The Economic Position of Family and its Relationship with Child Trafficking:

A Study from the Perspective of Policy Analysts and Experts

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Abstract

The prevalence of child trafficking reflects the omnipresent poverty, deterioration of institutional norms, lack of relevant laws, and deficient implementation in both the source communities and destination locations (ILO, 2002). However, most of the countries respond to the problem of child trafficking from solely a legal perspective. They declare it an act of violence and focus on prosecuting the offenders. Such approach is limited in its scope as it ignores to probe into the underlying factors of the problem and hence, lacks the appropriate and long term effective strategy of an effective resolution. The issue of child trafficking is rooted in the multidimensional factors associated with socio-economic, political, cultural, and educational aspects (Broderick, 2005; Limanowska, 2005). It is inevitable to explore and analyze these issues in order to develop a comprehensive and everlasting solution to the problem. In this context, the present study is designed to investigate the economic factors associated with child trafficking. The study is based on the results and findings of a survey carried out in Peshawar, the provincial capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A sample of 392 respondents was selected through a stratified random sampling technique from a list of lawyers, crime reporters, and academicians.

Key words

Child Trafficking, Economic Factors, Family, Opinion Leaders, Peshawar.

Introduction

The factors associated with the vulnerability of children to trafficking have been analyzed by researchers in different regions and cultures of the world. The demographic information of the victims mostly represents their belonging to a family of low socio-economic status, in a larger population, with lack of sufficient employment opportunities, and the deficiency of an alternate income source. Families with low socio-economic position often lack the resources and will to socialize their children and protect them from the evils of society like trafficking (Mirza, 2010; Bales, 2007; Demarest et al., 1993; Kielland and Ouensavi, 2001). The abolition of child trafficking is unlikely to be realized through legislation advocacy alone but by raising the socio-economic status of the people (Skeldon, 2000).

Similarly, intensive rural poverty forces many poor families to give up their children to traffickers, under the pretext of providing them the opportunity to secure good jobs and better lives (Bales, 2001; Dottridge, 2002; Lloyd, 2005). Being a member of certain socio-economic status or ethnic group cannot determine the likelihood of being subject to trafficking, however, poverty, lack of access to education, unemployment, and being a member of a minority group enhances the likelihood that young persons will become vulnerable to trafficking (ILO, 2003; Moore, 1994; Clawson, 2009; Estes and Weiner, 2001, 2005; Flowers, 2001). Children from such homes are often neglected and abused and the parent's socio-economic status is a hurdle in the development of children (Albanese, 2007; Anderson and Michaelson, 2007; Royal, 1998; Williams and Frederick, 2009; Williamson and Cluse-Tolar, 2002; Wilson and Dalton, 2008).

Poverty alone is not responsible for child trafficking; however, it is supported by other factors like ignorance of parents as reported by UNICEF (1998, 2000) in Sudan and Mauritania. Broderick (2005), while conducting research on transnational human trafficking under the title "Identifying factors in human trafficking," established a hypothesis that there is a significant difference between victims' countries of origin and the destination countries as it relates to the economic factors of poverty, unemployment, income, and literacy. The research findings reveal some significant differences in economic factors that exist between the two nations.

Beyond poverty, other major community conditions that inflate minors' risk for entrapment into prostitution include residing in an urban environment characterized by high crime and elevated levels of police corruption (Clawson, 2009). Situational conditions such as low socio-economic status of family, existence of prostitution market in the nearby area, the irregular and frequent movement of people like tourists, truckers, or military personnel are the common risk factors most often associated with child trafficking (Estes and Wiener, 2001, 2005).

There are many risk factors which have been titled 'poverty plus,' a situation in which poverty does not by itself lead to a person being trafficked, but where one or more of the 'plus' factors, such as gender based violence, illness, domestic violence, and lack of educational opportunities, combines with poverty to increase vulnerability (ILO and UNICEF, 2009; Tumlin, 2000; and Mirza, 2010). Parents' ignorance, lack of general awareness, lack of education, absence and lack of implementation of existing laws, internal conflicts, lust for money, and involvement of influential individuals are the most common factors related to child trafficking (NET, 2008; Gunatilleke, 1994; Demleitner, 2001; Goździak and Bump, 2008).

Child trafficking in Sub Saharan Africa is a demand-driven phenomenon (ILO, 2002). The existence of an international market for children in the labour and sex trade, coupled with an abundant supply of children from poor families with limited or no means for education in a cultural context that favors child fostering, with restrictions on legal migration possibilities, have clearly opened a niche for traffickers. Fifty percent of the trafficking victims are children below the age of 18 (ILO, 2002; Broderick, 2005; Van, 2006). A number of studies have analyzed the labor market and have concluded that excess of labor in origin countries and shortage in the destination propels the business of child trafficking, as can be seen in the destination nations in Europe (Skeldon, 2000; ILO, 2003).

