

Exploring the Experiences of Child Domestic Labor: A Qualitative Study

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Author's Contribution

¹ Conception of study

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¹ Analysis/Interpretation/Discussion

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² Critical Review

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Cite this Article: Ashiq, U., Dar, M.R. Exploring the Experiences of Child Domestic Labor: A Qualitative Study. Children Rights Journal of Rawalpindi Medical University. 30 Nov. 2021; 1(1): 23-31.

Conflict of Interest: Nil
Funding Source: Nil

Abstract

The current study was conducted to know the experiences of the children domestically working. The aim of the study was to explore the experiences of the children who are working as domestic laborer. For this purpose, the phenomenological approach was used. It was based on in depth interviews which was semi structured with open ended questions. Children were taken with the age range of the 12-18 years. The duration of working was more than 5 years. At the completion of gathering the data from participant's data analysis by using "NVivo 11 pro" was done with labeling, generating themes and categorization of the themes.

The main categories were emerged into the central experiences of the child domestic labor biological factors, psychological issues, financial issues, social factors. Overall study results indicate that children who are domestically working are facing several challenges which is threatening to their physical health conditions, risks on mental health, rising financial issues and rejecting them socially by discrimination & unjust. The concluding points is that these children as if working in threatening situation is harmful for their physical health, worsening psychological conditions and damaging their social lives, keeping them unskilled in the long run.

Key words: Child Domestic Labor, unjust, discrimination, maltreatment, unskilled.

Introduction

The time of the childhood is the period for children to be in school and at play, to grow to feel secure, to stay around healthy and safe environment. This phase is to experience the love, affection, security and encouragement of their family, teachers, and community by the guardians and care takers. In childhood children nurtured by their parents or care figures to enrich their potential and abilities. Parents wants their children to have a healthier quality life for children as young people deserves special kind of attention, resources and opportunities. Every nation, parents, teachers, leaders, community and society is committed to provide children education, protection and engaged to improve their life conditions as well as their psychological wellbeing¹.

According to the study that parents plays important role in the learning of a child. Parental role is full with responsibilities. Parent's role is expected to endorse the child's mental health and emotional development as well as to achieve the high level of confidence, optimistic life style, and higher academic levels and positive social life². Parenting also provide all kind of basic needs and satisfactory life style. Unfortunately, situation is turning off instead of taking responsibility of bringing up a child our millions of children are compelled to work a labor in the age when they should not work more than their physical capacity³.

According to the estimate of International Labor Organization⁴ for the year 2012 which indicated that numbers of adolescents aged 15–17 years in hazardous work and this age range is in child domestic labor is dangerously increasing. During this crucial period of time hazardous work is threatening for the health, security and safety for the adolescents also harmful for physical and mental health. Alongside this harmful living conditions impair their educational and leaning opportunities. In the several forms of labors one of the most vulnerable form in which particularly young children are involved that is a child domestic labor.⁵

Child Domestic Labor is one of the worst form of labor and considered as modern form of slavery as well as the most common and traditional forms of work for children particularly age 7-18 specifically for girls⁶. Although now the young boys also working as girls in homes. Child domestic Labor is carried out in private homes where child lives in the boundaries of owners homes and therefore it is hidden from the view of public and community's supervision and control. This situation makes child domestic workers particularly vulnerable to exploitation, physical, emotional and

sexual abuse. There are several cases which has been reported by Pakistani news in which children who are working in domestic labor brutally treated by their employers. Nearly Nearly 12 million children are in labor in Pakistan and they mostly offered the job of child domestic labor.

A child domestic labor is kind of employment which in which is under 18 child perform all domestic chores on nominal wages⁷. The type of tasks are cooking, washing clothes, cleaning and looking after babies and toddlers. Sometimes purchasing house essentials usually done by young boys. Girls stay inside of homes and more over involved in baby siting.

