general overview of the economy” (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2009, p. 19). Furthermore, the level of consumer competences and skill fluctuates greatly and is generally determined by age, gender, location and social background (Rajagopal, 2017). The main objective of consumer education is to teach individuals to act as aware and moral citizens in society, but consumer education should also provide the skills and tools to have an influence (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2009).

There are six major challenges to consumer education; global threats to living beings, dependency on the world economy, choice overload caused by affluence, increasing inequality, media complexity, and new understanding of the human mind. This paper will focus on the challenge of increasing inequality (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2009). Consumer education’s response to the challenge of increasing inequality, such as poverty, gender gap, and child labor, is to teach, “ethical motivation and awareness, the skill to diagnose decision-making situations and make ethical decisions” (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2009, p. 21). Thus, as illustrated with ethical fashion, consumers, once informed, are capable to a much larger extent to make ethical buying choices which in turn effects the behavior of brands and retailers.

2.5 Corporate Social Responsibility

To a larger and larger extent, business organizations are obligated to contribute to human rights, poverty alleviation and environmental protection (Schuster, Lund-Thomsen, Kazmi, 2016). This trend is in part due to globalization; cross-border trade, off-shoring, outsourcing, global capital flows, which has transformed the role that business organizations play in society (Mayer and Gereffi, 2010). In order for business organizations to fulfill these obligations, the term corporate social responsibility (CSR) has evolved. CSR is an ambiguous term as there is no clear-cut definition and therefore many argue that CSR has been proliferating without a systematic conceptual framework (Carroll, 1999). This paper will utilize Archie B. Carroll’s, a prominent CSR scholar, definition of CSR,

CSR involves the conduct of a business so that it is economically profitable, law abiding, ethical and socially supportive. To be socially responsible... then means that profitability and obedience to the law are foremost conditions to discussing the firm’s ethics and the extent to

which it supports the society in which it exists with contributions of money, time and talent. Thus, CSR is composed of four parts: economic, legal, ethical and voluntary or philanthropic (Carroll, 1983, p. 604).

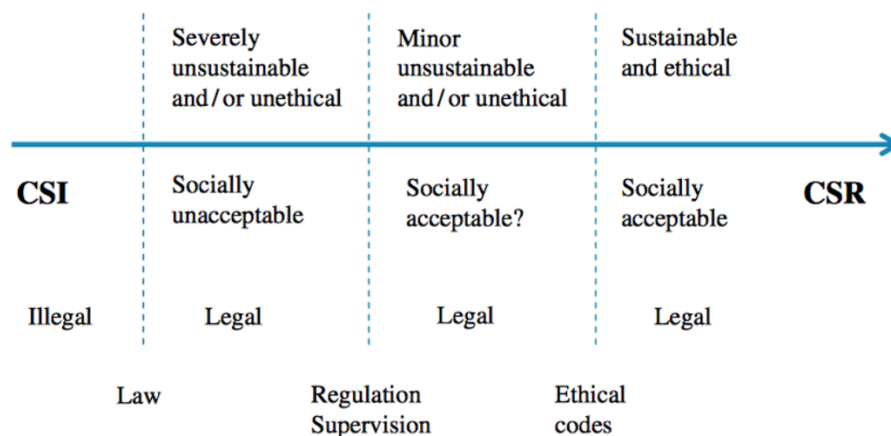
As illustrated above, Carroll conceptualizes that CSR is composed of four multilayered parts; economic, legal, ethical and voluntary or philanthropic. In 1991, Carroll present this concept of the CSR layers by using a pyramid figured model (Sato, 2013). The pyramid is built upon the four layers, first economic responsibility at the base then legal responsibility, ethical responsibility and lastly philanthropic responsibility. Economic responsibility, the base of the period, is an obliged responsibility as it is the responsibility of a business to gain economic profit for its stakeholders (Freeman, 2007). Furthermore, without an economic profit, corporations are not able to sustain and thereby the remaining responsibilities would not develop.



- A. B. Carroll's pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility

The second responsibility, legal responsibility, is also an obliged responsibility, as a firm has legal obligation to follow society's codification of laws, morals and norms (Carroll, 1991). Ethical responsibility, the third level, is also an obliged responsibility, "to do what is right, just, and fair" (Sato, 2013, p. 92). Firms are not only expected to oblige their legal responsibilities, but also the expectations and obligations of society and the rules which it sets (Carroll, 1991). Lastly, philanthropic responsibility is not required by society, but rather, desired. Examples of philanthropic responsibility include, "donating to local schools, supporting area and culture, and building a recreational center for the employees' wellbeing" (Sato, 2013, p. 92).

In contrast to CSR is corporate social irresponsibility (CSI). The concept of CSI developed due to the ambiguity of CSR, “Social responsibility is difficult to define. What should a manager do? It is easier to look at the problem in terms of what he should not do – i.e., at social irresponsibility” (Armstrong 1977, p. 185). Armstrong defines CSI as, “where great harm is caused to the system, and where almost all unbiased observers are in agreement that an irresponsible act has occurred” (Armstrong, 1977, p.185). This definition has been further elaborated by Ralph Tench, William Sun and Brian Jones in their book, “Corporate Social Irresponsibility”. They identify two categories of business behaviors as CSI. The first being illegal activities and the second being legal behaviors that are severely unsustainable and/or unethical and thereby entirely socially unacceptable. What is understood by legal but severely unsustainable and/or unethical are activities that clearly can be defined as incorrect by collective agreements in society by forces such as supervision (professional bodies, governmental agencies, etc.), regulation (compulsory and self-regulatory) and monitoring (media, whistle-blowing, pressure groups, interest groups, etc.) (Tench, Sun, Jones, 2012). As Tench, Sun and Jones state, “By recognizing that there are some types of business activity that could be legal, yet fail to the left of satisfying Friedman’s ‘ethical custom’ or Carroll’s ‘ethical responsibilities’, the equivocal zone and the range of debate is beneficially narrowed” (Tench, Sun, Jones, 2012).



- The CSI and CSR Continuum by Timothy S. Clark and Kristen N. Grantham

Tench, Sun and Jones utilize Timothy S. Clark and Kristen N. Grantham's model on the CSI and CSR continuum, as illustrated above, to examine the relationship between CSI and CSR. The CSI and CSR continuum theorizes that CSI, which they conjecture has a finite end, stands at one extreme of the spectrum and CSR, which is infinity scalable, at the other. By having the concept of CSI as a frame of reference CSR becomes a clearer concept, "what is CSR is, to the minimum extent, what is not CSI" (Tench, Sun, Jones, 2012, p. 2). Thus, with the assistance of the CSI and CSR continuum, Tench, Sun and Jones, conceptualize CSI, not only by what CSR is not, but also as Armstrong states,

A socially irresponsible act is a decision to accept an alternative that is thought by the decision maker to be inferior to another alternative when the effects upon all parties are considered. Generally, this involves a gain by one party at the expense of the total system (Armstrong, 1977, p.1).

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as Global Goals, were first proposed at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The SDGs were meant to be a continuation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which ran from 2000 to 2015, and sought to, "encapsulate and promote global aspirations across a wide array of topic areas broadly associated with sustainable development" (French & Kotzé, 2018, p.1). The SDGs are, as defined by the International Institute for Sustainable Development, "the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global agenda, adopted by countries in 2015, with a vision of ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring that all people enjoy peace and prosperity" (IISD, 2019). The SDGs and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were adopted by countries in 2015 by world leaders and a historic UN Summit and on January 1st, 2016 the SGDS and Agenda 2030 were implemented (French & Kotzé, 2018).

The SDGs include 17 goals; No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Production and Consumption, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and lastly, Partnerships for the Goals (Ibid). This paper will focus solely on goal 8, target 7,

Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labor in all its forms (UN, 2015, SDG 8.7, Appendix 1 & 2).

Corporate Social Responsibility in India

In a country such as India, where one-third of the population is illiterate, two-thirds lack access to proper sanitation, and 400 million people still live on less than United States dollar (USD) 2 a day, the passage of the Companies Act should be hailed as a positive step forward in ensuring that business contributes to equitable and sustainable economic development (Ghulliani, 2013, p. 1)

India is the first country in the world to make corporate social responsibility mandatory through legislation (Khandelwal & Bakshi, 2014). In 2009, in order to promote CSR activities in India, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs in India launched the CSR Voluntary Guidelines (Mitra & Schmidpeter, 2017). The Guidelines are built upon the principal of fairness, as “fairness has been a deeply ingrained principle of Indian social order for the millennium” (Mitra, Ganar & Mukherjee, 2018, p. 2). The guidelines were in 2013 made mandatory through the Companies Act of 2013, which specified that companies of a certain size were to spend a compulsory 2% of their profits towards CSR activities (Mitra & Schmidpeter, 2017). Furthermore, the CSR mandate in the Companies Act of 2013 stipulates the formation and composition of a CSR Committee which shall consist of three or more directors, one of the directors being independent of the company (Khandelwal & Bakshi, 2014). The duties of the CSR Committee are to formulate and recommend CSR policy and expenditure to be incurred to the Board and to monitor the CSR of the company. Furthermore, the statute is binding for both foreign and Indian companies which fall within the mandate and only expenditure for CSR in India qualify for the spend (Mitra, Navan & Mukherjee, 2018).

The Companies Act of 2013 is a necessary initiative according to the Indian government as globalization has fuel indiscriminate exploitation on all fronts; social, economic, and environment or profit maximization (Mitra, Navan & Mukherjee, 2018). Thereby making it necessary for the

Government to provide a formal mandate for businesses to follow. As Mitra and Schmidpeter states,

This is for the good of both business and society since they are also inseparably intertwined with each other, even more so, in a country like India, where the pressure on resources such as water is extremely high and therefore no stakeholder should feel short-changed regarding the allocation of such resources (Mitra & Schmidpeter, 2017, p. 4).

2.6 Ecological Economics

Ecological economics first appeared in 1979, when René Passet in *L'Économie et le Vivant* illustrated the relationship between nature, human society and the human economy (Martinez-Alier & Muradian, 2015). The fundamental premise of ecological economics is that the economic system is embedded within a social system, which in turn is embedded within an ecological system (Cosme, Santos & O'Neil, 2017). Furthermore, ecological economics is a transdisciplinary field which bridges across not only economics and ecology, but also psychology, anthropology, archaeology, and history (Martinez-Alier & Muradian, 2015). According to Juan Martinez-Alier and Roldan Muradian the contrast between traditional economics and ecological economics lies in how the economy is perceived;

In ecological economics, the economy is seen as embedded in the ecosystem (or, more accurately, in the historically changing social perception of the ecosystem). The economy is also embedded in a structure of property rights on environmental resources and services, in a social distribution of power and income, in social structures of gender, social class or caste. Instead, in mainstream economics the economy is seen as a self-sufficient system where prices for consumer goods and services, and prices for the services of production factors, are formed (Martinez-Alier & Muradian, 2015, p. 3).

Additionally, ecological economics further emphasizes the pressure of population and the pressure of consumption and production on resources. Ecological economists believe that the increasing growth in consumption is putting an immense strain on the economy and particularly underdeveloped countries and therefore catch-up theories are becoming inefficient, “We need something else, both in the global North and South. We need something that goes beyond

economies centered on GDP growth” (Gerber & Raina, 2018, p. 354). Ecological economists focus on post-growth as a solution to the pressure on the economies of the global south rather than traditional development theories. Furthermore, ecological economists agree with the concept of post-development which argues that, “the practice and concept of ‘development’ fundamentally reflects capitalist western hegemony over the rest of the world and should be abandoned” (Gerber & Raina, 2018, p. 355; Escobar, 1995).

The Western mass consumption has reached new heights making current growth patterns in the Global South are ecologically, socially and financially unsustainable (Gerber & Raina, 2018). As Herman Daly, a prominent ecological economic scholar, states, “the starting point in development economic should be the ‘impossibility theorem’, namely that a Western-style high mass consumption economy for a world of 7.5 billion people is simply impossible” (Daly, 1991, p. 149). Furthermore, Daly argues;

It is absolutely a waste of time as well as morally backward to preach steady-state doctrines to underdeveloped countries before the overdeveloped countries have taken any measure to reduce [...] the growth of their per-capita resource consumption. [...] That does not mean, however, that the underdeveloped countries can be left out of consideration. For one thing, the underdeveloped countries are not ever going to develop [...] unless the overdeveloped countries moderate their demands on world resources and absorption capacities. [...] In addition, underdeveloped countries will have to revise their expectations downward regarding their own growth (Daly, 1991, p. 148).

2.7 Capitalism

Capitalism first emerged in the sixteenth century and since then capitalism has contributed to a rapid acceleration of living standards in the industrialized world (Bellanca, 2013). Furthermore, it is the dominant mode of production, distribution, and exchange in the world. Capitalism can be defined as, “a social system in which the economic surplus is taken by who retains the control of the economic organizations and the objective is profit maximization” (Castells, 2000, p. 2). There are three primary types of capitalism; the Anglo-American, continental European, and East Asian. The Anglo-American type emphasizes the role of markets and therefore tends to be particularly harsh in

terms of its consequences for human welfare. In contrast, the continental European type of capitalism emphasizes the welfare state as well as social democracy. Lastly, the East Asian model is based on state-led capitalism, which is exemplified by the form capitalism assumed by South Korea and Japan (Lippit, 2005).

The Anglo-American form of capitalism, found in the United States and to some extent in the United Kingdom, is the most well-known and widespread. It is the harshest form of capitalism due to its reliance on markets, and a common conviction that market prices have normative value. Thereby, supporters of the Anglo-American form of capitalism believe that, “if a person’s value in the labor market is insufficient to provide a living wage for himself (herself) and his (her) family, that is simply regarded as unfortunate, but not a cause for social action” (Lippit, 2005, p. 5). This perception is clearly illustrated by the minimum wage in the United States, which in 2004; “More than 28 million people [in the US], about a quarter of the workforce between the ages of 18 and 64, earn less than \$9.04 an hour, which translates into a full-time salary of \$18,800 a year –the income that marks the federal poverty line for a family of four” (Lippit, 2005, p. 6).

Thus, albeit many people have benefited greatly from the relatively unconstrained free market in the United States, there are clearly copious amounts of peoples who has failed to gain from the system. Thereby, illustrating that the impact of capitalism is not entirely beneficent, “as growing prosperity has been accompanied by various manifestations of acute social injustice and environmental degradation” (Lippit, 2005, Preface). For example, when individuals invest in homes or drive cars, they are unlikely to be focused on their individual contributions to global deforestation or warming. Furthermore, as Victor Lippit argues, “even if some enlightened individuals are conscious of these consequences of their behavior, the global trends will hardly be altered if they refrain from pursuing their personal ends” (Lippit, 2005, p. 2). Rather in such cases, common good ensuing from individuals’ pursuit of their own benefit will not materialize. Thereby, the capitalist system calls into question the future sustainability of the human habitat, which has been illustrated time and time again;

History is filled with instances in which the pursuit of individual benefit under the capitalist system has contributed to social injustice on a gargantuan scale. One need only consider the history of the slave trade, or the fact that Liverpool, the first great industrial city in England,

owed much of its prosperity in the eighteenth century to that trade and the building of ships for it (Lippit, 2005, p. 2).

In summary, the capitalist system has both negative and positive implications in today's society. Capitalism has made great improvement in living standards possible for a sizable, if minority, part of the global population, as well as holding the promise of the possibility for those who have not yet benefitted. In addition, capitalism also brings with it a plentitude of negative implications, such as inequality, social injustice, the crassness of commercial culture, as well as its environmental contradictions. However, as there is no viable alternative to capitalism, the focus should be to enhance its positive features and eradicating its more destructive and socially reprehensible ones (Lippit, 2005).

2.8 Race to the Bottom

As illustrated above, the increasing global demand and mass consumption is putting immense strain on the world economy, and particularly on that of developing countries. To a further extent, it is becoming impossible to meet the demands of the western world without having economic, legislative and societal costs. Globalization critics believe that this demand and immense pressure on less developed countries are a phenomenon of globalization. Furthermore, they argue that as less developed countries participate in competitive global markets their governments are forced to cater to both international and domestic investment interests by decreasing wages and benefits of its citizens, resulting in a race to the bottom (Rudra, 2008). The concept of the race to the bottom can be defined as,

A world increasingly free of restrictions on trade and capital flows allows investors to scour the globe in pursuit of the highest rate of returns. Nations that harbor public policies that raise production costs or inhibit sound macroeconomic fundamentals risk lower profit margins and capital flight. Fearing such reprisals, governments are constrained from initiating (or maintaining) policies that guarantee a higher quality of life for their citizens, such as safety nets, environmental standards, and acceptable labor costs and protections (Rudra, 2008, p. 2).

In addition, globalization critics believe that this race to the bottom will result in a loss in the vigor of domestic politics and that the forces of global commerce will trump efforts to pursue all other things significant to society (Brueckner, 2000). According to globalization critiques globalization is entering a new stage in which the competitive exposures intensify for low-wage developing countries (Greider, 1998). One of the main concerns is the central purchasing contradiction, as stated by William Greider, “too many producers, too few consumers in a global system where too many workers cannot afford to buy the things they make” (Greider, 1998, p. 5). This disproportion of funds is illustrated by the United Nations poverty figures which estimates that over 58,7 percent of labors in the developing world still live on less than the \$2 a day poverty threshold, and 23,2 percent live in absolute poverty, or less than the \$1 a day (UN, 2005). Greider argues that as long as the system advances through the exploitation of labor and prevents developing countries from pursuing more balanced strategies, change will not happen (Greider, 1998). Greider’s view is further strengthened by the distinct and recent rise in poverty and inequality in many developing countries which coincides with the implementation of economic liberalization policies and heightened anxieties about the race to the bottom (Cornia, 2004).

2.9 The Global South

In recent years, the term “Global South” has emerged in transnational and postcolonial studies and it refers to the countries located in the developing world. More specifically, the Global South can be defined as, “countries concentrated around the equator and in the southern hemisphere with relatively low levels of both geopolitical power and development” (Lange, 2015). The countries considered to be belonging in the Global South, despite having many common characteristics, tend to be quite diverse with ranging economies, cultures and populations. As Matthew Lange, a professor in Sociology at the McGill university, states, “some cases also have considerably more geopolitical power and higher levels of development than others, with India being an example of the former and Singapore being an example of the latter” (Lange, 2015). In the Global South, state diversity has subsisted for centuries, several regions having had sizeable state-like institutions for hundreds and hundreds of years. For instance, some of regions in the Global South, such as the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia and North Africa, were some of the first to emerge with large and complex political institutions. Whereas, other regions of the Global South developed complex

institutions at a much later time, such as throughout the sub-Saharan Africa, where complex political institutions were absent until the twentieth century (Lange, 2015).

A major driver that brought state-like institutions to the rest of the Global South was overseas colonialism, as it also brought major development to the political institutions of the Global South that had large and complex political institutions prior to colonialism. In many cases such as,

In the Andes and Mesoamerica, the indigenous states were conquered by the Spanish and replaced by new ones that were focused on controlling indigenous laborers and extracting resources. A similar process occurred later in Asia and Africa, as European powers – and eventually Japan and the United States (US) – either established new states or radically restructured old ones to make them better suited for colonial control and extraction (Lange, 2015, p. 674).

Thus, colonized or not, the political institutions of all countries within the Global South were shaped by colonialism. States in the Global South are further diversified by how greatly they vary in their level of democracy. For example, many countries within the Global South possess hybrid regimes, which are regimes that combine authoritarianism and democracy in different ways and to different extents (Lange, 2015).

Another diversifying factor in the Global South is the variation in terms of present state capacity. Take for example the upper extreme which includes; Singapore, Chile and Barbados, which are states capable of implementing complex policy. Furthermore, these states are capable of providing their populations with numerous amenities, such as healthcare, transportation, education, etc. On the opposite side of the scale are “juridical states”, states that are unable to perform even the most basic actions and that are recognized by the international community as states but nonetheless have an absence of organizational components of statehood (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982). The lack of state capacity is hardly the only crucial issue that the Global South faces, others include poverty, late development, dependence and globalization and ethnic diversity and conflict. These issues affect all state transformations in the Global South, although some more than others, and therefore must be contemplated for every analysis of state change in the Global South.

Limited economic development is one of the defining features of the Global South. Moreover, it is also one of the most pressing issues for the majority of the countries in the Global South. Poverty affects the region in different ways depending on the different characteristics, history and assets of the states (Lange, 2015). As stated by Lange, there are many ways to measure impoverishment in the Global South, such as life expectancy or access to basic services, but per capita GDP measured by the World Bank is the most common indicator. Per capita GDP in the Global South illustrates that there is a relative and absolute poverty present throughout most of Global South. According to Lange, this poverty affects the region's states in different ways,

Most obviously, it affects the resources that the states control, as limited economic development usually constrains the resources that states can extract. In fact, average government expenditure as a percentage of GDP is lower in the Global South than in the OECD, meaning that governments in the region control fewer resources than their relatively low GDPs suggest (Lange, 2015, p. 679).

Furthermore, the lack of state resources limits the compensation and benefits the states employees receive which increases the risk of corruption. The inadequate resources also limit state services, such as healthcare, education and other social safety nets. These are just some of the consequences which poverty has on the development of the Global South.

As mentioned above another crucial issue for the Global South is dependence. Historically, the Global South has been dependent on other regions due colonialism. According to dependency theory, the Global South's dependence on powerful actors within the core regions of the world has negative effects on development. Dependence can have different effects on countries, but most notably it can remove autonomy and thus limit states ability to pursue their interests (Lange, 2015). The last crucial issue that Lange identifies for the Global South is ethnic and national diversity. Diversity is extremely common in the Global South and is a large hindrance in national integration. An example of this diversity is linguistics, most countries in the region have multiple spoken languages. Ethnic diversity is yet another national divider in the Global South and has historically caused extreme violence (Lange, 2015).

2.10 Culture and the Good Life

Throughout history the concept of culture has been placed in different disciplines and periods, “above science, in opposition to science and within science” (Arizpe & Brauch, 2015, p. 47). Due to this broad perception of culture there are many diverse interpretations of culture. This paper will use UNESCO’s definition of culture from the UNESCO 1998 General Conference;

Culture is the continuous flow of meanings that people create, blend and exchange. It enables us to build cultural legacies and live with their memory. It permits us to recognize our bonds with kin, community, language groups and nation-states, not to speak of humanity itself. It helps us live a thoughtful existence. Yet culture can also lead us to transform our differences into banners of war and extremism. So, it should never be taken for granted, but carefully shaped into the form of positive achievement. Culture is never at a standstill: every individual contributes works and images that blend into the rivers of history (UNESCO, 1998).

An important aspect of culture is the “self”. Notions of the self, or person/psyche, can be viewed as cultural constructions that reflect collective understandings of behavior and experiences. Perceptions of the self-fluctuates across cultures, thus reflecting differentiations in the ways which individuals experience and understand personhood (Mauss, 1985). According to Kirmayer, Adeponle and Dzokoto the self is further influenced by;

Unraveling the knots and contradictions of the pathologies of power and domination requires cultural historical reflection to clear a space where the voices of the subjugated can be heard and where the diversity of traditions can provide alternate psychologies with different views of interiority, identity, and functioning in health and illness (Kirmayer, Adeponle & Dzokoto, 2018, p.1).

Furthermore, according to Kirmayer and Ramstead, psychology scholars, these practices (behavior and experiences) involve modes of discourse, embodied experience, and social contexts which provide cultural affordance (Kirmayer & Ramstead, 2017). Thereby, the premise that constructions of the self-fluctuates across cultural contexts is interconnected to understandings of variances in configurations of social relationships such as, “different histories, ecologies, cultural practices, and

institutions within societies result in different social rules, expectations, and values or ‘prevalent cultural mandates’ (Kirmayer, Adeponle & Dzokoto, 2018, p.4). Furthermore, “at present, globalization, telecommunications and telematics are changing the way in which people identify and perceive cultural values” (Arizpe & Brauch, 2015, p. 56). As globalization spreads, cultural challenges to humanity are beginning to emerge and fragmentation into cultures is on the rise.

Due to globalization, the future will be increasingly shaped by the awareness of interdependence between societies and cultures. In this changing world, cultures are no longer fixed, but are exchanged instantly around the world through the internet and mass media. Therefore, the World Commission on Culture and Development is emphasizing the need for new global cultural values or ‘ethics’ (Arizpe & Brauch, 2015). The Commission identified five ethical pillars on which to build these new global ethics/values; (1) human rights and responsibilities, (2) protection of minorities and vulnerable groups such as women and children, (3) democracy and the elements of civil society, (4) equity within generations and between generations, (5) commitment to peaceful conflict resolution and fair negotiation. The World Commission on Culture and Development believes that these five ethical pillars will be the fundamental ethics in a globalized world (Ibid).

Southeast Asian and Indian Culture

As mentioned previously, the Global South is an extremely diverse part of the world, due to not only its sheer size, but also its rich history dating back to the 3rd and 2nd millennia B.C (Lange, 2015). This paper is taking departure in the India and will therefore focus on the culture of East and Southeast Asia. South Asia’s multifaceted millennial long history has shaped the Indian culture and regional ethnic diversity in India has its origins in the large number of historical kingdoms that evolved in interaction with other continents and civilizations (Tenhunen & Saavala, 2012). The people of the subcontinent therefore have a disposition to cope with diversity due to the range in religion, linguistics, culture, social standing and geographical location.

Another essential part of the Indian culture is the caste system, it is a social and cultural institution unique to Indian civilization. The origins of the caste system can be traced back to the aspirations of the Aryans to place themselves in stronger position in relation to native inhabitants. Although the caste system has evolved within the last century it still has a large significance in the Indian society;

The principal of arranging social life according to inherited caste identities and the separation of castes through the avoidance of interaction has undergone many changes. Yet caste still crucially influences marriage, political organization and everyday interaction, especially in rural India (Tenhunen & Saavala, 2012, p. 33).

In addition, the importance and influence of caste and family in India is not limited to homes but also extend into the workplace. The Indian ideal is not a free individual, “but someone who acknowledges his duties and is willing to make sacrifices for his or her family” (Tenhunen & Saavala, 2012, p. 51). Particularly, Southeast Asian cultures emphasize relatedness with others in the definition of the person, and furthermore, hold commitment to relationships as the fundamental expression of self and personhood (Church, 2000). Moreover,

They affirm notions of self and personhood that emphasize values or traits, such as attentiveness, humility, respectfulness, dependence, empathy, self-control, moderation, nurturance, dutifulness, self-sacrifice, conformity, traditionalism, and cooperativeness (Kirmayer, Adeponle, & Dzokoto, 2018, p. 7)

The Indian culture is evolving concurrently with globalization and deep-rooted cultural meaning are changing, albeit slowly. Additionally, traditional conceptions are also evolving; “concepts of the person and his or her relation to the community, relations between men and women, basic values, ideals and conceptions of human nature – these are all changing” (Tenhunen & Saavala, 2012, p. 186). These transformations are in part due to globalization and the consequences it has on the internal dynamics of the Indian society; “when subjugated groups are able to alter their position, they change both the role and cultural meanings attached to social hierarchies” (Tenhunen & Saavala, 2012, p. 186). Despite these transformations, it is important to note that the ‘westernization’ of Indians often is only skin-deep – the more people from diverse cultures interact, the more importance is placed on their own cultural identity.

Cultural Perceptions of the Good Life

Across cultures there are different conceptions of what constitutes as the good life (Diener & Diener, 1995). These conceptions stem from the ecological and cultural context of the environment in which the individual occupies, the availability of resources, social settings, and the shaping of

core beliefs and priorities (Inglehart, 2006). Every culture promotes specific conceptions of ‘the good life’ that reflects its own combination of social historical, political, and economic traditions. Thereby, with a global population of over seven billion people, “a vast range of subjectively-held ideal life narratives exist within and across societies” (Bonn & Tafarodi, 2013, p. 1). Another driving factor of ‘the good life’ is the existence of fundamental human motives and need which provide direction, shape and structure to the objectives of individuals worldwide. It can be argued that, “cultures endure, at least in part, because they facilitate the satisfaction of basic need” (Bonn & Tafarodi, 2013, p.1).

As mentioned above the concept of ‘the good life’ varies across cultures. This paper will examine ‘the good life’ from an Eastern and Western perspective. Easterners and Westerners use different cultural theories to construct life experiences, as illustrated below;

Western cultures emphasize self-enhancement: Being able to achieve and to celebrate one’s success is a major source of Westerners’ self-esteem. Conversely, Eastern cultures emphasize fitting in and fulfilling obligations: Being able to critically reflect on and learn from one’s past failures and to minimize future failures is a defining characteristic of a well-adjusted Easterner (Wirtz, Chiu, Diener & Oishi, 2009, p.1).

Thus, Westerner’s self-construal emphasizes positive qualities of the self and potential gains in situations, whereas Easterners’ self-construal focuses on potentially negative facets of the self and situations, as to avoid unfavorable social situations. Accordingly, “the divergent cultural theories described above may also influence the way Westerners and Easterners appraise positive and negative life experiences and construct their self-esteem from these events” (Wirtz, Chiu, Diener & Oishi, 2009, p.3).

2.11 The Mindset Theory

Mindsets, also known as implicit theories, can be defined as, “people’s lay beliefs about the nature of human attributes, such as intelligence or personality” (Dweck, 2012, p. 615). The concept of the mindset can be divided into two major areas; entity theory and incremental theory. Entity theory is also known as a fixed mindset, and states that individuals hold a set mindset and believe that human

attributes are simply fixed trait. Thus, a person has a certain moral character or personality and is unable to alter it. In contrast, incremental theory, or also known as a growth mindset, states that through effort and education, individuals are capable of developing their moral character or personality over time (Ibid). In addition, individuals may also hold a fixed versus growth mindset of others, in such cases people tend to form rapid trait-based judgments of others (Chiu, Hong & Dweck, 1997).

According to Carol Dweck, one of the world's leading researchers in the field of motivation and mindsets at Stanford University, individuals whom hold a fixed mindset in regard to their own traits, such as intelligence, tend to avoid challenges for apprehension of presenting themselves to be unintelligent. Moreover, these individuals also tend to show less resilience in the face of setbacks, "that is, they interpret setbacks as implying a lack of ability and become discouraged or defensive" (Dweck, 2012, p. 615). Whereas, those individuals which believe their attributes and qualities can be developed tend to seek challenging learning opportunities and show more resilience in the face of setbacks, thereby viewing setbacks as integral parts of learning, rather than indictments of the self. Furthermore, according to Dweck, "They are thus less likely than those with a fixed mindset to affix labels to a person or group and more likely to update their impressions in the face of new information" (Ibid). Thus, Dweck suggests that entity beliefs, or fixed mindsets, can lead individuals to make more rigid judgements and thereby limit the paths they choose to take. Furthermore, the beliefs are an integral part of an individual's motivational system and thus they influence the goals that individuals pursue, as well as the level of interest that they maintain, the effort invested and predict their behavior after setbacks (Dweck, 2007).

