

Causes and Consequences of Child Labor in Sindh: A Study from Hyderabad Pakistan

Meetha Ram¹, Beihai Tian¹, Bakhtawar Nizamani², Assan Das³, Nazia Bhutto⁴ and Naeem Ahmed Junejo⁵

¹Department of Sociology, College of Humanities & Social Sciences, Huazhong Agricultural University, Wuhan China. msagarparmar@gmail.com

² Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Pakistan

³ Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Pakistan

⁴ Sindh Development Studies Centre, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Pakistan

⁵ School of Social Development and Public Policy, Beijing Normal University China

Abstract: Child labor involves the type of work which deprives children at early age from their childhood and stops their mental, physical and psychological growth. There are negative consequences of child labor on their future life and wellbeing. In most of the cases the children are not paid their proper wages or in some cases children work without pay at early age. There are international laws to protect child rights and stop child labor in the world. There are national and provincial child protection laws in Pakistan as per international commitments. This study has been taken Qasimabad town of Hyderabad District of Sindh province in Pakistan as case to find out causes and consequences of child labor. The study has aimed at finding out reasons of child labor and status of their daily earning. It also aimed to know the type of work done by children and their parents or guardians, the status of education and their interest towards attending school has also been found out by this study.

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1. Introduction

Child labor is mainly meant toward work that can deprive children by their childhood, their dignity and potential. Child labor leaves harmful effects on children's physical, mental and psychological development. It is mainly done for the sake of economic gains while children are innocent and unaware about their rights and negative consequences of the work they are performing in that little age. In most of the cases children are not paid proper wages, mainly they are overworked, face harmful and dangerous environment and extreme weather conditions (ILO 2013). There is no room for such children's growth that can teach them to function and survive properly in society, mainly results withdrawn from society. Child labor can be said as a form of abuse on children similarly like other form of abuse (Humanium 2010).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) also protects the rights of children, it extends the children's protection from economic exploitation or any kind of work that is dangerous for them or interfere with their education, likely can be said as the protection of rights of children from any work that is harmful for their physical, mental or spiritual health as well as social or moral development (Nafees, et al. 2012). Pakistan is facing challenges of extreme socio-economic instability and political disorders. The reasons behind child labor in Pakistan include

poverty, large family sizes, poor literacy ratio, social norms stopping children from education, effects of natural disasters, economic crises, unemployment and lack of economic opportunities day by day. These issues lead children to be engaged in child labor which harmfully effect on their growth in all aspects (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan 2011). More than 12.5 million children in Pakistan are involved in child labor and most of them are driven due to poverty (Mustafa 2017). Pakistan's Labor Force Survey, 2014-15 showed that of those children aged between 10 and 14 years active in child labor, 61 percent were boys and 88 percent came from rural areas (Rodriguez 2017).

Sindh is the second largest province of Pakistan by population and it is second largest economic hub also. It is rapidly increasing urbanized province of Pakistan containing largest urban cities Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas or Sukkur. As per a report of the Express Tribune (Tunio 2017) in Sindh due to poor socio-economic conditions children below the age of 14 are mainly forced to work in various sectors including factories, industries, field or other hazardous zones to support their family. The Government of Sindh has passed "Sindh Prohibition of Employment of Children Bill, 2017" to discourage this practice and exploitation of children. This study was carried out at Hyderabad; the second largest urban city of the Sindh province. The study aimed at finding out the causes of

child labor, type of work done by children, their daily earning and status of education as well. This study also aims at highlighting national and international child labor laws.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Child Labor Definition and General Perspectives

There is no as such consensus in academia or public policy and other related literature about the definition of child labor that what child labor is. Though child labor is often understood as the form of child abuse developed countries have popular opinions about child labor in developing countries that it is the form of labor stems from opportunistic businessmen who seek cheap labor. The parents who face economic problems are happy with earnings of their children and who opportunistic businessmen take benefit of those (Edmonds 2003). Child labor can be defined “the employment of children in any work that deprives children of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, and that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful” (Parvathamma 2015). The same study by Dr. G.L. Parvathamma defines some characteristics of child labor as below.

- Violates a nation’s minimum wage laws
- Threatens children’s physical, mental, or emotional well-being
- Involves intolerable abuse, such as child slavery, child trafficking, debt bondage, forced labor, or illicit activities
- Prevents children from going to school
- Uses children to undermine labor standards

In other words child labor refers towards engagement of child in any type of work which deprives him/her from right of education and childhood and also exploits mentally, physically, socially or morally. There are several key factors behind child labor including poverty, health care, parents’ education, lack of awareness about laws or social status as well (Awan, Waqas and Aslam 2011). Earlier there were two categories of child labor; the children working in factories and the children engaged in the work which may stop them from education or risk their physical health (Kazmi 2015).