There are numerous factors that Child Domestic Labor is dangerously increasing for instance orphan hood, poverty, poor living conditions. Around world specifically in Asia ILO reported in (2003) that around 175,000 children under 18 are employed in domestic labor in Central America. Although most child laborers are between 12 and 17 years of age but some are as young as 5. In South Africa nearly 54,000 children under 15 are working as domestics and in Guatemala around 38,000 children between 5 and 7. It is also estimated that more girls below the age of 16 work in domestic service than in any other category of child labor. In Pakistan according to the report of Dawn 12.5 million in labor and specifically in Domestic Labor nearly 8.52 million children are working in domestic labor⁸.

Literature has revealed that this working situation is where a child experience maltreatment such as discrimination, isolation, particularly they cannot even resist against any kind of physical, emotional and sexual exploitation. They cannot express their desires also lose their self-respect⁹. Study have shown that experiences of child domestic labor more significantly related with psychological problems than the children who are non-working¹⁰. Literature have shown that among these children psychological problems are bedwetting, sleeplessness, withdrawal, regressive behavior, depression and phobic reactions. According to the study depression among child domestic workers has also been reported in Bangladesh¹¹ and in Latin American countries¹².

In this working conditions children face high level of emotional abuse and it has been identified through the studies that the emotional abuse is highly harmful for the growth & development of a child. At this stage maltreatment can lead to structural and chemical changes which can involve in emotional and stress regulation. (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2010). Maltreatment can cause

anxiety and depression in late adolescence¹³. Continually facing emotional abuse or severe deprivation can permanently effect on the brain ability to use serotonin, a neurotransmitter that helps produce feelings of well-being and emotional stability¹⁴. Psychologically emotional abuse can influence their physical wellbeing, crash potential & abilities, deprived them from education they cannot complete their schooling, loss of right to play. In the long run the long term consequences can lead them to with many psychological issues for instance anti-social behavior. They are also highly vulnerable to emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

Studies have shown that child who are working in homes are separated from their parents and siblings where they deprived from the familial love, care and bonding. They also have the less opportunities to socialize also threatening to their emotional and mental health. Feelings of disorientation also amplified among these children.

Rationale of the Study

This study has been carried out to identify the factors associated in child domestic labor and risk factors effecting a child biologically, psychologically, morally and socially. This study will also identify these hazardous working conditions of domestically working children and evaluating that how these working conditions are contributing to elevate the mental health risks.

Materials and Methods

In order to explore the cultural specific expression of a domestic labor among adolescents: Phenomenological approach was used to explore the experiences of the child domestic labor. For this purpose, 8 adolescents were selected among them 6 were girls and 2 were boys. All were from domestic child labor and duration of working in homes was more than 5 years. The operational definition was provided to the domestic labor adolescents and they responded. The semi structured Interview technique was used to explore the underlying issues. Interviews were conducted individually.

Participants: Participants of this study were taken who are working in homes and who have left their work and came back to their homes. Snow ball sampling technique was used to identify the domestic laborers. The age range of the participants was 12-18 girls and boys.

Procedure: The procedure of this current study was that participants consent was taken before interviews

as well as the employer's consent. They understood the instructions properly that they were assured to keep their identity confidential.

Ethical guidelines: Consent was taken from the participants and from the parents. The participants who were living with the employers their proper consent was taken. They were assured the information and identity will be kept confidential and right to withdraw will be given.

Data management and analysis: in the current study initial coding process was done by the reviewing all data obtained from interviews. This data from the domestic labors was coded through the labeling process with NVivo 11 plus software. Then the interconnected codes were arranged to give themes and inter related themes were arranged to give categories.

The given categories represent the actual factors of child domestic labor.

Results labelling the data, codes, themes and categories were generated from the interviews. We presented categories first followed by themes and codes.

Categories, by using Nvivo 11 plus software, the process of initial coding was completed in which Four major categories were explored by the experiences of child domestic labor.

