Economic and Social Causes of Child Labor in District Quetta, Balochistan

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Abstract:

Main aim of this research study is to investigate economic and social causes of child labor in Quetta, Baluchistan. The target population was the working children at the auto workshops, wood works and furniture, cycle repairing, restaurants/hotels, retail trade, wholesale trade, carpet industry, tailoring shops, shoe shine and shoe repair spots and bricks factories. A sample of 90 respondents was selected randomly and interviewed by face to face survey. The results received from the primary data indicated that the child labor was influenced by the parents' income as well as by the literacy status and rate of child labor was higher i.e. 17.78 and 17.78 percent among

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households having monthly income of ≤ Rs. 2000/- or up to Rs. 3000/-, respectively. The poor economic condition was the main cause of child labor as perceived by 56.67 percent working children. Majority of children doing labor (35.56%) faced 'Bad' behavior of their employer, and 31.11 percent described 'Good' behavior; 17.78 percent described 'Very Good' behavior, 8.89 percent described 'Worse' behavior and "Worst" behavior of employer was described by 6.67 percent of the working children.

1. Introduction

More than 215 million children in the world are deprived from their childhood, education, and dignity due to menace of child labor as International Labor Organization (ILO) report 2013 revealed. Children work in deplorable, harmful and hazardous conditions where their health and life are at risk (Rana Ejaz, 2008; Emily, 2010). Among them 120 million children having age between 5 and 14 are full time worker and one third are working in unsafe conditions (ILO, 2013). Children should have right to play, right to learn and right to dream for their bright future but regrettably child labor is become burning issue, difficult to deal and hard to eradicate because children are compelled to do work unwillingly and forcibly (Ray, 2000). Ground realities show that families don't have enough money to meet their household daily expenses, unable to pay utility and health bills and schools fees for their children, consequently their child work as their helping hand and bread earner (Akhtar, et al. 2010). Such marginalized families are particularly targeted through social protection programs so they could save from falling in abject poverty. Hardly such social protection programs are designed to curb the child labor but studies indicates that these programs have been helping

poor families to keep their children in schools and out of work (Barki and Tazeen, 1998).

Pakistan is also not heaven for children as millions of children work in agriculture fields, brick kilns, small food outlets, mechanic workshops, carpet weaving industries, etc. The irony is that despite having enacted legal provisions in 1973 constitution of Pakistan which barred families to send their under 14 year's child to work, one can find child labor in each and every work field either it is agriculture sector or industrial as well as in service sector (Ray and Lancaster, 2005; Rana and Rashid, 2010).

International labor Organization (ILO) report (2012) revealed that 45,417 children having age group of 10-14 were found working against 2010 figure of 41, 091. Though age group of 5-9 years was not estimated these recent data shows considerable increase of three times more against figures surveyed in 1996. As indicated in 2011 report 10-14 years age group children rate in labor participation is increased. There were 0.3 million children and adolescents of age group 10-19 were engaged in labor in 2010 as compare to 0.36 million in 2011. They work as daily wage laborers, domestic servants, street hawkers, bus cleaners, garbage pickers, shoe polishers, mechanic helpers, etc. Majority of them belongs to Afgan refugee children. Carpet weaving is considered most dangerous and hazardous job due to health issues but unfortunately it is found that mnoros of marginalized Hazara and Afgani communities were found in this dangerous carpet weaving job. Keeping in view these pathetic conditions of children need was felt to study social and economic causes of child labor in Baluchistan for which Quetta district was selected.

2. Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are as under:

1. To identify socio-economic condition of the households where children are involved in child labor and examine working condition of the laboring children
2. To study the perceptions of the working children towards the attitude of the employers child labor

3. Method

This study was carried out during 2013 in District Quetta of Balochistan province with the objective to identify socio-economic condition of the respondent households and examine working condition of the laboring children. Moreover, the study also aimed at studying the perceptions of the working children towards the attitude of the employers, problems faced by working children. In order to take representative sample, stratified random sampling technique was used. The target population was the working children at the auto workshops, wood works and furniture, cycle repairing points, restaurants/hotels, retail trade, wholesale trade, carpet industry, tailoring, shoe shine and shoe repair and bricks. The number of children had been working regularly at above mentioned places in study area was confirmed and out of 329, a sample size of 90 respondents for this survey study was finalized (Table 1). Proportional allocation method was used to obtain samples from each stratum. For each stratum, the enterprises were selected randomly.

