

## **Psycho-Social Effects of Corporal Punishment On Working Children: A Case of Motor Workshops in Quetta**

By

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### **Abstract:**

*Child protection has derived ample attention of human right activists all around the world. Children involved in labour and economic activities are faced with the issue of corporal punishment at work places which has serious effects on their psycho-social and physical development. This research study was carried out to assess the psycho-social effects of corporal punishment on children who are in involved in economic activities in motor workshops in Quetta city. A total of 200 working children selected were interviewed through structured questionnaire. The study finds out that a variety of determinants such as poverty, household size, lack of education among parents, poor quality of education, extreme weather events and unemployment of adult family members force children to get engaged in child labor. Use of violence against children is a common phenomenon in motor workshops that has short and long term psycho-social effects including decrease of self-respect, pessimism, inferiority complex, hooliganism, aggression and anxiety disorder among children. The study*

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*concludes that use of violence against working children has negative impacts on individual children, their family and society as a whole.*

**Keywords:** Corporal punishment; Violence; Effects; Behavior; Working children Etc.

### **Introduction:**

Corporal punishment is a global phenomenon and has a long history in many parts of the world. It is mostly characterized as physical punishment; however, research evidences establish that it is also practiced in psychological forms (Straus & Kantor, 1994). Corporal punishment is practiced in all over the world—basically aimed to control children’s negative behavior (Akmatov, 2011); however, it is now considered as a kind of violence imposed on children by teachers, parents, employers, co-workers, care-takers and other in the name of “discipline” which is experienced by a huge majority of children (Evans et al, 2012) such as, students in educational institutes, children at home, child laborers at work places and resident children in hostels (Pinheiro, 2006) especially younger children, and those with disabilities are most vulnerable and exposed to corporal punishments (Danish and Iqbal, 2016). Corporal punishment has been defined as “physical punishment—aimed to modify behavior that might be in the method of beating, pressing, slapping, spanking and pinching using matters such as belts, sticks, and splashes” (NASN, 2010) however, some researchers also including psychological stresses such as scaring child, keeping in isolation, verbal abuse, making child ridicule, etc. (Grogan-Kaylor, 2004).

The involvement of children in economic activities—child labor is very much common in developing counties of the world, particularly in Africa and Asia. At the same time, working children are faced with a serious problem of their protection at work places (Barrech & Din, 2019). It deteriorates their several rights as human beings and children. A huge majority of child laborers suffer from corporal punishment-both in physical and psychological forms. The main actors of such punishments are the employers, senior workers (trainers), co-workers and even the customers. Since, children are easy and comfort targets of corporal punishments,

therefore, most of the time employers never hesitate in punishing the children who are employed under their supervision (SPARC, 2017).

In least developed countries like Pakistan, the use of physical punishment as “discipline strategy” is a hotly debatable issue (Naz et al, 2011; Danish and Iqbal, 2016; Arif and Rafi, 2007). Since, the engagement of children in labour and economic activity is commonly evident in Pakistan (Siddiqi, 2013), therefore, their association to corporal punishment is not hidden due the culture and myths that have been developed in the society (GIEACPC, 2018; SPARC, 2017). It has been believed that discipline cannot be imparted among working children, unless they are pressurized and frightened of being punished. At the same time, there are seldom mitigation and prevention measures for the control of corporal punishment in general, and at work places in particular. Thus, direct and long term impacts on children as individual, their families, and society as a whole are always ignored by different actors of the society (Ulman and Straus, 2003) including parents, duty bearers, and policy makers. Research and scientific data is very much lacking in the field of corporal punishments and its effects on working children especially hazardous and exploitive forms of labour such as garage/motor workshop works.

