

A Sociological Analysis of Child Labor in Quetta:

By

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Abstract:

There is no denying the fact that Quetta being the largest city of the province of Balochistan is home to numerous tribes and families who immigrate to it from across the province. At the work places, the children undergo certain physical abuse as in their learning process of the work; they are subjected to physical punishment. Being severely and continuously under abuse, the children tend to develop mental problems and become psychologically abnormal. This research intended to highlight this menace through a quantitative means for which a questionnaire containing 20 questions was drafted and distributed among 200 government officials, human rights activists and social organizations. Their results showed that the menace of child labor is growing in the city of Quetta and the government has failed largely to execute its policies and a fresh initiative on collective basis is urgently required.

Keywords: Sociological, Analysis, Child Labor, etc.

Introduction:

Child labor, without an iota of doubt, is the alarmingly serious social problem that most of the developing countries are facing in spite of the swiftly advancing global trends of human rights, equality and child rights. Child labor brings in account all those incidents or cases of labor taken from the children whether willingly or otherwise under the age of 13 the majority of the children make the age ratio from 12 to 7 years. Child labor in its literal meaning explicitly means the physical labor exercised by children for making a sustenance including the works like junior mechanics in garages and automobile workshops, hotels or selling a variety

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of things from one road to the other. Pakistan has always been criticized for keeping a negligent and blind eye toward the increasingly grave child labor crisis in the country, but the case of Balochistan is even much worse in this regard (Rehman, 2013).

If the children are brought up in a good society where they are healthy enough and are being educated, they can be the builders of the society, but the same children if taken to work at early ages can prove dangerous for the society. The children of Quetta are facing a similar challenge ahead as there are thousands of children who are strolling in the streets. They are not only out of the schools or not getting enough education; rather they are facing serious labor and abuse (Shaik, 2015).

Case study research method as an empirical inquiry, investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The case study is about the child labor from the context of development through the prism of programs and campaigns in the last six decades in Quetta. It is more importantly, to explore and dig out that what triggers child labor and at what cost and the immediate and long term effects on the social fabrics and social relations are affected by it.

The child labor in Quetta is unbaiting and it continues to grow because the causes which fuel it are still persistent in the society. Poverty and illiteracy and the tribal mindset are still very much intact in the society, especially in the suburbs of the city where mostly the people from different tribes have migrated and settled. Unless, these causes that fuel the child labor and child abuse are eliminated, the latter cannot be curtailed and the children cannot be protected. Therefore, the parents being the primary means to prevent this social evil must be contacted by the government and imparted with some concerning reality of life about their children. Some strict measures on the part of the government are needed as well. This is an open violation of all the international rights of the children which is taking place in Quetta (Rasheed, 2016).

The silence of the entire community is tantamount to criminality. The rights of the children are openly being violated and yet no one raises its voice for their cause. The more and deeper the silence is, the more the children are driven to the risks of being abused. Exploiting the children by taking 15 hours work from them and paying them even lesser than a normal labor is the worst kind of exploitation. Neither they get a proper sleep nor do they get to enjoy their lives. Under this toiling environment, they are

often subjected to punishment if they did not come to the expectation of the masters or they committed an accident mistake.

This harsh treatment meted out to the children hardens their heart, kills their emotions and turns them psychologically traumatic. Rather than being some responsible citizen one day, they become toiling animals. Some of them turn out to be monsters if they fall into the hands of the militants, the gang mafias or get involved in the street crimes. The childhood is a very crucial and very delicate stage. Anything happening in this stage is engraved in their minds for the rest of the lives. Any incident that may happen to them will haunt them for the rest of their lives (WCPD, 2013).

As a matter of concern, sodomy is also mainly caused by child labor. This is the social evil that no one talks about in the society. Sodomy is the illegal and forced act of maintaining sexual relations with the children. Most of the children get so much beaten and harassed that they do not tell anyone out of the fear, not even their parents. As a consequence, they continue to be exploited by their owners. Many children have bruises and wounds all over their bodies. They are victims to violence, but being so naïve and fearful, they do not disclose certain accidents. The society, thence, does not know and realize the pain and torture the children go through every day (Shaik, 2015).

