Socio-Economic and Cultural Problems of Brick Kiln’s Working Families: (A Case Study of District Faisalabad)

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ABSTRACT

In Pakistan large numbers of families are associated with this industry in towns and cities. Families working at brick kilns make important contribution in the economy of Pakistan but at the other end they are suffering in different social, economic, cultural and psychological issues. Even their children and females worked hard to get rid of such issues. So, giving the importance to this portion of community it would be the responsibility of social scientists that the issues faced by them would be identified and highlighted. The whole study was gone through the detailed investigation of social, economic and cultural problems of families working at brick kilns in district Faisalabad. Objectives of the Study were; to discover the socio-economic and cultural problems faced by the workers working at brick kilns and this study has following general objectives; to assess the socio-economic status of the working families serving at brick kilns, to investigate the economic issues of the working families, to find out the social problems (living, health, education, water and sanitation) faced by the working families, to evaluate the cultural problems (security, harassment, discrimination and exploitation) of the families working at brick kilns and to suggest reforms regarding policies about the labor working at brick kilns. District Faisalabad was the universe and families working at brick kilns were the target population. Out of 265 registered brick kilns 12 brick kilns were selected by using convenient sampling technique for this research. 220 working families were the sample size for this study covering 100% data collection. Head of the family was the respondent for this study. A structured interview schedule was developed for data collection and collected data through interview schedule was analyzed by applying Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

KEY WORDS: Socio-economic, cultural, brick kilns, exploitation, discrimination

I- INTRODUCTION

The Pakistan brick kiln industry is one of the biggest in the Continent Asia. It is an old-style, disorganized factory restricted to rural and peri-urban zones. People working at brick kilns have their own traditions, norms, values which constitute a distinct culture. Lahore and Faisalabad are big brick making areas of Punjab. Brick kilns having a specific culture, owe a malicious tradition of bounded and forced labor. While child labor prevalent at high level in both of these metropolitan cities of province Punjab, Lahore and Faisalabad. The intended study is an attempt to explore the socio-economic conditions of families working at brick kilns. It examines the cultural traditions and norms of children and these families. The inferences of the study will help in suggesting some measures improving the lives of these families. It will also contribute to design steps to eradicate this social evil (Asian Development Bank, 2011).

A study carried out by Turkpak International (Pvt.) limited in 1991 on “Wood use in the brick kiln industry of Pakistan”. Today, the world is facing serious socio-economic and political as well as cultural challenges, which are getting intense with time due to increased population growth and poverty. Among these issues, one of the most challenging subjects is of bounded and forced labor. The developing and under-developing countries in particular, are much affected by this issue. In Pakistan, the brick kiln industry is known to be one of the biggest in Asia. According to study conducted jointly by the Government of Pakistan and USAID 2004, calculated that there are over 3,000 brick making units in the country with over 50 % located in Punjab province. With the annual increase of 3 % per year, by 2009 the brick industry is estimated to be over 5,000 units.

Out of 177 nations, Pakistan is placed 136th on the Human Development Index. In Pakistan, the negative effects low human improvement speculations are borne by poor people, particularly specialists in the casual segment, which utilizes 71.9 percent of work power (barring non-horticulture laborers). The liabilities of casual division laborers

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are primarily connected to absence of financial and lawful assurance. Like other creating nations, local casual division job is likewise described by laborers' abuse regarding substandard states of work, for example, extended periods of work, and low wages. The work power focus in casual parts includes both instructed/prepared and un-taught and un-talented vagrant laborers from country zones. Other than female support, tyke work is additionally a key a portion of Pakistan casual areas. The casual area is supportive the formal division in Pakistan economy, yet the viable front of the country administrative components is for the most part not relevant to the casual segment, particularly the accompanying are not connected. Block ovens are a part of the casual area, where both managers and workers need access to official formal bolster, similar to fund, checking and so on (PILER, 2001).

