

## **Socio-Economic Causes of Child labor in Carpet Weaving Industry: A Case Study of Union Council Ali Wahan**

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### **Abstract**

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The study was conducted in Union Council (UC) Ali WAhan, District Sukkur and the data was collected through purposive sampling. 50 respondents all working girls in carpet weaving industry were interviewed. Carpet weaving is hazardous work and children are prohibited to do. The result of study shows that 58% respondents were never enrolled to school. 84% respondents initiated work due to poverty, 44% respondents honorarium is Pak Rs. 2,001-2,500 per month (26 working days) and 56% respondents working hours are 48 hours in a week (06 days). 60% respondents father are illiterate. 74% respondents have not their own homes. 78% respondents faced physical injuries during work. 80% respondents feel backache due to long working hours or wrong posture during work. 66% respondents know that carpet weaving is hazardous work and not suitable them. 46% respondents believe that child labour in carpet weaving industry is decreasing. 80% respondents want to study instead of work. The study recommends that government as well as NGOs should introduce women empowerment/poverty uplifting programmes on grass root level. These programmes may consist on business management skills trainings and micro finance for mothers. Therefore they generate income instead of their children through child labour.

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**Keywords:** Socio-Economic, Child Labor, Carpet Weaving, Ali Wahan

### **Introduction**

Children are gift of ALLAH and represent ALLAHs creation. Same as other developing countries in Pakistan, child labor is a common problem. Parents send their children 05-14 years for work with out knowing hazards of child labor.

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Child labor is common due to poor economies. Economic instability, large family members, low wages are main causes of child labor.

Article 32 of Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)<sup>1</sup> defines any activity that disturb schooling of children or harmful for health, physical, psychological, social or spiritual development is child labor. In Pakistan especially Sindh, people think that child labor is a basically child training. This training will empower child to combat unemployment of educated youth in future. Although ILO worked to child labor free district Sukkur and now people are aware regarding hazards of child labor but still there is need of more awareness raising programmes. Carpet weaving is a type of worst form of child labor. It is hazardous work according to hazardous occupation list of government of Pakistan<sup>2</sup>. It means that children cannot work in this industry on any circumstances. Due to consequences of child labor, govt of Pakistan passed children act 1991.

This act strictly banned the underage employment (Age of 05-14) and accused will be punished by fine or imprisonment. Despite all efforts of govt and non govt organizations, hazardous child labor is still available in "Ali Wahan" city. Where the parents don't know difference between hazardous and non hazardous child labor and consequences of hazardous child labor. Hazards child labor can control with awareness (Rogers & Swinnerton 2000)<sup>3</sup>. Poverty put pressure on parents therefore they send their children for work. Due to low income or low daily wages in common child labor, children involve in hazardous work. Sometime parents don't care regarding work of children and they choose their profession their self (Dessy & Pallage 2003)<sup>4</sup> and due to unawareness children involve in worst form of child labor. Child labor is cause of adult unemployment or under employment. Children especially girls are involve in carpet weaving due to their "nimble fingers" and their small pasture. That allows her to tie a smaller and swift knot (Grootaert & Kanbur 1995)<sup>5</sup>.

## Literature Review

Naseem & Iqbal (1991)<sup>6</sup> argue that increased ratio of unemployment, inadequate resource distribution and over population are the factors those push children in child labor. Poverty is a main cause that push the children in child labor (Ghayur 1997)<sup>7</sup>. It is observed that children involve in worst form of child labour due to comparatively better earning as compare to non hazardous work (Dessy and Pallage 2001)<sup>8</sup>.

Kousar et al. (2005)<sup>9</sup> worked on child labor in carpet weaving industry of Pakistan. She found that majority 71.7% respondents initiated carpet weaving due to poverty; while, 10.7% started work due to both poverty and their own interest, 6.7% due to their self-interest, 5.8% due to parents interest and 5.0% due to poverty and parents interest.