The mindset also inspires different goals. For example, the fixed mindset orients individuals toward performance related goals where they endeavor to gain favorable judgments of their competences and worth. Conversely, the growth mindsets orient individuals towards learning goals where they endeavor to increase their mastery and competences (Dweck & Murphy, 2016). In addition, mindsets can also shape the way individuals think about effort. Specifically,

Those with a fixed mindset believe that if you have high ability, you should not need high effort. Moreover, if you need high effort, that means you do not have high ability. To these individuals, effortless success is the most rewarding. In contrast, people with a growth

mindset view effort as the fuel that makes the engine run. Even more, effort is highly valued by people with growth mindsets because it indicates that they are stretching themselves and developing (Murphy & Dweck, p. 128).

Mindset theory can also be applied to consumer behavior. Particularly, individuals are able to signal the self with the brands and product choice. Due to the growth mindsets focus on learning and development, these individuals differ from those with fixed mindsets in the kinds of benefits they seek from products and the product information they attend to (Park & John, 2012). Furthermore, brands and products can be utilized by individuals to self-enhance by signaling to themselves and others that they share the positive qualities associated with a certain brand or product. Thus, brands and products have the ability to serve important self-enhancement functions, “encouraging consumers to reinforce or expand core aspects of their identity” (Dweck & Murphy, 2016, p. 130). According to Dweck and Murphy, brands and companies can also project a fixed or growth mindset and therefore can organizational mindsets shape consumers’ expectation of, and relations with brands, products, and companies. Consequently, mindsets have the ability to heighten the understanding of consumers and in turn, influence consumer behavior, as stated by Dweck and Murphy,

Understanding how mindsets shape people's goals and expectations should help managers design marketing campaigns to reach their intended audience, should shape how companies respond when recovering from product failures, and should provide guidance when extending into new product categories and markets (Ibid, p. 135).

2.12 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory first appeared in 1984, in Edward Freeman’s book, “Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach”. The book was written as a practical guide of strategic management for students and managers (Freeman, 1984). Throughout the following decades stakeholder theory gained traction within strategic management as well as other fields, such as marketing, law, public administration, etc. Stakeholder theory’s foothold within the business world can be attributed to, “this rise in importance to its practicality in dealing with a business world that is increasing in

complexity and turbulence, and to society's increasing sensitivity to the ethical (or unethical) behavior of organizations" (Freeman, Harrison and Wicks, 2007, p. 5).

Stakeholders can be defined as, "groups and individual that have a valid interest in the activities and outcomes of a firm and on whom the firm relies to achieve its objectives" (Freeman, Harrison and Wicks, 2007, p. 2). The term primary stakeholder may include, for most businesses, customers, employees, suppliers of services and tangible goods, suppliers of capital, as well as the communities in which the firm operates. Other stakeholders may include government officials and regulators, special-interest groups, consumer advocate groups, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the media, unions, competitors, etc. as illustrated below in figure 1. These stakeholders can be classified as secondary as they do not directly contribute to the value-creating processes of the firm (Phillips, 2003). Freeman argues that secondary stakeholders warrant less consideration, as he states, "we do not mean to imply that they are not important, but rather that, from a practical perspective, much of a manager's time and attention will (and should) focus on the stakeholders who contribute most to the value the firm creates – the primary stakeholder" (Freeman, Harrison & Zyglidopoulos, 2018).

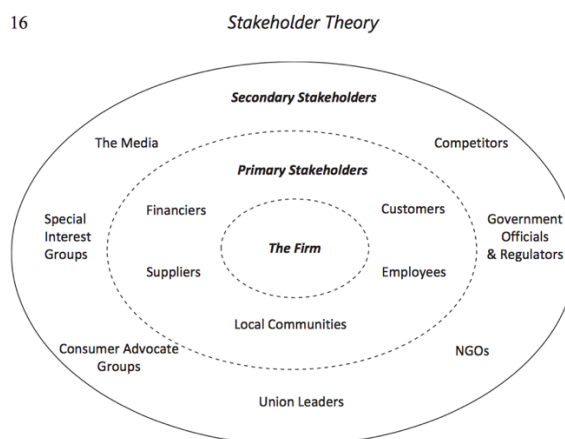


Figure 1 A basic stakeholder map.

- Source: Freeman, R., Harrison, J., & Zyglidopoulos, S. (2018). *Stakeholder Theory: Concepts and Strategies* (Elements in Organization Theory). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stakeholder theory is based upon an alternative way of understanding how firms and individuals can create value and trade with each other in a world with little stability and certainty. Freeman designed stakeholder theory to solve three interconnected problems; "First, how can we create value

in a turbulent world? Second, how are we to understand the ethics of capitalism? Third, what should we be teaching in business schools?” (Freeman, Harrison & Zyglidopoulos, 2018, p. 1). Stakeholder theory is built upon seven core concepts; managerial focus, moral foundation, an overarching purpose (enterprise strategy), creation of both economic and noneconomic value, reciprocity, reputation and stakeholders interest converge over time.

The first concept, managerial focus, is built upon the notion that business executives manage stakeholders, and the manner in which these stakeholders are managed determines the value a firm creates or destroys (Freeman, 1984). Freeman further states that, “the real challenge is to determine best practices in managing stakeholders, and to determine the contexts in which those practices are most likely to lead to the best value-creating results” (Freeman, Harrison & Zyglidopoulos, 2018, p. 3). The second concept, a moral foundation, is the idea that stakeholder management must be based on a moral foundation that includes respect for humans and their basic rights, as well as fairness, integrity, honesty, loyalty, freedom to choose, and the supposition of responsibility for consequences of actions taken by a firm (Phillips, 2003). The concept of an overarching purpose needs to answer the following questions for a firm; What is their purpose? What do they stand for? Thus, the overarching purpose, also known as the firm’s enterprise strategy, can be defined in terms of what it does for its stakeholders (Freeman & Gilbert, 1988). Another term utilized to describe a firm’s enterprise strategy is stakeholder culture. Firms form stakeholder culture which provides guidance to how managers and employees are to treat stakeholders. These stakeholder cultures tend to vary greatly across organizations (Jones, Felps & Bigley, 2007).

The fourth concept, creation of both economic and noneconomic value, is relevant to the stakeholder approach of management as noneconomic factors are essential and must be included in discussions of stakeholder welfare. This type of noneconomic value includes benefits associated with human factors. Examples of noneconomic value are; person development, affiliation, freedom to choose, esteem and happiness (Harrison & Wicks, 2013). The next concept, reciprocity, is the idea that a strong reputation makes behavior such as negative reporting, organization of boycotts, lobbying for new regulations, or other behaviors which can reduce the amount of value the firm produces, less likely. According to Charles Fombrum, the founder of the Reputation Institute, “a business gains a reputation from the way it treats its stakeholders, and this reputation can influence how attractive the is to both existing and potential future stakeholders” (Jones, Harrison & Wicks,

2018, p. 5). Finally, the last concept of stakeholder theory is stakeholder interests converge over time. This concept is fundamental as an important aspect of the stakeholder discussion is whether the interests of one stakeholder are to be transacted against the interests of another stakeholder (Freeman, 1984).

In short, throughout the last decades, stakeholder theory has been applied to a multitude of disciplines, such as management and business, law, government and healthcare. To a larger and larger extent stakeholder theory is embraced by other types of organizations such as nongovernmental organizations (Freeman, Harrison and Zyglidopoulos, 2018). This is in part due to stakeholder theory's ability to emphasize negotiations, as not all stakeholders share the same views as those as the corporation. Stakeholder theory can be pragmatically extended by focusing on three attributes, "power (how one stakeholder manifests its effects in a relationship), legitimacy (how a stakeholder's behavior or existence is justified), and urgency (how a stakeholder's sense of pressing importance is communicated)" (Sato, 2013).

3. Methodology

The purpose of this paper is to examine child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry and its main contributing factors, in lieu of the extensive Indian legislation in regard to child labor. Particularly, it will aim to explain why child labor is still strongly present in India through an extensive analysis of data and interviews collected from various stakeholders of child labor. In addition, the paper will discuss, with the input of the stakeholder interviews, whether UN's SDG target 8.7, ending all forms of child labor by 2025, can realistically be accomplished within the allocated time frame. Furthermore, this paper will include two interviews of victims of child labor, as to gain an understanding of the environment in which child labor takes place and its alternatives, as well as the effects of child labor on the individual. The paper will also in depth discuss how the mindset of Indians has a major impact on the normalization of child labor in India. Lastly, this paper will discuss child labor with a cultural perspective as to gain insight to the cultural differences between the Western and Eastern view of child labor within society.

Research philosophy points to specific assumptions on how a researcher perceives the world, and these assumptions are to support the chosen research strategy and methods (Saunders, Lewis &

Thornhill, 2012). This paper will utilize a critical realism research philosophy, which seeks to explain and critique social conditions, thereby taking departure in an empirical method appropriate for qualitative studies. A critical realism research philosophy has been selected as to develop a holistic model of the overall process, by integrating both social oriented and knowledge-oriented perspectives. Thus, a greater understanding of the reality of the individual stakeholder will be obtained in order to analyze how the reality and mindset of the individual differ on the issue of child labor. Below, a comprehensive account of critical realism will be included as to gain a clear understanding of the development and concept of critical realism, in addition to an understanding of its application in this paper.

Critical realism like other qualitative methods, “aims to use language data to gain insights into social and organizational realities. This takes place through discovering the views, perceptions and opinions of both individuals and groups through the language they use” (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p. 126). The research philosophy of critical realism first appeared in the 1970s from the work of Roy Bhaskar as an alternative to both positivism and constructivism differing by drawing elements from both methodological strains in its account of ontology and epistemology (Fletcher, 2017). As mentioned above critical realism functions as a general methodological framework for research, albeit it is not associated with a particular set of methods.

Critical realism handles the world as theory-laden, but not theory-determined. Furthermore, critical realism does not contradict that there is a real social world in which to attempt to understand or access through philosophy and social science, but rather theorizes that some knowledge can be nearer to reality than other knowledge (Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen & Karlsson, 2002). Thereby, “the ability to engage in explanation and causal analysis makes CR useful for analyzing social problems and suggesting solutions for social change” (Fletcher, 2017, p. 3). Critical ontology categorizes reality into three level; the empirical level, the actual level, and the real level. The first level, the empirical, is the realm of events as they are experienced, “at this level, events or objects can be measured empirically and are often explained through common sense but these events are always mediated through the filter of human experience” (Fletcher 2017, p. 4). Thereafter is the second level, the actual level, “at this level events occur whether or not we experience or interpret them, and these true occurrences are often different from what is observed at the empirical level” (Fletcher, 2017). Thus, at this level there is no filter of human experience. The last level is the real,

at which casual structures exist. These structures are inherent properties in an object that acts causal forces to produce events.

Another approach to critical realism than that of Bhaskar is the one of Bernard Lonergan, a Canadian Roman Catholic philosopher and theologian (Walker, 2017). Lonergan's approach to CR begins with the simple invitation to reflect on nature of insight. The approach of coming to know by Lonergan consist of acts of experience, understanding and judgement. Furthermore, for Lonergan;

Any instance of knowing is not a single operation, but a dynamic interacting combination of three cognitional processes: experience, understanding, and judgement. He stresses that knowing cannot be reduced to any single one of these activities. Human knowing, as conceived by Lonergan, is not just the experiencing of data, or the developing of insights, or the forming judgements alone, but a dynamic and integrated (Lonergan, 1967, p. 205)

Thereby, Lonergan's model of knowing suggest that 'human knowing is not some single operation, but on the contrary, a while whose parts are cognitional activities' (Lonergan, 1967, p. 207)

Lonergan and Bhaskar agree that critical realism seeks to provide the explanation of phenomena, be it common sense, scholarship, science or any form of human knowing (Walker, 2017). However, Lonergan's approach to critical realism differs to that of Bhaskar as Lonergan contends that his account of the process of coming to know can be shown to be something which, "can be known objectively and with certainty and can thereby serve as a secure basis from which to explore epistemological and metaphysical issues" (Walker, 2017, p.6). Moreover, although Lonergan concurs with Bhaskar in his acknowledgment that theory must offer the best current explanation of phenomena, he also offers a validation of his interpretation of the process of coming to know, as well as the fact that, "knowledge is possible, even if our knowledge in particular cases may be somewhat provisional" (Walker, 2017, p.6).

The research of question of this paper is one of individual reality, experience, and knowing. Furthermore, the research of this paper is based on knowledge which is gained through Lonergan's cognitional processes and thus, "objectivity is seeing what is there to be seen ad not seeing what is not there, and that the real is what is out there now to be looked at" (Lonergan, 1972, p. 238). Thus,

this paper will utilize Lonergan's approach to critical realism, as the victims of child labor and stakeholders may place different interpretations on the situation, as a consequence of their individual views/reality/known on the world (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012).

3.1 Data Collection and Methods

This paper examines child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry and takes point of departure in a multi-stakeholder perspective, therefore the data collection naturally inclines towards the qualitative side in terms of methods. Qualitative researchers emphasize, "the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). These researchers also stress the value of the nature of inquiry. Furthermore, according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson,

Qualitative methods aim to use language data to gain insights into social and organizational realities. This takes place through discovering the views, perceptions and opinions of both individuals and groups through the language they use; the main methods to achieve this is the in-depth interviews" (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012, p. 126).

Furthermore, a qualitative method has been chosen as it has the ability to obtain a more realistic view of the lived world which cannot be experienced or understood through numerical data and statistical analysis. Qualitative methods also provide researchers with the perspective of the participants of the study as a result of direct interaction with them or through immersion in a culture or situation. In addition, they also have the ability to allow the researcher to describe current situations and existing phenomena and yield results which can be helpful in creating new ways of understanding, and lastly qualitative methods can create a descriptive capability grounded on primary and unstructured data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The collected qualitative data has been selected with a purposeful design in mind from stakeholders of child labor which are 'information rich' and illuminative. These stakeholders offer useful manifestation of the phenomenon of child labor. Furthermore, the sampling of this paper is aimed at insight about the phenomenon of child labor and not an empirical generalization derived from a sample and thus applied to a population. The collected qualitative data has been derived through the

connections gained by Mia in her internship at the Centre for Responsible Business, a nongovernmental organization in New Delhi, India, in the period of August 2018 to the December 2018. The Centre for Responsible Business focuses on the area of sustainable development and believes that collaboration is fundamental in order to achieve the SDGs. Mia's responsibilities and tasks revolved around the Centre of Responsible Business' fifth annual conference, 'India and Sustainability Standards'. The theme of the fifth annual conference was 'Collaboration a key to SDGs: Leveraging CSR and Voluntary Sustainability Standards'. To that extent, Mia was involved with various stakeholders and related topics, in particular child labor and women in value chains. These stakeholders include Fair Labor Association, Global March Against Child Labor, GoodWeave, UNICEF, Fair Wear Foundation, C & A Foundation, and various brands and suppliers. Thus, Mia's personal experiences in India has provided a background and perspective for the research.

As mentioned above, the primary data for this research paper has been collected through qualitative methods. In particular, the data has been obtained through extensive interviews with the intent of capturing direct quotations of stakeholder's personal perspectives and lived experiences. To that extent, six in-depth interviews have been conducted with various stakeholders of child labor; C & A Foundation (a NGO focusing on promoting a fair and sustainable fashion industry), Shahi Exports (India's largest exporter of ready-made garments), a European Brand Representative (from a major international U.K retailer), a specialist in child protection from UNICEF (the world's largest NGO focusing on the protecting the rights of children) and two victims of child labor in India. These interviews were conducted on a semi-structured basis, with a predetermined set of questions which can be found within the appendix. The interviews were all conducted in the form of one-to-one interviews over a video call, with the use of the telecommunications application Skype, due to distance and major time differences. With the exception of the interview of the European brand representative, who wished to remain anonymous, which was conducted face to face in India. The length of the conducted interviews range between 20 to 40 minutes. All of the conducted interviews have been transcribed and included in the appendix. In addition to the conducted interviews, this paper will utilize qualitative data collected from secondary sources in forms of books, articles, and online resources, to support the primary data in order to answer the research question.

This paper will be applying the analytical techniques of content and descriptive analysis on the conducted interviews as to gain a holistic perspective of child labor. The content analysis sums numbers of specific facts and data, this data is, “not mathematical absolutes but relational within the context of social science. Numbers alone do not embrace meaning. Yet, when they are related to specific time, space, and events, their very existence suggests significance and relation to meaning” (Tackney, Chappell & Sato, 2017, p. 139). Furthermore, a holistic perspective enables an understanding that the whole phenomenon under study, in this case child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry, is understood as a complex system which is more than the sum of its parts and the focus is thereby on complex interdependencies and system dynamics which cannot be reduced into cause and effect relationship. The analysis will also aim to provide valid and reliable research. The content analysis has been utilized to organize, analyze and find insights in the semi-structured interviews by identifying the most used words and concepts of each stakeholder and thereby enabling a comparison of the individual stakeholder’s reality and perspectives on child labor (Appendix 5 & 6). The descriptive analysis will be utilized to exemplify the experiences of the victims of child labor to gain an understanding of the impact of being exposed to child labor on individuals. Furthermore, the descriptive analysis will be used to apply theory to the interviews and to further investigate the mindset and perspectives of the stakeholders.

The qualitative research methods utilized in this paper are associated with certain limitations. Specifically, the limited size of conducted interviews undermines opportunities to draw useful generalizations or make broad policy recommendations based on findings. However, the limited amount also enables a comprehensive and in-depth investigation of the perspectives of stakeholders, particularly as they all are specialized and ‘information rich’ in the area of child labor. Thus, the gathered data will not be generalizable, given that the data collected from the victims of child labor are based on personal opinions and life experiences and can therefore not represent all victims of child labor in the global textile and clothing industry. Furthermore, as the primary instrument of investigation, qualitative researchers are imbedded in their own culture and experiences which increase the risk for bias in regard to the way data is gathered, interpreted, and reported. In addition, the use of human subject increases the chance of ethical dilemmas which undermine the overall validity of the study, as with the case of interviews of the victims of child labor. The interviews with the victims were conducted with a high regard for the sensitivity of the topic as well as the

experiences of the individuals. Thus, these interviews have been examined critically to a much lesser extent, in comparison with the interviews of the other stakeholders.

Another limitation of this paper is the lack of the perspective of an Indian government official. Despite many attempts, it proved difficult and we were unable to attain an interview with officials of the Indian government. The Indian government is an essential stakeholder of child labor and therefore should ideally have been included in order to gain an in-depth insight on the issue. Furthermore, in order to control for potential confounding variables and errors this paper has several delimitations. Firstly, the scope of this paper has been restricted to child labor in India, as India is the country in the world which has most child laborers according to UNICEF. Additionally, historically India's legislation is extensive on the ban of the use of child labor which contradicts the extensive numbers and in 2013 India implemented the CSR Mandate which makes CSR spend mandatory for all firms operating in India. Secondly, the scope has been further restricted to child labor within the Indian textile and clothing industry and thus will not touch upon child labor on a broader industry spectrum. This is due to the interesting tendencies of the textile and clothing industry, where compliance and auditing common resulting in suppliers creating hidden supply chains by moving the labor into private homes or unregulated production sites.

Previous research on child labor in India include; Child Labour in India – An Overview by M.C Naidu and Desaratha Ramaiah, The child and the state in India: Child labor and education policy in comparative perspective by Myron Weiner and Child labor and Fertility, schooling, and the economic contribution of children of rural India: An econometric analysis by Mark Rosenzweig and Robert Evenson. These previous studies primarily focus on economic and infrastructure related drivers. For example, Naidu and Ramaiah argue that child labor is predominantly necessitated by economic compulsions of the parents. They furthermore state that the main reason for the rise to child labor is unemployment and underemployment amongst the adult population living in poverty which is in turn due growth of the Indian population. In contrast, Weiner and Rosenzweig and Evenson focus primarily on the infrastructure related challenges, such as the lack of access to proper education, health facilities, and transport opportunities.

Child labor has a large social relevance in today's globalized world. Firms are able to mobilize supply chains, picking and choosing markets with competitive advantages, such as low labor cost

and lax labor regulations and enforcement. Thus, it becomes imperative to ensure fair labor standards and practices as to guarantee clean supply chains. Furthermore, given that work deprive children their rights to education and harm their safety and health, child labor furthermore hinders their social and physical development. This paper also has scientific relevance as it further investigates the issue of child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry. Particularly, this paper elaborates on previous studies by emphasizing factors when formerly have not gained as much consideration. Thereby, this paper adds new perspectives to the already existing literature.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Data Presentation

4.1.1 India

Rich in history, India dates to the Indus Valley civilization, one of the world's oldest which thrived in the 3rd and 2nd millennia B.C. Since then, classical Indian culture evolved through mergers with different Dravidian inhabitants and Aryan tribes. The Golden Age brought about the Gupta dynasty and India experienced a growth in science, art and culture. During this period and the following 700 years, Islam spread across the Asian subcontinent, effecting India greatly. In the 16th century, European explores began establishing footholds in India and by the 19th century, Great Britain had become the dominant political power on the subcontinent and India was viewed as the 'crown jewel' of the British Empire. The colonialization of India brought about major changes within the Indian economy and society (Bose & Jalal, 1999). In 1947 India gained independence after years of nonviolent resistance to British rule steered by Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Despite the de-colonialization, large scale communal violence continuously occurred resulting in the subcontinent's partition into two separate states, Pakistan and India. The partition did little to lessen the animosity and the neighboring nations fought three wars between 1947 and 1971, resulting in East Pakistan becoming a separated nation from Bangladesh (Bose & Jalal, 1999).

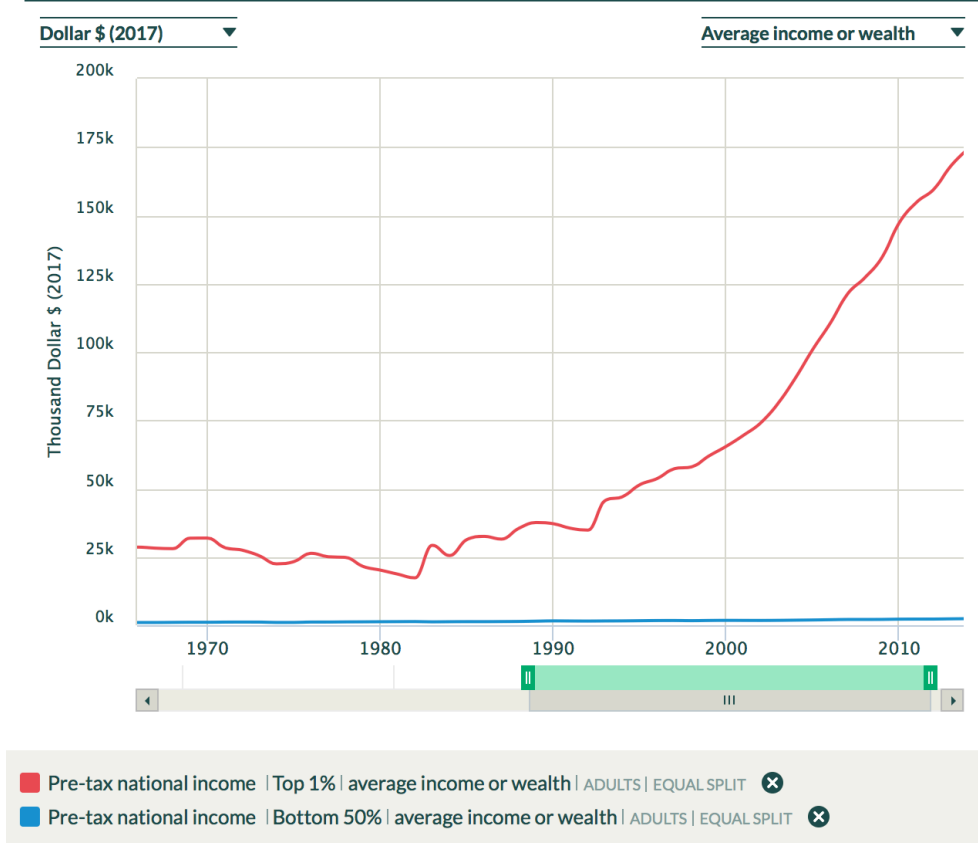
Located in the South of Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Pakistan and Burma, India is the seventh largest country by area with more than 3,287,263 square kilometers. India is thereby considered to be situated in the Global South (Lange, 2015). Furthermore, India is the second most populous country in the world with a population of more than

1.3 billion people. India, also known as the Republic of India, is a representative democracy with a parliamentary republic multi-party system which has seven recognized national parties and over 40 regional parties. The Indian parliamentary system is governed under the Constitution of India, which serves as country's superlative legal document which came into effect on 26 January 1950. Due to its size and population, India has a large purchasing power parity (PPP) and according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Indian economy in 2017 was the sixth-largest economy by market exchange rates, nominally worth around US\$2.611 trillion (IMF, 2017). According to the World Factbook;

India's diverse economy encompasses traditional village farming, modern agriculture, handicrafts, a wide range of modern industries, and a multitude of services. Slightly less than half of the work force in in agriculture, but services are the major source of economic growth, accounting for nearly two-thirds of India's output but employing less than one-third of its labor force (World Factbook, 2019).

Despite being the sixth-largest economy by market exchange, the per capita income remains below the world average at \$7,200 per capita in 2017 (IMF, 2019). Furthermore, the recent decades have witnessed the issue of an increasing income gap worldwide. This is a large issue in India, as despite being one of the fastest growing economies in the world, the growth of the Indian economy is not being shared equally amongst the different classes of the society (Sehrawat & Singh, 2019). Specifically, "in the early 1990s, India had two resident billionaires with a share of 1% in GDP, whereas in 2017, top 1% of the population now holds 73% of the wealth (Sehrawat & Singh, 2019, p. 14). Illustrated below, is a graph of the Evolution of average income in India, 1966-2013 by the World Inequality Database, demonstrating the immense income distribution inequality between the top 1% of the Indian population and the bottom 50%, in addition to its development from 1966 to 2013. The top 1% had a yearly average of \$168,235 in 2013, whereas that of the bottom 50% was merely \$2334. Thereby, further illustrating how the income inequality has increased in India in recent years and how extreme the income difference is between the top 1% of Indians and the bottom 50% (WID, 2019).

Evolution of average income, India, 1966-2013



- Source: World Inequality Database: <https://wid.world/country/india/>

The education system in India is free and compulsory and is provided as a fundamental right to children between the ages of 6 and 14. Public schools are controlled at three levels; central, state, and local. However, the efficiency of the Indian system is extremely low and according to recent findings more than half of children in fifth year are unable to read at even a second-year level (Kremer, Chaudhury, Roges, Muralidharan & Hammer, 2005). The low quality of education is primarily due to three core issues; low levels of accountability and capability in school leadership and management, inadequate assessment and monitoring processes and poor teacher training, motivation, and support structures, as illustrated in the example below;

Twenty-five percent of teachers were absent from school, and only about half were teaching, during unannounced visits to a nationally representative sample of government primary schools in India. Absence rates varied from 15% in Maharashtra to 42% in Jharkhand, with

higher rates concentrated in the poorer states (Kremer, Chaudhury, Roges, Muralidharan & Hammer, 2005, p. 658).

The Indian population is very diverse like many other countries in the Global South (Lange, 2015). There are three main ethnic groups, Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and Mongoloid, with the Indo-Aryan being the majority at around 72% of the population. Likewise, there are a plentitude of languages in India (over 22 recognized languages) with Hindi being the most popular (World Factbook, 2019). The Indian population is young which corresponds to India's low dependency ratio, healthy savings and investment rates and its increasing integration into the global economy. Despite this, India's long-term challenge remain significant,

Including; India's discrimination against women and girls, an inefficient power generation and distribution system, ineffective enforcement of intellectual property rights, decades-long civil litigation dockets, inadequate transport and agricultural infrastructure, limited non-agricultural employment opportunities, high spending and poorly targeted subsidies, inadequate availability of quality basic and higher education, and accommodating rural-to-urban migration" (World Factbook, 2019).

India's most serious problem is food deprivation and poverty. A large part of the Indian population has to survive on insufficient nutrition, resulting in poor health. India frequently rank first in global figures related to absolute poverty and "the United Nation's World Food Program estimates that nearly half on the world's hungry live in India" (Tenhunen & Saavala, 2012, p. 117). Another aspect of poverty in India is the issue of child malnutrition, in 2007 close to half of the Indian child population below the age of five was suffering from serious to moderate underweight conditions (von Grebmer, 2009). Poverty in India differs greatly from district to district and can be divided into five categories; most deprived (27% of population share), household services deprived (18% of population share), moderately deprived (26% of population share), community services deprived (15% of population share), and lastly, least deprived (14% of population share) (Appendix 4).

Another major challenge in India is child labor. As mentioned previously child labor is a global issue which is most common in underdeveloped countries, such as those in the Global South and particularly India. In 2001, child labor constituted for around 13% of the workforce in India according to UNICEF (UNICEF, 2011). During the last two decades, the Indian government has put

in place a range of programs and laws to address the issue of child labor (Bajpai, 2017). The two main laws dealing with the issue of child labor are the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 and the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment of 1973 (ILO Convention 138) and on the Worst Forms of Child Labour of 1999 (ILO Convention 182). However, the Indian government has now chosen to ratify these two ILO conventions as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the United Nations (Bajpai, 2017). In addition, the Indian government has created its own legislation to control and regulate child labor in India in addition to provisions within the Constitution of India. The most recent and influential of these legislations include;

The Indian Constitution

The Indian Constitution states that, “no child under the age of fourteen years shall be employed in any mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment [Article 24]” (Bajpai, 2017). Furthermore, the Constitution further states that, “the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength” (Bajpai, 2017). The last significant provision of the Indian Constitution in regards to child labor is Article 39 which states that children are to be given facilities and opportunities to develop in a healthy manner and, “in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and moral and material abandonment” (Ibid).

