



SOURCES OF CHILD LABOR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN PUNJAB PROVINCE

NAMRA MUNIR¹, MUHAMMAD ASIF SHAHZAD², NAVID JAMIL MALIK³

ABSTRACT

Education is essential for every human being, but there are several reasons why working children cannot attend school or even obtain a primary education. These reasons are to blame because working children cannot enroll in school. The issue of child labor affects the entire world and is included in the goals for sustainable development. The research aims to investigate the many social and economic factors that contribute to the prevalence of child work among primary school pupils. A survey was utilized as the methodology to carry out the study and achieve the study's goals. A total of two hundred and fifty primary school pupils participated in the survey. SPSS was used to perform an analysis of the raw data, and the statistical methods of frequency and percentage were employed to investigate the study's findings. According to the study results, one of the primary reasons children are forced to work is because they are required to do so for their families to survive in this day and age when advanced technology and modern living standards are the norms. The study's findings indicate that certain socio-economic conditions are to blame for the detrimental effects on children's social and mental development experienced during their elementary school years. The research would suggest that stakeholders make an effort to guarantee 100 percent enrollment and attendance at schools ranging from elementary to secondary levels, all the way up to high schools, to eradicate child labor.

Keywords: Child labor, Primary school students, Socio-economics status

JEL Codes: I10, Z10

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is essential for all people, yet there are reasons why some children have to work and are unable to attend a school or even obtain a primary education. These reasons are to blame for the situation in which working children find themselves. Whereas poverty is one of the fundamental reasons for all social wrongdoing (Edmonds, & Schady, 2012; Audi and Ali, 2017; Audi and Ali, 2017; Sajid and Ali, 2018; Senturk and Ali, 2021). In a similar vein, most social scientists have concluded that widespread poverty is the primary driving force behind child labor. The term "child labor" can refer to any kind of work or activity that robs children of their childhood. As a result, these are the kinds of activities that are detrimental to children's physical health and mental development and that slow down their progress toward reaching their full potential (Edmonds, & Schady, 2012; Sarkar, & Sarkar, 2016; Ali and Audi, 2016; Ali and Audi, 2018; Ali et al., 2022; Audi et al., 2022). Child labor is practiced in many different settings, and while it is sometimes hidden from view, you can see it happening at some point. Because our eyes are covered, we cannot distinguish between the two. The following discussion will cover all aspects of one of the most pervasive and deplorable forms of child labor: forced labor. It may occur in the home of the family or elsewhere, and its occurrence is exceptionally typical and occasionally regarded as satisfactory. When residential work is performed outside the home, children – particularly young women – are forced to work for extended periods, unable to attend school, and find it challenging to spend time with their families and friends. A staggering number of children are employed in various agricultural jobs. Typically, they work in the agricultural fields owned by their families or work together with their entire families for a single employer. This job may be rigorous or laid back, legal or illegal, done as a part of the family or by the young person on their own for a business. It includes creating articles of clothes, chemicals, glasswork, fireworks, matches, and various other products, weaving carpets and cleaning gemstones, and cleaning jewels. These activities expose the children to hazardous chemicals, resulting in injuries, respiratory and skin infections, intense

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Education, Lahore (Vehari Campus)

² Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Education, Lahore (Vehari Campus)

³ Associate Professor, Department of Education, University of Sialkot, Sialkot

heat, fire and explosions, damage to the children's visual perception and hearing, cuts, consumption, and even death (Maya Jariego, 2021).

