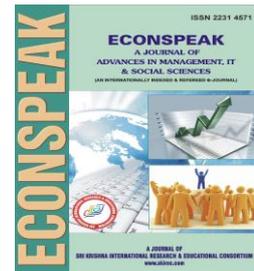




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## CAUSES AND FACTORS FOR THE INCREASING TREND OF CHILD LABOUR IN PAKISTAN- AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the causes that are involved with the inclination of the practice of child labour in Pakistan. This study was exploratory in nature and the factors that were identified to have a relation with the child labour in Pakistan with the help of this study; were found to be poverty, lack of resources and bigger sizes of the families. Through qualitative research method of unstructured interviews and conversations and with the use of snowball sampling technique; children that were involved in labour were asked questions and interviewed about the work that they were doing and the reasons behind it. About 30 children (20 boys and 10 girls, aged 6 to 17 years) were approached and a compensation amount was also given to them so that their time does not get wasted and they could also earn a little amount within that time. Another factor that was also found in this study was that the boys were found a lot more in number as compared to the girls that were involved in the child labour for the reason that girls were mostly associated with helping with the house chores and care after the animals that were also a source of food.

**KEY WORDS:** Child labour, Child Labour in Pakistan, Causes of Child Labour, Factors of Child Labour, Trends of Child Labour

## INTRODUCTION

If we look at the daily newspaper and television news channels, there are several occasions when we come across news that involve something to do with the children's rights being violated every now and then. Not only that, but there have been a number of times when children are being shown as doing the works and jobs that are done by or are supposed to be carried out by the elders and strong people in developed countries. The developed nations have set a criterion for the rights ranging from the inhuman (animals) organisms all the way through the human beings and within the classification of the human beings, come women, men children and elderly and so on. So, whenever anyone's rights are being violated from time to time, people start reacting about it especially the Western societies there the rights of people are kept as their top priority. But conversely, unfortunately in Pakistan, where there are resources present but are not properly utilized by the government officials because of the corruption and politics involved, these rights are not being properly taken care of and being appropriately monitored.

Pakistan is an underdeveloped nation that has a lot of issues that includes the political bureaucracy, lack of justice, lack of resources, lack of the establishment of the organizations that are involved with the check and balance of the rights of the citizens. This also suggests that in a nation where there are a lot of political, social and economic problems where the rich are getting richer day by day and the poor are getting poorer than most certainly, the poor would also use their children to make earning of their family more and more and this in return, would increase the involvement of the children in child labour. Children have the basic right to get education and do other playful activities that would help them in their future and also in their physical health. But sadly, this has not been the case in most parts of Pakistan. (Ahmed, 1991)

Whenever anyone goes through the traffic signals in an urbanized city or roam about in the streets of Pakistan, most certainly would that person is able to see any child that is involved in begging, selling, coconuts, selling toys or car related things, taking huge bags (that are difficult to carry) and collecting papers from the streets etc. In the most similar way, on the welding and denting painting shops of cars, children are seen doing tasks that are done by (or are supposed to be done) by a well-trained adult mechanic or welder and children's health could get affected by it. Not only are these children deprived of their most basic rights like education, health, diet, sleep etc. but they are also paid with an inconsiderable amount of wages. So, why is it so? Why have the children of Pakistan become so helpless that they have come out of their homes to earn money instead of going out and playing games like any other child of the same age from a well earning family in the same city of Pakistan? All of this will be explained, explored and discussed in this study and the factors that are associated with it would be discussed and analyzed through this research. This study also aims at

finding the relationship between ongoing and increasing trend of the child labour would be explored and analyzed. (Bhalotra, 2007)

This has been the case of many children of Pakistan since the old times and because of the technological advancements and globalization, this problem is now highlighted and officials are reacting to it, but we are just at the first step of progress for the reason that a lot needs to be done about it. The citizens of Pakistan need to work on this problem together and sort it out and the situation is not possible only on the reliance on the government officials.

There have been a lot of non-government organizations (NGO's) that are working on this subject, but they have their own ways of doing things. If the infrastructure and the economic development of Pakistan is properly organized and not only organized but properly looked upon because of the fact that there exists a lot of corruption, only then could the problems that are related to the child labour be sorted out. If the children (that are involved in child labour) are sent to the schools, there still needs to be done something about their families for which they were working and doing jobs. However, this is not the main focus of the current study. The factors that are involved in the child labour in Pakistan would be explored through the help of this study and the reasons for this trend still being practiced in Pakistan would also be highlighted.