The Factory Act

The Factory Act was created in 1881. Fashioned for factories with more than 100 employees, the Factory Act designated a minimum age of seven for employment in factories. Furthermore, it prohibited successive employment (employment in two factories on the same day) and lastly the Act required that working hours were not to exceed nine hours a day and at least four holidays be given in a month (Bajpai, 2017). Since 1811 the Factories Act has been amended several times. The first amendment was added in 1911 where provisions were included to prohibit work between 7 p.m. and 5.30 a.m., work in certain dangerous processes and lastly it required that employees have certificate of age and fitness. Further amendments were supplemented in 1922, 1926, 1934, 1948 and lastly in 1954. These amendments included provisions that penalized parents and guardians for allowing children to work in multiple factories in the same day, limited the number of hours’

children were allowed to work in a day and raise to minimum age for employment in factories to fourteen year (Ibid).

The Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act

The Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986, also known as CLPRA, was a direct outcome of various recommendations of a series of committees (UNICEF, 2011). CLARA brought about stricter legislation in regards to child labor in India; banning the employment of children (those who have not completed their fourteenth, in specified occupations and processes), establishing procedures to decide modifications to the schedule of banned occupations, regulating the conditions of work of children in employment where they are not prohibited from working (Bajpai, 2017). The Act classified all establishments in two categories; those in which employment of child labor is prohibited and those in which the working conditions of child labor shall be regulated. Furthermore, the penalties under this Act were also more stringent than previous acts. For example, the penalties included,

Whoever employs any child or permits any child to work in any hazardous employment shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than three months but which may extend to one year, or with fine which shall not be less than ten thousand rupees but which may extend to twenty thousand rupees, or with both. For a repeat offence, the punishment is imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months, but which may extend to two years. For failing to give notice to the inspector as required by Section 9, or failing to maintain a register as required by Section 11, or making any false entry in the register, or failing to display an abstract of Section 3, or failing to comply with any other provisions of this Act or rules, the punishment is imprisonment which may extend to one month, or with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees, or both (Bajpai, 2006, p. 13).

The Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act – Amendment Act, 2016

The CPRLA was amended in 2016 to the Child and Adolescent Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (Bajpai, 2017). This amendment ensured that the engagement of children (persons under 14 years) in all occupations and the engagement of adolescents (persons between 14 and 18) in hazardous occupations were prohibited (CLPRA Amendment, 2016, Article 2). The amendment includes two exceptions for labor provided by children; assisting with family housework or family

enterprises and work as an artist in the audio-visual entertainment industry (CLPRA Amendment, 2016, Article 5):

As illustrated above throughout the last century and particularly in the last couple of decades, Indian legislation in regard to child labor has progressed greatly. The enforcement of legislation, awareness amongst buyers of child exploitation, in addition to international pressure has placed child labor in the spotlight. Although, the last decades have seen a reduction of child labor due to these factors another major development has emerged (UNICEF, 2011). As a report by UNICEF states, “child labor is now more invisible because the location of the work has changed from the more formal setting of factories, to the business owners’ homes. There has also been an increasing involvement of children in the home-based and informal sectors” (UNICEF, 2011). Thus, the use of child labor has evolved and changed shape intact with the legislation to enable its use.

4.1.2 The Indian Textile and Clothing Industry

The Indian textile and clothing industry is one of the largest in the world and one of the oldest industries in India. The industry has a rich heritage and is historically well-known, with the origin of textiles tracing back to the Indus Valley Civilization where the Indian people used homespun cotton for weaving their clothes (Kar, 2015). By drawing on such historical advantages and improving substantially over time, the industry is regarded as one of the most important industries in India, with an overwhelming presence in the national economy (Ibid). The textile and clothing industry employs approximately 40 million people directly in its manufacturing activities which is distributed between the formal and informal sector. Thus, the textile and clothing industry is only second to agriculture as the largest employment provider in India (Kar, 2015). Therefore, the industry generates an estimated 1/5 of the total export earnings and furthermore contributes to 4% percent of the country’s total GDP. According to the Economic Survey of India 2013-14, an increase of 4,19,000 people in employment was noted from 2012-2013 with the highest ever increase recorded in the textile and clothing industry (Kumar, 2015).

The Indian textile and clothing industry has one of the longest and most fragmented supply chains in the world, with the existence of many intermediaries between the producer and the final consumer and consists of a five-tier structure. The tier 1, 2 and 3 units comprise solely of the

factory units and the formal sector of the industry. While tier 1 units cater exclusively to the international market, the tier 2 attends to both the international and domestic market. The tier 3 generally caters to Indian brands as well as tier 1 and 2 and is furthermore found in locations adjacent to major export clusters. In contrast, the tier 4 and 5 units comprise of the non-factory and informal sector of the Indian textile and clothing industry (Ibid). Lastly, the tier 4 and 5 merely consists of micro-enterprises and owner operating units which are often unregistered, they focus on a particular outsourced activity such as printing, dyeing, embellishment, tailoring, machines embroidery and button stitching and button hole making (Kumar, 2015). Thus, the supply chain consists of many intermediaries, such as spinning mills, integrated spinning-weaving mills, power looms, handlooms, hosiery, manufactures of man-made fibers and cloth, textile machinery, component manufactures. This furthermore includes the regular factory-based clothing industries, a diversified 'subcontracting system' which has evolved as another form of production (Kar, 2015).

The large core processes, such as design, cutting and sampling, are centralized and other jobs such as sewing, button stitching, thread cutting embroidery and washing are subcontracted and most often to be found in the informal sector (Ibid). Although the Indian textile and clothing industry is divided into two sectors, namely the formal and informal sector, the informal sector is as vast as the formal one, however, with little to no legal presence and security. Thus, this is often where child labor can be found (Ribhu & Agrawal, 2017). The informal sector is not profoundly studied nor recorded as the formal sector has been and yet, it is expected to contribute the equivalent revenue to the Indian economy. The industry consists of independent, small proprietary units at one end, and subcontracting units at the other while a major part of the jobs are furthermore farmed out to the home-based workers. Characteristically, the methods of production and work organization in this industry remain heterogeneous. The production process is furthermore split into separate functions undertaken in different locations and managed by different parties such as export agents, contractors and subcontractors (Ibid).

Moreover, the textile and clothing industry is the only industry that is self-reliant-starting from raw materials to the highest value-added products. Presently, the industry accounts for about 30 % of India's manufacturing exports, with a fair degree of diversification in terms of the export markets (Kar, 2015). Owing to its significant contributions, the Indian textile and clothing industry occupies a unique place in the country being the largest industry to emerge in modern India as well as the

largest net foreign exchange earner for the country. Furthermore, despite being the largest net foreign exchange earning industrial sector in India, it should be noted that the industry's share in world exports of textile and clothing remains low compared to other nations, including the main contributors such as China, South Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong (Ibid).

Over the past decades, some of the world's largest and most popular brands have entered the Indian market. The trend in recent years have been the arrival of some western designers as France, Italy, UK, etc. who are beginning to enter joint ventures with Indian designers and subsequently cater to the domestic and export markets. The main driver for this is the consistent growth performance and abundant and cheap skilled manpower and the enormous opportunities to be reaped both for domestic and foreign investors when making investments in the Indian textile and clothing industry (Kar, 2015).

According to recent data, India holds an increasingly focal point for the worldwide fashion industry and furthermore reflects a growing middle class and an increasingly powerful manufacturing sector. Combining these forces with a strong economic fundamental and growing technology, makes India immense for many international brands and companies to simply ignore (Imran, Balchandani, Beltrami, & Rölkens, 2019). The report furthermore states that the strong macroeconomic tailwinds are driving India with a prediction of its GDP to grow 8 percent a year between 2018 and 2022. In relation to this, India's middle class is estimated to expand by 1.4 per cent a year over the same period, outpacing some of the biggest countries such as China, Mexico, and Brazil. Consequently, India is set to evolve from a progressively important sourcing hub into one of the most attractive consumer markets outside the Western world. If this prediction turns into reality, India's textile and clothing market will be one of the sixth largest in the world comparable to the western countries and thus be worth \$59.3 billion in 2022, in addition to the United Kingdoms' (\$65 billion) and Germany's (\$63.1 billion (Ibid).

4.1.3 Child Labor in India

Child labor is a massive and extensive problem in South Asia, including India. While children should be enjoying their childhood and their playful days, many of them can be found sweating in the factories of big retailers or in the agricultural cotton fields earning meager sums to support their

impoverished families (Aggarwal, 2008). In India, many children are forced to work due to poverty and are deprived of the right to education and a fair chance to move out of the poverty trap in which they were born. The Census of India Survey 2011 by the Government of India estimates that 11.7 million children between the age of 5-14 years-old which is furthermore 4.5 percent of the total children in this age group, that is working under hazardous occupations and processes as main and marginal workers (Census Survey of India, Government of India; Kumar, 2015). While the percentage of children in the labor force may be lower in many other developing countries, India is known as the home of the largest number of child labor's in the world thus, making it a problem of great proportions (Ibid).

While the Census of India Survey 2011, Government of India estimates that 11.7 million children between the age of 5-14 years-old are working under hazardous conditions, estimates made by respected and well-known NGOs shows an estimation between 55 million to over 100 million children being employed and exploited in child labor within the country (Ribhu & Agrawal, 2017). While there is, conflicting data regarding the exact number of children who are employed in the Indian labor force, it is observed that the economic exploitation of children in India is extensive and that the huge extent of child labor in India impose a great cost on the Indian economy in terms of the opportunity lost in order to develop the country's human resources (Ibid). The census data furthermore reflects that a seven percent reduction in child labor in India from 2001 to 2011. Similarly, the total number of child labor in Delhi has also fallen by seven percent, from 42,000 in 2001. However, it is important to note the simultaneous rise in the work of the unorganized sector from a mere 8,413 in 2001 to 12,466 in 2011 (Kumar, 2015).

The social structure in India has been characterized by the caste system for decades and is often referred to as being responsible for child labor due to the hierarchy amongst the people where members of so-called lower castes and communities are meant to be the service of the upper castes. Thus, the caste system creates a reality where only the upper-caste people get the opportunity to go to school and the lower caste Indians remains poor and uneducated (Aggarwal, 2008). Another driver for child labor in India is the poor educational system. The Indian educational system does not guarantee a job to one who acquires the skills taught in school. Therefore, the low quality and lack of access to educational facilities drive children into work in order to learn a skill which can earn them a living (Ibid). Thus, the issues of child labor in India is rooted in the exploitative socio-

economic situation with the poor and backward economy, the lack of meaningful educational facilities, lack of job opportunities and other socio-economic institutions that perpetuate this evil cycle and awareness which does not prevail in India (Aggarwal, 2008).

Over the past two decades India has illustrated action towards child labor by placing a range of laws and programs to address the immense issue both imposed from the Indian government and from several NGOs and organizations (Aggarwal, 2008). However, aggressive action to eliminate this problem is difficult in a nation where 75 percent of the population lives in rural areas, most often stricken by poverty limited resources to escape the poverty trap (Ibid). The concerns in regard to elimination of child labor have been expressed by several platforms both within and outside the country and a wide array of state interventions have been made to prevent child labor on a national level. However, despite several efforts for its elimination, the problem of child labor continues to be a major political, social, economic and moral challenge. Thus, Indian children continue to constitute a significant proportion of the cheap labor force within the nation (Ibid).

4.1.4 Child Labor in the Indian Textile and Clothing Industry

The Indian textile and clothing industry has one of the most rapidly growing informal workforces, especially in the capital of New Delhi, which is also known to be the hub of textile and clothing exports in India (Kumar, 2015). It is furthermore estimated that approximately 100,000 children are working more than 14 hours a day in the illegal sweatshops in and around New Delhi and is one of the most notorious industries that thrives on child labor across the sub-continent (Ribhu & Agrawal, 2017). Child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry is most often found in the last two tiers of the supply chain, namely tier 4 and tier 5. This is due to children being engaged in primarily two broad categories of work, embroidery and embellishment and finishing also known as Zari work (Kumar, 2015). The Zari work consisting of intricate embroidery has become immensely popular in the American and European fashion stores. The sweatshops owners of the Zari work prefer to employ children due to their thin and nimble fingers, which makes them able to work faster (Ribhu & Agrawal, 2017).

By the time, these children engaged in the Zari work reach their mid-teens, they will already have suffered health and psychical damage. Due to their thin and nimble fingers, their hands are often

badly damaged and their eyesight weak due to the long hours of work of tedious positions at the bamboo framed workstations. Given that children have no fixed hours of work by, they furthermore have no trade union to fight for their cause (Ibid). The majority of these children are often brought to the cities by their older siblings or relatives in order to “learn the talent”. The socio-economic culture in India provides an atmosphere where the child is willingly forced into work simply to the talent of embroidery, while no one considers the consequences. In most of these cases the child will not receive payment for the first few months due to them learning the skill. However, the theory about the ‘thin and nimble fingers’ have proved to be fallacy due to the fact that quality and productivity of an adult worker cannot be corresponding to the same of an underage child and is thus impossible to compare (Ribhu & Agrawal, 2017).

Given that the exact number of children working in the Indian textile and clothing industry is difficult to estimate, so are the children facing violence and abuse on a daily basis. With suffering under torture, sexual abuse, unhealthy working conditions, and cruelty by employers are viewed to be a reality for these children whom are trapped in an evil circle of exploitation and abuse that will deprive them their rights and freedom in hopes of a better life (Ibid). The circle of exploitation revolves around 12-14 hours of work per day from dawn to the evening with only a few breaks for meals. Given that the majority of these children are migrants, they furthermore have to sleep at the workplace due to the fact that they cannot return home. This increases the risks of illness and poor health conditions, leaving these children in need of medical care, that they will never receive and thus will suffer until they, if lucky, leave the workplace (Ibid).

Over the past decade, the Indian textile and clothing industry has witnessed a wide array of scandals in regard to child labor. In 2007, children were discovered sewing clothes for the large UK clothing retailer Gap Inc. The children were reportedly ten-years old and working in a New Delhi factory. The children came from the poorest parts of India and had been sold to the sweatshop by their impoverished parents. The scandal was resolved with an immediate response from Gap, stating that none of the products made by the sweatshop and children would be sold in their stores (McDougall, 2007). One year later, another scandal turned headlines when one more of the largest UK retailers, Primark, was accused of utilizing child labor in their supply chains in 2008. The investigation showed children down to the age of eleven-years-old sewing tiny beads and sequins onto cheap t-shirts from a Primark collection in a refugee camp in India (Daily Mail, 2008).

While both Gap Inc. and Primark retailers have taken a pro-active approach towards the immense issue of child labor in their supply chains, they have furthermore both explicitly stated that they will under no circumstances work with subcontractors utilizing children in the workforce and will not accept children producing or working on their clothing products for their brands (McDougall, 2007 & Daily Mail, 2008). However, over the past few years, efforts to change this has been implemented. Several reports about companies and brands employing children and working with sweatshops have caused significant damage to well established brands and furthermore their reputation. Due to this, many of them have now taken the step towards their own social compliance and labor standards, to make sure that their supply chains are child labor free on all levels (Ribhu & Agrawal, 2017).

4.1.5 The Bachpan Bachao Andolan

The Bachpan Bachao Andolan was founded in 1980 and is the largest movement for the protection of children that works with law enforcement agencies and policy makers to strengthen the system in India. The movement was first started by the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize winner Kailash Satyarthi who has been battling for three decades towards the sole purpose of ending child labor and human trafficking, as well as demanding the right to education for all children (BBA, 2019).

Kailash Satyarthi is furthermore the founder of Global March Against Child Labor, the single largest civil society of network, consisting of a coalition of NGOs, Teacher's Unions and Trade Unions, which is active in 103 countries for the world's most exploited children. Since the movement was established, it has rescued more than 87,000 children from exploitation, with the main vision to create a child-friendly world where all children are free from exploitation and abuse (BBA, 2019). According to the Bachpan Bachao Andolan, they believe that rehabilitation of victims is a long process which not only includes their reintegration into the society but also their psychological recovery from the trauma they have gone through by providing them with a sense of freedom and safe environment (BBA, 2019). In 2017, the Bachpan Bachao Andolan's presence had spawned into 20 states across the country, utilizing the movement to head all organizations as an umbrella body towards the common goal. Given the several milestones the BBA has undergone though the past three decades, the organization has created multiple child-friendly villages to help

these children after being rescued and to provide a profound place for them, to educate and help them succeed in life (BBA, 2019).

Child-Friendly Villages

According to the Bachpan Bachao Andolan “Combating child labor requires program interventions that are comprehensive with a holistic approach that not only targets children, but also their families, the communities, the recruiters, traffickers and exploiters, government officials, and society at large” (Ribhu, 2008, p. 8). The child friendly villages are also known as Bal Mitra Gram directly addresses the multi-dimensional problems that drive, generate and perpetuate the child labor situation of India. The Bal Mitra Gram furthermore attacks the circle of illiteracy, poverty and child labor and refer to it as a ‘triangular paradigm’ through an innovative concept offering a long-term sustainable solution to a wide array of problems such as child labor, trafficking for forced labor, poverty alleviation, and illiteracy, among others (Ribhu, 2008). It furthermore aims at prevention while understanding the root causes to ensure sustainability and permanent settlement of the child labor problem. Not only does the Bal Mitra Gram program aim to withdraw children from work while enhancing the quality of education, it also aims at a holistic development of villages towards the creation of a child friendly society. Throughout the whole process the emphasis is given on child participation, community mobilization, promotion of education, victim empowerment, gender equality and awareness of gender issues, while drawing upon the convergence of various poverty alleviation schemes and programs, and ensuring long-term sustainability of the initiatives through the creation of sound community organization and building a resource base (Ibid). The children receive compulsory, good education, and the voice and opinion of the children are heard and taken into account. The fight against the scourge of child labor needs little justification. Children are entrapped in a world with no freedom of mobility or choice, leading a vagrant and tunneled existence (Ribhu, 2008).

4.2 Stakeholder Interviews

In order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry, this paper seeks to obtain insight and knowledge from various stakeholder’s perspectives on child labor affects children through their own personal experiences and how these have had an impact on them and their future. Thus, we have conducted two interviews with Amar Lal and Mohammed Manan, who are victims of child labor in India. From these interviews, we obtained

insights and in-depth knowledge into their lives as child workers from their own perspectives. Furthermore, four corporate interviews were conducted by C&A Foundation, Shahi Exports, UNICEF and a large European Brand, in order to gain a multi-stakeholder perspective on the issue of child labor and the common challenges they face when working in the Indian textile and clothing industry.

4.2.1 Interview: Amar Lal, Former child laborer in India

Amar Lal is a 22-year-old man from Jodhpur, Rajasthan in India, who belonged to the 'Banjara Tribe Community' also known as a gypsy community. The Banjara Tribe community which consisted of three to four families, would continuously move from one place to another in order to find places to work or to sell what they made as the main form of income. When Lal was five years old, he started working with his family and ever since he can remember, this is how his whole life began, with no permanent place to call home and hard labor work.

Lal and the other children from the community worked alongside each other and did whatever they could to earn a living in order to support their families. According to Lal, they were used to work from seven or eight in the morning to six or seven in the evening. These hours were very common for children and the working conditions in which they had to endure every day was the worst condition known and extremely dangerous. Lal furthermore describes the bad working environment and how the employees would misbehave and treat them poorly and how their small hands would get hurt, making them almost unable to work the long hours every single day. Unfortunately, there were no alternatives to this kind of work for these children. Lal explains how no one in his entire family had ever been attending school or received an education and had literally no idea about the school system, given that this was never an option or opportunity for them.

According to Lal this was their reality and their life, and they had nothing else to live for besides their work in order to survive. Once you understand and realize that this is the situation and how life is taught, it simple is what it is he states. Lal furthermore stresses that this is the situation for many children in India and many whom are still involved in some type of work and have no other opportunity in life. He refers to himself as lucky and fortunate that he was able to get an opportunity

for another life and that there were no positive aspects of child labor and how the experiences and things he has seen has changed his life.

In 2011, the march called Education March lead by Kailash Satyrthi found Lal while he was working with his family. The march was educating people about education and the importance hereof. Lal describes after that, how the Kailash foundation convinced his father to let him go with them to one of their rehabilitation centers called Bal Ashram, created by Kailash Satyrthi and the organization Bachpan Bachao Andolan. According to him, this was the second time in his life where he began something new. When he arrived at the Bal Ashram rehabilitation center, he started to grow and learn new things which helped him in the decision about his future and therefore quickly choose law as his major in school. Lal finished High School and participated in various programs and seminars on different issues and helped approaching people to inform them and create awareness towards education.

According to him, the law is the main way to fight child labor and improve the Indian education system. He furthermore emphasizes on the implementation hereof and the governments participation as immense and states that he decided on studying law, so he could continue to work for the children and the issues of child labor. After his senior year in High School, Lal started law school and finished his degree in 2018 and received a job at the Delhi High Court where he is currently working. By doing so, Lal is looking at several cases related to the child issues and mostly child labor, bonded labor and sexual abuse every day. Lal furthermore works with different policies and implementing some of the judgements and systems and rules for the government in the hopes of eradicating child labor in all its forms. When asking what he feels should be done towards child labor and the solution towards the eradication of the immense issue, Lal advocates that the Indian system needs to be powerful because no one can resolve this on their own. According to him, the government needs to take this vital step, due to the fact that they are the ones that have the resources, the money, the schools, the health facilities and the main power to create a difference.

Lal furthermore states that when he moved to Bal Ashram, it was the first time he really understood that there was something else to life then working. The many new opportunities that he could pursue and great things he could achieve, where things he had never imagined could be a reality for him and that he did not understand and know about before he moved to Bal Ashram. These were all

thing that the center taught him and not has family. Lal is truly appreciated towards the chance he has been given by the Education March and reflect upon his life and how everything has changed. Lastly, Lal states holds when he was young this was out of the imagination and for years he felt that, “you know, like your living in the different part of the world where you have no idea that what’s going in other places, what’s the life of other people (...) So I think that for me, I used to feel like that, okay, this is my life” (Lal Interview, 2019, Appendix 16).

4.2.2 Interview: Mohammed Manan, Former Child Laborer

Mohammed Manan is a 21-year-old man from Samsahiriya, a village in the state of Jharkhand, India. Manan started working when he was only six-years-old and worked six to eight hours every day, while collecting an earning of 20 and 25 rupees per day. The family of Manan consist of three sisters and four brothers whom have all been working since early ages of their lives, with no one having the opportunity or knowledge of going to school and get an education.

According to Manan, when working as a child it was extremely dangerous both physically and mentally. While working he would often get injuries on his small hands and having trouble breathing due to the bad working conditions and chemicals that he had to endure and intake every day. Manan explains that because the lack of awareness and better facilities, the children had no school to go to and that because of this, most of the children were working every single day with their families.

Given that Manan had no opportunity for an education or alternatives to working, he has experiences and seen many horrible things in his life. He continues to explain that, once him and his friend were working and collecting Mica inside a mine when the soil came down and collapsed and his friend lost his life. He furthermore describes that the images of this experience have been hard and that he is still struggling with this and how he will never forget this incident for the rest of his life.

When Manan worked as a child, he used to dream about someday being able to go to school. He furthermore explains how he would walk to town with his father and see children being well-dressed and going to school and living their lives, while he was working in order to help support his family. While one of his biggest dreams was to go to school, he knew that this was not possible for him and that it would remain a dream. Manan stresses that child labor is a big issue not only in India but

around the world. He elaborates by stating that, while people often talk about development, education is the most powerful thing and as a country is developing, education plays an important role, given that it is the birthright of every child.

When Manan was eight, he was able to stop working and was furthermore rescued with the help from the Kailash Foundation and was brought to the Bal Ashram rehabilitation center. There, he completed High School with an impressive score of a 73% mark in his senior year and later got admission to the University of Delhi. According to him, he was lucky and fortunate to be rescued as many children and facing the same problems that he was and not able to get an education or the chance for a better life.

In between the duration from being in Bal Ashram and to 2009, he got the opportunity to join the ILO convention. Here, he went to Geneva to speak and meet several leaders from around the world and discuss the current situation of child labor and how countries often make the laws against child labor, but often do not implement them properly. In terms of his studies, Manan is pursuing his MSC in Microbiology from the university of Delhi and feels fortunate to have escaped that part of his life and gotten the opportunity to receive help by creating a better future for himself. However, he still feels strongly and deeply about what has happened to him as a child worker and lastly holds that, “I have a great desire to see a world where there, there will be no child labor in the world. I think that what I have suffered and what I have seen in my life, that no child should suffer like me. Every child should have a better childhood, every child should have good education and they should have a dream in their life” (Manan Interview, 2019, Appendix 17).

4.2.3 Interview: Anindit Roy Chowdhury

Global Development Management Specialist – Gender Justice and Human Rights

Anindit Roy Chowdhury is a global development management specialist at the C&A Foundation India. For the past 19 years, Chowdhury has been working on the issues of forced and child labor and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Chowdhury joined the C&A Foundation almost four years ago which is a newly started organization that has been operating for five years.

When asking Chowdhury about the challenges in terms of overcoming child labor, he believes that one of the main challenges is transparency and furthermore stresses the immense role of this in the Indian textile and clothing industry. According to him, the fashion supply chain is very complex and opaque, and while companies have a certain degree of compliance, the tier two and tier three of suppliers and sub-contractors are often in a situation of complete in-transparency. Given that people simply don't know or acknowledge their existence, he starts that, "you don't know what is happening and most likely, if you don't know what is happening in it, the chances are that things are not going right" (Chowdhury Interview, Appendix 12).

Chowdhury furthermore holds the fact that 75 % of the clothing or fashion made in India is for local consumption. Here, the tier one companies making the garments are not under the preview of the local brands because the local brands do not do adequate amount of compliance. Moreover, he states that If you go further down the supply chain to the tier two of suppliers and tier three, you will find the embroidery, embellishment, laundry service, washing service and coloring service. Additionally, if you look at the mills, which is producing the very textile down, where the garments are being made, these do not come under the preview of direct compliance of the brands which means a massive proportion of the supply chain is opaque and hidden.

Another challenge Chowdhury advocates, is the mindset of the Indian people and how child labor has become socialized and normalized. He explains his meaning of mindset by stating that you would never find a child in Europe serving tea in a tea stall or begging in the streets. However, if you look at India, this is a very common sight and it is a matter of mobilization. Chowdhury elaborates by stating that people in India know that these children are impoverished and that if they were not working, they would probably not get anything to eat. Therefore, if the children are working and able to buy food a majority of the Indian society consider this a matter of fortune for these children.

Moreover, he states that the Indian people don't shutter once they see children working on the streets, because they have gotten used to it and to the big challenge at some level where children are born into poverty scenarios and end-up forced into labor. This creates the kind of mindset that families, communities and governments have, which makes it extremely difficult to take action towards the issue of child labor and be responsible towards these children. He furthermore advocates that if you ask anyone in India if they know that child labor exists, a hounded percent

would absolutely say yes. While people may not know the depths of it, they know that it exists and holds that the question we therefore should be asking, is what we are doing about it.

When going deeper into the root of the child labor issue in the Indian textile and clothing industry, Chowdhury emphasizes on the immense of responsibility amongst all stakeholders. He furthermore argues that the responsibility of child labor should been taken into consideration from all stakeholders' perspective and that the Indian textile and clothing industry faces several challenges in terms of who is responsible for child labor in the supply chains. He furthermore holds that the institutions and schools, the government and governance mechanisms and the families of the children hold the main responsibility and that all these stakeholders are hold responsible because it is their jobs to protect the children as they are citizens. While the children may not be old enough to vote, they have rights, and those rights should be protected. While brands and retailers have the responsibility of sourcing in a sustainable way and prevent the issue of child labor in their supply chains, he furthermore advocates that consumers needs to be held responsible as well by demanding more transparency towards the retailers when buying their products.

In accordance to this, he states that rather than just buying tons of clothes because they can afford it and asking questions such as what is it made of? and how is the fit? Consumers should be raising the importance of asking the vital question, *who makes my clothes?* Given the increasingly scrutiny of consumers purchasing habits, they as stakeholders should be more involved in the sourcing process and demand more awareness towards their brands and retailers. On the other hand, Chowdhury also view children as stakeholders and believe that they should be held responsible for the issue of child labor as well. The importance of empowering them and help them so they can make their own decisions and say no, is extremely important and is a human right that they all should be entailed to. By looking at the whole system of stakeholder mapping, everyone has different responsibility and Chowdhury firmly believes that on less everyone works towards it, thing will not change for the better.

Today, everyone has a lot more clothes than before. Chowdhury refers to his own teenage son and while only having two pairs of shoes, one black pair and one pair of white when he was a boy, his teenage son today has ten pair and a wide array of options as well. According to him, the world is changing simple because the market is geared towards this kind of practice referring to consumers

wanting more and more and the only way to do so, is to make sure garments are becoming cheaper and cheaper. Thus, the textile and clothing cannot be made in Europe and have to be made in some of the poorest countries in the world in order to chase low wages.

Chowdhury sees this as the crucial reality of how business works and argues the importance of raising business principles for companies that believe in sustainability and yet holds marketing mechanisms that constantly influence people to wanting and buying more and more.

Chowdhury finds this to be a dichotomy and raises the need for consumers to start thinking about this issue. He furthermore refers to Europe and the current progress being made in order to implement more sustainability into the textile and clothing industry. He refers to the so-called 'Garment Libraries' and how consumers can go online and select the clothes they desire, get them delivered home, wear them for a couple of times, and then send them back. According to him, this is a smart and innovative idea as a business initiative and what the industry needs in order to create change. By implementing this, the pressure on the government increases towards making the economy more sustainable and finally child labor free. However, due to the rapid market changes and competition, companies and retailers' focal goal is to make clothes cheaper and cheaper, and one of the cheapest ways of doing so, is through the use of child labor.

Lastly, when asking about whether or not the SDG target 8.7 about ending child labor by 2015 is realistic, Chowdhury states that he is fond of goals and a big supporter and believer of the previous MDGs and now the SDGs. However, according to him, this is not the big question. According to him, the big question is whether or not we are keeping that as a target and moving towards it? His point of view is furthermore that if there is a goal and there are people working towards it, whether this is the civil society organizations, the government or someone else, this is a step towards the right direction and he will do his part and keep working towards it.

4.2.4 Interview: Anant Ahuja

Head of Organizational Development at Shahi Exports

Anant Ahuja is the Head of Organizational Development at Shahi Exports, and furthermore the grandson of the founder, Mrs. Sarla Ahuja. Shahi Exports is India's largest apparel manufacturer and exporter of ready-made garments, working with the world's biggest brands and operating in 65

factories and processing mills across nine states. Shahi Exports was established in 1974 and holds approximately 100,000 workers across all of India.

