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Prevalence of Child Labor among Elementary School Students from 5th to 9th Grade in al Mukalla

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Results: The study showed a high prevalence of child labor among school children in Mukalla city (54.2%) where the common reason of child labor is that children have the interest to help their families (69.9%). About (35%) of students reported that they exposed to different kinds of abuse in their owner's place. Child labor affects negatively on their school's achievements and about 20.7% of them thinking to leave school. Educational level of parents did not indicate significant association with child labor (p-value 0.11)

Keywords: *child, labor, mukalla.*

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Prevalence of Child Labor among Elementary School Students from 5th to 9th Grade in al Mukalla

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Conclusion: High prevalence of child labor may affect on their school achievements and being a predisposing factor to school drop-out.

Keywords: child, labor, mukalla.

I. Introduction

The term "child labor" is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. (1).

Interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. (1).

More than one-fourth of the world's people live in extreme poverty, according to 2005 U.N. statistics. The intensified poverty in parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America causes many children to become child laborers. (2)

Poverty and its related problems are some of the causes of child labor in Ethiopia. The 2001 survey reported that about 90 per cent of the children working in productive activities replied that they were working to either supplement family income (23.8 %) or to improve it (66%). (3).

However, research has recently shown that mothers who only went to primary or middle school don't generate much impact on their children, whereas those who have completed high school are much more committed to sending their kids to school. Quite understandably, the more you study, the more you gain the skills you need to climb up the social ladder and get better job. (4).

Long hours of work on a regular basis can harm children's social and educational development, U.S. adolescents who work more than 20 hours per week have reported more problem behaviors (e.g., aggression, misconduct, substance use), and sleep deprivation and related problems (falling asleep in school). They are more likely to leave the school. (5).

Growth deficiency is prevalent among working children, who tend to be shorter and lighter than other children; these deficiencies also impact on their adult life. (6).

Long-term health problems, such as respiratory disease, asbestosis and a variety of cancers, are common in countries where children are forced to work with dangerous chemicals. (6).

Exhaustion and malnutrition are a result of underdeveloped children performing heavy manual labor, working long hours in unbearable conditions and not earning enough to feed themselves adequately. (6). The International Labor Organization estimates that 215 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 currently work under conditions that are considered illegal, hazardous, or extremely exploitative. (7) Of an estimated 215 million child laborers around the globe: approximately 114 million (53%) are in Asia and the Pacific; 14 million (7%) live in Latin America; and 65 million (30%) live in sub-Saharan Africa (7).

In 2010, approximately 1.6 million children were actively working in Egypt, according to a comprehensive survey conducted by the Central Agency for Public

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Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) and the International Labor Organization (ILO). (8).

In 2000 The phenomenon of child labor in Yemen touched the life of more than 400 thousand who belong to the age group of 14-16 years with a male percentage of 48.6%, and a female percentage 51.4%. Studied proved that more than 97% of child workers are children of illiterate parents.(9) In Hadramout and especially in Mukalla city; this issue was not yet addressed and may be neglected. This study was designed to explore in-depth about this sensitive and hidden problem in Mukalla city (capital of Hadramout province at eastern Yemen) focusing on elementary school children, and to address its impact on schooling drop-out and also form the child rights perspective. The specific objective is to determine the prevalence of child labor among school children in Mukalla and to identify the reasons behind the child labor and its consequences on the health of the child.

II. Methodology

Study design: Across-sectional study was carried out by group (2) fourth year medical students of Hadharamout University in 2015-2016 to determine the prevalence of child labor in primary school students from 5th grade to 9th grade in AL-Mukalla city during 2015-2016.

Study area: The study was conducted in governmental elementary school students in Mukalla city, which is the capital of Hadhramaut governorate in Yemen.

Study population: all students in the governmental elementary schools in Al- Mukalla city.

Sample size calculation:

The sample size was being calculated by using the following formula:

$$\text{Sample size (N)} = \frac{PQ(Z)^2}{(D)^2}$$

p = proportion of the characteristic in the population. (p = 30%)
q = 1 – p (1 – 0.3 = 0.7)
d = precision or error allowable. (d = 5%)
z= 1.96 correspondence with 95% confidence level

$$N = \frac{3.841 \times 0.3 \times 0.7}{0.0025} \quad \frac{3.841 \times 0.21}{0.0025} \quad \frac{0.80661}{0.0025}$$

The minimum sample size required was 322 students, but actually we enrolled 330 students.

Sampling Method: A two-stage sampling was conducted:

In the First stage: the total number of governmental elementary schools in Al-Mukalla district were determined then three governmental elementary schools from the total governmental elementary schools were randomly selected by lottery method. The selected 3 governmental primary schools were: *14 October* school, *Al Gmaher* school and *Amar bin Yaser*.

In the Second stage: The sample size (332 students) were distributed proportionally among the randomly selected 3 governmental elementary schools according to the total number of students in each governmental elementary school Then in each governmental elementary school the sample was distributed proportionally among each level according to the total number of students in each level. Students in every level were selected randomly by a lottery method.

