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## **Socio-Economic Effects of Children Employment Law in Reducing Child Labor in Punjab-Pakistan**

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**Abstract:** Children do laborious work because of many reasons out of which the most important is the pressure to help the family escaping from extreme poverty. Though the children are not given adequate payment for their work and the children prove to be the dominant shareholders to family income especially in developing nations. According to Maple Croft report, Pakistan was placed at 6th position out of top 10 countries in which child labor is in its worst condition. Keeping in view that scenario the present study is aimed to identify the socio-economic effect of child employment laws in reducing child labor. The study was conducted in Sargodha District of Punjab. Multistage sampling was used for data collection. Study employed descriptive design. Study population included all the poor people living in rural areas of district Sargodha. From four randomly selected villages, thirty poor people were selected purposively from each village for the collection of data. Thus, study sample consisted of total 120 poor families whose children were doing laborious work. Structured interview schedule was developed with continuous guidance and supervision of field experts. Panel of experts determined content and face validity of the research instrument. Cronbach's alpha value was used to check reliability of instrument. Data was collected through personal interviews. Data thus collected was analyzed and different statistical techniques were applied to explain the results of the study.

**Keywords:** Child labor; Child employment laws; Child protection; Socio-economic effects

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## 1. Introduction

Child labor is a prominent issue spreading across the globe but mainly is found in the developing countries. African as well as Asian countries both cover an overwhelming majority of the total child employment. Particularly child labor is mostly practiced in rural localities. In rural areas the minimum age limits required for children to go to schools and to practice laborious activities are not noted and are not taken into account. Children, who do laborious work, do such activities because of many reasons out of which the important one is living under poverty and family pressure to help the family escaping from extreme poverty. Though the children are not given adequate payment for their work and the children prove to be the dominant shareholders to family income especially in developing nations. Different issues related to schools in rural areas also prove to be prominent factor of child labor. The issues related to schools might be either due to school being out of access of the children or lack of best quality education being provided at the schools and financial constraints restricting parents to send their children to private schooling (Boyden, Ling & Myers, 1998).

Children should not be allowed to work at the expense of education and the wishes of the child. It condemns them to the limitations of life. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that each child is protected and not used for cheap labor. It is the responsibility both parents and government to eliminate child labor from the society.

Many children are working as young as 5 years old. They work in poorly organized, working environments are unhealthy and work is of hazardous occupations and for a long time; often they do not go to school and intake unhealthy food. Wages are either too low or have no pay, and their income or assistance is often needed to survive in the family (Cartwright & Patrinos, 1998). They work mostly in the informal sector, and agriculture accounts for more children than the labor of other sector. In developing countries, at least 90 percent of economically active children work in agriculture of rural areas. In the short-term impact, the most significant economic impact of child labor at the family level is the growth in household income. The long-term result is low school attendance and poor health of children which are a major negative consequence of child labor and the potential for future generations to be expanded and solved. Child labor grows to be low-paid adults; As a result, their descendants will be forced to work for family income. Thus, poverty and child labor are transmitted from generation to generation (Forastieri, 1997).

## 2. Literature Review

The issues of child labor and young employment are closely intertwined and show that there is a need for a common policy approach to address them. The results of employment are typical for those who are unable to collect the human capital needed to earn a living, with older children and graduates of other preschool educational institutions. Indeed, today unemployed or under-employed youth are often children working at night. The link between child labor and the results of the labor market may also work in the other direction: a decline in the future labor market may reduce household involvement in human capital investments (Edmonds & Shrestha, 2012).

Children employment, that is an individual with age under 18 years, is controlled and managed by various laws developed at country, federal or territory level. Such types of laws are closely

associated with employment of children which are in school going ages, national level laws are related to children employment and age at which school is left (Galli, 2001).