When asking Ahuja about the situation of child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry, Ahuja holds that Shahi Exports has a high level of control in all of its factories in terms of child labor and that they audit heavily across all activities in their manufacturing areas by making sure no such activities are present. However, he does acknowledge the immense issue of child labor in the textile and clothing industry, especially in India. Ahuja finds the subject of child labor to be extremely tricky and understands the sensitivity towards the issue and why people find it morally wrong and scary to find out that children might/or are making their clothes. However, Ahuja states that if you think about it in the worst way, then yes, it is scary. However, he points to the fact that reality is not always how it is played out to be.

Ahuja highlights the fact that the retail prices over the last 20 years have not gone up, if anything, they have gone down due to inflation across the world. With various factors affecting the economy, he holds that consumers will be able to buy cheaper and cheaper clothes while the factories have to work harder and find new ways to maintain the same standards. Therefore, it is hard to imagine how better standards will start and be implemented. In addition to this, Ahuja believes that it starts at all levels and that consumers have to be more selective about the brands they purchase from and which suppliers they utilize in order to make sure child labor is not present at any levels.

Ahuja advocates that team effort is of the essences, when talking about responsibility and who bares the main responsibility of keeping a sanitized supply chain and implementing sustainability. If brands are going to factories and finding the cheapest place to source from, one cannot expect the best standards, especially with small margins being paid, the implementation of standards would be difficult. Nonetheless, he states that consumers could be the starting point as well. If the consumer wants to buy a \$2 pair of jeans because of the demand, then how can one expect a good supply chain. Ahuja explains that, when it comes to selling clothes, the brands are the ones taking the main risks because they have to respond to consumers. While brands hold the responsibility of satisfying the consumers with various garments and new collections for every season with several pieces, the suppliers have to receive the order and create the garments for the brands, without further risks, making brands the most responsible ones from an outside perspective.

When discussing child labor and the education reform in India, Ahuja states that he has family members whom have not finished school and that he does not believe that it is the main factor as to whether or not they are going to succeed in life. When talking about the Indian school system, Ahuja refers to the system in a negative manner. According to him, Indian children are sent to school every day without receiving proper instructions or learning anything on a daily basis. Given that many of the Indian schools are government schools, he stresses the fact that the school system is flawed and that this is the reality in India for several schools across the nation. When asking him about the alternative to children being educated and going to school, he creates a scenario and state that:

I mean how wrong would it be if your parents said, look, we need the money because we can't even get food, we are literally starving to death and in order to get the money, the children should help us too, because they are not learning anything in school (...) I just think, if you break it down like that, child labor does not seem like the biggest problem in the world (Ahuja Interview, 2019, Appendix 13)

Ahuja states that the school system in India is ineffective and the opportunity costs of going to school or not, is not as high as people make it seem to be, especially not if the parents have the opportunity to do some home-based work within the home of the family. In relation to this, he emphasizes on the fact that he does not see the problem in a family to think that if their children are not learning anything in school, maybe they should learn a skill set that could actually help them earn money for a living.

Lastly, Ahuja holds that the reality of ending child labor by 2025 as according to the SDGs target 8.7, needs a solution in order to eradicate the child labor issue in India and that the issue solely can be done in terms of collaborations amongst stakeholders on various levels. However, he finds the issue to be a part of India and the society and advocates that the issue of these children working within family homes or on the streets are facing various challenges. He furthermore explains that there needs to be a long-term solution. While people want children to go to school and learn and educate themselves, this is impossible if the school systems is broken, thus making it hard to help these children succeed in life. Finally, he stresses that, what is really missing in India is a proper

education. A school system where children are receiving an education and provided with learning skills engaging them to put in an effort that can help them for the rest of their lives.

4.2.5 Interview: Vandhana Kanhari

Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF

Vandhana Kanhari is a specialist in child protection and working for United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) India. UNICEF began its work in India in 1949 and is now working across 16 states with the Indian government to ensure that each child born in India gets the best start in life and develops to his or her full potential.

According to Kandhari, UNICEF has been working towards achieving the goal of ending child labor in India over the past two decades, together with several NGOs, civil society and the Indian government. She furthermore argues that the number of children working in India has decreased over the past 20 years due to the increase of awareness and facilities such as education and schooling. In addition to this, an incremental amount of work has been implemented by several organizations, trade union, NGOs, civil society and the Indian government, which has made some improvements on a national level.

When asking about the main reason for child labor, Kanhari argues that there are different reasons for child labor and that it is a multi-dimensional and extremely complex issue both socially and economically. Due to the high level of poverty in India, a majority of children accompany their families to work and support them by earning an extra income. Moreover, some families take loans which the children have to help repay. Moreover, if a family member is ill or has died, the children often have to step in as a bread provider and therefore have to work instead of going to school and get an education. Due to these situations, many families do home-based work where the whole family can work together and help each other.

Kanhari stresses the fact that there is an enormous difference between boys and girls when it comes to child labor and the consequences thereof. According to her, the girls face more abuse than the boys, especially when it comes to safety and the distance when going to work. With the plentitude of factors contributing to child labor, this is the result of the lack of monitoring, awareness and an

understanding by the government. Kanhari furthermore holds that child labor no longer can be found in the mechanized industry, but in the formal sector where it is much more difficult to manage and control, especially because it happens in the homes of the families.

The consequences for the children working are many and the majority of them suffers from disabilities and illness that will affect them the rest of their lives. Kanhari states that the children working are facing eye problems and disabilities with their fingers and hands, when working in the textile and clothing industry. In addition to this, she holds that these children also suffer emotionally, due to them being separated from their families or sold, which have a negative effect on them. The high risks of sexual abuse and violence for both the boys and girls are something that UNICEF have worked towards for years and collaborate with other NGOs and civil society in order to overcome. She holds that all these scenarios have had an adverse impact on the children and that the Indian government needs to have and employ a concerted effort as to eradicate these conditions that children are living in.

When asking about the number of children rescued and helped into rehabilitation, Kanhari argues that UNICEF have no estimated figure on how many children the various organization rescue and provide rehabilitating for. However, she states that the department of Ministry have created a project called the National Child Labor Project (NCLP), which is a project that help bridge between education and the children who have missed out while working. The project furthermore rescues children and help them into rehabilitation and provide them with access to education and how some of these children also go to school and support the family as well by working.

Finally, when asking about whether it is realistic to end child labor in 2025 as stated in the SDGs target 8.7, she finds realistic to be a subjective term. However. Kanhari holds that UNICEF is working together with communities and the Indian government on a national level in order to reach the target. She furthermore states that it is a combination of the government services being available on a broader scale in order to reach all children and address the issues to eradicate child labor.

4.2.6 Interview: European Brand Representative

Head of Compliance, CSR, Plan A and Administration

The UK brand representative is the head of compliance and CSR and has been working there since 2005. The UK brand opened its first store in India in 2008 and have been present there since.

According to the brand representative, the retailer collaborates with the Indian government and various organizations and emphasizes on the importance they entail. He furthermore advocates that brands needs to be aware of their total supply chain, how they source and in which conditions the workers are under while doing so. Due to many brands not being able to be physically present at all level in their supply chains, many of them collaborate with various organizations in order to mitigate the risks such as child labor in their supply chains. He furthermore stresses that these collaborations and networks are extremely important to the brands, as they are held solely reliable for the all the activities within their corporation.

In relation to this, the brand representative gives an example of a previous experiences when working for an American brand in 2007, where child labor was found in their supply chain. He furthermore explains that children were found working in the tier three making embroidery and embellishment where there was no control. The children had been a part of a larger human trafficking network where their parents had sold them in order to earn money to survive. Due to this scandal many brands and retailers started implementing their own compliance. He furthermore holds that large corporates like IKEA has done a lot of work with child labor and child work. However, when these children were rescued and there was no rehabilitation center to provide safety and an education, the chance of them returning to work was extremely high and many of them went hidden, thus making the work they are doing for these children detrimental.

When asking about the responsibility of stakeholders, the brand representative stresses that we need to raise the question about whether or not people are aware about how their clothes are made. In relation to this, he holds that the first step should be consumer awareness on where their clothes come from, who made it and with risks are associated in the manufacturing process of the product. By doing so, this will give a perspective. He furthermore advocates that, if consumers continuously demand cheaper and cheaper clothes, somebody has to pay that price of this. By looking at fast

fashion such as H&M, they provide great design but poor quality leaving the consumers buying more and more. He furthermore states that change needs to happen, and that it is time to produce clothes that can last longer and be worn for a longer period of time and that the mindset needs to be developed. Otherwise, the focus will become pure consumption, consumption, consumption and therefore circular economy much be taken into consideration.

When asking about the role of the Indian government in terms of child labor, he explains that India has fantastic laws. Unfortunately, the issue is implementation due to the high level of corruption within the country. He elaborates by stating that if the implementation was straight, there would be no need for auditors or social compliance. Thus, he holds that the government should do more, but also be supported by the industry. According to the brand representative, there are flaws in the education system in India which is controlled by the government. The Indian society has a unique advantage of having a young workforce compared to the western countries. However, with the poor quality of education, people need to learn a set of skills in order to get work and earn a living.

The brand representative states that the Indian society has normalized child labor and that this is the way of business. The young boys and girls whom are employed in the domestic sector as helpers in normal households is being normalized and by employing children at home and make them work, beat them, abuse them. By keeping a six-year-old maid or employing children due to their nimble fingers making them better at stitching carpets, is a mindset and the only thing changing this, is to create more awareness. This is the only way the Indian society will learn the consequences of employing children and forcing them to work.

Lastly, when asking about the SDG target 8.7 and whether or not this is realistic, he furthermore states that he cannot speak on behalf of the domestic industry, given that more needs to be done in India. On the other hand, he states that he confidently can claim, that there is no child labor in the first-tier of the supply chain, because of the level of awareness that is happening and going on, however, he emphasizes on the immense factor that child labor is not a brand issue, but an industry issue and that collaboration amongst stakeholders is essential in order to overcome child labor in the textile and clothing supply chains.

4.3 Data Analysis

4.3.1 Content Analysis

The purpose of this section is to extract overt and covert the concepts and perceptions of the interviewed stakeholders in regard to child labor. A qualitative data analysis program, NVivo 10, will be utilized in order to examine the numerical frequencies of words in each of the six conducted interviews and their significances. Initially, all the conducted interviews were imported to NVivo as a first step. Through the use of Nvivo 12, a search for word frequencies in the data set collected instigated and thereafter word cloud was generated from the results of the applied data (Appendix 5 & 6). In addition to these standard steps, the interviews were further examined for words which were contextually important, if with a lower word frequency. Thus, the word frequencies were explored on two levels. On the first level, as to grasp the most discussed terms, the top 100 frequently occurring words of three letters or more were identified, having discarded thematically irrelevant words, such as *the*, *can*, and *may* (Appendix 6). The three most frequently occurring words include: *Education*, *Right(s)*, and *Government*.

As illustrated above, the most recurrent words throughout the six conducted interviews were; Education (63 times), Right(s) (38 times), and Government (38 times). The six interviewees each spoke of these words in different contexts when discussing child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry. Particularly, the connotations ranged from positive to negative depending on the particular stakeholder. Thus, the data set illustrates various opinions and perspective as to how child labor is seen and experienced through each of the stakeholders' perspectives and mindsets, in relation to their backgrounds and expertise within the field of the Indian textile and clothing industry.

Education was the most utilized word throughout all of the interviews, with a total frequency of 63 times. Anindit Chowdhury from the C & A Foundation and Vandhana Kanhari from UNICEF were the stakeholders which used the term the largest amount of times, respectively at 19 (Chowdhury) and 15 (Kanhari). However, although both stakeholders had a high frequency of the term education, their use of it differed to a certain extent. Kanhari utilized the word education in a positive manner, by emphasizing on its importance and how it can be applied as a progressive tool in the development of children and the eradication of child labor. Moreover, Kanhari states that all Indian

children have access to education, yet this is contradicted by all of the other stakeholders. Likewise, Chowdhury emphasized positively on the importance of education and its benefits. Nevertheless, Chowdhury also used education in a negative context, stating that the quality of education in India is simply too low to retain children in the education system and that it is in need of huge restructures and new policies in order to be utilized as an effective tool to raise the living standard in India and reduce child labor.

Both Amar Lal and Mohammed Manan, victims of child labor, utilized education a total of 5 times (Lal) and 13 times (Manan), shared the positive opinion on education of Chowdhury and Kanhari that education is an essential tool for change and that Indians need to be educated at a higher standard in order to effect change. They further, reflect that being rescued by the BBA and having had the ability to obtain a proper education has drastically changed their lives. However, they too mentioned the need for education reforms, as many Indian children do not have access to proper education and at times are not even aware of the option. The European brand representative had a more neutral view on education, conversely focusing on skill development programs rather than education in a formal sense. However, he also emphasized negatively that the current education system in India is flawed. Lastly, in contrast, Anan Ahuja from Shahi Exports described education in a negative context. In total, Ahuja utilized the term education 3 times, although it should be noted that he used term school 13 times with the same context as education. Ahuja raises several critical questions as to whether education plays as an important role as the other stakeholders states it to be. He emphasizes on the extremely low quality of the education system, stating that often children might learn more skill and life lessons from child labor than attending school. According to him, this is a reality for many Indian children and their families and thus currently, at its low quality, education is not necessarily the way forward.

The term Right was used a total of 58 times throughout the six interviews. The term was primarily utilized in two ways; as a statement of confirmation and accuracy (for example, “in order to build the right perception...” and as a statement of a just claim or title (for example, “every child has a right to free and compulsory primary education”). This paper will only employ the latter in the analysis. Thereby, albeit Ahuja and the European brand representative applied the term most frequently it was predominantly used as a confirmation of accuracy and thus not relevant. Although these rights vary throughout the interviews, all stakeholders used positive connotations and context

when describing that all Indians should have rights, whether it be to education, freedom or a birthright. Correspondingly, all the interviewed stakeholders used a negative connotation when these rights were not upheld.

The third most utilized word was Government with a frequency of 38 times. The interviewees which employed the term most often were the European brand representative (12), Chowdhury (9), and Kanhari (6). The European brand representative both used government as a positive concept, emphasizing their collaboration with the Indian Government, through different social welfare programs and initiatives. Furthermore, they also repeatedly commented on the positive progress the Indian Government was making on reducing child labor. Throughout the interview these stakeholders not particularly critical of Government or its laws and legislation, rather focusing on the positive impacts. However, the European brand representative does note that he believes that Government should do more in regard to child labor. In contrast, are the victims of child labor, Lal and Manan, who, although only using the word Government in a combined total of 8 times, imply the government throughout the interview by referring to it as 'they' and 'them'. Lal and Manan are very critical of the Indian Government, repeatedly stressing that the Government is the stakeholder which bares the most responsibility, as it is in control of resources, such as infrastructure and capital, and is capable of implementing and enforcing legislation and regulation. They negatively imply through context and connotation that the Government has not lived up to this responsibility.

Ahuja only mentions Government twice throughout his interview. Both times it is in a negative context with reference to education system, stating that government employees, such as educators, are not properly regulated, thereby resulting in the lows standards of public services. Lastly, Chowdhury has a more neutral stand on the term, Government. He utilizes both positive and negative contexts when discussing the term. Thus, although he at times appears critical of the Government, Chowdhury stresses that no one entity bares the total responsibility of child labor, rather that all of its stakeholders share the responsibility. Therefore, he also emphasizes on the positive improvement that the government is continuously making, while recommending further cooperation and collaboration between all involved stakeholders, be it the government, brands or even the children of India.

In addition to the three terms with the highest word frequency, two additional words became noticeable throughout the analysis, *mindset(s)* and *normal/normalize*. While these words are not on the list of the most frequently utilized throughout the data set, they lay implicit throughout multiple of the interviews. The terms were used a total of 10 times for *normal/normalize* and 8 times for *mindset(s)*. In contrast to the previous terms, these are to a higher extent undefined and open to interpretation and subjectivity. As, the concept of *normal* and *mindset* may fluctuate greatly due to culture, environment and economic background. Specifically, what one might view as 'normal' in the Western hemisphere may not be in the Global South. Thus, all the interviewees use these terms in regard to their own subjective 'reality' and therefore they cannot be directly compared. However, in the case of Lal and Manan, their subjective realities seem to be comparable as their experiences and opinions are very similar, both having been victims of child labor and rescued by the same organization, the BBA. In addition, they have attended the same school and programs through the BBA within a few years of each other.

In four of the six interviews, the term *mindset* was utilized. Chowdhury from the C & A Foundation has the highest frequency, with a total use of four times. He utilized the word in an explanatory manner, stating that the different mindsets of stakeholders are a major causation of child labor. He further elaborates on the term by utilizing the words *normalized* and *socialized*. Chowdhury stresses that a scenario of children working on the streets or in a tea stall, would never materialize in the western world and that there, the reality of child labor, is anything else than 'normal', in contrast to India where he himself views it as a normality. In addition, he states that it is not only the mindset of Indians which needs to develop, but also that of the western mass consumption. Similarly, Kanhari, Ahuja and the European brand representative utilizes the term *mindset* as causation, indicating that without proper awareness and education the Indian mindset of child labor as a regularity will not change. Albeit, Lal and Manan do not use the term *mindset*, they do utilize the term *normal/normalized* throughout their interviews in an analogous manner. Thereby, it can be argued that though Manan and Lal do not directly state the term *mindset*, they do indirectly imply it by referring to child labor in India as 'normal' and the way of life.

The frequencies above illustrate how each of the interviewed stakeholders have their own subjective opinions on the issue of child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry. This, is in large part due to each individual's 'reality', stemming from past experiences, backgrounds and environments.

Therefore, these terms also illustrate the differentiation between stakeholders' opinions on the same concepts and causation in relation to their own subjective mindsets.

4.3.2 Descriptive Analysis

As mentioned previously Edward Freeman defines stakeholders as, "groups and individuals that have a valid interest in the activities and outcomes of a firm and on whom the firm relies to achieve its objectives" (Freeman, Harrison and Wicks, 2007). In the Indian textile and clothing industry there is a plentitude of stakeholders of child labor on both a primary and secondary level, these include actors such as brands, suppliers, consumers, families, governments, non-governmental organizations, the media and many more. Anindit Roy Chowdhury from the C & A Foundation also identifies the child exposed to child labor as a primary stakeholder of child labor. Most notably, he argues that the child has a responsibility to itself to not participate or engage in any form of labor. Furthermore, Chowdhury identifies the family, institutions such as school, the government, brands, the consumer as stakeholders. He believes that all stakeholders, whether it be primary or secondary, of child labor have different layers of responsibility, whether it be toward the child, the consumer, the industry, or, as with the case of the government, toward its citizens.

Chowdhury is not the only stakeholder with this opinion, Anant Ahuja from Shahi Exports also emphasizes the importance of the stakeholder approach in the eradication of child labor, stating that the main actors of child labor need to understand and take into consideration the different perspectives of the stakeholders if change is to happen (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12). He further emphasizes that different stakeholders each have their own objectives and agendas in regard to child labor, indicating that not all stakeholders are necessarily interested in the same outcome. Additionally, it is important to note that Ahuja, as a supplier, views child labor from not only an ethical and social standpoint but also with an economic perspective, as it is the responsibility of the firm to create economic value for its stakeholders (Freeman, Harrison & Zyglidopoulos, 2018). This value can be jeopardized by the state of the reputation of the firm; the presence of child labor within the supply chain can negatively affect the reputation of a firm and thereby also reduce the amount of value the firm produces (Jones, Harrison & Wicks, 2018). Therefore, Ahuja's interests in regard to child labor is also influenced by his perspective as a supplier and his responsibility to his own stakeholders.

As a supplier, Shahi Exports utilizes a large amount of its resources on ensuring that child labor is not within their supply chain through compliance and auditing programs and CSR initiatives. However, their efforts are focused predominantly on their own actions and not those of society. Nevertheless, although Shahi Exports monitor their own supply chain and exerts resources on ensuring that child labor is not utilized by its sub-suppliers, they alone cannot solve the issue of child labor. Vandhana Kanhari from UNICEF shares this sentiment, that one stakeholder alone cannot influence change due to child labor being a multidimensional issue. Thus, it can be asked, which stakeholder bears the brunt of the responsibility, if any? To answer this question the three attributes of stakeholder theory needs to be considered; power, legitimacy, and urgency (Jones & Harrison, 2013). Which stakeholder(s) has power? Which stakeholder(s) has legitimacy? And which stakeholder(s) has urgency? Chowdhury from the C & A Foundation argues that this responsibility is shared amongst all stakeholders, stating that all stakeholders are equally significant.

However, it is important to note that some stakeholders have more power, legitimacy and urgency to attribute to their significance within the system. Stakeholders which have a higher level of significance are able to utilize their influence on other stakeholders in order to implement their will and thereby also their agenda. For example, as Ahuja from Shahi Exports describes the relationship between the brand and supplier as paternalistic, with the brand exuding its standards, regulations and objectives over the supplier. This perspective is further supported by the European brand representative whom also views the brand as the dominant party in the brand-supplier relationship. Thereby the brand is the stakeholder whom manifests its effects in the brand-supplier relationship and thus has the most power. The brands are also the face of the textile and clothing industry towards the consumer, which gives further legitimacy and urgency to the brands thereby establishing its powerful position in the stakeholder hierarchy.

Another influential child labor stakeholder in the Indian textile and clothing industry, is the Indian government. The government controls the allocation of funds, whether it be to states, infrastructure or social welfare initiatives and programs, as well as laws and legislation. Thereby, the government is able to exert its legitimacy, urgency and power on all of the stakeholders. Therefore, Amar Lal, a victim of child labor, argues that the government needs to prioritize the issue of child labor in order to effect change. He maintains that without the government's commitment then little can be done to

eradicate child labor as a large portion of the issues lies within the system. However, although the Indian government in effecting change, the support and commitment of other stakeholders is still required. The European brand representative believes that the to do this is through private-public partnerships, which can bring the different stakeholders and their interests to the table.

According to Carroll (1991) and his definition of CSR, firms are obliged to follow society's codification of laws, norms and morals and, "to do what is right, just, and fair" (Sato, 2013, p.92). To that extent there is a multitude of collaborations and CSR initiatives by the various stakeholders aimed at eradicating child labor and examples by the interviewed stakeholders include collaborations such as between the Indian Labor Department and UNICEF and Shahi Exports collaboration with NGOs for proper auditing training and compliance. Shahi Exports' training initiative fulfills their legal responsibility to obey India's laws on child labor, as well as their ethical responsibility, to oblige the expectations and obligations of society and its rules. In addition, by partnering with NGOs with more experience in regards to these issues Shahi Exports also limit their exposure to CSI, as child labor can be defined as behavior, "where great harm is caused to the system, and where almost all unbiased observers are in agreement that irresponsible are has occurred" (Armstrong, 1977, p.185). Thereby, Shahi Exports utilizes their CSR as a tool for improvement. As with Shahi Exports, brands also utilize these type of CSR initiatives and collaborations to improve and support compliance and auditing as to ensure that no child labor is present within the supply chain.

These partnerships are valuable as suppliers and brands have difficulties with guaranteeing proper compliance and auditing of its sub-suppliers at the various tiers. For example, partnerships with organizations such as the Better Cotton Initiative, which monitors the production of cotton at the bottom of the supply chain, which the European brand is part of. Thus, by partnering with Better Cotton Initiative, the brand creates further safeguards to protect against the potential risks within the textile and clothing industry, particularly at lowest supplier tiers where child labor most often is utilized. The Better Cotton Initiative is an example of a sustainable coalition, capable of creating value for stakeholders. Additionally, NGOs such as the C & A Foundation which specializes in sustainable issues, such as child labor, in the fashion and apparel industry utilizes large amounts of resources on the rescue and rehabilitation of child laborers, similarly to the organization, Bachpan Bachao Andolan, which rescued and rehabilitated Aman Lal and Mohammed Manan. Furthermore,

the C & A Foundation also engages in direct programming and its implementation focused on rescue, rehabilitation, education, and life skills.

The Indian government is also contributing to the creation of CSR initiatives on the national level through the newly established CSR mandate which was created in 2013. The CSR mandate, which makes it compulsory for firms to engage in CSR with a minimum spend of 2 percent of their annual profits, is increasing the focus on CSR by making it mandatory. The implementation of the CSR mandate has already generated results such the ones by stated Textile Excellence report on the CSR mandate. Through the creation and enforcement of the CSR mandate, the government illustrates in authority (power, legitimacy, and urgency) over its stakeholders, such as suppliers and brands, and its ability to effect change. In addition, by making CSR mandatory the Indian government makes CSR a legal responsibility, rather than previously when it was merely an ethical and philanthropic responsibility (Carroll, 1991). Thereby, it can further be argued that the government is the most influential stakeholder with the capability of implementing and enforcing legislation, initiatives and regulations to eradicate child labor.

According to Anindit Ray Chowdhury from the C & A Foundation the largest challenge of child labor in the apparel sector is that the apparel sector is quite opaque. Specifically, as described previously the supply chain in the textile and clothing industry, particularly the lower tiers, is very in-transparent often resulting in hidden supply chains. These lower tiers with low transparency include embroidery, embellishment, laundry and washing services and mills, these lower tiers are most often not under the purview of direct compliance to the brands (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12). This is a major concern as it makes it difficult to almost impossible to facilitate proper monitoring from regulatory bodies, such as the government, firms and NGO. Chowdhury emphasizes the consequences of in-transparency, that if there is no transparency then there will most likely be a compliance issue. Hence, the lack of transparency enables stakeholders to take advantage of the system as well as each other, resulting in a lack of compliance of regulations.

An example of this lack compliance has been provided by Shahi Exports; whom depicts a case of illegal overtime in some of their factories where the contracting brand discovered the lack of compliance and following of protocol. This merely resulted in the reduction of a few points of their

compliance rating as well as a mild reprimand. Anan Ahuja, head of organizational development at Shahi Exports, further describes;

At the same time, I would also say that sometimes there have been issues in the factory, whether it's compliance related, like, oh, we, um, we're supposed to follow this protocol, but the fact we decided not to, and then the auditors from the brand who came to see, they discovered that it wasn't being followed (Ahuja Interview, 2018, Appendix 13).

Based on this example, it can be reasoned that although compliance is extremely important to Shahi Exports, incidents occur as illustrated above. Nonetheless, this incident demonstrates the minimum and ineffective consequences of the lack of compliance by suppliers. Despite partaking in illegal behavior according to Indian legislation, Shahi Exports were only reprimanded by the brand with no consequences from the government. If India's garment industry leading supplier is not reproached for illegal behavior, what then can be found in the supply chains of less prominent and monitored suppliers? And are the brands aware of it? "(...) are brands aware? yes, they are. I mean I would say it would be naive for us to assume that the brands completely don't know anything" (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12).

While suppliers and brands have a responsibility to comply with laws and legislations, the government also has a responsibility to ensure that these laws and legislations are being monitored and enforced. Vandhana Kanhari, specialist in child protection at UNICEF, believes that the occurrence of child labor is in large part due to a lack of monitoring by the government as most monitoring in the Indian textile and clothing industry occurs in supply chains where the product is meant exports. Therefore, she argues that a more stringent criteria for monitoring is needed by the government in order to enforce laws. However, Ahuja challenges the view on monitoring and compliance, arguing that from a brand and supplier's perspective, compliance is more an issue of perception, to ensure that the brand is viewed as a responsible and ethical stakeholder;

But compliance is actually a lot of it is perception. So, in order to build the right perception, we need to have strong communication. So, maybe monthly updates to our brands that say, look, we've audited these factories. These are the ratings we've given them. These are the challenges, being transparent (Ahuja Interview, 2018, Appendix 13).

As with most countries in the Global South, India has historically been dependent on other regions, particularly the United Kingdom, due to colonialism (Lange, 2015). This dependence has affected the autonomy of India, since its independence in 1947 and the results of it are still evident in the Indian society today. Another defining feature of the Global South and India is the limited economic development which has affected the country in different ways. In regard to the Indian government and corruption, the lack of state resources has limited the compensation and benefits of state employees and thereby also greatly increased the risk of corruption (Lange, 2015). As mentioned previously corruption is a fundamental problem in India and it undermines the political and bureaucratic structure of India and its implementation. The European brand representatives argues that the heart of issue lies with implementation, stating that, “Unfortunately, the issue is about implementation because there’s a lot of corruption there (...) I mean if the implementation was straight, you would not need auditors or social compliance” (European Brand Representative Interview, 2018, Appendix 14). Furthermore, all of the interviewed stakeholders were aware of a lack of implementation and enforcement of not only law and legislation, but also infrastructure and social welfare initiatives.

It can thus be argued that the corruption in India and its undermining of implementation is a main cause of child labor. As, if social welfare programs, infrastructure (education, health, transport, etc.) CSR initiatives and legislation are not properly implemented and enforced they become obsolete or at best lose momentum. Therefore, in order to eradicate child labor this underlying fundamental cause of corruption and lack of implantation needs to be remedied first as to affect change in India. As Lal stresses,

Governments have to be taking this step (to eradicate child labor). They have to come forward because they have all the resources, they have all the money, they have the schools, they have the health facilities, they have the power (Lal Interview, 2019, Appendix 17).

As Lal states, it is the government’s responsibility to take care of its citizens and thereby ensure that child labor is not utilized and present in supply chain. However, currently corruption is wide spread within the government, and thereby undermines the effectiveness of all of its institutions of governance (Raj, 2011).

In India, every child up to the age of 14 years has the right to free and compulsory primary education (Kanhari Interview, 2019, Appendix 14). However, according to Oxfam India, there are 287 million illiterate adults in India, amounting to a third of the global total, which illustrates a large disconnect between education and literacy. This is due to quality of education and lack thereof in most Indian government schools as well as a difficulty with retaining students within the system. Thus, children often end in employment rather than attend school, as, “the opportunity cost of going to school or not going is not as high as people make it seem like it is” (Ahuja Interview, 2018, Appendix 13). If the education is not up to par, then there will more likely than not be an issue with retainment as Chowdhury stresses;

If you look at the quality of education, most government schools in India, unfortunately these are not to the highest of standards. And if the standards are not high, a child is not happy in the school environment. Then the child would not want to stay in the class after the particular age group (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12).

The lack of retainment of students in government schools is in large part due to low quality of education. According to Ahuja, this is due to the standard of teachers, in India when working as a teacher in government schools getting laid off is a rarity and thus teachers often do not even show up for lessons, as Ahuja states, “it’s a really flawed system, but that’s kind of the reality, at least right now” (Kanhari Interview, 2019, Appendix 14). Another reason for the low retention rate is parents pulling children from school in order to participate and help out with household chores or to earn additional income for the family through various forms of labor (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12). Hence, without an extensive reform of the education system school retainment figures will not increase nor will the number of illiterates decrease.

