ANALYSIS OF INVISIBLE CHILD LABOUR IN HAYATABAD, PESHAWAR

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Abstract: This study was undertaken in Hayatabad Town, Peshawar. The study investigates socio-economic factors affecting invisible child labour. The study was based on a sample of 95 households and the data were collected in July 2006. The study found that although the wages of working children were small but they contributed significantly to their households' income. More than half of the working children were not satisfied with their present job and their employers and more than half of working children reported that their employers were harsh with them. The regression results showed that household income, landholdings and parents' education were significant determinants of invisible child labour in the study area.

Key words: Invisible child labour, poverty, Hayatabad, Pakistan

1. Introduction

"Child labor" is, generally speaking, work for children that harms them or exploits them in some way (physically, mentally, morally, or by blocking access to education). There, however, is no universally accepted definition of "child labor". Varying definitions of the term are used by international organizations, non-governmental organizations, trade unions and other interest groups. Writers and speakers don't always specify what definition they are using, and that often leads to confusion (Khan, 2007).

Not all work is bad for children. Some social scientists point out that some kinds of work may be completely unobjectionable — except for one thing about the work that makes it exploitative. For instance, a child who delivers newspapers before school might actually benefit from learning how to work, gaining responsibility, and earn a bit of money. But what if the child is not paid? Then he or she is being exploited. As Unicef's 1997 State of the World's Children Report puts it, "Children's work needs to be seen as happening along a continuum, with destructive or exploitative work at one end and beneficial work - promoting or enhancing children's development without interfering with their schooling, recreation and rest - at the other. And between these two poles are vast areas of work that need not negatively affect a child's development." Other social scientists have slightly different ways of drawing the line between acceptable and unacceptable work.

International conventions also define "child labor" as activities such as soldiering and prostitution. Not everyone agrees with this definition. Some child workers themselves think that illegal work (such as prostitution) should not be considered in the definition of "child labor." The reason: These child workers would like to be respected for their legal work, because they feel they have no other choice but to work

Though restrictions on child labor[1] exist in most nations, many children do work. This vulnerable state leaves them prone to exploitation. The International Labour Office reports that children work the longest hours and are the worst paid of all laborers (Bequele and Boyden 1988). They endure work conditions, which include health hazards and potential abuse. Employers capitalize on the docility of the children recognizing that these laborers cannot legally form unions to change their conditions. Such manipulation stifles the development of youths. Their working conditions do not provide the stimulation for proper physical and mental development. Finally, these children are deprived of the simple joys of childhood, relegated instead to a life of drudgery. However, there are problems with the obvious solution of abolishing child labor. First, there is no international agreement defining child labor. Countries not only have different minimum age work restrictions, but also have varying regulations based on the type of labor. This makes the limits of child labor very ambiguous. Most would agree that a six year old is too young to work, but whether the same can be said about a twelve year old is debatable. Until there is global agreement, which can isolate cases of child labor, it will be very hard to abolish. There is also the view that work can help a child in terms of socialization, in building self-esteem and for training. The problem is, then, not child labor itself, but the conditions under which it operates (Ashraf, 1994).

The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimated that there were around 250 million children working all over the world. At least 120 million children aged between 5 and 15 were working full time. One third of them were performing dangerous work (ILO/IPEC, 1998). The informal sector in a number of developing countries in general and in Pakistan in particular accounts for a large share of the economic activities of the country. Children, thus, participate fully in every activity of the informal sector, like workshops, small scale industries, leather work, carpet weaving centres, hotels, brick kilns etc. In addition, a substantial number are self employed, hawking cheap goods, shining shoes or collecting waste materials (Tunio, 1992). Like other developing countries, children in Pakistan are working in various sectors which include children working in rural economy, informal economy, export economy, etc. One of the most important categories of child labour is invisible child labour. Invisible child workers are those who are virtually invisible to outsiders, as they work in the privacy of people's homes. Most of these workers are girls. Children working inside people's houses now receive far more attention than before, although there is still no accurate estimate of the number of child domestic workers worldwide (Himayatullah, 2005). Although much research work[2] has been done on other aspects of child labour, no study has been conducted on this issue of child labour in Pakistan. This study, therefore, will be concluded on invisible child workers. The present study would constitute as a pioneering work in this regard. The phenomenon of child labor, not only

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[1] Invisible child workers are those who are virtually invisible to outsiders, as they work in the privacy of people's homes. See Khan, Himayatullah (2007) for further details.
[2] See for example, Barker and Knaul (1991); Collins (1983); Shah (1997); Syed and Mirza (1991); Zain-ul-Abadeen (2001) and Himayatullah (2005).

closes the future of millions of children in the third world countries but it also restricts the development prospects of these countries drastically. The existence of child labor is a threat to the overall development, solidarity and peace in the world. Eradication of labor from the world is, therefore, a goal that must be achieved at the earliest.