Table-I Sample population and sample size for child labor in district Quetta of Balochistan province

Sr No.	Labor activity	Children interviewed (sample size)
1	Auto workshops	14
2	Wood works and furniture	4
3	Cycle repairing	3
4	Restaurants/Hotels	16
5	Retail trade	12
6	Wholesale	6
6	Carpet industry	4

7	Tailoring	13
8	Shoe shine and shoe repair etc.	6
10	Bricks kilns	12
	All	90

4.   Results

This section of paper contains the data analysis and description of the results accordingly.

4.1 Monthly income households whose children are involved in child labor

The prevalence of child labor by parents' income and literacy status in Quetta district of Balochistan was examined and the data are shown in Table-2. It is obvious from the findings that the rate of child labor was linearly influenced by the parents' income as well as by the literacy status. The result showed that the rate of child labor was higher i.e. 17.78 and 17.78 percent among households having monthly income of ≤ Rs. 2000/- or up to Rs. 3000/-, respectively. The rate of child labor reduced to 14.44 and 14.44 percent with increase in the monthly income of the parents up to Rs. 4000/- and Rs. 5000/-, respectively. Similarly, the parents having monthly income of Rs. 6000, 7000 and 8000/-, the rate of child reduced among them up to 11.11, 8.89 and 6.67 percent, respectively. However, the lowest rate of child labor of 4.44 and 4.44 percent equally was found in the households having their monthly income Rs. 9000 and 10000/-, respectively. This indicates that the poor people are impelled to send their children for labor due to higher household expenses and lower monthly income. The results also showed that increasing rate of child labor is also one of the major indicators of increased level of poverty in the societies. The data further indicated that the child labor was markedly higher (71.11%) in illiterate children; while the literate children were fewer in number (28.89%) involved in child labor. Hence, the increased child labor is also one of the major indicators for increased rate of illiteracy. These findings are in accordance with those of

Khan (2003) who indicated that the children belonged to rich families and has literate parents were more likely to go to school and less likely to work.

4.2 Working children according to age

The working children were also distinguished by their age group and interviewed 90 children were classified into age groups such as: 6-8 years, 8-10 years, 10-12 years and 12-14 years (Figure-1). The data in Figure-3 showed that the majority (41.11%) of the working children was observed to be in the age group of 12-14 years, and the age of 25.56 percent of the child labor was in the range of 10-12 percent. Some 21.11 percent working children were in the age group of 8-10 years and the minimum percentage (12.22) of working children were in the age group of 6-8 years. Although most of the working children were more than 10 years of age, but considerable number of children were also observed in working having their age below 10 years.

4.3 Factors responsible for discontinuation of working children's education

The respondent working children were also asked to perceive on the factors responsible for discontinuation of their education and they reported multiple factors that are responsible for discontinuation of their education. The responses of the working children are presented in Figure-3. The result showed that poor economic condition of the household head was the major reason for discontinuation of their education as perceived by 56.67 percent working children; while 22.22 percent of the working children disclosed that intentionally they don't like to go to school and they have no interest in schooling. Some 13.13 percent of the respondent working children indicated that due to their poor academic performance, they are reluctant to go to school; while some 7.78 percent of the working children indicated that they are not in the school due to fear of the teacher. The results clearly suggested that poor economic

condition is the key factor responsible for discontinuation of education of the working children, followed by lacking interest, poor academic performance and fear of the teacher.

4.4 Employers' behavior as described by working children

The respondents selected from the working children in district Quetta of Balochistan province were also asked to describe their employer's behavior with them and their responses are given in Figure-2. The data indicated that majority (35.56%) of the working children in the study area described 'Bad' behaviour of their employer with them, and 31.11 percent of the working children described 'Good' behaviour of their employer with them; while some 17.78 percent of the working children described that the behaviour of their employer with them during working hours is 'Very Good'. Some 8.89 percent of the working children out of 90 described that the behaviour of their employer with them is 'Worse'; while "Worst" behaviour of employer with them has been described by 6.67 percent of the working children in the study area out of a total sample size of 90 working children. It is evident that more than half of the total working children strength in the study area was facing adverse behaviours of their employers, that is an indicator of simultaneous negative impact on the society the children belong to.