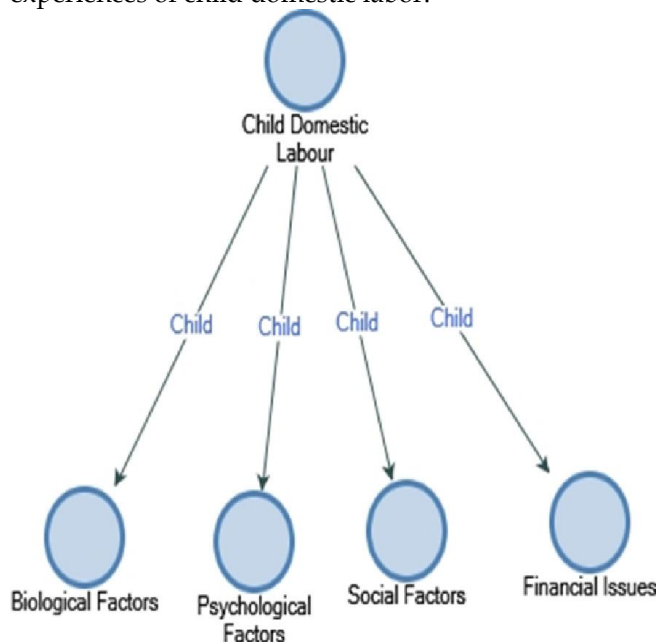


Figure 1: Four major categories are emerged after data analysis through NVivo 11 plus software.

According to the image the causes and impact of the child domestic labor mainly is associated with biological issues, psychological issues, financial problems and social issues.

Themes: By using NVivo 11 plus software, the themes were produced in order to condense the data into their corresponding categories. Overall, eight has been identified which has been reduced into four major categories. Each theme is explained as follow:

1. Physical Issues

According to the child domestic labor a child experiences are closely related with physical issues. Child is with this working age range is also a period of

growth & development but these working conditions effect on child physically for instance they feel insecure, heavy work load, bonded to work, feels lethargic, work in poor working conditions, looks after young babies more than their physical capacity, have a problem of sleeplessness, lack of security, poor health conditions.

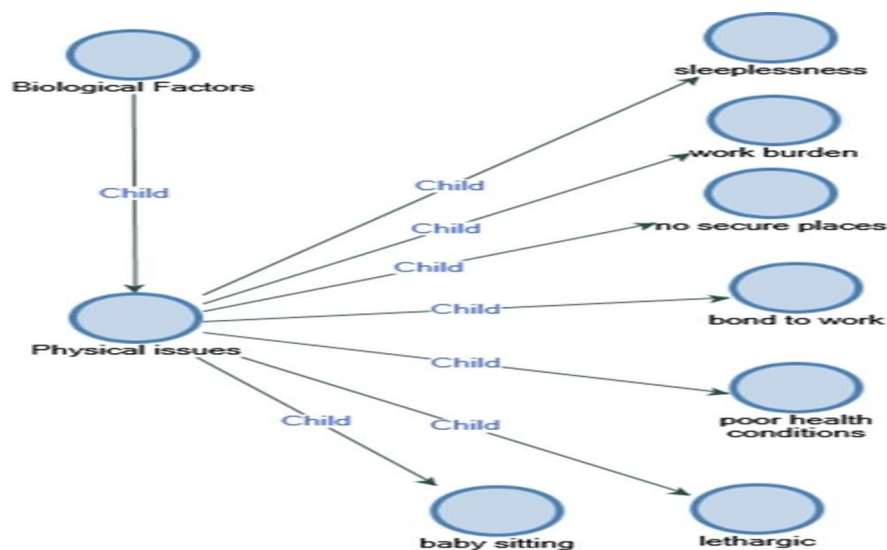


Figure 2: This picture explains that the themes comes under the category of physical issues, are more commonly associated with the child domestic labor

2. Low Self Esteem

As the child domestic labor experiences highlighted the low self-esteem issues such as feels in himself or herself inferior than other children as if one participant described "I sometimes I don't sleep because I feel fear that people will come to know I am domestic labor" lose their confidence, helplessness, worthlessness,

unable to concentrate on learning new skills, and feels fearful.