### **Literature Review:**

#### **The Prevalence of Corporal Punishment at Work Places:**

Corporal punishment is practiced in many societies all around world that makes it difficult to accumulate factual data on the prevalence of CP, additionally, such violence also happens behind the doors at homes, schools, workplaces and many more. Children of very young age are also experiencing physical violence which is never reported. Practice of corporal punishment in schools has a plenty of data and is focus of study around the globe for years, however, the prevalence of corporal punishment against children at work places has not attained reasonable attention so far. The lack of attention from key stakeholders to address this form of violence against child laborers demonstrates that the issue has such a low priority. Children involved in labor and economic activities are suffering from numerous protection issues. Violation of child rights at work places is a common

phenomenon especially in the less developed countries. Use of physical punishment against children at work places such as motor workshops, hotels, brick clines, carpet waving centers, industries, etc. is seldom reported unless scientifically investigated at national and local level.

At global level, the visibility of corporal punishment is increasing and consequently attaining the attention of researcher to reveal the enormity and context of the problem particularly in less developed countries. For example, the statistics of UNICEF on “child discipline” in thirty-five low and middle-low countries demonstrate that in the years 2005-2006, three out of four children ranging the age of 2 to 14 years were victims of corporal punishment (physical and/or psychological) at homes. This counted almost 38 percent in Herzegovina and Bosnia and ninety-five percent in Yemen (UNICEF, 2010). Similarly, a study conducted in Cambodia demonstrated that more than 80% children experienced physical violence of different types in their homes (Beazley et al. 2006).

#### **Psycho-Social Impacts of Corporal Punishment:**

Corporal punishment has a variety of direct, indirect, short and long-term effects on child’s emotional, physical, social and spiritual development. It affects not only individual children but also family as a unit and society as a whole. Generally, the impacts of corporal punishments are discussed in physical, behavioral social, psychological dimensions, however, it makes it difficult to highlight these impacts separately, rather they are all inter-related on each other. For example, physical injury to a child may damage the child’s developing brain that can ultimately impact the psychological development in shape of emotional hardships and cognitive delay. Some behavioral dimensions of the impacts may result in drug abuse and addiction to alcohol. Corporal punishment can result in long term impacts on society such as mental health, justice and welfare systems of the society.

#### **Poor Moral Internalization and Anti-Social Behavior:**

Instead of teaching good behavior and bring about good discipline among children through practice of corporal punishment, the results what adults want to gain are less likely to be achieved. The use of corporal punishment

does not help achieve children's persistent compliance to the required results of behavior modification (Gershoff, 2002). The 2016 meta-analysis of researches on corporal punishment elaborates that eight investigations confirms poor moral internalization and negative behavior as a result of corporal punishment (Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). It results in increased tendency of children in showing negative behavior traits such as lying, bullying, cheating, truancy, running away, and involvement in crime among children and youths. The 2002 meta-analysis elaborates that there is strong association of corporal punishment with anti-social and delinquent behavior (Gershoff, 2002). The result is also confirmed by different other research studies show that corporal punishment cause externalizing and internalizing behavior issues among children (Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor, 2016) both at young age (Scot et al, 2013) and adulthood (Grogan-Kaylor, 2005). It is also established that corporal punishment decrease traits of empathy (Lopez et al. 2001) and moral regulations among children (Kerr et al. 2004). It teaches children how to escape from the situation and not to be get caught. It harms the relationship between child and adult by inducing fright and fear among children. Consequently, children's respect and love for the adults and parents decrease and the hateful behavior is ignited.

### **Increased Aggression Among Children;**

A plenty of research evidence is available (meta-analysis on the topic-2002) that there is significant association of corporal punishment with increased aggression among children (Gershoff, 2002). Children, who are more exposed to corporal punishment, develop aggressive behavior towards their friends and people around them. Most of such children use violent ways to solve problems and conflicts (Hart et al, 1990) and show more aggression toward parents and family members (Ulman and Straus, 2003). The reason behind this may include that "aggression is a reflexive response to experiencing pain" and it teaches children that violence is a suitable way to get what is desired. Children mostly feel very aggressive when they are physically punished (Dobbs, 2005).

