

Child Labor: A Poverty Shape

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Abstract: More than 25 thousand children out of total 43.5% (1509840) child population are working and living under a very critical condition in Azad Kashmir estimated on basis of a survey conducted in seven districts headquarters to their municipalities limit by dividing them into their wards. In response of which 1805 male children between ages of 9-15 years were located working other than male and female children working in houses were left for not easy access. The intention of this article is to collect a true and valid data of child labor in Azad Kashmir for composing and assorting welfare program to redress the miseries and grievances of poor and destitute children to make them useful citizen for prosperity and development of society. Azad Kashmir is dissimilar place and majority of population is dwelling in rural areas where, there is scarcity of employment opportunities due to the high poverty level, so people and their children come to cities for earning their livelihood. Prevalence of child labor is indication of political economical and social deterioration and all social evils existence which don't let the society develop. Ignoring children's socialization means future suffering and decline. Whole world is concentrating on for providing them all their basic needs that they require for healthy growth. Basically child labor is a ramification and emanation of poverty so for stopping it need to eradicate poverty causes through launching programs for good governance, political and social campaigns against it.

Key words: Child labour, child population, municipalities limit

INTRODUCTION

Child labor is a global phenomenon. A number of indigenous national international welfare organizations are working for stopping it and ameliorating the working children conditions. Various studies and researches have been conducted in this field but first time whole Azad Kashmir was focused with the purpose of comprehending intensity of phenomenon and searching ways for rooting it out.

Azad Kashmir is the liberated part of the disputed Azad Jammu and Kashmir state between India and Pakistan comprising of two divisions and 19 sub divisions (Muzaffarabad Capital, Bagh, Rawalkot, Sudhnuti, Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimber) consisting of 5134 sq. miles area and 3471000 projected population. Male population is out number than female with sex and urban rural location ratio of 100 females per 101 male and 12.5: 87.5, respectively. People of the area are economically, geographically and culturally different to each other and Pakistan. Majority of the population 87.5 are residing in rural area where the poverty level is more. For estimating the quantum of the child labor in Azad Kashmir a questionnaire survey was conducted and seven districts big cities were selected for study and apart from sampling whole research population (total working children in these cities except male and female children engaged in labor in houses) was covered. Accordingly 1805 male children out of (1509885) 43.5%

total child Population between age group of 9-15 years were discovered in labor and living with critical social condition. In light of which more than 25000 children were estimated working.

Children are beauty of the universe, Assets and Nurseries of future, so to make the future bright, safe and strong, society should provide them their needs, care, educations, nutrition, suitable environment and opportunities for recreational activities for their physical, mental, psychological and social development.

Morally, mentally and physically healthy child is an asset for a nation. This should be the duty of all of us to ensure that today s children are physically emotionally and educationally equipped for the future.

By a lay man view a child is an innocent or too young to protect and understand his/her interests.

Child means a person who has not completed his/her 15 years of age. (THE children (pledge of labor) act 1933)

Child is a person who has not completed his/her 14 years of age and Adolescent is who has completed his/her 14 years but has not completed his/her 18 years. (Employment of children act 1991)

Child is an individual who is under the age of 15 years and Guardian' includes any person having legal custody of or control over a child. (Employment of Children Act 1933)

Whereas ILO and developed countries defined a child; as an individual between the age of 05 and 15 years,

In Pakistan child labor statistics are based on children between the age of 5 and 14 years, as the 1973 constitution of Pakistan fixes the minimum age for admission to employment at 14 years.

The term child labor has differently been defined by a number of authors. Child labor is the employment of children when they are too young to work on wages or when they are employed for unsuitable and unsafe jobs.

Child labor is any work by children that interferes with their full physical development, opportunities for desirable education and recreational needs.

Child labor as any mental or physical work done by a child for earning wages.

Child labor; all children under the age of 15 years in work or employment with the aims of earning livelihood for themselves and for their families.

Legally no parents and Guardian can receive any benefit in return of sending children for work.

An agreement to pledge the labor of child 'means an agreement written or oral, express or implied whereby the parent or guardian of a child, in return for any payment or benefits received or to be received by him, undertakes to cause or allow the services of the child to be utilized in any employment (Children (pledging of labor) act 1933)

Pakistan's state religion is Islam which emphasis on observing its universal principals for socializing children, so that they can become useful and responsible member of society.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) regarded children as "Flowers from the garden of Allah.

Islam requires its follower to treat children kindly. The father is held responsible for the maintenance of their children. Apart from fulfillment of material needs and providing a decent treatment, Islam stress its follower to get their children well trained and educated.

