

Tiny Hands on Hefty Work: Determinants of Child Labor on Automobile Workshops in Sargodha. (Pakistan)

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Abstract

Throughout the entire world causes and consequences of the child labor has been elaborated theoretically and empirically as well. This theoretical and empirical analysis confesses the fact that child labor is the response of chronic household poverty. Considering this confessional analysis of entire world this study aims to determine the factors which served as push factors for children to be involved in automobile workshops in Sargodha District. 200 boys working on different automobile workshops were interviewed. The study concluded that poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and parental education are the major determinants of this social evil.

Introduction

Children are fundamental assets and the future of a nation. The society should offer them sufficient opportunities for their proper physical, mental, social, and moral growth, development and education. As childhood is the formative part of human life, children, should not therefore, be exposed to such work as is detrimental to their physical or mental growth. One out of six children in the world today is involved in child labor, doing work that is damaging to his or her mental, physical and emotional development¹. Rena, (2009) believes that it is necessary to understand that child labor not only hampers the growth of human resources but reduces child's educational attainment. Moreover, child labor has redistribution effects on the labor market. In developing world children are forced to work as their families and their own survival depends on it. Chaudary *et al.* (2002), reveals that the children's entry into the labor market is caused by a number of complex socio-economic and socio-demographic "push factors", "pull factors" and interactive factors, by taking a sample of 125 working children of Dera Ismail Khan. Their analysis illustrates that poverty is the main cause of child labor in the city but there are other factors contributing to it such as family size, schooling system and illiteracy of parents.

They showed an inverse relationship between the income level of the family and the incidence of child labor, and positive relationship between adult literacy and child schooling. Incontrovertibly speaking child labor does more than deprivation of children's education. It not only obstructs mental and physical development but stolen their childhood from them. Usually child laborers are immature and inexperienced and also completely unaware of the short and long-term risks involved in their work. Just for the sake of some short-term benefits and, with no oversight of long-term implications of their involvement in the labor market in their childhood often seize their basic rights to basic education, personal, social and emotional development. Due to long working hours the child laborers loses their normal social interaction and faces many physical and psychological dangers during their life span even death. Unfortunately, as in other developing countries, Pakistan is not free from the curse of child labor. A large segment of the labor force is engaged in informal activities and child labor is a notable feature of the Pakistan's growing informal labor market. Children are abundant in Pakistan.

¹ ILO

Therefore, child labor is a common phenomenon despite it being illegal. Child labor in Pakistan is far too multifaceted to be summarized in black and white terms, save to say that it is a huge problem, and that there is clear evidence that it is increasing. Researches confess the fact that child labor is very simple response of household chronic poverty. This confessional analysis of the issue brings one to the controversy of intersecting rights – socio-economic rights and the founding values of human dignity, equality and freedom – which reinforce one another at the point of intersection. For example, if there is a need to abolish child labor, there is a negative impact on family income in families that allow their children to be employed because of poverty; yet, at the same time, the welfare and dignity of the child is affected negatively by such employment. Moreover, The Minimum Age Convention 1921 changed the situation of child labor around the world. As a result the minimum age for admission to employment was 15 years. In case of poor educational and economic facilities this limit was 14 years (Awan et al., 2011). Child labor has now become multifaceted issue demanding multiple solutions to save the future of little angles. Child labor, primarily hazardous child labor, is a crucial issue for every state.

Government of Pakistan is also doing efforts to undertake the child labor but still there is a need to control child labor. Recently the issues of child labor and its impact have received aggrandize attention in entire world. This increased attention is definitely due to the part of fact that child labor is causing serious social, moral, economic and demographic implications for children, households, communities, societies and the world. Therefore, the elimination or reduction of child labor has been the aim of numerous fields in different parts of the world. Unfortunately no much effort has been made to measure the incidence and distribution of children engaged in hazardous activities at the national level. Current study is exploratory and aims to investigate the factors that push children towards child labor in automobile workshops of Sargodha city. The research on child labor particularly in this domain will be untapped resource of knowledge for policymakers in the field. Organization of the remaining article is as under: in section second data and methodology has been elaborated, third section discusses the results and finally the fourth section presents the conclusion and implications of the study to the policy makers to combat child labor.