4.5 Difficulties faced by the working children in their job

The working children in district Quetta were also asked to perceive on the difficulties they face during their working hours and all of them disclosed everything what difficulties they face. The responses of the children on this aspect are presented in Figure-4.The result clearly suggested that the behavior of employers is not positive, as the majority of the working children (34.44%) perceived that their "employers are harsh" and deal with them in an extremely negative manner. On the other side, 32.22 percent of the working children perceived that

"long working hours" is the major difficulty for them; while 21.11 percent of the working children disclosed that the "work is difficult". Similarly, 7.78 percent of the working children disclosed that their "Health is getting worse" due to performing unlimited laborious work; while 4.44 percent of the respondent working children complained that "No leisure time" is provided to them and they are bound to work continuously till they proceed for their homes. The situation stated above by the working children is extremely painful and the children of minor age are facing severe physical and moral difficulties in the age that is specific for their education and personality development for the future life.

4.6 Classification of respondents with regard to their level of education

The respondent working children in district Quetta of Balochistan province were also classified with regard to their level of education and their responses received from the 26 literate respondents are presented in Table-4.

The result indicated that out of total 90 working children only 26 (28.89%) were literate and remaining 64 (71.11%) were illiterate. Out of 26 literate working children, majority (34.61%) were observed at restaurants/hotels, followed by children working at auto workshops (23.07%), retail trade (11.53%), tailoring (7.69%). The lowest literacy status was observed at Brick kilns where only 3.84%) literate children were observed. On the other hand, out of 64 illiterate working children included in this investigation, majority (17.18%) were found working at the Brick kilns, followed by those associated with tailoring (17.18%), auto workshops (12.05%), restaurants/hotels (14.06%), retail trade shops (14.06%); while equally (4.68%) percent illiterate children were associated with wood works and furniture, cycle repairing, wholesale trade, carpet industry shoe shine and shoe repair, respectively. This indicates that among literate working children, most of them

were engaged to work at restaurants/ hotels, auto workshops, retail trade shops and tailoring shops; while among the illiterate working children the majority was working with Brick kilns.

4.7 Interest of working children in education

The sample respondents were classified with regard to their interest in education and they were asked to perceive on their interest in education. The responses of respondents working at auto workshops, wood works and furniture, cycle repairing, restaurants/hotels, retail trade, wholesale trade, carpet industry, tailoring, shoe shine and shoe repair and bricks kilns are given in Table-5. The result showed that majority of the working children (51.11%) showed negative attitude towards education and disclosed they have no interest in education; while 48.89 percent of the working children from the total sample size of 90 were positive for acquiring education and they perceived that they are interested in school education. The most positive working children were found who were working at Restaurants/Hotels and out of total 16, 12 showed open interest in education; probably these working children during serving at the restaurants meet most of the educated customers and due to the interaction with most of the quality people their sense is developed accordingly. Similarly, out of total 12 working children at Brick kilns, 9 showed interest in education, they want to leave this hard work and join school, but their conditions do not allow. The children associated with tailoring, auto workshops, retail trade shops showed little interest in education. This indicates that the society impacts the working children, and if during working hours they are interacted with educated people, they will perceive to be positive for education; while if there are interacting some negative elements, they will lose interest in education.

4.8 Respondents with regard to purpose of their activity

The children at work having age from 6 to 14 years were classified according to the purpose of their activity in district Quetta of Balochistan and they were classified into various age groups such as 6-8 years, 8-10 years, 10-12 years and 12-14 years. The respondents were asked to perceive on the purpose of their working in this particular age and their responses are presented in Table-6. The results showed that 50.00% of the respondents had been working for learning purpose, and 23.33 percent of the working children had been working for earning purpose; while 26.67 percent of the respondent working children had been working both for learning and earning purposes. It was observed that the children from the very poor families had been working not only for learning, but were also expected to have some rumination/money for their work to fulfill the needs of their households. However, it was observed that payment to the working children was not fixed by their employers, and in most cases the payment of their work was received by their parents, and never have they received any rumination of their work, particularly at the Brick kilns.