International law also does not permit children to work. According to ILO minimum age convention 1973 No.138,

The minimum age at which children are allowed to start work should be set at 15 or at the age at which children finish compulsory schooling.

There are two kind of work that children do and only one of them is child labor. Child labor is,

- Work that is done all day by children under the age of 15 years
- Work that stop children from going school.
- Work that is dangerous and may hurt children physically, emotionally or mentally.

The other kind of work that child does for just helping out the family or earning money for outside of school activities. Child labor is not,

- Chores done around the house before or after the school.
- Internship (when you do work for an organization or company during the summer vacation to learn about a specific kind of work.
- Apprentice (time when you are learning about something and doing it at the same time, for example electricians often have apprenticeship teach the trade which helping out around the shop.
- Helping out at family form or business as long as it dose not keep you from going to school or doing your homework and once you are 16, you can choose to work after school or on weekend to earn extra money.

Keeping the historical background child labor is an old phenomenon. It has always been traditional practice that children has been remained working along side their parents and other family members. From here child labor was emerged out when poor families put their children's on work on wages. Only rich upper class saved their children from working, however the notion that child labor is a social problem, a phenomenon hindering the physical and mental development of the child, is a relatively recent development. The interpretation of child labor and accompanying ideas that child should be protected against it, come into force when paid child became common.

Child labor in 19th century Europe was qualitatively different from what had preceded it. Children were employed in factories for employers and for wages. Some works in cottages and tenants with their parents, who in turn were paid for the out put of the household. Industrialization brought the machines and chemical which was dangerous for the children work, poor ventilation, long hour's and low wages.

According to the Encyclopedia of Britannica 1986 the movement to regulate child labor begins in Great Britain at the close of the 18th century, when rapid development of large scale manufacturing had resulted in the exploitation of very young children in mining and industrial work. In Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, children less than 15 years rarely worked except in commercial Agriculture, because of the effective enforcement of laws passed in the first half of the 20th century.

250 million children between the age of 5 and 15 years were in developing countries at least 120 million full time as the estimated figures are issued by ILO. 61% of these were in Asia and 325 millions in Africa from whole Asia south Asia is ahead and in south Asia India is on no. 1st, which has 44 million child labors, the largest work force in the worked.

Nowhere in the world it is recognized and permitted but almost prevalent every where particularly in developing countries Africa and Asia together account for over 90% of total child employment. the phenomena found more in rural area than urban where families due to ignorance, having particular rigid rural Social structure and have no realization of importance of education, put their children on work for raising their income or financial support in stead of sending them school.

3.3 million Children under age of 15 years out of 40 millions total child populations are in labor in Pakistan, which is close to one third of total population.

Child labor statistics indicate that in terms of number of child engaged in labor Punjab (where about 1.943 million children in trap, of this unwanted phenomenon which 60% of total child labor. In N.W.F.P. (where 1.058 million children are in labor) Sind (0.298Million) and Balochistan (0.014million) are rated as No. 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively.

Causes of Child labor : Child labor is a multi dimensional phenomenon and possessing multifarious causes behind, primarily it is the worst shape and shoot of poverty with a lot of other causes. To limit the causes of any phenomenon is very difficult; because hundred millions causes remained in action for long time then a problem is emanated.

Widely some common causes are considered responsible for child labor such as, Poverty, ignorance and illiteracy, unemployment, underemployment, Population explosion, bad or poor governances, Education system and quality of schools, social security system, customary/historical trends and demand for child workers.

Different socio-economic factors can be held responsible for the spreading and prevalence of child labor. These factors include Poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, lack of family planning,, dissatisfaction about education system, absence of social security mechanism and many other (Shah1997).

Putting aside the causes of child labor need to look on parties equally involved in child labor.

- Family, individuals: - whose children are assisted engaged in labor,
- Community, Society and Culture: - Where on its practice is carried on.6,34
- Government and formal institutions: - which allows an illegal practice.

INDIVIDUALS, FAMILY

Children are innocent dependent on families and follow family's direction. Parents and families put their

children on working in bad environment instead of sending them school for raising income owing old age, bad health, drug addict, unemployment etc. No where children except the poor found in labor, so the poverty is root cause, individual and family are responsible who do not endeavor for emancipating from this trap because of their less competing, resisting and fighting spirit and courage. Often they lost opportunities for going ahead.

A conservative ideology of individualism which expresses itself through an extreme self concern, along with competition and the drive of success, it fosters an attitude of every man for himself and produces a feeling that loser of the race for success are not our responsibility. Hence both success and failure is individual matter. If one is in poverty trap he is responsible for his laziness, sluggish, shiftlessness personality traits.