Similarly, from a broader perspective, the practice of child trafficking is associated with demand and supply. The demand in international sex and labour market and the abundance of a vulnerable population which is supported by the trafficker as a profitable and low risk trade (Joffres et al., 2008; Schauer and Wheaton, 2006). In most cases, trafficking results from the interface of multiple risk factors (ADB, 2003; Sinha, 2005; ILO, 2006; EPCAT, 2001). Thus vulnerability results from a range of inter-related economic, social, political, and familial factors (e.g., poverty, lack of sustainable livelihoods, inter and intra familial conflicts, structural inequities and discrimination).

Becker (1995) introduced the dialogue on the economic approach to crime. Like rational choice theory, a person evaluates the cost and benefit of a crime. The benefit according to Becker may include money, property, and psychic prices ("getting away with something"). Costs could be money, "the opportunity cost of not working in legitimate work," and the likelihood of conviction and punishment. Becker perceives trafficking offenders as risk takers, who gauge the potential for profit to the threat of apprehension due to their illegitimate actions. As the benefit of child trafficking is construed to be more than its cost, it will continue. Similar arguments are made by Schloenhardt (1999), Hughes (2003), O' Neil (2000), and Makisaka and Marc (2009) that traffickers are making money from the business of trafficking of children and women and hence, the crime prevails. Miko (2000), Yinusa and Basil (2008), Olateru (2004), ILO (2006), and Kapstein (2006) claim that next to arm and drug smuggling, trafficking of women and children is the third principal income source for criminal syndicates worldwide and the key players and contractors across the world. However, the feminist approach has looked into this crime and analysed it (Jeffreys, 2009), finding that prostitution and the sex business is a globalized industry where from girls' bodies result in enormous profits.

Child trafficking, routinely referred to as modern day slavery, has prevailed due to its profitable nature. Human trafficking is a high profit and relatively low risk trade with availability of supply and constantly increasing demand (Joffres et al., 2008; Bales, 1999, 2007; Naim, 2005; Hughes, 2000; Kapstein, 2006). Similarly,

camel racing in the Gulf countries attracts poor people from Pakistan through the manipulation of parents by agents to surrender their children. Many law enforcement officials and immigration personnel have perceived that high profit and low risk and the absence of significant fear of prosecution and penalties encourage the trafficking gangs to work in those countries (Mirza, 2010).

Studies show that trafficked children are exploited in diverse ways. They are trafficked for sexual abuse and/or for forced labour, and sometimes for both. They are coerced into prostitution (Albanese, 2007; Priebe and Suhr, 2005; Williams and Frederick, 2009). They are detained, locked up to the point of starvation, along with severe physical and verbal abuse (Anderson, 2003; Makisaka and Marc, 2009). A variety of tactics that the traffickers use for controlling the victims have been reported by Makisaka and Marc (2009); the victims are routinely tied into the web of debt-bondage. They are deprived of their identification and traveling documents, e.g passport, with the aim that they may not be able to escape. They are psychologically tortured. Victims, due to their illegal status are afraid of the authorities, and are fear that they cannot ask for help. In Europe and Central Asia, children are mostly trafficked for forced begging, marriages, and prostitution. Their forced services are utilized in bricks kilns, agriculture, rice mills and other factories. Both girls and boys are also used as domestic workers (UNDOC, 2009).

Afghan boys in Pakistan and children in Colombia are trafficked for exploitation in militant and paramilitary operations and even suicide bombing. In Nepal and Pakistan, one of the major forms of human trafficking involves bonded labor. In East Asia, Pacific area children are often trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and forced begging. In Latin America and the Caribbean, poor families often push their young daughters to provide sexual favors to wealthy older men in exchange for school fees, money and gifts (Trafficking in Person Report, 2003). Noor Education Trust (NET, 2008) reported the findings that the purpose of sale through marriage (i.e. bride price in Pakistan) was quoted as sex trade by 32 (16%) respondents, exploitation as cheap labour was quoted by 27 (13%) respondents, while 73 (34.4%) said they were used for both. However, Mirza (2010) reported that even children are trafficked for removal of their organs. Literature reveals that children are trafficked for the purpose of performing forced labour of all types, including agriculture, domestic services, construction work, and sweatshops, in addition to commercial sexual exploitation (Brodrick, 2005; Trafficking in Person Report, 2003; Bales, 1999). Trafficking clearly violates the fundamental right to a life with dignity. It also violates the rights to health and health care, rights to liberty and security of person, and the right to freedom from torture, violence, cruelty or degrading treatment. In addition, it violates for children who have been trafficked or victims of child marriages, their right to education; it also violates the right to employment and the right of self determination (Mirza, 2010; NET, 2008).