3. Maltreatment

In child domestic labor the experience of maltreatment is highly perceived in which smacking, hitting, rebuking, ridicule by others, using an abusive language. "Our parents are greedy they don't allow us to study they want us to do child domestic labor".

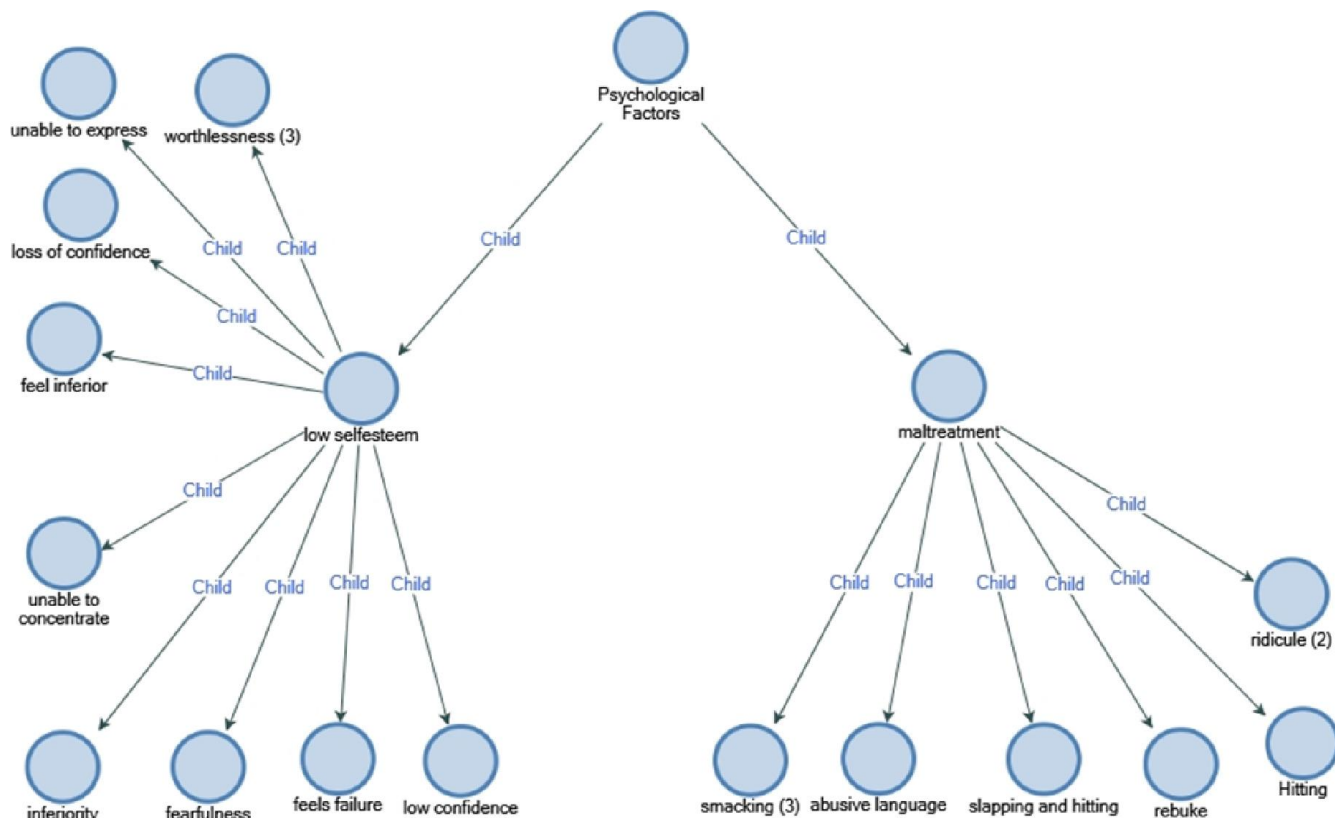


Figure 3: This picture explains that the themes come under the category of psychological factors, low self-esteem and maltreatment are more commonly associated with the child domestic labor working conditions

4. Lack of Opportunities

The children working as domestic laborers they deprived from the all kind of childhood opportunities, they cannot go to school, unable to fulfill their needs, they cannot afford their education, deprived from any kind of play activities, and basic learning skills.