Another aspect which emphasis salvation through individual effort, include an honest work. It dovetails into the economics beliefs in the individual's power to win success through his own exertion, honest frugality and hard work. If he fails, he has no one but himself to blame. Behind his failure are the human weaknesses of intemperance, idleness and other bad habits.

COMMUNITY SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Strong and live communities and societies preserve and secure their values through their resisting power of social norms and don't let practice of which morally and legally prohibited. Child labor is disapproved action and result of empathic state of society and community which s normative system losing grip cause to grow weed like child labor. Social values violation is started when it's safeguarding system become weak. A morally, legally prohibited practices carried on as a permitted action means social values and concepts has been changed so society showing no resistance and disliking. Social norms pressurize the individuals and minority to stand with society for conformity, if the social norms are strong, persons will conform the society norms otherwise no body will care.

A prohibited practice continual means society permitting it as part of culture.

GOVERNMENT

Primarily state and government is responsible for providing universal basic rights, such as education, security etc Child labor is illegal practice but it is being exhibited as approved usual practice and no Govt. agency and institution is doing anything for stopping and discontinuing it. Law clearly defines no child (below 15

years of age) can work for wages, is it not a crime, then why not it should be stopped like a crime.

Good governance means well functioning of public institutions, setting the right priorities, formation of appropriate policies and their efficient implementation for the welfare of the people and bad and poor governance means who is unable to do all these. The government role in our country is very critical particularly in setting priorities and formulating policies and strategies for achieving goals by making plan to control social ills.

Every year Govt. set a portion in Budget for poverty alleviation and education but no effect is appeared and poverty remains unchanged. No Govt. agency/institution is doing anything for the elimination of the factors responsible for child labor. In the presence of law observing institution child labor practice is carried on clearly every where instead of prohibition. Why Government fails to run campaign against child labor.

Although the 1973 constitution of Pakistan clearly states that no child under the age of 14 shall be employed in hazardous jobs, we find children less than 14 years of age working under life threatening conditions. So for no active efforts have been put in by any of our government to enforce any such law.

Data classification: In regard of No. of child in labor in Azad.Kashmir. Table 1 indicate Muzaffarabad, Kotli, Rawalakot, Sudhnoti, Mirpur, Bhimber and Bagh, are on No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, respectively. These figures are related with population, poverty level of people and opportunities of employments, where these elements are existed there more children were found in labor.

Muzaffarabad, Kotli and Rawalkot and Mirpur are big cities of Azad Kashmir., at one hand where in workshops, small hotels, shops and mobile selling work etc have enough opportunities for child employment and at other hand for Emigrants and refugees keep much attraction to settle and live here, which raising the child labor rate.

Data explanation: Besides to having the different socio economic conditions the people of Azad Kashmir are also different in keeping geographical, cultural and political conditions to the Pakistan. As compare to Pakistan child labor in Azad Kashmir is less by reasons of a better social, political, economical conditions and education level of people.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir 's total population is estimated to be around 3.4 millions out of which below 15 years are 43.5% (1509885) the total child population while 14.53% out of 43.50% are below five years of age including 2.5% are infants and 10 to under 15 years of age children are 13.91% (482816) out of total population. This

Table 1: Distribution of working children municipality/committee wise

Town./Municipality	Years Population		Below 15 years of age	Child Pop 43.5% (No. of child in Labor)
	(1998)	(2003)		
Muzaffarabad	77940	91575	39835	617
Mirpur	92219	104219	45335	475
Bhimber	15955	18570	8078	82
Kotli	31676	40000	17400	250
Rawalkot	39652	44467	19343	225
Bagh	18928	20239	8804	80
Sudhnuti	13820	15485	6736	76
Total		334555	145531	1805

age group mostly was come across working, out of which 246574 are boys and 236242 are girls. The adults population 18 years and above in AJK is 15.37%. This percentage in Rural and urban areas is 49.8 and 53.94%, respectively. The population of 65 years and above is 3.87% and 52.63% of the total population is of the working age group 15-64 years.

The collected data reveals as presented above in Tables, the following particular social characteristics of children which are in trap of labor.

- Education (illiterate, under primary and primary)
- Income (economic conditions)
- Age factor
- Work place/work nature/Working environment
- Family Size

The lack of money is root cause of all evils. Without any ambiguity poverty is curse and mother of all social diseases, one of them is child labor. Collected data indicates children are forced to work for, feeding their parents who are old, ill or addict and no other earning hand is in their families, Raising family income, absence of any of parents, as helpers, elder found no way to income other than sending them on work.

