

**Research Article**

## STUDYING THE SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES OF LABOR CHILDREN BASED ON GROUNDED THEORY

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### ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of urbanization and migration to cities, especially metropolises had led to making social problems in a broad level, especially in developing countries. One of these problems is labor children which are observed inside the cities and its growing process and the wide results had made a situation in which these children are called "urban tragedy" and "the reserved army of criminal economy". This study was performed based on a grounded theory as one of the important qualitative methods which is based on a kind of induction and by using the study's data, it produces theories. The participants of this study are 25 labor children in Shiraz. To select the desired sample, purposeful sampling was used which has more consistency with the qualitative researches (Paten, 2002). Using snowball technique, the individuals which were rich examples of the data and had informative abilities were selected. In order to gather the information of the participants, deep interview technique was used and after the interview, the participants achieved a theoretical saturation. Based on the findings of this study in the individual aspect, these children have many internal tensions and consider family separation and the people as their enemies.

**Keywords:** Labor Children, Street Children, Grounded Theory, Social Issues, Iran, Shiraz

### INTRODUCTION

Despite positive influences for different systems and societies, political, social and economic evolutions are the source of some of the social issues and problems. These problems which are made in developing countries due to the inconsistency of the social economic structure with the made evolutions would generate a deep gap between different levels of the society (Shaverdi, 2002).

Labor children or street children which are called urban tragedy, is a problem that metropolises and relatively large cities of the contemporary societies, developing or developed societies are facing it. Of course the conditions and the factors of this phenomenon's development and the ways to confront it, is different in various societies. Iran had also experienced this phenomenon and its bad social consequences. Sparse statistics and some preliminary studies about this phenomenon are representing the spreading process of it in Iran's large cities.

Unbalanced development and the inconsistency of cultural, economic and social structures to attract and being consistent with development standards had led to the rapid revolutions in some structures and the lag of other society parts. The result of this process is what we observe today in small and large and also metropolis cities. In other words, the above processes had led to the accumulation of national wealth in province centers especially the capital and a large number of immigration to these centers and had made various patterns of life in our cities.

From one side, the lack of legal ambiguities to pursuit the issues of labor children and the current oppositions to collect and organize between the society's formal organizations and the lack of accurate statistics of the number of these children along with not performing a comprehensive plan can have a destructive and social consequences in the long term, especially in metropolises.

Studying the condition of labor and street children shows that these children are exposed to problems and crimes and in the case of not improving their hard life situation are the most available and susceptible

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individuals for social deviations and crimes, so the phenomenon of street children is a widespread social issue and one of its consequences is the invent of social damage that its roots are related to the structure of traditions, rules and the social structure which makes possible the labor of children and the process of street children and the construction of the sub-street culture. From the other side, this phenomenon is a social issue which is related the conditions and the structural evolutions of the Iran society (Hosseini, 2006).

The rapid population evolutions, uncontrolled spread of urbanization in the form of living in suburbs, the growing process of drug misuse especially industrial drugs along with the elimination of family roots, the opposition of tradition with modernism and staying in the situation of semi-traditional-semi modern condition, immigration, poverty culture, economical problems , inflation, unemployment, market-based economy, lack of economical production, lack of legal trustee in formal organizations, legal-lawful problems, a criminal look with contempt from the society toward these children are the factors which prevent the problem solving of these children deeply and on the other hand is the process of investigating the problems and damages of this group.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study was performed based on grounded theory and as one of the good qualitative methods. The pioneers of this approach are Glaccier and Strauss which produce theories based on the results of data of this study. In this approach, the data collection and analysis and the final possible theory has close relationship and instead of considering a default, the researcher would enter to the studied field and make theories (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The base of used qualitative method in this study which is in the oriented interpretation emphasizes the appearing of patterns, themes and some data (Patton, 1990). Interpretation researchers would consider the essence and the nature of the world and would use methodological processes (Dennis, 2003). In an interpretational approach, the concreteness of the sociological analyses must to be somehow that the people understand their operation. In this approach, in contrary to confirmation, there's no profit in working with numerous data and we can analyze its deep interviews (Trauver, 2002). Thus, this method helps the understanding and the description of the participants' experience of music and its consumption in their minds (Charmaz, 1995). This issue has a considerable consistency with this study's purpose to achieve the system of labor and street children's meaning system.

The participants of this study are 25 labor and street children in Shiraz. To select the sample, purposeful sampling method was used which has more consistency with the qualitative researches (Patton, 2002). Using snowball technique, some individuals which were rich samples of data and had informing abilities were selected. To collect data, deep interview technique was used and after the interview, the interviewees were concordant.

