

**CHILD LABOR IN COAL FIELDS OF BALOCHISTAN.
 (A Case Study of Mach Coal Fields Balochistan)**

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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this paper is to know the level of child labor in coal fields at Tehsil Mach, as Balochistan is the most backward province of Pakistan where literacy rate is very much low as compare to other provinces Balochistan has low life style in all fields of life, though it is the biggest province in terms of land but least populated province also, Balochistan is very much rich in its minerals, low literacy is not the only reason behind the child labor, poverty can be the other major source of child labor in province, it has the highest rank in poverty also, According to one report by ILO in 2013 that some 500 children are working in Loralai coal fields, the situation is very much similar in other coal fields of Balochistan including Mach coal fields, the children are found in all coal mines at Mach coal fields while working to support their families financially, the child labor is found inside and outside the black hole while prone to all hazards, working at coal fields without any safety kits and prone to all disease which are caused by coal dust, The children are mostly from Tehsil Mach but other than this the children from KPK and Afghanistan are also seen in coal fields, the children in coal fields are not safe from all type of hazards, their rights are being violated and they are exploited physically and sexually, the child labor is seen due to many reasons at coal fields the major reason is seen as poverty, health and safety issues are being faced by the children, the children at Mach fields are deprived from the all basic rights such as education, health, entertainment, the heavy work is being taken from them while working six to eight hours at coal fields.

Key words. Child labor, Coal Mine, Chronic Diseases, Poverty.

Introduction.

The aim of this study is to elaborate the condition of children who are working in coal mines of Balochistan, it is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of land and territory but the least populated province, and very much rich province in term of natural resources, the province has been producing several type of minerals for many years, it has huge contribution of natural gas in country, the long costal belt has been producing sea foods and the hub for business the Gwadar port would be the big source of income not only for province but also for country, according to world bank report that in 2008 there were 39 minerals which were being mined in Balochistan, the other report by geological survey of Pakistan GSP that 80% minerals come from Balochistan.

But the socio economic condition of people in province are very much weak, the major number of people suffer due to poverty the large number of people live under the line of poverty, the province lacks all the basic facilities such as education and health, instead of sharing huge natural minerals ,the ratio of poverty is very much high as compare to other provinces, the statistics regarding the poverty and unemployment does not show good picture according the report in 2013, that 45.68% people live under the poverty line but the ratio has been increased to 52%, the province is also suffering due to lack of safe drinking water only 20% people have access to safe drinking water and 86% in rest of Pakistan, just 25% villages in Pakistan have electricity, the infant mortality rate is also high as compare to rest of country in spite these all the province has been suffering due to drought weather, that badly affected the livestock which is the largest source of livelihood in province because just 6% land is cultivated, the report published by institute of sustainable development policy that half of population in Balochistan just earn 1.25\$ per day , the poverty and unemployment are causing several issues in province including the illiteracy or quality education.

None of constitution in Pakistan permits children to work as child labor is defined by the -International Labor Organization| ILO that those children who are deprived of their dignity, childhood are called child labor and such activities which are harmful for the physical and mental developments deprive children from education, Ray, R. (2000) in Pakistan

the age of children which is mentioned in 18th amendment is below 14 however the United Nations convention on the rights of children(CRC) mentions the age of children under 18 year.

Child labor in Balochistan

Child labor is extensively predominant in country which can be found in every field of economy, there are large number of child labor which are not visible normally because they mostly work in predominantly in at informal sectors, the child labor is highly accepted in society, child protection laws are not implemented completely, in Pakistan there is no any type of authentic survey which indicate the prevalence and extension in child labor because the last survey in country was carried out by Federal Bureau of Statistics, in 1996 in collaboration with international labor organization ILO, according to that data 3.36 million children in ages 5 to 14 were child labor .

Child labor is universal issue in all over the world mostly in developing countries; however in Asia and Africa 90% child employment is noticed Patrinos, H. A. (1995). In these countries child labor is mostly seen in rural areas where mining and agricultural activities are carried out, also lack of educational institutes are observed in rural areas of developing countries, children are the major contributor to their families in terms of family economy however the children are not well or paid enough for the work which they do, there can be several reasons why the parents prefer to send their children for earning some money rather than sending them to schools , the reason might be the lack of good educational institutes or quality of education, in Asia the India has the highest number in child labor which is 44 million and in Pakistan the child labor is some 10% though the child labor is banned in these Asian countries (Weiner 1991). According to ILO report that child labor is also seen in South America such as the child labor in Brazil is some seven million. (ILO 1992).

