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Factors Contributing to Child Labor in Afghanistan: A Case Study in Jalalabad City

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Abstract

Child labour in Afghanistan is a critical socio-economic problem that needs special attention of policy makers. In order to make effective policies, to reduce child labour, it is important to understand the specific factors that affect it in different situations. The paper empirically examines these factors through a primary data set, which is collected from the six sub-sectors of Jalalabad province from 5-14 years old children. Ordered Probit model has been adopted as the main estimation technique for carrying out this work. The results showed that education, fertility, parental education, household income level and child dependency ratio are, among other factors, the major influencing factors in our models.

Key Words: Child Labor, Afghanistan
JEL: D1

Background of the Study

Afghanistan has passed through a difficult period in its existence since the Soviet invasion, (Kakar, 1995). Since late 1970s, it has been characterized by endless war and conflicts that has destroyed the state and all its institutions. This has resulted into enormous socio economic challenges; mass unemployment and consequently poverty have come to define households which is forcing child members of households to engage in informal employment so as to make ends meet, (Barnett R Rubin, 1989).

The wars that Afghanistan has been experiencing since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1978), the civil war that followed amongst the Mujahedeen (1994), the US invasion (2001), and the war on terror have caused untold sufferings and have created a large number of disabled, widows, orphans and refugees. The wars have turned Afghanistan into a beleaguered society by robbing the able-bodied human resources and forcing children and in some cases women to take care of their households by engaging in some economic activities (Barnett R. Rubin, 2000). In the aftermath of the US-led invasion of Afghanistan, the war has so far driven 683,301 indigenous population out from their lands (where they derived much of their livelihood), scattering them into cities, small town and relatively settled places where they are forced to engage in some income generating activities for their survival (UNHCR, 2015).

The persistent insecurity and sporadic violence have turned the attention of the state apparatus and relevant institutions from addressing the highly impactful socioeconomic issue to mitigating the genes of war and insurgency. The US-led intervention in the wake of September 9/11 was perceived to be the watershed moment for changing the fate of the Afghan society on many fronts, such

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as economic development, reconstruction, stability and security, but still, all the best wishes remain at the level of conception and translating them into implementation remains a distant dream. According to World Bank report Matsumoto (2008), with a 48.4% population under the age of 15 years, Afghanistan is the fifth youngest nation in the world, and the first in Asia (WB, 2015). The labor force participation rate is reported as 49.8 percent (CSO, 2013)

The protracted conflict destroyed the existing social and economic fabrics and left the political institutions and physical infrastructures of the country in shambles. The ongoing war in Afghanistan not only impedes the socioeconomic development but also severely undermines the potential growth of human capital of the young generation and most importantly children (Barnett R. Rubin, 2000).

Furthermore, conservative customs, poverty, deep rooted traditional values, lack of educational facilities and a strong culture of gender discrimination deprive over five million school-age children or one third of Afghanistan's under 18 years of population of about 14.5 million of an education, (UNICEF, 2013).

Given the realities on the ground, the government can hardly implement international labor laws contained in convention 138 that requires that children aged 15 years should do light work and 18 years hazardous work (ILO, 1973). According to Afghanistan labor laws, the minimum age is 15 years but it is relaxed to 14 years on condition if the family approves it (Catani, Schauer, & Neuner, 2008). In Afghanistan, it is common to find children as young below 14 years of age engaging in some sort of employment, particularly in the carpet industry, auto workshop, selling on the street , begging for money, sales worker, craft and related work, or scavenging cans and bottles from the city's putrid rubbish dump (Catani et al., 2008).

Several factors influence parents in their decision to let their children to work. Poverty is apparently at the top of such factors prompting household decisions in that direction (Blunch & Verner, 2001). Furthermore, composition of household and norms of gender affect the extent to which labour resources are available, consequently necessitating sending children into the workplace (Fafchamps & Wahba, 2006). The remuneration given to these children is very low and sometime they are not even paid by their employers and in some instances, they are given tasks which are very dangerous and beyond their capacities (A. K. Basu & Chau, 2004).

Biggeri et.al (2010) argue that the persistence of poverty in the country is forcing the children to join the labor force market which has adverse effect on their lives and on the country at large. Hence, from a politico-economic perspective, the existence of child labor does not bode well for the future stability and economic development of Afghanistan, This argument can be underpinned by the given fact that a large number of children are not going to schools to acquire skills essential to drive them out of the current predicament. The chronic nature of household vulnerability in Afghanistan further exacerbates the problem of child labor; almost eight out of ten household in Afghanistan are prone to some kind of shocks i.e., environmental, political, economic (NRVA, 2012).

Children's Working Conditions in Afghanistan

Like in many other war ravaged countries, the prevalence of child labor and incessant conflict in Afghanistan are not coincidental phenomenon. Due to the never ending spiral of conflict and insurgency, the Afghan children are almost bracketed in the "Children of War" generation. As a matter of fact, conflict has paved the way for the joint evolution of the menace of debilitating poverty, insecurity, and despair, which has consistently thumbed an

alarmingly big chunk (30 percent) children in Afghanistan under the curse of child labor (UNICEF, 2011).

In Afghanistan, the prevalence of child labor ranges from minimum 18 to maximum 42 percent. Both in magnitude and severity, the phenomenon of child labor is highly prevalent in western and southwestern parts of Afghanistan, whereas the prevalence of child labor is comparatively lower in central and southeastern parts Of Afghanistan, (Guimbert et.al 2008). Household composition, particularly the age and sex of household members, can affect decisions to use child labour, since different people have different access to labour markets based on norms shaping work expectations. As noted above, age and health status of household members, particularly of the "expected breadwinners", can have an effect on perceptions of household insecurity and decisions about child labour, (AREU, 2008).

Most of the children are under the minimum age for employment in Afghanistan and work many more hours than permitted under Afghan law. They also face both physical and psychosocial hazards that can have severe and long-term consequences for their well-being. The degree to which children are exposed to harm depends on the interplay of hazards, risks and protective factors in their work and family lives. Hazardous and high-risk activities combined with few protective measures constitute work that is likely to harm not only children's health, but also their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development(AREU, 2008).

Parents and children of both child labour and non-child labour households have high aspirations for a successful and prosperous future. Such aspirations, however, are tempered by physical and economic insecurity and lack of access to high quality education. Tackling the issue of child labour is not only a question of eliminating hazardous or harmful work performed by children, but also requires reviving people's hope and confidence in the future by increasing physical and livelihood security, improving school quality, and enhancing local governance and accountability (AREU, 2008).