Anti-social, violent and criminal behavior is usually perpetrated in adulthood. Children who experience physical/corporal punishment during

childhood, show anti-social behavior during adulthood (Gershoff, 2002). It is found that corporal punishment “perpetuates itself”. Those adults who have been exposed to corporal punishments in childhood are more likely to perpetrate it on other children at home, schools or work places (Lukenheimer et al. 2006; Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor, 2016)

### **Mental Harm:**

Besides being painful for emotional and physical health, corporal punishment also causes poor mental health for children. It has significant association with an issues of mental health among children that can cause depression, anxiety disorders, behavior disorders and hopelessness (Gershoff, 2002). Children who experience corporal punishment also suffer from having low self-esteem (Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). It can even result in attempts of suicide, drug-dependency, alcohol usage, emotional instability, hostility and low self-esteem (Fergusson and Lynskey, 1997). Some other research studies also claim that the same consequences of corporal punishment are also observed in adulthood (Gershoff, 2002) for example, studies carried out in United States of American (Afifi et al. 2012), Finland (Osterman, 2014) and Canada (Afifi, 2014) found that corporal punishment has long term results in adulthood such as self-harm, anxiety disorder and drug dependency.

### **Methodology:**

This descriptive study was carried out by interviewing 200 working children in motor workshops in the Quetta—the capital city of Balochistan province. The sample was derived by applying multi-phased sampling techniques including cluster and purposive cum convenient methods. Working children within the age range of 10 to 16 years were interviewed through structure questionnaire and field observation. Data was analyzed in descriptive statistical methods with the help of SPSS and MS Excel.

## Results and Discussion:

### Personal and Family Profile of Respondents:

The field survey collected data from 200 working children who were in the age bracket of 10-16 years with mean age of 14 years. A high majority of the respondents (49%) were Pashto speaking and 15.5% were Brahvi speaking. 47% children were illiterate while 12 percent were primary pass. 45.5 percent lived in joint family system while 33.5 live in nuclear family.

**Table No. 1 Household size and No. Of household members engaged in economic activity**

	N	Min	Max	Range	Mode	Median	Mean
Household size	200	4	27	23	11	11	13
Total No. of members in family who generate income	200	1	11	10	3	3	5
Total No. of family members (under 18 years) who are engaged in economic activities	200	1	6	5	2	4	3.5

The household size in working children's families was varying where the minimum was 4 while maximum was 27 members per family. The mean household size was 13. This demotes that increased population per family is one of the major cause of child labor. Based field survey, it was found that on average 5 members of the respondents' families were engaged in generating income. This including parents, siblings, and uncles/cousins in case of joint and extended families. The minimum was 1 while maximum was 11 members per family. A variation of 10 members was found.

**Table No. 2 Parents' Employment Category Cross-tabulation (N=200)**

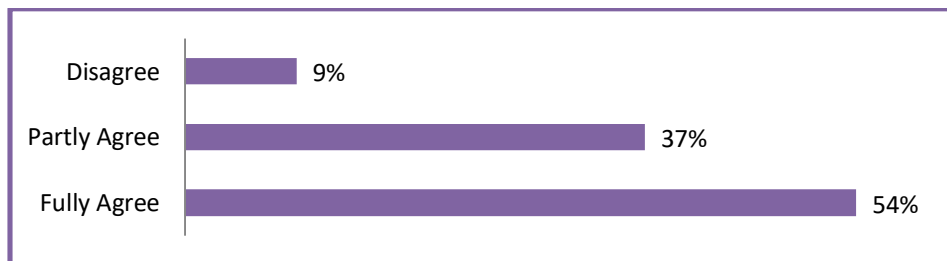
Parents	Employment Category *								Total
	Unemployed	Govt. Service	Private Service	Self Employed / Business	Labour	House wife	Deceased	Other	
Father	29 (14.5)	10 (5)	21 (10.5)	52 (26)	46 (23)	00 (0)	36 (18)	6 (3)	<b>200</b>
Mother	--	3 (1.5)	--		10 (5)	139 (69.5)	40 (20)	4 (2)	<b>200</b>