Later (International Labour Organization 2002) defined three categories of child labor as below.

- The labor performed by a child, who is under minimum age specified by the national legislation
- The labor that is harmful for the physical and moral well-being of a child
- The unconditional worst form defined by international laws

Child labor is a serious matter and its scale play major role in global policy making and advocacy initiatives worldwide. It is one of the integral parts of Asian tradition to employ persons to undertake domestic household chores. It is found in most of the Asian countries that many young children work as domestic child workers, mainly the economic and social factors result towards it (Mai 2008). Most of the countries, including Pakistan, and a number of development agencies follow the definition of child labor given by international labor organization (Kazmi 2015).

2.2 Child Labor in Pakistan

Pakistan has faced worst situation regarding child labor in past. As per 1996 survey 40 million children among the ages of 5-14 years were engaged in child labor and that number became country’s 30 percent of total population (Kazmi 2015). In Pakistan poverty ratio is high, 38.8 percent population lives in poverty which results one in each four individuals lives with acute poverty (Rodriguez 2017). The main causes behind child labor in Pakistan include poverty, unemployment, illiteracy or family background etc. The major form of child labor in Pakistan is domestic child labor but common forms of child labor also include working in agriculture, factories, local labor, working on hotels or begging profession also. As the poverty is global issue; affecting various developing countries in the world. Pakistan is one of the countries in South Asia with millions of people living in extreme poverty. There are efforts taken to decrease poverty in Pakistan but there is still need to work more. Pakistan ranks at 157th out of 188 countries in Human Development Index (The Borgon Project 2017). According to Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPHI) report by Pakistan Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform in 2016 shows 39 percent Pakistan as under multidimensional poverty. This extreme poverty is one of the reasons of child labor in Pakistan. Another reason behind child labor in Pakistan is low literacy rate among the masses. Pakistan Economic Survey 2017-2018 shows that literacy rate in Pakistan is 58 percent for above ten years old and net primary enrollment is 54 percent (Alvi 2018). Other factors contributing to child labor in Pakistan may include lack of earning opportunities, poor access towards education or employment opportunities, low awareness about laws and policies about child protection or various other social factors. According to National Nutrition Survey 2017 about 58 percent households were food insecure and about 44 percent children remained underdeveloped or short for their age (Amnesty International 2018). 10 percent of all workers in Pakistan are between 10 and 14 years of ages (Bhalotra S. 2001). As per National Labor Force Survey 2012-2013 majority of the child workers

belong to rural areas and they are mainly engaged in agriculture related labor (Pakistan Moderate

Advancement 2013).

Table # 1: Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10-14 yrs.	13.0 (2,449,480)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	72.3
Combining Work and School (%)	10-14 yrs.	1.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		71.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2014)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis of statistics from (LFS Survey, 2010-2011 2014)

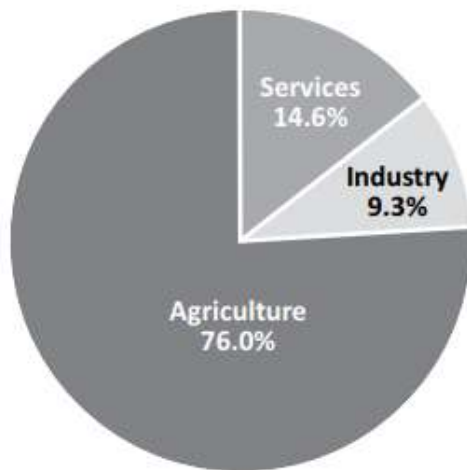


Figure # 1: Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14

Source of data: Worst Finding on Child Labor by (Pakistan Moderate Advancement 2013)

Pakistan has passed various laws which limit children to work at early age. The children rights are also respected and defended by the Constitution of Pakistan. As per the Constitution any child cannot be employed in any factory or mine or any other hazardous type of employment (Kashif and Hussain 2013).