However, over recent years the Indian government has created a plentitude of social welfare programs aimed at improving access to education as well as the quality of it. For example, The Department of the Ministry of Labor has created the National Child Labor Project Program, which is aimed at bridging education for those who have missed out due to different circumstances such as child labor (Kanhari Interview, 2019, Appendix 14). Based on this, although level the level of education remains low, the Indian government is working diligently on improving the system and ensuring 100% quality education for all. This points to the development of a stronger education

system in India and a brighter future. Which is furthermore in alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SDG 8 target 7 states,

Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labor in all its forms (UN, 2015).

Is it realistic to have eradicated child labor in all its forms by 2025 when there in 2011 were over 10 million children in labor in India? (Kanhari Interview, 2019, Appendix 14). According to Chowdhury, that is not big question to raise, rather, “to me, the big question is, are we keeping that as a target and moving towards it?” (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12). As mentioned above, the main challenges of eradicating child labor in the textile and clothing industry are hidden supply chains in the informal sector, consisting of primarily home-based work such as embroidery and embellishment, lack of transparency and compliance, lack of implementation and enforcement of laws and legislation, lack of access to quality education. These challenges seem to be difficult to impossible to overcome by 2025 in order to eradicate child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry. However, as Chowdhury states;

I'm not really the position to tell you with absolute authority that yes, at least in India we would be achieving 8.7. In fact, on the contrary, I'd probably say we may not be achieving 8.7. However, my point of view always is if there is a goal, and there are people working towards the goal, whether this is the civil society organizations, whether it's the government, *then there is hope* (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12).

According to Kirmayer, Adeponle and Dzokote, “different histories, ecologies, cultural practices, and institutions within societies result in different social rules, expectations, and values or ‘prevalent cultural mandates’” (Kirmayer, Adeponle & Dzokoto, 2018, p.4). Given India's rich history (empires, colonialism, the caste system, civil wars, etc.), size, population, religion, diversity and development, the cultural mandates of India differ significantly from that of the Western world.

Thereby, one cannot presume that the same norms and values that are dominant in the West can be applied in India. Furthermore, the Indian perspective on the good life also differs from that of western, as it is determined by conceptualizations that stem from the ecological and cultural context in which the individual occupies, for example, social settings, the availability of resources and the shaping of core beliefs and priorities (Inglehart, 2006). This is exemplified by Amar Lal and Mohammed Manan, victims of child labor, who until they were rescued had no idea that there was an alternative to the life they were living. As Manan describes;

It was out of the imagination. You know, like you are living in a different part of the world where you have no idea that what's going on in other places, what's the life of other people. So, I think that for me, I used to feel like, okay, this is my life (Manan Interview, 2019, Appendix 16).

As illustrated above, both Manan and Lal were unaware that alternatives to a life without labor existed as labor had been a part of their family heritage for generations. Thus, they were content with the life they were living. This conception was not changed until they were rescued and discovered alternative lifestyles which in turn altered their perception of the good life. Nonetheless, Lal and Manan's perception of the good life still differs from the that of the Western, as the Western culture emphasizes self-enhancement in contrast to the Eastern which emphasizes fitting in and fulfilling of obligations (Wirtz, Chiu, Diener & Oishi, 2009). These obligations are often based on the position in life of the individual, where in India the caste system classifies the individual at birth (Tenhunen & Saavala, 2012). Furthermore, according to Kanhari, the caste system sometimes pushes children out of school as due their social and economic standing it can become a necessity for children to support the family through labor (Kanhari Interview, 2019, Appendix 14).

As for the case of child labor, the Indian mindset once again differs greatly from that of the Western, where in the west, child labor is a rarity and considered abhorrent, in India it is quite normalized. Chowdhury elaborates that child labor has become socialized and normalized in the Indian mindset, and that child labor is common sight in India (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12). He states that many Indians would consider children from impoverished backgrounds, who more often than not would not get anything to eat, working as, "a matter of good fortune for these kids" (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12). Furthermore, Chowdhury

states, “so this kind of a mindset of families, of communities, of service providers, of government mechanisms, of people within the government, makes it extremely hard for us to take action against and labor” (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12). Ahuja further challenges the classical Western view of child labor by setting up the following scenario based on the Indian mindset;

How wrong would it be, if you as parents said, look, we need the money because we can't even get food we are literally starving to death and in order to get the money, the children should help us too because they're not learning anything in school. I just think like when you break it down like that child labor doesn't seem like the biggest problem in the world (Ahuja Interview, 2018, Appendix 13).

He thereby confronts the Western perception, illustrating how many Indians have little to no alternative, “my point is like, is it really irrational? Is it really wrong for a family to think if their children are not learning anything, maybe they should learn a skill that will actually earn them money?” (Ahuja Interview, 2018, Appendix 13). Ahuja elaborates on what many of the other stakeholders leave unsaid, that child labor at times in India is the better alternative. This mindset is what Chowdhury emphasizes needs to be challenged, Indians need to change their perception of child labor, but in order for that to happen there need to be enormous social and economic development in all of India.

However, the Indian culture and mindset is slowly evolving in concurrency with globalization and exposure to different global cultures. The traditional Indian conceptions, such as the relations between men and women, basic values, and ideals and conceptions of human nature, are transforming and Indians are beginning to adopt more westernized ideas and concepts (Tenhunen & Saavala, 2012). Therefore, it is not irrational to assume that in the future the Indian mindset towards child labor will also evolve, although the sheer size and population of India presents a large challenge to this timeline. In addition, there are many stakeholders working toward changing this mindset as well, such as NGOs, the government, trade unions, associations, suppliers, brands and individuals. For example, Amar Lal who after his own experiences with child labor has dedicated his life to ending child labor through the legal system,

I think that law is the way that you can fight in the legal system way and you can improve education and implementation in the systems and the people in the government, which is very important. So, I decided that, okay, I will go for my law degree and when I completed my law degree, then I will continue to work for the children issues and child work (Lal Interview, 2019, Appendix 17).

Consequently, Lal's experiences have affected him greatly and shaped his life and ambitions, as today he works with cases related to children issues, such as child labor, bonded labor and sexual abuse (Lal Interview, 2019, Appendix 16). Lal is an example of how being exposed to child labor can impact individuals. Other impacts of child labor on the individual include physical and mental health of children, such as malnutrition, work related illnesses/symptoms (eyestrain, chronic cough, hearing loss and in extreme cases loss of organs) and an increased risk of sexual abuse (Ibrahim, Abdalla, Jafer, Abdelgadir & Vries, 2018). According to Kanhari examples of physical impacts in the textile and clothing industry include, "eye problems and disability when the children are engaged in the embroidery industry" (Ahuja Interview, 2018, Appendix 13). Further awareness needs to be emphasized on these impacts of child labor on the physical and mental health of children in order to affect the Indian mindset. As the European brand representative states, "it's a mindset. So maybe talking to them about the consequences of employing children (can create change). It's all about awareness" (European Brand Representative Interview, 2018, Appendix 15).

Globalization has not only had an impact on the Indian culture, but also its economy. It has become increasingly impossible for countries in the Global South, such as India, to meet the demands of the Western world without economic, legislative and societal costs (Rudra, 2008). This race to the bottom has had a large impact on Indian legislation as well as its economy, as competitive exposures intensify for low-wage developing countries (Greider, 1998). Particularly, the Indian economy has been affected as many brands have moved their production to India as to gain the competitive advantage of low-cost labor and production opportunities (ILO, 2006). This has put further strain on the Indian suppliers as brands and consumers continually demand lower prices in concurrence with the global demand for higher living and working standards through initiatives such as the SDGs and Human Rights and Labor Standards Policy. Ahuja from Shahi Exports provides a supplier's perspective on the matter;

The retail prices are not going up. If anything, they're going down. Clothes are getting cheaper now. That's fine. But the problem is that if you look across the world, there's obviously inflation. Um, there's things like minimum wage revisions. There are all these different things that are forcing the price of manufacturing to go up. So, if retail prices are the same, that means the consumer is still just getting clothes as cheap as they used to, or cheaper, but the factories have to work harder and find new ways to maintain the same standards. It's hard to imagine how better standards will start (Ahuja Interview, 2018, Appendix 13).

Ahuja further emphasizes that if suppliers are to change their behavior then the demand in turn also needs to adapt. However, in India about 75% of the clothing produced is made for local consumption and is therefore not under the same compliance scrutiny as international exports (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12). This is, again, in part due to the Indian mindset, but also the average Indian's purchasing power. In 2013, the yearly average income for the bottom 50% of the Indian population was only \$2334, hardly enough to be selective about how one's clothes were produced. Therefore, it seems reasonable that Indian consumers are more concerned about price than production standards and as Chowdhury stresses, "one of the cheapest way of making clothes is by making it through child labor because it allows you to get to it by not paying the right fee" (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12).

However, it is not only the Indian mindset and demand tendencies that need to change. The Western world's mass consumption has reached new pinnacles making current ecological, socially and financially patterns unsustainable (Gerber & Raina, 2018). The pressure of the current tendency of mass consumption is particularly putting immense strain on underdeveloped countries as they endeavor to catch-up and provide the production of goods. Furthermore, as Herman Daly states of the impossibility theorem, "that a Western-style high mass consumption economy for a world of 7.5 billion people is simply impossible" (Daly, 1991, p. 149). Thus, unless the Western world slows its consumption and limits its demand on underdeveloped countries change will not be possible.

Current demand tendencies in the textile and clothing industry are highly based on the concept of fast fashion; consumers want constantly new designs, at faster a pace and at a lower price (Jung & Lin, 2016). Another issue with fast fashion, according to the European brand representative, is that despite the high quality of design, the quality of clothes (the fabric, stitching, etc.) is so low that

there is an extremely high turnaround. Thus, consumers go through clothes at a much higher rate than if the quality of the products were higher (European Brand Representative Interview, 2018, Appendix 14). This creates an even high strain on the Western mass consumption and thus the Indian market. According to Benhabib and Bisin, the increased tendency of mass consumption is in large due to capitalism, as Western societies are developing into a new stage of capitalism, “one which is characterized by corporations exercising monopolistic power and sustaining demand by advertising through the media” (Benhabib & Bisin, 2000, p.1). Thus, it can be considered hypocritical of companies which claim to be sustainable, yet use advertising to induce consumerism, as Chowdhury states, “you can't be saying that I'm a company that believes in sustainability and yet my marketing mechanism, constantly ask people to buy more and more and more” (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12). Chowdhury further argues that the reallocation of production sites to underdeveloped countries in order to gain a competitive advantage and thereby cheaper products is also a major factor, “the world is changing because the market is geared towards that practice, they want you to buy more and more” (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12).

In order to lessen the strain on the textile and clothing industry in India and thereby also the use of child labor within it, current fast fashion tendencies need to change. This can be done first and foremost through consumer education. Consumers, at a large scale, are simply not aware of what is happening within the industry and which effects it has on individuals and in this case children. Therefore, transparency needs to increase, as Chowdhury argues that supply chains need to be more transparent, have better compliance mechanisms and most importantly be publicly disclosed in order to ensure that consumers are aware of the happenings within brand's supply chains. The European brand representative further supports this by stating,

So, I think the first step should be that, you know, consumers are made aware about how a product is made, where it comes from, and what other risks associated in that manufacturing process of the products. That's what give a perspective (European Brand Representative Interview, 2018, Appendix 15).

Furthermore, consumers need to be questioning the origins of the products they consume and reflect on the ethical consequences of their consumer behavior. Chowdhury emphasizes that

currently consumers are not asking the correct questions in regard to their consumption, rather, he states that, “we almost always ask the question in terms of what does my clothes cost or what is it made off? Or how is the fit? (...) We almost never asked who made my clothes” (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12). Therefore, he stresses that there needs to be much more focus on consumer education, as without consumers being aware of the negative effects of their behavior it will not change. Prevention thereby, plays a large role through the creation of awareness, such as public advocacy campaigns (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12). However, the question is also what the consumer does with the information they are given, as with Chowdhury’s example of the Indian consumer;

The question is, what do you do with the knowledge? If you ask anyone in India, do you know that children work or do you know about child labor, I think about a hundred percent, you would get a response saying yes! I mean people may not know the depths of it, but people know that there is child labor that exists in the apparel sector, people know about child labor. The question we really need to ask is, what are we doing about it Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12).

Another approach to educating the consumer is promoting ethical fashion initiatives such as slow fashion, a contrast to fast fashion. The concept of slow fashion focuses on slowing down the production cycle of clothes and thereby further improving the quality of life for all workers, guaranteeing their fundamental rights by removing time pressure on the fashion cycle (Fletcher, 2007). Furthermore, by slowing down the production cycle the level of quality of the products will also increase and thereby the turnaround of new purchases of clothing will decrease. Thus if, consumers are more selective about which brands they purchase from and how they are produced then brands are forced to be more selective about the suppliers they contract (Ahuja Interview, 2018, Appendix 13). Thereby, the risk of child labor in the supply chain will be reduced.

To a larger extent international brands are turning their attention to ethical fashion initiatives such as slow fashion or even garment libraries. The concept of garment libraries is built upon the ability of consumer to, “go into a garment library online, choose the clothes that they want, get them delivered at home, wear them for a couple of times. And then send it back” (Chowdhury Interview, 2018, Appendix 12). Thereby, consumers can lessen their consumption of clothing further, which

will have positive economic, environmental and societal effects of the issue of child labor. If child labor is to be eradicated these changes are essential because as the European brand representative states, “if they (consumers) go on demanding cheaper, cheaper, cheaper, then somebody has to pay that price, don't they? (European Brand Representative Interview, 2018, Appendix 15).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

From the analysis above, key findings illustrate that the Indian Government does indeed have a large impact on child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry. The findings suggest that the Indian Government is the stakeholder which holds the greatest power, influence and urgency of child labor due to factors, such as access to resources and ability to create and change regulations and legislation. The results further demonstrate that the before mentioned impact has been both negative and positive on child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry. Specifically, the Government has initiated legislation banning child labor, which was revised as recently as 2016. In addition, the Indian Government has also ratified the United Nations' Convention of the Rights of the Child and through the Companies Act of 2013 made a spend of 2% of the total profits of all firms operating in India on CSR mandatory. These positive impacts can be observed from the reduction of 7% in child labor in India from 2001 to 2011 (Kumar, 2015).

However, the Indian Government is also responsible for a row of negative impacts on child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry. Particularly, the lack of enforcement and implementation of the before mentioned legislations on child labor. Regrettably, much of the legislation aimed at eradicating child labor is rarely enforced by punishment and thus stakeholders have little incentive to follow it. Another aspect of the findings which decelerates the implementation and enforcement of the relevant legislation is the high level of corruption in India. Thereby, the progressive impacts created by the Indian Government are reduced considerably. These implications are also applicable to education in India. As, despite having made education in India free and compulsory and a fundamental right to children between 6 and 14, many Indian children still do not have access to education. Thus, it not nearly enough for the Indian Government to ‘talk the talk’, rather further effort and implementation is needed to ‘walk the talk’.

From the results, it is also clear that poverty is a major causation of child labor in India. The findings illustrated that this is in part due to the tendency of the capitalistic mentality as well as the race to the bottom where wages are forcibly reduced as to remain competitive. In addition, the income inequality in India between the bottom 50% and the top 1% is massive, leaving over 680 million Indians unable to meet their essential needs (Appendix 4). To reduce this number, the Indian Government would ideally need to raise public social spending for health care, water, and sanitation, from the 20% of today to 50%. Thus, it can be concluded that the Indian Government has a large impact, whether it be negative and positive, on child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry. However, according to the findings this impact needs to be increased significantly if it is to have a meaningful impact the eradication of child labor.

How does the mindset of relevant stakeholders affect child labor? To answer this question, the mindsets of the interviewed stakeholders were analyzed and the Indian culture and conceptions of the 'good life' were taken into account. The results of the analysis found clear support that child labor has in many ways been normalized in the classical Indian mindset. Indians do not find child labor odd, rather a daily manifestation. This is a direct contradiction of a Western mindset, where child labor is viewed as unacceptable and is rarely if ever openly exhibited. The normalization of child labor in India is part due to India history of colonialism where forced labor was practiced, therefore child labor cannot be considered a new phenomenon. More notably, though is the finding that Indians have normalized child labor as many view it as a lesser evil, than the perils of starvation and the other consequences of extreme poverty.

However, although the Western mindset in general perceives child labor as objectionable, it rarely accounts for the consequences of the Western consumer behavior. The analysis found evidence for that Western mass consumption is putting immense pressure on brands and thereby suppliers to supply ever cheaper products, causing suppliers to cut corners regarding compliance and at times using child labor, as it is the cheapest source of labor. Thus, it can be concluded that it is not only the mentality and mindset of the Indian population which needs to become less fixed, but also that of the Western consumers. Through the content analysis it was illustrated that 'realities' of each of the interviewed stakeholders differed regarding the subjective understanding and usage of certain terms and concepts, specifically; education, right, government, mindset and normal/normalize. These subjective realities differ between the stakeholder, and therefore their interviews have been

examined from a critical standpoint. Thus, it can be concluded that the individual mindset of relevant stakeholders affect child labor different forms depending on the individual stakeholder's mindset, whether it be a fixed or growth mindset. For instance, the fixed Indian mindset that child labor is a normalized concept validates it and reduces motivation for change and development.

Thereby, it can be determined that, in lieu of India's extensive legislation on child labor, that child labor is still present in the Indian textile and clothing industry today due to a variety of tangible and intangible factors. As identified above, the tangible factors include; high levels of poverty, lack of access to compulsory and free education, lack of enforcement and implementation of existing legislations and regulations, and Western mass consumption. These tangible factors are furthermore intensified by the effects of globalization and the global economy. Furthermore, the main intangible factor of child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry is the fixed mindset and Indian culture, which has normalized and standardized child labor. From the results above, a clear finding emerged; that the target of SDG 8.7 will not be realizable in the set timeframe.

Whereas previous research of child labor in India, such as, *Child Labour in India – An Overview* by M.C Naidu and Desaratha Ramaiah, *The child and the state in India: Child labor and education policy in comparative perspective* by Myron Weiner and *Child labor and Fertility, schooling, and the economic contribution of children of rural India: An econometric analysis* by Mark Rosenzweig and Robert Evenson, predominantly has focused on tangible contributing factors, this paper has encompassed the intangible factor of the mindset. In addition, this paper has drawn extensively on the subjective realities of the individual stakeholders rather than solely quantitative data, as to gain an understanding of the mindset of child labor and how each interviewed stakeholder perceives it. Conversely, the tangible findings of this paper are in line with those of previous studies wherein poverty, unemployment, lack of access to education and lack of implementation and enforcement is examined.

The findings of this paper can be applied by most stakeholders of the issue, although the information may be particularly applicable for stakeholders whom are actively implementing initiatives, programs, regulations or legislation on child labor. This is due to the intangible nature of the findings, that the mindset is one of the main contributing factors, and therefore it needs to be imparted through continuous education and awareness. In addition, the findings that there is a

significant lack of enforcement and implementation of child labor legislation leads this paper to recommend that the Indian Government considerably improves and increases its monitoring and compliance systems of operating brands and suppliers. Once discrepancies are located, enforcement of legislation will be made easier. In addition, the findings are also relevant for consumers, if consumers are to a further extent aware of their mindset and the consequences of their purchases they may make more sustainability and ethical consumer choices.

There are a number of gaps in the knowledge in this research paper which would benefit from further research. Specifically, the paper lacks the stakeholder perspective of the Indian Government, as well as the insight of consumers; what they buy and why, are they aware of mass consumptions' consequences and would it make a difference? In addition, future research on this topic would include how to implement the findings of this paper, by further investigating the collaborations of stakeholders on child labor in the textile and clothing industry. Particularly, how multi-stakeholder approaches can raise awareness and collaborations, as the different stakeholders are able to reach various target groups and thereby enable further cooperation on SDG target; eradicating all forms of child labor by 2025.

5.2 Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to answer the research question of; *In lieu of India's extensive legislation on child labor, why is child labor still present in the Indian textile and clothing industry today?* To that extent, the following sub-questions were also answered as to gain further understanding of the stakeholders of child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry and their mindsets on the issue;

1. How does the mindset of relevant stakeholders affect child labor?
2. To what extent has the Indian Government had an impact on child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry?

The issue of child labor in the Indian textile and clothing industry is a contemporary problem which will have significant consequences if not attended to. Some of these consequences include; the continuous exploitation of children, increase in poverty and income inequality in India, strain on the environment, and illiteracy as a result of the lack of access to proper education. Thus, it essential

that not only the production behavior in India is altered, but that the Western tendency of mass consumption is drastically contemplated and reflected on. As the reality of the matter is that as it spreads in line with globalization, we enter what Herman Daly defines as the impossibility theorem, “that a Western-style high mass consumption economy for a world of 7.5 billion people is simply impossible” (Daly, 1991, p. 149).

The most recent figures of child labor in India state that there are over 11.7 million Indian children in labor, working under hazardous occupations and processes, which is utterly unacceptable. Children, such as Amar Lal and Mohammed Manan must have better basic prerequisites to enable them to live the ‘good life’, be it the Western or Southern conceptualization of the term. Therefore, the Indian Government must take action regarding these economic constraints described by the Indian Minister of Women and Child Development, which need to be lessened and access to quality education increased. Furthermore, legislation must be implemented and enforced as without these functions as legislation without enforcement is fruitless and obsolete.

In conclusion, Chowdhury was on the right track when he stated that all stakeholders of child labor need to take responsibility for their actions. Be it, brands which demand low prices and stressful schedules of its vendors, suppliers which do not follow labor regulation and utilize child labor, the government which does not enforce or implement its own regulation, or consumers which mass consume clothing and thereby enable the circle. All stakeholders need to be aware of the consequences of their actions from not only an environmental and economic standpoint, but also a societal. Thus, next time you go shopping, keep in mind, “if they (consumers) go on demanding cheaper, cheaper, cheaper, then somebody has to pay that price, don't they? (Interview 3, 2018).

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7. Appendix

7.1 The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



7.2 Sustainable Development Goal 8. (Target 8.7)

The SDG targets

8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances, and in particular at least 7% per annum GDP growth in the least-developed countries

8.2 Achieve higher levels of productivity of economies through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high value added and labor-intensive sectors

8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises including through access to financial services

8.4 Improve progressively through 2030 global resource efficiency in consumption and production, and endeavor to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation in accordance with the 10-year framework of programs on sustainable consumption and production with developed countries taking the lead

8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor, eradicate forced labor, and by 2025 end child labor in all its forms including recruitment and use of child soldiers

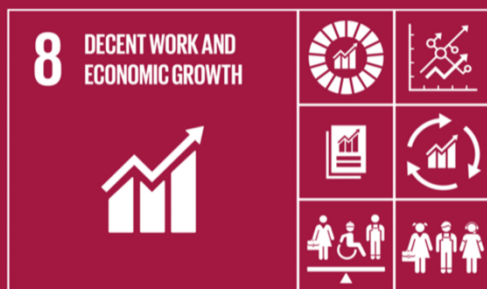
8.8 Protect labor rights and promote safe and secure working environments of all workers, including migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in precarious employment

8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism which creates jobs, promotes local culture and products

8.10 strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and to expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all

8.a. Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, particularly LDCs, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for LDCs

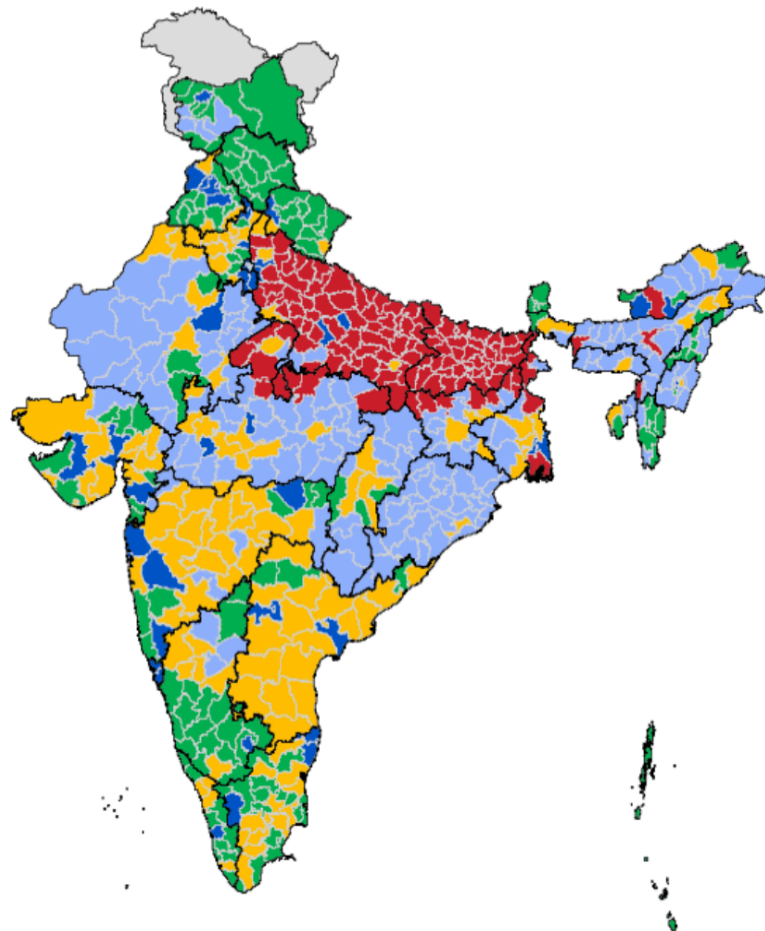
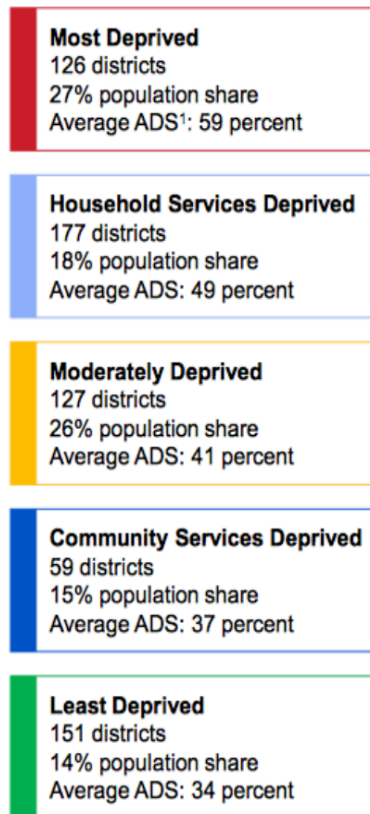
8.b. By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the ILO Global Jobs Pact



7.3 India and Deprivation

Exhibit E6

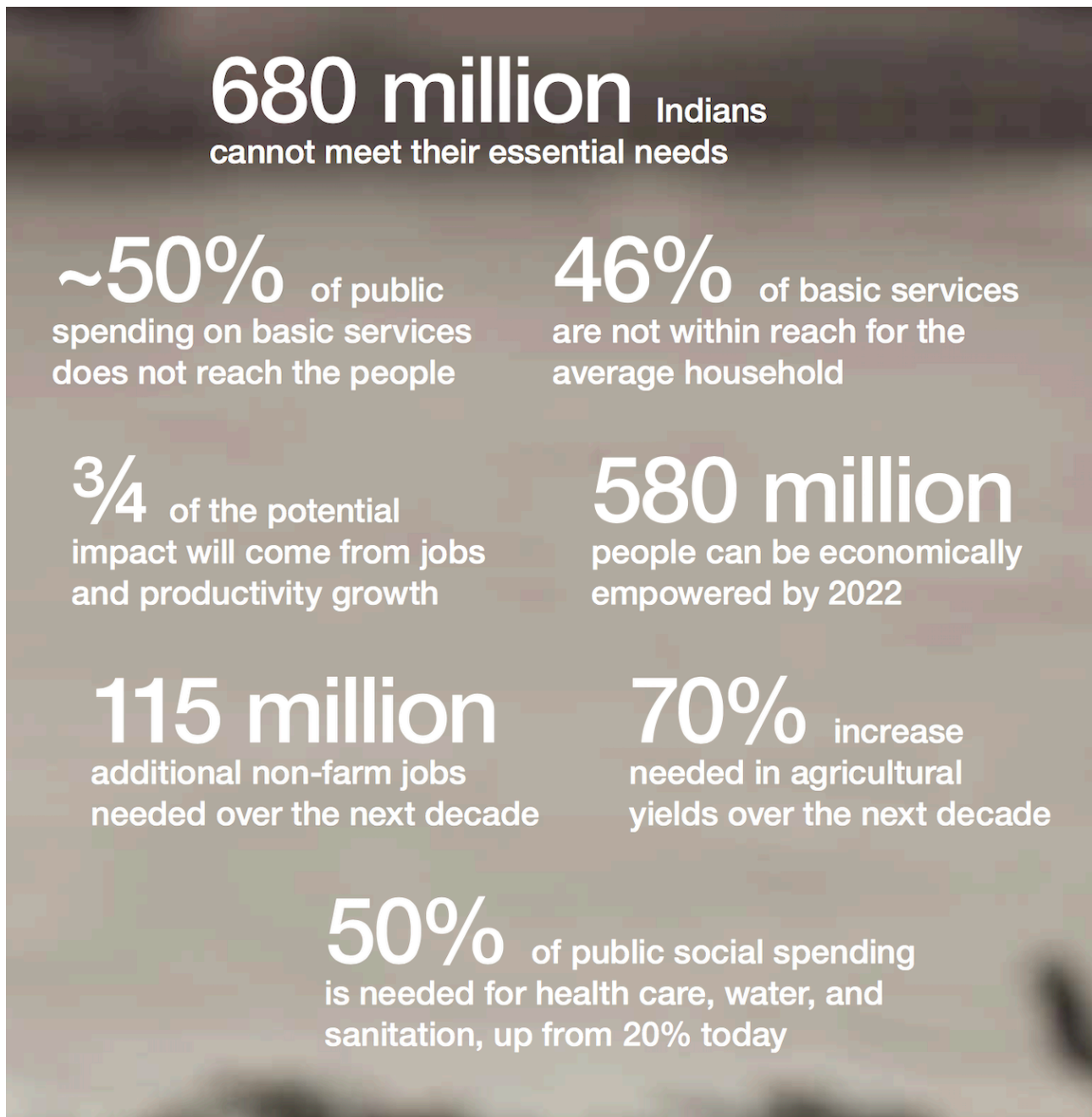
Each of India's districts falls into one of five categories based on the extent and pattern of deprivation found there
2011



¹ Access Deprivation Score: distance of each district from the point of no deprivation.