5. Lack of Social Support

While exploring the experiences of domestic child labor this has been figured out that these children miss their social support system, they feel "they are compelled to work because their parents are self-centered and sent them to work". They don't have any social support, no family support, no acceptance by society, no acceptance by family and parents if they don't want to work.

6. Unjust

By exploring experiences child domestic labor this category of people feels that they are discriminated by main stream society, facing unjust of opportunities, they are oppressed, belongs from poor communities. And have disrespectful position in the society.

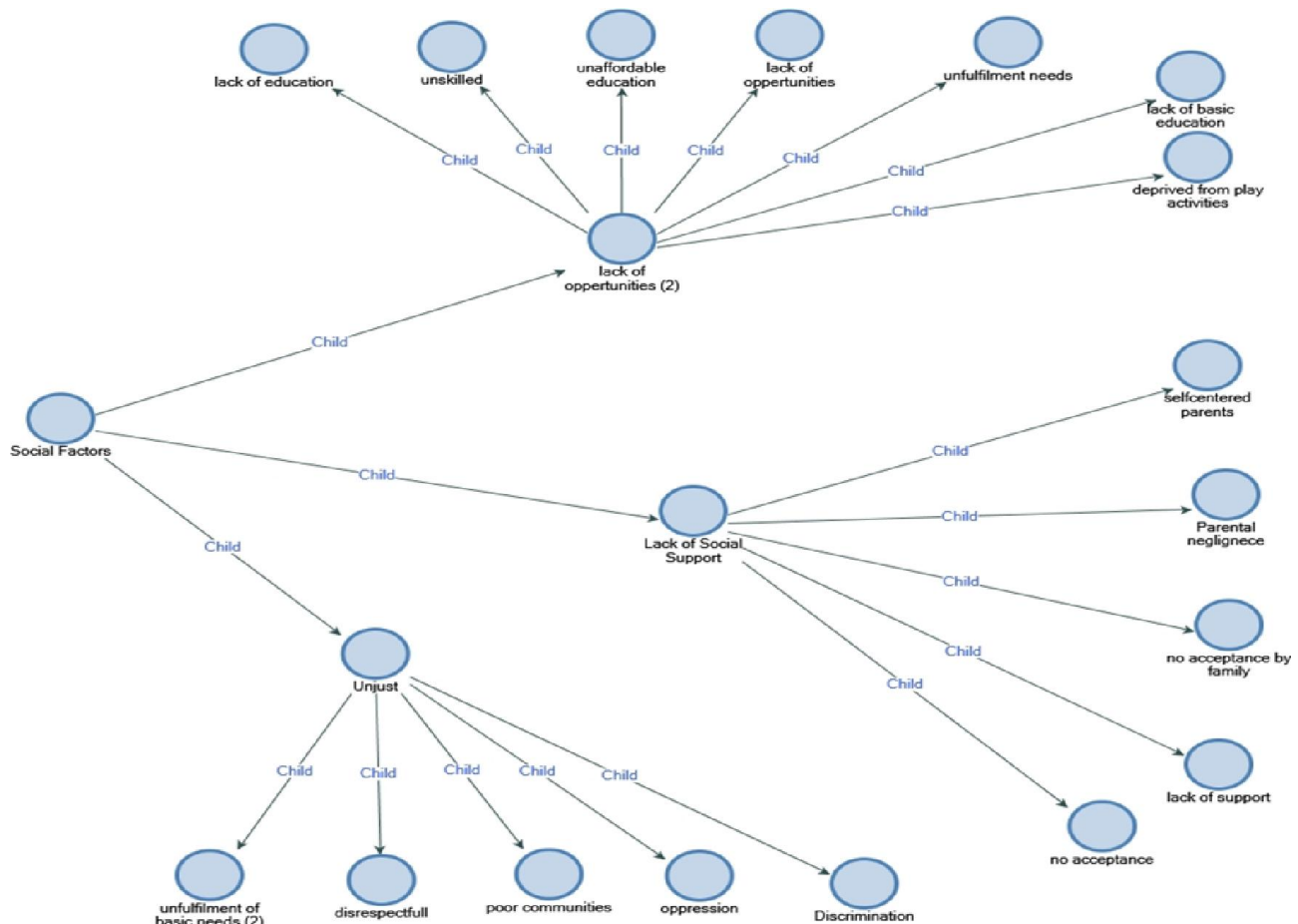


Figure 3: This picture explains that the themes come under the category of social factors, are more commonly associated with the child domestic labor working conditions

7. Financial Issues