4.9 Daily working hours of the respondent working children

The working children at the auto workshops, wood works and furniture, cycle repairing, restaurants/hotels, retail trade, wholesale trade, carpet industry, tailoring, shoe shine and shoe repair and bricks kilns in and in the vicinity of Quetta were enquired for their working hours and their responses are given in Table-7. The result indicated that majority (50,00%) of the overall respondent working children had been working 4-8 hours, while 30.00 percent of the total working children (90) interviewed had been working for more than 8 hours. Similarly, some 20.00 percent of the respondent working children at different enterprises had been working for ≤ 4 hours. It was observed that the working children remained at work maximally at the Restaurants/Hotels, followed by Auto

workshops, Bricks kilns and tailoring shops, while the working hours were also higher in case of children working at retail shops, wholesale shops and shoe repairs etc. hence, the working hours for the child labor were higher at Restaurants/Hotels, Auto workshops, Bricks kilns and tailoring shops as compared to other enterprises.

5. Conclusions

The ratio of child labor is alarmingly higher in KPK province while the lowest is the Balochistan. The poor people are impelled to send their children for labor due to higher household expenses and lower monthly income. The results also showed that increasing rate of child labor is also one of the major indicators of increased level of poverty in the societies.

The increased child labor is also one of the major indicators for increased rate of illiteracy. Although most of the working children were more than 10 years of age, but considerable number of children were also observed in working having their age below 10 years. The poor economic condition is the key factor responsible for discontinuation of education of the working children, followed by lacking interest, poor academic performance and fear of the teacher. More than half of the total working children strength in the study area was facing adverse behaviours of their employers, that is an indicator of simultaneous negative impact on the society the children belong to. The working children are extremely painful and the children of minor age are facing severe physical and moral difficulties in the age that is specific for their education and personality development for the future life.

The most positive working children were found working at Restaurants/Hotels; probably these working children during serving at the restaurants meet most of the educated customers and their sense is developed accordingly. The children working at Brick kilns also showed interest in education, they want to

leave this hard work and join school, but their conditions do not allow. The age of the working child also influences their perception while interviewing and 12-14 years children were more conscious while children of lesser in age were less conscious about their future and perceived accordingly for their interest in formal and informal education. Among literate working children, most of them were engaged to work at restaurants/ hotels, auto workshops, retail trade shops and tailoring shops; while among the illiterate working children the majority was working with Brick kilns.

Among the working children (child labor), none of them could reach high school for matriculation studies. The children from the very poor families had been working not only for learning, but were also expected to have some rumination/money for their work to fulfill the needs of their households. The payment to the working children was not fixed by their employers, and in most cases the payment of their work was received by their parents, and never have they received any rumination of their work, particularly at the Brick kilns. The working children remained at work maximally at the Restaurants/Hotels, followed by Auto workshops, Bricks kilns and tailoring shops, while the working hours were also higher in case of children working at retail shops, wholesale shops and shoe repairs etc. hence, the working hours for the child labor were higher at Restaurants/Hotels, Auto workshops, Bricks kilns and tailoring shops as compared to other enterprises.

Acknowledgement

Table-2: Prevalence of child labor by parent's income and literacy status in district Quetta of Balochistan province

| Sr#	Income group (Rs)	Literate	%	Illiterate	%	All	%
1	≤ 2000	3	3.33	13.00	14.44	16	17.78
2	2000 – 3000	5	5.56	11	12.22	16	17.78
3	3000 – 4000	4	4.44	9	10.00	13	14.44
4	4000 – 5000	5	5.56	8	8.89	13	14.44
5	5000 – 6000	3	3.33	7	7.78	10	11.11
6	6000 – 7000	2	2.22	6	6.67	8	8.89
7	7000 – 8000	2	2.22	4	4.44	6	6.67
8	8000 – 9000	1	1.11	3	3.33	4	4.44
9	9000 – 10000	1	1.11	3	3.33	4	4.44
	All	26	28.89	64	71.11	90	100.00
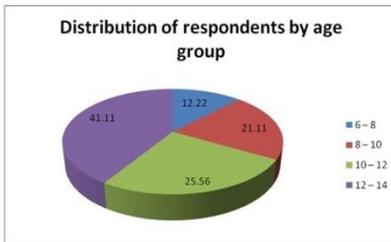
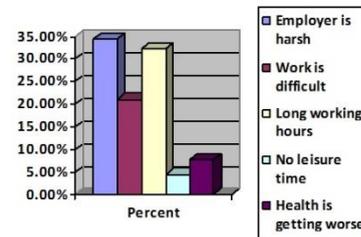Figure 1 Working children distinguished by age
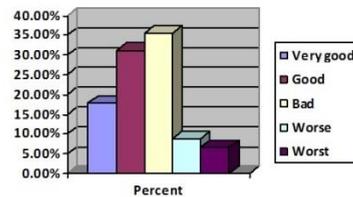
Figure 2 Sample respondent's perception regarding employer's behavior
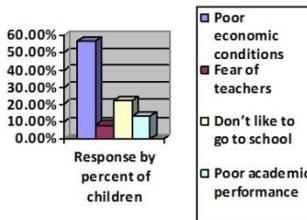
Figure 3 Working children stating factors responsible for discontinuation of their education