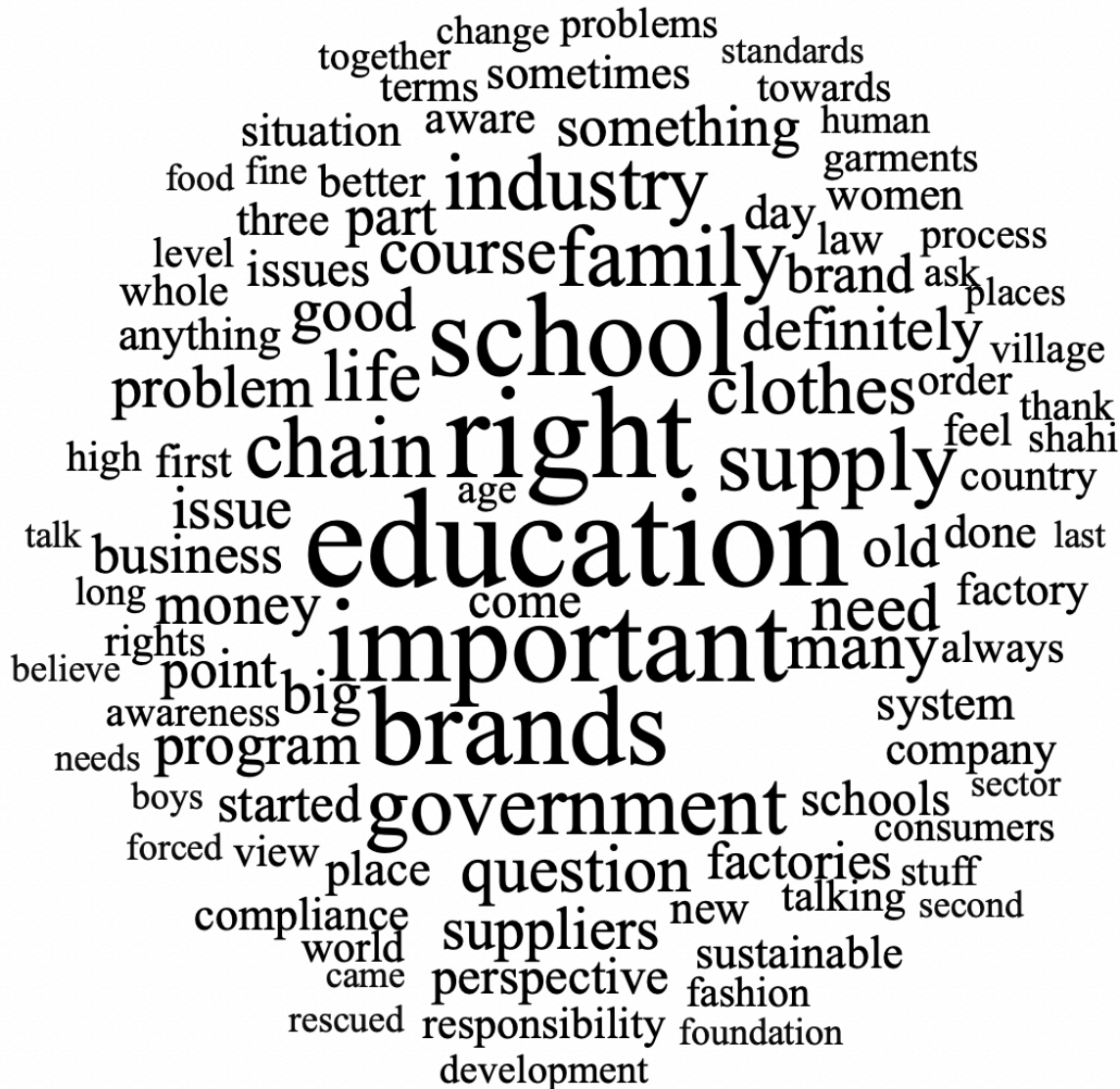
Source: McKinsey Report (2014)

7.4 India and Essential Needs



Source: McKinsey Report (2014)

7.5 Word Cloud: Word Frequency NVivo 12



Source: Own table from NVivo 12

7.6 100 Most Frequent Words

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage v
education	9	63	0,80%
right	5	58	0,74%
important	9	52	0,66%
school	6	52	0,66%
brands	6	49	0,62%
supply	6	38	0,48%
chain	5	37	0,47%
family	6	37	0,47%
government	10	37	0,47%
industry	8	33	0,42%
clothes	7	30	0,38%
life	4	30	0,38%
course	6	27	0,34%
many	4	27	0,34%
need	4	27	0,34%
question	8	27	0,34%
big	3	24	0,31%
definitely	10	24	0,31%
good	4	24	0,31%
issue	5	23	0,29%
money	5	23	0,29%
old	3	23	0,29%
problem	7	23	0,29%
program	7	23	0,29%
suppliers	9	23	0,29%
part	4	22	0,28%
something	9	22	0,28%
brand	5	21	0,27%
business	8	21	0,27%
point	5	21	0,27%
factories	9	20	0,25%
started	7	20	0,25%
come	4	19	0,24%
issues	6	19	0,24%
perspective	11	19	0,24%
day	3	18	0,23%
plsecond	6	12	0,15%
scsector	6	12	0,15%
systandards	9	12	0,15%
dcstandards	9	12	0,15%
firtalk	4	12	0,15%
new	3	17	0,22%
sometimes	9	17	0,22%
anything	8	16	0,20%
aware	5	16	0,20%
better	6	16	0,20%
company	7	16	0,20%
compliance	10	16	0,20%
factory	7	16	0,20%
feel	4	16	0,20%
law	3	16	0,20%
situation	9	16	0,20%
sustainable	11	16	0,20%
three	5	16	0,20%
women	5	16	0,20%
always	6	15	0,19%
country	7	15	0,19%
order	5	15	0,19%
responsibility	14	15	0,19%
rights	6	15	0,19%
talking	7	15	0,19%
terms	5	15	0,19%
view	4	15	0,19%
whole	5	15	0,19%

world	5	15	0,19%
age	3	14	0,18%
ask	3	14	0,18%
awareness	9	14	0,18%
consumers	9	14	0,18%
fashion	7	14	0,18%
garments	8	14	0,18%
high	4	14	0,18%
level	5	14	0,18%
problems	8	14	0,18%
process	7	14	0,18%
shahi	5	14	0,18%
stuff	5	14	0,18%
thank	5	14	0,18%
towards	7	14	0,18%
village	7	14	0,18%
change	6	13	0,17%
development	11	13	0,17%
fine	4	13	0,17%
human	5	13	0,17%
long	4	13	0,17%
places	6	13	0,17%
together	8	13	0,17%
believe	7	12	0,15%
boys	4	12	0,15%
came	4	12	0,15%
food	4	12	0,15%
forced	6	12	0,15%
foundation	10	12	0,15%
last	4	12	0,15%
needs	5	12	0,15%
rescued	7	12	0,15%

Source: NVivo 12 (Own table of 100 most frequently used words)

7.7 Interview Questions: C&A Foundation

1. How many years has C&A Foundation operated in India?
2. How have C&A Foundation experienced the development of child labour over the last 20 years in the fashion industry in India?
3. How are C&A Foundation helping prevent child labour in the supply chains in India?
4. How aware are C&A Foundation about the 'Hidden Supply Chains' and the use of child labour in these operations?
5. What are the main challenges for overcoming child labour?
6. How can education be used as a tool to eliminate child labour?
7. Do brands take responsibility for child labour in their supply chains? and who has the main responsibility for preventing it in the supply chains?
8. What needs to be done to create more awareness about child labour and the questions about 'who made my clothes?'
9. How do C&A Foundation view the gap between what the buyers want and demand and the need for implementing sustainability in the fashion industry in India?
10. Do you collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure no child labour is being used? if so, who and how?
11. What do you think about the goal of ending child labour by 2025 as defined by target 8.7 of the SDGs? Is it realistic?

7.8 Interview Questions: Shahi Exports

1. How is the collaboration between Shahi Exports and the buyers? (brands)
2. What is the main driver behind the many initiatives in terms of sustainable development that you engage in?
3. How are buyers responding to your many initiatives and projects?
4. How does Shahi Exports experience the demand from buyers in terms of sustainable products?
5. Have you experienced an increase in the demand for more sustainability over the past two decades?
6. Who has the main responsibility when it comes to having a clean supply chain and implementing sustainability?
7. How do Shahi Exports collaborate with other stakeholders?
8. From a manufacture's perspective, what do you think about the goal of ending child labour by 2025 as defined by target 8.7 of the SDGs? Is it realistic in India?

7.9 Interview Questions: UNICEF

1. How has the development of child labour been over the last 20 years in India?
2. How do these children end up in forced and child labour?
3. What is the typical age of the children that are being rescued from child labour in India?
4. How has child labour affected these children?
5. How many of these children get an education?
6. How can education be used as a tool to eliminate child labour?
7. What are the main challenges for overcoming child labour?
8. What do you think about the goal of ending child labour by 2025 as defined by target 8.7 of the SDGs? Is it realistic?
9. Do your organization collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure no child labour is being used? if so who and how?

7.10 Interview Questions: European Brand Representative

1. How many years have “brand name” been operating in India?
2. What is “brand name” stands on sustainable development in the fashion industry in India?
3. How are “brand name” achieving the SDGs in their activities?
4. Does “brand name” have any CSR initiatives/programs related to their supply chain?
5. How does “brand name” choose their suppliers and are (you) aware of sub-contractors and their activities in terms of sustainability?
6. How does “brand name” tackle the common issue of child labour in the fashion industry in India and how are you trying to prevent these issues in our own activities?
7. From a brands perspective, what do you think about the goal of ending child labour by 2025 as defined by target 8.7 of the SDGs? Is it realistic in the fashion industry in India?
8. Do you collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure no child labour is being used in your supply chain? if so who and how?

7.11 Interview Questions: Former Child Labor Victims¹

1. Can you please start by introducing yourself, with name age, etc.
2. How old were you, when you first started working?
3. For how many hours did you work a week on average? And how much were you paid?
4. What was your main task/ work? How were the working conditions?
5. How many other children worked alongside you? And were there any alternatives to working or any positive aspects of working as a child?
6. How old were you, when you stopped working? And how did you get out?
7. Who assisted you in the process of getting out of child labor? Organizations, family members etc.?
8. What types of support have you received the following years, after you got out of child labor, and from whom?
9. How has the rehabilitation process been for you?
10. Has being a child laborer affected you as an adult? If so how?
11. What are you doing now? Work/study
12. What are your dreams and hopes? And how has getting out of child labor contributed to that?
13. After these experiences, how do you view child labor today?

¹ Appendix 11: Interview Questions were presented for both victims, Amar Lal and Muhammed Manan and are identical. Therefore, only one copy of the interview questions will be inserted here.

7.12 Interview with Anindit Roy Chowdhury, C&A Foundation

Type of interview: Skype Call

Time and date: 14:00 PM, 4th December 2018

Location: New Delhi, India

Q1: How many years that C&A foundation has been operating in India?

The foundation has been operating in India for the last four and a half years and three or four months now, so in many ways we are pretty new and also as a foundation, we are a very new organization. We are four-and-a-half-years old organization. So, in many ways you could us a startup, which is now kind of stabilizing ourselves and doing things in India.

Q2: How have you (C&A Foundation) experienced the development of child labor in the fashion industry in India?

I mean, I have been with the foundation now for two years and nine months. I've been working on the issue of forced and child labor and commercial sexual exploitation of children for the last 19 years now. The last three years and nine months have been with the foundation and post my coming into the foundation, the programming in India, and kind of taken off. Even before I came, there was only one program, which was Freedom Fun, that can be found in Tamil Nadu. But post my coming in, we now have about 11 partners across the country. And we work in India quite extensively and India now is, one of our, if I may, major counties of program rehabilitation.

Q3: How has C&A Foundation helped prevent these child labor issues and supply chains in the fashion industry in India?

There are multiple ways of doing it. The way we promote it is through four major strategies that we have, one of course is to work on the issue of transparency. And in this one we target companies and industry bodies and health organizations in the corporate sector brands to be more transparent or sterile supply chain to have better compliance mechanisms and most importantly publicity disclosed they're supply chain so that people are aware of what's happening in the supply chain, how best the monitoring is being done, etc. So that's one part of the work or one part of the strategy. The other of course is that we support large scale advocacy road, so believe that we can only make a difference and keep it sustainable, only if are able to promote policies and laws of the land and make sure that they are implemented appropriately. Therefore, a lot of focus is actually on

policy development, policy, dialogue, policy advocacy and also in making sure that these policies are implemented. The topic is of course that we focused a lot on creating on the field. So, we support the research initiative and organizations so that they can create information on the ground. We also work with organizations that are working on various kinds of tools for transparency, by online systems where welcome voices or labor voices can be heard, etc. We work on these various methodologies and people in the field. And the fourth and last, which is also the most important strategy for us and the team, in which we do the maximum investment is for direct programming or direct implementation of programming, where we focus on rescue, rehabilitation, education, life skills and livelihood training for survivors. So that's a big piece of the work. We also work in terms of getting or making sure that these workers then get opportunities to be employed in gainful and dignified work rather than being forced labor. So that's a large piece of program and obviously for these programs we also meet the maximum amount we rescued.

Q4: What would you categorize as the main challenges when it comes to like overcoming child labor and those issues?

To me, one of the biggest challenges is that of transparency to explain the problem in the apparel sector is that the apparel sector is quite opaque. And if you look at the apparel sector, the tier one companies have a certain degree of, if I may, compliance in place. The brands reach out to the tier one companies and make sure that they have a certain degree of compliance. And I am talking about international brands, I am talking about brands that are sensitive towards public opinion, So H&M and Zara, all of the big ones. But you have to remember in India about 75 percent of the clothing or fashion are actually made for local consumption. And here even the tier one companies that are making the garments are not under preview of the local brands because the local brands do not do adequate amount of compliance. And then of course the tier two level of the suppliers, and then the tier three levels if you look at issues like embroidery, embellishment, if you look at the laundry service and the washing services about these brands or if you look at the coloring of the clothes etc. Or if you look at the mills, which is actually producing the very textile down, where the garments are being made, all of these do not come under preview of direct compliance of the brands, which means a humungous proportion of the supply chain is opaque. You do not know about their existence. There is complete in-transparency, you do not know what is happening in it. and most likely, if you don't know what is happening in it, the chances are that things are not going right. So that is a big problem in the fashion industry. That one is what we are dealing with. So, to

me, that probably is one of the biggest challenges. The other of course is a challenge of mindset. And I say mindset in terms of the fact that if we look at the fashion industry, there are a lot of children in forced labor, but many people in India would probably say, well you know, these are poor children, and these are from impoverished backgrounds. And most often than not they would probably not even get to eat. So, the fact that they are getting food to eat because of the work that they are doing, even if they are children and not being able to get to school at some level, a lot of people consider it as a matter of good fortune for these kids. So, you know, for instance, in India you would realize that child labor is socialized and normalized, you could be looking at a child labor in India, serving tea in a tea stall besides the street or begging in the street. It is a very common sight. But is, I mean, I am assuming you are from Europe, if you are in Europe, you would never see a child on the street. Now that is a matter of mobilization. When we see children on the streets, we do not shutter or we do not feel, Oh my god, that is so terrible to see because we have now gotten used to it and just getting used to the big challenge at some level we are also getting used to the fact that children are born in poverty scenarios, would therefore be in labor and that extremely unfortunate and it kind of propels a particular kind of mindset, which makes it extremely difficult for us to work in. Because a lot of times, even within the communities that we work, we would hear from members of the community who would say, but what could we do because we don't have enough money and going to school does not make sense. It is useful for the child to be at work. So, this kind of a mindset in the thought process of families, of communities, of service providers, of government mechanisms of people within the government, makes it extremely hard for us, you know, to take action against child labor.

Q5: If we look at some of the SDG goals, what do you think about the goals of ending child labor by 2025 as defined by target 8.7. Like is that even realistic in India?

To be very honest Mia, I am actually very fond of goals. I was a big supporter of the MDGs. I was compatibly younger, so I believe in the MDGs, I also believe in the SDGs. My point here is that the question in whether the MDGs or the SDGs now would be fulfilled or reached or otherwise. To me that's not the big question. To me, the big question is, are we keeping that as a target and moving towards it? I am not really in the position to tell you with absolute authority than yes, at least in India we would be achieving 8.7. In fact, on the contrary, I'd probably say we may not be achieving 8.7. However, my point of view always is if there is a goal, and there are people working towards that goal, whether this is the civil society, organizations or whether it is the government. All of

these are important mechanisms towards moving in the right direction. If everyone would achieve success in that or not, is kind of hard to say and may not be as well, but my point is that should not. I am a guy and the person who is not concerned about the result. My concern is, am I doing my bit, am I doing enough to make sure that it happens and therefore moving towards the direction. So, 2025 to me, if it is still realistic, the realistic goal to move us and to make sure the 8.7 is successful. Well, time will tell, but I will move and keep working towards it.

Q6: How do you view education as a tool to kind of eliminate child labor or at least be used as trying to prevent these accidents?

Well, it is an extremely important tool. Frankly speaking, if you look at your website and download out theory of change on forced child labor, please do so simply because of you look at the indicators that we use, there are six of them. One of these is how many kids do we rescue and then put them back into mainstream education and the support of this, how many children are into mainstream education and the support of this. So, we are using education as a very important tool to make sure that they are not just out of work, but they are engaged in something that is far more gainful than the work that they do, so that is number one. So principally we believe in education roads and we should focus a lot more in on education. The second bit is if you look at the Indian context, the government of India promotes what is called the Solvency child or the education of all scheme. Now, the education for all programs allows children from all backgrounds, in various locations to be enrolled and insured 100 percent quality education from the government system. So, therefore, it is important for us to work in India on the issues of education. Number three, which I think is also equally important is the fact that we know the children are in school, then is they are in school, five or six hours on a daily basis and the average, it clearly means that during that period of time, children are not being forced to work. So that's in the middle of the day, where it is at its peak, children are taken away from their work and they are now staying in their schools and getting education. So, I think education is a very important tool. It is a powerful. However, the caviar that I always draw is that quality of education is a very important piece. If you look at the quality of education, most government schools in India, unfortunately these are not to the highest of standards. And if the standards are not high, a child is not happy in the school environment. Then the child would not want to stay in the class after the particular age group. So, did you think when 14, you know, you listen to your parents, if they force you to go to school but forced back once you got to reach a certain degree of authority you do not actually then challenge your own path and you are

saying I am not going to be a part of this system because it does not excite me. So therefore, I think it is important for us to not question education. I think it is very powerful strategy but it's more important for us to focus on how we improve the education system, the schooling system, the school mechanism that exist in making sure the children are not just enrolled in schools but also retained. Because the biggest problem in India is not enrollment. We actually have achieved in most places' hundred percent enrollment of children in schools. But the problem is retainment of class seven in about the seventh standard and above, children started going missing in classes because they stopped enjoying it they are stopped by their parents. And I think that needs to be addressed and changed, and that can only be changed if the quality of school changes. So, it is very, very powerful tool. We have tremendous faith and believe in it and we work on it in almost all our programs.

Q7: What do you feel needs to be done in order to create more awareness on child labor?

I mean I keep on asking that question all the time. It's one of my main topics really, whenever I make a presentation, it's a question that I always ask. Because as a society, we are not used to asking that question. We almost always ask the question in terms of what does my clothes cost or what is it made of? Or how is the fit? These are the kinds of questions that we normally ask. We almost never asked who made my clothes. So, I think it is an important consumer education piece that we need to embark upon. I don't think we have done enough. People would almost always be surprised about the question, simply because it is not really a valid question people would see. But the point is that is the difference that we have to create- So, I believe that prevention can play an important role and active, public campaigns and public advocacy campaigns can make a difference. But I don't think there is a lot of work in it. We have done one piece of work that is quite important is that we support a foundation, who then do constant news, at least five news articles come out every day, every week, and these five new articles come out to the Thomsen Reuters Foundation Portal and then it is shared across, it actually reaches out according to almost 1 billion people across in various spots. Now, this is one way of doing it, but that is not only specific to the apparel sector. Its modern slavery and human trafficking in general. So I think there a lot more work that needs to happen in terms of building that awareness and believing in that awareness frenzy really where people, especially at the ground level, people who are buying clothes start asking that question because you know this, I have understood the purpose of businesses to do business and once I am not in any way suggesting that I am a better human being and more conscious and aware someone

who was in the business sector. But unless the business sector understands a business dynamic of an action, they do not make changes. So, if consumer starts asking those question, who made my clothes? Is paid by child labors? Has there been fair wages, has there been forced labor in making my clothes? These questions are discourses. Because if they realize that there is a trend to the money that they are currently making through selling of the garments, it is important piece and I think there is a huge opportunity for us to do a lot more.

Q8: You talk about the gap between what the buyer wants and the demand and need for implementing sustainability in this fashion industry. How do you view this gap between consumers wanting fashion so fast, but they also want the people to get the right amount of wages and all these other initiatives? How can this gap, how can this be fulfilled?

This s an important question. I get fashion tips from my son who feels like I look like an old man, which I am. Everyone has a lot more clothes than before. I mean if I consider the amount of clothes that I had when I was my sons age, who is a teenager, there is no comparison and he has so much more and more options. He has you know, for football he has a particular pair of shoes and for other sports as well. He has jogging shoes. He has maybe 10 pairs of shoes and I had only two pair and that was it. This is how the world has changed and the world is changing because the market is geared towards that practice, they want you to buy more and more. How would it make sure that you are buying more and more by making sure that the garments are becoming cheaper and cheaper. I mean the garment have to be cheaper. It cannot be made in Europe. They cannot really be made in, America, they will unfortunately have to be, you know, it has to be made in Asia, an Africa, even in some of the poorest countries, if this is a reality in terms of how that business works and I think it is important for us now to start raising those business principles, questioning those business principles that, you know, you cannot be saying that I am a company that believe in sustainability and yet my marketing mechanism, constantly ask people to buy more and more and more. It is a bit of a dichotomy if I may in these two approaches. So, I think it is important for people to start thinking on those. Like, I mean for instance I hear in Europe that they have now what is called garment libraries. So, people can go into a garment library online, choose the clothes that they want, get them delivered at home, wear them a couple of times, and then sent them back. That way you do not have to own the garment, you do not need that extra space to store it. Yu only wear it as many times as you want, and then you sent it back to the library and only paying a certain fee

and not having to pay for the entire garment. Not that is a great idea. It is an innovative idea. It is in a very small scale, but it is growing and a super good idea as far as I am concerned. These are some of the new kind of business initiatives that has to change on this. The business formal improves those changes. What is going to happen is there's going to be more and more pressure on the government and to make our economy sustainable, we are going to use cheaper ways of making clothes, and one of the cheapest ways of doing so, is through child labor because it allows you to get to it by not paying the right fees. So that a larger economic discourse really, and I do not seem to see any foundation discourse really. And I don't seem to see any foundation that has the ability to change the discourse completely, but we certainly try to influence it. and this is just one of the practices that you can talk about principle that really is the gap that we now see in many ways defined by the companies, the advertising machinery that works with it and the consumers. Because for all three of them, the companies want you to buy more clothes. And because you do not ask the right questions, things do not change, it is going to be very hard. I mean you could change the Indian context. Maybe today you will say, okay, if you work for another 10 years in the south Indian context of the textile mills it will probably be from forced labor and child labor, but then the work moving from south to north. So, its constantly going to happen, so the idea really to change the business model is going to take time and a lot of effort and multiple stakeholders working on it.

Q9: So, my final question is who do you see holds the main responsibility? Is it brands and are they aware of these hidden supply chains being used, once they use sub-contractors and sub-suppliers? So, there are two parts of the question really. The first one is, are brands aware? Yes, they are. I mean, I would say it would be naïve for us to assume that the brands completely do not know anything. They are not left in the dark, that is kind of letting them off too easy. Frankly speaking, each of these large brands have a very strong country presence and the thing is, this is one of the countries that we are talking about. You know, you have H&M office here, you have all of the big sourcing offices here. And in sourcing people tell me that they do not know about child labor in the country, that is a lie. That is a big lie. The question is, what do you do with the knowledge? So, if you ask anyone in India, do you know that children work or do you know about child labor, I think about a hundred percent, you would get a response saying yes. I mean, people may not know the depths of it, but people know that there is child labor that exists in the apparel sector or the other, people know about child labor. The problem is, and this is one of the things that I did not divide especially in the brand scenario, it that the person who is responsible for sourcing is actually an individual who is purely responsible for sourcing his or her job really is to find the cheapest clothes

that matches the quality of the sample that is offered in Europe or in America etc. And his job is to make sure that the order will reach the stores on its date. You understand what I mean?

So, the focus really is not on some of these responsible sourcing mechanism, the focus is sourcing per se. Now the holder responsibility pieces are activity depending on the people who do compliance. And these are two different things generally. And to me that is a big problem if you look at my objective in the organization, my objective is to buy clothes in the right quantity, the right quality at the right price. And most importantly, it should be delivered under the right time. The other person responsibility is maintaining soldering of standards in terms of social standards and norms and practices. Now the problem is these two people should ideally be the same person and both of them should be the responsible of the same person. If there are two people sometimes working on cross purposes? So again, the question is do brands know the answer is at the country office level they know. They may not know the depths of it, because I mean this is what I have been doing for the last 19 years, they may not be doing it, however, it is not as if they do not know. To expect them to be completely naïve about what is really happening is a fantasy. Secondly, do they know enough? I agree. They also need more training, more capacity development, more interaction, more engagement, that is important. Thirdly, can they react and respond? Yes, they can and they should, but at the same time they need to work with their compliance as a team rather than two separate beings working together. So, the compliance team should be about of the sourcing process as well. Four, is that of transparency of the entire supply chain is very important for a brand to say, will I only know my tier one company and then I do not know anything about know this entire industry is working is actually unacceptable.

They need to know the entire supply chain, so they should be able to say, okay, if this is the t-shirt, that would be made, this is where the cotton has come from. This is how the company has been certified. This is where the cotton has been turned into a textile, this is where the garment has been constructed and this is the shipment process or the dying process and hen the dying process and then the shipping process. A brand should be able to know everything. At this point they only know the last point of contract form where the garment is being shipped. So, they know the main suppliers, they do not know the other players in it. so, to me that's a big noodle. They need to do a lot more, so that is one answer. In terms of the brands, the second question that you had within it is very important. Who is your most important stakeholder? Frankly if you ask me, I don't think anyone is any less important than the other. I mean, you come to think, the family is a very

important stakeholder. Not because they need to have a responsibility towards protecting the children and making sure that they have the right to development, rather be in the workforce, forcedly, this is unacceptable. So, the family has a responsibility. The institutions like the schools, the government, local governance mechanisms, they have a responsibility because it is their hobs to protect the citizens and children are citizens of the same country. They may not be not be voting and that does not matter. They ae student, citizens and they have rights and therefor, those rights should be protected. If you look at the schools, they have to make sure that children are maintaining in schools. And the third, which I think is very important is the brand themselves. As we just talked about, the four, our brands and suppliers and of course the consumer, they need to be responsible, you know, rather than just buying tons of clothes just because they can afford to more important to kind of now say, who made my clothes and what are the basic etc. My last, my last point really is, even if the children, even they have responsibility towards themselves. Is it is important for us to empower them and help them, so that they can take decisions and be able to say, no I will not do that. So, if you look at the whole system of stakeholder mapping, everyone has different layers of responsibility and on less everyone works towards it, things won't change. So, we need more cooperation, more partnerships in order to actually reach the goal.

7.13 Interview with Anant Ahuja, Shahi Export

Type of interview: Skype Call

Time and date: 11:00 AM, 20th December 2018

Location: New Delhi, India

Q1: How are the collaborations between Shahi Export and your brands and suppliers?

So essentially the way it works, I mean, the general model, it's called contract manufacture. So basically, what happens in the brands, brand partners we work with, they place orders with Shahi, sometimes they even have or they even reach out to multiple suppliers and see who can offer the best price or who is the best person to place the order with if it is big. And then once the order is placed with you, as a supplier it is your job to obviously complete the order on time, at the quality that is required and then send it out to the buyers. So that is just generally how it works. But I mean there is a lot of detail around this relationship that can be explored.

Q2: What about the sub-suppliers or sub-contractors and how do you go from one end of the supply chain until the other end like consumers? What is your role in this?

For Shahi it is mostly the case that as much as possible we tried to do in-house. So Shahi has a pretty big capacity. We have like almost 60 factories, so we generally do not outsource stuff. A lot of it is just placed in different factories and now in the last few years we have also set up a textile mill. So, you know, more than half of our fabric is made in our own mill, but we do not even have to buy a lot of fabric from outside vendors. So that just leaves the trims and accessories. So, whether it is buttons or if it is a special type of accessory or something like that. And also, to a large extent, we don't, we only make like the fabric which is mostly cotton based. For example, Shahi makes jackets for Columbia and you know, some of this outer wear stuff to, in order to make that, we actually have to source it from different vendors in the supply chain. Sometimes the brand we work with will actually say, okay this is the vendor we nominate for this fabric. So, you have to buy it from this vendor. Generally speaking, this is not the best for Shahi, because when we are forced to buy materials from a nominated supplier, usually the price is not as competitive.

Follow up questions: So, when a brand asks for a certain thing, do you also have to go in with regulations, to make sure that all of them are there and kept, such as child labor or human rights and working conditions as well?

Yes, for sure. Some of the work we do, like for example some of the stuff we do with like H&M and Zara it requires, and others as well, it inquires handwork. So, bead work and that sort of work, and hat is a special process. So, in order to do that, we usually will either bring in hand workers, like contract-based workers handworkers to our factories to complete the work or we will actually work with these smaller workshops that hire these specialized workers. And in that case, we are actually worked with different NGOs, actually they trained us on how we are supposed to go and audit these workshops and make sure that, you know, child labor and none of those issues are happening. So there is a process, I don't know the full details, but just, I guess what I was trying to say is that we have actually our own compliance team, in-house compliance teams have been trained on how to audit and supervise this whole process so that, you know, we can take full kind of responsibility.