The main objectives of the study are to examine the socio-economic background of the households with invisible child labor, to analyze the factors determining invisible child labour in the study area, to investigate the economic contribution of child labor in their families' income, and to suggest policy recommendations for reducing child labor.

2. Methodology and Data

2.1 Area of the Study

Hayatabad constitutes the area of this study. Hayatabad is relatively a modern sub-urban area of Peshawar where the invisible child labour is prevailing in most of the houses.

2.2 Sampling Method and Sample Size

There are seven Phases in Hayatabad but due to lack of time and financial resource, Phase II and Phase VI were purposively selected. It was assumed that in Phase II most households were relatively richer than those in Phase VI. Thus, these two phases were selected to compare the prevalence of invisible child labour. Before collection of data, an informal survey was conducted in June 2006 to find out households with invisible child labour in the two phases. According to informal survey the total number of households with invisible child labour was 950 in the two phases. Then a sample of 10% was selected from the population to analyze the issue of invisible child labour. The distribution of sample households in the study area is given in table 1.

The respondents were selected by simple random sampling using a lottery method from a list of households having invisible child workers.

Table 1. Total and Sample Households in the Study Area

Phase	Total Households Having Invisible Child Workers	Sample Households
Phase II	500	50
Phase VI	450	45
All	950	95

Source: Survey

The data were collected with the help of a pre-tested interview schedule. Based on a feedback from pre-testing, the interview schedule was revised and finalized. The final version of the interview schedule was used for data collection. The data were collected in the first week of July 2006.

2.3. Data Analysis

After conducting survey for data collection, the data were analyzed with the help of a computer by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In order to analyze the determinants of child labour the following econometric model was estimated.

2.4 . Model

In order to examine what factors affect/determine invisible child labor, an econometric model was used which is given as follows:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_i \sum_{i=1}^{k} X_i + \theta D_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Where the dependent variable Y_i, shows number of children working in the respondent's household. β_o is the vertical intercept in the regression equation whereas β_1 and θ_i are coefficients of independent variable. X_i are (quantitative) explanatory variable like, family income, household size, operated land and D_i is a dummy variable representing father's education and ε_i is the stochastic error term.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the study showed that maximum (31 percent) of the sample respondents belonged to households with an average size of 8-10 members. As many as 27% and 32% of the sample respondents were from households with 5-8 and 10-12 members, respectively. On the whole 58% of the sample respondents were from households of size 8 and above.

One would also hypothesize that larger households may have more members who earn many but in our case the large households had more dependents and they sent children to work and earn money.

The data showed that a large member (50%) of the households had no land and were categorized as landless. Among all, 37% of the sample households operated farm area up to 10 canals. Only a small proportion (13%) of the households operated land of 10 and above canals. This implies that majority of households were poor because income and landholdings are positively correlated. This claim is supported by our findings as 87% of working children were from households with either no land or with land of up to 10 canals.

Income of the households may have bearing upon child labour and it can be hypothesized that the higher the household income, the lower the prevalence of child labour. Household income may be one of the important determinants.

The data show that majority (82%) of the working children belonged to households with monthly income of up to Rs.3,500. Only a small proportion (6%) of households had monthly income of Rs.4,500 and above. This was followed by 12% which had monthly income in the range of Rs.3,500-4,500. The data show an inverse relationship between household incomes and prevalence of child labour.

Father literacy status may be also an important factor determining child labour. It was hypothesized that invisible child labour was negatively correlated with literacy status of household's head. The findings of the present study confirm this hypothesis. Majority (74%) of the working children had illiterate fathers. Only 26% of the working children had literate parents.

Table 2. Literacy Statuses of Children's Parents

Literacy Status	Number	Percent
Literate	25	26
Illiterate	70	74
All	95	100

Source: Survey

Like land area, family income, and literacy status, father's occupation is also related to child labour. About 21% of the working children fathers were either employed in public sector or self employed (shopkeepers). As many as 26% of the children's fathers were jobless but looking for work, 13% jobless who did not want to work and 16% were farmers (Table 3).

