

Sociological Issues in Child Labour at Automobile and Engineering Workshops

ASHFAQ AHMAD MAAN, SHAHID MAHMOOD, NAZIA TABASAM AND SAJJAD KHAN NIAZI
Faculty of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad–38040, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at investigating some sociological issues related with the child labor employed in Automobile and Engineering Workshops in tehsil Samundri district Faisalabad. The children under 15 years of age were randomly selected for the study. Nature of job, employer's behavior and sufferings of the respondents were some of the major variables included in the analysis plan. A significant association was found between employers' general behaviour and respondents' satisfaction with their work.

Key Words: Labour; Children; Working; Workshop

INTRODUCTION

Children have right to live and to develop their full potential. This right is set forth in the convention on the rights of the child. A brief description of the working child may be a child who performs adult roles. Child labour is the direct result of the usage of children by adults. This incidence is wide-spread. The socio-economic pressures compel children to work for earning (ILO, 2001), causes of its incidence may be, and have been described eloquently in numerous journalists' reports reflecting implications of this sociological problem.

Many remedies are suggested but the problem seems to be persisting. Pakistan has recently passed laws greatly limiting child labor and indentured servitude, but those laws are universally ignored, and some 11 million children, aged 4-14, keep that country's factories operating, often working in brutal and squalid conditions (Silvers, 1996). Therefore, this study was designed to look into the sociological issues of child labour working in automobile and engineering workshops in tehsil Samundri, district, Faisalabad–Pakistan.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The sample for study was selected by simple random technique, which consisted of 120 respondents (children) working in automobile and engineering workshops of tehsil Samundri.

Data were collected through comprehensive interview schedule referred to a number of questions formulated according to the requirements of the research being conducted (Goode & Hatt, 1952). Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics for drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was found (Table I) that almost one-third of the respondents were working as motor mechanic helper, while 29.0% of the respondents were auto mobile helper. One-fifth respondents were working on different jobs i.e. denting, painting etc.

The employers' behaviour is the factor which contributes a lot to the satisfaction level of the employees. The data also reveal that the employer's behaviour was harsh towards most of the respondents i.e. 47%, while 35% respondents reported that they observed normal behaviour from their employers. The respondents who received polite behaviour from their employers were small in proportion. It is obvious from the data that in general the employer's behaviour was not reasonable towards their employees. Amjad (1999) found that majority (75%) reported that the behaviour of the employer towards them was harsh. A large majority (83%) of the respondents got physical and verbal punishment when committed any mistake.

As far as punishment on committing any mistake is concerned, 21.0% were punished verbally but 15.8% said that their employer cut their pay and 28.2% reported that their employer did not take any action. Majority of the respondents i.e. 60.8% were somewhat satisfied with their work. The respondents who were not satisfied with their work were more than one-fifth of the respondents. The satisfied proportion of the respondents was very small which clearly shows the poor provision of working conditions and poor facilities provided by the employer.

The working conditions of any type of work determine the satisfaction level of the employees. The data reveal that a majority of the respondents i.e. 67% were somewhat satisfied from their working conditions while slightly less

than one-fifth respondents were quite satisfied from their working conditions which they avail from their employers.

The data reveal that slightly less than half of the respondents got/suffered from disease while they were at work. This situation clearly indicates the poor working conditions and non availability of safety measures during the work, which should be a basic need provided by the employers. The present study was conducted in the industry where the child/youth are highly at risk to get injured. A majority of the respondents i.e. 59.2% reported that they got injured during their work. Table II indicates different factors, which caused the mental tension/depression among the child/youth. On enquiring about the employer harsh behaviour, 41% reported that they felt great mental tension by such phenomena while the same percentage revealed that they felt to some extent the mental tension by the employer's harsh behaviour. The children/youth have a

