

Save the Child: “A Stolen Childhood” (A Dark Past and a Terrible Secret)

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Abstract—For nearly a century, save the children has been fighting to save children from poverty and discrimination. Well this is something really sad to know and still keep on knowing that Child Labor still exist.

Generally, some people may have a casual approach towards children working at a very early age when they are supposed to learn, play and enjoy their life because I believe and I think you too that Childhood should be a safe time of life for growing learning and playing. But unfortunately very few people understand the significance of missing childhood. Every child deserves a childhood of love care and protection so they develop to their full potential. Would you want to know how it feels leaving your home, education, freedom and fun for the sake of earning? If yes, I want to express my views in this Article on Child Labor. Most important to know, when we are talking about Child labor, we need to understand who is a child.

Index Terms—Child hood, hazards, save the children, exploitation, early marriage and violence.

I. INTRODUCTION

Who is a Child?

A young human being below the age of puberty or below the legal age of majority. Ten years ago in 2002, the international labor organization launched the first world day against the child labor observed on June 12 every year.

International conventions define children as aged 18 and under. Individual governments may define "child" according to different ages or other criteria. The legal definition of child generally refers to minor

"Child" and "childhood" are also defined differently by different cultures. A "child" is not necessarily delineated by a fixed age. Social scientists point out that child’s abilities and maturities vary so much that defining a child’s maturity by calendar age can be misleading. According to Indian law the word “child” remain ambiguous

As per child labor Act 1986 ‘ a child is defined as a person who has not completed 14 years of age Finally it is very much clear in the Plantation labor act 1951 which clearly defines “child” , “adolescent and “Adult”. Child means below 14 years of age, Adolescent.

II. INTRODUCTION TO CHILD LABOR

Child labor is the employment of children at regular and sustained labor.

Actually the considerable differences exist between the many kinds of work children do. Some are difficult and demanding, others are more hazardous and even morally reprehensible. Children carry out a very wide range of tasks and activities when they work."

The term “child labor” is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that harms them and exploit them in some way and of course gives a negative effect upon their physical and mental development.

UNICEF defines child labor as work that exceeds a minimum number of hours, depending on the age of a child and on the type of work. Such work is considered harmful to the child and should therefore be eliminated.

Not all work done by children should be classified as child labor that is to be targeted for elimination. Children’s or adolescents’ participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling, is generally regarded as being something positive. This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays. These kinds of activities contribute to children’s development and to the welfare of their families; they provide them with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life.

No Doubt that “Child labor” is one of the more harrowing aspects of 19th century history and undoubtedly an emotive topic. To get employment reform acts passed as legislation, reformers highlighted stories of the horrific treatment of children in mills and down the mines. Not all work is bad for children.

Some social scientists point out that some kinds of work may be completely unobjectionable except for one thing about the work that makes it exploitative. Here I can give you the example of those work which kills their childhood and they need to be save from that particular work which:

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
- interferes with their schooling by:
 - depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
 - obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
 - requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance

with excessively long and heavy work.

But a child who delivers newspapers before school might actually benefit from learning how to work, gaining responsibility, and earn a bit of money. But what if the child is not paid? Then he or she is being exploited.

As UNICEF's 1997 State of the World's Children Report puts it, "Children's work needs to be seen as happening along a continuum, with destructive or exploitative work at one end and beneficial work - promoting or enhancing children's development without interfering with their schooling, recreation and rest - at the other. And between these two poles are vast areas of work that need not negatively affect a child's development." Children's participation in economic activity - that does not negatively affect their health and development or interfere with education, can be positive. Work that does not interfere with education (light work) is permitted from the age of 12 years under the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 138. So child engaged in part time work to learn practical skill linked to social or inherited custom or crafts is not child labor. It becomes "child labor" only when child weaves carpet in a factory or factory; earns money to support family without schooling, social development. On the other hand if child works for 3-4 hours to learn or earn for self or parents after schooling, would not be known as child labor.

