

Socio-economic Causes of Child Labor:

A Case Study of Hotel Industries in Quetta, Balochistan

By

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Abstract:

Child labor is a phenomenon that has a variety of socio-economic and political causes. This research study aims to identify the socio-economic factors that cause child labor in Quetta, Balochistan with special focus on hotels / restaurants. The study is quantitative in nature and a total of 200 working children (in hotels/restaurants) were interviewed through structured questionnaire. Additionally, key informants were also interviewed to get deep insight into the issue to understand the root causes of child labor. The study finds out that there is strong nexus between child labor and socio-economic conditions of family; however, poor economic condition is not the only cause of labor among children. The study identifies two classifications of factors – the pull and the push factors. In addition to poverty, unemployment of elder family members and to overcome basic facilities of family; there are other significant factors that cause child labor which include parental pressure, family size, access to and quality of education and cultural practices in family. The study suggests operation oriented recommendations to key stakeholders.

Keywords: Child labor, Hotel Industry, Poverty, Socio-economic,

Introduction:

A child has been defined as any human being who is under the age of 18 years, unless under the relevant national laws recognize an earlier age of

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majority (CRC-1990). Similarly, the 1973 Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, defines a child as any human being who is under the age of 18 years. The Employment Act of 1991 of children clearly defines a child as any human being who is under the 14 years and adolescent as under the age of 18 years. Hence, constitution of Pakistan also defines child whose age is at least 14 years. Although, the 18th amendment has moved up the minimum age limit to 16 years, with no change in labor laws. The constitution's article 25(A) which state that the compulsory education must be provided to all children between the age of 5-16 years. It helps to understand who are child and also forced that they could not be permitted to work at the age of 16 years. While, ILO defines child labor as any child who are involved in economic activity which affect their childhood, schooling, their self-esteem, and damage their physical, emotional, and psychological development (pay-check.pk: accessed date 29 April 2018).

Literature Review:

Child labour is not a problem of few countries but blown up the whole globe. The ratio of child labour has been increasing day by day, even as the figure of child labour remained high. However, still there is positive expectation to control it. As maximum number of children in the world was found in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, they were out of School, along with stand for approximately half of the child employment globally. (Fyfe, 2004) Child labour was a major issue and one of the complex obstacles in the way of social development for each country. Although, it was the social evil and many countries had planned to get rid of it but still remained unchecked and affected developed and under developed countries. In accordance to the International Labor Organization definition of child labour is an action of working of children for the earning of income but not learning or playing activity under the age of 14 to 15. As ILO reports showed that more than 200 million children are busy in different kind of child labour as well as above 8 million children are involved in hazardous and violent types of child labour. A large number child is taking part in financial activities and providing huge amount of income to the families. They support their families under the age of 5 to 14 as running the shops, garages, and hotel etc. to survive (Ejaz, 2008). Poverty is not the cause of children labour as most of societies, their culture values, norms, traditions results in to child labour. And it is common practice to help the parents in many societies (Ariyanti, 2018). Several reasons behind child labour like as poverty, deficient resources, lack of priority towards child labour by governments in the world, which lead them to work without knowing hazardous to their health (Avas et al, 2016). A study was conducted in 2007 in the Solapur of Maharashtra with aims that to know the various

causes of child labour in Solapur city. In the findings showed that the majority of children do work due to the inadequate family income and resources compelled them to do work, in order to support the family to overcome family financial problem (Wadgave et al, 2013).

Pakistan's Scenario on Child Labor:

The circumstance of children works in Pakistan, 10 percent of all workers are between the ages of 10 - 14 years and the Pakistan has a for each capita pay of something like \$1900. A white collar class person in nation gains around \$5 every day overall. The normal Pakistani needs to support 9 or 10 individuals by their everyday pay. The Human Rights Commission (HRCP) of Pakistan anticipated in 1990s that eleven million children were engaged with working in country and half of them ages under 10 years. It was additionally expected that countless as one fourth of the nation's work compel was comprised of child workers. Vast number of the children works in shops and workshops and 22.5% of the learning populace procure not exactly PKR 500, month (USD 6, month). (Zaidi et al, 2013)