### **Demography of Ali Wahan:**

Ali Wahan is a union council of taulqa Rohri, district Sukkur. It is situated on east bank of river Indus near to national high way. 02 government high schools for boys and girls are available. It is known to its carpet weaving industry<sup>10</sup>.

### **Locale of Study**

This study was comprised in Ali Wahan one of the union council of taulqa Rohri and district Sukkur. 50 respondents girls were selected through purposive sampling.

### **Objective of Study**

The objective of the current research is to find out the circumstances in which children involve in hazardous work and awareness toward worst form of child labor.

### **Results and Discussions**

#### Age of Respondents

All the respondents belong to 09-14 years of age group.

#### Cultural Backgrounds

38% respondents are Urdu speaking, 34% Sindhi, 18% Punjabi and 10% are Saraiki speaking.

### Level of Education

Only 02% respondent are primary class pass, 40% respondents were enrolled but drop out in class 02 while remaining 58% respondents were never enrolled. The result shows that girl child have less access to education as it was observed in earlier studies (Rosati & Rossi 2003)<sup>11</sup>. In rural areas of Pakistan especially in Sindh, parents are reluctant to send their girls in schools. Due to fear of high cost of education and discrimination at home, parents dislike to send their girls for education (Sawada & Lokhsin 2000)<sup>12</sup>. Chand (1983)<sup>13</sup> argues that lack of interest in education and poverty drives toward dropout from school and supply of child labour.

### Reasons of Work Beginning

**Table I**

<b>Case Study 01</b>	
S is working in carpet weaving factory from last 06 years. She was 08 years old when she start this work. Her father was passed away when she was 06 years old. She have 03 sisters and 02 brothers. She is very fond of study but she cannot go to school due to poverty. Her mother send her brothers to school. She said when your brothers will complete study and get job then they will support family. From their point of view education is necessary for boys. Because they can easily move in society.	

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Percentage (N=50)</b>
Poverty	84
I don't like study	4
School is far away	8
Community dislike girls education	4

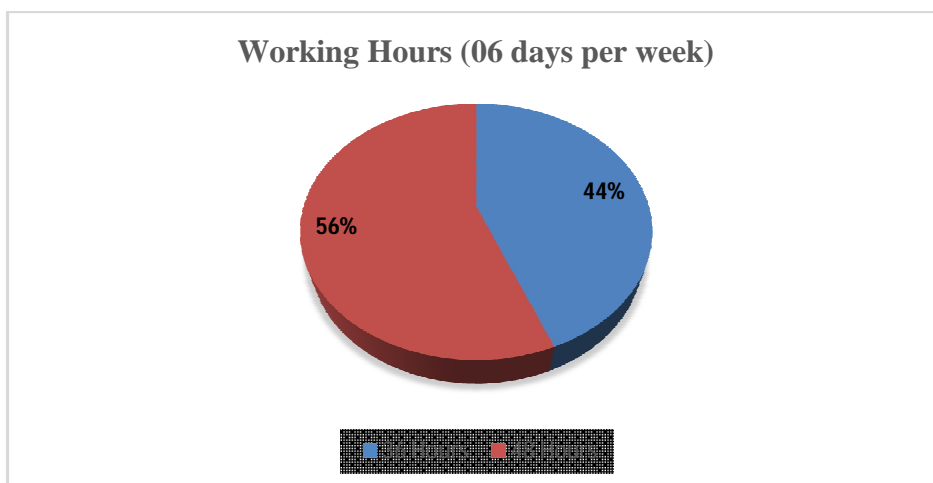
Source: Primary Data

Table is showing the respondents reasons for work initiation. It describes that 84% respondents initiated work due to poverty. 04% respondents initiated because they don't like study, 8% initiated because school was far away from their homes. 04% respondents informed that their community dislike girls education therefore they initiated work.