Table 3. Distributions of Working Children by Father's Occupation

Occupation	Number	Percent
Employed in Govt. Sector	10	10.5
Landless Laborer	23	24
Farmer	15	16
Jobless but looking for work	25	26
Jobless Doesn't want to work	12	13
Other (Shopkeeper etc)	10	10.5
All	95	100

Source: Survey

3.1. Invisible Child Worker, Household's Income and Literacy Status of Fathers of Working Children

Analysis of child labour was also performed simultaneously by parent's income and their literacy status (Table 4). The data show that in all income groups, illiterate fathers had more working children which means that more and working children had illiterate fathers. Looking from another angle it is evident that as income of households increases the number of working children decreases. Thus, Table 4.6 points out two phenomena simultaneously (i) child labour was more prevalent in households where fathers were illiterate, and (ii) household income had an inverse relationship with the number of working children. These are important findings and pose threats to policy makers and planners.

Table 4. Prevalence of Child Labour by Parent's Income and Literacy Status

Income Group	Literate	Illiterate	All
≤ 1,500	8	19	27
1,500 – 2,500	8	21	29
2,500 – 3,500	7	14	21
3,500 – 4,500	4	8	12
4,500 & above	2	4	6
All	29	66	95

Source: Survey

3.2. Working Children and their Socio-Economic Conditions

This section analyses the invisible child labour with respect to age, education, working conditions, earnings, spending, employers' behavior, satisfaction from job and difficulties faced during job.

3.3. Literacy Status of Sample Respondents

Literacy is an important factor playing a major role in decision-making. The working children were asked about their literacy status. It is evident that amongst all more than half (58%) were illiterate compared to those who were literate (42%). This can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Sample Respondents Distinguished by Literacy Status

Phase\Literacy Status	LITERATE	Illiterate	All
Phase II	21 (42)	29 (58)	50 (100)
Phase VI	19 (42.2)	26 (57.8)	45 (100)
All	40 (42)	55 (58)	95 (100)

Source: Survey   Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

3.4. Education Level of Working Children

Working children who were literate were also classified based on their level of education. Table 7 shows that out of all, 58% were illiterate. About one-third (30.5%) and 12% of the working children had education level of up to primary and middle, respectively. None of the working children was matriculate.

Table 7. Sample Respondents Classified on the Basis of Level of Education

Phase\Literacy Status	Education Level				
	Illiterate	Primary	Middle	Matric	All
Phase II	29	15	6	-	50
Phase VI	26	14	5		45
All	55	29	11	-	95
PERCENT	58	30.5	11.5	-	100

Source: Survey

3.5. Why Working Children did not/don't Go to School?

As mentioned earlier, majority (58%) were illiterate and only 42% were literate. Majority of the literate children (73%) percent were educated only up to primary level. This can be caused by many factors. The working children, when asked what their main hurdle in getting education was, reported a number of reasons for not going to school. About half (54%) of them considered their families' poor economic conditions as the biggest cause of discontinuation of their education. One-fifth (20%) of them stated that they left school because of their poor academic performance. This in turn may be due to the reason that they did not have proper facilities for getting education including non-availability of books, uniform and coaching by either parents or tutors. This resulted in their poor performance in education. Similarly 20% of the sample respondents thought fear of teacher as a causing factor of leaving school. They stated that they were being beaten by their teachers which may be due to their poor performance in school. All factors compelling children to discontinue education may be attributed to lack of affordability by their parents as they were financially poor.

3.6. Monetary Reward for Child Labour

As mentioned earlier child labour was exploited, their weekly earnings were as low as given in Table 8. The maximum weekly earnings amounted to above Rs.200-300. This was reported only by 10% of the working children. The minimum weekly earnings were up to Rs.50 as reported by 29% of the respondents. Majority of them (61%) were earning in the range of Rs.50-200 on weekly basis. This implies that the weekly earnings by working children were very low.

Table 8. Classification of Working Children by Amount of Weekly Earning

Weekly Earning (Rupees)	Number	Percent
Up to 50	28	29.5
50 -100	24	25.3
100 – 150	21	22.1
150 –200	12	12.6
200 – 300	10	10.5
All	95	100

Source: Survey

3.7. Working Relations Between Employers and the Child Labour

Working relations between employees and the employer assume an important role. Bad working relations between labour and employers result in unrest and disputes. Child labour is no exception in this regard. This was also observed and confirmed by our data. A very small proportion (5%) reported that their employer's behavior was very good. Some 16% termed their behaviors as good. A vast majority (79%) of the working children stated that the employers' behavior was not good at all and that they were ill-treated by their employers. The negative and harsh dealing of the employers may have negative impact upon children's mind and future career.