In short, both the magnitude and extremity of child labor is an appalling fact in Afghanistan. Let alone the rest of the country, there are 70000 children only in the city of Kabul scavenging for the bare survival of their own (UNICEF, 2015).

Literature

Examining the situation with child poverty in Afghanistan, Biggeri et al. (2010) concluded that the multidimensionality of poverty afflicts unbearable cost on the future prospects for child's development. In a pioneering study, Kantor (2008) found that beyond poverty, the social and economic cost-benefit analysis of work and education dominates household's children decision-making process. On the other hand, the findings of Grace and Pain (2004) unveils the diversity of wealthier families in Kabul as a strategy for accumulating wealth, whereas the diversity of poor household, including children as part of it, is a way of mitigating the extreme poverty. In an attempt of describing the Nahia-wise child distribution and raising the awareness about the issue of child labor in Afghanistan, (AIHRC, 2006), observed that most of the children work as carpet weavers, shopkeepers, vendors, and tailors. In the context of war and insecurity, Catani et al. (2008), notice that children are not only feeling the brunt of the war and post-traumatic shocks but they are also highly exposed to domestic violence in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

Recently, Kofoly (2014) investigated the role of Afghan conflict in premature children in the labor market. He further noted that the surge in violence after the US led invasion having positively affected the supply of child labor. He also discovers that despite the increase in the supply of child labor due to

conflict, hours of non-domestic work for girls have decreased.

Child labor is still a dominant phenomenon in most of the developing countries. According to Jones and Rodgers (2011), civil wars and protracted conflicts have far-reaching repercussions for millions of children, women, and men. To capture the effects of violence and civil wars both in the short and long run, on these indicators, Justino et al. (2013), found mixed results for the impact of violence and conflict in the former, whereas in the latter, children suffered substantial loss of human capital. This finding is reinforced by Shemyakina et al. (2011). Amin et.al (2004), and and Duncan (1997) confirm that poverty is the principal factor of child labor in most of the developing countries. However, based on the characterization of every society, some studies have found poverty having mixed role in the incidence of child labor; for example, some studies claim that poverty is not the sole determinant but one of the determinants that explain child labor. A recent study by Sarkar (2012) suggests that declining poverty may not be the only panacea for reducing child labor.

The prevalence of child labor is considered as obstacle to the growth of human capital in children. The studies of Emerson et al. (2007) and Psacharopoulos (1999) show that child labor is negatively related with lower level of human capital. Child labor, through the channels of time constraints (because of less available time for school), and physical and psychological constraints (because of exhaustion after hours of work), inhibits the potential growth of human capital in children, (Baland and Robinson (2000). However, some economists like Psacharopoulos (1997) and Fan (2004) contend that child labor tend to be a basis for educational financing, in this case, more children would raise the level of income to be invested in the quality of children. They argue that deterring child labor may prompt children to work more and accumulate less human capital.

On the same token, Delap (2001) cites from the slum areas in Bangladesh that gender norms and age subordination as the main determinants for the prevalence of child labor. By contrast, Weiner (1991) argued that more than anything else, cultural norms are the main causes of child labor. Bargaining position of mother is also considered an essential element in addressing the problem of child labor; in his inclusive study, Chang (2006) finds that higher bargaining power of mother plays a significant role in affecting the child's work sustenance. Besides, higher schooling years of mother relative to father is more influential in determining the work and school likelihoods of children. Reggio (2011), found that increasing the power to bargain is negatively associated with the reduction of work hours for daughters rather than sons.

As far as the impact of the size of family on the educational attainment of a child is concerned, the existent literature presents mixed results about their relationship. For example, Åslund et al. (2010) investigated the relationship between the extent of the family and attainments in education and found no effect of the household size on educational attainment in U.S, Norway, and Israel respectively.

Moreover, Bhalotra and Heady (2003) discuss the paradoxical nature of land in the debate about child labor, and argue that children from rich families with land have higher inclination to work than their counterparts from poor households with little land. In a comparative study, Ray (2000) argues that families live in poverty have lower child labor in Peru, whereas the reverse occurs in the case of Pakistan.

Dumas et al. (2007) found that in developing world, credit markets are imperfect, so the parents find difficulty in resource allocation over time. Moreover, G. Becker and Tomes (1976) discussed the quantity-quality trade off in a household, they concluded that, surge in children's quantity raises their quality cost.

Psacharopoulos (1997), investigated the impact of more young siblings on child labor and schooling, such type of siblings to be related to a lesser extent with schooling and surprisingly fewer children going to work in Peru. In addition, Cigno et al. (2002), analyzed the determinants of child labor, and found a significantly direct effect of the children with ages ranging from 6 to 16 who were working at the time, and an inverse relationship on school allocated time. On the contrary, J. Angrist et al. (2010) found that having more children decreases maternal supply of labor.

On the contrary, some studies argue the relation between child labor and fertility to be ambiguous. For example, Baland and Robinson (2000), found that the increase in family size diminishes the work length for children. They argued that as more children raise the overall family income, it consequently reduces the labor intensity per child, but increases the demand for more children. Another line of argument is that growth in fertility raises the overall cost for children consequently necessitating additional child labor to raise more income.

Theoretical Literature

Keeping in view the perceived role and function of every member in the household, so far different theories have been developed, which provide plausible account for the incidence of children in the workplaces. For example, Rosato and Schmitz (2006) argued that assuming household utility maximization is subject to the different sets of features, including leisure for both children and parents, the number of children, schooling of children, and the composition of goods, therefore, decision of time allocation for every member of the household differs. For example, a child may allocate time among market work, home production, education and leisure. Similarly, parents may also allocate her time among child rearing, market work, homework and leisure. According to this framework, if the father's leisure and child education are substitutes, then a rise in wage of the father will increase his leisure price thusly leading to substitution of education for children. Whereas in case of child quality as being the normal good, a rise in the father's wage will lead to rise in child's education. Similarly, (Akerlof, 1982) argued that the mother's role in the market has a greater impact on the overall composition and household preferences. For instance, a rise in mother's earning increases the opportunity cost of having more children, so evading that cost, and consequently preserving the quality of child by investing the increments of wage in education, mothers tend to compress household size by decreasing birth.