The government, on the one hand, needs to take steps and then properly do monitoring while on the other hand, not only the well off and resourceful citizens of Pakistan also needs to take the responsibility themselves rather than showing helpless behaviour and do nothing, and in addition to that, every one of us needs to monitor and take further steps for the future of these children. This could be resolved once the factors involved are properly examined and then later on, properly addressed by the governing members. The factors that are found to be associated would be explained with the help of the literature in the section below.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The statistics around the world reflect that children over the numbers of 306 million are employed and doing some kind of labor (International Labor Organization report, 2010). This also takes us to another point of view that first of all, they are children and the types of works they are involved in are most of the times being reported as unsafe. So, why in the world are children involved with getting employed and doing labor? There could be several factors that are related with the increase in the child labor and many researchers have suggested different issue with it that includes: poverty, lower levels of the literacy rates and outsized families, economic disasters, natural disasters, earthquake, and increasing levels of unemployment. The numbers that are involved with the increasing or decreasing rates of the employed children is not exactly known by the officials and the

authorities that are dealing with these types of issues but the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan suggests the number of child labor to be around 10 million in 2005.

Before discussing the whole argument in detail, it would be suitable to explain the word 'child' to have a standard view of the problem. So, what exactly is the word 'child' and how can anyone operationally define by saying that particular person comes in the criteria of being called as a child? And that particular person doing job is basically a child labor? The United Nations (UN) International consensus has given the definition of child and suggests that 'any individual that falls under the age of 18 years is regarded as a child (UNESCO). This definitely shows that there are a lot of children that are involved in the child labor all over the world and specifically all across Pakistan, which is the main focus of this study.

As mentioned earlier, there are several factors that have been associated with the child labor and have been explained through a number of studies all around the world. Researchers have suggested those factors to be poverty of the household (Van, 1998), social inequality (Grootaert and Kanbur, 1995), schooling (Becker, 1965; Chernichovsky D., 1985; Rosenzweig M. R. and Evenson, 1977), economic growth and increasing demands (Swaminathan, 1998) and also, household income (Fallon and Tzannatos, 1998). Some studies have also shown an inverse relation between the child labor and economic development (Kambhampati and Raja, 2006; Kak, 2004). Similarly, (López-Calva, 2001) suggests that the countries that are in the phase of getting developed tend to have a higher acceptance for the child labor.

Talking about the factors that are associated with the child labor in Pakistan specifically, reports conducted by the (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2010) shows that child labor involves the interplay of poverty, low literacy and bigger size of the family. In addition to that, the same factors of poverty related issues have been, on the other hand, also found to be associated with the child labor by other studies as well (Dumas et al., 2004).

All of these factors suggest that when there are a lot of places available for jobs (in terms of doing labor and low wages jobs) and the needs of the people are not being met properly by the government and by the available situation, people, especially the poor, become so desperate to do jobs that could at least fill their food requirements. And for this reason, they send children to do labor and get employed in one way or another. These factors could be very much related with the situation of Pakistan and this could also give an explanation about the current ongoing practice of the child labor. Through the personal observations it could be noticed by any person living in Pakistan that there are a lot of children that are employed and doing jobs to meet the dietary needs of their families.

As mentioned before, Pakistan is going through changes in the socio-economic and political chaotic situations and there are a number of studies that have been conducted in Pakistan (Kashif & Hussain, 2011). It clearly shows that this subject is a matter of giving attention and the government officials need to do something about it.

Another study that was conducted in Pakistan, the factors that have been associated with the child labor were found to be high birthrate, illiteracy, migration (rural and urban), higher members in families and poverty (Ahmed, 1991). The researcher also suggested that these factors could be the reason for a larger number of children that are present within the population of Pakistan.

All of these factors were kept in mind for the current research and the factors that were involved were thoroughly examined and further steps were taken for the implementation of this research. The rationale and objective of this study would be explained in the following section below.

#### **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

This study aims at understanding the factors that are involved with the child labour and also to address that why is it still under practice in Pakistan. Children need to study in the schools at their age rather than doing jobs and earning money and these needs to be stopped. Children are the future of any country and if they are not involved in getting education and in getting involved in constructive activities, this would also come in the way of the country's progress. This study is basically addressing all of this argument.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

- To understand the status and trend of child labour in Pakistan
- To highlight the major factors contributing to child labour in Pakistan.
- To Suggest recommendations for stopping/ decreasing child labour in Pakistan

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Following are the research questions that would be addressed in this research study:

- What are the factors involved with the child labour in Pakistan?
- Why is it a problem?
- Why is this practice still running?
- What initiatives need to be taken to stop it or decrease it?

#### **METHOD AND MATERIALS**

This is an exploratory study that was used to find the factors that are involved in the child labour in the domain of Pakistan. The method that had been used for this research was qualitative research method and the children that were involved in the child labour themselves and were doing jobs and earning money in one way or another were approached. It was mostly participatory research and

the researcher used to spend the day with those children and observe their whole day activities with them so that any data does not get missed and could be used in analysis.

