

# CHILD LABOR; DETERMINANTS IN SHADMAN MARKET LAHORE

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**ABSTRACT... Background:** Child Labor is any kind of work that harms or exploits the children in some way (physically, mentally, morally or blocking access to education). Child labor is quite common in Pakistan, and is still ignored; which depicts the society's attitudes towards child care. Child labor is an ethical dilemma and special attention must be given to this issue. **Objective:** To determine the factors responsible for child labor in Shadman Market Lahore. **Study design:** Descriptive, Cross sectional. **Place and duration:** Shadman Colony Lahore, July-August 2010. **Methodology:** Structured Pretested questionnaire was used to assess the factors responsible for child labor. **Results:** Large family size, low income per capita and parental illiteracy were shown to be responsible for child labor. **Conclusion:** Family size, income per capita and parental education has a large scale effect on child labor. **Key words:-** Child labor, Family size, income per capita, parental education.

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## INTRODUCTION

Children are the most beautiful and purest creation of God. They must be provided a conducive nurturing environment so that they can enjoy the best years of their childhood and groom as responsible leaders and citizens<sup>1</sup>. The ILO defines child Labor as: when a child is working during early age, he overworks or gives over time to Labor, he works due to the psychologically, socially, and materialistic pressure, he becomes ready to Labor on a very low pay<sup>2</sup>. According to UNICEF child labor is work that exceeds a minimum number of hours, depending on the age of a child and on the type of work. Such work is considered harmful to the child and should therefore be eliminated<sup>3</sup>.

It is estimated that in South Asia out of a total of 300 million children, aged between 5 to 14 years, 21.6 million children are laborers<sup>4</sup>. In Bangladesh, out of 35.06 million children (5-14 years), 5.05 million children are working<sup>5</sup>. Similarly in India<sup>6</sup>, Nepal<sup>7</sup>, Pakistan<sup>8</sup>, and Sri Lanka<sup>9</sup>, out of 253, 6.23, 40, and 3.18 million children, 12.6, 1.66, 3.3 and 0.48 million children are working respectively.

Child labor is quite common in Pakistan, and is still ignored; which depicts the society's attitudes towards child care. This problem is growing fast day by day. The National Child Labor Survey, conducted in 1996 by the FBS, showed that out of 3.3 million working children, 1.94 million children between the age of 5-14 were active in the Punjab, 0.3 million in Sindh, 1.06 million in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 0.01 million in the Balochistan<sup>8</sup>.

Pakistan is a poverty ridden country, with limited resources and a booming population. A great proportion of the population lives below the poverty line. The basic needs of life are beyond the reach of the common man. The children of these poor people have no choice but to work and support their families<sup>10</sup>. The illiterate parents don't understand the need of the day and that is to educate their children. They believe getting education is a waste of time and their children should rather be doing work to contribute to the family's income<sup>11</sup>. In addition, family size also has positive relation with child labor<sup>12</sup>.

Globally, issue of child labor has been seriously

considered. But, at present there is not enough available information that assesses the factors responsible for child labor in Pakistan (in general) and Lahore (in particular). As a result of this deficiency, this study was designed to collect data regarding factors determining child labor in Shadman Market Lahore.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This descriptive cross sectional survey was conducted in Shadman Market Lahore. For this purpose, list of children working in Shadman Market Lahore was made and out of it, 100 children were randomly selected for interview. Each child was questioned about their family size, parental education and income of their family.

Data was collected in July-August 2010. Computer software was used for tabulation and analysis of the data. Results are presented with frequency and percentage tables.

## RESULTS

**Table-I. Educational status of both parents of child doing labor.**

Educational status	Father		Mother	
	requery	%age	Freq.	%age
Illiterate	61	61	72	72
Literate	Primary	13	11	11
	Middle	17	12	12
	Metric	09	05	05

## DISCUSSION

Parental education influences child labor. The more educated the parents are lesser the children are employed in work. Highest proportion of children working were from illiterate families i.e. 61 % (illiterate fathers) and 72 % (illiterate mothers) (Table I). The family income per capita and child labor have an inverse relationship. Lower the income per capita more will be the children employed. Study showed 52%, 36%, 8% and 4% children were employed against an income per capita of 1000Rs, 2000Rs, 3000Rs. and 4000Rs, respectively.

**Table-II. Income per capita of family (Rs. /month) of child doing labor. (Values rounded off to the nearest thousand)**

Income per capita (Rs. /month)	Number of children employed	
	Frequency	%age
1000	52	52
2000	36	36
3000	08	08
4000	04	04

**Table-III. Child labor and family size.**

Number of family members (family size)	Number of children employed	
	Frequency	%age
03	02	02
04	04	04
05	14	14
06	13	13
07	12	12
08	30	30
09≤	25	25

There are more mouths to feed that the total family income can't support; so the parents are forced to send their children to labor. (Table II) Large family size is another reason for increased child labor. The size of the family was found to be large in most of the survey. In this study, 13% children came from families comprising of 6 members, 12% children from 7-membered families, and 30% children from 8-membered families. (Table III).

## CONCLUSIONS

Parental education, income per capita and family size are amongst major determinants responsible for child labor in urban settings of developing countries like Pakistan. The menace of child labor must be controlled before it is too late. The government must enforce strict anti-child labor laws and ensure each child gets education which is the right of every child. Education is a

must to eradicate child labor and for a prospering Pakistan.

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**BEING IGNORANT IS  
NOT SO MUCH A SHAME,  
AS BEING UNWILLING  
TO LEARN.**

**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**