In the same context, the wage for children increases school time opportunity cost and return to each birth. Hence, larger families may trade off quality of children for quantity, which further declines educational attainment. Following are some standard Child Labor theories. These include the theory of economic crisis of (Ferreira, 2009), intra household externalities (Maddox, 2007), child stature (Steckel, 1995), bargaining failure (Emerson, 2002), parental non altruism (Lubatkin, 2005), quantity and quality of children (Fan, 2004). This theory says that economic volatility is the hallmark feature of some of the developing and less developed world; it causes the problem of child labor through different channels. In this connection, Jacoby and Skoufias (1997), argue that economic downturn which has an adverse impact on family income forces parents to pull out children from educational institutions due to economic crisis. While increase in parental earnings or household wealth is negatively related with child labor, The ***Theory of Intra-Household Externalities*** holds that the fear of shifting the balance in bargaining power overwhelms in many cases the decision of a literate person to share his/her personal capital with other members in the household. In order to preserve the bargaining power, K. Basu et al. (2001) argue that a literate person shares the gains of literacy. Literate parents, particularly

mother, who is able to back her children in the school work may increase the return to education. According to the ***Theory of Child's Stature,*** the decision of child to pass his earnings to the household may purely be driven by the search for increasing his role in decision making. This line of argument is evidenced by (Moehling (1995). According to his empirical assessment, in urban America working children enjoy larger share of resources in the household than non-working ones.

According to K. Basu (1999), setting the bargaining power as the function of potential power swings the balance in favor of the child in household. Bargaining power driven by potential earnings raises the stature of household's youthful members due to the upswing in their productivity profile. The increased child productivity resulting from potential earnings is compounded by technological advancement in the labor market; thus, tilting the power to young members in the family. So, in the presence of the productivity edge and the convoluted interaction between earnings and bargaining, it makes the children unamenable to any kind of policy intervention. On the other hand, the ***Theory of Bargaining Failure*** states that the inability of children to pre-commit the repayment of loan provided to them in childhood while going to school breaks the negotiations between parents and children. This reduces the parents' preferences toward enhancing children's human capital. By making a compelling case in favor of this argument, Baland and Robinson (2000) hypothesized that the absence of parental altruism and the resulting breakdown of contract add to the exacerbation of children in the labor market. Contrarily, Genicot (2005) confronts this argument by arguing that the presence of parental altruism towards their children might not always lead to the reduction of child labor. He says, even in the presence of the altruism of the parents, if parents' level of income is of subsistence nature, bargaining between parent and employer may increase child labor.

In order to ensure that the increments of rise in wage percolates on the right place, the employer may try to employ the parent along with children. In this way, the due share of wage will be channeled to every member of the family, and the possibility of sharing worker's productivity will vanish. The issue of child labor is also theorized through the ***Theory of Quantity and Quality of Children.*** However, sometimes, this trade-off is emerged as spin-off from the effect of change in mother's wage on children. Quality and quantity can be considered as substitutes if the services provided by children to their parents are defined by the quantity of children and their quality on average. On the difference between the quality of children across the familial hierarchy, Betts (1999) discerns ***budget constraint***, ***return to scale*** and ***biological*** as the factors responsible for variation in the quality of children across siblings. Parental decisions regarding their children hinge on the conditions of the asset market. The **Theory of Non-transferability of Asset** states that if asset markets are vibrant enough to ensure the transferability of assets between children and parents, then parents may make efficient decisions regarding children. This can only be realized if parents are altruistic enough to economically fortify their children by leaving a bequest, or if children intend to support their parents during retirement. However, by considering the role of child labor in the future productivity of children, Bommier and Dubois (2004) argued that even if the decision of child work is driven by parental altruism, if the child labor causes the reduction in the productivity and thus income of children in the future, transfer of income to parents in the future may be reduced as a punishment to them.

Empirical Literature: Modeling Issues

To rightly identify and accurately uproot the problem of children in the labor market, the existing studies on household

microeconomics consider different dynamics related to household. Economists put certain assumptions to model econometrically the composition/decomposition of household decision. For example, Manser et al. (1980) construct a bargaining power model which solely focuses on how different agents in the household can tackle the problem of equilibrium selection. In this model, the main idea is how the household can reach to a pareto-optimal understanding in making decision. Within household, gender role happens under intense debate in labor economics. For separation of gender in public and private sphere of life, (Ulph & Ulph, 1988) extend the discussion of household decision by introducing separate sphere model. They have analyzed and incorporate the distinctive traits of men and women and suggested some division of roles for them in the household.

As every household member tries to maximize their utility, yet they are interdependent because of the emotional attachment and the presence of public good. This interdependence ensures the cooperative way of dealing and the likelihood of long-term interaction between the family members. In this context, (Chen & Woolley, 2001) argue that the inevitability of repeated interactions among family members leads to the evolution of a cooperative environment that results in the prospective outcome form the best understood decision making to everyone. By contrast, non-cooperative bargaining models Ulph et al. (1988) take the issue of bargaining over the household decision in a self-centric way. This model assumes that each member of the family maximizes his/her wellbeing by considering the wellbeing of others as given.

(Lopez-Calva, 2002) incorporate the role of social stigma and behavioral standards in the investigation of children in the labor-force. He analyzes the influence of social norms on the decision of parents with regards the education and work prospects of children. In the social stigma model, the decision of father to let children to work rather than study stigmatizes him. This subsequently reduces his welfare.

In their work the whole debate revolves around the formulation of social stigma and balancing supply and demand in the labor market for children as well as adult. They assume that the degree of stigmatization will be lower in any society if it is marked by a wide prevalence of child labor. It is because the society is used to tolerating the presence of child labor.

Chiappori et al. (1992) developed a household labor supply collective model in which, individuals are characterized by their preferences, with household decision are assumed pareto efficient. This model is premised household welfare function assumption comprising of the weighted sum of private utility functions.

Unitary household model: this assumes all members to have similar preferences or alternatively the view that a member decides for everyone. Thusly, intra-household resource allocation and the influence of intra-household bargaining power distribution on such allocation, does not come in play.

In this study parents' decision with regard to the allocation of their children's time is based on optimization in several activities including among others: only (i) schooling (ii) working, (iii) a mixture of both (iv) neither of the two.

Methodology

Method of Analysis

The current model treats each of the four decisions in terms of sequence/order of stages. For each alternative, the set of explanatory variables can be adjusted. The number of outcomes in the sequential probit model depends upon the number of categories it contains. Initially, a variant of our model – the univariate Probit is used to estimate the coefficients with a dependent variable indicating as to whether the child

only goes to school or otherwise using the rest of the sample. In second stage, estimates represents whether child is engaged jointly in schooling and work, or other ways, using smaller samples singling observations of respondents who are schooling only. The third step computes those coefficients of dependent variable specifying children who work only or other respect are utilizing new smaller sample eliminating observations of respondents who are schooling or doing a combination of studying and working concurrently. The use of the current estimation technique without doubt assumes household decision order process to be sequential. Sequentially, household decisions regarding children typically begins with children attending schools, followed by studying and working and finally working only.