So, here different organization have their own views that what kind of work come under the category of child labor and what not but I think that a child must give his or her full time in their studies and remaining time he can spend in playing and enjoying because a part time easy work also somewhat killing their childhood. This is the time to study and enjoy not to work because finally they have to work when they become adult. Full time education is must and the rest time for only enjoying their life as the children also need some mental relaxation. Only then they can give their 100 percent towards their studies. Easy and part time work as selling newspaper no doubt, that it is not hazardous for him and he is helping his family but somehow his childhood is on end. Think about it! How he will feel when he will see the same age group of children are enjoying and playing after their studies. "This is not the argument but just a feeling."

In commemoration of International Children's Day, Save the Children is launching a unique index exploring the major reasons why childhood comes to an early end. The End of Childhood Index focuses on a set of life-changing events that signal the disruption of childhood. It ranks 172 countries based on where childhood is most intact and where it is most eroded. It shows which countries are succeeding, and failing, to provide conditions that nurture and protect their youngest citizens. The indicators used to measure the end of childhood are: under-5 mortality, malnutrition that stunts growth, out-of-school children, child labor, early marriage, adolescent births, and displacement by conflict and child homicide. Which children survive or die, learn or don't, are protected or harmed, is no accident. Lost childhoods are a result of choices that exclude

particular groups of children by design or neglect. Millions of children have their childhoods cut short because of who they are and where they live.

There have been major gains for children in the last 25 years, but recent progress in fighting extreme poverty has often not reached those children who need it most - because of geography, gender, ethnicity, disability or because they are victims of conflict.

Children's experience of childhood is largely determined by the care and protection they receive, or fail to receive, from adults. Children have the right to survival, food and nutrition, health and shelter. They also have the right to be encouraged and educated, both formally and informally. And they have the right to live free from fear, safe from violence and protected from abuse and exploitation.

In 2015, world leaders gathered at the United Nations to make a bold commitment - to end poverty in all its forms by 2030 and protect the planet for future generations. Taken together, the Sustainable Development Goals they established envision a future in which all children enjoy their rights to health, education and protection - in short, their right to childhood. Crucially, signatories to the new agreement promised to ensure this would happen for all segments of society - regardless of income, geography, gender or identity. And they promised that those who are furthest behind - the most excluded in society - would be reached first. This pledge to leave no one behind must be upheld. Only then we will realize its potential to transform the lives of millions of children across the world, guaranteeing every last child the childhood they deserves is additional education and practical skill that a child learns.

Countries where child labour is seen?

The proportion of child laborers varies a lot among countries and even regions inside those countries.

III. CHILD LABOUR AND EDUCATION

Child labor is closely associated with poverty. Many poor families are unable to afford school fees or other school costs. The family may depend on the contribution that a working child makes to the household's income, and place more importance on that than on education. And when a family has to make a choice between sending either a boy or girl to school, it is often the girl who loses out.

More than ever today, children need a good quality education and training if they are to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in the labor market. However, in many countries the schools which are accessible to the poor families are under resourced and inadequate. Poor facilities, over-sized classes, and lack of trained teachers lead to low standards of education.

In the Millennium Development Goals the United Nations and the broader international community set targets of ensuring that by 2015 all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education and that there is gender parity in education.

TABLE I
 COUNTRIES WHERE CHILD LABOUR IS SEEN

Top 10	Where childhood is least threatened	Bottom 10	Where childhood is most threatened
Rank	Country	Rank	Country
1	Norway	Guinea	163
1	Slovenia	Sierra Leone	163
3	Finland	Burkina Faso	165
4	Netherlands	South Sudan	166
4	Sweden	Chad	167
6	Portugal	Somalia	168
7	Ireland	Central African Republic	169
8	Iceland	Mali	170
8	Italy	Angola	171
10	Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, South Korea	Niger	172

These targets cannot be met unless the factors that generate child labor and prevent poor families from sending children to school are addressed. Among the most important steps required are:

- Provision of free and compulsory education;
- Tackling barriers to girls education;
- Ensuring that children have access to a school and a safe and quality learning environment;
- Providing catch up education opportunities for children and youth who have so far missed out on formal schooling;
- Tackling the worldwide shortage of teachers and ensuring a properly trained and professional teaching force;
- Enforcing laws on child labor and education in line with international standards;
- Tackling poverty, and creating decent work for adults;
- Raising public awareness to tackle child labor.