There are still relatively small-scale mines in many countries that use child labor. These young people are kept busy for extended periods without receiving an appropriate education or safety instruction. Child miners frequently experience physical stress symptoms, including lethargy and disorders affecting both the skeletal and muscular systems. It is extensively investigated in the confines of rural communities and villages. In addition to this, the oppression of racial and ethnic minorities and indigenous people groups is frequently tied to it. Children are commonly coerced into participating in armed conflict, either as combatants or as members of the military forces that already exist (Dayioğlu, et al., 2021; Maya Jariego, 2021). Abuse of a sexual nature is universally recognized as the most heinous form. The children who are forced to work in such conditions lose their morals and are more likely to contract various sexually transmitted diseases, which can ultimately result in death. Work in the informal sector encompasses various occupations and activities, such as that of cobblers, rickshaw laborers, newspaper hawkers, and rubbish collectors. Only a few of the structures are monitored carefully, while the others are being avoided in broad visibility. These activities occur consistently throughout the city and involve the home industry. So, the objective of the study is to find out the socio-economic factors that are responsible for child labor among primary school students.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Federal Bureau of Statistics, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, and the International Programmed on the prohibition of Child Labor (IPEC) as a component of the International Labor Organization, attempted to conduct the most recent nationwide survey of child labor in the year 1996. This survey covered the entire country (ILO). The review was for 5-14 years, and it showed that 3.3 million, or 8.3 for every penny, are economically dynamic. According to the survey's findings, the number of young people who are employed is approximately 3.3 million, with 2.4 million being young men (73 percent of the total) and 0.9 million being young women (27 percent of the total). The amount of work done by children increases as they become older; this means that the older the child is, the more established they are, and the higher the rate of work required to do. According to the summary, there are around 40 million children in the age group of 5-14 years, which corresponds to approximately 30 percent of the nation's total population. More than half of the children in the group are between the ages of 5 and 9 years old. The ratio of male children to female children was 106 to 100, giving the male children an overwhelming advantage. Again, males outnumbered females in age groups ranging from 5 to 9 years old and 11 to 14 years old, with the respective sex ratios being 107 and 105 to 100, respectively. The vast majority of children, or 28.7 million, call rural areas their home (72 out of every 100 cents). Compared to metropolitan regions, the proportion of males to females in the provincial territory is slightly higher.

The population of Pakistan is over 160 million people, and it is primarily an agricultural nation. The agricultural sector is essential in realizing monetary growth at the provincial level. Significantly nearly three-quarters of the whole population is involved in various survival-related activities in the countryside. There is evidence that children younger than eighteen years old, both young women and young men, have been and continue to be a part of Pakistan's agricultural labor. They play an essential role in creating domesticated animals and harvests. Child labor in agriculture is responsible for producing a significant portion of the drink, food, fibers, and other essential elements used in the manufacturing of various goods. Horticulture is, and will continue to be, the primary source of employment for both adults and children in the rural regions of Pakistan (ILO - IPEC, 2007; Bull, & McNeill, 2007) 23the prevalence of living in poverty is highest among these individuals (Swaminathan, 1998). In Pakistan, landlessness in rural areas is intimately tied to the country's persistent poverty problem. According to the World Bank (2009), barely 2 percent of Pakistan's population controls more than 45 percent of the country's total land area. This severely restricts both the agricultural industry's competitiveness and the prospects for people to make a living from agriculture.

To a significant part, child work is a byproduct of precarious economic conditions. Children are forced to participate in the labor force when there is a need to bring in more money for the family. Child labor is caused by several circumstances, including the size and economic standing of families and unemployment among adults. The information gleaned from the field research will be used to shape the following discussion, which will cover these topics. Due to the state of the world's economies, child labor is common. A precarious financial situation, a large number of relatives, and a low income are essential variables that contribute to the work deployment of children. The shortage of available land in Pakistan's rural areas, combined with the country's high birthrate, contributes to the country's widespread poverty. Peasant farmers make up the majority of the region's rural households, the most of which are poor. The nation is entirely inhabited by families, each of which has large gatherings of members, and there

is rarely enough food to go around. Because of the extreme level of poverty, most families will almost certainly continue to feel obligated to the society's relatively few wealthy individuals. The young children of the rural households are entrusted to these wealthy families to serve as laborers (Basu, and Van, 1998). Because of the debt due to their parents, these children's educational opportunities have been cut short. As a result, the cycle of poverty is perpetuated, and it becomes increasingly difficult to break free of it. The vast majority of interviewed parents were aware of the benefits their children would derive from attending school, yet, they were quick to point out that they lacked the financial resources necessary to make this a reality for their families (Patrinos, and Psacharopoulos, 1997; Mehmood et al., 2022). They were also aware of the potentially harmful circumstances their children were exposed to and their implications for their health. Suppose Pakistan and other developing countries want to reduce the burden of child labor. In that case, a lot of work needs to be done to create job opportunities for poor peasant farmers and distribute natural resources more equally among the people, particularly those not being used, to close the gap between the rich and the poor in the society. In each of Pakistan's provinces, the federal government should make landless people a portion of the thousands of acres of fertile land under its control. They need to have access to the 44 lands, but some rules and conditions are attached, and they need to be reasonable. It is possible to put underutilized land to productive use and generate employment, which would help alleviate the nation's current unemployment crisis.