Education is the single mean to provide understanding and training for pulling out to any entangled phenomenon as the Table 1 indicates. The maximum working children 41% 794/1805 are primary and under primary like their parents and 30% are under middle. They are not tracing the way out to this problem. Because their parents were also not educated so children are deprived of it.

Azad Kashmir is a small disputed territory between Pakistan and India and no farms and industries like carpet, soccer ball are present where the child can be employed. Here the workshops, small hotels and mobile services rubbish collection work attracting the helplessness and constrained children parents for employment.

Table 2 presents 35% (632/1805) are working in workshops 26% (457/805) are engaged in mobile service work, (newspaper seller and rubbish collectors). In

Table 2: Distribution on basis of Education

Education level	No. of child	Percentage
Illiterate	397/1805	22
Primary/under	812/1805	45
Middle.	488/1805	27
Metric	108/1805	6

rubbish collection work only Afghan refugees children are engaged. The children working in small hotels and shops are 25% (450/1805). Particularly rubbish collectors are working with the parents or working for just meals of two times or 10-30 rupees per day on helping their parents in completing the task given by contractor.

Most of the children 44% (784/1805) were found working for 10 to 30 rupees daily wages plus one or two time meal and place for sleeping, (Table 3 and 5).

The most cogent reasons given by children for their working are; - to assist in household enterprises 54%, to supplement the household income 27% and because no one else is available to do household chores are 14%. The majority of working children 41% are members of households whose income range is 2501 to 4000 followed by 29% in the income group Rs.1500 to 2500, 21% in the income group Rs3500 and above and remaining 9% in the income group with less than 1500.

Age is very important factor on basis of which child labor is determined. Legally no person under 15 years can work. Collected data show with the increase in age demand for child worker is increased. Table 4 shows that highest No. 35% out of total working children were on age group of 14-15 and 32% were on 12-14 years of age even than 5% were found under 10 years of age, mostly of them were afghani and engaged in rubbish collection work with their parents. Female child demand for working is very less due to social, cultural tradition values and complication. Male and female children working in houses were not included in this study because of not easy approach but they are deduced half to total discovered (1805) working children.

Another reason for their working is their large family size, most of the children are earning to feed 5-7 family members and no else workable is existed there except them.

Collected data results and previous studies indicate that poverty is single responsible factor for which children remained deprived of education, care and nutrition etc and fall into labor. All factual data analysis points are hinting that poverty is the chief reason of child labor.

Male and female children working in houses were not included because of not easy approach in this study, but they are deduced half to total discovered working children (1805).

Turning to the chief aim of the study our social and moral obligation is to trace and search the ways out to

Table 3: Distribution on basis of income or earning.

Learner/helper No wages	288/1805	16%
Daily wages 10 to 30 rupees	784/1805	44%
Up to 1000	342/1805	18%
Up to 1500	306/1805	17%
Above 1500	90/1805	5%

Table 4: Distribution on basis of age

9---10	98/1805	5%
11-12	512/1805	8%
13-14	590/1805	2%
14-15	605/1805	5%

Table 5: Distribution on basis of work place

Workplace	No. of child	Percentage
Workshops	632/1805	35
Shops Small Hotels	445/1805	24
Mobile seller. News paper, Rubbish, Collector	452/1805	26
Welding	71/1805	4
Van/bus Conductor	54/1805	3
Others	141/1805	8

this unwanted phenomenon. The problem to the solution of the phenomena is indiscriminately implementation of the policies of the government set for achieving specific purposes, therefore constitute comprehensive plan and policies for execution and arise awareness of complications of child labor with the participation of all opinion former agents. The first foremost step required is concentration on restoring efficiency and function of the formal and informal social institutions to stop the practice of this phenomenon. Remarkably law and order observing and maintaining agencies and institutions will have played their role in this regard.

In Islam the Zakat is very strong and an ideal system of which proper and appropriate execution and distribution leave no angry and poor, it can be more improve to amelioration the living conditions of poor and particularly financial support and assistance can be fixed for hapless school going children as so they can continue their schooling. For imparting useful education and training, specially, schools and vocational institutes should be established for children in labor with residential facilities supervised and supported by government ILO and NGOs.

The private public partnership can be a key in eliminating child labor. The corporate sector organization CSO, (Citizen Sector Organization) and government joint strategy would helpful not only reducing the child labor but also eliminating poverty and other causes of child labor.

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