

SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF CHILD LABOR IN LAHORE DISTRICT 2014

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ABSTRACT

This paper consists of a literature survey and theoretical discussion regarding socio economic conditions of child labor in Lahore district. The major determinants of socio economic conditions of child labor are age of child, level of education, economic activities in which the child involve, employment status of child labor as self, unpaid and employed as well as reasons adopting child labor such as poverty, wish of the child etc. Fourteen places were taken as sample sites. At least one sample site was taken each town. Questionnaire method was used to collect primary data. The results of this research highlights that the groups aged 12 to 13 years and 14 to 15 years are most active groups in child labor. It is clear from the study that around 55% of the child labor is illiterate.

KEY WORDS: Socio Economic, Child Labor, Lahore, Determinants, Questionnaire method

INTRODUCTION

Lahore city is facing a major threat of child labor. Although it adds a little to the country's economy it produces a large illiterate population as well as it is unethical to push children to go at work instead of encouraging them for education. The issue of increasing Child Labor has become very important during the recent years. The child Labor (Estimated i.e. children of 5-14 years) during 1999 was around 3 million in Pakistan. Only about 23.76 million children belonging to 5-14 years were enrolled in schools at primary and middle level and 35% of the total population that was 12.67 million was without schooling aged 5-14 years (Larik, 1999). In this world, one-fifth of the population goes to bed hungry every night. Moreover two fifths of the work force engaged on family farms is able to generate employment of six months. They only earn about 10 US dollar a week. These are many conditions ideally suited to push children towards the labor market for supplementing the family income on daily wages. The proportion however, rises to more than three fifth for the working children in urban areas implying more poverty and vulnerability of urban households and children towards the harsh and exploitative working conditions.

The situation of child labor in Pakistan is also not dissimilar with this global scenario. There is the open unemployment of 6.7 percent of the work force. Those who are employed, a quarter find employment income only able to meet ;half of their subsistence requirements, while another quarter barely manage to meet the subsistence requirements from their employment income. One fifth of the population is living in poverty. Such conditions are foreign to the ideals of child education and human development. In fact poverty forces a child to become active inter labor market to supplement family income. The contribution of working child in house hold monthly income can be as high as more than a third. In case to Pakistan, more than a quarter of

the children found working is doing so to supplement the family income and this proportion is relatively higher for boys. Pakistan has a labor intensive technological base with approach favoring this trend. The high growth rate of population and ever increasing cheap child labor with the rush of auto technologies reduces the labor absorption. Labor Market in Pakistan, therefore, would mean a good supply of physical as well as intellectual cheap labor by so called official adult work force (age between 10-64 years of age) and unofficial (not defined as working population in the official surveys and documents) child work force and a low demand for this uneducated, unskilled and less productive labor by the producers of different goods and services in the country in order to determine different levels of wages most of the time in favor of the laborers. Because of the excessive labor supplies, the labors market is presently confronted with the twin menace of unemployment and underemployment. First, the high rate of unemployment has assumed serious proportions; second and severe is the worrying aspect of this unemployment amongst the youth is educated & trained labor.

METHODOLOGY

The Lahore district was taken as study area. Lahore district is divided into nine divisions and one cantonment area. Minimum one sample area was selected from each division with different status and nature of work of children in areas of different socio economic status according to the needs and requirements of the study. Following sample areas were selected for collection of primary data.

- Bilal Gunj
- Baghbanpura
- Data Darbar
- Karim Park
- Lytton Road
- New campus
- Railway Station
- Shah Alam Market
- Sadar Bazar
- Township
- Taj Bagh
- Model Town
- Nishter Colony
- Daroghawala

