

## Socio-Economic Aspects of Child Labor in Pakistan; A Case Study of Hyderabad, Sindh

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### Abstract

*Child labor has been recognized as a serious and challenging issue in the civilized societies all over the world as well as in Pakistan. In Pakistan, children as labor force providing their services in various formal and in-formal sectors of economy. Therefore, this research paper aims at analyzing the socio-economic factors of child labor and to assess the working condition of child labor in Hyderabad District of Sindh, Pakistan. This research also analyzes the kinds of problems faced by children at working place. A sample of 80 children was interviewed at their working place from Hyderabad district. The data was collected by using pre-designed questionnaire. Study found that the poverty and lack of government attention towards socio-economical issues are the major reasons of existing child labor in Pakistan. It is suggested that government have take effective initiatives to control the child labor in Pakistan.*

**Key Notes:** Poverty, Lack of Education, Addicted Fathers, Migration, Working, Mothers and Profession of Fathers

### Introduction

The socio-economic prosperity of the nation would depend upon human resource development or wellbeing of its society in wide-ranging and children in particular. In this modern era child labor becomes an important issue. Child labor is an employment that takes away children from their rights of getting good education, good health and charms to grow at healthy environment. According to ILO's about 44.39% of the working children face physical as well as mental torture at their working places. It is estimated that about 352 million children are engaged in different economic activity in the world .ILO estimates that about 120 million children works full time as a labor and 250 million children who are working and attending school. Work at the young age put negative impact on children's physical and mental development. Whereas, according to the World health report (1995), 15% of children at the age of 10-14 years were working in Asia and India had the largest percentage of child laborers in the world. Child labor contributes to about 20% of India's GNP and mostly operates in the unrecognized, informal, and unregulated sector of the economy. Children participate fully in every activity of the informal sector, such as workshops, small-scale industries, leatherwork, and carpet weaving centers, cheap hotels, brick kilns and garages. In addition, a substantial number are self-employment, hawking cheap goods, shining shoes or collecting waste material.

There are various social, cultural and economical factors that divert children to work and support their families. Due to their young age and less of education mostly labor child receiving low wage, work long hours and abused at work. Therefore this study focused to evaluate

Socio-Economic Aspects of Child Labor in Sindh with special focus on Hyderabad and investigate the extent at which child labour remains deprived from their rights.

### Literature Review

Child labor is the employment of children when they are too young to work on low wages at unsafe and harmful environment. According to Folk (1987) child labor is any work by children that interferes with their full physical development, their opportunities for a desirable education or their needed reaction. Ahmed (1987) defined that child labor as "any mental or physical work done by a child for earning wages". *The United States Department of Labor (USA, 1957) defined child labor as "The employment of boys and girls when they are too young to hire for work or when they are employed at jobs unsuitable or unsafe for the children of their age or under conditions inimical to their health or welfare"*. Child Labor includes children prematurely leading adult lives, working long hours for low wages under conditions damaging to their health and to their physical and mental development, sometimes separated from their families, frequently deprived of meaningful education and training opportunities that could open up for them a better future.

A large number of children all over the world especially in developing countries are deprived of education and other amenities of life. The socio-economic strain forces these children for labor, who should be in a school and as a result face the harsh reality of the world and work simply for survival. The developing countries have been facing the crises of child labor due to poor economic and