\*Data in parenthesis is percentage

The study sought to analyze the occupation of respondents. It was found that up to 20 percent children claimed that their parents have passes away. While among the profession of father, 23 percent were laborers, 26 percent were self-employed, 14.5 percent were unemployed, 10.5 percent had private services of different kinds and only 5 percent had government service. On the other hand, high majority (almost 70 percent) mothers of working children were housewives. The data in table No.1 implies that parents' occupational status is one of the causes of child labor.

### Psycho-social effects of corporal punishment

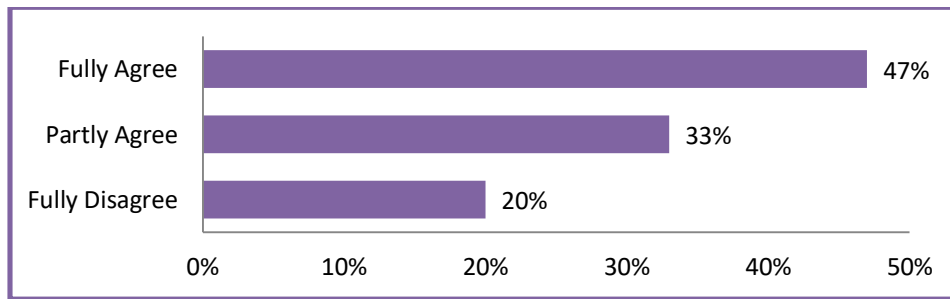
**Figure 1. CP decrease self respect or self –esteem**





Child laborers engaged in motor garages were inquired to express their opinion regarding effects of corporal punishment of their self-respect OR self-esteem. It was found – as shown in figure 1 that almost half of the children fully agreed while 37 percent partly agreed that corporal punishment decreased their self-respect. A total of 91 percent children expressed their agreement with the statement. This implies that use of corporal punishment by the employers in work places weaken working children. They feel ashamed and observe the feelings of inferiority complex. It acts as a hinder in different stages of personality development among these children.

**Figure 2. CP create pessimism**



Field survey also showed that there is significant relationship between use of corporal punishment and creation of pessimism among working children. The data in Figure 2 illustrates that a high majority of children (80 %) observed that they felt pessimism and negativity in their social life and personality due the frequent use of corporal punishment at work places while 20 percent children claimed that corporal punishment did not have any relationship with creation of pessimism as the consequence of punishment.

**Table No. 3. CP cause uneasiness (apprehension)**

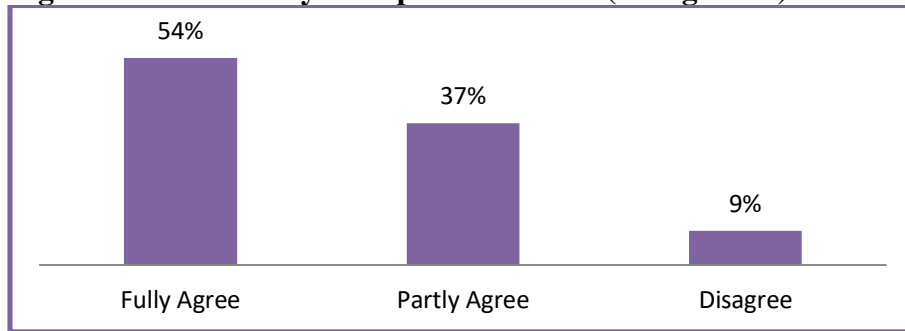
	<b>Frequen cy</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulati ve Percent</b>
Fully Agree	112	56	56
Partly Agree	58	29	85
Disagree	30	15	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>	

Similarly, a high majority of working children (i.e. 85 percent) also claimed that the frequent use of corporal punishments by their employers / senior colleagues caused uneasiness as a part of their work. They mostly felt apprehension and anxiety due to punishment. It also compelled some children quit their work places.