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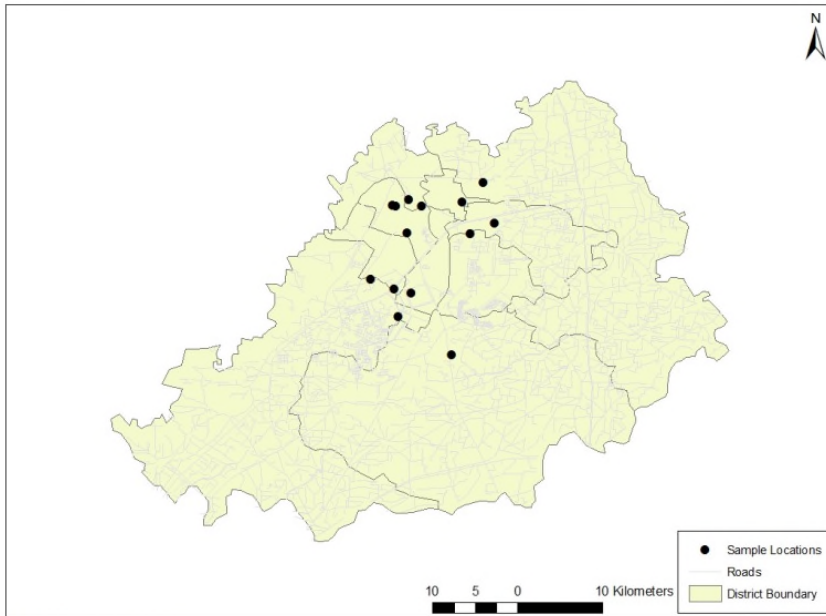


Figure 1 Sample Locations

Younes (2014)

The study has been conducted using all possible methods of data collection. Primary as well as secondary data were collected. However more efforts were done to collect primary data as a major data source. A comprehensive questionnaire was prepared. The questions related to behavior were largely open ended so that the children have an open choice to express themselves. However in order to keep the survey in manageable limits, the questionnaire was consisted on both open ended as well as close ended questions. Open ended questions were related to general information regarding place, name and address etc. Close ended questions were related to age, education, working hour, income and facilities. The measurement scales were made to perform statistical analysis. Questionnaires were completed through a child to child interview by interviewee. Each sample area contains a fix quantity of minimum 50 questionnaires to have a good comprehension of the problem during the selection of sample area. The variability in economic status of residents of different areas of the city were kept in view. The age limit for the child labor survey was selected as children below 15 years and up to 15 years. However priority was given to the children between 5-14 years of age as per standards set by International Labor Organization. Both linear and cluster sampling techniques were used. The efforts were made to get 100% answers of questions. Secondary data were collected from report published by Special Education and Social Welfare Division, Government of Pakistan and NGO such as Child Care Foundation.

RESULTS

The data collected from the field were analyzed. Table No 1 shows that most of the target population was belonging to a group aged 12 to 13 years and 14 to 15 years.

Table 1. Age Wise Distribution of Child Labor

Locations	Below 8 Years	8 to 9 Years	10 to 11 Years	12 to 13 Years	14 to 15 Years
Bilal Gunj	0	4	13	18	15
Baghbanpura	1	1	7	14	27
Data Darbar	0	2	4	10	34
Karim Park	1	3	11	21	14
Lytton Road	0	2	6	17	25
New Campus	1	1	3	13	32
Railway Station	0	2	5	16	27
Ahah Alam Market	0	3	8	23	16
Sadar Bazar	0	0	8	14	28
Township	0	0	4	27	19
Taj Bagh	0	1	3	10	36
Model Town	0	0	4	18	28
Nishter Colony	0	0	4	15	31
Daroghawala	0	0	14	20	16

Source: Field Work

Table 2. Qualification of Child Labor

Age	Illiterate	Below Primary	Primary	Middle	Matric
Below 8	3	0	0	0	0
8 to 9	15	4	0	0	0
10 to 11	55	35	4	0	0
12 to 13	195	33	6	1	1
14 to 15	107	123	96	19	3

Source: Field Work

Table No 2 shows that most of the children below 8 years are illiterate. Fifteen out of fifty children that belong to 8 to 9 years were illiterate and only four were below primary level of education. Fifty five children belonging to 10 to 11 years were illiterate and 35 were below primary education level. Only four had completed their education till primary level. Maximum child labor was belonging to group 12 to 13 years aged. 195 children were illiterate, 33 were below primary, 6 were primary and 1 and 1 were middle and matric respectively. All these results have been shown below in Figure No 2.