The household decision about how a child's time will be allocated is seen as a sequential decision making process. The household first weighs the option of the child attending school only (the preferred option for the child) against all other options. If the household does not select the preferred option, a series of further decisions are needed to choose between a work-school combination or a work-only option and then to select the type of work.

There are several ways to model econometrically the supply of child labor, depending on how the decision making process within the household is viewed. The key is whether the decision maker in the household considers all options open to the child simultaneously or considers preferred options first, followed by a hierarchical decision making process.

A simultaneous decision making process would call for a multinomial choice model, in which the choices are schooling, work for wages, work in home enterprise, work on farm, no work, or variations thereof. A hierarchical decision making process can be modeled with a sequential choice model, in which the first step models the choice between the preferred option—in this case school attendance— and all other options combined. The second step models the second-best choice against the remaining options, conditional on not having opted for the first-best choice. This process continues until the choices are exhausted.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each approach. The appeal of the multinomial choice approach is that only one equation needs to be estimated, which by construction will yield a consistent set of probabilities showing the effect of a change in each explanatory variable on the probability of selecting each option. There are several drawbacks, however. The most important is that the multinomial logit model requires the assumption of the independence of irrelevant alternatives. That is, it assumes that the odds ratios derived from the model remain the same, irrespective of the number of choices offered (Maddala 1983). In practice, this assumption is inappropriate when the choices include close substitutes. In the case of child labor, for example, it requires that the decision maker view the choices between wage work and work in a home enterprise as independent. Obviously, that is very unlikely. If non-independent choices are included in the multinomial logit model, the model will overestimate the selection probability for those options. An attractive alternative is the multinomial probit model, in which the residuals have a multivariate normal distribution and which is not subject to the independence of irrelevant alternatives assumption. The problem, though, is that because of computational difficulties, the model can only handle a small number of alternatives, and for that reason, it is rarely used. The multinomial probit and logit models also share the requirement that the relevant set of explanatory variables be the same for all choices. In the case of the child labor options, this is defensible somewhat, but not entirely. For example, the cost of schooling is clearly a relevant variable in the schooling-work choice but not in the choice among work

options. Likewise, ownership of a farm may matter for the choice between work for wages and work at a home enterprise, but not for the other options.

The sequential model approach solves many of these difficulties. The independence of irrelevant alternatives assumption is not required since alternatives are introduced one at a time, and the vector of explanatory variables, if needed, can be adjusted for each set of alternatives. Furthermore, the use of a set of binomial choice equations makes it convenient to extend the model estimation to include a labor

P_1 = Probability of Schooling and not working

P_2 = Probability of schooling and working

P_3 = Probability of not schooling but working

P_4 = Probability of not schooling and working

In our model, the probabilities of these choices are determined as illustrated below:

$$P1 = f(a_1 X) \quad (i)$$

$$P2 = [1 - f(a_1 X] f(a_2 X) \quad (ii)$$

$$P3 = [1 - f(a_1 X)][1 - f(a_2 X)] f(a_3 X) \quad (iii)$$

$$P4 = [1 - f(a_1 X][1 - f(a_2 X][1 - f(a_3 X)] f(a_4 X) \quad (iv)$$

Where; a_1, a_2, a_3 and a_4 are variables which are dichotomous representing respectively whether the child is schooling or not; mixes both schooling with working or not; working or not; and demanded in home-caring or not. The f represents the normal standard distribution function, while X is the explanatory variables vector. Parameters a_1 are estimated over the entire sample. Parameters a_2 are estimated over the sample of children excluding those who go to school only. Parameters a_3 are estimated over the sample of children excluding those who go to school only, and those who go to school and work. Parameter a_4 estimates all the remaining. Child activity is the dependent variable of this study. Independent variables include: Household Income, Father Income, Asset, Household Expenditure, Child Dependency Ratio, Child Age, Parental Education, Household Size, Proximity to City, Proximity to School and Number of Literates.

Data Collection

The data for the study was collected through surveys from the six Nahias of city of Jalalabad in Afghanistan. The process involved visiting potential respondents in their Nahias and Children in their places of Work and Schools.

The households for this study were selected based on their socio-economic status, livelihood strategy, reliance on child labour, and the focal child's age. Thus low socio-economic status was a key criterion in selecting case households. Additionally, the selected cases aimed to represent a range of livelihood strategies and including households with children that: (i) work full time, (ii) combine work and schooling, and (iii) do no work. This would enable the study to also investigate how work and education trade-offs are considered. The following criteria are specifically considered:

a) Presence of poor households.

b) Presence of households using child labour, with the children working either within or outside the neighbourhood.

c) Existence of or access to diverse livelihood activities, in which children are involved.

d) Access to an educational facility

In absence of general census data in the country in general and Jalalabad city in particular, we divided our study population on the basis of multistage cluster sampling desings. We chose this design because it is very suitable in situations where we have less information on individual units but more high information on population aggregations. We designed six clusters out of the six Nahias, which acted as the sampling points. Within the Nahias, we identified households with children to participate in the survey based on our study objectives, and within a particular household in most cases, the children were traced in their work places on streets, workshops, farms and brick making factories. In total, we randomly administered questionnaires to an estimated sample of 600 respondents, equaling to roughly 100 in each Nahia. For obtaining the desired information, a well-structured research instrument (questionnaire) was designed through which a sample size of 600 households have been surveyed.