The process of data analysis was performed based on its importance in the grounded theory approach during 3 coding step. These 3 steps were based on grounded theory and as the following: 1-open coding 2-axial coding 3-optional coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

In this step which is followed continuously, the performed interview had been coded and analyzed linearly. Firstly, in the form of open coding, a label was given to every concept in the interview and based on the characteristics and the dimensions of every concept many open and raw codes were appeared. In the following and in axial coding step, a number of codes which were related conceptually and characteristically were gathered and organized. Thus, after the breaking the interviews to codes and the sub- subjects in open coding, in this step (axial coding), relating and their organizing was done based on main subjects.

Optional coding was followed by using concepts and issues in the extraction of main concepts of the effective study. This step is performed with the purpose of main issue and theory appearance. In optional coding, it is tried to select issues which cover the main gained subject appeared in the previous steps (Strauss and Corbin, 1988). It's important to note that these 3 coding steps were not followed successively and based on the study's environment the researchers had been changed to get the optimal result.

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In the triple coding steps, the paradigm analytical tool was used based on Strauss and Corbin's theories. The used paradigm in consisted of 3 parts of situation, reciprocal performance and the consequences (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In all research steps, this triple paradigm had acted as a guide for researchers and had led to more organization.

In qualitative researches the tool of measurement are researchers so their skill, accuracy and qualification have to be considered (Patton, 2002).

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The issue of street children in Iran is a social structural subject and the result of rapid social evolutions and legal and lawful problems which is a reflection of the social-economic and cultural situation of lower levels of the society and the poor people of the city especially those who live in suburbs who lack the ability to adapt themselves with the rapid social evolutions in the metropolises. But in recent years, no attention was paid toward spiritual and intellectual aspects of these children lives based on their interpretation of the social world. Thus the goals of this study include:

- Recognizing the system of intellectual definitions of street and labor children
- Recognizing the psychological characteristics of the street and labor children
- Recognizing the interpretation of labor and street children of society's functions

#### **Results**

Working is necessary for adults, but for those little children and teenagers who are not grown is a factor for their lagging in various growing aspects. So, based on the aspects of this research, we would study the findings of this study:

Lining in stressful family condition would make intellectual and psychological problems for children, somehow that most of these children don't have the ability to solve their problems and have a phobia for the future happenings. Farhood, 11 years old says: " I always have this fear that someone bothers or beats me and I have a phobia of young boys". Farhood has no knowledge of father and his role and is deprived of family emotional support and his elder brothers always beat him. He is always anxious and says that I always think that I'm in danger and I fear the places in which the police are there and think that bad people are there to bother me.

Moein has stutter and a number of times some addicted persons had beat him and stolen his money. He said that "when I have money, I have a fear that people stole it, so when I suspect someone, I will approach respectable people, so they think that they are my parents and would not approach me. He has this experience that middle aged women are more supportive. He states that someday a boy wanted to beat him and steal his money, but a woman had helped him. Omid is a shoemaker and says" when I sit somewhere, I have this fear that someone steals my money and a number of times, some boys had stolen my things and escaped and he suffers enuresis.

Most of these children are depressed, disappointed and have inferiority problems. Mohammad is sad that he can't be like other children and play games and sadly says that I sorrow and cry. Ali is 14 years old and works in a fast food and his employer asks him to go to a psychologist and he eats anti-depression pills. He states his experience as the following: sometimes I feel that all the world's misfortunes are for me and nobody suffers like me. He stares to a place for a long time and cries deeply. He eats his nails and seems that it's due to severe emotional and psychological pressures.

Reza is 16 years old and originally from Afghanistan and he came from Kerman to Shiraz. He has a severe tendency to beat himself and there are the marks of knife cuts all over his skin. He says that when he becomes angry, he likes to beat someone and usually beats younger children. He says that when he cuts his hand with knife or glass, he would feel glad. He has a record of suicide and says "when I cut my hand with blade, my mother came into the bathroom and took me to the hospital. On contrary to Reza, Saber is shameful and looks at the floor and avoids eye contact with other people. He says that nothing is not like loneliness and I don't want to talk to other people. Saber's mother is Afghan and he doesn't have father and we can observe depression signs in his personality and has a tendency to suicide and self – injury.

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### **1.4. Family Break-up**

Most labor children had bad and stressful experiences of their families. When they go to their homes at night to be with their family and sleep, their experience had been severe physical quarrels and arguments among family members. Davood says "My father was always bad tempered and when we didn't have food to eat, he beats my mother and we escaped and when we came back to home, father and mother were not there.

Moein, 12 years old lived in a populated family, his father was Afghan and his mother was from one of the Fasa villages. His uncle had lived with them who had harassed him sexually, such that after his uncle's separation, he became a prostitute and he speaks rapidly and we can observe the cold sweat on his face. Moein says "one night, my mother was not home and we didn't have cooler, so we went on the roof to sleep there, I was not slept yet and felt that someone took off my pants and...., this happening was repeated I had a fear and even let him to kiss and pity me. Moein had never have the experience of his parent' affection and his comments are about having sexual relationship with his friends and even older people. His father was addicted to opium and in his father's absence, his mother worked as a seasonal worker in the village and she came home late or even she didn't come at night.