Through snowball sampling, the children were approached for the reason that they were not willing to share information when they were directly approached. They were planned to be given a compensation amount of the time in which they gave the information and it was as a substitutive amount for their time. It was not given to them solely for that reason but it was also noticed that when the amount was promised to be given, they were more interested in giving the information that also helped the researcher in gathering a lot more data than was expected to be gathered. They were even told by the researcher that their information is safe with them and will not be misused and also, their identities will never be revealed. Their consent was taken from them and the snowball sampling helped a lot with gathering the information for the reason that with the participant that was interviewed before, rapport was built and that child was also present during the next interview that was conducted. The themes were further taken from the data and analyzed through the thematic analysis.

#### **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

A sum of 30 children (10 girls and 20 boys) with the percentage of 33.3% and 66.6% were approached and their ages ranged from 6 to 17 years. Two out of thirty children (6.66%) had attended the school but left it because of feeble economic conditions. The results of the data also showed that the majority of the children worked in the recycling business and collected papers in the huge bags and other children were involved in working in car welding shops and street vendors. The main findings of this study suggested that the main factors that were associated with the child labour were poverty, lack of resources and bigger sizes of the families. Not only that, but the findings also suggested that there was a role of gender also involved. The boys were more likely to be involved in the labour and in employment. This has been identified as a problem in this study for the reason that the child labour is increasing with the economic crisis and costly education system and families that are poor have the priority of fulfilling their basic needs. If their basic needs are not met, they cannot most certainly focus on their children's education as well.

Another quite important finding was found was that when there were a lot of members of the families of the children who were doing labour, chances were there that most of the other brothers and sisters were also involved in doing labour and lesser were the number of siblings going to school for getting education. Five of the children (16.66%) reported that their siblings were also involved in labour and were not going to school while the remaining twenty five (83.3%) mentioned that their siblings and they themselves had gone to school for primary education. One of the children had a copy of his own and wanted to study but his parents could not afford to send him to school. Two of

the other children mentioned that they used to go to school regularly, but left for the reason that their parents could not afford the school uniform and books. They wanted to go to school themselves when asked about whether they wanted to study or not. In addition to that, these findings also revealed that the poverty has a lot to do with the employment of children. In addition to that, it was found that children were paid quite less even if they did the task which is required to be done by an elder.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Pakistan is in the phase of getting developed and Lopez-Calva (2001) has suggested that the developing countries tend to have higher rates of the child labor which is quite relatable with reference to the scenario of Pakistan. This has become a problem for the reason that the number of children involved in labor has been observed to be increasing with the passage of time and needs to be controlled. In addition to that, the factors that were found to be associated in this study with the child labor in Pakistan were poverty, lack of resources and bigger sizes of the families which were also quite relevant and related with the previously conducted studies (Becker, 1965) (Chernichovsky D., 1985) (Fallon and Tzannatos, 1998) (Swaminathan, 1998) (Swaminathan, 1998). The bigger family size was found to be the dominant factor in this study. There were more mouths that needed to be fed and lesser amount of family income and the same problem has also been addressed by the standardized study conducted by the (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2010). The findings suggested that there was a direct relation between the bigger family sizes and the child labour which This suggests that this factor could be one of the leading causes of the increasing trend in the child labor in Pakistan.

The low family income was found as the cause of not going to school in the current study, which was closely related with the recent study conducted on the children involved in labor in Rawalpindi, Pakistan (Zaidi, 2010).

Furthermore, the situation of our neighbouring country India could be very much related with the situation of the child labour in Pakistan for the reason that both countries are geographically and to some extent, culturally related to each other. The statistics in India also suggest that boys tend to have higher participation in the employment related activities as compared to the girls (Zaidi, 2010) which is also quite relevant with the present study as well, in which boys were found higher in number (boys= 66.6%, girls= 33.3%) to be involved in child labour.

All of these findings and discussion suggests that there are a lot of themes that are found common with the previous conducted researches and shows that the results are quite significant. The findings also make a way for the recommendations that would also be further explained.

**CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATION**

Through this study, it has been concluded that when there are lack of resources and proper infrastructure of education and employment etc., chances are there that people send out their family members (with the inclusion of their small children) so that they could meet their basic needs which ideally, should have been given by the government. The main factors that were found with this study also showed that there needs to be done a lot of work to lower the rates of child labour.

Through this study it is also recommended that a documentary film needs to be made upon the child labour and through the use of photography technique and documentary, a lot of information and ways could be identified and future researchers and organizations might also get help out of it in lowering the increasing drift of child labour in Pakistan.

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