In a few social orders like Pakistan, an extensive number of children get part in monetary exercises and make an instalment basically to family unit wage. The 'children work has been an imperative component in relatively each area of Pakistan's economy. Children have been working in the casual kind of child work in families either in the clothing of helping out relatives in household undertakings or in the state of local hirelings in homes and living spaces. Furthermore, they are being worked with low maintenance or overtime on regular or not smooth premise in businesses, undertakings, shops and the foundations, on streets and in lodgings all around. In like manner most of the working youngsters work next to their folks in casual division and in agribusiness activity (Mazhar, 2008)

Child Labor in Baluchistan:

Child labour is perceived as one of the endless issues in all Baluchistan territory. Generally, children in the area are working at Coalmines, development destinations, autos workshop, hotel, and garbage jockey. Henceforth, it has influencing the children mentally, physically, ethically and freely which incorporates various extreme issues, for example, trafficking of children etc. report of ILO that in 2013 in excess of 500 children were discovered working in Coalmines in area Loralai and Society for Human Resources, (SEHR) revealed that pretty much 10,000 child workers are available in Quetta. What's more, if a child would be the casualty of child work then it would be an immense lose for the instruction of the children and around 2.3 million children out of

3.6 million children are discouraged of going school and they are participate in carports viably by their senior citizens. (Altaf, 2017).

Worst Form of Child Labor:

There are several worst form of child labor, as slavery, child trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom and forced labor. Slavery is where a person unwillingly surrenders his rights before his master, hence, child trafficking is second worst form of child labor where the child is kidnapped and shifted to other cities or countries while in some cases parents owing to poverty send their children for labor. Debt bondage, another serious form of child labor when parents take loan and could not pay off on time ultimately they send their children for labor to that concerned person and they work till the debt pay off. Serfdom is another of child labor causing when a person is acquired by force, he/she is made to work unpaid or with a little wage. The last but not least bad form is a forced labor when child is forced to work his/her consent (Pouty et al, 2004).

Causes of Child Labor:

Child labour is a social evil, many factor are there that contributing child labor and spreading it. like as, poverty, illiterate parents, large number of family, lack of income resources, on availability of Job opportunities for educated people, deficient education system, overpopulation and our old type traditions are the responsible factor of child labour (Rao et al, 2004). In several cases, the children are found in vulnerable form of activities owing to the carelessness of their parents. For the reason that the parents don't care about children's line of work (Dessy et al, 2005). The most pushing factors for child labour is the poverty, poor, education, deficient economy, ignorance of parents and meagre economic condition of families are the causing factors of child labour (Wassan et al, 2004). Ground realities; prove that lack of basic needs, health facilities, access to education, raising the probability of child labour and the families unable to bear family day today expenditure. So they forced their children to do work (Akhtar et.al, 2010).

A survey of child labour was conducted at Lahore Capital of Punjab, Sialkot, and Gujrawanwala, the total respondent were 100 children in different of field. The major results were founded that poverty, old traditions of families to fight for survivals etc. were declared for child labour. Added that founded, common age of involved child labour were 11 years, busy to meet the daily needs of family (Khan, 1982). The very first reason of child labour is poverty which forces the people to send their Children to workplaces for the endurance of the families as these families are deprived from the fundamental necessities of life. Low

aspiration is another major cause of child labour which is found globally. The parents don't pay heed to the future of children, hence they rushed to workplace. Hence the demands for unskilled labour another cause of child labour. As the children are most likely unskilled so they provide an easy and cheap source of labour. The 4th reason of child labour is the illiteracy and high cost of education as illiteracy rate is very high the people don't send his children for schooling, which helping to increase child labour.

The last but not least cause of child labour is the early marriages. They are producing many children and it contributes to overpopulation. In this way having many children parents due to least sources of income they send children to workplace to support them economically (Victor, 2017). The factors that helps to promote child labour are distributed in three forms, as first one is pull factor, push factor hence the third one is interactive factor. The pull factor that child is very cheaper to employ with lower wages. One of the best example of pull factor are that in Bangladesh during in 1990s, garment factories attracted a lot of poverty effected children to employ easily with low wages.