Yaser, 10 years old, with a black face and the mark of an old ulcer on his chin has bad experience of his family. He had never seen his father and his mother was with him just for 5 years and lives with his grandmother and grandfather. He hasn't a certificate card and didn't go to school and seems that he is the child of an illegitimate relationship. His grandfather is sick and his grandmother has diabetes. He sells flowers and helps his uncle. Yaser makes stories about his family and has childish lies about his parents and states them somehow that he believes them. He says" my father is a doctor and had went to America and will return next week and my mother waits for me at home. He says that he lives in Maali Abad (one of the rich regions of Shiraz). When we ask about the reason of his presence in welfare center, he says that I was coming back home from skate class and they had made a mistake. He tries to hide his dirty and long nails from the researcher and when he sees his 37 year old uncle he became sad.

Sometimes, the pressure of family on labor children is somehow that the being in the street is an experience of freedom and enjoy as an appropriate substitute. Nima is 13 years old and his mother divorced his father due to his addiction and he lives with his step mother. He says that when he goes home, his father beats him or abuses. He states that his step mother is a good woman but he can't calm his father. Mohammad, 12 years old states that when I go home, I'm waiting impatiently for the morning and coming out. Shabab,14, likes living in the street and considers home as a torturing place and says that other children think that we are unlucky but they don't know that we can go wherever we like and be happy. He believes that home is misery, abuse and .... He is very impolite and uses abuse and when I ask him that whether he uses these words at home, he answers that his parents speak the same. But Omid's attitude toward home and family is full of disappointment. He angrily states that always different men came to their house and stay with his mother and his mother has an excuse for their presence. I can feel the bad smell of cigarette on his clothes and he stopped his education at 4th grade and has nervous behavior. He says that his parents are always worried about his 16 years old sister and he thinks that his sister likes these things as well.

Hossein, 15, lives with his uncle's family and is addicted like his father which had died 3 years ago and his mother departed them. He had sold augury and had continued this career until now. He spend most of his money for buying sandwich and soda pop and sometimes drinks alcoholic drinks with his friends.

He says that his uncle beats him and they don't like him. He says when he sees other children with their parents, a feeling of misery and loneliness appears.

Most of these children have inadequate growth, different diseases, malnutrition and inadequate and inappropriate social, emotional and bodily growth. Javad, 12, had not gone to school because his father didn't let him and his right leg has problem due to poliomyelitis. When I ask him about the reason he says that when he was a child, people had commended him. Alireza is 13 but he looks like an 8 years old child and has malnutrition. He says that he hated milk. I think that Moein has hepatitis and when he feels affection somewhere, he would be attracted there. Hossein had also mild hepatitis and Mohammad and

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Davood have epilepsy. Nima sighs and says that he wished that his father had commended him, but he always had beaten him.

#### **2.4. People are Enemies (Social Aspect)**

Labor children live in an environment which has a big difference with an ordinary life based on social aspect and it's full of stress and tension. The thing which attracts their attentions is their tendency to be compared with other children which increased with its tensions in adolescence. Shahab says "when I see someone who comes back home happily, I think about myself and my situation. When Hossein sees one the children with his family, he would become nervous and enjoys the compassionate looks toward himself. He says honestly that when someone looks at him as a miserable child, he would be happy, especially if she is a woman.

Reza, who had signs of self-injury in his behavior, stated his hatred with other words. He had a severe tendency to beat other children. He says" I like to beat them hard. He feels a severe tendency to harass rich boys and for many times, had been harassed in communal houses with other boys. His first rape experience happened when he was 8 years old which led to bleeding and we can feel the hatred, hostility and his tendency to destruction among his words.

The tendency toward drug misuse and its experience in his family is visible in these children' behaviors, such that he can trap the cigarettes smoke in his lungs. Sometimes, Nima, Davood, Mohammad and Shahab smoke in their friendly group and they like this this relationship. Sometimes, Mohammad drinks alcoholic drinks with his friends and he enjoys using some of the drinking common words.

One of the features of these children is the reproduction of violence. Most of them reproduce these behaviors due to bad experiences and violent conditions in their families as the doer or the subject of this issue toward their family members. Sometimes they are the subject of these attacks like Reza who had self –injury or Farzad, 17, whose father had killed in an ethnic quarrel. He likes violence and always has a knife. He says that I love American guns and I like to continue my education and be a police officer, but he had fired from school due to aggressive behavior and beating his teacher and he works in fruit shop and had worked in a supermarket, stone cutting shop and a home appliances shop which had fired due to his aggressive behavior.