Table I. Characteristics of the respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Job Nature		
Engine Operator	15	12.5
Motor mechanic helper	38	31.7
Auto helper	35	29.2
Electrician	6	5.0
Others (denter, painter etc.)	26	21.6
Total	120	100.0
Employer's Behavior		
Polite	22	18.3
Normal	42	35.0
Harsh	56	46.7
Total	120	100.0
Punishment on mistake by employer		
Physically punished	42	35.0
Verbally punished	25	21.0
Cut pay	19	15.8
Warned	34	28.2
Total	120	100.0
Satisfaction from working conditions		
Highly satisfied	22	18.3
Some what satisfied	80	66.7
Not at all	18	15.0
Total	120	100.0
Suffering from any disease		
Yes	55	45.8
No	65	54.2
Total	120	100.0
Injuries during work		
Yes	71	59.2
No	49	40.8
Total	120	100.0

Table II. Distribution of the respondents according to mental tension/depression due to different factors

Mental tension/depression due to different factors	To great extent (%age)	To some extent (%age)	Not at all (%age)	Total (%age)
Employers' harsh behaviour	49(40.8)	51(42.5)	20(16.7)	120(100.0)
Hard physical work	30(25.0)	77(64.2)	13(10.8)	120(100.0)
Low wage/pay	2(1.7)	5(4.2)	113(94.2)	120(100.0)
Bad working conditions	48(40.8)	57(47.5)	15(12.5)	120(100.0)
Longer hours of work	54(45.0)	47(39.2)	19(15.8)	120(100.0)

specific physical capacity to do physical work. If it exceeds from their capacity, they loose their potential. Majority of the respondents i.e. 64% reported that they got mental tension to some extent by hard physical work. The wage/salary is a monetary reward to the labourers which they receive after giving their services/labour. This often becomes responsible for the mental satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the laborer. However, in the present study a vast majority of the respondents i.e. 94.0% reported that wage/salary does not matter in the mental tension/depression. The factor of working conditions is very important in creating interest in the work. Almost half of the respondents reported that bad working conditions create to some extent mental tension among them.

In any type of work/labour the working hours are determined, specified and are flexible. Any disturbance in working hours create disturbance among employees except the given reward. It was found that slightly less than half of the respondents felt great tension by longer hours while the other majority felt to some extent tension by longer working hours.

The chi-square value (Table III) shows a significant association between employer's general behaviour and respondents satisfaction for their work. The gamma value shows a negative association between them, So the hypothesis "employers polite behaviour tends to lead the satisfaction of the respondents is accepted. The chi-square value (Table IV) shows a non significant association between "respondents have some mental tension/depression due to the hard physical work and their satisfaction for their work. Data show that respondents feel no tension/depression due to the hard physical work. The gamma value shows a positive relationship between these variables. So the hypothesis "hard physical work tends to dissatisfaction for the work" is rejected.

The chi-square value (Table V) shows a significant association between the longer hours of work and their satisfaction from their work. Data show that respondents feel tension/depression due to the longer hours of work. The gamma value shows a positive relationship between these variables. So, the hypothesis "longer hours of work tend to dissatisfaction from the work." is accepted.

The chi-square value (Table VI) shows a significant association between duration of work and suffering from any disease. The Gamma value shows a positive relationship between these variables. So the hypothesis "more the number of years of work, more suffering from disease" is accepted.

The chi-square value (Table VII) shows a significant association between bad working condition and their satisfaction from their work. The gamma value shows a positive relationship between these variables. So the

Table III. Association between employers' general behaviour and respondents' satisfaction

Employers' general behaviour	Respondents satisfaction from their work			Total
	Highly satisfied	Some what satisfied	Not at all	
Polite	6(27.3%)	13(59.1%)	3(13.6%)	22(18.3%)
Harsh	4(7.1%)	34(60.7%)	18(32.1%)	56(46.7%)
Any other	10(23.8%)	26(61.9%)	6(14.3%)	42(35.0%)
Total	20(16.7%)	73(60.8%)	27(22.5%)	120(100.0%)