3.8. Sample Respondents Comparing Work with Going to School

Although working children were out of school and were working for negligible sum of money in reward for their long working hours, they intended to go to school provided they were allowed to do so and given chance. More than half (53%) of the respondents preferred going to school rather them to work labour. They reported that they were unable to go to school because of many reasons but they would like to go to school if they were provided the opportunity. This implies that children were not satisfied with their job, wages and employers. Only 26 respondents (27%) showed preference to work rather then going to school. Similarly, 20% were not sure and did not know about their preference (Table 9).

Table 9. Sample Respondents Comparing Work With Going to School

If allowed would you go to School or prefer to work	Number	Percent
Prefer to go to School	50	53
Prefer to work	26	27
Don't know	19	20
All	95	100

Source: Survey

4. Estimated Econometric Model

General descriptive analyses of invisible child workers in relation to the sample households and the socio-economic conditions of the working children were performed using one-way classification as well as cross tabulation preceding sections. In order to test such hypotheses, an econometric model was also estimated where the number of working children in each households was treated as dependent variable regressed on household's income, household's size, farm area operated by household, father's education/literacy status, etc. The estimated regression model is as given in Table 10.

Table 10. Estimated Regression Equation of the Determinants of Invisible Child Workers

VARIABLE	Coefficient	t-statistics
Constant	4.15	6.42***
Household Size	-0.081	1.35
Household Income	-0.37	2.31**
Household Land Area	-0.19	2.65***
Literacy Status Dummy	-2.34	-3.31***
Phase Dummy	0.95	0.56
R^2 = 0.53		
F= 25.4		

Notes: (1)   Figures in parentheses are t ratios.
        (2)   ** and *** show significance at 5% and 1%, respectively.

The estimated regression model shows that the number of working children labour has a mixed type of relationship with explanatory variables. The dependent variable, Y, represents the number of working children in a household. The coefficients of independent variables have the expected algebraic signs and support our hypotheses. The household size coefficient is positive showing that as the size of household increases the number of working children also goes up. However, it is not statistically significant. This may be partly true because larger households may have either more dependents (i.e. working children) and/or more adults earning money. So it depends upon the nature of household. One thing, however, is clear that household size had positive correlation with child labour. Household's monthly income has a negative coefficient, which is significant at 5%. This is an important finding that shows that the higher the household's income, the lower the incidence/prevalence of child labours. This is in line with theoretical expectation. Like income, farm area operated by household is also negatively correlated with child labour and its coefficient is statistically significant at 1%. This may be true because if household operates more area, it is likely to have more income and may need to not force children to work. Literacy status (D_1) was also found a significant determinant of child labour. The negative coefficient of D_1 shows that if the father is literate the intercept decreases by 2.34 and it is significant at 1%. In addition to dummy variable for literacy, another dummy (D_2) was also used as an explanatory variable which captured difference between two phases. $D_2 = 1$ if the respondent belongs to Phase II and zero otherwise. The phase dummy shows no significant difference in invisible child worker.

The above estimated model shows the best fit as its coefficients have algebraic signs in agreement with prior theoretical expectations. Three coefficients are highly significant. The whole regression model is also significant as based on the value of F-statistic. The explanatory power of model is not bad also because the R^2 = 0.53 indicating that about half of the total variation in dependent variable is explained by the explanatory variables.

If we analyze the estimated coefficients of the model it poses serious policy challenges. Firstly, the positive correlation between child labour and household size implies that the larger the population the lower the head income and land area per family. This would in turn result in child labour. So population growth rates need to be reduced. Secondly, the negative correlation between family income and child labour also necessitates that efforts be done to increase income per capita. This could be done

through introducing and implementing income generating activities. Thirdly, the negative relation between households' land holding and child labour implies that as population increases, the available land would be subdivided and fragmented in small pieces. This would lead to food insecurity and lower incomes and resultantly more and more child labour. Fourthly, the negative coefficient of literacy status dummy shows that if literacy rate is low more and more children world be sent to work, the opportunity cost of which may be very high and would be socially costly.

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