reported to be labeled as a source, transit, and destination country. Men, women, girls, and children are trafficked for exploitation in forced labour and sex markets. The report further states that the big problem faced in Pakistan is bonded labour, which is concentrated in Sindh and Punjab provinces, particularly in brick kilns, carpet making, agriculture, fishing, mining, leather tanning and production of glass bangles. The estimates of Pakistani victims of bonded labour, including men, women and children, vary widely but are likely to be over one million. Other practices include the sale of daughters into domestic servitude, prostitution, or forced marriages, and tribal or family disputes are settled through trading girls (known as *swara* in Pashto) or as payment for debts.

Research Methodology

The present section explains the methodology adopted for carrying out the research study.

Study Area

The present study is conducted in Peshawar, the cradle of Pakhtun culture. The incidents of various issues related to child trafficking are likely to be high in this city. The city houses a large population of Afghan refugees who are prone to child trafficking (Azam, 2009). Moreover, it has also provided shelter to the internally displaced peoples (IDPs) due to military operations within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), as a result of the war against terrorism. Both of the mentioned groups are prone to child trafficking and other socio-cultural evils. Further, the city hosts old established academic institutions like Islamia College, the University of Peshawar, and the University of Agriculture. It also houses the Peshawar press club where journalists have been covering every aspect of life in their reports, including crimes. A Bench of the Supreme Court, a full-fledged High court, Special courts, and Peshawar District courts are running its affairs in both its civil and criminal jurisdictions. Due to the combination of these features, District Peshawar has been selected to thoroughly examine the issue.

Sampling Procedure

Originally an attempt was made to approach the victims of trafficking which are handled by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in Peshawar. However, access was not granted to the victims due to a law prohibiting such interaction. In the absence of information from victims, it was decided to approach social scientists, legal experts, and crime reporters who are the eyes and ears of the society and critical policy analysts for their perception of the issue. Moreover, the stratum that has been used in our sampling includes these "opinion leaders" within this particular society that are capable of influencing the society at large, the local government administration, and the regional and national legislature. It is, therefore, worthwhile to better understand their perception of the issue.

For data collection, a proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used, while the membership list of the Peshawar Bar Council, Peshawar Press Club, and Teachers' Association was utilized as the sampling frame. For gathering consistent and reliable data, this technique was deemed to be the most appropriate. As mentioned, the population is trifurcated into strata of social scientists, crime reporters, and lawyers working within district Peshawar. A sample size of 392 has been drawn from the total population of 453 by using formula $\mathbf{n} = \mathbf{K}^2\mathbf{V}^2/\mathbf{d}^2$ as proposed by Casley and Kumar (1989). The calculated sample size is divided into the mentioned strata on the basis of a proportional allocation method where NI = Ni/N*n formula is used (Chaudhry and Kamal, 1996).

Data Collection

A comprehensive questionnaire, based on the Likert scale, was developed for data collection. The questionnaire was first discussed with experts and amendments were made accordingly. Thereafter, the questionnaire was pre-tested for its relevance to objectives of the study. Again, the inconsistencies and ambiguities will be addressed before starting the final phase of data collection.

Data Analysis

Data has been analyzed through SPSS 2010 computer software. Bivariate analysis has been carried out to measure the level of significance of hypothetical association and direction of the relationship between the dependent variable (i.e. child trafficking) and the independent variables (e.g. economic position of victim's family) by using Chi square (χ^2) and Gamma (γ) analyses.

Results and Discussion

In this section, major results will be discussed and have been presented in Table No. I, which highlights the association and direction of the relationship between child trafficking and the economic position of the family.

A positive (γ =0.460) and highly significant (p<0.05) relationship was observed between low socio-economic status and child trafficking (Table I). Findings of the present study suggest that parents with low socio-economic status may not be fully capable of being responsible guardians. In other words, families with middle and high socio-economic status may be more capable of effective guardianship than families with low socio-economic status. These findings are consistent with what has been reported by ILO (2003); Moore (1994); Clawson (2009); Estes and Weiner (2001, 2005); Flowers (2001); Dottridge (2002); and Lloyd (2005).