Table A: *Predictive Probabilities*

Variable	Model_1	Model_2	Model_3	Model_4	Model_5	Model_6	Model_7	Model_8
Dependent Variable: Child Activity *(CHAi)*								
HHI_i	0.652*** (0.000)				0.928*** (0.000)	0.785*** (0.000)	0.779*** (0.000)	0.851*** (0.000)
FAI_i		0.805*** (0.000)						
$ASSET_i$			0.36*** (0.000)					
$HHEXP_I$				-0.79*** (0.000)				
$FEDU_i$	0.219** (0.000)	0.223** (0.003)	0.383*** (0.000)	0.235** (0.002)	0.289*** (0.000)			
$MEDI_i$	0.605*** (0.000)	0.416*** (0.000)	0.740*** (0.000)	0.821*** (0.000)		0.931*** (0.000)		0.877*** (0.000)
$NLIT_i$							0.464*** (0.000)	0.299*** (0.000)
$HHSIZE_i$	-0.22*** (0.000)	-.22*** (0.000)	-0.21*** (0.000)	-0.23*** (0.000)	-0.21*** (0.000)	0.32*** (0.000)	0-.25*** (0.000)	
CDRATIO								-0.109** (0.004)
$CAGE_i$	-0.04*** (0.000)	-0.04** (0.003	0.002** (0.004)	-0.004** (0.012)	-0.003** (0.033)	-0.003** (0.035)	-0. 03* (0.067)	
PTS_i								0.339** (0.001)
$P2C_i$	0.04*** (0.000)	.004*** (0.000)	0.363*** (0.000)	0.007*** (0.000)	0.006*** (0.000)	0.008*** (0.000)	0.048*** (0.000)	0.339*** (0.000)
Obs	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
Wald Chi	269.54	275.07	260.04	281.14	254.45	254.45	281.14	277.36
Prob > chi2	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R2	0.198	0.193	0.180	0.194	0.166	0.176	0.194	0.192

Note: *** significant at 1%; ** significant at 5%; * significant at 10%. **; P-values in parenthesis. The probit logit models (1-8) are estimated with categorical dependent variable "Child activity" which represents School only, Work & school, Work only and Neither work nor school. The independent variables are: Household Income (HHI_i), Father Income (FAI_i), Expenditure (*HHEXPi*) are in log form. $ASSET_i$, Father Education ($FEDU_i$), Mother Education ($MEDU_i$), Number of Literates ($NLIT_i$), Household Size ($HHSIZE_i$), Child dependency ratio ($CDRATIO_i$), Proximity to School (PTS_i) and Proximity to City (PTC_i).

Discussion and Interpretation of Predictive Probabilities

Results presented in the Table show the predicted probabilities of explanatory variables.

The parameter estimates in model_1 present the results of household income, father education, mother education, household size, child age and proximity to school. Household income which is one of the main variables enters the model with positive sign. The result indicates that increase in the level of household income tends to increase the likelihood of children to join the higher category of child activity. The result is in line with the findings of Dahl & Lochner, 2005).

Father education ($FEDU_i$) is also significant at 5%. Our result maintains the theoretical consistency by arriving at conclusion that the education of father can protract the intergenerational link of education to their children, because the father with higher human capital have more chances of earning potential income than that of lower educated parents. Similar findings have been found by (Chevalier, 2004). Hence, the results confirm that in the decision regarding children, mother education plays more fundamental role than father education. We report that father education is significant at five percent while mother education proves its significance at one percent level. For economizing on the human capital of child, existing literature put more weight on maternal care and upbringing at the early stages of childhood. Moreover, it is true that education has significant implications for the household wellbeing and structure in general, keeping in view the difference of returns on child care and job in the labor market, educated mother tend to reduce the family size into a manageable level. This gives child the opportunity to enjoy the higher status (education) in family and society. Our findings are consistent with that of (Boyden & Levison, 2000).

The sign of the household size ($HHSIZE_i$) is negatively significant at one percent. The possible reason is the fact that larger size families are usually defined by poverty and less per capita. Hence, in the face of capital constraints, larger households find it difficult to finance children's education. Thus, increase in the level of household size raises the likelihood of children to remain in the lower category of their activity, which is work only or homecare. Henceforth, this conclusions reinforces that of (De Haan, 2010).

The variable child age ($CAGE_i$) with negative sign, which indicates that as the child age raises, the child has more chances of falling in the lower class of child activities, given that as he grows up to physical maturity, the inherent labor characteristics thrive in his boy. Consequently, he joins the labor market.

Our result indicates that proximity to city has a crucial role in determining children in the labor market. Increase in proximity to city raises the likelihood of children to happen in the higher category of activities. Conventional view holds that as proximity to city increases, the market intensification of exchange also happens, which attract more children to the labor market, (Fafchamps & Wahba, 2006). However, due to the lack of infrastructural base in Afghanistan, it does not culminate in the attraction of children to the labor market. Households that live in close proximity to city have easy access to schools, both in terms of distance and quality. Thus, increase in proximity to schools raises the likelihood of children to remain in higher category (school only).

In model_2 after controlling the set of the variables, when we replaced household income with father income (FAI_i), we found that, comparatively, the income of father plays more significant role in the decision of child activity than the income of household. It is so because in joint family system, child does not necessarily have its share in the overall income of the household. A family may live under one ceiling, yet they may have different economic conditions. With an increase in father income, the child is likely to find itself in higher category of its activity.

Similarly, when we used asset ($ASSET_i$) instead of father income in the model_3, we

realized that after asset also holds its position in the order of importance for families, but not as important as both incomes. Asset holding of a family has significant effect on the participation decision of the family's children in the labor-force. A rise in household asset holding has the tendency of increasing the possibility of children joining school, because asset holding strengthens and supplements the financial status and decreases the fluctuations in family's income, see (Nath & Hadi, 2000). However, the empirics of Dutta et al. (2010) suggest that assets, particularly land, increases child labor. Likewise, household expenditure ($HHEXP_i$) is replaced with asset in model_4, which is significant at 1 percent level and holds negative sign, which shows that with increase in household expenditure, the child is more likely to be in a lower category (work only). One possible reason is that demographic and socioeconomic characteristics often shape the expenditure pattern of the typical household in Afghanistan. Keeping in view the persistent nature of extreme poverty and the underdeveloped status of socioeconomic and demographic characteristic, it is quite difficult for families to allocate their economic resources to the education of children. More specifically, skyrocketing prices of food items and fuels take the lion share of their economic resources, which makes them unable to invest in children's education. The result derived here is in line with (Mayer, 1997).

The results from Model_7 found that with positive sign and at one percent significance, the number of literates ($NLIT_i$) in a family also affect the decision of household regarding children activities. Hence, families with less literate individuals have no access to decent job opportunities, which in effect propels the cycle of poverty on household level. More literate adults in the household can ameliorate or vanish the impact of poverty on the household, and increase the likelihood of children being in the higher category of child activities Our result in this regard is consistent with (Lipton & Ravallion, 1993).

In model_8, we particularly focus on the role of dependency ratio and proximity to school. Child dependency ratio which is obtained from the division of the number of children by the number of adults in the household is significant at five percent level and has negative sign. Higher child dependency ratio increases the likelihood of children to move down to the lower category of child activities. One possible justification that dependency ratio shrinks the necessary amount of parental care and financial resources which undermines parental decision regarding investing on the education of children.