The child labor is one of the major issues in Pakistan, there is no enough or reliable statistics regarding the child labor in Pakistan but according to one estimate that in Pakistan there are 11 to 12 million children working in different fields(HRCP2015) major number of children are under the age of 10, the children are mostly seen in technical activities and child labor is the quarter of skilled labor, even there are few industries which cannot survive without children such as motor garages, brick

making and carpet making, each year huge number of children enter in the labor force where they face or compete with adults however it has observed that in many cases they work combined with their parents, the child labor is found irrespective of fields means even mostly children are seen in domestic labor as well, the high class society mostly prefer women for their domestic or kitchen works where the girl children work with their mother or many times with their parents, in Metropolitan cities Pakistan the child labor is normally seen in different places, while in collecting garbage, in streets, working in restaurants or working in motor garages. Anker, R. (2000).

This is fact and all the world has understood this phenomena that the children are the future of any nation and child labor does not have positive impacts on any society, the children who are working or involved in child labor can bring disturbance in society due to illiteracy or ignorance, the children remain far from the education, which created disharmony in the society, there would be violation of laws, in such society the all institutions of society cannot function properly because society is not going smoothly, child labor does not cause just illiteracy but it also deprives the children from their childhood, removes their freedom and dignity, the children are deprive form their basic education though after the 18th amendment it is decided that education is basic right of everyone . Hassan, S. A. (2012).

The poverty is the major reason of child labor in developing countries and all form of child labor are in available in these countries, there are several reasons of child labor in Balochistan, such as poverty, unemployment, lack of educational institutes, according to one NOn-governmental organization -Alif Ailaanll that 66% children between ages 5-16 are out of school, further it was revealed by them that that in 2016 1.8million children do not attend school in Balochistan.

Child labor at coal fields in Balochistan

There are six big coal fields in Balochistan which all are located near Quetta district the capital, coal mining has been carried out in province for last several decades, before the British era just open cast coal mining was carried out but underground coal mining was started in British era, the coal mining is the most hazards work in the world, the coal dust directly hits the people's lung and creates chest and cardiac issues not among the workers but also the population living near by the coal fields,

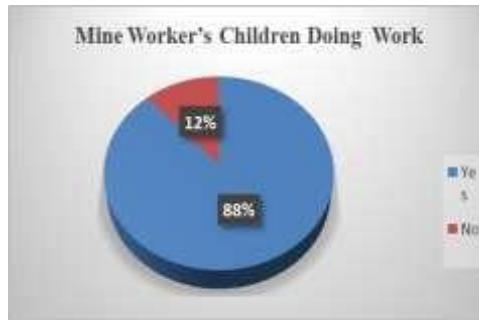
the unsafe and fangled methods of mining are making more hazard because the workers are prone to many physical and mental threat due to unsafe mining. The Mach coal fields are located 60km far from the capital Quetta city, and situated in Kachi district, where there are 213 million ton coal reserves at tehsil mach.(GSP,2013)

Child labor is one of the major issue at all six coal fields of Balochistan, the children are found in all fields of coal mining weather inside the coal for excavation of coal or outside of coal fields while transporting the coal, the condition of children in coal mining is similar in all six fields The child labor is also in peak at Sharagh coal fields, the all coal fields are situated in rural areas where they lack all the basic facilities, the coal mine workers live under serious conditions, there is no public schools for their children, due to poverty the children also work with their parents, and same is the condition in health the workers and their children do not get health facilities from the contractors or coal mine owners , the 1923 mines act is not properly implemented in coal fields the owners with the collaboration of mines department always violate the law and however the 1923 act does not fulfill the current requirements. Research Methodology.