Domestically working children shared experiences of financial issues is the main cause of working as domestic labor. They are bread winner of the family, rising poverty, familial economic issues and have low wages, exploitation in wages mean paid less than they work.

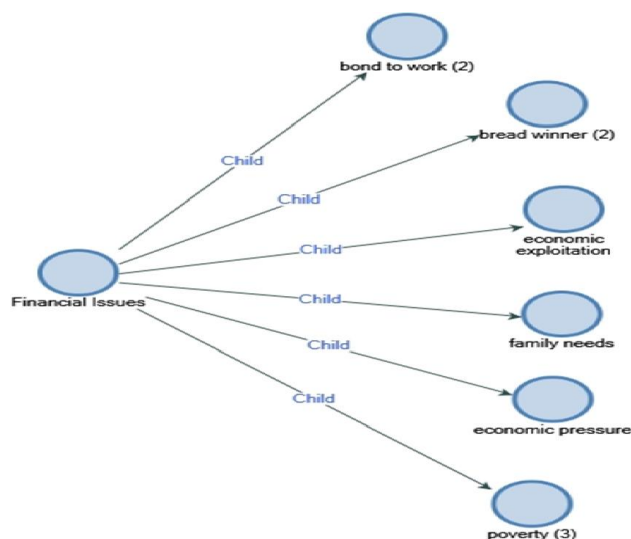
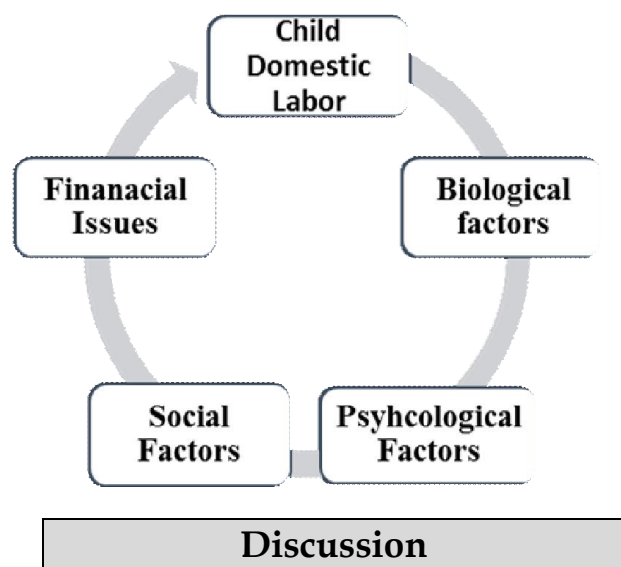


Figure 4: This picture explains that the themes come under the category of social factors, are more commonly associated with the child domestic labor working conditions

Theoretical Model

The theoretical model obtained on the basis of results shows that the child domestic labor is basically revolving around issues which are contributing in developing a child with several deprivations from a childhood, by indorsing biological factors, psychological problems, social issues and financial issues. These main issues are described as that domestically working children facing. This theoretical model has been obtained through the perception of children working as a domestic labor.