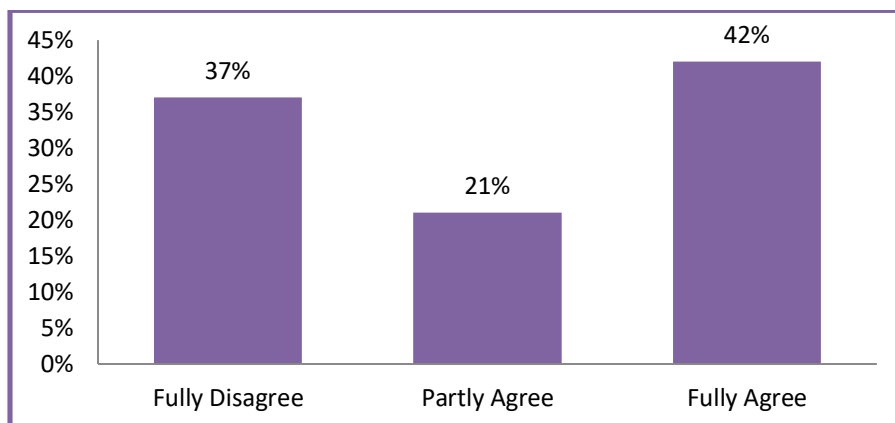
**Table No. 4 CP introduces inferiority complex among the working children**

	<b>Frequen cy</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulati ve Percent</b>
Fully Agree	106	53	53
Partly Agree	46	23	76
Disagree	48	24	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>	

Respondents of the field survey were inquired to respond their point of view regarding a statement that corporal punishment introduces inferiority complex among children. In response, almost half of the respondents expressed full agreement and almost a quarter showed partly agreement with the statement. However, only 24 percent children believed that corporal punishment did not cause inferiority complex among working children.

**Figure 3. Cause rowdy or impolite behavior (hooliganism)**

As presented in Figure 3, children were asked to express their opinion regarding the level of corporal punishment effects on hooliganism (the impoliteness in the behavior) among working children. Data showed that there is a significant relationship between corporal punishment and hooliganism. 54 percent children fully agreed and another 37 percent partly agreed with the statement that corporal punishment at work place (motor garages caused them to be rowdy and impolite during work and outside the work places. The more they receive punishments, the more negative changes observed in the behavior of working children.

**Figure 4. Increase aggression in behavior**

To find out the effect of corporal punishment on increase of aggression among children, the field survey asked the respondents of the study to record their perception in this regard. It was found that more than half working children reported that corporal punishment causes aggression among children both at work place and outside. However, this aggression, is normally shown as the children grow elder and it is expressed before the other weaker segments of their surroundings such as siblings, junior colleagues and other children. On the other hand, 42 percent children believed that punishment did not cause aggression among children.

**Conclusion:**

Corporal punishment is the use of either physical force or psychological stress against children with objective to bring about discipline among children. The use of corporal punishment against working children at motor garages is a common phenomenon in the urban localities of Quetta district. Corporal punishments are more commonly practiced by employers and senior works at work places; however, customers are also involved in such practices in some cases. Major factors that cause employers to practice corporal punishment at motor garages are rooted in several situations and activities that are performed by children.

The use of corporal punishment directly and indirectly affects the psychosocial development of working children both in short as well as long terms. Its severe and regular use prevents children from improving their skills and capacity building. It causes decline in self-respect and creates pessimism among children. Children are observed to be induced with inferiority complex and hooliganism as a result of corporal punishment at work places. Some moderate level personality disorders such as aggression, impulsive and emotional instable circumstances in long run are caused by punishments. The study concludes that the use of corporal punishment in work places is very much prevalent and it has several short and long term effects on the psycho-social development of child laborers.

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