Similarly, a positive (γ =0.485) and significant (p<0.05) relationship has been found between growing unemployment and child trafficking (Table I). A large proportion of the young population in Pakhtun society remains illiterate and

unskilled, and likely unemployed. This situation of joblessness has deteriorated the psycho-social make up of individual personality, and many remain unable to cope with the challenges such as dealing with inflation, thus becoming easy prey to trafficking. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Kielland and Ouensavi (2001); ILO and UNICEF (2009); Tumlin (2000); and Demleitner (2001).

However, a non significant but positive (γ =0.324) relationship was revealed to exist between the increasing number of children in poor households and child trafficking. The positive value of this Gamma value could be interpreted to mean that the more vulnerable poor families are, the higher the potential for the involvement of their children as trafficking victims. A plausible explanation for this increase could be the existence of the common psyche that "sons are guns." These findings are in line with those reported by Bales (2001).

Contrary to the above, a positive (γ =0.403) and significant (p<0.05) relationship was observed between non-cooperative behavior of economically sound people and child trafficking. The significance and positive result of this study reveals the non-cooperative behavior of well off people, when compared with the indigent in Pakhtun society. This practice of non cooperation can best be understood in terms of Karl Marx ideology of dialectical materialism, where there is a gap between the two classes i.e., the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which he explained in his concept of historical materialism. The ideology of the Pakhtunwali focuses on helping the needy and deserving people, however, this ideal is not apparently occuring in practice. This brings massive problems to the regional poor, and ultimately they may be deceived by the traffickers with an offer of employment, education, better career, etc. Lack of social capital, social solidarity, and homogeneity in the existing strata of the "haves" and "have nots" could be the main contributing factors. For bringing harmony and equilibrium between two classes, it is an imperative need to implant social capital on sound footings within Pakhtun society (i.e. the study area).

Moreover, a positive (γ =0.189) and significant (p<0.05) relationship was observed between cheap labor for business activities and child trafficking. Similarly, a positive (γ =0.314) and significant (p<0.05) relationship has been found between demand in the international market for cheap labor and child trafficking (Table I). The findings of the present study suggest that the traffickers may get motivated when observing high demand in the national and international labor and or sex markets, along with an increase in the number of vulnerable populations. The findings of the present study are in line with those concluded by Joffres et al. (2008); Broderick (2005); Van Impe (2006); ILO (2002); Schauer and Wheaton (2006); Skeldon (2000); and ILO (2003).

Similar results (γ =0.469; p<0.05) are observed between profitability of the business and child trafficking. The findings suggest that continuity of the trafficking business may be subject to the return it warrants for the investors. The higher the potential profit, the more would be the frequency of the crime and vice versa. The findings are in much corroboration to that of the reports prepared by Miko (2000); Olateru (2002); UNODC (2008); Joffres et al. (2008); Bales (1999 and 2007); Naim (2005); Hughes (2001); King (2004); Kapstein (2006); Schloenhardt (1999); and Hughes (2003).

A highly positive (γ =0.464) and significant (p<0.05) relationship was found between exploitation of victims in diverse forms and child trafficking (Table I). The findings suggest that it may be very difficult for the law enforcement agencies to trace the victims as they may be engaged in various fields like, bricks kilns, factories, sex industry and militancy, forced begging, marriages, domestic work, and debt bondage. These findings are in high degree of agreement the conclusions reported by Albanese (2007); Priebe and Suhr (2005); Williams and Frederick (2009); Anderson (2003); Makisaka and Marc (2009); UNDOC (2009); and TIP (2009).

Table No. I Relationship between Economic Aspect and Perception on Child Trafficking.