Our result also shows that proximity to school (PTS_i) influences decision regarding the work or schooling. It holds positive, which means with the increase in proximity to school, the children are more likely to move up to the higher category of child activities. On the other hand, the undersupply of educational establishments, the poor quality of schools, the risky commuting of long hours distance to schools, mainly due to volatile security situation, and the presence of shadow schools, which do not exist in physicality, take away all the incentives from the families to send their children to schools. Our result reinforces the findings of (Kondylis & Manacorda, 2012).

Table B: Discussion on (Marginal Effects)

Tables B and C show the results of the marginal effects of the models. Each model shows four values (stage), the first stage result covers the children who only go to school. Unlike the interpretation of overall ordered Probit model, here we can interpret the coefficients of variables in each single category. Since the dependent variable is a categorical variable, hence we need to estimate and interpret the marginal effects which show the instantaneous change in the dependent variable as function of change in explanatory variables, provided that all other covariates are given, (see Spector & Mazzeo, 1980).

Table B: *Marginal Effects*

tVariable	Model_1				Model_2				Model_3				Model_4			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
HHI_i	.05*** (0.000)	-.13*** (0.000)	-.02** (0.003)	.21*** (0.000)												
FAI_i					.52*** (0.000)	-.13*** (0.000)	-.06*** (0.000)	.21*** (0.000)								
$ASSET_i$									.05*** (0.000)	.14*** (0.000)	-.02* (0.000)	-.22*** (0.000)				
$HHEXP_i$													-.06*** (0.000)	.08*** (0.000)	.05* (0.006)	.25*** (0.000)
$FEDU_i$	.03** (0.04)	-.05** (0.003)	-.06** (0.002)	.05** (0.001)	.04** (0.004)	-.03* (0.007)	-.04** (0.003)	.04* (0.008	.06*** (0.000)	-.06*** (0.000)	-.03* (0.002)	.09*** (0.000)	.03** (0.001)	-.03** (0.002)	-.02** (0.003)	.05** (0.004)
$MEDI_i$	.07*** (0.000)	-.19*** (0.000)	-.09** (0.003)	.29*** (0.000)	.06*** (0.000)	-.16*** (0.000)	-.09*** (0.000)	.26*** (0.000)	.09*** (0.000)	-.21*** (0.000)	-.08** (0.004)	.33*** (0.000)	.09*** (0.000)	-.19*** (0.000)	-.06** (0.003)	.30*** (0.000)
$NLIT_i$																
$HHSIZE_i$	-.09*** (0.000)	.05*** (0.000)	.07* (0.006)	-.05*** (0.000)	-.12*** (0.000)	.03*** (0.000)	.04** (0.03)	-.05*** (0.000)	-.11*** (0.000)	.03*** (0.000)	.04** (0.004)	-.05*** (0.000)	-.01* (0.007)	.07*** (0.000)	.04* (0.006)	-.05*** (0.000)
$CDRATIO_i$																
$CAGE_i$	-02** (0.032)	-.06** (0.002)	. 01* (0.021)	.01*** (0.000)	-.02** (0.014)	-.04** (0.002)	.01** (0.03)	-.03** (0.003)	-.02** (0.03)	-.01* (0.07)	-	-	-	.02** (0.02)	.01* (0.008)	-.01* (0.006)
PTS_i																
$P2C_i$	.09*** (0.000)	. 07*** (0.000)	-.03** (0.002)	-.07*** (0.000)	. 06*** (0.000)	.06*** (0.000)	-.05** (0.004)	-.08*** (0.000)	.04*** (0.000)	.07*** (0.000)	-.01** (0.030)	.04*** (0.000)	.08*** (0.000)	.05*** (0.000)	-.03** (0.020)	-.03*** (0.000)

Note: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th shows stages respectively. Significance levels *** = 1%, ** = 5%, and * = 10%

Table C: *Marginal Effects*

Variable	Model_5				Model_6				Model_7				Model_8			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
HHI_i	-0.07*** (0.000)	-.14*** (0.000)	-.01** (0.003)	.23*** (0.000)	-.15*** (0.000)	-.12*** (0.000)	-.06** (0.030)	.10*** (0.00)	.03*** (0.000)	.03*** (0.000)	-.17*** (0.000)	-.06*** (0.000)	.19*** (0.000)	-.01* (0.07)	-.11*** (0.000)	-.04*** (0.000)
FAI_i																
$ASSET_i$																
$HHEXP_i$																
$FEDU_i$	-.05*** (0.000)	-.04*** (0.000)	-.03** (0.004)	.07*** (0.000)												
$MEDI_i$					.13*** (0.000)	.46*** (0.000)	-.04** (0.040)	-.11*** (0.000)					.27*** (0.000)	-.03** (0.04)	-.16*** (0.000)	-.08*** (0.000)
$NLIT_i$									.06*** (0.000)	-.03** (0.004	-.21*** (0.000)	-.08*** (0.000)	.07*** (0.000)	-.02* (0.062	-.04* (0.051)	-.01* (0.070)
$HHSIZE_i$	-.06*** (0.000)	.03*** (0.000)	.04** (0.003)	-.05*** (0.000)	-.04*** (0.000)	-.24*** (0.000)	.003** (0.003)	-.06*** (0.000)	-.23*** (0.000)	.073* (0.03)	.03** (0.021)	.041* (0.06)				
$CDRATIO_i$													-.03** (0.001)	-	-	-
$CAGE_i$	-.003* (0.008)	-	-	-	-	.02** (0.002)	.02** (0.004	-	-	-	.04** (0.002)	-.01** (0.003				
PTS_i													.04** (0.004)	-	-	-
$P2C_i$	.029*** (0.000)	. 07*** (0.000)	-	-.02*** (0.000)	. 05*** (0.000)	-.04*** (0.000)	-.02** (0.004	-.03*** (0.000)	.05** (0.003)	.01** (0.004)	-.08*** (0.000)	.07*** (0.000)	.01* (0.008)	.01* (0.008)	-.07*** (0.000)	

This study reveals that with a unit increase in the level of family income, a child with 7% has a higher probability go to school, whereas 14% and 2% are less likely to be in second and third categories respectively and 21% more likely to remain at home. On the other hand, as the argument provided on the significance of father income over household income in tab, considering the marginal effects of both incomes, it is clearly evident that the role of father income outweighs household income. One unit increase in father income is associated with 52% more likelihood of child in the first category, 13% and 6% less likelihood in the second and third category respectively. Likewise, child will be 21% more likely in the last category if father income increases by one unit.