Development of child labor laws is the most common approach adopted by the governments of many countries for controlling child labor. During the last decade, developing countries have focused specially on the child labor issue and have conducted many international level seminars and conventions to create awareness regarding consequences of child labor. The labor laws have then been transformed in the light of recommendations of the conventions. Currently different countries have developed many laws, which inhibit the economic activities of children having age around 12 or below and control the employment rate of children up to 17 years (Anker, Barge, Rajagopal & Joseph, 1998).

According to survey, Pakistan received 6th position out of top 10 countries in which child labor is in its worst condition. Overall 197 countries were listed and ranked keeping in view occurrence of child labor in the countries. The report further narrated that children in quickly developing countries were also exposed to child labor. The main reason for this is that poor families are very common source of child labor around the globe (Verisk Maplecroft [VM], 2014). Government of Pakistan report stated that nearly 4.4% of children lying in the age Category of 10 to 15 years are involved in laborious work. Therefore these children are active members of labor force of the country. Hence number of employed children lying in this category has increased to an alarming rate in the last few years. In 2011, the survey on labor force depicted 4.3% of the children lying in the age category of 10 to 15 years were involved in laborious work (Naeem, Shaukat & Ahmed, 2011).

138th ILO convention on the lowest Age for getting into the work was approved on 26th of June 1973 and total 161 countries had ratified. A large majority of countries included in ratification have done this subsequent to 1996. Whereas, there exists considerable distinction in this convention, three major ideas in C138 are particularly of much value. The First of which is C138 urges that countries must increase the lowest age of admission to work, which must not be at any cost less than 15 years. Those countries which are in developing phase can set the age up to 14 years subject to change it after having success in minimizing child employment. Secondly, it differentiates between light daily routine work and employment. Normal daily routine light work is organized on national level basis, but in principal it is the work that which does not contradict with child health requirements and school timings. Light daily routine work may be allowed but not under the age of 13 years. Thirdly, it clearly eliminates “family and small-scale holdings producing for consumption at local level and not frequently employing officially recruited workers” (article 5 section 3) from the recommendations of the convention. ILO Convention 182 on Bam and Immediate Action for the eradication of root causes responsible for practicing of worst forms of child employment was passed on 17th June, 1999 and till that time was ratified by 174 nations. C182 explains a child as a person having age under 18 and suggests putting boundaries on certain forms of employment until someone reaches the age of 18 years. It distinguishes between unconditional, the most severe category of child labor from which the children have to be discouraged irrespective of the circumstances, irrespective of the prevailing family and employment rate in the country and most critical hazardous child labor that national laws must clarify and explain (Grant, 2013). Pakistan started implementing the recommendations of this convention in 2001 but unfortunately has not succeeded in successful implementation of the boundaries set by the convention. Hence many cases of violating child labor laws have been reported in different parts of the country, which shows government’s failure to successful

implementation of the child labor laws. Child labor practiced domestically has not been banned yet under child employment act (Heady, 2003).

The employment of Children Act 1991 was enacted more than two decades ago, but unfortunately the implementation of this act still remains as unattained goal (Understanding Children's Work [UCW], 2014). With the widening socio-economic gap and a burgeoning young population, poor children in Pakistan are vulnerable to being employed in the expanding informal economic sector, which includes employment in homes as child domestic workers. Child labor needs to be controlled through collective as well as individual efforts at societal level. For this, there is a dire need to make people aware of the consequences of child labor (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency [Sida], 2004)

Under 18th amendment in the constitution, child labor issue has been transformed to provinces and this is not under the responsibility of federal institutions. In May 2011, apart from employment of children act 1991 of the federal government, government of Punjab has introduced some amendments in employment of children act 1991 and made it employment of children act 2011.

It was estimated that over 200 million child laborers worldwide. Out of these, 90% were supposed to be involved in the most severe forms of labor activities. Proper solution of this severe form of child labor is much needed to ensure economic and social development in the countries. In February 2002, 115 countries in the world included the worst forms of child labor in the 182 Convention. This Convention recognizes that these forms of worst child labor are crucial to be addressed for sustainable socio-economic development. On 1 February 2002, 115 countries ratified the worst forms of child labor in 182 conventions. The Convention establishes that these forms of child labor may be a threat to the well-being of the child, which may be a threat to the child's fundamental human rights. It is strictly forbidden by anyone under the age of 18 (Siddiqi & Patrinos, 1995).