2.3 Child Labor in Sindh Pakistan

Sindh; one of the provinces of Pakistan is the second largest province by population. It is also second largest economy with largest financial hub; its capital. Among 3.3 million children who are working around country, there are 1.94 million among the ages of 5-14 in Punjab while 0.3 million are in Sindh province, the rest are in other provinces (Rashid, et al. 2015). In backward areas of Sindh province the bonded labor in agriculture sector and debt slavery possess a vast history. As per the figures of some human rights groups, the landlords kept almost 4500 bonded laborers in Sindh province. As per other

figures by the trade federation it was noted that nearly 200000 families were kept to work under debt slavery in brick kiln industry (Srivastava 2003). In such situations the children are also forced to work with parents in these sectors including agriculture and brick kiln. Another sector where child labor is found is Sindh is Carpet weaving sector. As per the study by (Edmonds 2003) it is expressed that the carpet weaving sector mainly exists in Sindh and Punjab provinces of Pakistan and mainly this job is performed in looms of individual’s homes not in larger factory or formal industry structure. It is observed that many children are engaged in sector and worked without pay as supporter inside their own homes; such children are not counted in formal number though this number is also high in Sindh. It is drawn from another study by (Ibupoto, et al. 2019) that there is a large number of children working in agriculture sector in Sindh especially at Hyderabad District, the one of the major reasons behind this, is poverty that does not allow their parents to send children to schools. Parents are not more interested to send their children to school due to poor economic conditions; they prefer to send children to work in agriculture sector to earn something and to support families. After 18th amendment in Pakistan, Sindh is the first province to ban child labor and pass a law entitled “Sindh Prohibition of Employment of Children Bill, 2017” initially (Tunio 2017), later Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces also passed laws (Mustafa 2017).

3. Objectives of Study

Below are the main objectives of the study.

- To find out reasons of child labor and status of their daily earning.
- To know the type of work done by children and their parents/ guardians.
- To highlight the status of education of the children engaged in child labor.

4. Material and Methods

This study has used qualitative and quantitative methods of research. The secondary data sources have been taken from previous research papers, reports, books and other related sources. The secondary data has analyzed as general situations of child labor in the province, the reasons behind it, the consequences and policy concerns about it. For the primary data 100 cases of children were studied at Qasimabad of Hyderabad District, the randomly interviewed respondents of primary data are the children who are

engaged in child labor in the area in various sectors. The responses of primary data are analyzed to find out the reasons of child labor, the literacy rate of children engaged in child labor, type of child labor and daily earning of children from their labor.

5. Results

Demographic Results: Age, Number of Family Members and Number of Family Members engaged in earning

Table # 2

	Frequency	Percentage
Age (In Years)		
7	12	12%
8	08	8.0%
9	20	20.0%
10	04	4.0%
11	16	16.0%
12	20	20.0%
13	20	20.0%
Total	100	100.0%
Number of Family Members		
6	20	20.0%
7	12	12.0%
8	12	12.0%
9	16	16.0%
10	24	24.0%
11	08	8.0%
12	04	4.0%
13	04	4.0%
Total	100	100.0%
Number of Family Member who earn (Including Child)		
1	16	16.0%
2	84	84.0%
Total	100	100.0%

Above Table # 2 represents the demographic data of the respondents. The majority of respondents 20% each are of the 9, 12 and 13 years age. 16% respondents are of the 11 years age and other are of 7, 8 and 10 years of age. The table also shows the number of family members of the respondents. 24% respondents have 10 family members, 20% have 6 and 16% have 9 family members. 12% respondents have 7 and 8 family members each while 8% respondents

have 11 family members. There are only 4% respondents have 12 and 13 family members. As per above table data there are 16% of the respondents children who are only wage earner for their family and 84% children work together with their father or guardian.

Objective One: The objective one of the study is "To find out causes of child labor and its impacts on children."

Table # 3

	Frequency	Percentage
Reasons of Labor		
<i>Low Family Income</i>	18	18.0%
<i>To Fulfill Family Needs</i>	44	44.0%
<i>Force of Family to Work</i>	22	22.0%
<i>All of Above</i>	16	16.0%
Total	100	100.0%
Daily Earning (In PKR)		
<i>100 – 150</i>	68	68.0%
<i>151 – 300</i>	32	32.0%
Total	100	100.0%

The above Table # 3 shows the reasons of child labor and daily earning of children from labor. The major reason of the child labor is poverty, children work to fulfill family needs. According to 44% respondents they work to fulfill family needs. The second major reason of child labor is force of family to work and earn for family, 22% respondents responded that they work due to force of family to work and support family. Low family income is also

one of the reasons of child labor and that is 18%. The above table also shows daily earning (in Pakistani Rupees) of the children. There are 68% of the children who only earn 100-150 PKR (0.95 USD) per day and only 32% children can earn in between 151-300 PKR (1.9 USD).