The push factor that when the children are highly compelled to, support the family, such as extreme poverty, demise of the earning member, parental divorcements Hence third one is the interactive factor and it has a number of psychological factors. In this, the children are exploited and taken advantage by leading them to employ in order to earn money. Causative factor to these are the lack of interest to child's education, failure in examination, drop out from schools, peer group, punishment by family, psychological and social crisis in the family. However, there are number of factor contributing to child labor. But two are the main reasons that are lack of education and awareness. Education is one of best way to controlling child labour and poverty. Therefore, the provision of primary education must be state's first priority, and there should be easy access to schools and must be affordable. Hence, second factor involves lack of awareness about the issue of child labour. There is insufficient attitude toward child labour (Saddat, 2009).

Methodology:

The study is descriptive in nature. Several studies have been conducted on the similar themes of the issue, however, this very study was focused on the socio-economic causes of child labour with special focus on hotel industry in Quetta. Children involved in hotels as child laborers are not only forced to work due to poor economic conditions but other factors are also involved which primarily include familial business. A total of 200 hundred working children were sampled through accidental

sampling technique. Structured questionnaire along with interviews with key informants and observation was used as tools to muster primary data from the respondents. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was checked through a rigorous exercise of pre-testing. Data was cleaned, processed and then analyzed in SPSS which helped in descriptive statistical analysis.

Results and Discussion:

Hotels Industry in Quetta and involvement of Children:

The respondents of study were children who are involved in any type of labor either paid or unpaid in hotels in Quetta. The paid children are those who directly get compensation for their services daily, weekly or monthly while the unpaid are those who work in hotel of their own family mostly father, elder brothers or uncles (in joint family cases). The unpaid children are also considered to be involved in economic activity as they are source of saving the amount that would be given to other laborers.

In Quetta city there are various types of hotels – the large, medium and small ones – in terms of services and variety of eatables served to customers. Children do a variety of tasks in these hotels ranging from light to heavy work. Such labor includes supply of eatables to outside customers, serving food to customers within the restaurants, cleaning the dishes, cleaning the hotel, cutting of vegetables and meat, bringing water and other items to the hotels, making tea or food in rare cases, loading and unloading of hotel items (food and non-food items) and so many personal services to the hotel owners and other elder workers of the restaurants. During such a variety of tasks by individual children in the hotels keep the children in hurdles and have to face harsh issues and tough challenges which consequently cause complex psycho-social problems for the children in short as well as long term.

Personal Profile of Respondents of the Study:

In this very study all children interviewed were boys. No girls are involved in economic activity in the hotels and restaurants due to the fact that culturally girl's involvement in hotels is not valued. While the mean age of children interviewed was 13.4 years. A high majority of children have Pashto as their mother tongue. The main reason behind this is that mostly hotels and restaurants are owned or run by the populace of Pashtoon areas of the province. An interesting finding of the study was that only 3 percent of the respondents were middle pass and 34 percent were primary level literate while the rest of children never went to school or dropped out of school in the early years. About 13

percent of the working children had studied in religious education from Madrassa.

Pertaining to family information retrieved from respondents, mostly children live in joint family system. 36 percent of children live in Quetta away from their families, such children belong to other districts of the province who have come to Quetta for making living. An eye opening finding of the field survey was that 38 percent respondents had other family members (less than age of 18 years) involved in economic activities. This indicates that the tendency of children towards economic activities is increasing particularly in those families who already have other elder working children. Most of the children selected for the field survey belong to low income families, however, middle class family's children were also found to be involved in hotel labor particularly when the hotels were own by same families.

Socio-economic Causes of Child Labor (in Hotels/Restaurants):