In Pakistan, the block creation segment relies on fuel squandering elements and strategies, which add to air contamination and outflow of nursery gasses, in this way producing negative monetary and ecological effects. Moreover, inside the area there are social difficulties, for example, fortified work, tyke work, working antagonistic residential infrastructure, unclean water and sanitation environment, poor instruction and unfavorable word related wellbeing conditions and so forth., these issues need genuine thought. The area is one of the significant performing artists in the development business but because of its unconventional attributes is rebuked as a non-citizen and is not perceived as an industry. In spite of the fact that the utilization of other propelled fabricating materials, both privately produced and imported, has expanded as of late, blocks remain the fundamental and significant element of the extending development area. It is fascinating to watch that block making innovation embraced and being utilized as a part of Pakistan has yet to see any change not at all like the contending areas like earthenware production, tiles, concrete and marble business which have received cutting edge systems and gain sensible benefits from the all the partners, having been sharpened toward their social obligation by giving better word related environment (Gujarati, 2003).

Statement of the Problem:
The absence of basic facilities can affect the functioning of the individuals and then over all smooth running of society. Manual labor at Brick Kilns portrays stratum of population which is living below the standard line of minimum life requirement. Still they are living and doing the same job and own their work. They have a distinct way to live life, their own traditions, values and aspirations. Economically they are very poor because they are captured in the nasty cycle of bonded labor. People are bound to work on low wages according to the will and wish of those who control their means of sustenance. Workers at kilns are at the margins of Pakistani society. The whole family of a worker offers their services and even then hardly lives from hand to mouth. The present study will probe the problems & vulnerability of the workers at brick kiln.

Objectives of the Study:
- To assess the socio-economic status of the working families serving at brick kilns.
- To investigate the economic issues of the working families.
- To find out the social problems (living, health, education, water and sanitation) faced by the working families.
- To evaluate the cultural problems (security, harassment, discrimination and exploitation) of the families working at brick kilns.
- To suggest reforms regarding policies about the labor working at brick kilns.

Scope of the Study:
It is a well-known fact that there are thousands of families and their children engaged in brick making industry and majority of them work in bounded environment. Since, they live in isolation from the main population, there living conditions and wellbeing are largely dilapidated. Certainly, the in-depth knowledge about these factors is almost not existent. Thus, this study explores the problems and threats faced by the workers, working at brick kilns in District Faisalabad. This study is expected to provide answers to some of the questions; basis of which a concrete strategy and or action plan to address their problems and to get rid of the expected threats with alternative opportunities to improve their livelihood and wellbeing.

II- MATERIALS AND METHODS

Locale of the study was the district Faisalabad situated in Province Punjab, Pakistan. District Faisalabad was the universe for the current study and families working at brick kilns were the target population. A Survey research design was used to complete this study. Total brick kilns are 373 in district Faisalabad (According to the study conducted by Hayat Foundation, 2016). Out of 373 brick kilns, only 265 are registered under Government Act. Total numbers of families working at brick kilns are 5026 and average 20 families are working at each kiln (Hayat Foundation, 2016). These brick kilns are located at different locations in District Faisalabad. Out of 265 registered brick kilns 12 brick kilns
were selected by using convenient sampling technique for this research. As the researcher selected 12 brick kilns as sampled kilns and 220 are working at these selected kilns. Therefor all the families working at selected kilns were sample size for this study i.e. covering 100% data collection. Head of the family was the respondent for this study. Both male and female household heads were involved in this research. A structured interview schedule was developed for data collection. Descriptive data analysis was done through Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS).

Conceptual Framework of the Study:
The research was conducted based on the established conceptual framework based on literature review. The conceptual framework indicating the nature of variables and concepts and its conceptualization are given below.

| Nature of the variables/conceptual Framework and Indicators for the Research |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Independent Variable/Background variables | Intervening/intermediate Variables | Dependent Variables |
| Age | Bondage | Social, economic and cultural problems |
| Income | Lawlessness | Poor health |
| Sex | Exploitation | Living standards |
| Marital Status | Discrimination | Children’s education |
| Family size | Social acceptance | Children’s Socialization |
| Economic status | | Harassment |
| Educational status | | Women discrimination |
| Health status | | Child labor |