Objective Two: *The objective two of the study is "To know the type of work done by children and their parents/ guardians"*

Table # 4

	Frequency	Percentage
Type of work done by children		
<i>Automobile Repair Shop</i>	36	36.0%
<i>Electronics Repairing Shop</i>	12	12.0%
<i>Fruit Cart</i>	08	8.0%
<i>Iron shop</i>	12	12.0%
<i>Keys Repairing Shop</i>	04	4.0%
<i>Waiter</i>	12	12.0%
<i>Saloon Shop</i>	04	4.0%
<i>Welding Shop</i>	12	12.0%
Total	100	100.0%
Type of work done by children's parents/ guardians		
<i>Government Job</i>	04	4.0%
<i>Fruit Seller</i>	08	8.0%
<i>Labor</i>	28	28.0%
<i>Rickshaw Driver</i>	20	20.0%
<i>Shopkeeper</i>	04	4.0%
<i>Taxi Driver</i>	08	8.0%
<i>Watch Man</i>	12	12.0%
<i>Welding Technician</i>	04	4.0%
<i>Doesn't Work</i>	12	12.0%
Total	100	100.0%

The Above Table # 4 shows the type of work done by children and their parents or guardians. A large number of children work at auto mobile repair shop and that is 36%. 12% respectively work at electronics repair shop, iron shop, work at hotels as waiters and work at welding shop. Other work done by children include fruit cart, keys repairing shops and

saloon shop. As per above table data the type of work done by children's parents or guardian include labor as major part that is 28%. Parents or guardians of 20% of children are rickshaw drivers 12% are watch man. Other work done by children parents or guardians includes government job, fruit seller, shopkeeper, taxi

drivers and welding technician. The parents of 12% of the respondent children do not do any type of work.

Objective Three: *The objective three of the study is "To highlight the status of education of the children engaged in child labor"*

Table # 5 shows the status of education of children engaged in child labor, reasons if not going to school and their interest to go school. The table shows that 62% children are not going school and there are only 38% children, going to school. The major reasons behind not going to school involve poor economic conditions which lead to work to support family. The major reasons include 38.8% which is work to support family and 33.8% which is can't afford study expenses. Other reason of not going to school is family force to earn, which stop them to attend school. From the respondent children who are not going to school 77.4% are willing to go school and there are 22.6% children which do not have interest to attend school.

6. Discussions

Child labor is generally understood as the work which deprives children from their childhood, their dignity and potential. There are mostly harmful effects of child labor of children's mental, physical and psychological growth. The child labor is done mainly for economic benefits at very innocence age. This study has carried out at Qasimabad Town of District Hyderabad in Sindh province of Pakistan. The study aimed at finding reasons of child labor and knowing the status of their daily earning. It also aimed to know

the type of work done by children and their parents or guardians, the status of education and their interest towards attending school has also been found out by this study.

The study has resulted that poverty and low economic sources of the family lead children to work at early age. It is found by the study that 44% children work to fulfill family needs because of poor economic earning of family. Though the children work at early age about below 13 years of age but their earning is not as enough. There are 68% of the children who only earn 100-150 PKR (0.95 USD) per day. The size of family also matters in fulfillment of family economic needs, study found out that 24% of the respondents have 10 family members. It is found by study that the type of work done by children or their parents is mainly the common and low standards work. The type of work done by children include to work at automobile shop, electronics repair shop, iron shop, work as waiter or to work at welding at shop. The large number 36% of children work at auto mobile repair shop. On the other hand the parents or guardians of children are engaged to work as labor, driver, watch man, fruit seller, shop keeper or technician but mainly 28% parents or guardians of children are labor. The study suggests increasing awareness among children and parents about child labor laws and child rights. It also suggests providing educational opportunities to poor children with economic opportunities for their parents and guardians; proper implementation of child labor laws is also one of the recommendations of this study.

Table # 5

	Frequency	Percentage
Status of Education		
<i>Going School</i>	38	38.0%
<i>Not Going School</i>	62	62.0%
Total	100	100.0%
Reasons If Not Going		
<i>Can't afford study expenses</i>	21	33.8%
<i>Work to support family</i>	24	38.8%
<i>Family Force to Earn</i>	13	21.0%
<i>All of Above</i>	04	6.4%
Total	62	100.0%
Want to go School, If Not Going		
<i>Yes</i>	48	77.4%
<i>No</i>	14	22.6%
Total	62	100.0%

Corresponding Author:

Meetha Ram
Department of Sociology, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Huazhong Agricultural University

Wuhan China
Telephone: +8615623906295 / +923342800835
E-mail: msagarparmar@gmail.com

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