Ahmed (1991)<sup>14</sup> argues that children are forced to work due to non availability or lack of education facilities. Most of the children left school due to poverty (Khan 2001)<sup>15</sup>.

## Working Hours

Graph I



Source: Primary Data

Graph is showing that 56% respondents work 48 hours, 44% respondents 36 hours in a week (06 days). High working hours disturb the growth of children. Children those are working in carpet industry are physically weak and have low weight as compare to school going children (Joshi et al 1996)<sup>16</sup>. Chirala (2008)<sup>17</sup> observed that long working hours may cause of headache, multiple eye problems, pain in muscles and body , lung and nerve diseases.

## Honorarium of Child

**Table II**

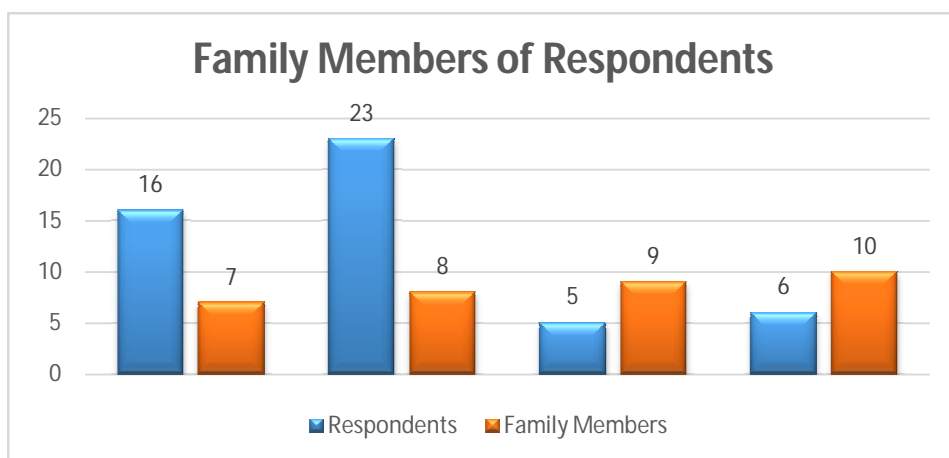
Child Honorarium	Percentage (N=50)
Rs. 1,000 - 1,500	34
Rs. 1,501 - 2,000	22
Rs. 2,001 - 2,500	44

Source: Primary Data

Table is showing that respondents honorarium per month (26 days). It indicates that honorarium of 34% children is between Pak Rs. 1,000 to 1,500, honorarium of 22% respondents is between Pak Rs. 1,501-2,000 and honorarium of 44% respondents is between Pak Rs. 2,001 to 2,500. It shows that children are paid less as compare to adult [Jomo (1992)<sup>18</sup> & Khan (2001)<sup>19</sup>]

Family Members of Respondents

**Graph II**



Source: Primary Data

Graph is showing the family members of respondents. 16 respondents have 07, 23 respondents have 08, 05 respondents have 09 and 06 respondents have 10 family members. To determine the economic conditions of household, it is important to observe size of household. A study on child labor in India shows that majority of child laborers have 07 or more than 07 family members (Ayaz 2012)<sup>20</sup>. More siblings in house hold impose negative effect on schooling. Low percentage of children in schools is closely related to high fertility rate (Jones 1990)<sup>21</sup>. The large house hold size increases the risk of child labour (Lloyd 1994)<sup>22</sup>.

### Family Income

**Table III**

<b>Monthly Family income (Pk. Rs)</b>	<b>Percentage (N=50)</b>
Up to Rs.6,000	78
6,001 to 8,000	6
8,001 to 10,000	16

Source: Primary Data

Table is showing per month family income of respondents. It shows that monthly family income of 78% respondents is Rs: 6,000, only 06% respondents family income is between Rs: 6,001 to 8,000 and 16% respondents family income is between Rs: 8,001 to 10,000 per month. The result shows that almost all respondents family income is very low to manage daily requirements. Therefore to fulfill this gap in between income and expenditure, parents send their children for work. In other words poverty and big family both are the main & basic reason of child labour.