$X^2 = 10.179$; d.f. = 4; Significance: 0.03*; Gamma = -.096* = Significant

Table IV. Association between the hard physical work and their satisfaction for their work

Hard Physical work	Respondents satisfaction from their work			Total
	Highly satisfied	Some what satisfied	Not at all	
To great extent	5(16.7%)	19(63.3%)	6(20.0%)	30(25.0%)
To some extent	12(15.6%)	49(63.6%)	16(20.8%)	77(64.2%)
Not at all	3(23.1%)	5(38.5%)	5(38.5%)	13(10.8%)
Total	20(16.7%)	73(60.8%)	27(22.5%)	120(100.0%)

$X^2 = 3.231$; d.f. = 4; Significance: 0.520^{NS}; Gamma = .078; NS = Non-Significant

Table V. Association between longer hours of work and satisfaction with work

Longer hours of work	Respondents satisfaction from their work			Total
	Highly satisfied	Some what satisfied	Not at all	
To great extent	13(24.1%)	29(53.7%)	12(22.2%)	54(45.0%)
To some extent	1(2.1%)	37(78.7%)	6(19.1%)	47(39.2%)
Not at all	6(31.6%)	7(36.8%)	6(31.6%)	19(15.8%)
Total	20(16.7%)	73(60.8%)	27(22.5%)	120(100.0%)

$X^2 = 15.92$; d.f. = 4; Significance: 0.003**; Gamma = .109; ** = Highly Significant

Table VI. Association between duration of work and suffering from any disease due to their labour

Duration of work	Suffering from any disease due to their labour		Total
	No	Yes	
Upto 1 years	18(75%)	6(25%)	24(20%)
1 to 2 years	32(44.4%)	40(55.6%)	72(60.0%)
Above 2 years	15(62.5%)	9(37.5%)	24(20.0%)

$X^2 = 7.608$; d.f. = 2; Significance: 0.02*; Gamma = .140; * = Significant

Table VII. Association between bad working conditions and satisfaction with their work

Bad working conditions	Respondents satisfaction from their work			Total
	Highly satisfied	Some what satisfied	Not at all	
To great extent	10(20.8%)	32(66.7%)	6(12.5%)	48(40.0%)
To some extent	5(8.8%)	37(64.9%)	15(26.3%)	57(47.5%)
Not at all	5(33.3%)	4(26.7%)	6(40.0%)	15(12.5%)
Total	20(16.7%)	73(60.8%)	27(22.5%)	120(100.0%)

$X^2 = 12.978$; d.f. = 4; Significance: 0.01*; Gamma = .246; * = Significant

hypothesis "bad working conditions tend to dissatisfaction from the work" is accepted.

CONCLUSION

Results of the study revealed that employers' general behaviour, hard physical work, longer hours of work, and bad working conditions are the major sociological issues faced by the children employed in automobile and engineering workshops.

SUGGESTIONS

It seems that the developing societies, like that of Pakistan, have to live with the curse of child labor. Therefore, the following steps should be taken at least to facilitate the child labor. Some measures should be taken to regularize the working hours and wages of working children. The health and sanitation facilities to the working children should also be improved, so that they could maintain their health. Working conditions and work premises where child workers are engaged need to be improved.

REFERENCES

- Amjad, M., 1999. Child labour with special reference to children working in Auto Workshops, in rural areas of Faisalabad. *M. Sc. Thesis*, Department of Rural Sociology, University of Agriculture Faisalabad
- Goode, W. and P. Hatt, 1952. *Methods in Social Research*. pp. 133–214. McGraw Hill Book Company, New York
- ILO, Poverty Reduction Plan, 2001–02. Thirteen Asian Regional Meeting. Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: Bangkok, 28–31 August 2001
- Silvers, J., 1996. Child Labour in Pakistan. *The Atlantic Monthly*; February 1996. *Child Labor in Pakistan*, 277: 79–92

(Received 19 October 2004; Accepted 20 November 2004)