Statements	Attitude -	Perception on Child Trafficking				
		Agree	Disagree	Not sure	Total	Statistics
Children from low socio- economic status are more susceptible to trafficking.	Agree	281 (71.7)	40 (10.2)	1 (0.3)	322(82.1)	χ ² =36.761
	Disagree	47 (12.0)	9 (2.3)	0 (0.0)	56(14.3)	(.000)
	Not sure	4 (1.0)	10 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	14(3.6)	γ =.460
Growing unemployment provides room for traffickers to groom around.	Agree	290 (74.0)	40 (10.2)	1 (0.3)	331(84.4)	χ²=15.242
	Disagree	19 (4.8)	10 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	29(7.4)	(.004)
	Not sure	23 (5.9)	9 (2.3)	0 (0.0)	32(8.2)	γ =.485
Non-cooperative behavior of economically sound people is proportional to child trafficking.	Agree	235 (59.9)	27 (6.9)	1 (0.3)	263(67.1)	χ ² =14.699
	Disagree	42 (10.7)	14 (3.6)	0 (0.0)	56 (14.3)	(.005)
	Not sure	55 (14.0)	18 (4.6)	0 (0.0)	73 (18.6)	γ =.403
Increasing number of children at poor household breeds the chances of trafficking.	Agree	252 (64.3)	35 (8.9)	1 (0.3)	288 (73.5)	χ² =7.499
	Disagree	52 (13.3)	15 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	67 (17.1)	(.112)
	Not sure	28 (7.1)	9 (2.3)	0 (0.0)	37 (9.4)	γ =.324
Trafficking is a profitable business that's why it is increasing day by day.	Agree	253 (64.5)	29 (7.4)	1 (0.3)	283 (72.2)	χ ² =18.652
	Disagree	26 (6.6)	10 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	36 (9.2)	(.001)
	Not sure	53 (13.5)	20 (5.1)	0 (0.0)	73 (18.6)	γ =.469
Protection is being given to traffickers by the high ups of the society.	Agree	248 (63.3)	38 (9.7)	1 (0.3)	287 (73.2)	χ² =3.189
	Disagree	31 (7.9)	7 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	38 (9.7)	(.527)
	Not sure	53 (13.5)	14 (3.6)	0 (0.0)	67 (17.1)	γ =.212
Trafficking is encouraged to gain cheap labor for market / business activities.	Agree	268 (68.4)	45 (11.5)	0 (0.0)	313 (79.8)	χ²=12.366
	Disagree	41 (10.5)	5 (1.3)	1 (0.3)	47 (12.0)	(.015)
	Not sure	23 (5.9)	9 (2.3)	0 (0.0)	32 (8.2)	γ =.189
Demand in international market for cheap labor is a reason of trafficking.	Agree	222 (56.6)	32 (8.2)	0 (0.0)	254 (64.8)	χ ² =19.754
	Disagree	49 (12.5)	4(1.0)	1 (0.3)	54 (13.8)	(.001)
	Not sure	61 (15.6)	23 (5.9)	0 (0.0)	84 (21.4)	γ =.314
The trafficked children are exploited in diverse forms.	Agree	283 (72.2)	38 (9.7)	1 (0.3)	322 (82.1)	χ²=12.352
	Disagree	20 (5.1)	11 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	31 (7.9)	(.003)
	Not sure	29 (7.4)	10 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	39 (9.9)	γ =.464

Source: Field Survey, 2012

 $Note *Values\ presented\ in\ the\ above\ table\ indicate\ frequency\ while\ values\ in\ the\ parenthesis\ represent\ percentage$

Conclusions

It is concluded that children from lower socio-economic families and strata are more susceptible to becoming victims of illicit trafficking. Growing unemployment, increase in population, especially in poor families, along with the non-cooperative behavior of the economically sound people, has been shown to be positively associated with child trafficking. In addition, the demand for cheap labor in national and international markets is a major motivating factor for the traffickers. Trafficking has been shown to be a profitable business and protection granted to traffickers by those in society with power often results in exploitation of victims in diverse forms.

The findings of the present study can be said to confirm the Routine Activities Theory introduced by Cohen and Felson (1979), which states that the interaction of three variables: suitable targets, absence of capable guardian, and motivated offender at the same time and place can result in the commission of crime. Applying this theory to the present study appears to support that lower socio-economic families, high unemployment, the lack of social solidarity and homogeneity, and a decrease in the capability of guardians to safeguard their wards can combine to support the existence of child trafficking. Further, overpopulation in poor households can turn them into an easy and suitable target for illegal trafficking organizations. Furthermore, demand in the national and international market for cheap labor, the ready availability of a vulnerable population, and the low risk and high profitability of this illicit business may motivate the offender to carry out this illegal enterprise in child trafficking.

Policy Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in the light of the findings of this study:

- Poverty and gender inequality are perceived to be large contributors to illegal child trafficking. In this regard, serious and sustained efforts should be made for promoting gender equality and alleviating poverty in all segments of society.
- 2 Government and other agencies should encourage and support academicians to conduct research on child trafficking and to highlight the issue.
- 3 The government should increase the salaries of immigration enforcement personnel, human trafficking investigators, and police officials who are specifically working on human trafficking cases. However, along with this, government officials should issue a policy of zero-tolerance for corruption. If any official is convicted of corrupt behavior or actions that support illegal human trafficking, then severe punishment should be inflicted. Another

- strategy to adopt is the "naming and shaming" policy. Government should publish and publicize the names of all the involved people in the trafficking chain, whether government officials, private citizens, politicians, or other powerful people. Media should give proper time and place for publishing and disseminating the name and cases. After all, personal reputation does matter.
- 4 Rehabilitative measures by the government in collaboration with the national and international organizations should be initiated, which include programs for psychological support and therapy for the those in vulnerable communities and particularly for the survivors of trafficking victimization.

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