Data collection methods & tools: The data was collected by self-administered questionnaire which included the following:

1. Personal data. (*age, sex, school, parents job and educational level*).
2. Prevalence of child labor.
3. Reasons of child labor.
4. Education level of the parents.
5. The consequences of child labor on child health

The pre-testing of the questionnaire of the study was conducted on 20 students of October primary school at 10/5/2016. The sample of students used in this pre-test was not included in the study. The questionnaire was pre-tested to determine the age of students, question sequence, and the identification of difficult words. The questionnaire was initially constructed in the English language, which was later translated into Arabic language. During the pre-test a few difficult words in some questions were found and these words were changed into simple local words. Also extra necessary questions were added. These problems were discussed with the members of the research team and the questionnaire was modified accordingly.

Statistics: Data collected was organized and analyzed using descriptive statistics methods (frequency, percentages, range, mean and standard deviation),

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computer programs applied are word and excel for the construction of tables.

Ethical Considerations: An approval of this study was obtained from Hadhramout University College of Medicine Department of Community Medicine. An institutional endorsement was obtained from the office of the Ministry of Education in Mukalla. Objectives of the study was clarify for the participant and verbal consent were obtained from them.

III. Results

A total of 330 students in elementary schools of Mukalla were enrolled in the study. The mean age of students are 14.6 years (SD 1.6 years) with a range from 11 to 18 years.

The study showed a high prevalence of child labor among school children in Mukalla city (179/330, 54.2%) where most of them (73%) were working at night after the school time. (Table 1).

Although (57%) of students working in a place where the owners are relative to them but they complain of at least one type of abuse in their work (35.2%) and the work is a hard duty (58.1%) (Table 1).

The Working students feel satisfied with this situation as (54.2%) reported that the working environment is clean, and the given salary is sufficient for them (57%), and their employer reward them (53.1%) (Table 1) while the main reason of child labor is that children have the interest to help their families (69.9%).

Child labor affects negatively on their school's achievements (63.4%) and about (20.7%) of them thinking to leave school while (79.5%) thinking continues in their work regardless of their schooling achievement. (Table 2). Educational level of parents may have a role in deciding child labor, but in this study, it has not ignificant association with child labor (p-value 0.11).

Child labor is not free from health consequences on the working children as (40.2%) of the studied working children were injured due to their work and (31.3%) of them admitted to hospital due to work-related problems. Psychologically, most of the studied working children feel fear (53.6%), guilt (16.8%) and depression (29.6%) (Table 3).

Table 1: Distribution of the working students by working characteristics, Mukalla, 2015/2016:-

Working Characteristics	No. of students (N=179)	%
Working time		
At night	131	73.2%
On the day	48	26.8%
Work-load		
Comfortable	57	41.9%
Hard work	104	58.1%
Nature of the labor		
Fixed in place	101	56.4%
Mobile	59	33%
Others	19	10.6%
The working environment Hygiene		
Clean	97	54.2%
Accepted	73	40.8%
Bad	9	5%
consanguinity between child and work owner		
Relative	102	57%
Not relative	77	43%
Salary		
Sufficient	102	57%
Not-sufficient	77	43%
Owner rewarding		
Yes	95	53.1%
No	84	46.9%
problems with place owner		
Yes	138	77.1%
No	41	22.9%
Child abuse from place owner		
Yes	63	35.2%
No	116	64.8%

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Table 2: The impact of child labor on schooling achievements among working school children in Mukalla

Student achievement	No of working children N=179	%
The child failing in their study		
Yes	114	63.4%
No	65	36.6%
Child have the interest to leave their school		
Yes	37	20.7%
No	142	79.3%
Child have the interest to continue working regardless to their schooling achievement		
Yes	128	79.5%
No	51	20.5%

Table 3: The health consequences of child labour among the working school children in Mukalla, 2015/2016

Health consequences	No of working children N=179	%
Injury		
Work-related injury	72	40.2%
No work-related injury	107	59.8%
Work related-hospitalization		
Admitted to Hospital	56	31.3%
Not admitted to hospital	123	68.7%
Work-related psychological effect		
Fear	96	53.6%
Guilt	30	16.8%
Depression	53	29.6%

IV. Discussion

The high prevalence of child labor is reported in this study (54.2%), child labor is common in developing countries like Nigeria (64.5%) due to poverty. [10] Similar motivation like their interest to help their family (69.9%) was also reported in Ethiopia (46.7%).[11]

Families may encourage their children to work due to the poverty status and in this study no significant association exist between child labor and educational level of their parents (p-value=0.11), the situation is similar to Ethiopia [11]. The working environment is more or less comfortable to the studied students, but most of them are exposed to problems in the place of the work (77.1%) or being abused by their employer (35.2%). The same finding was reported in Ghana (40% abused)[4,12]

Effect of child labor in their schooling children is in a negative direction; about (63.7%) of students have failed in their school due to work and (20%) of students wants to stop studying due to work, similar findings were reported in India.[(4)]

Health-related problems are reported in this study as 40.2% of students were injured at their place in contrast to Ghana (28.6%), this may be due to the nature of work and lack of regulations[(12)].

V. Conclusion

High prevalence of child labor may affect on their school achievements and be a predisposing factor drop-out. Working students are prone to health and psychological problems. Poverty and lack of legal protection of children are main constrains to save the child rights, and to protect them from abuse.

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