Labor and street children are considered as "reserved army" of delinquent bands and social security breakers. Farzad, 14, sells artificial drug pills and says: my mother is sick and my father had departed us, so I have to work. My mother thinks that I vend and when I go home, I have to hide the pills in ruins behind our house. When I ask him the reason of his jog, He speaks about its high money and the excitement of hiding his job.

These children had not learnt the communication skills and their sociability is negligible. They tend to use wrong words and information and avoid using plural words. When they speak with an individual from another gender, they use inappropriate words and personal adjectives. When I was talking with Alireza, he spitted and Ali cleaned his nose with his finger without using a paper tissue or Davood was speaking with his mouth full of cake or Mohamad who was crying and he used his sleeves to clean his face.

One of the interesting points was the attitude of Yaser toward social life that had a good imagination to make stories and he was trying hardly to attract others. His hysteric and showy behavior was also interesting and he considered himself as an important person who hated pitiful looks and he said that I like to help orphan poor children. His uncle said that he have a tendency toward the opposite sex and tries to attract the girls' attention. He had an amazing talent to play football but his labor does not him to plat and be happy.

In table 1, the primary definitions, basic issues and the core issue during the interviews' analysis has been presented. It's important to note that in contrary to the usual research methods, the analysis part in grounded theory is not an individual, rather are the definitions which are based on purposeful sampling of the interviewees in the theoretical sampling (Boostani, 2010).

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**Table 1: Primary definitions, basic issue and the core subject**

Core subject	Basic subject	Basic definitions	Aspects
Highest alienation	Internal stress	Non -existence of affection, lack of self – esteem and self-confident, fear and anxiety, sleep disturbance like Enuresis, inappropriate nutrition, inconsistent growth, depression	Individually-psychological
		Family break-up	family
	They are enemies	Tendency toward drugs like cigarette, the relationship with delinquency groups, the tendency to have sexual relationship and raping others, social destruction	social

**Discussion**

The denial of labor and street children and disregarding them does not help to solve their problems, rather would lead to more damages. In order to solve their problem, all government institutions have to play their contribution with dividing exact responsibilities and using all the scientific, professional and legal capacities. Also, non-governmental institutions, based on the flexible power and their higher performance help to recognize, introduce and solve these children problems and would provide a suitable cultural situation for all the people of the society.

Street and labor children have characteristics which makes them different. They would taste the feeling of freedom and living lonely due to wandering in the streets without their parents and would gain the ability of conforming to the street culture and rules and would be ready for doing delinquent actions and gradually would become a delinquent who would be punished. Most of them have nutritional problems and different diseases. The hard conditions of life had made them shorter of thinner other children and they have anti-social behaviors. Most of these children have populated families which have social problems or one their parents is died. Due to contempt or inappropriate training, they have personality, self-confidence and reasoning problems and a tendency to destroy their environment.

Excitement, felling guilty, psychological and motion instability, depression and aggression are this group's moral characteristics along with mood disorders, delinquency, psychological weakness, story-making, lying, hysteresis, paranoia, organic disorders and psychological disorders.

Labor and street children are rejected children who are rejected from their parents in different levels, maybe completely or maybe some of his need are neglected or being separated from his parents since his childhood. Most of the rejected child' problems are due to unhealthy relationships of the child and the parents. He shows his objection as an appropriate behavior, stress and depression. Also, they show some

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actions like escaping from home, school, robbery, beating others and a child who faces hatred would receive its consequences and they are more prone to become delinquents and threatening the social security. Due to the lack of hygienic facilities, they are prone to different diseases like anemia, skin diseases (infection, baldness, fungal,...), the infection of respiratory system, visional weakness, diarrhea, wounds, bone fractures, and contagious diseases like mouth and teeth disease, eye, heart, digestion diseases. Because labor children are deprived of suitable foods, they have nutritional problems and vitamin deficiency and not supplying them would influence their intellectual activities. These children don't have adequate time to exercise and we can say that the most important dangers are hygienic issues and different diseases and sometimes their presence in social environments would be a danger to threat the hygienic security of the society.

These children are trained with wrong information, knowledge and words and when they have a relationship with younger children, their right and wrong knowledge and their culture would be conveyed to other children which is a danger for the society, because it would lead to other serious problems.

The process of the stated evolutions and the appeared pattern based on paradigm model, in addition to the received core subject of the research data, would approach us to provide a model and a theory based on the initial information of the research which would fulfill the purpose of presenting a pattern which contains all the participants.

Diagram1. Paradigm model of the research

Ali's condition: immigration, unemployment, poverty

Phenomenons: the increase of quantity and the complex quality of the labor children

Background: Age, the weakness of social system

Mutual action/ action solutions: escaping to street, economical benefits

Meddler's condition: street's attraction

Consequences: they are enemies, violence reproduction

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