The high unemployment rate among adults is another major factor contributing to the employment of children (Kuznesof, 1998). Child work can even occasionally take the place of adult labor because child labor is far more affordable and simpler to manage. Children complete their work more quickly yet are paid less. Adults may have concerns about income, workload, and working hours, but youngsters typically do not do these things. However, it was discovered through field research that children do not replace adults in the dari (cotton carpet) sector. This is because, in this industry, different age groups are responsible for various aspects of labor. In this situation, adults are only unemployed when there is no work available; child labor is not a factor in the displacement of adult workers. This is another crucial aspect that contributes to child labor. During the field study, it was discovered that most respondents did not have sufficient resources to achieve their fundamental requirements. The financial contributions that children make to their families are of some assistance.

Young labor is more cost-effective than other forms of work, and employers find it simpler to control child workers than they do adult employees, who may make demands. However, not every one of the interviewed employees admitted to using child labor because it was more cost-effective. They said that the parents of these youngsters came to them and insisted that their children be put in for employment. They said that the parents of these children came to them. In the circumstances like these, employers typically did not have many options available to them. However, in fact, children are the most suitable candidates for employment because they are simple to control and are not aware that they have any rights because of their lack of experience. Employers who rely on child labor for a significant portion of their revenue often subject children to inhumane working conditions and pay them very little for their efforts (Edmonds, and Schady, 2012). There is no pay negotiation between the employer and the youngsters or their families. These individuals showed consideration for the parents by providing employment opportunities for the children.

Work done by children prevents society as a whole from coming together. They are deprived of critical requirements such as training, a healthy diet, and time for recreation and other activities, among other things. In the traditional social hierarchies, children are regarded as societal resources, and it is expected that they will assist and work alongside their parents in the completion of family responsibilities. Children have been enrolled in apprenticeships so that they might learn from the experiences of their forebears and help the family tradition continue to thrive. Some communities have a habit of acquiring and maintaining distinct callings as custom or destiny from one generation to the next. These communities have a place with a particular standing, exchange, or activity. These cultural norms and societal expectations occasionally affect the working conditions of children. However, a higher population growth rate is typical in developing nations and is connected with resource markets. This is because parents in developing countries typically put resources into having a more significant number of children to increase the market valuation of the family unit. According to Baland and Robinson (2000), when the length of benefit markets are functioning and there are exchanges between parents and their children, the parents have the power to determine the amount of work their children do. Even though this work lowers the potential earnings of the children in the long run. They further explain that if the parents are benevolent toward their children and are determined to leave them an inheritance, or if the children are philanthropic toward their parents and intend to support and give an exchange to them during their senior years, this will be taken into consideration.

The presence of many children in a family is a significant factor that might lead to child labor in rural parts of Punjab, in particular. Children are seen more as financial assets than as a source of parental duty by their parents. The deficiency of sufficient resources is the root cause of this problem. Children are not given the proper care they require since they are seen as a source of revenue. The typical size of a family is between 8 and 9. The number of members in a family determines the kinds of needs that must be met. When there are more wants, there are also more expenses, which is when parents are forced to send their children out into the workforce. Because of this, the family expenses are supposed to be carried by all family members, regardless of age. The employment of children brings in money, even if only a tiny amount, which contributes to the general financial well-being of the family. In addition to the myriad of other contributing elements, one of the root causes of child labor is the cultural context. Through the ages, people have believed that a child needs to learn the abilities present in their family. This custom also contributes to the perpetuation of child labor. Both the child's parents and his employers believe that this is acceptable behavior on the child's part. It is generally accepted that children living in such conditions are helping out rather than working for their families. Because of this, students are forced to begin their training as soon as humanly possible. Similarly, a cultivator's son who does not learn how to operate the plow and other instruments at a young age would have a tough time performing them when they are older. In the region where this research was conducted, one of the most important contributors to the prevalence of child labor as a source of the labor force was the cultural component.