### Fathers Education of Respondents

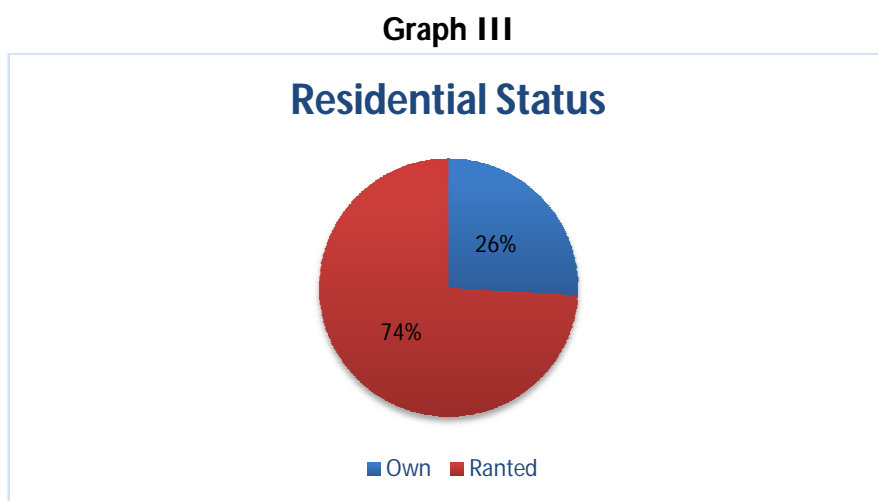
**Table IV**

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Percentage (N=50)</b>
Illiterate	60
Informal Education	35
Primary Education	05

Source: Primary Data

Table is indicating the fathers education level of respondents. It shows that 60% father are illiterate, 35% have informal education, 05% & have basic education (Primary). The result shows that high percentage of child labour come from illiterate homes. The results verify the results of Khan (2011)<sup>23</sup>. It shows that when education of household increases than incident of child labor decrease. Same results have been given by Hamid (1994)<sup>24</sup>.

### Residential Status of Respondents



Source: Primary Data

Graph is showing the residential status of respondents. It shows that only 26% respondents have their own house while majority of respondents 74% have rented houses. Large family members, less income, rented house and inflation push children into child labour.



## Injuries during Work

Graph IV



Source: Primary Data

Graph is showing the respondents responses on incidents during work. Majority of respondents 78% faced injuries during work and 22 % respondents did not face any injury. The common injury in carpet weaving is cuts on fingers. The results are verifying the (Anonymous 1993)<sup>25</sup> that cuts and injuries are common in carpet weavers.

## Availability of First Aid Kit

Table V

Availability of First Aid Kit	Percentage (N=50)
Yes	20
No	50
Don't Know	14
Did not reply	16

Source: Primary Data

Table is showing the availability of first aid kit at working place. 20% respondents inform that there is first aid kit available at their working place while 50% respondents inform that kit is not available, 14% respondents don't know regarding kit and 16% respondents did not reply.

### Health Problems

**Table VI**

<b>Illness</b>	<b>Percentage (N=50)</b>
Headache	60
Backache	80
Eye Pain	74
Neck Stiffness	82
Pain in Hands	48

Source: Primary Data

Table is showing the health problems of respondents that they feel. 60% respondents feel headache, 80% feel backache, 74% feel pain in eyes, 82% feel neck stiffness and 48% feel pain in hands. It was observed that continues sitting in awkward position leads to backache even at young age (Jain and Jain 2002)<sup>26</sup>. It was observed in Jaipur in carpet weaving industry that child workers were suffering from backache and pain in lower limbs (Joshi et al. 1994)<sup>27</sup>. This is due to long hours and continues sitting or wrong posture. Anonymus (2003)<sup>28</sup> argues that in handmade carpet industry weavers are prone to skeletal deformities, eyesight and health problems due to toxic chemicals.