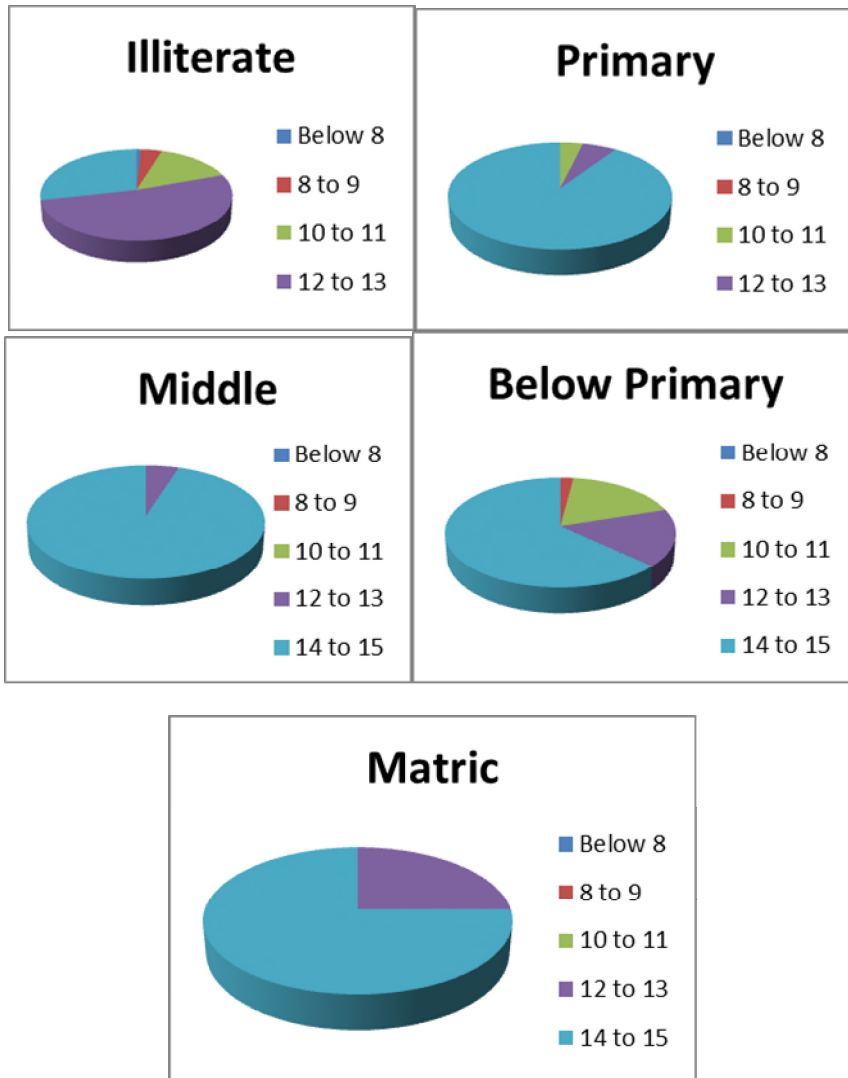


Figure 2: Qualification Level of Child Labor

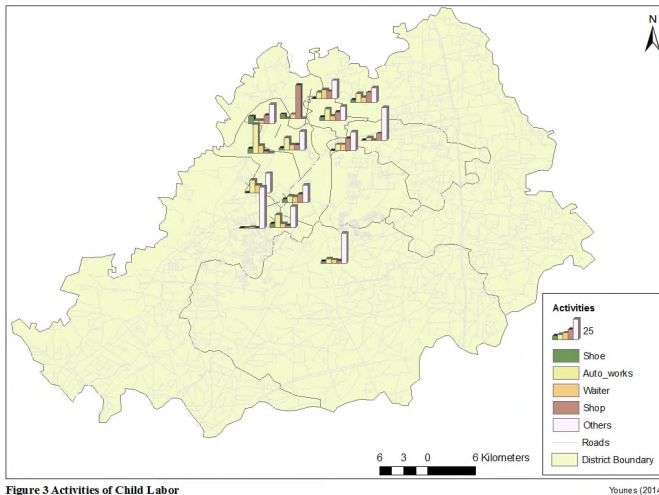


Figure No 3 highlights the activities in which child labor is involved. Most of the child labor is involved in activities other than working at shops, working at tea stalls as waiters, working at auto workshops or making spare parts and working as shoe polisher as well as shoe making. Most of the child labor at Shah Alam Market is busy in working at shops as helpers. At Data Darbar most of the child labor is busy in making spare parts of auto mobiles.

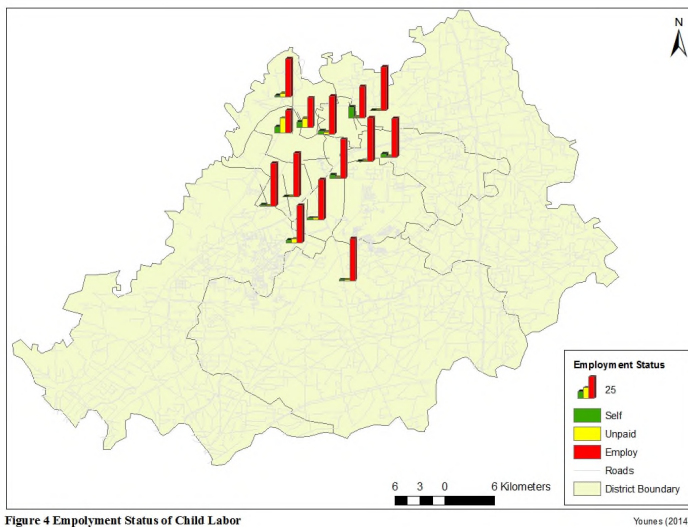
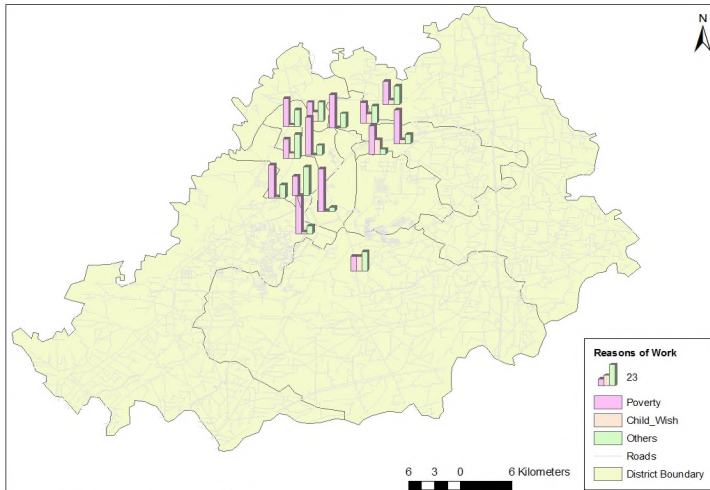


Figure No 4 shows the employment status of child labor. Most of the child labor is employed in the city. There were a few places where child labor was unpaid. It was due to their learning phase at their work place. Figure No 5 shows the main reasons of child

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labor being at work. Three categories were selected such as poverty, wish of the child himself to work and other reasons. The results show that poverty was the major reason that pushes children at work. Social pressure does not allow them to study in schools. There were a few children at Sadar Bazar and Nishter Colony who opted child labor according to their wish.



CONCLUSION

This study is an attempt to describe the socio economic conditions of child labor in Lahore to highlight the different causes of child labor, their activities, employment status and their qualification level. The results of this study shows that groups aged 12 to 13 years and 14 to 15 years are most active groups in child labor. It is clear from the study that around 55% of the child labor is illiterate. It is evident that children are compelled to share the economic burden of their families. The problem of child labor cannot be addressed without the interest of policy makers of the country. Increasing earning opportunities and employment for adult members of the family can help in reducing this problem.

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