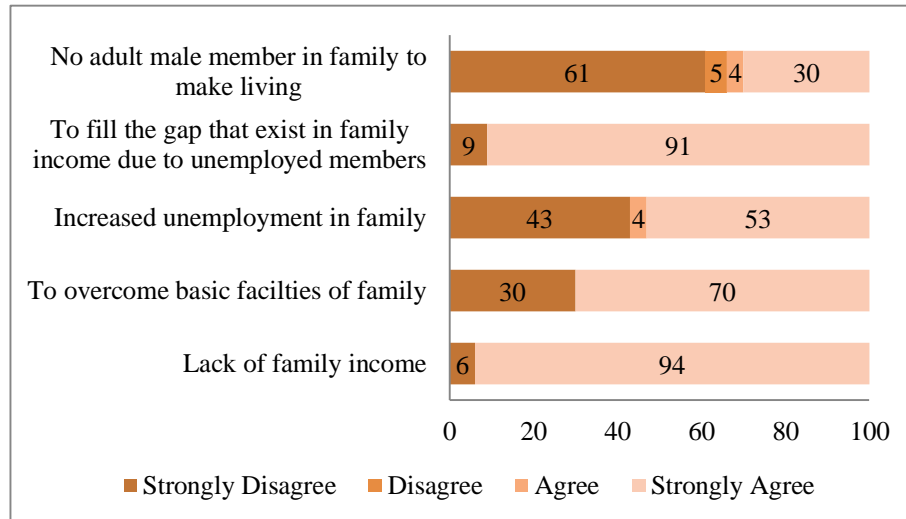
Child labor is a phenomenon that is the result of a variety of socio-economic, political and geographical factors. In this research study the field survey was limited to identify and analyze the socio-economic causes of child labor in the hotel and restaurants in Quetta city. Though, poor economic conditions force children to involve in child labor but it is not the only cause, there are several other social factors that compel children to get indulged in economic activities instead of getting education.

Data in Figure 1 illustrates that a very high majority of working children (94%) have joined child labor in hotels and restaurants due to the fact that they suffer from shortage of total family income to bear their income. At the same time, another significant figures in the same figure show that almost same majority of respondents (91 %) show agreement with the perception that they have joined labor market to fill the gap that exist in family income due to unemployment of other elder members of family. It reveals the fact that children are forced to work in hotels in those families where the elder members of family are either unemployed or they do not make living for family. This perception is supported by data in same figure when it was asked if children are involved in labor due to the reason that they have no elder members of family to bring income for family, almost two-third (34 %) expressed agreement. 70 percent of respondents worked to overcome basic facilities of family and 53 percent due to increasing unemployment of family members.

The data in figure 1 elaborates that the most significant factors that cause child labor include poor income conditions, unemployment of elder family members and meet basic facilities of family. This finding of field

data seconds the findings of other researches related to child labor conducted in other regions of the province and at national/global level (Wassan et al, 2014), (Wadgave & Godale, 2013), (Zaidi et al, 2013), (Khan, 1982), (Akhtar et al, 2010), (Avais et al, 2016)

Figure 1: Socio-economic factors that cause children to join labor (A)

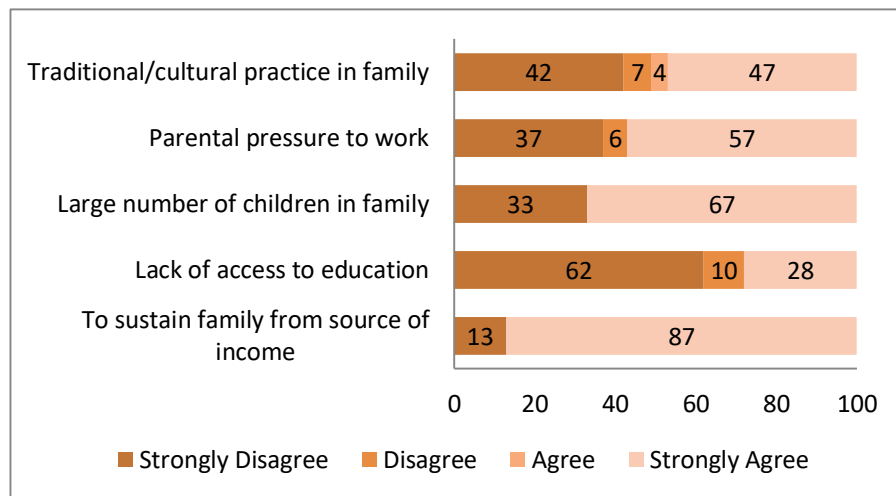


Source: Field Data

Data in Percentage

Besides the economic factors discussed in above discussion (Figure:1), the field data also finds some other factors other than economic that increase the ration of child labor in general and in hotel/restaurants in particular. These factors have significant relationship with the socio-economic conditions of the family such as family type, education, income level, geographical factors and occupation of elder members of family. The factors include parental pressure, family size, access to and quality of education and cultural practices in family. As shown in Figure 2, a high majority of respondents (67 percent) are of opinion that children are forced to work due to larger family size. The more the number of children in family, the higher tendency towards involvement of children in hotels related work. Mostly elder children are sent to restaurants and other places for labor in such families.

