

Effect of Child Labour on the Relationship of Child Labourers and Their Parents

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Abstract: *Child labour is a global phenomenon which has been exploiting the future of the children and their countries. A nation can only be prosperous if its residents are healthy and happy. Child labour acts as a hindrance in the growth and development of a child. It also has direct and indirect impact on the relationship of child labourers with their parents and siblings. The parents have different expectations from the children and children have totally different expectation from their parents. This is a clash of their interest. In this study the relationship of the child labourer with their family is studied. The area of research is Hoshiarpur district of Punjab state. The child labourers were randomly selected among slums, rural area, semi urban and urban areas of Hoshiarpur. From this study it is concluded that the child labourers are often neglected and remain devoid of all the basic amenities and it makes the unhealthy relationship with their parents and siblings.*

Keywords: *Child labour, Expectation from family, Anti social activities, Girl child labour, Family size, Share of income, livelihood*

1. INTRODUCTION:

A healthy mind lives in a healthy body, in the same way a healthy mind creates a healthy society. The role of a family in the society as well as for the family members is very important. There are many reasons of child labour; poverty, death of parents, large family size, work opportunities and lack of interest in education are some of those. International Labour Organization describes child labour is a work which prevents the children from their normal upbringing i.e. which interferes with the normal mental and physical growth of the child. It has adverse consequences on the moral, social, physical and mental health of a child. It is also an obstacle in the education of children. Some children leave their schools prematurely, some are capable to make a balance with study and work and some are incapable to join any school. The forms of child labour vary from light tasks like domestic work to heavy or dangerous ones like mining etcetera. In this research the relationship of child labourers with their family members is studied and the area of study is Hoshiarpur District of Punjab state. The respondents were interviewed about their relationship with the family members and their expectations from family members. The respondents had plenty of expectations from their families like fulfilling of the basic needs like food, clothes, and shoes to extraordinary demands like mobile phones. Many a respondent were emotional and they needed moral support, respect and attention from their family members.

2. OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this research is to study the depth of behavioural patterns of relationship between child labourers and their family members and how does the child labour affects their relationship. To know what are the expectations of child labourers from their family members.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The unitary household model given by (1) (Sakamoto, 2006) shows that elements like income inequality, household income, credit constraints, ownership of assets, a child's innate ability and future transfers from children to parents decide the child labour. The balance of bargaining power among the parents of the child also affects the decision of child labour. The Logit or Probit model suggested that parent's educational qualification, education cost, sex and age of child, religion, availability of school, employment level and income of parents affect the child labour. (2) (Nielsen & Dubey, 2002) calculated the multinomial logit model with the help of data of National Sample Survey Organization showed that in rural India there was a negative relationship between parental years of schooling, household income and child labour. This study was done to find the factors other than poverty which lead a child to child labour and focus of the study was on the attitude of the parents regarding their children. Among those differences in parents attitude and preferences was one of the main reasons. As parents know the harmful effects on the physical and mental health even then they force their children to child labour. There can be only four activities of children that is neither working nor attending the school, attending the school, working, both working and attending the school. The issue of domestic work done by children was also taken into account and this includes babysitting, collecting firewood, drawing water,