It was examined that the relationship between the impact of child labor on children's health and the current state of health and future health status, and the long-term effects of short-term health related the situation is even more complicated because it helps to improve the nutritional status of poor children (Naeem, Shaukat & Ahmed, 2011).

It was analyzed that according to the theory of child labor, many of the developing countries want to support their families as a contribution to the family. Research by Save the Children Sweden has shown that many children start working on orders or at least at the request of their family members. In most cases children work for simple reasons, some are voluntary, and some are opposed to their will. Many families need to contribute to family income and help households to provide free household items. When children often value themselves as part of their family, most children say that when they will contribute at home, then their family survives ("Sparcpk", n.d).

It was suggested that economic impact of child labor has to be categorized into the laborious work occurring in small family i.e. within family, the work on macro variables like long term growth and direct investment from the foreign sources, and its impact on labor market. It was reported that 40 percent of Gujarat's children in India contributed household income from 10 to 20 percent (Important India [II], 2017)

. This contribution is often spent on the fact that the income of the parents is not enough to guarantee the survival of the family, so it takes a lot of time to work (Swaminathan, 1998). An empirical research on nonfarm child labor found that children's activities are basically not professional. It was argued that the lack of education of parents is one of the most important

factors of the high birth rate, and large families who wish to obtain income from child labor continue to pass (Anker & Melkas, 1996). It was reported that 7.6% of young girls participated in the market in market research among children and young people between 8 and 17 years old, compared to 16.8% of children. In addition to having many advantages in the promotion of small businesses, they also increase the demand that parents work with their children to earn a living (Anker, 2000).

### **3. Methodology**

The study was conducted in Sargodha District of Punjab, Pakistan. Multistage sampling was used for data collection. Study employed descriptive design. Study population included all the poor people living in rural areas of district Sargodha. From four randomly selected villages, thirty poor people were selected purposively for collection of data. Thus study sample consists of total 120 poor families whose children were doing laborious work. Structured interview schedule was developed with continuous guidance and supervision of field experts. Content and face validity of the research instrument was also determined by panel of experienced experts who suggested minor changes in the research instrument. Research instrument's reliability was also checked by using Cronbach's alpha value. Data was collected through personal interviews. Data collected was then analyzed and different statistical techniques were applied to explain the results of the study. The reliability of the research instrument was checked by using Cronbach alpha ( $r$ ). The content and face validity of the questionnaire was checked by the panel of experts. Their suggestions, proposals and recommendations were incorporated to improve the questionnaire. For qualitative data collection from the federal capital, interview guide was prepared containing important and relevant questions for collecting opinion of the higher authorities. Reliability coefficient value Cronbach alpha ( $r$ ) of questionnaire was calculated by taking sample of twenty respondents. The alpha reliability was found to be 0.763 and the questionnaire was found reliable for further data collection.

Before going for full-scale data collection the respondents were interviewed for pre-testing of the instrument through interviewing them twice by using the similar instrument with an interval of 15-days. There was observed consistency between both the results in majority of the cases.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

Present study was basically based on evaluating the effectiveness of child labor laws in rural communities since their development especially the child employment law 1991. Results drawn from the data are discussed below.

Regarding demographic characters, majority of the respondents were quiet mature while none of the respondents was educated above middle level. More than half of the respondents were illiterate and half of the fathers of children doing child labor were also laborer. Most of the mothers of children doing laborious work were unemployed as well which might be due to the traditional norms of rural societies. The astonishing observation deduced from results that majority of the children doing laborious work were lying between age categories of 13 to 15 years. This category is much lower that making children of this age category to work is definitely unacceptable and shows the incompatibility and unsuccessfulness of child labor laws in Pakistan. 80% of the children involved in laborious work were males. Awareness level of rural communities regarding child labor laws and their awareness regarding child labor is a crime was recorded the lowest which endorses the concept that child employment laws have been unsuccessful even in creating awareness among rural masses. Effectiveness of the child labor

laws on children doing laborious work remained between low to moderate level. This also depicts that child labor laws have remained ineffective in bringing positive impact on children and providing them legal protection. Creating awareness among the people especially rural masses was the most highly ranked step, which must be taken to ensure full implementation of child labor laws.