Because they lack an understanding of the benefits of education, illiterate parents are less likely to encourage their children to enroll in school. It is a reason that the parents' education was another factor in their decision to put their kids to work. People had limited access to education, and many did not see the point of continuing their education. Furthermore, if they cannot give education beyond the basic level, what is the sense of doing so even if they do offer secondary education? Education is a vital instrument in the process of nation-building. It teaches people social etiquette. Parents who have completed more education make thoughtful preparations for their children's futures. Education enables parents to raise their children healthily and constructively. It is a necessary instrument that allows individuals to have the capacity to lead a regular life. A high level of illiteracy is prevalent in the area studied for the research, and parents also steadfastly maintained their position that they did not want to educate their children. The majority of parents think that their children were born to work just like them. As a result, they only allow their children to attend school intermittently, at times when the children do not have a significant amount of work to perform. They also claim that the children's earnings contribute to maintaining a portion of their way of life. They don't even care that, at first, children make little earnings because the fact that the youngster earns is what is essential, and salaries will always rise. What matters is that the child learns. According to the parents of the child, primary education is a waste of time because children do not acquire any knowledge while attending schools of this type. The parents are solely focused on the money brought in by their children's labor; they are oblivious to the positive and negative effects that child labor might have on a child's education. Because parents do not view child labor as unethical, they can be held personally liable for the adverse effects that their children experience. Because of their lack of literacy, they cannot make the best choices for their children due to the high number of children. Significant concerns, such as their health, education, and participation in other social activities, are not addressed. So, the majority of responsibility for the prevalence of child labor falls on the shoulders of the parents.

In addition to the primary elements, the cultural context plays a role in employing children in labor. People have believed that it is essential for a child to learn the abilities present in their family through the ages. This custom also contributes to the perpetuation of child labor. Both the child's parents and his employers believe that this is acceptable behavior on the child's part. It is generally accepted that children living in such conditions are helping out rather than working for their families. Because of this, students are forced to begin their training as soon as humanly possible. Similarly, a cultivator's son who does not learn how to operate the plow and other instruments at a young age would have a tough time performing them when they are older. The cultural element was one of the most important contributors to the frequency of child labor in the region that focused on the research investigation.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was designed to investigate the factors contributing to the prevalence of child labor among primary school students in Punjab. The students who were enrolled in elementary school and who held part-time jobs after school at establishments such as hotels, tea shops, and workshops were included in the research. Primary school students in the Sahiwal region range in age from 5 to 13 years old, and they all have jobs outside of school in addition to their studies. The student population in this region is taken into consideration. The researchers helped the children fill out the questionnaires and reached out to more than 300 children who work during the after-school hours. Of these children, 250 completely filled out the questionnaire. The present investigation is quantitative in its approach. Therefore, the

method of surveying was utilized to collect the data. The researchers created a questionnaire by reviewing the relevant previous research and using dichotomous questions with answers of either yes or no. In terms of the Cronbach Alpha value, the overall reliability of the questionnaire items was determined to be 0.835. Following the completion of the data collection from the 250 participants, the information was transferred into an MS Excel sheet for further processing and analysis. The frequency and percentage statistical methods were utilized to interpret the study's purpose.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data were collected from the sample of 250 working children in order to achieve the objective of the study.

Table 1: Distribution of working child by Age

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
11-13 years	175	70%
8 to 10 years	60	24%
5to 7 years	15	6%
Total	250	100%

Table 1 shows that the maximum response i.e. 70% from the working children of age group 11 to 13 years; followed by 24% percent from age group 8 to 10 years; followed by 15% from age group 5 to 7 years.

Table 2: Distribution of working areas of working children

Working areas of children	Frequency	Percent
Any other	63	25.2%
Workshop	93	37.2%
Brick kelin	49	19.6%
Hotel	45	18%
Total	250	100%

Table 2 shows that 25.2% of children work in any other work place and 37.2% children work on workshop and 19.6% percent children work in Brick kelin while children (18%) work on hotels.

Table 3: Social Factors of Child labor

Statements	Yes (f)	No (f)
I am orphan.	80	170
My parents force me to work.	112	138
My step mother forces me to work.	133	117
My step father forces me to work.	77	173
My father is an addicted person.	67	183
My father is ill.	123	127
My father insists me to work with him.	170	80
My mother insists me to work with her.	60	190
I live in a backward area.	185	65
Because government failed to stop child labor.	180	70
My home environment is not favorable for study.	120	130
My work is necessary for my family.	65	185

Table 4: Economic Factors of child labor.

Responses	Yes	No
My parents are unemployed	108	142
My parents are poor.	182	68
Lower income of my father.	167	83
My parents could not bear my school expenditures.	221	29

Table 3 shows that the children with the most significant response rate (185) reside in underdeveloped areas. The children with the second-highest response rate (180) believe that the government has failed to curb child labor. Furthermore, the data studied above revealed that fathers of children were forced to work with them compared to their

mothers. The assertion that their mothers cause kids to work with them receives the lowest response rate (60), whereas children (65) stated that their labor is vital for their family or they will go hungry.