The study was aimed to explore the experiences of the child domestic labor. For this purpose, the qualitative research design was used to explore from as a qualitative research methodology this is a unfolding model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experiences¹⁵. Interviews to explore the phenomenology is most common method of gathering a data in qualitative research, it helps to explain, better understand and explore research subject's opinion and behavior. Interview questions are open ended and in depth information has been collected.

The child domestic labor is a worst form of slavery and many children are bonded to work due their familial circumstances, particularly financial issues literature revealed that denying children's fundamental right to be educated between the ages of 5 to 16 exposes them to health hazards, creels their development and indulge them at risk to several forms of violence, exploitation, which is physical, psychological and

sexual. Nearly 80% children want to go to school in Pakistan who are working as domestic labor¹⁶. The study suggests child domestic labor is hazardous occupation for children in which it has harmful effect on child 's growth & development, safety & security. Study indicate that child domestic labor is hazardous occupation, which restrict their normal growth & development, they at risk of maltreatment and emotional harm.⁸ It also a denial of childhood needs and deprived to fulfill biological essentials of a child. Study indicates that experiences of the child domestic labor which is explored through the perceptions of the children is more closely related to their issues, threatened to their safety & security, no fulfillment of basic needs, deprived to play and less social activities to socialize as normal human being.¹⁷

Literature stated that that hazardous working conditions are causing discrimination, isolation, children are away from care takers and also experience the maltreatment in which physical abuse, and oral abuse is also reported by the children which assures that child also understood and perceives and lose of self-respect.⁹

Study also shown when they feel helpless and bond to work they also repress their true feelings children with domestic labor indicated through the interviews they feel unexpressed can't express their desires¹⁸. Few studies reported that the experiences of child domestic labor is more significantly associated with the psychological problems in children with long term consequences than non-working children.¹⁰ Current study clearly explore the experiences of children with mental health issues as well long term outcome on psychological well-being by reporting feeling of inferiority, sleeplessness, fearfulness, worthlessness, loss of confidence, fear to be ridiculed and rejection by society.¹² In the long run literature have shown this particular problem can be turned into clinical issues such as depression, anxiety, violent and aggressive behavior.¹⁹ Children pay heavy price of this domestic labor even brutally tortured and killed.

This study also has identified that this segment of society their children feels that they suppressed, oppressed portion of society which is facing extreme level of discrimination and unjust. They live in marginalized areas where they do not have any kind to resources to have better quality life. As if poverty, discrimination, unjust, lack of opportunities and lack of resources, no place of acceptance, less opportunities of play and get education and have skillful knowledge. Working in domestic labor playing a massive role in

Therefore, study suggests that by exploring the fact and the experiences of the children domestically working can be addressed by knowing their opinions. Role of the stakeholders can be identified appropriately. Parents should be aware about the hazardous conditions and later on impact of child's mental health and physical development. Further the children who are survivors' psychological prevention and counseling should be implemented for their better healthy life.

Conclusion

A word cloud centered around the words "child", "domestic", and "labour". Other words include "smacking", "poverty", "unable", "exploitation", "worthlessness", "inferior", "conditions", "burden", "bond", "work", "places", "family", "needs", "pressure", "concentrate", "hitting", "failure", "express", "feels", "low", "rebuken", "abusive", "concentrate", "loss", "feel", "poor", "secure", "inferiority", "confidence", "ridicule", "fearfulness", "lethargic", "winner", "health", "language", "sleeplessness".

The phenomena of Child Domestic Labor is global it is increasing swiftly, Asian countries and Pakistan

Acknowledgment

All families who cooperated with me and Children working as Domestic Labor. I am highly grateful for them they have shown their trust on me.

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