The children are left alone to the monsters by their parents and the society watches in silence. The government, on the other hand, has the least interest in the social affairs of the public. This is not the story of a single child; it is the story of thousands of children who are laboring hard whether it is 40 degrees centigrade or it is chilling cold out there. They have to work even when they are suffering from sickness or illness. They do not get proper treatment as well. The children who are begging in the streets often have to stay content with unhygienic food. It is not good for their health, but they cannot afford to spend the panhandled money to purchase food otherwise they will receive punishment from their parents. (WCPD, 2013)

The children are not rescued because the society thinks they are working with their own will and they are not treated in the trauma centers to gauge the pain inflicted upon them. They are molested continuously and they become so much traumatized that they become habitual to the molestation. A stage comes they get addicted to it and become a part of the monstrous activities. As they grow older, they try to subject other children to satisfy their addiction and a chain of criminal behavior takes place that

will plague the entire society if the children are not rescued now (Rehman, 2013).

It is totally surprising to hear that those organizations that are predominantly working for promoting the rights of the children and those who call themselves the defenders of the children are not concerned with the plight of the children in Quetta. It is not that they do not know the children are working in the workshops, with mechanics, at restaurants and begging on the streets. They come across certain children almost on daily basis. But, in the name of child welfare, they are merely interested in propaganda activities. They engage in the blame game and blame the government for its incompetency over failing to protect the children.

It is true that the government is incompetent in this regard. The government is not doing its job properly. Had the government done its job and had the government provided the society with all the ingredients of prosperity, there would have not been any need for the social organizations in the society at all. Instead of blaming each other, they should engage in concerted efforts and eliminate this social evil from the society. Who knows how many children will suffer ahead from this practice. (Baloch, 2016).

Methodology:

SPSS format is given due importance in the process of the research in this chapter which adds to scientific and more authentic instruments of interpretation of data at hand. It is one of the means to imperatively judge the public views and examines the literature with regards to such a topic of vast and wide scope. Once this is given due course of analyses, then, the researcher explains the reasons for selecting in-depth structured questionnaire, as a tool of data collection, are examined. Following this discussion, ethical consideration privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of the participants are also part of the present study.

As participant observation does not take place in statistical quantitative mode of the research, the pros and cons of the research and the ethical considerations that what area of what volume of population in what senses will be affected if the given research is published. This of high importance that any information or publication of the research might lead to changes in state policies or general public behavior is of great concern and significance.

Statistical data collection and quantitative interpretation is also crucial in the research design that it helped understand the interpretation of the data and the final steps of how the results were deduced through scientific and imperative judgment. This study has tended to rely on quantitative methods in order to explain the use, values and interpretation of concepts.

What is more, this study explores the choices and motivators reinforcing the methodological framework and the data collection methods employed in the research. The discourse then proceeds towards the research design and the case study comparative research and provides the rationale for adopting this approach. The following section constructs the data collection methods used in this research. The public views assisted in enhancing an imperative interpretation of the data, a key to quantitative research, thus, enhancing its applicability to contemporary real-life situations. As the contingencies of lack of resources and the lack of means to conduct a broader and comprehensive study of the research, the social unit that was selected for the distribution of most of the questionnaires was Quetta city. A variety of professionals hailing from different skills and backgrounds were consulted and the questionnaires were distributed among them.

Following are the two tables with their graphs that demonstrate the statistical figures of child labor in Quetta.

Table 1

Quetta is plagued by child labor more than any other city in Balochistan.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	68	34.0	34.0	34.0
Agree	101	50.5	50.5	84.5
Neutral	17	8.5	8.5	93.0
Disagree	7	3.5	3.5	96.5
Strongly Disagree	7	3.5	3.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Result:

The question was that Quetta is plagued by child labor more than any other city in Balochistan. The results have the indication with accurate results that 68 strongly agree to the question under debate whilst 101 of them only show their agreement. On the other hand, the people who stood neutral were 17. Given the ratio of the people who disagreed, only 7 of them disagreed and 7 of them strongly disagreed. So the tilt was in favor of the question. The results demonstrate that child labor is the biggest social evil taking place in Quetta. The majority of the respondents in the given question are endorsing the point of view that Quetta holds the largest number of child labors in the entire province. This is mainly because of the settlement of the families, specifically, the tribal families from across the corners of the province in the rural zones of Quetta. They maintain their traditional and cultural patterns of life here as well. For the very reason, they prefer labor and work over education for their children as soon as they reach the age of 9 or 10 years. The streets of Quetta are full with child beggars whose innocence attracts the people to give them money, but their innocence does not attract the people to rescue them. The shops are replete with children working in the shops, mostly aging less than 15.

Table 2

The growing rate of psychological illness among children has seriously compromised the spectrum of development in Quetta.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	70	35.0	35.0	35.0
Agree	90	45.0	45.0	80.0
Neutral	32	16.0	16.0	96.0
Disagree	4	2.0	2.0	98.0
Strongly Disagree	4	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Result:

The question was that the growing rate of psychological illness among children has seriously compromised the spectrum of development in Quetta. The results have the indication with accurate results that 70 strongly agree to the question under debate whilst 90 of them only show their agreement. On the other hand, the people who stood neutral were 32. Given the ratio of the people who disagreed, only 4 of them disagreed and 4 of them strongly disagreed. So the tilt was in favor of the question. The results demonstrate that the psychological development of the children is related to the environment where they grow up. Physical abuse and labor is mentally disturbing them. As a result, the development ratio is declining. The foundations of development are standing on the future generations whose torch bearers are the children of today. If they are lost, our future is lost. If half of the population of the children is out of schools and thousands of children among them are doing hard labor and getting abused, they cannot emerge as responsible citizens. Their creativity dies within them. Their skills get dormant and they become the enemies of the society rather than building it up. This is the starting point of the criminal behavior. They tend to become, not all of them, drug addicts or get involved in the street crimes which is the starting mark of a criminal life. Juvenile delinquency is gaining momentum in Quetta. Once they are lost in the darkness, they cannot be brought back. They cannot become a part of the mainstream society if they have grown to become non-sentimental exploited humans.

Discussion:

The above given SPSS tables and graphs reveal that the child labor is a very serious and a very heinous problem that continues to spread in the city of Quetta. Most of the people who send their children for child labor hail from the Afghan refugees who are not only poor, but they are also not highly literate. Therefore, to them sending their children for labor at high risks of hostile environment where the children can be led astray is not a crime. Hence, the children do labor. Sometimes, even poverty is not an excuse. Many parents who have their own shops and they are in a strong financial position to send their children to the schools, yet they choose to keep their children at the shops to assist them.

One would wonder that the age of the children is sometimes between 7 to 13 years where they sweep the shops, bring tea for the guests and do other physical stuff in the presence of their own fathers. If the fathers can tolerate so much of the work of the children in their presence, what can be expected

when the children are doing hard labor in their absence? They do not have the least realization that they are murdering the future of their children with their own hands (Baloch, 2016).

The lack of social awareness too is fanning this crisis as the number of children who are not enrolled is increasing day by day. The number of enrolled children is declining while the number of child labors is increasing. This is a very serious matter of social crisis which if not prevented can prove catastrophic for the entire nation as whole. Since the children are the future of the society, such treatment meted out to them is beyond grasp and the silence of the capable and influential people is just adding to the miseries of the children.

The children have to bear the brunt of the wrath of the parents if they do not get to work. If they work, they have to bear the brunt of their shop owners who subject them to physical [punishment for not working according to their expectations. In some cases, the children do become the soft targets and become the targets of the sexual gratification of their masters. Quetta in comparison to any other city of the province of Balochistan is more affected; the reason behind this is the immigrant community. Most of the immigrants who migrate from across the province are from tribal backgrounds that unlike the people of the urban areas do not prefer to educate their children (Muhammad, 2013).

They prefer to get their children to work as soon as they perceive them able enough to do work. That is the main reason behind the staggering ratio of the child labors in Quetta zone than any other city of Balochistan. As a matter of fact, this becomes the utmost responsibility of the government to play its crucial and undeniable part in exterminating this menace which has plagued Quetta and continues to grow like a germ (Shaik, 2015).