social condition. Children in these countries work for longer period in hazardous and life threatening conditions. In less developed and developing country, large size of population found as major of expansion in child labor. Due to poverty parents prefer to use their children as for source of earning further income instead of providing education and better life to them. Therefore, often in uneducated and tribal communities' parents prefer to have more child as they more source of earning. There are both demand side (i.e. employer's preference to employing children) and supply side factors (i.e. poverty) which forced children to work. Poverty is the main reason for which the children are forced to work. Children start working instead of attending school or most of the children leave school before completing their primary education because they cannot afford the education expenses. They cannot fulfill their basic needs that are why they prefer to send their children to work at hazards environment. Ahmad, M. (1987) discussed that poverty is the major factor who, on the one hand, change their perception about their love ones as a burden and send them to work rather than to schools and, on the other hand, working as a domestic servant is considered the most appropriate place for such children, where they will have food, clothing and shelter in addition to their wages. He further describes that due to his small age and less domestic responsibilities the child usually pays more concentration to his work, learns and becomes mature in his profession soon. It favors the employer by saving his money and time. G. R. Pasha (2001) analyzed the main factor that makes significant contribution to child labor is migration. In most cases, people are forced to migrate to big cities, due to lack of work opportunities in their hometowns. This is mainly because of two reasons. Firstly, there is usually less economic growth in village's and small towns as compared to cities. Secondly, they migrate again because of lack of awareness of family planning. So the population of small to increases to such an extent that even if there is some economic growth, the population growth over-shadows it, thus increasing the unemployment rate and decreasing per capita income. Consequently, the residents are forced to migrate. Once a family member migrates, a chain of migration process started which increases the urban population in the long-run. Consequently, decreasing per-capita income and increasing the unemployment rate in cities. The families become poorer and poorer and this forces parents to send their children to work. Raja (1983) has conducted a research in his research of 50 children in various auto workshops. He finds out that 1.70% of these children work for 9 to 10 hours daily. About 2.76% of these working children belong to

illiterate families. In UNICEF Report (1990) it is mentioned that 20% of children do not go to schools in the developing world. Anwar and Naeem (1986) analyzed the child labor situation in rural Punjab and found that the innocent children were bound to work underinimical conditions. Most of them don't go to schools and have to perform hard labor to meet the basic needs. Khan (1982) conducted a survey of 100 children working in a variety offields in Lahore, Gujranwala and Sialkot and found that major causes of child labor were poverty, family tradition, fight for survival and lack of anyother choice. She found that the average age of those working children was 11 years who work to meet the day-to-day needs of their parents and other family members. Hafeez (1988), conducted a survey in Karachi villages, found that povertyand parentage authorities are the main causes for child labor in those areas. She found that the life for the adult members of such families is very low. She says that compelled child labor is most frequent in those areas. Ali and Hamid (1999) considered child labor as a function of poverty, parent's education, family tradition, family size, education expenditure and wages of adult labor. They mentioned the distribution of female child labor according to monthly income of mother, monthly income of father, education of mother, education of father, starting age of work, job of mother, number of sisters, number of brothers, monthly payments etc. In their viewthe reason for increasing child labor is not as simple as it appears to be andthey suggested that education is the best antidote against child labor. Child labor all over the world has increased rapidly in the recent years. The exact information about the child labor is vague. However, various agencies have tried to put forth an estimate of reality. In 1979 (ILO, 1988), the International Labor Organization (ILO), estimated that the total numberof working children around the globe is 52 million. In 1983, this estimatewas considered false and ILO mentioned the new figure of 100 million. A comprehensive report of the UN Sub-Commission (UNICEF, 1995) suggested that 145 million children in the age group 10-14 years were working in the world. According to ILO's World Labor Report 1994, about 200 million underage people are working but the UNICEF report (UNICEF, 1991) indicates that 160 million is the correct figure. According to ILO Report 1994 about Pakistan, this estimate was 2 to 3 million children. Zafar (2000) mentioned that in Pakistan more than 4 millionchildren of age group 5 to 15 years are engaged in child labor. Like most of the developing countries of the world, a large number ofchildren are usually seen working on the places like tea stalls, auto-

mobileworkshops, brick kilns, weaving industry, power looms and as domestic servants-cum-trash pickers in Pakistan. In other forms of labor, they are also seen begging which they may have to make for their masters. As legislative measures, Government of Pakistan is trying to curb this evil. Still there is a large number of children working on the sites like those mentioned before. According to Zafar (2000), in Pakistan during last 5 years more than 0.2 million children escaped from their homes. Hussain (1988) studied the relationships existing between economic growth, poverty and child labor. He mentioned that a child has to work for many hours daily in exchange of few coins per month.

To sum up, child labor is socio-economical issue related with many countries of the world including Pakistan. Due to poor economic conditions, at very young age children start to work and support their families as to

fulfill the basic requirements of their family. This opens the area to investigate the scenario of child labor in Pakistan with special focus on Hyderabad district.