### Awareness Regarding Hazardous Work

**Table VII**

<b>Awareness Regarding Hazardous Work</b>	<b>Percentage (N=50)</b>
Yes	66
No	22
Did not reply	12

Source Primary Data

Table is showing the awareness of respondents regarding carpet weaving work. The result shows that majority of the respondents 66% know that this work is dangerous for their health, 22% respondents don't know that this work is hazardous and 12% respondents did not reply. The term hazardous work was translated in "Khatarnak Kam" or "Mushaqat wala Kam" for easy understanding of respondents.

#### Sensitization Through Hazardous Child Labour

**Table VIII**

<b>Sensitization through</b>	<b>Percentage (N=50)</b>
Social Workers	20
NGO Teacher	42
Community Leader	2
Owner of Factory	2
Don't Know	34

Source: Primary Data

Table is showing the way of sensitization of respondents. It indicates that 20% respondents hear this term through social workers, 42% respondents from NGO teachers, 2% from community leaders and 02% are sensitized through their owner of factory (Carpet Weaving). While 34% respondents don't know regarding this term.

#### Status of Child Labour in Carpet Industry of Ali Wahan

**Table IX**

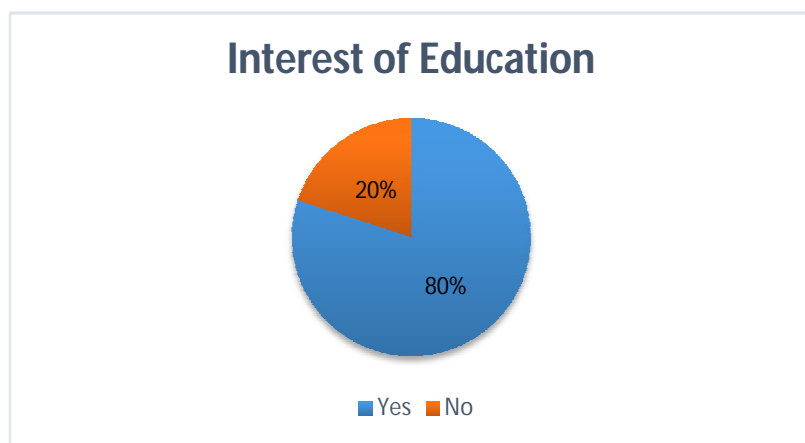
<b>Status of Child Labour</b>	<b>Percentage (N=50)</b>
Increasing	20
Decreasing	46
Don't Know	34

Source: Primary Data

Table is showing the result of status of child labor in carpet industry of Ali Wahan. Result shows that 46% respondents believe that child labor is decreasing, 20% believe that it is increasing. 34% respondents don't know that it is increasing or decreasing.

### Interest Towards Education

**Graph V**



Source: Primary Data

Graph is showing the respondents interest towards education. 80% respondents like to study and only 20% don't like study. The majority of respondents like to study and it shows their believe that study is good for them. The result match with the result of Shaheen (1982)<sup>29</sup>. The result is contra indicate with the result of Sabeeha (1979)<sup>30</sup> and Khan (2001)<sup>31</sup> where none of children believe that schooling is good.

### Conclusion

It was observed in research that, parents are mostly involved to push their children in this difficult work. We cannot deny the key factors poverty, lack of education, materialistic objectives and other socio economic problems those push children in hazardous work.

## Recommendations

1. Hazardous child labour must be stopped.
2. A campaign should be organized on yearly basis to make people aware regarding hazards of child labour.
3. Labour department must visit the sites and take strict actions against child labour.
4. Religious leaders must sensitize the community regarding rights of children (Right to education).
5. Awareness regarding family planning must be initiated in the area.
6. All laws against the child labour must be implemented.

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