The universe of this study is Mach coal fields located at Tehsil Mach district Kachi, the population of this study is child labor who are working in coal fields This is a mix method research, qualitative and quantitative methods are applied in this study, different type of methods are used to collect data such as interview, questionnaire, FGDs, key informants, researcher observation, the sample unite is child labor and the sample size is 100 children from 20 coal fields out of 40

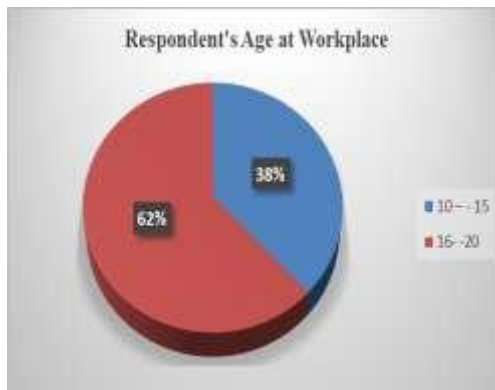
Child labor at Mach coal fields.

In Mach coal fields the children are forced to mine irrespective of coal hazards , in this study hundred children are interviewed, the children at Mach coal fields have no choice the only choice is to work at coal fields , their aim is to earn and support their family, the all children who are found at Mach coal fields they do not go to school, the majority of the children are not completed their early or primary education, in this study the coal mine workers who are working in coal fields are also interviewed regarding their children weather their children working in coal fields the following chart shows the children who are working with their father/brother or guardians in Mach coal fields.



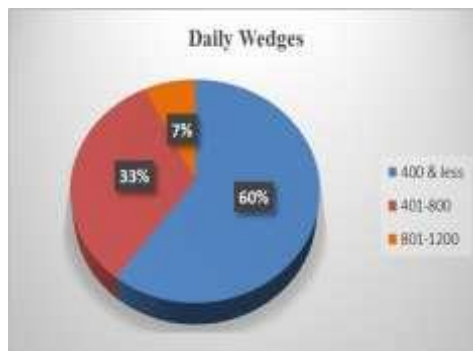
The children in Mach coal fields are directly working in coal fields, majority of the children father are asked for sending their children to schools but large number of respondents complained that near coal fields there is no any school located neither for boys nor for girls.

The children from all ages are found in coal fields, and can be seen while performing the most hazards and heavy works, the following chart shows the ages of children working at coal fields.



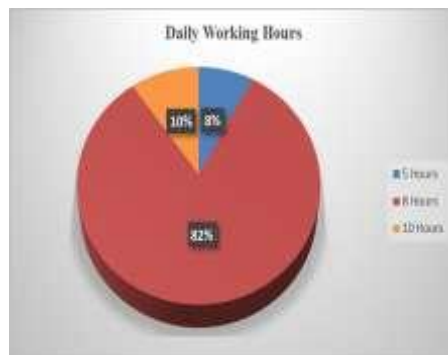
The children are paid less than other coal mine workers, majority of the children working at coal fields even do not know about their wages because their wages are mostly paid to their fathers according to this study that 40% children are not aware about their wages because they are mostly paid by the Munshi or Jamadar who arranges labor in market, this study also reveals that 60% children in coal fields get petty amount the large amount is taken by their elders or family head, 30% children give extra time to their work in order to save small amount of money for themselves only 10% children are given smart amount or the amount which they earn.

The chart shows the children daily wages

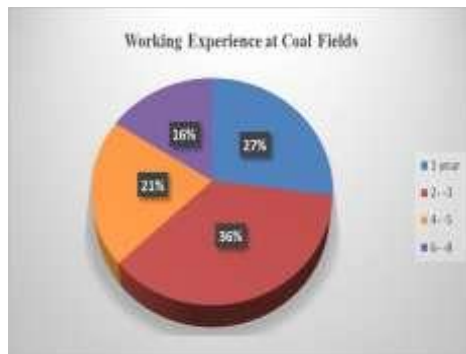


Despite these all the children work at coal fields which environment never supports the children and children at coal fields are subjected to different type of psychological and physical abuses by their employees or peers, this study shows that 18% children at coal fields are

physically abused and 30% children had been affected by several chronic diseases, the study also shows the diseases which effect the children at coal fields, there is not only single health issues faced by the children but also the children feel trouble while working inside the dark hole such as 3% children terror due to blackness inside the coal fields and 14% children are victim of interiority complex, due to long working hours inside the coal the below chart shows the percentage of hours daily given by the children to coal fields



According to research the mental and psychological issues faced by the children who are working in coal mines that 3% children would suffer from night terrors and some 14% children were victims of extreme inferiority complex that they have reached to the mental breakdown due to long working hours and hazards environment at coal fields , many children have developed serious lung diseases due to dust found in coal after working eight to ten hours in coal field they return to their home with bleeding hands and foot due to lack of safety tools apart from this there were the continuous threats of sexual exploitation during research 26% children omitted that they have been touched inappropriately by the people around them and 17% were directly abused by them. The children at coal fields were very much young even in childhood they were brought to coal fields with their elders in order to perform easy or light works and major number of children have stepped into adult age in coal fields the following chart shows the percentage of children working experience at coal fields of Mach.