Figure 2: Socio-economic factors that cause children to join labor (B)



Source: Field Data

Data is in Percentage

Additionally, 57 percent of children claimed that they work in hotels because of parental pressure. Mostly parents of rural areas of Quetta city or other neighboring districts sent children to work in hotels. A high majority of population in the neighboring districts of Quetta (Pishin and Killa Abdullah) depend on hotels business for their livelihood, not only in Quetta but other parts of Pakistan. These families engage the children of their own families in hotels either with themselves or with known people. Thus children get involved in labor due to pressure from elder family members. This pressure from parents/elder family members is not only due to poor economic conditions, rather an important reason is the cultural practice of involving children in hotels or other types of occupations. Field data, as shown in figure 2, elaborates that almost half of respondents (51 percent) children get engaged in labor due to traditional / cultural practice in family.

Child labor is the major issue which prevails in the whole globe. Poverty not only creating this situation but in most societies, families their culture values, traditions causes them to do labor. And the pattern of helping parents in economic activities is very common in several societies. Several reasons behind child labor like as poverty, deficient resources, lack of priority towards child labor by governments in the world, which leap them to work without knowing hazardous to their health. The majority of children do work due to the inadequate family income and resources compelled them to do work, in order to assist the family to overcome family financial problem. During the study it was also observed that working of children has become a part of their

tradition and they were not aware by the importance of education. It was also observed most of children were interested in to do work rather than to go school.

This study revealed that the respondents of the study lives in their own homes rented and free of fair places 47%, 52% and 1% respectively. Furthermore, there are many reasons causing child labor. According to experts the main cause of this menace is inflation, lack of income opportunities force them to work on cheap daily wages. On the other hand, accommodation in study area is very expensive due to that family force the child to do work in order to ensure the income to meet their basic needs of family. However, the results showed that due to less family income compel the children to do work in hotels. The respondents 92.5% were strongly agreed to the above said statement. In addition, the prevalence of child labors is of many causes. During the data collection it was observed that, there is no effective law to curb the child labor in hotels. People do not have awareness about population planning which has caused child labor. While government does not have resources to meet the basic need for people door to door nor have capability to implement effective law to overcome the burden of child labor. The experts viewed that over population is the one of major causes of child labor. There is no proper system of family planning in our society. Similarly, our religion allows polygamy and remarriage of widows which leads to the over population. Resultantly, the basic needs of family are unable to meet to meet by limited resources which cause child labor. Besides it, they said that laws are limited up to the files and not implemented properly. Moreover, the effective legislation and its implementation are required to be made.

Conclusion:

The causation of child labor is poverty, inflation and excessive number of family members which force the children to work in such circumstances. And the child labor doesn't know that working in minimum age is lethal to their physical and mental growth. However, that is the responsibility of the government /state to ensure the welfare of its citizens through effective legislation along with family welfare services with creation of better environment. As to get education and right to play are the basic rights of child therefore, government needs to ensure the provision of those basic rights and enact the child labor law strictly to control it this social evil.

Recommendations:

- Government needs to enact the child labor law strictly to control it.
- Government needs to start a rigorous campaign for curbing child labor.
- There is need of a survey to be conducted on national and provincial level in order to know about the exact figure of child labor working in hotel, garage, and shopping malls
- Government and other stakeholders require initiating housing schemes for poor people so that they may be safeguard from rented houses lord.
- Government needs to launch soft loan scheme at local level for poor especially those who have no other option but to engage their children in work.
- The government needs to ensure the basic facilities to a common man and increase the minimum monthly wages.
- The government has to control over the inflation so that the poor may meet the basic needs.
- The government and other stakeholders need to enact the present law strictly and bring reforms in harassment laws to curtail down the menace of child labor.

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