Child laborers work for most of the time. In some cases they work for 16 hours a day. This deprives the child from time to seek education, which is essential for the overall development and future progress of the child. Some children are bound by their employers as slaves and have to work all the time. In some cases the poverty of the household and low level of parental education are responsible for child labor. The value of education is less important to the parents than the income they consider putting their child to work a better education method than schooling as work assures survival and better future prospects. This is due to the failure of many graduates to get a job, which is evident from the high level of unemployment existing among them.

"Education broadens your mind but it does not teach you how to survive".

Why the childhood ended so soon? A Burning Question

IV. CHILD LABOR AND HEALTH HAZARDS

The Major reasons including poor health, conflict, extreme violence, child marriage, early pregnancy, malnutrition, exclusion from education and the main is child labor of course the working conditions that are safe and healthy for adults may not be safe and healthy for children because of their physical differences. Risks may be higher for children at various stages of development and may have long-term negative impacts. When taken together these factors have created a global childhood crisis of massive proportions. Factors that may increase the health, safety, and developmental risk factors for children include:

- Rapid skeletal growth
- Development of organs and tissues
- Greater risk of hearing loss
- Developing ability to assess risks
- Greater need for food and rest
- Higher chemical absorption rates
- Smaller size
- Lower heat tolerance
- Exposure to pesticides
- Working with machinery and sharp tools
- Lack of clean water, hand-washing facilities, and toilets
- Beginning to work at very early ages, often between 5-7 years of age
- Less restrictive standards for agricultural work

Occupational hazards cause not only short-term health effects (mainly injuries, skin problems, etc.), but most effects are long-term and will only become evident in adulthood. Therefore, they are difficult to measure and to quantify. Cancer, infertility, chronic back pain and IQ reduction are some of the expected long-term outcomes. The elimination of child labor is a long-term objective. However, in the meanwhile, we cannot allow that children are injured or harmed at work in their struggle for survival, especially when we have the knowledge and means to prevent this.

Long hours of work on a regular basis can harm children's social and educational development.

U.S. adolescents who work more than 20 hours per week have reported more problem behaviors (e.g., aggression, misconduct, substance use), and sleep deprivation and related problems (falling asleep in school). They are more likely to drop out of school and complete fewer months of higher education.

The unconditional worst forms of child labor (e.g., slavery, soldiering, prostitution, drug trafficking) may have traumatic effects, including longer term health and socioeconomic effects. Children work in conditions that may endanger their health such

as in stone quarries, tanning leather, and electroplating metals. They work without any protective clothing or equipment. Children in different occupations face different fatal diseases. Children employed in stone cutting, brick factories, granite quarries and slate factories face the risk of silicosis caused from exposure to silica. Tuberculosis is another disease faced by children in pottery related industries. These children also suffer from malnutrition due to their poor living conditions.

Lack of education traps children in poverty

Yes, we cannot refuse this important point that “Education is the chief defense of Nation” and lack of it become a hindrance for the children push them into the cloud of poverty and slavery. So educating children gives the next generation the tools to fight poverty and prevent their rights and from diseases too. It builds confidence, literacy and dignity. It builds a stronger foundation for the future we all share. And it’s every child’s right.

In 2000, there were 375 million children and youth out of school. Today that number has been reduced to 263 million. 24 million children who are out of school come from excluded groups. They are children from disadvantaged backgrounds, often girls, who live in conflict-afflicted countries, in slums and in remote communities, who are from ethnic minority or lower caste families, or who are disabled.

I have taken this concept of education in my article to save children’s childhood because education give the power to fight for yourself to speak for yourself and it remove all kinds of hesitation we can distinguish between the right and wrong.