III- RESULTS

Following are the major results after the analysis, males are interviewed at large i.e. (83.63%) while (16.37%) females were interviewed, which intimated that women are also associated with this profession with different working categories moulder/sanchiwala (63.18%), baker/fireman (20.45%) and kharkar/carriage (16.37%). Out of 220 respondents, 52.72%) respondents have PKR 6001-9000 as their monthly income. Majority (87%) of the respondents told that they do not have any kind of property (residential or agricultural).100% of the respondents said they have drinking water through hand/electric pump/stream at work places but (94%) told they have no knowledge purity of the water either this water is pure or not. Sanitation issues also putting them more troubles, (76%) respondents told that they are using outdoor toileting whereas, majority i.e. (90%) respondents denied regarding proper drainage system and (91%) told they are using wood as fuel for cooking. As for as basic facilities are concerned, (96%) told that there were no play grounds for any recreational or supports activity and 65.46% told they have no basic education facility at their work places. Children and women were found vulnerable facing different diseases like fever, eye/ear infection, chest problems and skin infections. No dispensary or first aid box is available at the kiln. (70%) told they have taken advances/loans from the kiln owners and they are bound to do this work because they have signed a contract with them. Due to such contracts, they have to work more than 14 hours a day. (52%) respondents told about rubbish attitude of the managers/munshi towards workers while majority of the respondents i.e. (94%) told that they have no any unity to report negative incidents/issues facing by them therefore (65.45%) told that all the decisions or solutions of their issues were made by the munshi/manager of the kiln. (49%) respondents told that their women and children are facing harassment issues at work places, like facing physical and verbal harassment. They are found fearful regarding their future, only (24%) of the respondents agreed that process of bricks making should be mechanized. (94.55%) of the respondents told that they have their identity cards (CNICs) and registered as voter and majority (92%) of the respondents told that they have no familiarity towards labor laws.

Testing of Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Lower the income of the respondents higher will be the socio-economic challenges
Table 1. Association between income of the respondents and social-economic challenges faced by the worker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income (Rs.)</th>
<th>socio-economic challenges</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 7000</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7001-9000</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9001-11000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11001 or above</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68.1%</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 14.07  d.f. = 3  P-value = 0.029*  Gamma = 0.142  
* = Significant

Table 1 represents the association between incomes the respondents and the socio-economic challenges. Chi-square value shows a significant association between incomes of the respondents and socio-economic challenges. Gamma value shows a positive relationship between the variables. So the null hypothesis “there is no association between income and socio-economic challenge” is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Female workers will be faced more cultural problems (security, harassment, discrimination) at workplace

Table 2. Association between gender and cultural problems at workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>cultural problems at workplace</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 52.12 d.f. = 1  P-value = 0.000**  Gamma = 0.832  
** = Highly significant

Table 2 represents the association between gender of the workers and cultural problems (security, harassment, discrimination) at workplace. Chi-square value shows a highly significant association between gender and cultural problems (security, harassment and discrimination), they are faced. Gamma value shows a strong positive relationship between the variables. It means female facing more cultural problems (security, harassment and discrimination) at workplace. So the null hypothesis “there is no association between gender and cultural problems (security, harassment and discrimination) at workplace” is rejected.

IV- DISCUSSIONS

The absence of basic facilities can affect the functioning of the individuals and then over all smooth running of society. Manual labor at Brick Kilns portrays stratum of population which is living below the standard line of minimum life requirement. Still they are living and doing the same job and own their work. They have a distinct way to live life, their own traditions, values and aspirations. Economically they are very poor because they are captured in the nasty cycle of bonded labor. People are bound to work on low wages according to the will and wish of those who control their means of sustenance. Brick kiln workers are at the margins of Pakistani society. The whole family of a worker offers their services and even then hardly lives from hand to mouth. The present study will probe the problems & vulnerability of the workers at brick kiln.

It is a well-known fact that there are thousands of families and their children engaged in brick making industry and majority of them work in bounded environment. Since, they live in isolation from the main population, there living conditions and wellbeing are largely dilapidated. Certainly, the in-depth knowledge about these factors is almost not existent. Thus, this study explores the problems and threats faced by the workers, working at brick kilns in District Faisalabad. This study is expected to provide answers to some of the questions; basis of which a concrete strategy and or

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action plan to address their problems and to get rid of the expected threats with alternative opportunities to improve their livelihood and wellbeing is designed.