To this end, the human rights activists have been collaborating with the government of Pakistan and other notable organizations in the country. They have been working as pressure groups against the government for quite some time; however, their role as a whole has been held with high reservations. The substantially huge amount of resources and technical expertise have not yet brought a ground breaking development package for the people of rural areas who still live under the atmosphere of insecurity and ignorance. Had they played their imperative role in nation building and not just standing as lobbying groups for vested interests of their

organizations, the children would have not suffered labor at such young ages.

United Nations International Children Education Fund is a specialized agency that operates around the world under the auspices of United Nations. It has branches in almost all those countries that are members of the United Nations body. UNICEF advocates for political change in support of children especially those hardest to reach and most at risk. It operates in collaboration with the government of Pakistan, the civil society and other NGOs of related concern. This has led to the creation of the foundations of UNICEF's new Child Rights and Business Principles (CRBP). It works to ensure sustainable efforts around the country for child protection. It is yet to take development initiatives. NGO's and social rights organizations have failed to mitigate the effects of the labor and abuse from the lives and minds of the children (Rasheed, 2016).

Achievements of the NGO's in the urban areas, their positive and negative consequences on the local people and the attitude of the public toward NGO's are the emergent concept of this research thesis whereas the role of the consecutive governments cannot be denied outright as the NGO's is the inspiration and motivating lobby behind a series of child related policies that have surfaced in the last couple of decades.

Currently 9.2 million children in the country are out of schools and in the wake of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Bill supported by UNICEF, it is an encouraging sign that soon the steps will practically be implemented for enrollment of children. The free enrollment and the bearing of the expenses by the foreign donors and the government of Balochistan can save thousands of children from being forced for labor by their parents and, thus, being saved from the tyranny of the physical abuse at the hands of the shop owners.

The UNICEF has been successful in various projects in other parts of the country, but it is high time it enters Quetta with the main intension to rescue the children from misery and painful labor. Much to the nations chagrin, Quetta is located on a very hostile environment. It is adjacent to the bordering areas of Afghanistan where the militants have their sanctuaries. The illicit activity of human trafficking is also on the rise. If the children run away getting fed up with the excessive labor and working environment, they are highly likely to fall into the hands of the militants who can take them as new recruits and then brain wash them for their attack (UNICEF, 2012).

If they are fall in the hands of the human smugglers, they can sell them aboard as slaves and their vicious cycle of labor will start for them, an unending life of labor. The children are prone to many risks in every stage of life. Escaping from the labor is not a viable option, but the children do not know the consequences, in order to get rid of the work, they escape and the results are highly appalling and awful for the children. Had the children known the treatment they would receive once they escape, they would have preferred to cling with the labor and abuse, but they live in their own world and decide with their own innocent minds since their parents are not protecting and guiding them. The parents are to be held responsible for the destruction of the future of the children at such delicate and young age (Rehman, 2013).

Conclusion:

After an exhaustive sociological analysis and debate of the literature at hand with regards to the growing menace of child labor in Quetta and the role of the government along the other social organizations in mitigating it, both from positive and negative contexts, it has been revealed that the children who are laboring in Quetta urged by socio-financial challenges and by their parents are being physically and mentally abused. Media in Pakistan does not represent change in a positive manner. It has escalated the bizarre behavior of the masses, but has not yet introduced or represented positive change in the society. Media is not the diplomatic wing of Pakistan which it should be by promoting the softer image of the country in the world.

Since media is composed of journalists, anchors, columnists and owners, every person has exerts varying pressure and influence over the organization of media. Since the behavioral outlook of the given characters of media is different, it signifies changes in the media structure as well. Not only in the case of Pakistan, but all over the world, media has become an integral part of the society and people want media to communicate every happening and every piece of knowledge of the world to them. The child labor has to be highlighted through the media so the maximum number of people comes to know about it and exert pressure on the government to eradicate this menace.

It is high time the aggravating situation of child labor is tackled with utmost sincerity and priority by the government and the future of the children is saved.

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