Q3: You do a lot of different initiatives in terms of sustainable development. What is the main driver behind these many initiatives you do?

I mean I think that generally speaking Shahi has been a progressive company form the beginning. The company was started by me grandmother. Her background was that she used to be a sewing machine operator. So, she kind of grow up, not to well off. She had to join a factory to earn extra money. So, her perspective was always that of the workers, like she understood, and she came from that. So that is one thing. I guess beyond that is just like the industry needs, a sort of sustainable approach in order for it to be like successful because we are just in such a unique position as the garment industry is one of the most polluting. So, there is a lot of work that we need to do there, whether it is chemicals and dyes or plastics or even landfilling old garments. There is a lot of work there. Then from a social point of view, this industry typically employs women, in a place like India for example, they are kind of locked out of the labor force. So, this industry is the answer to that question. Not only women though, but it is also the like low-income unskilled women. So, these are the people who there really are not a lot of jobs for aside from maybe agriculture. So, there's not a lot of formal sector jobs for this demographic. So when you consider it the environmental kind of, uh, consequences of our work, the social realities of our work, that it's pretty obvious that like if you want to succeed in this industry, you have to think of it from the point of view of development because that's just naturally what the industry has to do. And if we, if the industry continues running, how it is in ways where it's like, okay, we're just dumping old garments in the land and

dumping, you know, untreated water and the, you know, different places and so on not using renewable energy. Then you start to wonder like how long can we actually work at this level at the quantities were producing where it's like, I don't know what the factory you visited for example, that you guys were here and yeah, they washed 40,000 garments a day, just washing. So, like the, I mean if you want to continue doing things at that scale, it seems pretty obvious that you have to figure out how to, how it can be sustainable.

Q4: How are the buyers and the brands responding to your many initiatives and projects?

It has been supportive. I mean, mostly I would say that a lot of the inspiration is a lot of the motivation comes from the buyers in the sense that is you go back in time to 2007, one of our buyers GAP Inc, they had developed this program for women, it was a soft skill training for women. And they asked us, do you guys want to pilot this program? We think training women in communication, time management, all these sorts of general skills could be a really good thing for the factory to do. They just said that they didn't really like sell it. Asides from that they said, look, we want to, you know, help this group of people. And uh, yeah, so, so they asked if we wanted to pilot, we started running the program and then I joined the company like around five years after So, the program had been running for five years. Um, and when you talk to people, it was just clear that like this program was designed from the point of view of like social development, but it had a lot of spillover effects. It was essentially like creating a lot of value for the business as well. So, when we get support in these kind of ways from, uh, from our brand partners, when Gap helps us with this program or when H&M tells us, hey guys, you should switch to led lights or you should look into this technology. So, when that comes from our buyers itself, then it becomes, first of all, they send a message. They send the message that, look, we want to work with suppliers who think about this stuff. So, it gives us an opportunity to improve our relationship if we can align on these factors, but also it gives us all these ideas that it leads for the team to take forward, so I think it's been a pretty positive relationship in that point of view. At the same time, I would also say that, you know, sometimes there have been issues in the factory, whether it's compliance related, like, oh, we, um, we're supposed to follow this protocol, but the fact we decided not to, and then the auditors from the brand who came to see, they discovered that it wasn't being followed. Like, just as a simple example, I'll, share that. You know, like some of our factories like the overtime hours will exceed what the law permits. So maybe the law says you're allowed to work two hours beyond your regular shift per day or one hour per day. I don't know, I can't remember the exact law. So, if a factory

exceeds that, uh, you know, sometimes like the brands, we'll see that data and our systems and they'll like take off points on our compliance rating and say like, you know, this is not good. So, um, yeah, I guess what I was trying to say with that is that even though Shahi does all these nice development programs, if we don't actually comply to all the laws and all these smaller points, sometimes those programs can be kind of, I don't know, not appreciated also.

Q5: And if we talk about, responsibility, and the society today, you know, people and consumers like to think about brands as the big bad companies. Who would you from a manufacturing perspective say has the main responsibility when it comes to keeping a clean and sanitized, um, supply chain and implementing sustainability?

That's a good question. I feel like it has to be a team effort because the one thing is that, if brands are just going to go to factories, that if they're just going to follow the cheapest sort of place to source from, yeah, you can't expect the best standards, right. If you're paying such small margins. Yeah. Then how do you expect that back to implement those standards? So, it starts there a little bit. Um, you could even argue it starts with the consumer. If the consumer wants to go and buy a \$2 pair of jeans then, and if there, if that demand exists. And how can you expect as a sustainable, like good supply chain? Um, I guess that's one point. I mean also if you think about it like a retail prices for garments in the last 20 years, right? Like, think about how long you've been buying clothes. Yeah. The retail prices are not going up. If anything, they're going down. Clothes are getting cheaper now. That's fine. But the problem is that if you look across the world, there's obviously inflation. Um, there's things like minimum wage revisions. There's all these difference, different things that are like forcing the price of manufacturing to go up. So, if retail prices are the same, that means consumer is still just getting clothes as cheap as they used to, or cheaper, but the factories have to work harder and find new ways to even like maintain the same standards. It's hard to imagine how better standards will start. So, it really starts at all levels. Consumers have to be like more selective about the brands they purchase from. Um, then the brands have to be more selective about the suppliers they work with and then realistically the suppliers need to be reinvesting their money into improving their factories instead of doing other things. So, I think it's like the three-way kind of coordination that will be most successful. Um, but yeah, I think there's a lot of different ways to think about it. I don't know, what do you think?

The interviewer: I mean, I totally agree. But also, um, I mean, you know, the whole thing about consumers wanting more transparency. Um, and I think there is a gap, you know, between wanting, you know, like the slow fashion, but also consumers also expect, you know, to have new seasonal collections every other week or two weeks, you know, so there's a gap between wanting sustainability and transparency, but also wanting this fast fashion. How do Shahi Exports cope with that kind of demand?

Well, for us it's like the way it works is like we're not, so when it comes to selling clothes, the brand is the one that's taking the risk, right? Yeah. Because they have to respond to consumers. They have to say, okay, our consumer is this type of person and they want a garment. Um, and they want a collection for each season, and they want these many pieces in the collection, whatever. Yeah. Then, they have to go and design those collections. All we have to do is receive the order. Right. We just have to say, okay, this is what the brand wants. Yeah. Now we get paid as long as we fulfill what the brand wants. The risk is not so high for us. Um, so that's kind of how it works. But at the same time, I think where our role becomes really important is to say that like, you know, if, uh, if we like, we should be trying to have clothes made in the best conditions possible because, um, even though margins are small and so on, I think that, you know, if everyone can comfortably survive off of, you know, the business, that actually means like it, that doesn't mean the management makes a bunch and workers just get minimum wage and no benefits. That means that everyone has, it has to be a healthy ecosystem. So, the supplier is responsible for that. But beyond that, there's a kind of a disconnect between suppliers and consumers. There's the brand in between. So, I think that, you know, the brand has a lot of responsibility. Another factor consider is like, think of like the biggest supplier in the world that you know, let's just try to imagine, I don't even know who's the biggest right now, but let's say like there's a supplier that's, I don't know, uh, maybe they have a sales of \$3 billion, which is huge. That would be huge if they did. Now think of how many brands have that, like basically all the top 10 brands, you know, or at least like three, four times bigger than that. So just in terms of power, in terms of size, brands are going to be these huge. I was just, I was just making a point about like, uh, I was just going on a rant a little bit, but my point was to say like if you look at the power play between all the different suppliers and then the brands, it's pretty crazy to think about like, so let's, let's take three countries, right? Let's look at Japan. Who was the richest person in Japan? It's the owner of unique low heels. He's richer than the owner of Sony. Even the richest person in Sweden, the owner of H&M who's the richest person in Spain and one of the

richest people in the world, the owner of Inditex are. So, like it's clear that brands have the potential to be way bigger than suppliers, at least now in the current system. Um, and you know, all you take the biggest supplier in the world, they'll be like still small compared to your medium size brands. So just because that's the nature of like the power between these two parties. I think like brands can sometimes dictate the way business is done.

Q6: Um, if we look at it from your perspective again, what do you think about the goal of ending Child Labor by 2025 as defined by the target 8.7 in the SDGs? Like is that even realistic in a country like India?

Um, you know what, I actually haven't worked too much on child labor because almost all of the production we do is in a really controlled environment. Like we have these factories. Uh, we do a little bit of the workshops, which I mentioned earlier, but we also audit those heavily. And in the factory, It's like very controlled. You know, there's lot of different controls to make sure that doesn't happen. Yeah. But I can comment on it from a personal philosophical point of view. I don't know what your thoughts are on this, but I, so there is a company called GoodWeave, I don't know if you've heard of it. I asked them about child labor. I said, look like what's your personal opinions on child labor? Like how do you guys think about it? And we turned it into a nice discussion, but one of the takeaways from the discussion for me was like, let's say you have, let's say your family, right? Let's say you have kids, husband, family, whatever. And the school that you send your kids to, the teacher doesn't even show up. There's no teacher. They're not learning anything. They're just sitting in a room. That's a reality in India, a lot of schools, because in government schools, government jobs, it's not, it's really hard to get fired. Like you basically can't get fired. So, if you become a teacher in a public school, you can skip school every day and you still can keep your job and get paid. It's a really flawed system, but that's kind of the reality, at least right now. So then, let me ask you this. Like you're sending your kid to school every day. They're literally do not learn anything. They're not even being instructed. Then you got an opportunity to do some home-based work maybe GoodWeave comes up to you and says, Hey, you know, one of the brands we work with wants us to make these garments. You guys can make them and earn this much. So would it be, I mean how wrong would it be if you as parents said, look, we need the money because we can't even get food we are literally starving to death and in order to get the money, the family should help us too because they're not learning anything in school. I just think like when you break it down like that child labor doesn't seem like the biggest problem in the world. Plus I also remember being a kid

and you know, for example like I used to be interested in business and learning about how things are doing are going now, obviously it's a whole different situation when there's privilege and this and that, but my point is like, is it really irrational? Is it really wrong for a family to think if their kid's not learning anything, maybe they should learn a skill that will actually earn them money? Um, I don't know, that's the philosophical side of it that I've kind of been like, like trying to understand. Yeah. I mean you definitely need to think of solutions in the long term. Like yes, we do want kids to be able to just go to school and learn and educate themselves. But if the school system is broken, how are we helping them succeed in life if we don't, even if they don't get any skills, at least by doing home based work, there are some skills they could pick up that could help them earn a living. Um, I've had family members who haven't finished school. I don't think it means that you're not going to be successful in life. Yeah. Um, so, it's a tricky topic. I see why people are sensitive about it because it's scary to think about, oh, my clothes are being made by kids who are forced to do it. You know, when you think about it in the worst way. Yeah. And it is a scary thought, but I don't think that reality is always how it is played out. I think like a certain level, like it's, it's really important to be literate. It's really important to have the skills to be able to like, do we account manage your money. But beyond that, what you learn in school, sometimes it's useless. Like I've learned so much in school that I still don't use today. Yeah. We're on soft skills that I gained from general. Like okay, how to be, how to communicate proactively. Like these are things, maybe you pick it up in school, but it's not explicitly taught. Yeah. So, I just think like until we have a school system that is really effective, the opportunity cost of going to school or not going is not as high as people make it seem like it is.

Q7: You mentioned that you've worked with other NGOs, so you have other companies coming in and doing your auditing, like band, right?

So, a lot of brands will actually send their own auditors for, they have third party auditors that they, that they will hire to do this. Then they come to our factories either announced or sometimes even unannounced. Um, so there's like a long history of that sort of system. Yeah. Uh, but what the system that we're working towards is a self-compliance system. So, we want to be able to manage our own compliances, add a level, and build such a level of trust with our, with the brand that they don't feel like they need to monitor as closely. Because, um, I mean, one way to think about it, right? It's like if we are, I mean technically speaking a company like Shahi has enough resources now at least for us to be able to say, okay, we don't like, we should know how to run our factories.

We should know how to manage our factories. We should know the bottom of standards and codes that we should follow based on who we work with and then we should be able to implement them ourselves. Um, the whole audit industry has, there's so much money that goes into it, you know, so many, so much of people's time, so many days. So, the question really is like, could we be saving all that money just if we took more responsibility? That's one side of it. The other side is like, it's a little bit paternalistic, the relationship that exists between brands and suppliers where they say, look, these are the standards you have to follow. Um, and then we say, okay, we'll try to live up to your standards. But realistically, if we just stepped back and thought about it, those standards, I mean, for the most part makes sense. These are things we should be able to enforce ourselves. No child labor, no. Um, no excessive overtime, no harassment, no abuse. You'll like, these are basic things that we should, at this stage be mature enough to like implement and upholding our factories. So, we're working on that now. We have like an internal compliance committee. Uh, we have an internal team, so it's like this independent team that reports to the board and they just do the same thing that the brands do. They go and audit all the factories, collect information, figure out what's wrong, work with the factories to improve it and the next level that we're trying to work on now is basically not only doing all this checking, but also how do we communicate this? Because one step is obviously to check and make sure things are happening the right way. But compliance is actually, a lot of it is perception. So, in order to build the right perception, we need to have strong communication. So maybe monthly updates to our brands that say, look, we've audited these factories. These are the ratings we've given them. These are the challenges, being transparent. Look, these are the property, you are our brand partner, we don't want to hide anything from you. So, this is what we're, this is what's happening in our factories, this is what we're facing challenges with, but this is the solution we want to implement. So, it's just a whole new approach where we're not looking at them like people who are, you know, determining the law and then we have to follow it somehow. Manage it. Rather we're looking at is like literally our partners who, I don't know, if they have the best in mind for us, they also want the best outcome for our factories. So, it's just a different perspective.

Q8: How important do you think like collaboration amongst your stakeholders is in terms of, you know, keeping a clean supply chain and implementing sustainability in all areas of social, economic, environmental, like how important are these collaborations?

Well, I think they are really important for sure. I mean we've seen a lot of good work done by these large coalitions, whether it's the sustainable apparel coalition or some of these other companies. So, from that point of view, I think like, there's definitely a lot of value in it. Now. The challenge I would say with it is that, um, if you have these coalitions and stuff like that, but they're all essentially dominated by, or not dominant, but if they're all essentially like majorly just brands, then the voice of suppliers or the voice of other stakeholders doesn't really come out. So I think from that point of view, for example, like I was, I was talking to some of the brands, some of the suppliers like Shahi and I was kind of like talking to them like, hey guys, we should, we should like set up our own coalition, like a supplier coalition and we should discuss issues from our point of view and then take them to these larger coalitions because otherwise our voice sometimes doesn't get heard. I just realized like if you look at sustainable apparel coalition, there's like only two suppliers on that and the rest are brands and different. So where does the suppliers voice will always get lost amongst such a large group of people. So, I think there is a lot of value in these multi stakeholder groups, but I also think it's good to have smaller groups that are more specific like specific to the, you know, the type of work so that things can be discussed at different levels. But what I don't really support is like, so if you look at like organization like WRC, workers' rights consortium, some of these activist groups now if you're an activist and you want to make change, that even more requires like a multi stakeholder approach because you have to understand everyone's perspective and make them understand the issues and then the change can happen. The way they work is like they don't want any stakeholders, any other stakeholders to be part of their process, not even brands. So I think like, yeah, if you look at the different extremes, I definitely believe more in the multi stakeholder approach, but I do see the value in having side conversations as well and understanding like, okay, ask suppliers, this is what we're going through as brands is what you're going through. Maybe even as activists, this is what you're, so all those can exist and then they should feed into these larger multi stakeholder groups.

Follow-up question: So, all voices get heard on all kinds of levels, you mean?

Yeah, a little. Yeah. More fairly. You know, so yeah. Um, yeah. It's not like you're, the volume of your voice is determined by like the size of your company or your influence.

7.14 Interview with Vandhana Kanhari, UNICEF

Type of interview: Skype Call

Time and date: 10:00 PM, 29th January 2019

Location: Copenhagen, Denmark

Q1: How would you say the development of child labor has been over the past 20 years in India?

So, I think that the number of children have definitely decreased, and children who are working and children who are employed financially definitely. And this have also a lot to do with the facilities the services, education, uh, that is now available to all the children as well as awareness on the harms of child labor. So, a lot of work has gone on to, into this by the government, by the NGO sector, by civil society in the past 20 years. So definitely there has been an improvement in the situation.

Q2: how do these children end up in forced and child labor in India?

So, um, there are different reasons. It's not just one reason. I mean, child labor as you are aware are multi-dimensional and extremely complex. So, uh, it is not just one reason. Very often children do accompany their parents when they go on work. Uh, sometimes parents have taken loans which they need to repay. So, children also get involved in the work and sometimes, also due to the lack of access to good education. In India, we also have uh, you know, it's a whole social economic issue as well. So, we also have the caste system which sometimes pushes children out of school. There is also the whole issue of violence. And then you also have, of course, the whole economics where, uh, you know, if health of the family is also extremely well connected in the sense that there is a family member who is the bread earner who is terminally ill or who has died or who has a health issue, children often end up working to support the family. Uh, then you also have the changing trend of economics, which is B street work and uh, you know, the families were being given work at home to do so the entire family ends up working as well. So, children often miss out on school and end up trying to finish the job so that you know many more pieces so that much more money. So, uh, the, so there are different reasons how children end up in labor.

Q3: How many of these children actually get an education, you know, afterwards?

There's no number as such. I don't think we have any estimated figure officially to quote. Okay. But definitely there are a lot of children once if they do get rehabilitated, then the government under the

right to education act under the age of up to the age of 14 years, every child has a right to free and compulsory primary education. So, uh, education is definitely something that they can get access to. Then the department of the Ministry of Labor also has something called the National Child Labor Project Program. The NCLB program, which you may have heard of when you were here, which is like, uh, the bridging of the education, you know, for those children who have missed out. So, and also under the ITU or the special training centers, the STC part, which the schools are supposed to bridge the gap and provide them with a special, uh, training so that they can go back into mainstream education. So, children who do get rescued or rehabilitated or who end up maybe in childcare institutions do have access to education, but we don't have numbers of how many, there are many children who do go to school and then support the family at work as well. So, there is no one particular number that we have right now.

Q4: What would you say is like the main challenge for overcoming child labor in India?

Well it's again, like I said, some of the challenges are definitely access to good quality education. Okay. And uh, it's important to retain children in school so that they don't miss school. Yeah. Um, uh, well child marriage is also something that could be something that makes children drop out of school and then, you know, they get into work. And then also for the girl child, uh, there are different issues such as safety, security, distance from school. So as a result of which if they don't go to school than they do by before they often get into work. So I think education is definitely important role. Then again, it is, the other role is that of monitoring of the industry, of their supply chains to see that the children are not, uh, you know, that the parents get a decent wage so that the children don't end up. So it's also very, it's not just a social issue or an issue that, for example, an NGO or something just like UNICEF can deal with alone. But these are all, uh, it's, it's an issue which is multi-dimensional. It's an issue, which is economics. They closely related to economics and the industry as well. So, I think it's a combination of factors. It's a combination of the government services being available, it's important to the decent wage that the families, the parents should get so that the children are not pushed into labor. And then there's also the industry supply chain. It's the quality of education. So, it's a combination. So these are some of the challenges that we need to look at.

Q5: What is the typical age for children to be rescued, you know, from child labor in India, and what kind of effects does this have on these children when they come out of this?

So, there is no one age, you know, there's no typical age of children being rescued. You can see the children are rescued from the age of five or six right through to the age of 14, 15. Yeah. So, uh, we don't really know. There is no study to show that there's any one particular age group, but I think this is the age group where you find mainly the children, you know, who get rescued. And of course, labor has definitely had a very, very severe adverse impact on the physical health of the children. And it also depends on the kind of industry that they're working in. And it could affect the, you know, the overall because if they are working for example, in industry where they have to inhale, like if in agriculture very often it's also pesticide. So, you do get, you know, and you have in the mining you have silicosis, you have breathing disorders, you have spinal problems, so you have blisters on their hands and different parts of the body. You have eye problems and disability when the children are engaged in the embroidery industry. And of course, then the, that's the physical and the health part. And then you have the emotional impact of those children who have been in bonded labor or who had been separated from their families for long periods of time. So it has definitely got a negative emotional impact on the children and also the fear of, you know, being caught out of, uh, being, uh, abused and the girl children have often been abuse, uh, you know, uh, sexually abused and different forms of violence for both boys and girls. So definitely it has an adverse impact on the emotional and then, you know, when they're neglected by the, the physical safety, their emotional safety, the violence, the punishment, physical beating. So, uh, it all plays a definite role on their psyche and you know, and as you can imagine, it's definitely if you show you read and heard about how children are impacted emotionally, so it has an adverse impact on both ways and on their development and education of course.

Q6: If we look at the fashion industry in India, a lot of studies have shown that child labor exists more in the domestic market, then if you look at the international one, is this like a common thing? And, is it maybe the mindset of Indian towards child labor, if you look at it that way or what can be the reason for this?

It is not so much as a mindset. I think it's also the lack of monitoring and an awareness and an understanding. And it's also something to, again, I think to do with the wage. Yeah. Because, uh, people get away by paying less for children and then you can control children better. You know, you, they listen to you, you know, you keep them in a closed room for 12 hours without light and air and anything and they're your, they're subject to your physical and mental abuse. So, it's easier to control children. You pay them less wages, you earn more money. So of course, it is all of that.

And then it is the monitoring by the government. So, I think they need to be more stringent criteria for monitoring, which probably happens in the supply chain, which is meant for export. And then those industries which are more mechanized. You see less child labor, you don't see child labor in the mechanized industry. You'll see child labor more in the informal sector. Yeah. So that is more difficult to manage and control, especially when it happens within the home.

Q7: What do you think about the goal of ending Child Labor by 2025 as defined by the SDGs? Do you think this is realistic in India?

I think definitely we can work towards it. Yeah. I think realistic is a subjective term but definitely we can, uh, we are working towards it. The UNICEF is working in a large scale for preventive strategies to work within the community. We work together with the state government and we are also working at the national level. We are also working to enhance the capacities of the line departments and the functionality to work, uh, for children's issues in all different, for example, with education or with the social protection with uh, with the Labor Department, with the, under the protection and the child protection with the women and Child Development Department. So, we do work and strengthening the capacities of the functionalities, the people who work on this issue with the children, and with the different, um, you know, even with the industry. So, there is a complete, and of course through social media. So, I think people are definitely more aware now and the numbers have decreased in the past 10 years. And, uh, and definitely when the next census is done, we would know even better. So, there is a definite decline and a more understanding on the importance of, uh, education and harms of child laborers who definitely think it will definitely come down. And there is a concerted effort by the government and by the civil society to reduce child labor.

7.15 Interview with European Brand Representative

Type of interview: One-to-one interview

Time and date: 10:00 AM, 14th December 2018

Location: New Delhi, India

Q1: How long has your company been operating in India?

It has been awhile. I think It's been awhile. I think I all to remember and there are two entities here. One is the retail, which looks at, selling is a GB, It's a joint venture with alliance. And this is (Brand Name) Private Limited, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of (Brand Name). So, I think the sourcing has been done. I think I started my career in 2005 with (Brand Name) and the brand was already there, which means this I think from 2000 to 2003. For quite a while.

Q2: Are (Brand Name) doing any certain initiatives or programs in terms of you know sustainability or reaching the SDG goals?

If you specifically ask me what the SDG goal or the millennium, the millennium MDGs and SDGs where we talked about. In 2009 when we actually embarked upon our plan A, 2025 came in this year, I think last year. But plan A was conceived, it was a (Brand Name) initiative and in fact it was well recognized. So, it was heartbreaking program where in the company decided to actually adopt and make certain commitments that would actually go a long way in its sustainable growth, which means what we did was we actually invite the sustainable goals within our business. So, SDGs could be looked at something, we are not looking at SDG to align ourselves with them. We find the SDGs are aligning to our existing initiative. So, we are already here, the SDGs just came here. We said, okay, there's an alignment from that perspective and okay There are three things, three pillars. The first is nourish and wellbeing. So, nourish and wellbeing, you know, because we sell food, right? So that's the food. I mean I'm giving you an example. Other things also we can actually connect with knowledge in wellbeing. So as a food company, let's say in UK, because that's where we are operating, obesity is an issue, right? So, is it a sponsor company? What do we make a commitment off? Which is of course the quality of the food. When you look at the pesticides, we have to look at the like, you know, how the food was grown, the environmental aspect of it. But at the same time, we made a conscious decision to limit the calorific value in the food so that the customers were buying food from us. They get healthy food. Not food, which is high in calories. So that's nourish and wellbeing. So, we're nourishing our people. second, transforming lives and

transforming communities. But this is where women in value chain, this is where, uh, the community work with you, I believe it comes in. And third is getting for the planet. So, getting for the planet, again, it looks at how can we positively impact, so we talked about greenhouse gases. We are talking about carbon foot printing. We are talking about sourcing from sustainable raw material sources. So, for example, we made a commitment and by 2019 we will be sourcing all the clothes you're wearing. They'll come from sustainable sources. We are saying fair trade cotton. So, this is the kind of commitments we have made. So, it's around a hundred commitments. According for example, you're talking about recycled plastics, we are talking about cradle to grave approach, right? We are talking about a circular economy.

Q3: Are you working closely together with other, stakeholders, NGOs or organizations to implement these things?

Absolutely, for example, we made another commitment in which we said, because see, I mean, if you look at the whole value chain, there are issues that arise at times, because of, you know, elements of the purchasing practices. Now you must be aware that, you know, we have, it's very important to have a critical partner standing by. So, that critical partner, one of them is Oxfam. So, we made a commitment with Oxfam, that we going to do a research in India and look at if there are purchasing practices, that are negatively, effecting our supply suppliers. So they going to do a research, a deep dive, come up with some suggestions that, you know, how can we make our purchasing practices better so that, you know, the supply chain doesn't get affected by it and they come up with that industrial reports also that might be shared with IBF a business forum events they do maybe next year.

Q4: If we go into specific, you said you do a lot of things like recycling and stuff. When a big brand, you know, has its own supply chain. Do you follow every single thing there is in the supply chain to try to make us, you know, as sustainable as possible going into the future?

Yeah of course. Well there are two lenses you're looking at it from. One is of the Human Rights Lens. In fact, Human Rights reporters are in the bidomain, so you can actually go through it and we have actually, uh, like we have signatories of the Modern-Day-Slavery-Act, right? Similarly, we are partnered with EDI and I'm actually speaking things from, the India perspective as well because I think globally, we are doing a lot of things. Like for example in Bangladesh we're part of the Bangladesh Accord. Um, so different business there are different initiative or from the India

perspective because I'm responsible for India. So, there uh, like, uh, uh, so let's say in some areas of India we have this issue [Inaudible] because we cannot tell you the one and all you have to partner with similar stakeholders. Bring in those changes in the supply chain. Okay. So yes. So, so the thing is if you look at their supply chain, like you know, you got, if you look at the Modern Day Slavery act, it's actually right from the garments which you're wearing. And then it goes all the way down the bottom. So, it's your supply chain, right? And then anything can happen. So that's why it's important. For example, I cannot be physically present in my bottom supply chain. So, what we have done, we have become members of BCI, better cotton initiative, it is doing similarly. Uh, for example, we have made a pledge with the responsible sourcing network who are actually looking at, because the better cotton initiative is looking at the rights aspect, but it is not exactly going deep doing a deep dive on that. So, there's a responsible sourcing network was doing it for example. So, we have pledged that for example, safety, we did a pledge for, it was very important. So that's the partnership then, uh, in middle, uh, we are, uh, looking at, uh, you know, the mills, uh, no, we have a dedicated program on, uh, you know, with venture there is no pollution that goes into the like, you know, okay. Yeah. So, they will also be a partner with different initiatives. We remember some sustainable apparel coalition, for example. So, end of the day it's very difficult because you know, if you don't about MNS supply chain, the supply chain may be shared by, uh, you know, other brands. Also, so it makes sense. So, because you know, if they do the same thing, same intervention, you know, it may not be just for the, uh, you know, our suppliers, you know, you do add on it, somebody else comes, does. So that's studies and we became members of the sustainable apparel coalition. So now I think in the future you'll be looking at, especially if you look at the, uh, facility environment model. So, we'll be implementing Higgs index. Okay. All right. And then from that environment of perspective, we also part of the SNCP, my social and liver protocol. We were also the pioneers of implementation of the ISO 26,000 in seven factories, one factory, two factories in India. In fact, uh, you know, ISO 26,000, you actually empower the factory to understand, uh, what are the areas where the factory can actually focus their 7 areas actually, yeah. And there is an ownership and uh, the, the program is on a continuous improvement.

Q5: If we look at, like from a brand perspective and also from your own personal perspective, again, do you think it's possible to, um, to achieve the goal of ending child labor in 2025 is that a realistic in the fashion industry here in India?

I can't comment about the domestic industry. I think more needs to be done. Yeah. But I could be very, uh, I think, uh, confident in making this claim that, you know, in the first-tier supply chain you don't see child labor. Yeah. Uh, the second is of course, uh, because the level of awareness that's happened that's going on, uh, in the second tier supply chain also, especially, uh, the, you know, what the brands were actually buying stuff from India, like, you know, oh, they have taken additional measures. So, I'd give you a personal example. I was working for an American company, so in 2007, there was this huge issue of child labor. Mm. So, when people started investigating, they found that, you know, it wasn't enough. Third tier, means what? For example, we have a brand, so you have cotton shoe and then it goes to the next level and in between you put embellishments, right? Yeah. And by this, where you have, you have no control. Yeah. Uh, of course in 2007, all branches had to take a declaration from the suppliers that, you know, we will not use child labor in their supply chain. But this issue happened, and the children were rescued. Uh, when we did further investigation, it was found that, you know, there's children, they were actually a part of the larger human trafficking network. So, they were from Bihar and the parents had sold the children. So, there was a human trafficking angle. So as a company, first of all, we said, okay, fine. Uh, and of course, you know, uh, these garments of that company where I was, I used to work, they had ended up in a place where you had other Indian designers. So it, those garments had come for alteration. Yeah. So where, you know, this person went in and then he took the picture and, uh, it, it was flashed all over. It was in the BBC. So we, uh, how we did it, we said, okay, fine. First of all, we can, well, let's, uh, like, you know, strengthen, uh, the, uh, uh, you know, the process for example. So we said, okay, there has to be some capital visibility where your garment is going. Right. That was the first step. Second step, we said, we have to partner with the government. So we partner with the government. We also came up and partner with other brands and, uh, the government came up and say, fine. Uh, of course in the meantime, those children were rescuing or rehabilitated. So we took all the middle men out and then we actually engaged with a local NGO and they had around 15 years of experience in mobilizing people in their particular supply chain. And uh, so, you know, the women were brought in and we told our suppliers and you know, you pay the money to this NGO and you will cut it off percent for administrative costs. And that's what the money would go to. The women, why aren't you doing it? And we created a center within the village. Yeah. So it was a successful model in which how you engage with communities and how you are actually ensuring that, you know, women become more confident and you know, and then we saw that, you know, in certain cases, uh, they were earning more than the minimum wages. So this was an interesting pilot

and it was replicated, still happening. Similarly. We also partnered up with saver pilot for example, where like, you know, they came up with the centers. We also became part of a national workers group, it needs to be revived now. So these are a lot of initiatives. So you have to be part of to mitigate the risk of child labor. I still believe there could be child labor in the cotton field, uh, because we do not have visibility. But I can be 100% sure wherever there's a BCI intervention, there is no child labor. Because there's not a valuation that's goes on. And the second thing is also like really to look at child labor and child work. I think that is what Ikea and others have done a lot of work on. Sort of like I'll say, okay you and as to the approaches, if you rest the rescue and then you know, there's no rehabilitation so they might go back to like, you know, when they go and they actually hide, they go hidden. And so actually that becomes detrimental to what they are doing.