Brick making is one of the primitive manufacturing industries in the world and this skill is as ancient as the Indus valley Civilization. In Pakistan, large numbers of families are associated with this industry in towns and cities. Families working at brick kilns make important contribution in the economy of Pakistan but at the other end they are suffering in different social, economic, cultural and psychological issues. Even their children and females worked hard to get rid of such issues. So, giving the importance to this portion of community it would be the responsibility of social scientists that the issues faced by them would be identified and highlighted. In this study, multiple aspects of families working at brick kilns would be discussed like to assess their socio-economic status, to find out in depth information about their daily living patterns, to find out their social, economic and cultural problems. Moreover, parent’s desires and wishes towards their children’s social lives and future and multi directional harassment issues in gendered perspective and exploitative domains would be investigated. The whole study was gone through the detailed investigation of social, economic and cultural problems of families working at brick kilns in district Faisalabad.

V- CONCLUSIONS

The primary data indicates that the living standards of the workers require urgent improvement as basic facilities are lacking whether in terms of housing needs, or access to social services. Most of the workers are poor and they are earning less than their monthly incomes and they have to borrow money to manage their monthly budgets. Access to education and health are the bigger issues of the area and access to health care facilities provided by the public sector or employer is non-existent. Mostly families are living rent free katcha houses provided by the owners and they have no convenience to move even in emergencies. As the basic facilities are concerned drinking water is available at workplaces but no one knows about its purity. The source of this availability is the employer or the welfare organizations. Mostly brick kiln residents are using outdoor toiletting for defecations. There is no drainage system and they are using wood as fuel for cooking. No play grounds for any recreational or supports activity and no basic education facility at their work places and neither vocational institutes nor training school for them and children at their work places. Majority facing health issues due to the hazards nature of work and children’s and women are also facing different diseases like fever, eye/ear infection, chest problems and skin infections. There was no dispensary available for them at work places or first aid box facility to cater emergencies. Mostly people are doing brick kilns because their parents involve in this profession while some adopted this profession because they have taken loans or advances from the brick kilns owners. Families working at kilns are ready to skip this profession if replacement opportunities were available to them. Brick making is a time taking profession and people are doing 14 hours working in a day and they are doing work at night times also and this practice is continued round the year at brick kilns. More teasing situation for the families working at kilns is when they are facing rubbish and harsh attitude from the manager’s/munshi’s. Moreover, there is no any facility to report any sort of incident at brick kilns. Women and children of brick kilns working families facing continues harassment issues at workplaces. People working at brick kilns were not happy that this profession should be mechanized. There is no any platform for raising the issues or conflicts of working families and all the decisions or solutions of their issues were made by the mushi/manager at the kiln. They have their identity cards (CNICs) and get registered as voter.

Testing of hypotheses results also showing the associations between the variables and the intensity of the problem discussed in the research. Chi-square value shows a significant association between incomes of the respondents and socio-economic challenges. Gamma value shows a positive relationship between the variables. So the null hypothesis “there is no association between income and socio-economic challenge” is rejected and alternative hypothesis accepted. Chi-square value shows a highly significant association between gender and cultural problems (security, harassment and discrimination) they are faced. Gamma value shows a strong positive relationship between the variables. It means female respondents facing cultural problems (security, harassment and discrimination) at workplace. So the null hypothesis “there is no association between gender and cultural problems (security, harassment and discrimination) workplace” is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

VI- SUGGESTIONS:
Researcher proposes the following recommendations;
• There should be schooling for children and provision of non-formal schools in the area. There should be adult literacy and/or Vocational Training with compensation for the working families and their children.
• Alternative skills training can be initiated.
• Better quality health facilities should be provided by the government at brick kiln’s working families with suitable stipend.
• Health insurance schemes for the poor should be launched.
• Availability of pure drinking water and first-aid box should be the compulsory at every kiln, and it should be monitored by the government authorities.
• There should workers union to raise their voice for dispute resolution and associations for articulating workers’ demands.

REFERENCES