Table1: *Cross-tabulation between Father's occupation \* average age of child*

		Average age of children			Total	
		Below 13	13 to 15	16 and above		
Occupation	Farming	Count	11	12	7	30
	% within father occupation	36.7%	40.0%	23.3%	100.0%	
	% within average age of children	22.4%	20.0%	63.6%	25.0%	
	% of Total	9.2%	10.0%	5.8%	25.0%	
	Business	Count	2	3	0	5
	% within father occupation	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
	% within average age of children	4.1%	5.0%	0.0%	4.2%	
	% of Total	1.7%	2.5%	0.0%	4.2%	
	Job	Count	14	0	0	14
	% within father occupation	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
	% within average age of children	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	11.7%	
	% of Total	11.7%	0.0%	0.0%	11.7%	
	Labor	Count	22	36	3	61
	% within father occupation	36.1%	59.0%	4.9%	100.0%	
	% within average age of children	44.9%	60.0%	27.3%	50.8%	
	% of Total	18.3%	30.0%	2.5%	50.8%	
	Soldier	Count	0	0	1	1
	% within father occupation	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% within average age of children	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	0.8%	
	% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%	
Died	Count	0	9	0	9	
% within father occupation	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%		
% within average age of children	0.0%	15.0%	0.0%	7.5%		
% of Total	0.0%	7.5%	0.0%	7.5%		
Total	Count	49	60	11	120	
% within father occupation	40.8%	50.0%	9.2%	100.0%		
% of Total	40.8%	50.0%	9.2%	100%		

Table 1 provides cross tabulation between father's occupation and children's age. The data shows that the fathers of nearly 22% of the children with age below 13 years were doing farming while fathers of nearly 20.0% of the children with age between 13 to 15 years were doing farming. Similarly fathers of nearly 63.6% of the children with age above 16 years were doing farming. Fathers of nearly 4.1% of the children with age below 13 years were doing business while fathers of nearly 5.0% of the children with age between 13 to 15 years were doing business. Fathers of nearly 28.6% of the children with age below 13 years were doing some sort of job to fulfil the

financial requirements of the family while none of the fathers who were surveyed had above 13 years of children doing laborious work and were doing any type of job. Fathers of nearly 44.9% of the children with age below 13 years were themselves laborers. Fathers of nearly 60.0% of the children with age between 13 to 15 years were themselves laborers while Fathers of nearly 27.3% of the children with age 16 years and above were themselves laborers. Fathers of 15% of the children doing laborious work had died.

Almost 36.7% of the respondents doing farming were fathers of less than 13 years old children (on an average) doing laborious work. Similarly, 40.0% of the respondents doing farming were fathers of 13 to 15 years old children (on an average) doing laborious work. 40.0% of the respondents doing business were fathers of less than 13 years old children (on an average) doing laborious work. Similarly, 60.0% of the respondents doing farming were fathers of 13 to 15 years old children (on an average) doing laborious work. 100.0% of the respondents doing any type of job were fathers of less than 13 years old children (on an average) doing laborious work.

36.1% of the respondents doing labor work were fathers of less than 13 years old children (on an average) doing laborious work. Similarly, 59.0% of the respondents doing labor work were fathers of 13 to 15 years old children (on an average) doing laborious work. Only 4.9% of the respondents doing labor work were fathers of 16 years and above (on an average) children doing laborious work.