But we have seen that some out-of-school children have attended school in the past but dropped out, some will attend school in the future, and some will never go to school. Many who are in school are not learning the basics of reading and math. To fully address the global education crisis – and reap vast social and economic rewards – equal, quality education must be made available to everyone and to all.

These things are generally noticed that Girls are more likely than boys to be excluded from education. Rather girl’s education should be as much essential as boys and I think that Girls education is more important than boys because one educated girl educate the whole generation but unfortunately About 15 million girls will never have the opportunity to learn to read and write in primary school, compared to about 10 million boys. Across sub-Saharan Africa, 9 million girls will never attend school, compared to 6 million boys. The gender gap is even wider in South Asia, where 4 out of 5 out-of-school girls will never enter the formal education system, compared to 2 out of 5 out-of-school boys.

Children with disabilities, especially girls with disabilities, are less likely to start and stay in school than their peers without disabilities. This pattern is more pronounced in poorer countries.

Refugee children are 5 times more likely to be out of school than non-refugee children.

UNHCR estimates that half of refugee children and over three-quarters of refugee adolescents are not in school, compared to 9 percent and 16 percent of children and adolescents globally. In Lebanon, which hosts over 1 million Syrian refugees, over 60 percent of Syrian children – more than 225,000 – were not enrolled in school during the 2015/16 school year.²⁸

Attacks on schools also prevent children from accessing education. In Syria, for example, there have been more than 4,000 attacks on schools over the course of the conflict, and 1 in 3 schools are out of use, having been damaged by bombs, used as shelters for internally displaced people or occupied by armed groups.

The highest rates of out-of-school children are found in sub-Saharan African countries at the bottom of the End of Childhood Index, where schools are often too far away and families are too poor to support their children’s education. In Chad and Somalia, about half of primary and secondary school-aged children are not in school. In Niger 55 percent are out of school. In Djibouti 61 percent. In Eritrea 63 percent. And in South Sudan two-thirds of children are out of school.

Ruksana, 16, lives in a small shanty in a slum area of New Delhi, India. Like her parents, she did not attend school. Instead she worked making shoes and helped her mother raise the family after her father died. Two years ago, Ruksana began attending classes at a Save the Children learning center called “Jigyasa” which means the quest for knowledge. In the mornings she does academic work and three afternoons a week she does vocational training.



Photo: CJ Clarke /save the children

Risk and Jeopardy of Teenage child bearing

Every year, around 17 million girls give birth, forcing them to assume adult responsibilities and putting their health, education and economic prospects at risk. Most births to adolescents (95 percent) occur in developing countries, and 9 in 10 of these births occur within marriage or a union.

Childbearing at a young age, when a girl’s body is not physically mature enough to deliver without complications, often leads to devastating consequences. Complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the second leading cause of death for adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 globally. And babies born to adolescent mothers face a substantially higher

risk of dying than those born to women aged 20 to 24.

Young mothers are less likely to be in school and more likely to struggle economically. This is one of the reason that puts them and their children at risk of exploitation, ill health and perpetuating cycles of poverty.

Early childbearing also severely impacts the economies of communities and nations. For example, if all adolescent girls in Kenya completed secondary school, and if the more than 200,000 adolescent mothers there were employed instead of having become pregnant, \$3.4 billion could have been added to the economy. This is equivalent to the value of Kenya's entire construction sector. If adolescents in Brazil and India had been able to wait until their early 20s to become mothers, those countries would have greater economic productivity equal to over \$3.5 billion and \$7.7 billion, respectively.

Most teenage girls in developing countries do not want to have babies, 53 but many are unable to avoid getting pregnant. They may lack knowledge about contraception, or be afraid to seek contraception services. Contraceptives may be too expensive or not widely or legally available. Girls may also be unable to refuse unwanted sex or resist coerced sex, which tends to be unprotected.

While very early childbearing (before age 15) appears to be declining in all regions, childbearing among older adolescents (ages 15 to 17) has remained steady.