Due to several reasons The children at Mach coal field are not satisfy from their work or workplace environment, 90% children are not satisfied with coal mining and only 10% children are satisfied to some extent because of heavy and unhealthy work, the children face several type of tensions at workplace, because of low wedges and coal dust the environment is very much polluted.

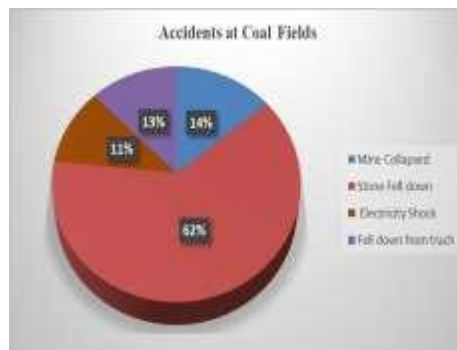
The following chart shows the tensions which are being faced by the children at coal fields,



The children are facing severe health issues at coal mining due to lack of medical and health facilities the mine workers do no display positive picture there is only one BHU at Mach city while lacking all the basic health instruments including professional doctors, the data shows that only 6% children at coal fields are healthy or they don't have health problem yet, however 33% children are in between they feel some health

issues but not such bad or chronic disease but major number of children are unhealthy, this study shows that 61% children are unhealthy means they don't have good health due to coal mining and coal dust is causing several health issues and the old method or wooden method is causing several joint issues because while drilling or excavation inside the coal mine the workers cannot work properly, loading and unloading, the water which comes out from the coal mine is full of different chemicals which are hazards for health, the children give their full day to coal fields because majority of the workers live near the coal fields and their children also live with them which is also major cause of health issues.

The safety tools are not applied in coal fields the children who are working in coal fields even lack basic safety kits, which is the another major reason of being unhealthy, though it is the responsibility of mines owner to provide all the safety kits to the all workers who are engaged in coal mining, while it is revealed in this study that the children are not provided none of the safety tools such as uniform, gloves, helmet, face mask, safety shoes, safety glasses, and even large number of children are found without shirt, such unsafe methods are causing minor and major accidents inside and outside the coal fields, if the safety measures are taken properly such accidents can be controlled and the health issues can be reduce because the lung diseases are due to coal dust while covering their faces with the help of face mask the worker including children who are working at coal fields can be protected from coal dust, the following chart shows the accidents which occur at coal fields.



Summary

There are many reasons behind the child labor at Mach coal fields few are identified in this study as the family members especially the mother education must be improved which can have positive impact on child socialization, although it is the responsibility of mines labor organization to provide education to the coal mine worker's children, because illiteracy is very much high among the children in coal fields which is causing many other social issues, the situation in coal fields never supports the coal mine workers and their family because of their living areas and conditions, there health issues must be solved and the children must not be involved in such activities which directly affects their mental and physical health, the children at coal fields must be given opportunity to play different indoor and outdoor games, technical education should be provided to the children, the government, coal mine owner or contractor must provide all the basic facilities to the family members of coal mine workers, there is no proper medical checkup of children who are working or living near the coal fields because the dust which is produced from coal can even effect the population living nearby coal such as the whole Mach city is effected by coal dust because the coal is dumped at the middle of city, the children come early morning and leave at late night, those children who are working as loader or for transportation of coal are mostly abused sexually and physically, those children who are working with their father or elder brothers, the wedges of their father or guardian must be increased that they should not bring their children to coal fields, the wedges system must be improved because the lion share is taken by the owner or contractor the workers get small amount, there is no awareness among the children regarding the mental and physical health or related to issues which are being caused by coal or coal dust. No doubt children are the future of any nation and the progress and prosperity of nation or country depends on their youth, the coal mining can change the life of people while utilizing it in positive way, the precious lives of children must not be given to black hole, the underground coal mining should not be applied in order to save the children and family members of coal mine workers, the children are sent to underground up to 3000ft

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