Socio-Economic Factors Leading Towards Child Labour: A Comparative Study in Punjab, Pakistan

Khizar Hayat Qamar (M. Phil) Lecturer Sociology
University of Sargodha, Sub Campus Mandi Bahauddin, Punjab Pakistan

Muhammad Shoaib, (M. Phil Scholar)

===

Abstract

Child labor is a serious social issue of the present era especially in the developing countries like Pakistan. Majority of the children in Pakistan are still working at hotels, tea-stalls, factories and brick-kilns and they are forced to earn money in order to fulfill the needs of the family or add to the income of the family. They are living in a miserable plight and pity condition. They have to work for long hours which affect their health. The number of child laborers in our country is about 12 million.

The present study was carried out in two districts (Mandi Bahauddin& Faisalabad) of Punjab. The main objective of the study was to explore various socio-economic factors paving the way for child labor in society. The universe of the present study was the city areas and suburbs of district Faisalabad & Mandi Bahauddin consisting hotels, workshops, tea-stalls and brick-kilns. Multistage sampling technique was used for the present study. At first stage, two districts (Faisalabad & Mandi Bahauddin) of Punjab province were randomly selected. At the second stage, city areas of these two districts were selected randomly for the selection of sample. At the third stage, a sample of 200 respondents (100 from each district) who were doing labor and working at hotels, workshops, tea-stalls and brick-kilns of the city areas was taken through convenient sampling. The data were collected by designing a well-structured interview schedule. The collected data were analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The results of the study showed that majority of the respondents were doing labor due to poverty and to support the family income. The other major reason of their labor was parents' illiteracy. Their main problem was long working hours and continue work schedule which had bad and serious physical and metal effects on their health.

Key Words: Child Labor, Brick-Kilns, Poverty, Illiteracy, Mental effects

Introduction

Child labor is a multidimensional problem which involves various causes behind it in a number of ways. Some of the major factors which are responsible and paving the way for child labour are parents' illiteracy, low levels of family income or poverty, ignorance, over population, large family size, traditional occupation, week enforcement of laws, unemployment, low levels of income, migration, lack of demand for universal compulsory primary education and many other factors (Venkateshwar, 2004).Child labour is considered as a crime against the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The labour puts hindrance in the way of the education and normal development of the children which can be harmful to their health and their morals. The impacts of labour on children are not the same as on the adults because there are major psychological, mental, physical and social differences between these two groups. Children are seriously harmed by the work which is not harmful to adults. Dangerous work during development and growth in the childhood can have deep and negative effects on the children for the rest of their whole lives and it may destroy their mental and physical growth (Boyden et al, 1998).

Child labour is a cheap and easily accessible phenomenon and it can be easily noticed in developing countries like Pakistan and many others. Children are innocent and unaware about various laws and rights as compared to that of adults' laborers. Owing to their childhood, they are exploited to use in the market. Moreover, their passive nature makes them more vulnerable and dedicated to their work. That is why they are employed at cheap rate without any terms and conditions and due to their innocence, they are exploited in different ways. Majority of the parents are aware how education of their children is important for their children. They also know about the various types of harms their children got due to labor however, many parents are not aware about all this. Furthermore, child labor laws are important in this regard to play role if the parents are agree to be sincere and ready for the education, welfare and betterment of their children (Dessy & Pallage, 2001).

Child labour is a universal phenomenon and it is present in the whole world. To collect a valid and reliable data about exact number and facts about child labor is very difficult because a large number of the children is doing labor in various either informal of unrecognized sectors. A

research report titled The State of Working America shows that 55, 00000 children are doing work in the United States of America in 1992- 93. Almost 6 million and 76000 children labor secretly for the economy which has no control by the state. In 2004, the total number of child laborers at global level was 2017 million (ILO, 2006).

According to a research report conducted in 1998 about examining the situation of child labor in Pakistan and making comparison of child labor in rural and urban areas, about twenty three percent children were rural workers whereas 10% children were at work in the urban areas. In the report, it was also claimed that these laborers continued working without any proper rest and better quality of food. They were working on low pay and they were exploited as well. The condition of the children working in the carpet industry was even worse and vulnerable (Situation of Child Labour in Pakistan, 1998).

It is hard to estimate the nature, extent and magnitude of child labour because of countless limitations on the collection of appropriate data about child labor in Pakistan. In 1996, the last survey on child labor was conducted by the Government of Nawaz Sharif. The survey stated that about 3.3 million children were working, out of which 73 % children were boys and 27 % children were girls.