### Research Methodology

This research study is conducted from the children who are working at different places at young age. A sample of 80 working children have randomly selected from Hyderabad district from different working places. A structure interview schedule was developed. The data was collecting regarding demographic information, reason for leaving school, duration of job, reason of working job working condition, and regarding their wages structure the children were classified according to their age group, 11 to 13 yrs and 13 to 16 yrs. The data was analyzed through Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) and excel

### Study Results

The table 1 shows the classification of working women by age, wages, working hours and type of work.

**Table-1: Distribution of Respondent According To Their Age, Nature of Work and Wages**

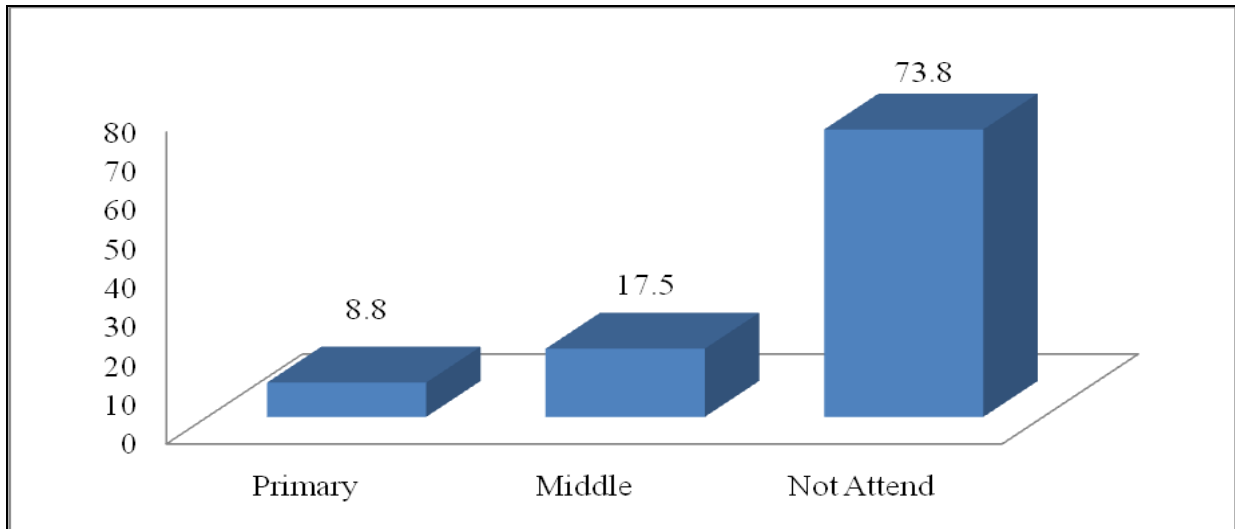
Working Outside	Age	How Much Wages	Number	% Of Total N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cobbler	11 to 13yrs	100-150	2	2.5	10	0
		200-250	2	2.5	8	.
	14 to 16	100-150	4	5	10	0
		200-250	3	3.75	10	0
Workshop	11 to 13yrs	100-150	8	10	8.5	0.92
		200-250	2	2.5	10	0
	14 to 16	100-150	2	2.5	11	1.41
		200-250	17	21.25	9.4	1.50
Cycle repairing	11 to 13yrs	100-150	2	2.5	8	0
		200-250	2	2.5	7	1.41
	14 to 16	100-150	6	7.5	9.3	2.06
		200-250	2	2.5	8	.
Work in hotel	11 to 13yrs	100-150	13	16.25	8.15	0.55
		200-250	2	2.5	8	.
	14 to 16	200-250	9	11.25	9.6	0.84
Total		300-350	4	5	8.8	1.09
			80	100	9.33	0.97

Source: Survey Data 2014

Table 1 shows that highest percentage of children is work on workshop. About 21.5% children at the age of 14 to 16 years age, working 10 hours in a day on workshop and get 200-250 rupees as their wage.16% of children at the age of 11 to 13 years age working 8 hours in a day and get 100-150 rupees as wage in a day

Figure 1 shows that highest number of the student not attending school which is 73% of children and17.5 % of children has education level up to middle and 8.8% has education up to primary level.