Data and Methodology

This study is based on primary data. Questionnaire was developed in order to identify the factors that push child towards work. 200 children working in automobile workshops are interviewed from Sargodha city. Boys ages from 6-15 are randomly selected and interviewed at their work places.

Results and Discussion

Results of the survey investigates that most of the children working in automobile workshops in Sargodha city are 10-12 year old as it contributes 41.7 percent to overall sample. 22.3 and 36.0 are respectively for 6-9 and 13-15 years. Most of the boys start their wok at the age of eight years as it contributes 53 percent. 20 percent boys never attended the school in their life, while 63 percent boys dropped out before class five. 42.3 percent boys have an average monthly wage ranging from 500-700 rupees per month, while only 8.0 percent have wage grater than 1000 rupees per month. The majority have the family size from 5-7 members. The education level of the father's of the working boys play an important role in child labour. 61.3 percent fathers never attended school in their life.

Table 1: Characteristics of boys working in automobile workshops in Sargodha city

| Characteristics | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Age | |
| 6-9 | 22.3 |
| 10-12 | 41.7 |
| 13-15 | 36.0 |
| Age at starting work | |
| <8 | 53.2 |
| 9-10 | 20.8 |
| 11-12 | 11.9 |
| 13-15 | 14.1 |
| Education | |
| Never attended school | 20.0 |
| Dropped out before class five | 63.0 |
| Primary | 14.3 |
| Middle | 20.7 |
| Average monthly wage | |
| <500 | 32.1 |
| 500-700 | 42.3 |
| 701-1000 | 17.6 |
| >1000 | 8.0 |
| Family size | |
| 1-4 | 11.2 |
| 5-7 | 62.8 |
| >7 | 26.0 |
| Father's education | |
| Never attended school | 61.3 |
| Primary | 12.0 |
| Middle | 18.0 |
| Matric and above | 8.7 |

Table 2 describes the reasons for starting a work. Results depicts that 19.7 percent boys start work for financial help to family, 49.3 percent are working because their parents sent them to work, 23.1 percent, 6.4 percent and 7.9 percent start work due to dropped out of school, not interested in education and others, respectively.

Table 2: Reasons for starting work in automobile workshops in Sargodha city

| Reasons for starting work | Percentage |
|------------------------------|------------|
| For financial help to family | 19.7 |
| Sent by parents | 49.3 |
| Dropped out of school | 23.1 |
| Not interested in education | 6.4 |
| Others | 7.9 |

Mostly the boys are working as mechanic (39.9 percent), while 16.0 percent are denter, 12.1 percent are painter, 14.9 percent are welder, 17.0 percent are electrician and 0.1 percent are working on other sectors of automobile.

Table 2: Nature of work in automobile workshops in Sargodha city

| Nature of work | Percentage |
|----------------|------------|
| Denter | 16.0 |
| Painter | 12.1 |
| Welder | 14.9 |
| Electrician | 17.0 |
| Mechanic | 39.9 |
| Others | 0.1 |

Conclusion and Policy Options

The aim of this study is to highlight the factors that push the child towards work in the automobile workshops of Sargodha city, Pakistan. The above discussion has revealed that child labor is a universal problem, and in developing countries it poses a significant challenge for national development. The solution does not lie in a singular approach, but in one that is multidimensional and multifaceted. The study interviewed 200 boys and investigates that most of the boys start their work at the age of eight years. Moreover, 20 percent boys never attended the school in their life and mostly of them have an average monthly wage ranging from 500-700 rupees per month. The majority have the family size from 5-7 members. 49.3 percent are working because their parents sent them to work due to poverty and financial constraints. Governments must ensure primary education free and compulsory for all children. Data on child labor are scarce and inaccurate. Government should take special attention to the forgotten areas of child labor like child labor within the home, or in the family form (Awan et al., 2011). Hence, intervention at all levels of society is needed in order to alleviate problems affecting children. Such intervention includes achieving education for all children, reducing poverty, and eliminating child labor by enabling legislation, interventions and education efforts to work together to mobilize household and national resources. Together, these will accomplish much in curbing the prevalence of child labor.

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