Figure 4 Difficulties faced by children in their job

Table-4: Classification of the sample respondents with regard to their level of education in district Quetta of Balochistan province

Sr#	Category/Labor activity	Primary		Middle		Madrassa	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	Auto workshops	3	11.54	1	3.85	2	7.69
2	Wood works and furniture	1	3.85	0	0.00	0	0.00
3	Cycle repairing	1	3.85	0	0.00	0	0.00

4	Restaurants/Hotels	6	23.08	1	3.85	2	7.69
5	Retail trade	1	3.85	2	7.69	0	0.00
6	Wholesale	0	0.00	1	3.85	0	0.00
7	Carpet industry	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	3.85
8	Tailoring	1	3.85	0	0.00	1	3.85
9	Shoe shine and shoe repair etc.	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	3.85
10	Bricks kilns	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	3.85
	All	13	50.00	5	19.23	8	30.77

Table-5   Classification of the sample respondents with regard to interest in education in district Quetta of Balochistan province

Sr#	Labor activity	Total number of respondent children	Interest in education			
			Positive		Negative	
			Number	%	Number	%
1.	Auto workshops	14	6	13.64	8	17.39
2.	Wood works and furniture	4	2	4.55	2	4.35
3.	Cycle repairing	3	1	2.27	2	4.35
4.	Restaurants/Hotels	16	12	27.27	4	8.70
5.	Retail trade	12	4	9.09	8	17.39
6.	Wholesale	6	1	2.27	5	10.87
7.	Carpet industry	4	2	4.55	2	4.35
8.	Tailoring	13	4	9.09	9	19.57
9.	Shoe shine and shoe repair etc.	6	3	6.82	3	6.52
10.	Bricks kilns	12	9	20.45	3	6.52
	All	90	44	100.00	46	100.00
	Overall Average	-	48.89%		51.11%	

Table 6: Classification of the sample respondents according to the purpose of activity in district Quetta of Balochistan province

Sr#	Age group	Learning		Earning		Learning and earning	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	6 – 8 years	6	6.67	4	4.44	1	1.11
2	8 – 10 years	10	11.11	7	7.78	2	2.22
3	10 – 12 years	10	11.11	5	5.56	8	8.89
4	12 – 14 years	19	21.11	5	5.56	13	14.44
	All	45	50.00	21	23.33	24	26.67

Table-7: Daily working hours of the sample respondents in district Quetta of Balochistan province

Sr#	Category/Labor activity	≤4 hrs		4-8 hrs		>8 hrs		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Auto workshops	4	4.44	2	2.22	8	8.89	14	15.56
2.	Wood works and furniture	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	4.44	4	4.44
3.	Cycle repairing	1	1.11	0	0.00	2	2.22	3	3.33
4.	Restaurants/Hotels	2	2.22	10	11.11	4	4.44	16	17.78
5.	Retail trade	4	4.44	2	2.22	6	6.67	12	13.33

6.	Wholesale	0	0.00	0	0.00	6	6.67	6	6.67
7.	Carpet industry	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	4.44	4	4.44
8.	Tailoring	3	3.33	7	7.78	3	3.33	13	14.44
9.	shoe repair etc.	0	0.00	6	6.67	0	0.00	6	6.67
10	Bricks kilns	4	4.44	0	0.00	8	8.89	12	13.33
	All	18	20.00	27	30.00	45	50.00	90	100

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