**Figure-1: Distribution of Children According to Their Education (%) n=80**



Source: Survey Data 2014

Table 2 shows that harsh attitude of teachers, high schooling cost, large family size are the major factors that forced to child to work at early age.

**Table-2: Sample Respondent Describing Reason not to Attend School (%) n=80**

Reason not to Attend	Frequency	Percent
Fear of Teacher	9	11.2
Poverty	26	32.5
Large Family	10	12.5
Financial Crises	35	43.8
Total	80	100.0

Source: Survey Data 2014

In this survey, children who had left school were asked reason for leaving school. About 43% of the children reported that because of financial crises my parents are not afford to bear the education expenses on other side, about 32% of the children are not getting education because they cannot fulfill their basic needs they prefer to send their children for

working at hazards environment. Approximately 11% of the children are not willing to go school because of harsh attitude of teachers. The table 3 highlights that highest number of children that is 36% of children belongs those families whose father are working as a laborer. 20% of the children come from households whose father is not alive. 12.5 % of the children from household whose father are shopkeeper. These conditions lead to the decision of the head of the households to engage their children in income generating skills at young age.

**Table-3: Distribution of Sampling According to their Father's Occupation (%) n=80**

Father's Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Shopkeeper	10	12.5
not alive	16	20.0
Carpenter	6	7.5
Farmer	16	20.0
Labor	29	36.2
Driver	3	3.8
Total	80	100.0

Source: Survey Data 2014

The table 4 envisages that 37.5% of the respondents are working on workshop. 36.2% of the respondents are working in hotel and 13.8% are working as cycle repairing and 12% are cobbler.

**Table-4: Distribution of Respondent According To Their Nature of Work (%) n=80**

Nature of Work	Frequency	Percent
Cobbler	10	12.5
Workshop	30	37.5
Cycle Repairing	11	13.8
Work In Hotel	29	36.2
Total	80	100.0

Source: Survey Data 2014

In table 5, 45% of children reported that they are ill-treated and employer behavior was harsh and insulting. 36% of children responded that they are abuse and 18.8% children facing problem of longer working hours all these problem may cause disappointment, discouragement, mental pressure and torture for working children.

**Table-5: Problems Faced By Children at Working Place (%) n=80**

Problems	Frequency	Percent
Abuse	29	36.2
Insulting	36	45.0
Long Working Hours	15	18.8
Total	80	100.0

Source: Survey Data 2014

### Conclusion

Based on the study it is concluded that child labor is major socio-economic problem in Pakistan. There is large number of children (i.e.2 to 3 millions) working as labor in both formal and informal sectors of economy rather than getting proper education. Poverty is the major cause of child labor in Pakistan and lack of education among them. On other side, teachers' harsh attitude in schools also motivates children to leave school and completely attached with their job. In many work place employers prefer to employ the children as labor because they work more and demand less (i.e. compensation, respect etc). Although child labor contributes significantly to their family income but they do not get sufficiently as their pocket money. Thus, the reward of child labor is very low; although they work for longer hours. But they are mostly exploited. This can be done only by bringing attitudinal change, and social awareness and rigorous campaign against the problem of child labor.

### Recommendations

- 1- At policy level, government should have to take positive initiatives as to provide economic support, health care facilities and protection to all.
- 2- The government should provide income generating resource to sustain their future in those areas which are backward. This will curtail the child labor.
- 3- It is responsibility of the government to control growing population by introducing family planning program to backward areas and give awareness regarding family planning program.
- 4- Due to poverty, parents cannot afford expenses of education and not agree to send their children to school and forced their children to work at hazard environment. Therefore, it is recommended that free education should be provided up to higher education level to all.
- 5- The government should have to provide subsidy on the basic food items and have to develop better employment opportunities with special focus on low income class resulting, parents will be able to fulfill the requirements of their family these initiatives will be helpful in controlling the child labor.
- 6- Government and non-government organizations should have to take various positive initiatives and to design various programs and schemes to create awareness among parents about the serious negative impacts of child labor such as physical, sexual or economic abuse.
- 7- Government have to make its education policy more effective as to provide safe and secure learning environment in schools and restrict all types of punishments in schools. Teachers training programmes should organize with special focus on teachers' behavior development.

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