Only 23.3% of the respondents doing farming were fathers of 16 years and above (on an average) children doing laborious work. 60.0% of the respondents doing business were fathers of 13 to 15 years (on an average) old children doing laborious work. All (100.0%) of the respondents doing some sort of job were father of below 13 years old children (on an average) doing laborious work.

Out of total, 9.2% of the respondents' children were below 13 years (on an average) of age while 10.0% of the respondents' children were on an average between 13 to 15 years of age. 5.8% of the respondents' children were above 16 years of age. 1.7% of the respondents' children were below 13 years (on an average) of age while 2.5% of the respondents' children were on an average between 13 to 15 years of age. 11.7% of the respondents' children were below 13 years (on an average) of age. 18.3% of the respondents' children were below 13 years (on an average) of age while 30.0% of the respondents' children were on an average between 13 to 15 years of age. 2.5% of the respondents' children were above 16 years of age. This clearly depicts that majority of the children start employment at a small age as very small percentage of children was employed above 16 years.

Table 2: *Chi-Square*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	49.582a	10	.000
Likelihood Ratio	51.441	10	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.008	1	.929

a. 11 cells (61.1%) have expected count not more than 5. The least expected count is .09.



Table 3: *Symmetric Measures*

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.643	.000
	Cramer's V	.455	.000

Table 2 provides chi square values and Table 3 provides phi and Cramer's values. These values show significant association between the average age of the children and occupation of their father. These tables depict that average age of the child doing laborious work was highly dependent on the occupation of their father i.e. types father's occupation directly effects the average age of his children doing laborious work. It can also be deduced that if the employment of the father is adequately paid i.e. it is fulfilling the family requirements with some ease, and then he does not send his children to work in early ages.

Table 4: *Regression Results*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Est. Std. Error	F	Sig.	$\beta$	t	Sig.
1	.529	.280	.273	.557	45.790	.000			
Constant							.840	4.544	.000
Awareness							.079	6.767	.000

Table 4 shows the R value was 0.529 and value of R<sup>2</sup> was observed to be 0.280 which shows that a large unexplained variation exist in the data and majority of the data was non uniform and scattered. Therefore the model was not explaining all the variability of the response data around its mean. Similarly, the F-statistics also depicts that the regression model was statistically significant as the p value (0.000) was much lower than 0.05. Beta value depicts that working children age is dependent on the awareness regarding child labor laws. This shows that even the people with lower ages (young) are unaware of the child employment (child labor). This is much critical for countries like Pakistan in which awareness level of the people regarding concept of child employment and its possible repercussions on the life of child in future is very low. These results are in coherence with conclusions drawn by previous researcher who reported that one of the principle reasons for child labor is poverty. When a family starts going deep into poverty gradient resultantly it has been forced by the prevailing situation to send their children to work (Hunt, 2013).

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Almost all of the governmental strategies to control child labor up till now have remained unsuccessful and found off target. Rural people are unaware of even the laws covering the child labor. In addition to this child labor laws seem to be failed in giving any type of protection to the children (International Labor Organization [ILO], 1999). Majority of the fathers who were taking their children to laborious work were themselves laborers which might concludes that laborer in Pakistan are not paid sufficiently thus throwing their children in early employment or it might also be owing to unawareness of the people of Pakistan especially those living in rural areas regarding repercussions of the child labor. Poverty was observed to be a major reason for increase in child employment ratio in Pakistan (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2002).

Keeping view the conclusions of the study, it is recommended that first of all creating awareness among rural masses is much important. Government and other organizations working for child labor must ensure proper awareness campaigns not limited to urban areas but these must be spread to rural level as well by every possible mean because the nearly three fifth (60%) of child labor is practiced in rural areas that is in agriculture sector. Proper implementation of child labor laws must be ensured and awareness regarding child labor laws must also be started to make people aware of child labor laws especially the illiterate communities. Special managerial steps are required to put children in schools in spite of sending them to laborious work. Proper poverty reduction strategies from the government may be much helpful in controlling child labor in rural areas (International Labor Organization, 2000)

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