Q6: If we talk about child labor, most consumers see brands as the big bad ones when it comes to no responsibility. How do you feel like consumers have responsibility as well? You know, to start asking questions and how do you think we should get more focused on this from a consumer perspective?

My personal view again. Uh, if you just give, I'll give you an example of child labor in the domestic market, you know, uh, where would you get most of the child labor in the Bindi? In the bangles? The question is; are the people aware how their clothes are made. So I think the first step should be that, you know, consumers are made aware about how a product is made, where it comes from, and what other risks associated in that manufacturing process of the products. That's what give a perspective. I mean, because I think, uh, now of course there's a lot of awareness, but then, you know, there are young girls or boys, they are employed as domestic helpers in normal household, right? So maybe the society is not, uh, very, uh, aware or maybe they normalize it, that, you know, we can do about, you know, this is normal to employ children at home and make them work, beat them, abuse them. So, that things would go. And, uh, luckily because of the stringent acts like Bosco, uh, there is a lot of awareness. The other bidders, of course, I'm not saying from a child labor perspective, but also from a supply chain perspective. We look at the end user made. How many times? I mean, again, it's my personal view. Uh, you know, people think maybe twice to, you know, they, they, they make a B line, uh, in, in a fast fashion store. Yeah. Because consumers, if they go on demanding cheaper, cheaper, cheaper, somebody has to pay that price, don't they? And for the fast, because in fast fashion, the issues, of course you have great designs, but you are poor quality when you go to, an h and m store, I'm going to take, you don't have like, you know, you go

and buy something from there. I look at the hand feel but they are cheap. I remember like, you know, somebody bought a skirt for 300 rupees. So that's why I think somewhere consumers also have to think about what is of course, uh, that, you know, maybe is it time to actually look at sustainable man-made fiber. Uh, second, uh, is it time to look at maybe, uh, like, you know, buying clothes, uh, that, uh, can be worn for a longer period of time? Or maybe do we have time to actually reuse it, for example, if you want to change their trend. Reuse your clothes; you buy this, give it to your sibling or somebody. So, so those mindsets need to be developed because otherwise it's just consumption, consumption, consumption.

And then, you know, again, once you consume it, then obviously the, we have to look at the circular economy. Yeah. So that's why I think MNS has done a very interesting thing called, I don't know. You've been to England? Yeah. Okay. If you would have an MNS store, you'll see, uh, uh, a bin, uh, from Oxfam where you like swaps, swapping right? So you get your clothes there, you put it there and uh, maybe you get a discount for that. And uh, these clothes are actually taken back by Oxfam. You must be aware that Oxfam has stores in Europe right. These clothes are refurbished and then resold.

Q7: You mentioned the government and you work with the government, is the government in India doing enough, you know, in order to implement regulations or laws on suppliers or brands or you know, in order to fix these problems with human rights and child labor?

We have a national human rights commission, at times whenever their accesses I think, but the focus because of the population we have in India. So uh, that intervention is when we initially focused on uh, police brutalities or stuff like that or maybe non state actors, but uh, and we have fantastic laws. Unfortunately, the issue is about implementation because there's a lot of corruption there. You know, when the talks about the implementation, I mean if the implementation was straight, you would not need auditors or social compliance. So, yeah, I mean I think government should do enough, but I think they should be also supported by the industry. There has to be, uh, you know, a private public partnership and I think it was good for organizations like CR to put everybody in the same you table. When you look at our gender equality program that I talked about, you know, in the other day when you talked about the value chain thing. Uh, so they're, uh, why did we partner with the British High Commission? We partnered with the British high commission because every single vendor, 46 odd brands who are, you know, sourcing out of India. What part of the brands ethical where there may be other sorts of smaller grants, you know, bestsellers a Danish

brand, they are doing a lot of sourcing out of India. They're part of that now. Uh, now everybody is responsible for their own supply chain. So I mean, everybody's doing their bit like, you know, can we monitor our supply chain? We do projects in our supply chain. I taught that, you know, it's time to also maybe position it. So when they, and what do you position now? We have to put, choose a topic because I think you have to choose topics, different topics like uh, you know, so that, you know, one is of course it has to have a business case. So because we have to get the businesses on board to adopt it. So you have to be very, very like, you know, I think a strategy in how you implant. So we chose gender equality. I think that is a topic, uh, which actually is an important topic because, uh, you know, has a woman as an important stakeholder and there are like, you know, human rights violations, human rights violation and women violations are similar, right? It's all about the rights. So we thought, let's partner with the British government. So we partnered with the British high commission and we said, okay, fine. British company partnering with the British government and they're doing a project on gender equality in the Indian supply chain manufacturers. Okay. That's stage one. So we impacted around 13,000 workers. Simultaneously, what we also did was we also looked at, we said, okay fine because it's an industry problem, it's not a brand problem. Until, unless there is an ownership from the industry. The issue will not go away. I, as a brand, I say, okay, I worked with the x factory and I say okay, you have to do this program. The fact they will do it because its benefactors for us and so long and giving the factory orders, I have a leverage on the factory. And if the factory is not wanting to do it internally for the sake of it, it will do. But you know, once the orders are over, we decide to walk out of the factory, this will be fine. Just dump it. That's fine. Maybe that buyer may not have that strategy. So, unless the factory or manufacturer internalizes it and believes it the problem will remain. So, what we did was we said, okay, fine, let's then look at uh, in this area of which this manufacturer is independently members. So, we are in the process of like, you know, uh, uh, doing a partnership with a Battle Export Promotion Council. So, what we have done is we want the position it and create awareness. if we look at the initial note, so it talks about marks and Spencer's partnership with the Ballot Sports Promotion Council. They have 8,000 members and imagine. So, what are we going to do is we create a subscription model. We don't have to fund it so to ADC now this calendar of course a better version of the calendar is coming up. There were some issues in terms of the design, and this will actually land up in the desks of all the ministers. Yeah. What we are doing here is tactical. We are slowly conveying the message at different levels. So this is part of our policy advocacy. So, these

are the ways we positioned the issue. Yeah. And there's an industry wide alignment and then they have agreed to put that in there, you know, website.

Q8: If you talk about the UN and all the big global bodies, would it be easy, to get more focused on human rights and all these problems if they came up with suggestions or new regulations?

So, UN has already commented right? There are Indian, uh, agencies who are in touch with UN. For example, there's something called the M Squared coalition, specifically again, looking at the garment supply chain. Yeah. Wonderful things people do at those meetings. Similarly, uh, I'm in touch with ILO. Yeah. So, the other day I had a fantastic meeting with ILO and then they say, fine, they want to do up on an official brainstorming on the issue of second tier supply chain. Where they are going to look at maybe child labor, so you are right, it comes from UN because you know, if it, if it is a declared by UN, then there is like the government becomes hell bound to do it. But at the same time, uh, ILO, because they're part, process is an interesting one for one. For example, the whole issue of trafficking, let's say a lot of organizations who are rescuing children like IGM. For example, again, you get information and that there are children in brick kiln or there is forced labor in Brick klin, you go and you know, rescue them. So, it's important if we do a group of analysis of why because at the end of the day everybody wants to do the business. Hmm. Maybe what happens is, that they normalize it, that this is the way to do business. For example, keeping a maid, a six year old girl. Or maybe you know, you think about, uh, having child labor because they have nimble fingers, they can do a better job in stitching the carpet. It's a mindset. So maybe talking about talking to them about the consequences of employing children. It's all about awareness. So for example, the brick line, uh, you know, uh, they found out that uh, most of these people who use brick, they did not have a direct contact with the workforce. As the contractors, for example, I pay 100,000 rupees to you as a contractor. You'll keep 30,000 or 40,000 rupees, give 60000. But I alone know how much money, you know, goes to me and to the people who are doing the work, right? So because it's a contract, a year contract, and you'll make this amount of bricks to what happens. These guys, they come, and they come with their families. They work together, stay in that place, has small huts and they made this stuff. So the idea is to connect the people who owns it and people who do it, but then also engage a middle man because if you take them out of the system, they will create problems because they have mafia. For example, if you're as a middle manager taking 20 young looking people, youngsters, police will immediately ask him. They take it and you pay money. He says the Middle man says 20,000, 10,000, I keep it for paying uh, money to the authorities.

Solution, you talk to the Labor Department because it's not police who owns this thing it's the Labor Department who owns it. And then tell this state and contractors we say, okay, fine, you're on our old system, yeah, the contract license. Yeah, so bringing transparency, most of the issues happen because there no transparency and people assume that this is the way to work. Although I still agree that, you know, for example, if there are criminal offences, like you know, human trafficking and women are subjected to prostitution, police needs to be involved in it to be, but whenever businesses are involved, it's very important that you know, you have to connect the dots and we have to look, raise awareness programs and a lot of the time I'm sure there'll be people who would be still thinking this is the right thing. I want to make more money, I exploit people. So then you take action, but at least you are mitigating the risk because there are those who may be wanting to follow the law, but they do not know.

Q9: Do you think education could be used as a tool, for eradicating child labor by putting in more kids in education and then sending them that way instead?

In fact, if we look at our factory act that it does provide for education Although if you look at the new child labor law, uh, you know, I think we haven't talked about 14 years and below. Uh, but the, the factories act states that workers should not be put under hazardous work conditions and employers should be actually helping them. Uh, yeah. Doing so well yeah. So yeah education plays an important role. Yeah. With education they should be vocational training. Yeah. Because I think that there are flaws in the education system in India today. If you look at the conventional education system in India, if you could think that that's the only education and take anywhere and then you are expected to get a job. Oh, sorry. So you need to have vocational training centers. You build on skills. So that's why we, the government realize that's why they put trust on the skill development. Yeah. Because again, India is a country, they have the unique advantage of having a young workforce compared to the western countries, with aging populations. Yeah. Right. So, we need more workforce ability to work. It's important to harness the skills. There are examples of some becoming doctors and lawyers and the scholars of channels. Yeah. I was pleasantly surprised when NGOs came to me. And they said they help young people from the poorer families to exit through scholarships. Yeah. So, there are examples of like, you know, people coming from the poorer backgrounds to get into like, you know, skills like doctors and engineers. It is not just black and white, there are shades of grey as well.

7.16 Interview with Mohammed Manan, Former Child Victim

Type of interview: Skype Call

Time and date: 06:00 AM, 7th April 2019

Location: Copenhagen, Denmark

Q1: Please start by introducing yourself with your name, your age, and what you do now for a living.

My name is Mohammed Manan and I am a 21-years-old and right now I am pursuing my MSC in Microbiology from a good university.

Q2: How old were you when you started working?

Uh, at the time ma'am, I was just six years old and I worked at, I had worked there for two years.

Q3: how many hours did you work a week and how much were you paid?

I used to work six to eight hours. I was working every day.

Q4: What kind of work did you do?

Actually, I used to work in mines, in Mica Mine. Basically, Mica is used to make some cosmetic things and it is also used to paint the cars and it is the insulator of electricity as well.

Q5: How much were you paid?

Um, like, uh, 20 rupees. 25 rupees. Not more than that.

Q6: How was the working conditions while you're working in these places?

It is very much dangerous to work, uh, because if you want to collect Mica then uh, we used to go more than 200 feet, 300 feet down and like a in a summer the temperature is more than 46 degrees Celsius there. If anyone is working inside the mine, then there is high chances that the soil will collapse down from the outside. So, it is very, very difficult to work in that situation.

Q7: Was it dangerous, you know, as well for your health and physical health?

Yes, because, because of when we, when I used to work, uh, I, I had some injuries in my fingers as well because Mica is very sharp. So, when you, when we used to collect the mica then, um, we used

to get caught in our fingers as well. And the one of the saddest, the story of my life is that one of my friends, one day, he had gone to collect the mica and a heavy down inside the mines. And when he was coming up after collecting the Mica, then certainly the, uh, the, the soil swell from the upside and the biggest stone collapse down and he was, he got death over there. So this is one of the second story of my life. I mean, I often tried to forget this, but I'm still struggling. I mean, I cannot forget this incident for the rest of my life, of course is the saddest and hardest incident for me.

Follow-up question: You mentioned your friends, so other children were working alongside you? Um, actually when I used to work along with me, they were, uh, because uh, uh, when I was just six years old, when I, when I had a, started working over there then, uh, and one thing I want to tell you that my village is situated in between the forest. As that time, when I was eight, when I was at my home and I used to work then at that time there was no better facility. We had no schools. We had no hospitals. So, the one source of income was Mica. So most of the children, I mean most of the villagers and the children used to go to collect the Mica along with me, I had 15, 15 of my friends who have to go to collect Mica with me, all in the same age, some are 13 years old, 14 years old, some were same as like me.

Q8: Was it boys or girls or both gender?

Um, mostly boys because like a who used to go along with me and they were mostly boys and also girls were also involved in the mine, in this field. I used to work, most of the, most of for my friends were boys

Q9: Did you work in order to support your family or?

Um, the biggest reason is just that a cause, a cause of lack of awareness about education. Most of the villages they use go to collect the mica and they used to tell their kids that you should, you should also go and you should also follow the same profession because we hadn't no Buddhist school over there. And there was totally lack of a lack of awareness about the education. So because of a lack of awareness and lack of a better facility and we had no school to go to. So that's why most of the children were engaged in the work over there.

Q10: Did you ever feel like you missed out, you know, on childhood playing and having fun or go to school or did you feel that you miss those things?

Yes. When I was, when I used to work, then I had a great dream that I used to see the dream that someday I'll go to school. And, uh, like, uh, when I used to go to town with my father for some time, then I used to see that children are going to school, they have better lives, they are well dressed, dressed up and they are going to, they're going to school and I'm working. So I mean, I had a great desire to go to school. I used to see the dreams, but that was not possible for me. But at that time, I used to see all of this kind of things. Fortunately, me along with my friends, I was rescued from there with the help of Kailash foundation and later on, we were brought to Balasham which is a habitation center running by Kailash Satyarthi. So I completed my senior high school over there and uh, I opt in 73% mark in my senior high school and later I got admission in University of Delhi. In life center sports. So, in between that duration when I was in Balasham and in 2009, I got the chance to participate in ILO convention. So, I had gone to Geneva and I was a speaker over there and there I, I had at this uh, leaders from all across the world and I had said that we often make the laws but we don't implement that. We make as laws that in upcoming 35 years we will eradicate the child labor from all over the world. But it doesn't happen because we are, we are just making law and we are not implementing that come together.

Q11: Do you feel like it's India, you know, who needs to come together? Like the government and different legislation programs or India or?

Um, I think this, this should be everywhere because child labor is not only in India. I mean many countries are there who were children are working. So, I think that our first, uh, India Indian government should, the Indian government is doing and making the law and they are implementing. But here I'm talking about all the word because I had spoken in ILO, so I had uh, I had uh, spoken about the, about all with the word. Yeah. I really one that each country, I'm not talking about any specific country, I'm just saying that like, um, in whole world, like if we have United Nation and uh, and like, uh, in India and in Pakistan, in any country where children are in what are involved in the work. So the government should make the law which has been made by the government that must be implemented. I mean the implementation is very important.

Q12: Why do you think, like, child labor is such a big issue in India?

Uh, I think, um, I suppose it's, it's a big issue in India. Again, I think it's a big issue all around the world. We often talk about uh, development and everything, but uh, we know that education is the most powerful thing. Like if any, if any country is developing and if and if any country develops,

then education plays an important role. So if you, if you want to have a, if you want to gain great skills, if you want to explore yourself, then education is very, very important. Without education we cannot do anything because once we finish our study and study our mind, we can, I like analyse and see the world in a different way. And so I, I really do believe that without education we cannot do great things and no, no any country can develop. So I believe education is the birthright of every child. So every child should go to school and they must have education in their life.

Q13: How old were you when you started, when you stop working and you were rescued with the organization?

Actually, when I started working over there at that time I was just six years old and I had worked there for two years. So between six to eight years ahead of us. So I had worked there for two years.

Q14: So, you stopped when you were eight?

Yeah.

Q15: How do you feel like umm this kind of work has affected your life. You talked about these experiences and stories with your friend, like how have they impacted you and the way you are now?

Um, like the important thing is like, uh, I was lucky because, uh, many children are still working and I was lucky among them was rescued from there and now I'm studying, I'm doing really very well in my life, but I really want that the children who are still working because I have faced the problem, the same problem, which the children who are still working, they're facing now. So, I really want that every child should go to school Like, uh, I really, uh, I, I have a great desire to see a world where there, there, there, there will be no child labor in the world. So I often go to a village in my vacation, and I make aware people about their education, especially in my village. And uh, so I do such kind of things also. So, because I think that what I have suffered and what I have seen in my life, that no child should suffer like me. Every child should have a better childhood, every child should have good education and they should have a dream in their life.

Q16: Did you have any sisters or brothers who were working as well?

Yes, I have three. I have three sisters and four brothers. Like we are including me, we are five brothers.

Q17: And you all work when you were children?

Yes.

Q18: And what about your mother and father? Did they work as well when they were children?

Well, my father, my father is also used to work in mine and my mother, now, my mother is housewife. So my father used to work in mines. Yes ma'am.

Q19: And what about your sisters? Where did they work?

Um, like, um, uh, now my older sister got married and uh, I'm the second youngest in my family. Like one side, one side came out from my village and I had to start a study. Then I made aware of people of my village about education and my younger brother is studying right now and three of my brothers, they are older than me. They are more than eighteen years old? Yes. Also they are also, they are engaged in local business, but my younger brother is studying right now and my three sisters got married.

Q20: So, your sisters, they didn't work in like a, with textile or in agriculture or anything or that when they were younger?

Oh yes. My older sisters were involving like in domestic, normal domestic work. Every culture like domestic work. My sister was involved in that.

Q21: Like textile and making garments and stuff like that.

Yeah.

Q22: So basically, your whole family, you know, has work since you were all children?

Yes, yes, yes, yes. No, not just my family, all the villagers. Now the facilities are better because we have a program named Child Friendly Village. Yeah. It has been running by Kailash, since that time when I was rescued and I was rescued because of this program and I can see a drastic change in my village because now we have good schools, we have good hospitals and most of the children are going to school and the villagers are aware about education. And also, it's a great step taken by the child friendly village. We formed a student council, there, there is there the children raise their problems and they get their solutions and yeah, even go to the Magisters and they talk about basically any kind of problem because the student council, we elected a president, vice president

and one secretary and rest are the members. So basically, children raise their voices because children very well understand their problems. Like what kind of problem, they are facing in their schools and in their village. So, they raise their problems. And in all this process, our activists who are working in that particular village assist, they assist to reach out to the principals and magister. This has worked over there. And I'm one of the examples of this program. I'm here because of this program. Child Friendly Village is running in many villages.

7.17 Interview with Amar Lal, Former Child Labor

Type of interview: Skype Call

Time and date: 07:00 AM, 8th April 2019

Location: Copenhagen, Denmark

Q1: So first, I thought maybe you could introduce yourself with your name and age and what you do right now for a living?

My name is Mar Lal and I am 22-years-old. I am working as a lawyer in Delhi High Court

Q2: How old were you when you first started working?

kay, so, uh, basically I belong to the one of the communities, which is maybe, you know, they, like, uh, we called the Bangra community. So, the people like these people make the move one place to another, places to work when and what they can to survive in their life. So my family used to be like that and we used to work from one place to another place moving around in different places. And in my family, no one had never been to school before. We used to work like in a different place, like sometimes putting some stone on the railway lines, sometimes digging the telephones lines, what, whatever worked like in a labor work. So I also used to be with my family. You can say since my childhood and since my life began, I started to work with them.

Q3: How many hours did you work a week? Like on average, how much were you paid?

Um, I was very young, and I was used to be with my family, and we used to like, uh, you know, uh, like on a contract basis with, some of the employees. So, we used to work together, like all family at the same place and doing the same work. So, and I was very young, like, you know, when the Kailash rescued me, I was very young, I was about like five years old, so I was too young, but uh, used to do some little bit things, what they were, I could have done. So it used to be like that.

Q4: So you didn't have like a main job or, or main task to do it was more eh, whatever you could find or?

Yeah, it's just sort of like that. Just like, uh, uh, my parent they're doing somewhere, some work, like breaking some stones. So I have to fix some stone one place to another place where I can just throw like here to there, something like used to be.

Q5: How were the working conditions while you were working with the family?

Um, because we used to work from morning till evening like, we used to go around like eight o'clock, seven o'clock and then that to work from say 6:00 PM 7:00 PM. So it used to be a daily routine, like our life and candies and always used to be both because you know, this, uh, not atmosphere good, people are misbehaving with you and sometime uh, uh, you get some hurt in your hands and yeah. So it used to be happen like that, it was very normal and uh, it was the worst conditions.

Q6: How many children were working alongside you? Were there a lot of other families with children involved as well?

Yeah. Like some of the families will use to be, who used to belong to from my community. So they also used to be part of it. But to me we were not so many people, like three or four families to be together and working someplace and then you finish that work. Then we usually tried to find some other work. So live from that place and go, go to the next.

Q7: You mentioned before that your whole family was working together, so was there any other alternatives to working, because you said you never went to school or anything, so the main purpose of why you were working more?

In my family no one had an idea about schools, and they had never been. definitely economic situation was one of the biggest tasks for them. We had no house to stay in, in any fix places, so we have to be used to move one place to the next place. And because we are living with families, so we always used to move with the family very well with families. So, we had nothing to survive in our life, uh, apart from our work. So, we used to do.

Q8: Where there any positive aspects of working as a child, you know, instead of going to school. Have you any positive things to say about working?

No, I was not such matured boy, because I was very young. So, I don't think that, uh, in that moment I could have things, something else. But one thing I think that once you work like that, then you understand what the reality of the life is and how, how the life is taught and what is the situation. So, I tell him, isn't that what is the situation of the other children who I still involving in some other type of work and they have situations is still like that and they have no opportunity. Like I got it in my life so I can feel them, and I can do it myself and I can go farther to work with them.

Uh, that's the reason that I choose the law so I can fight for them, uh, in a law way. So I can find to get the Goldman. So, these things which is motivate me and fill me that what is the situation is going on. So, I think that is an important aspect and that situation is always bad and you don't get what you want in your life.

Q9: How old were you when you stopped working and how did you get out of child labor to become a lawyer?

I started to work since I begin my life because I was very young, so I was part of my family. Then I started to work with my family but uh, once we were working and digging that telephone line in the north part of India. So uh, I was working with my family and that was the 2001 and I was around like five, five and a half years old and that moment that Callas, he was running one of the march's, it's called education march and they were teaching the people about education and what is it important and all like that. So they were, they were moving the same day where we were walking so suddenly saw that we are working with our family so they came there with a of group of the people and they started to slogans and Blah Blah Blah and nobody in my family, nobody can understand that what's really happening and we're going on and why they all people do like that. Then Kailash talk to my family and mostly my dad that are your children is working over here. So, my dad said that, uh, it's not a new thing or maybe the big deal for us. We used to do these things since, uh, from long, long time and in my family all people who are working and we have never been to schools and uh, we don't have the fixed place to stay. So, we always move. So our children also moves to us, so they work together with us. So he said that, uh, this is not the right way and your children should not to go work, uh, they should study. So my dad said that I don't have a way to do, so what can I do? So then Carlos suggested to him that, uh, you can send your child, uh, in our home, which is a ballast, maybe you heard about it. This is the one of the rehabilitation center of the VVA children study and growing in their life. So, so that moment my parents got ready and then I moved to Ballastram and that was the second part of my life where I began something new. And, uh, I went to Ballatram, I started my study there. I started to learn something new and how to grow up in this study. Uh, so these things really, uh, telling me a lot and I picked my study, very quickly. And then I go that, listen, in my school, I started my study, uh, I completed my senior high school from there, from Ballastram. And then because, uh, during living in Ballastram, uh, I used to participate in a different programs, seminars and lot of different kinds of the issues of the worlds

even. I used to go out and speak about some, uh, different issues and sometimes we used to go out to motivate the people and aware of them about education and all.

So, uh, I realized when I was around like eight years old or yeah, that, uh, what can I do in my future? So, uh, I used to see one of the men, like, Carlos. Uh, he's also the lawyer, so he always used to come to Ballastram, some from Delhi. So I have seen him that he's doing work, uh, by law, uh, for the children issues. And it's really going well. And I think that law is the way that a way you can fight in the legal legally way and you can, you can improve education into the, and you can implementation in the systems and the people in the government, which is very important. So I decided that, okay, I will go for my law degree and when I completed my law, then I will continue to work for the children issues and child work. So yeah. So after my senior high school, uh, I joined the law school and I just passed out 2018 and now I'm working, uh, in Delhi High Court. So I'm looking a lot of the cases, which is related to the children issues, uh, like mostly child labor, the bonded labor and sexual abuse and all kind of like that. And also the different policies and implementing some of the judgements and systems and rules of the government then all so yeah. So that's why

Q10: Okay, after all of these experiences how do you view child labor today?

I think what I feel that because it's, so for us it's very important that our system needs to be a very powerful because some of the organizations or maybe the private agencies, they cannot solve out all the problems. Governments have to be taken this step. They have to be come forward because they have all the resources, they have all that money. They have the schools, they have the health facilities, uh, they have the power. So, if they really give sensitization about these issues, if they take their first priority, then the problem can be solved out. But if they're not taking the forward step, then definitely the situation, which is the worst, it can take a longer time. So the people really one that we want to more uh, of course our government and our systems, the people who are running the countries, so they have to be, do a lot. So, if they do, then the piece can be sought out easily. But still it can take a long time to resolve all the problems.

Q11: Do you feel that there were any differences between being a girl and being a boy when working as a child?

I think when you, oh, working. So situation always like the same, like you have to do both of the things but you know, in the culture with this different responsibilities on the boys and the girls like,

uh, girls normally have to do a lot of the works which is belongs to from the family like, cooking foods and all these other responsibilities with them mom and but for the boys, they have to do more labor and hard work like in a physical way so that that is the most difference. What we find it and mostly in a rural area, this happened a lot so, and girls are not such a priority for them. Mostly it's happened to the boys' use be more prioties, but the now situation is going to change and people are trying to equal them. So it's happened. But if you go to a rural area the girls are less powerful or maybe they have less opportunity compared to the boys. So it's happened a lot.

Q12: We talked about the rural areas. Do you think there's a main reason why, you know, child labor exists more in the rural areas than they do in the big cities?

I think it do this, the more child labor in rural areas because there isn't one of the logics behind all of these things. Like do you know the places, which is the rural places and they have no facilities like they have no, they have no good education. Uh, they have no good roads or maybe whatever, the fundamental, uh, facilities, which this should be have in their life. So they have no resource of earning good money. So, the children who belongs to, from the rural area they come into in the cities and they are working in these places like Delhi, Mumbai, Calacatta oh, all of the big cities. Even if you see in the all, I don't know. So, in India it's mostly like that. So, if you go and see here in Delhi, there is a lot of child labor on who are working in are very worst situation. But if you go in a rural place, children are working but not in such worse situation or maybe not in that much difficulty, them they're working together the same place. It's not like that. So, most of the children they actually belong to from the workplaces and they migrate to the cities and they are working over here. Situation is like that. So, uh, that's why I worked with the organization, The BBA, uh, they are running one of the program which is called child friendly villages and the child friendly villages is the program where our team is that like we work on the villages laborers on the rural places and we go there and we find and that who, what is the villages who have the most worst situation in our countries? Uh, well we did not have like a health food or maybe that there is discrimination between boys and girls. There is no teacher in the schools. There are the hospitals, but, uh, there is no doctor in the hospital. Situation is like that, uh, the people who are the politicians and the local leader who are not supporting to the villages and all like that. So, we find out those kinds of the villages and we work on the ground level and we solve all the problems of the villages. We send all the children into the schools. Uh, we give the equal rights for boys and girls in the village. And we also, uh, organized, uh, some of the, uh, like seminars in that village. And the

also constitute a parliament of the children community, where children become a leader of the children. So the children can speak their problems to the higher levels people who are the leaders of the villages, like the old people. So they sit together and they say with each other what is their problem and this solve their problems that way. So if the people don't do so, the people who are the activists of the BBA, he didn't sit together with the, all the children who are the leaders of the villages and they will write a ledger to the higher authority to solve out all those problems. So these are the initiatives which we are taking. So we can stop the migration of the children from the rural areas to the cities so that some things can solved and uh, we can find out some solution.

Q13: Well, you mentioned, you know that your family haven't really done anything with school, either your father or your grandfather. So have you ever felt like you missed out on some opportunities when you were younger?

When I was young, we had never teachers or study, or go back to school or maybe looking at schools. Uh, uh, so it's, it was, it was out of the imagination. You know, like you are living in the different part of the world where you have no idea that what's going in other places, what's the life of other people. So I think that for me, I used to feel like that, okay, this is my life. Uh, I was born, and I work with my parents. I lived with them, so I used to feel like that. So for me it was like a normal life and I had no idea that what something can be happened at us. So when I moved to Ballastram, then I really understand that, okay, there is something different life which you can go, you can achieve, you can get the opportunities, you can fight, you can get the competition, you can win from others. So that thing I learned and understood from the Ballastram not from my family.

Q14: Okay. So, you know, working as a child has actually made you become a lawyer today, right. To fight for the children and their rights?

Yes, I did. I want to make a difference for other children