

# Research Paper

## Investigate the Occurrence of Injuries to Rural Child Labor in Agricultural Activities in Mahidasht County

Ali Asghar Mirakzadeh<sup>1</sup>, Kiumars Zarafshani<sup>1</sup>, \*Faranak Karamyan<sup>2</sup>

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Extension and Education, Faculty of Agriculture, Agricultural and Natural Resources Campus, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.

2. Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Extension and Education, Faculty of Agriculture, Agricultural and Natural Resources Campus, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.

3. PhD Candidate, Department of Agricultural Extension and Education, Faculty of Agriculture, Agricultural and Natural Resources Campus, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.

**Citation:** Mirakzadeh, A. A., Zarafshani K., & Karamyan, F. (2016). Investigate the Occurrence of Injuries to Rural Child Labor in Agricultural Activities in Mahidasht County. *Journal of Rural Research*, 7(3), 516-529. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21859/jjr-07037>

**doi:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.21859/jjr-07037>

Received: 24 Apr. 2016

Accepted: 7 Aug 2016

### ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the happening of injuries to rural child labor in agricultural activities in Mahidasht County. The study population comprised of 1. Children 5 to 18 years (N=934); 2. The parents of working children; and 3. The specialist who is familiar with rural work environment. In the first group (children), a sample of 272 members were selected using Crecy and Morgan (1970) sampling table and the stratified by random sampling method with proportional allocation. In the second group (parents), due to the lack of accurate statistics about the parents, purposeful sampling was used. In the third group (experts) the enumeration was done. Data were collected through structured questionnaire whose validity was confirmed by an expert's panel and its reliability was assessed by Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha=0.88$ ). The data were analyzed in SPSS software, version 18. The results showed that all the three communities complained primarily of physical injuries (skin disease, back pain, and knee disorders) followed by psychological injuries (tension and rough temperament, and creative destruction), socio-cultural injuries (continuance of child labor towards next generations, and learning bad language) and economical injuries (comprised of increased cost of child education, and increased health cost). Although the phenomenon of child labor cannot be eliminated in the rural environment, but observing ergonomic principles in the workplace can substantially reduce the damage caused to children.

### Keywords:

Agriculture, Rural, Child, Child labour, Etiology

## Extended Abstract

### 1. Introduction

Child labor is an emotive subject, the discussion of which is often charged with passion. People sometimes think about it with their hearts rather than with their heads. Although in recent decades, especially at the international level, suf-

fering of the rural child labor in agricultural activities have taken certain understanding, but many organizations have paid little attention to children in rural areas. Boys and girls throughout history have formed a part of the agricultural workforce. Child labor is a persistent problem worldwide, especially in developing countries. Children form over half the world's population and play a significant role in agriculture. Article I of the convention on the rights of the child, "child" is to be defined: «A child is human beings under the age of eighteen years, unless according to the law applicable

### \* Corresponding Author:

Faranak Karamyan, PhD

**Address:** Department of Agricultural Extension and Education, Faculty of Agriculture, Agricultural and Natural Resources Campus, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.

**Tel:** +98 (918) 5832204

**E-mail:** [karamyan.f@gmail.com](mailto:karamyan.f@gmail.com)

to the child, the age of Maturity is detected fewer». Economic theories of child labor have, with few exceptions, been based on some shared premises. First, that child labor is socially undesirable and its reduction a worthy goal. Second, that there are other, more desirable, activities in which a child can engage, namely attending school. Third, that the child labor decision is the prerogative not of the child but of a parent. However, the parent is motivated not by narrow self-interest but by a benevolent and rational outlook which takes into account the welfare of the whole household, including that of the child. In this context, parents have played an important role in the psychological adverse effects resulting from child labor. Various theories of child labor include: 1. Child labor and adult labor; 2. Child labor and credit markets; 3. Child labor and poverty traps. In general we can say children aren't like adults physically and emotionally and child workers are at a greater risk than adults. Moreover, occupational hazards and working conditions may have permanent effects on child development. This study sought to investigate the injuries of rural child labor in agricultural activities in Mahidasht County.

## 2. Methodology

The study population comprised of 1. Children aged 5 to 18 years (N=934); 2. The parents of working children; 3. The specialist familiar with rural work environment. In the first group (children), a sample of 272 members were selected using Crecy and Morgan (1970) sampling table and the stratified random sampling method with proportional allocation. In the second group (parents), due to the lack of accurate statistics about the parents, purposeful sampling was used. In the third group (experts) the enumeration done. Data were collected through structured questionnaire which has been validated by expert's panel and its reliability was assessed by cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha=0.88$ ). All the data were analyzed using SPSS software, version 18.

## 3. Results

The results showed that 73.3% of the children work in the village and only 8.7% work outside the village. Further, children work for about 33 hours a week. Approximately, 47.6% of the children were unhappy of working; probably because it's hard agricultural work and are dissatisfied is doing these things. Only 48.5% of the children were pleased with their work. The results showed that all the three study groups complained of primarily of physical injuries (e.g. skin disease, back pain, and knee disorders) and followed by psychological injuries (e.g. tension and rough temperament, and creative destruction), socio-cultural injuries (e.g. continuance of child labor towards next generations, and learning bad language) and

economical injuries (e.g. comprised of increased cost of child education, and increased health cost). Although the phenomenon of child labor cannot be eliminated from the rural environment, but observance of ergonomic principles at the workplace can reduce the damage caused to children.

## 4. Discussion:

This study is multi-dimensional. First, due to the high level of social capital and cooperation among villagers in rural areas, some children need to feel safe and have peace of mind so they can do their school assignments. On one hand, a sense of independence in is observed in such children at an early age and they are happy of earlier engagement. Further, since they have a role in increasing per capita income family, they are very happy. The most important physical damage expressed was skin irritation. Therefore, it is recommended to control ones exposure the sun's rays by using cap and gloves, use shade when resting in middle of work, abstain from working for 12 to 16 hour, use protective skin cream. Moreover, physical injury such as back pain and knee pain was a common problem stated. To reduce the physical damage one should not perform uniform and repetitive movements, observe work and rest intervals, reduce working hours, refrain from repeated bending and kneeling.

## 5. Conclusion

In general the phenomenon of "child labor" forms an important part of workforce in rural areas. The children are involved with certain problems and injuries in the short- and long-term. Although the phenomenon of child labor cannot be eliminated in the rural environment, but observing ergonomic principles in the workplace can reduce the injuries to children.