The responses of the working children are listed in Table 4 as having the highest response rate (182) that their parents could not afford their school expenses, and further that the respondents (182) say that their parents are poor, and children (167) elaborate that their father can afford their educational expenses despite having a lower income, while the children (108) respond that their parents are unemployed, forcing them to work for their family.

VII. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The findings of the study are as under; According to the study's findings, the majority of children who work after school are between the ages of 11 and 13 years old. The study also included children between the ages of 5 and 7, but these children made up a small percentage of the total. It was also discovered that most children (f = 93) work in brick kilns after school hours. In contrast, a minor proportion of school-aged children (f = 45) is employed in the hotel industry after school. The remaining children (f = 63) work in other settings besides hotels, brick kilns, and workshops. In response to the question, residents of underdeveloped areas (n = 185) believe that it is a significant factor in the employment of children, whereas children (n = 65) believe that it is only a marginal factor in the employment of children. In response to the question, "Why hasn't the government stopped child labor?" (f = 180) responded that it is a significant cause of child labor, whereas (f = 70) considers it to be a minor cause of child labor. In response to the question, parents forced to do work about (f = 112) responded that it is a significant source of child labor while (f = 138) feel it is a modest reason for child labor. When asked, "My father makes me work," about one-third of respondents (f = 170) said that this is a significant reason for child labor, while about one-fifth of respondents (f = 80) considered it to be a minor cause of child labor. In response to the question, "I am an orphan," f = 80 individuals responded that it is a significant cause of child labor, whereas f = 170 individuals believe it is not a cause of child labor. In response to the question "my mother insists me to work," f = 60 of the respondents believe this is a significant cause of child labor, whereas f = 190 of the respondents believe this is only a minor cause of child labor. In response to whether or not my parents can afford my education, (f = 221) responded that it is a significant cause of child labor, whereas (f = 29) believes that it is only a reasonable cause of child labor. In response to whether or not my parents are poor, f = 182 of the respondents said that it is a significant cause of child labor, whereas f = 68 of the respondents said that it is only a minor cause of child labor. At the end of the research project, the researchers concluded that in response to the question "lower-income of my father," f = 167 of the participants said it is a significant cause of child labor. In contrast, f = 83 of the participants considered it a reasonable cause of child labor.

Because the next generation of every nation's population is responsible for shaping its future, the issue of child labor is a pressing one all over the world. Ignoring children means contributing to the breakdown of society as a whole since a nation can't achieve prosperity and security without the leadership of a generation that is both vibrant and powerful. In Pakistan, 2015 saw no extraordinary breakthroughs in overcoming child labor. Due to the lack of updated information about child labor, researchers and policymakers have been unable to build any policy on this multicultural issue. The most recent statistics on child labor are derived from projected predictions; however, these estimates do not give a breakdown of data to emphasize the incidence of underage work in various industries. In addition, the absence of data that has been disaggregated according to the province is particularly significant given that, as a result of the 18th amendment, it is now the provinces' responsibility to draught legislation and policies regarding child labor. In 2015, not a single resolution opposing the employment of children was passed by any of the provincial assemblies. In light of the current state of affairs in the nation, the Employment of Children Act (ECA) of 1991 needs to be reconsidered and rethought in its entirety. The federal government has not yet developed monitoring mechanisms that can determine whether or not the ECA is being put into effect in the various provinces. This study also identifies several socioeconomic elements responsible for contributing to the adverse impact on children's social and mental development. According to the findings of a survey conducted in the Sahiwal division, two of the most significant contributors to the prevalence of child labor in rural areas are low levels of parental education and poverty. The most effective remedy for the problem of child labor is education. However, both the parents and the children need to be persuaded that education is the key to solving their issues and ultimately benefiting them. First, national governments and international organizations like the International Labor Organization (ILO) should take actionable steps to give these working children free education and training. It's possible that providing children with more accessible and more convenient access to schooling could help cut down on child labor. This study attempts to characterize the socioeconomic conditions of child labor in Lahore to emphasize the various causes of child labor, the activities that child laborers engage in, their job status, and the level of qualification they possess. According to the findings of this

study, the age range of nine to thirteen years old is the one that participates in child labor the most. The survey findings make it very evident that more than fifty-five percent of the children who work are illiterate.

1. Stakeholders may ensure 100% enrollment and attendance from elementary to high school so that child labor may eliminate.
2. According to Article 25A of the Constitution, the provincial governments may devise a comprehensive strategy to execute laws prohibiting child labor in their respective provinces.
3. To help the poorest, the federal and provincial governments can offer free education and books. Families in need can also receive cash assistance to enhance their standard of living.

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