sweeping, washing and cooking. It was seen in the study that the oldest child in the family suffers a lot. A daughter is always a substitute for a busy mother. It was also observed that if there is no trend of sending children to school in a locality then it affects the decision of surrounding people also. The term for this attitude is called Tola or Bustee characteristic. If a school is available in a village then the probability of sending children to the school increases. It was also observed that if the father of a child has completed secondary school education then he is less interested to send their children to work. The working status of a mother had no impact on going and not going to school of their children. But on the other hand if the father is working then there is less chance of working of his children. It was found that the scheduled cast children had more tendencies to work than the other upper cast children. If a mother is working then the chances of a girl child labour is more. Ultimately the major reason of the child labour was parent's lack of concern for their children, household poverty and the lack of proportion between the parents. (3) (Francesca & Gianna, 2007) assumed in their study that extended time of a mother is the time of her children. The mother has the decisive power to assign the same. It was noticed that if a mother is present at home the future and growth of her child is good and the chances of child labour get lesser and chances of education become more. This was in those cases where the income of father of a child was large and the families where the employment of father is not good then the chances of working of the mother and the children become higher. The rights of women and children have got more importance at international level. Mothers have very positive impact on children. If a mother is well educated then there are very less chances of getting her children employed in economic activities. The life expectancy and health is also good when the mother is literate. In urban areas women have multiple choice of labour whereas in rural areas most of the women work in agricultural fields or self employed. It was also observed that right to education of children also had a relation with child labour. If the schools were not approachable or of not good quality and if the parents feel that education is not worth even then the child remain devoid of getting educated. Even if the children worked for part time it affected their education badly and in later stage they become drop outs (4) (Guarcello, Lyon and Rosati, 2006; Heady, 2000) . It was also found in a research (5) (Biggeri et al., 2003) that the children who are not totally occupied in household chores may not be going to the work or school because of their poor health or in the absence of availability of job. It was also found that the females had lesser probability to study than the males. This element could be observed more in rural areas of India. The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes had the more probability of sending their children to work. Religion wise too, there is more tendency in Christians and Muslims to send their children to work. The families which had small piece of land had more chances of child labour. But the worst kind of child labour was seen in urban areas of India. (6) (Anokhi & Elisabeth, 2005) suggested that the child labour depends upon the occupation of the parents. It also examined schooling and child labour responses to the opportunities to the work. It was seen that if some condition of household, regional, parental and child characteristics are controlled then the children of employers and self employed parents become more prone to do child labour. The children who were from low average adult employment rate had more tendency to not to indulge in child labour than the children who were from high average adult employment rate. The time of children is usually used among leisure, work and school. The education of the parents, their income and their tendency to choose the activities decides the time allocation. This study has two theoretical axioms. It was observed that the rate of getting employed for 14-16 years children increased when the condition of labour market improved. In Pakistan, it was observed that children from small land owners work lesser than the children from larger land owning families and it was concluded that wealth was not the factor of decreasing the child labour. The opportunity to work was more important factor of child labour than the poverty. (7) (Stephen & Claire, 2010) studied the effect of occupation of the father on the labour of mother and children. It was observed that the child labour increases when there is need of short time treatment for father's illness. When the father had serious health problems then the probability of working of mother increased. (8) (Devi & Gautam, 2008) studied child labour and its factors in the urban and rural areas of Pondicherry, India. The result showed that low income was the main cause of child labour and most of the children admitted to the hospitals due to the ill health and complained about ill treatment at the workplace for slow work.

4. METHODOLOGY:

This is a qualitative research in which the detailed interview of respondents was taken. Random sampling was used in different areas and different age group of child labourers falling between 6-13 years of age.

5. RESEARCH AREA AND ANALYSIS:

The research area of the study was District Hoshiarpur of Punjab State, India. It covered slum, rural, semi urban and urban areas of the District. The relationship of the child labourers with their parents was studied and understood on the broad parameter that is expectations of the child labourers from their family members and the views of their family members for the child labourers.

In this research of 226 respondents 7.96% respondents were direly in need of moral support and attention from their parents. Their existence was badly ignored. 8.40% respondents reported that there was no admiration and respect for their work and help in their families. They wanted their families to behave in a good manner with them. Usually the child labourers do not even get a proper two meals a day and wear filthy dresses and torn footwear. They would give

their income to their families but at the same time they expect their parents to provide them good food and dresses. 19.91% of the respondents reported the proper food and dresses as a basic demand from their parents. Usually the child labourers did not get time for their recreation their childhood remain devoid of fun activities. 7.52% respondents expected from their parents to let them play for few ours besides their busy routine.

Respondent Response	Frequency (N=226)	Percentage
Support In Education	25	11.06
Admiration, Attention, More Affection, More Support	18	7.96
Better Clothes, Shoes And Better Food	45	19.91
Let Them Change The Job, Leave The Job, Open Him A New Business	9	3.98
Break From Work , Free Time, Play Time	17	7.52
Mobile Phone, Motor Cycle	16	7.07
Not Sure	4	1.76
Good Behavior, Respect	19	8.40
Less Interference, More Independence	14	6.19
Money To Spend, Pocket Money	59	26.10

Table: 1 (Expectations of the child labourers from their family)