Similarly, in table B, model_3 shows that increase in asset raises the chance of child by 5% and 14% to remain in first or second category respectively. With the increase in asset, it is highly unlikely (22%) for child to remain in the last category. So the children from asset-holding families either combine school and work or go to school only. This model first exposes the impact of asset holding in the decision regarding child activity across the whole hierarchy. A rise in the possession of assets raises the likelihood of children to do home care by 1.5 percent. The children from asset holding households either mix school with work (from the second stage) or go to school only.

With regard to the level of parent's education across the models, the claim is substantiated that mother education plays more fundamental role than father education in the human capital of children. For example, in model_1, the rise in the level of mother education increases the chance by 7% that a child be part of the first category, whereas the education of father will do the same by 3%. There is a 29-percent likelihood that a child's stay in the fourth category is associated with one unit increase in the mother education, but raises in probability in case father education is only 5%.

In any family, household size sets the basis for the allocation of children's time. Likewise, the return of children's activity or earning potential determines the size of household (see Hotz & Miller, 1985). The likelihood of children to attend school is largely influenced by the number of family members needed to supplement household income. Given this analysis, Ray (Ray, 2000) also recognized the role of household size in the welfare analysis of children. Larger households are usually prone to income shocks, thus, parents are unable to allocate a sufficient amount of resources to the education of children. In this case, the likelihood of schooling for children becomes very low, or in some cases the second category is also being compromised.

Child age is useful parameter in the decision making about schooling (Durrant & Arif, 1998). Keeping in mind the relative simplicity of primary schooling over middle and secondary schooling, the likelihood of dropout from school increases after that age, but this does not apply to Afghanistan. Child age comes to play its role in the determination of child activity in respect of opportunity cost. Children forgo going to school as their age increases because the latter increases their ability to earn higher wages. Moreover, age square with negative sign implies that initially school participation increases but at some point in time the rise in age contributes to reduction in schooling of the child (see also Ravallion & Wodon, 2000).

Father's education is paramount in shaping child activity. An educated father is more likely to decide the allocation of child's time in favor of schooling rather than working. Because of the possible high income earning ability through education and simultaneously realizing the importance of and return to education in the long run, educated fathers are convinced to educate children. Thus, after one unit increase in the father's education

level, the child schooling increases by 5%, while the likelihood of working decreases by 3%. Hence, this result is similar to that the findings of Edmunds and Pavcnik (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005).

Almost every Nahia visited for the purpose is called urbanized because it is registered with the main municipality. But, in actuality, the characteristics of an urban setup are hardly visible across the selected area. This may range from basic facilities like electricity, infrastructure, schools, security and the like. Therefore, it is problematic to depict a marked line between the urban and rural areas in the locality under consideration. "Multi-dimensional cost" of commuting to the city for ordinary people, particularly for children is very high. Hence the proximity to the city is a significant factor in the decision making involving time allocation for children. A rise in proximity to the city makes it affordable and feasible for households to utilize public goods provided by the government, so the likelihood of schooling increases, whilst the increase in the distance between city and locality raises the possibility of children to work.

Moreover, proximity to school is another indicator showing the current situation in child education in Afghanistan. The increase in the school enrollment ratio is directly related to an increase in proximity to school. Children residing near schools are more likely to go schooling. Lack of access to schooling restricts the children from going to school, instead they either join the traditional institutions or work for family at home (see (Sawada & Lokshin, 1999). Moreover, the risk of long hours commuting and the intermittent closure of schools for security reasons dissuade the parents to send their children to school.

With over 50 percent of the population under the age of 15 coupled with the flailing population growth in Afghanistan, the children are highly dependent on the adult members of their families. Child dependency ratio is the ratio of non-working individuals to the working age. The increase in the dependency ratio causes excessive consumption expenses on living, which in turn leads to less investment on the enrollment of children. Thus, the dependency ratio increases the dropout of children from schools and pushes them to the labor market.

To examine the robustness of our estimated models and validation of the data, some diagnostic tests have been carried out. First we diagnosed if there is the problem of the multi-colinearity in the data and to this effect we apply the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The results of VIF test shows that there is no multi-colinearity among the variables under consideration. With regards to heteroscedasticity in general, there is no need to worry about heteroscedasticity in ordered probit model, because our dependent variable is categorical. So, the residuals in this case are distributed in only four points along the x-axis when plotted against the fitted values of the model. It is unlikely that the variance of *1* residuals is same as the variance of your *2, 3* or *4* residuals for the random sample a categorical variable. In other words, the variance of residuals in this case is heteroskedastic by design default.

Conclusion

The results emerging from our study are interesting though not surprising. By and large, factors explaining the prevalence child labor in the country under our scope have been identified. During the last decade, the issue of child labour has taken centre stage in policy debates on development. It has been a challenging issue for many international institutions such as the World Bank, ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO, UN CHR, WTO, etc. The Afghan government has taken this issue very seriously. Furthermore, there are numerous non-governmental organisations which deal exclusively with the problem of child labour. The main question that it has addressed is: why do children work? Many arguments have

been put forward and many empirical studies have tried to test the resulting hypotheses. Empirical studies have also uncovered aspects of the problem which have as yet not received attention in the theoretical literature: As should be clear from the discussion, child labour is a complex issue and it has no simple solution. Among the factors that have been identified as prime causes are poverty, poor quality of education, lack of credit opportunities, high inequality of income, high degree of uncertainty facing the poor, and inequality between the sexes. As for policy options, it is now becoming clear that what is needed a combination of policy measures that attack the causes outline below.

Poverty

In the studies of child labor, researchers have widely examined the role of poverty. In our study too, poverty related factors have been examined in all the models we formulated. The results had mixed impacts in our study. Incomes of Household and father, household assets as expected had a positive impact on general and father in particular, the less the chances of children engaging in premature labor activities. This finding implies that child labor has more to do with either household or father poverty level. The results are in line with the findings of Basu and Van (K. Basu & Van, 1998), who have established that households tend to direct their children to work only when income from non-child labour are drips. The reason for such findings could be that higher incomes in households in general and parents in particular open up the opportunity for parents to send their children to school and to ensure protection of their children. Furthermore, the availability of household assets strengthens the financial standing of households thereby hedging household and parental income necessary for children's proper upkeep including schooling. With little income and almost no assets, households in Jalalabad (and in Afghanistan by extension) have no alternative but to surrender their children to the hash labour markets.