The proportion of births that take place during adolescence is about 2 percent in China, 18 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean and more than 50 percent in sub-Saharan Africa.

Half of all adolescent births occur in just seven countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria and the United States.⁵⁶ The End of Childhood Index shows how the contexts of these births differ. The link between early marriage and early motherhood is strong in Asia and parts of Africa, but having a child outside of marriage is not uncommon in many high-income or Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Adolescent pregnancies are more common in poor, uneducated and rural communities. The poorest 20 percent of girls in Indonesia have birth rates 6 times those of the wealthiest 20 percent. Similar poverty-related disparities are found in Nigeria and Peru. Girls in Rwanda with no formal education have birth rates 5 times those of girls with at least some secondary education. And in Tanzania, uneducated girls give birth at 8 times the rate of those with secondary education. In rural areas of many countries, adolescent birth rates are double those seen in urban areas. In Cambodia and Ethiopia, birth rates in rural areas are 3 and 5 times those in urban areas, respectively.

This is Marta from sinalo(Mexico) 16 year old with her 1 month old son. She had to leave school during her pregnancy. "I worry about going back to school and leaving my child alone," she says. "I do not know how I would be able to feed him.



Children Forced into Exploitative and Hazardous Work

Around 168 million children worldwide are involved into child labor that is more than all the children in Europe. The global number of child laborers has declined by one-third since 2000, but an estimated 168 million children are still trapped in child labor, compelled to work to support themselves and their families. More than half, some 85 million children, are doing hazardous work that directly compromises their physical, mental, social and/or educational development.

Children working to support their families don't just miss out on education. They also miss out on rest, play and recreation. They lose opportunities to participate in their community, religion, cultural activities and sports. The loss of these rights means that, in effect, many working children miss out on their childhood, losing their childhood this is the end of their childhood.

Poor children are much more likely to be forced into work than their wealthier counterparts. In Nepal, for example, 37 percent of children aged 5-17 are engaged in child labor (some 3.2 million children),³ mostly in agriculture, but also in industry and commercial sex work. The highest rates of child labor are found among the poorest Nepali children, where rates exceed 60 percent, with nearly 9 out of 10 child laborers working under hazardous conditions.

Higher rates of child labor are often found in rural areas. In Haiti, 22 percent of children in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area are involved in child labor, compared to 61 percent in rural areas.

The highest national rates of child labor are found in sub-Saharan Africa. In Cameroon, 47 percent of children are engaged in child labor. In Somalia, 49 percent are working. In Guinea-Bissau and Benin, it's 51 and 53 per cent, respectively. And in Mali, it's 56 percent. Not surprisingly, these countries have some of the lowest scores on the End of Childhood Index.

The Worst forms of child labor

Here I would like to show you the worst form of child labor. No doubt that child labor takes many different forms, our main priority is to eliminate it without any delay

Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182 define "child labor" as:

- a) 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;

- b) The use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- c) The use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- d) Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Labor that jeopardizes the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child, either because of its nature or because of the conditions in which it is carried out, is known as “hazardous work”.

Some more example I would like to show you the Hazardous form of child labor

- Construction.
- Carpet Weaving
- Domestic Servitude
- Military Service.
- Working in the chemical and textile factory.
- Mining
- Waste site scavenging
- Stone quarrying
- Deep Water Fishing
- Brick making.

In its most extreme forms, child labor involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities – often at a very early age. Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be called “child labor” depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries.



The agriculture sector comprises activities in agriculture, hunting forestry, and fishing.

The industry sector includes mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction, and public utilities (electricity, gas and water).

The services sector consists of wholesale and retail trade; restaurants and hotels; transport, storage, and communications; finance, insurance, real-estate, and business services; and

community as well as social personal services.

Some Action against the child labor

- Corporate social responsibility and child labor;

Now the companies are very much concerned against the child labor regarding their supply chain. They view it as inconsistent with company values, a threat to their image and ability to recruit and retain top employees, as well as to the sustainability of their supply chain. Child laborers can be found in all stages of supply chains, including in agriculture, manufacturing and retail.