According to the findings of the survey, these children made up almost 7 % of the total work force. The distribution at provincial level depicted that the volume of child labour only in the province of Punjab was about 1.9 million which was three-fifths (60 %) of total child labour in Pakistan.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was second at the list where almost one million children were doing labour in various sectors. The province of Sindh was at third number in this regard which had a population of 2, 98,000 child laborers. The fourth and the lowest figure about 14,000, was for the province of Baluchistan because of its lesser number of households reporting child labour. In the brick kiln and agriculture sector, generally bonded labor form of child labor exists. In these sectors, the children along with their family members have to do work in a very inhuman environment and conditions.

Although there are no exact facts and statistics about bonded labor in Pakistan, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan made the latest estimations about bonded labor and the results

showed that there were three to eight million children are bonded laborers. Majority of these children were doing labor in brick kilns and agriculture sectors.

According to the statistics of the United Nations International Children Emergency Fund, there were almost 2.5 million (250,000) children working under bonded labor in Pakistan in the brick kiln sector alone. Brick making is the oldest form of industries in the subcontinent and this industry is mostly located in the remote rural areas (UNICEF). Large family size and over population are two important determinants of child labor. In most of the developing countries like Pakistan, many things are regulated and based on population.

Population growth and explosion is one of the major causes of increase in child labour. The Pakistan Economic Survey 2010 stated that there were 82.05 million children and adolescents belonging from the age group of 0 to 19 years old. It will gradually increase as 84.28 millions in 2015. It will grow up to 86.88 millions in 2020. This ratio will gradually rise up to 87.05 millions in 2025 and 88.86 millions in 2030. In 12 years time from 1998 to 2010, almost 28.28 million children and adolescents have increased while in 20 years from 2010 to 2030, only 5 million children will be added into the total population. It shows a slow population growth rate as well as birth rate which will contribute in the elimination of child labour (Nadir et Al, 2004).

The different parties and governments put emphasis on this problem in different periods, but all in vain to control. During her regime, Benazir Bhutto in 1996 declared child labor illegal and ordered to control it. After Benazir Bhutto, the next Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced that eradication of child labor is the first priority of the government in 1998. Then Sheikh Rashid who was the Federal Minister for Labour and Manpower in 1999 presented a four points policy for the eradication of the problem of child labour from the country. Three years later in 2002 after Sheikh Rashid, the new Federal Minister for Labor and Manpower Mr. Omar Asghar Khan claimed to eradicate child labor and bonded labor from Pakistan before 2005. Moreover, the government also announced 100 million for the welfare, rehabilitation and elimination of child labour and bounded child labour in the country. Generally, there is a difference between government and private data and statistics about child labour in Pakistan. Most of the researches are based on towns or villages or some cities (Weiner & Noman, 1995).

In recent periods, Pakistan has passed various laws which are greatly limiting child labor but these laws are universally ignored, and some 11 million children, aged 4–14 are keeping that

the factories of the country operating. They are often working in brutal and dirty conditions (Silvers, 1996). Currently law enforcement agencies are performing very poor in Pakistan owing to corruption or bribery almost at each level (Jahangir, 1989).

Pakistan made tremendous efforts for the eradication of child labor from the country in 2013 in the form of national plans action against bonded and child labor at provincial levels. The Punjab Government re-established the district vigilance committees for the eradication of child labor. The FIA also made steps to control human trafficking. The government made serious efforts to cope with child labor and passed various acts against child labor at provincial level especially the Government of Punjab but these laws were in effect in the other provinces. Punjab and Federal laws differ with regard to the minimum working age and for hazardous work. So the enforcement of laws remains weak and the labor inspections have become infrequent (United States Department of Labor, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

One of the major reasons child labor in a society is class difference. According to Karl Marx, there are two main classes' i.e. bourgeoisie and proletariat. The later is exploited because it has no resources resultantly the children of this class has to do labour in order to fulfill the needs of the family because of social inequality in the society. Labor theory and class conflict theory of Marx is best suited. Since child labor is a burning issue of the present era.

Hypotheses

Following hypotheses were constructed to show the relationship between independent.

- Association between income of family and child labor
- Association between parents' education and child labor

Objectives of the Study

- To find out various socio-economic factors leading towards child labour.
- To study the nature of work and problems faced by working children.
- To know about the effects of child labour on the health of children.

Methodology

The present study was carried out in two districts (Mandi Bahauddin& Faisalabad) of Punjab. The main objective of the study was to explore various socio-economic factors paving the way for child labor in society. The universe of the present study was the city areas and suburbs of

district Faisalabad & Mandi Bahauddin consisting hotels, workshops, tea-stalls and brick-kilns.Multistage sampling technique was used for the present study. At first stage, two districts (Faisalabad & Mandi Bahauddin) of Punjab province were randomly selected. At the second stage, city areas of these two districts were selected randomly for the selection of sample. At the third stage, a sample of 200 respondents (100 from each district) who were doing labor and working at hotels, workshops, tea-stalls and brick-kilns of the city areas was taken through convenient sampling. The data were collected by designing a well-structured interview schedule. In order to fetch the data into comparable form, percentages of many categories of data were used in the Current study. Chi-Square was computed by following formula:

O   =   Observed values

E   =   expected value

∑   =   Total Sum

The calculated value of Chi-Square was compared with the table value. If the calculated value of Chi-Square was equal to or higher than the table value at 0.05 level of probability at the given degree of freedom, the relationship was statistically significant. If it is less than the table value (0.01 level of probability) it is termed as highly significant whereas the calculated value is less than the table value at 0.05, level of significance, it is declared as non-significant.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Item 1: Association between income of family and child labor

| | Child Labor | | |
Income	Yes	No	Total
Up to 10000	85	5	90
	94.4%	5.6%	100.0%
10001-20000	43	17	60
	71.7%	28.3%	100.0%
20001-30000	21	11	32
	65.6%	34.4%	100.0%
30001 and above	5	13	18
	27.8%	72.2%	100.0%
Total	154	46	200
	77.0%	23.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square = 43.391   **D. f**= 3   **P- value**= .000

Gamma=.701   **Significance**= .000

The chi-square value (43.391) shows an association (P=.000) between the independent variable, family income and the dependent variable, chances of child labor. So the hypothesis "**association between income of family and child labor**" is accepted because P value is less than 0.05. Moreover, the value of Gamma value (.701) shows also positive relationship between the independent and dependent variable.

Item 2:Association between parents' education and child labor

Education	Child labor		Total
	Yes	No	
Illiterate	87	11	98
	88.8%	11.2%	100.0%
Primary	37	11	48
	77.1%	22.9%	100.0%
Matric	20	11	31
	64.5%	35.5%	100.0%
Intermediate and above	10	13	23
	43.5%	56.5%	100.0%
Total	154	46	200
	77.0%	23.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square = 25.310   **D. f**= 3   **P- value**= .000

Gamma=.564   **Significance**= .000

The chi-square value (25.310) shows an association (P=.000) between the independent variable, education of the parents and the dependent variable, chances of child labor. So the hypothesis "**association between parents' education and child labor**" is accepted because P value is less than 0.05. Moreover, the value of Gamma value (.701) shows also positive relationship between the independent and dependent variable.

Results & Discussions

Analysis and interpretation of data are the most important steps for conducting scientific social research. Without these steps, generalization and prediction cannot be achieved which is the basic need in social research. Majority of the respondents were doing labor due to low level of family incomeand parents' illiteracy. The other major reason of their labor was parents' illiteracy. Their main problem was long working hours and continue work schedule which had bad and serious physical and metal effects on their health.

Conclusion

The major reason of child labor was parents' illiteracy. Their main problem was long working hours and continues work schedule which had bad and serious physical and metal effects

on their health.It is need of the hour to control child labor because children are raw material. Government and NGOs should play their role for the eradication of child labor.

==

References

Boyden, J., Birgitta, L. & Myers, W. (1998*) What Works for Working Children? And Save the Children, Sweden.*

Dessy, S. &Pallage, S. (2001). Child Labour and Coordination Failures. *Journal of Development Economics 65 (2), p.469–476.*

International Labour Organization (2006) Child Labour - A Text Book for University Students. *Available at http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=174*.

International labour Organization (2008) Sub-regional information System on Child Labour, *IPEC, retrieved June 3, 2008.*

Jahinger, (1989) Child Abuse in Pakistan. Report of Seminar, September 29, 1989 Peshawar. *Pakistan Pediatric Association NWFP (Peshawar) with the Collaboration of UNICEF.*

Nadir, N. Budhwani, Belinda, W. Gary, N. McLean (2004) Should Child Labor Be Eliminated retrieved at http://www.tc.umn.edu/~budh0004/childlaborarticle.pdf.

Silvers, J. (1996) Child Labour in Pakistan. *The Atlantic Monthly, February 1996; 277: 79–92.*

United States Department of Labor Report for Pakistan, (2005). *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*, [Online]. Available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,USDOL,,PAK,,48c8ca6a2d,0.html [accessed 18 Feb. 2011]

UNICEF (1991) The State of the World's Children 1991. *Oxford University Press, Oxford.*

Venkateshwarrao, D. (2004) Child Rights – A perspective on International and National Law, New Delhi: *Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2004, p.5.*

Weiner, N., Noman, O. (1995) the Child and the State in India and Pakistan: *Child Labour and Education Policies in Comparative Perspective. Karachi: Oxford University Press.*

Khizar Hayat Qamar, Lecturer Sociology
University of Sargodha, Sub-Campus Mandi Bahauddin
Pakistan
qamar.khizar@gmail.com

Muhammad Shoaib, M. Phil Scholar
Department of Sociology, Riphah International University Faisalabad Campus
irshoaib@gmail.com