Another important poverty variable household expenditure had an inverse relationship with the dependent variable in our study, implying that the more pressure on family income, the higher the probability that households send their children to work. In theory and practice, it has been established that higher expenditures especially on food and medical care are features of poor families. Hence the higher the need for such expenses, the higher the likelihood that children from such families be driven into employment earlier rather than later, a daily occurrence explaining our research topic of this study on Afghanistan.

Parental Characteristics

In the results, parental characteristics have emerged as an equally important factor along with poverty in accounting for child labor. Parent's education level, particularly that of the father and mother, has a strong impact on children going to work. The more educated the parents, the more the children are kept away from the labor market. These factors are self-explanatory, this is to say, ceteris paribus, educated parents have income to maintain their families and accordingly have less incentive to force their children into the labor market prematurely. Conversely, in Afghanistan where parent's education is at a low level, this factor is crucial in explaining the phenomenon of child labor. They are virtually uneducated and consequently have no way out but send their children into employment to supplement efforts of their parents.

Household Composition and Characteristics

Household characteristics variables also provided sound explanation of the child labor phenomenon in Afghanistan. Household size, age and dependency of child, as well as the number of literates in family, have mixed

impacts on child labor. Size, age of child and dependency of child had an inverse relationship with child labor while literacy has a positive impact.

Other Factors

Other factors such as the proximity to school and the city were found to have a direct impact on child labor. Children living in the vicinity of schools and cities are more unlikely to turn into workers at a younger age, partly due to the presence of vital social services for children in such an environment like schools.

Policy Recommendations

The findings of the current study provide lessons to different stakeholders particularly the government of Afghanistan, the international and local communities, parents and children.

Government

According to the findings, the government has high stakes in tackling the child labor phenomenon in the country. In terms of poverty-related factors, which include household income among others, the government should find channels to reduce poverty in the populous. First and foremost, to alleviate poverty, the government should work towards ensuring political and economic stability, creating an enabling atmosphere for the adult population to find suitable jobs and thus income, thereby mitigating child labor.

Parental education is a big challenge, considering that the majority of Afghan parents were found to be uneducated. To address this challenge, as well as the problem of poverty, the government should raise investment in education. Investment in education establishments and facilities such as schools should also increase. It should be directed at addressing the high school dropout at every level of education, sabotage to educational services like acid attacks on learners, kidnapping, and defilement. The government should also urgently enhance the quality of education in terms of qualified teachers, teacher-learner ratio, learning space and educational services such as scholastic materials like note books, text books, chalk and other learning materials. Furthermore, the government should develop flexible and proactive educational systems, with inclusive facilities, reasonable safety and decent learning environment, so as to enable children to realize their full potential for breaking the intergenerational poverty trap. Finally, the government should invest in the changing the mindset of the Afghans, particularly the female population, with regard to education. Hopefully the implementation of the suggested recommendations pertaining to education could have a sustainable effect on curbing the flow of children into the labour market.

Household composition has been explained in the study by size, age and dependency of child and adult literacy. The emphasis of the government should be on providing educational services to the masses, even adult education for those who missed out due numerous factors including the endless war in the country. Although household size is a thorny issue given the culture and Islam, the government should come up with programmes to encourage a limit on families.

International Community

The international community has a big stake and role to play in resolving the challenges that the contemporary Afghanistan state is facing, including child labor among others. They should make genuine efforts to support the government in reducing poverty, both financially and in the form of bringing the much needed security, thereby putting a break on children flowing into the labor market. Furthermore, the support will be essential in solving the issues of parental education and some aspects of household characteristics and composition.

Local Community

The local communities need to use the findings of this study in curbing child labor. They should first and foremost attract investors to create jobs to boost household and parental incomes. Second, they should discourage households from sending their children into the labor market and encourage them to go to school instead. Third, they should use community assets such as land, forestry, water bodies and mountains, to mention but a few, to create wealth for households.

Parents

They have the biggest stake in the future of their children. First, parents need to live within their means, that is to say they should engage in family planning. They should commit to timing their family development depending on the available financial resources and keep on increasing these funds so that they meet any expansion in family size. Secondly, they should drop the habit of regarding their children as income-generating tools in the family. Third, awareness should be raised among parents and incentives offered to send their children to schools, with successful social transfer programmes, such as those implemented in Brazil, Egypt and Mexico. These transfers are a kind of regular and reliable transfer in cash or/and in kind to households or individuals that can effectively guard the families or children against economic shocks. These incentives are delivered in many forms, including providing children with breakfast and lunch, which is an effective strategy to support households in feeding the children. What is more, providing such intakes will improve the nutritional and health status of children. Another way of persuading parents to send children to school is the Food-for-Education initiative, operating in Bangladesh. With this initiative, families sending their children to primary schools are provided with monthly food rations. With considerable effect on child labor, this programme has remarkably increased primary school enrollment. Social transfer programmes have been found to have a strong impact on curbing child labor. They take various forms such as increased income, greater access to school and healthcare services, and most importantly improved reallocation of labor and time.

Children

First, child should know their rights as children and their rights to education for a better and bright future. Second, they should not accept to be exploited by their parents to work for the families. Like any other underdeveloped society, Afghanistan also feels the brunt of a deep-rooted problem of child labor on many fronts. Amid the multitude of factors responsible for the consolidation and perpetuation of child labor, social and economic structures, community attributes and gender discrimination also, to a great extent, condone child labor perpetuation. The apparent unfamiliarity with and the blatant disregard for the existing legislations put forward by international organization for the eradication of the child labor further exacerbate the already pervasive problem of child labor. This vicious cycle of exploitation leads to the simultaneous disenfranchisement of foundational knowledge and childhood, which could only be garnered in the classrooms.

Direction for Future Research

Search for new variables

Poverty, parental, and household composition and characteristics variables have formed the basis of much of the studies on child labor. Further researchers especially in war infested countries like Afghanistan needs to explore the role of variables such as war and security.

Urban- rural

In much of the studies, researchers have biased on child labor problem in urban settings. Hence researchers need to explore the rural aspects of child labor, considering the difference in the two environments. Thus they would offer fresh explanation of this modern-day socio-economic challenge.

Institutional Structure

In all countries, there are institutions directly in charge of tackling child labor. Researchers have not yet fully explored the possibilities of the nature and type of institutions and child labor prevalence. This provides a new basis for research.

Cultural linkage

It has been assumed that certain cultures and religions encourage early marriage and parenthood, and accordingly taking on responsibilities and working at premature age. Culture and child labor linkages should be empirically investigated to provide insights into this much debated relations.

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