Child labourers become mature earlier than their age because of their work experience and take themselves as important as a mature family member so they expect their parents to give them more freedom to take their decision in the daily life and instruct them less. 6.19% respondents wanted their parents to interfere less in their life and to give them more freedom in taking decisions about their job and daily routine. 3.98% respondents were not interested in their present job and wanted to change the profession but they were not allowed to change their jobs because of their parents. The influence of technology could also be seen on the child labourers as a few of them were having mobile phones and many of them wanted their parents to provide mobile phones and motorbikes (7.07% respondents). As they also take these as a status symbol. 11.06% of the respondents wanted to pursue their studies and aspired to become a successful person in their life so the first thing they expected from their family was to let them leave the job and study further. The major portion of the respondents that is 26.10% of them wanted their parents to increase the share of the income generated by the child labourers so that they would spend some of their income to be used on their own. They were interested to go to the cinemas, amusement parks, eat at hotels etcetera. In the end four 1.76% of the respondents were not sure about their expectations from their families.

Overall it was observed that child labourers do not get adequate amount of food and it leads to the poor health. Most of the children expected from their families to give them proper food and also share of the income they earn by doing child labour. They wear torn and dirty clothes which give them inferiority complex. They have many demands but when they are not fulfilled they become frustrated. They do not get proper attention from their parents moreover they are ignored very badly from home as well as society. It was seen that they do not get enough time to play and educate themselves. Their siblings and parents remain busy in earning their livelihood. In this course most of them do not communicate well with each other. They hide their feelings, their peer and friends become their guide in their life. This leads them to astray and they indulge in smoking, drugs and other antisocial activities. It again enlarges the rift between them and their family members. Mostly the child labourers are treated as adults in their family. They perform most of their responsibilities as an adult does. In the family they have physical and verbal fights. The issue of money and survival also remain prominent. This condition is worse in the family who do not have parents or either of them is not alive. They become mature earlier than their age. If they are dependent upon their relatives they are more exploited. Their childhood remains buried throughout and they remain burdened with lots of responsibilities. The situation of female child labourer is worse than the male child labourers as they have to perform labour outside the home as well as inside. They get married earlier in their life and again cycle of child labour starts with the next generation. Most of the child labourers and their parents are illiterate and know very less about the family planning they usually have a huge number of children which they cannot feed properly so they force them into the menace of child labour.

6. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS:

Despite the type of work children perform they have somewhat similar feelings towards their parents. They think that their parents have done injustice with their lives by pushing them into labour. Parents are so busy in money making that they do not provide the required attention to their children. Hence the communication between the children and their parents is mostly related to money only and they neglect their children's mental and physical health. In such situations the friends of the child labourer have more influence on them and they share a healthy relationship. Most of the respondents told that their peers were their best friends. The children had to work in poor health also. They thought

their parents were cruel. Three times meal in a day is a luxury for them. They do not even get adequate amount of food twice a day. They wore torn and dirty clothes. In winters, they have to walk barefoot too. Proper dresses and footwear are like dream for them. The children who used to collect scrap from houses were more creative. They would select some items to make something worth for them. For example they picked broken toys for playing and waste accessories like some ornaments, belts and purses which gave so much pleasure to them. At the same time the level of frustration was very high among them. They had desire to earn more money and achieve all comforts in their lives. Some wanted to get proper education so as to get a government job. The teenage workers had the common desire to get more share of their earnings as their parents would give them minimal or no share from their earnings. Some of them wanted to live independently. The respondents felt that their parents had unnecessary interference in their lives and they were scolded and beaten up for the least important things. As a result they hated their parents. In this way the child labourer and their family members have unhealthy relationships. They take each other as a burden. They have fights over money and other things very often. The siblings of the child labourer had similar feeling for their parents. Some of the respondents told that they use alcohol when they have fight with their family members. The cases of beating the children were higher for the girl child labourers than the boys. In this way it can be concluded that no child labourer has a healthy relationship with their family members and this unhealthy relationship become a cause of stress, fights and antisocial activities.

7. CONCLUSION and SUGGESIONS:

Here it is understood that the child labourers have very much frustration in themselves because of the ignorance of their basic needs by their parents. This frustration leads them to alcohol consumption. The findings also show that there is a conflict between the child labourers and their families. The parents always demand money from them and child labourers are not allowed to use the money they earn. They are not even provided proper two time meals a day. They wear improper, dirty and torn clothes and shoes. They are not able to attend the schools. They often have physical and verbal fights with their family members. Not even a single case was found who was happy with their family members and had unhealthy relationship. There should be a provision of free counselling to the child labourers and their parents so that they may be able to relieve their frustration and bonding between the child labourers and their family members may become stronger.

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