- Child labor Monitoring;

This is one of the very effective way through which number of training programs and the workshop has been started so as to make the groups manually and plan the strategy to monitor the child labor and keep inform through trainers manual and handout for participants.

This is one of the very effective monitoring namely, Community-based child labor monitoring committees are typically composed of community leaders, teachers, health promoters, representatives from the families concerned and sometimes with children or adolescents withdrawn from work. They carry out monitoring visits to workplaces. These visits are conducted on a regular basis and often in conjunction with official visits by labor inspectors.

- Labor Inspection;

International program on elimination of child Labor (IPEC) works to build the capacities of labor inspector and other enforcement agencies to take action against child labor, especially in respect of hazardous child labor and child labor monitoring. Labor inspectors have traditionally been key partners in eliminating child labor. Today, their role takes on added dimensions and importance with the introduction of new legal instruments such as ILO Convention 182 on Worst forms of child labor.

To tackle hazardous child labor inspectors can give information on hazardous child labor to employers and workers including advice on how to eliminate it. They can also use their legal enforcement powers in the workplace.

- Time Bound Program

This program is specially made for the elimination of worst form of child labor. According to ILO Convention No. 182 calls for time-bound measures to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Countries ratifying this Convention must take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor as a matter of urgency, including time-bound measures to: prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labor; provide direct assistance for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labor and for their rehabilitation and social integration; ensure access to free basic education and appropriate vocational training for all children removed from the worst forms of child labor; identify and reach out to children at special risk; and take account of the special situation of girls.

(Source - ILO Convention No. 182, Articles 1 and 7).

V. RECOMMENDATION/SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

“UK Government support to ILO in fighting against the child labor”.

A majority of countries have adopted legislation to prohibit or place severe restrictions on the employment and work of children, much of it stimulated and guided by standards adopted by the International Labor Organization (ILO).

In spite of these efforts, child labor continues to exist on a massive scale, WHY IT IS SO?

Sometimes in appalling conditions, particularly in the developing world. If progress has been slow or apparently nonexistent, this is because child labor is an immensely complex issue. It cannot be made to disappear simply by the stroke of a pen.

Nevertheless, the basis of determined and concerted action must be legislation, which sets the total elimination of child labor as the ultimate goal of policy, and puts measures into place for this purpose, and which explicitly identifies and prohibits the worst forms of child labor to be eliminated as a matter of priority.

I also want to bring in notice one thing that In September 2015 world leader came together and agreed upon an ambitious global framework for ending poverty called 2030 Agenda for sustainable development Goals.(SDGs) there were 17 SDGs and it promises a future in which all the children have full childhood free from Malnutrition and Violence with access to quality health care and education. Most importantly they want to give the bright future to all the children and no one left behind.

But actually the situation is not so things has not been implemented yet we have a long way to go to realize this vision. Millions of children around the world are left behind.

We can give our opinion views and can tell you about the hazardous of child labor, where and what kind of difficulties children's are facing in different countries of the world can

criticize it and can suggest the various remedial measures to stop the child labor and I also did the same thing but question is same that condition of the children is not improving childhood is ending either due to poverty, lack of education, early marriages, due to violence displaced by conflict etc. But But But..... Who is the angel here to save the children and stop the early childhood ending, abolish the child labor completely?

Well At the end of my article I also want to give a suggestion that “EDUCATION IS THE CHIEF DEFENCE OF NATION “If we want to save our children then educate them appropriately it will give them confidence to fight for their right, to speak for themselves then I am sure no one will be able to exploit them. When they will be educated then of course, they will get the good job or they can do their own business and yes, business required the brain not the money, your brain will earn the money then automatically poverty will remove and then no question of child labor, no ignorance at all. There are number of laws against the child labor but the uneducated peoples are actually not aware about their rights then how they could fight for themselves that's why according to me, Education is must. We should educate our children only then we can save our children.

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