



## Analysis of determinants of child labor in KPK province of Pakistan

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**Abstract:** The study in questions aims at describing the prevalence of child labor in a district of war and terrorism struck province of KPK Pakistan. The study attempted to identify the factors contributing to increase child labor and analyzed some theoretical underpinnings to eliminate child labor in the given context. To do this, close ended questionnaires were administered to working children followed by interviews. The targeted population was classified into 05 clusters and a sample of 150 subjects was randomly selected. 100 questionnaires complete from all respects were included for analysis using descriptive statistics. 25 in-depth interviews (20 children and 05 employers) were carried out to obtain insight and substantiate the quantitative data. Findings depict poverty, illiteracy, family size and skill learning intentions to be directly correlated with child labor. The absence of intervention of state and regulatory bodies makes vulnerability of working children more severe. Findings are consistent with the previous studies.

**Keywords:** Child Labor, Economic Activities, Poverty, Education

### 1. Introduction

Child labor is a complex phenomenon and there are significant disagreements on its definitions among scholars and practitioners. Global approaches struggle to ban it and make children labor free. Child labor exists in all the countries of the world with varying proportion and forms. Although there is no agreed upon definition of child labor, however, most of the researchers have relied upon the definition produced by International Labor Organization. ILO (2002) defined 'child laborers' as all economically active children below the age of 12, all children aged between 12–14 working more than 14 hours a week, and all children below the age of 18 in the worst forms of child labor (WFCL). The ILO Convention No. 182 (1999) defines the term the worst forms of child labor as comprising: (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labor, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Important discourses on work-free childhood are captured by the policies of international organizations in which interventions are aimed at guaranteeing children's well-being (Abebe, 2009). Another convention was adopted by ILO in 1973. It defined the age limit of is years for working of a child after the completion of schooling. In 1997,

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the US congress passed “the Bonded Child Labor Elimination Act”, introduced by Rep. Bernard Sanders. The law amended section 3.7 of the US Tariff act of 1930 (19 USC 1307). After its passage imports of articles produced or manufactured with bonded labor, which are under the age of 15, are prohibited.

The constitution of Islamic republic of Pakistan states “No Child below the age of fourteen shall be engaged in any factory or mine or in any other hazardous employment.” Also, “All forms of forced labor is prohibited.” A number of laws contain provisions prohibiting child labor in Pakistan are:

- The factories Act 1934
- The West Pakistan shops and Establishment ordinance 1969
- The employment of Children Act 1991
- The Bonded Labor system Abolition Act 1992
- The Punjab Compulsory Education Act 1994

In contrast, work is deemed detrimental to child development, both at present and in the future. This view resonates with the “human capital discourse”

(Ennew et al. 2005:29), in which child labor undermines the healthy development, knowledge and skills of children that are needed to contribute to future economic development. It also fits the modernization perspective, which places the western world as an ideal that the rest of the world should follow. In this perspective, a high incidence of child labor is seen a sign of underdevelopment, whereas the dissonance of childhood from the performance of valued work is a yardstick of modernity (Nieuwenhuys 1996, Ennew et al. 2005). As a result, the employment of children is resisted, even opposed, through international campaigns (e.g. ILO’s global march against child labor in 1990s), and global NGOs network for combating child labor which produce powerful discourses of the merits of work-free childhoods. The social studies of childhood transform the “natural” category of the child into “socio-cultural” (Jenks 1996). It suggests that children’s work is inseparably linked to the social and cultural context in which it takes place. Any attempt to prevent children from working is Eurocentric, as their work is an integral part of everyday life and is indispensable to family livelihoods. This approach, while asserting the right of children to protection from exploitation; sees childhood as continuous with the adult world, with children gradually moving into the activities of adults as their competencies develop and as opportunities arise (Bourdillon 2006:1202).

## **2. Literature Review**

As was noted above, child labor is often tolerated because it is seen as inevitable due to household poverty. However, studies looking at the relationship between rates of child labor and household poverty, often measured using household income, show contrasting results both across and within countries: while some find a positive relationship (e.g., Cartwright, 1999; Patrinos and Psacharopoulos, 1995), others find a negative or insignificant relationship between child labor and poverty rates (Patrinos and Psacharopoulos, 1997; Ray, 2000; Rosati and Tzannatos, 2006). As a result a consensus appears to be emerging that child labor rates may not have a significant relationship with household poverty (Bhalotra and Tzannatos, 2003) or that there is little evidence to support the claim that such poverty is a major cause of child labor (Canagarajah and Nielsen, 1999). Indeed, in the case of Cambodia, a recent World Bank (2005) study, found children from households in the top three wealth quintiles began working earlier than those from households in the lowest two quintiles as well as a positive correlation between children’s work rates and their households land ownership. Another common, though misleading, assumption about child labor is that it is mainly associated with industrialization and urbanization. However, a distinct majority of economically active children in many developing countries are involved in agricultural work. For instance, in Cambodia according to the national household surveys, around 90% of working children were defined as ‘unpaid family workers’ in both 2001 and 2004 (see Table 1) with, in 2004, some 80% of these being in various types of agricultural work (see Table 2, combined percentages for the first four industry groups). Because of these misconceptions, Bhalotra and Tzannatos (2003) note many policy discourses on child labor do not recognize the predominance of family employment among most child workers, as they are largely influenced by media coverage of child labor in export sectors such as carpets, garments and sports equipment industries. Likewise, Tomasevski (2003) observes the dominant trend of conceiving children’s work as employment in the formal sector fails to provide a promising background to meet the challenge of child labor.

### **2.1 International Scenario**

According to ILO (2006) estimation there were about 218 million economically active children (aged 5 to 17) in the world in 2004; could be regarded as child laborers. The corresponding figures for the narrower age group of 5 to 14 years olds are 191 million economically active children, 166 million child laborers and 126 million are to be considered in the WFCL. Boys continued to be more involved in dangerous jobs than girls. However, the decline is

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marginal in the Asia and Pacific region as it still has about 122 million of child workers aged 5-14 years, which is still the highest number worldwide. The national child labor survey Pakistan conducted in 1996 by the federal bureau of statistics, found 3.3 million of the 40 million children (in the 5—14 years age group) to be economically active on a full-time basis. Of the 3.3 million working children 73 percent (2.4 million) were boys and 27% (0.9 million) girls. Children's contribution to work in rural areas is about eight times greater than in urban areas. The number of economically active children in the 10—14 year's age group. Rural children are mostly engaged in agriculture sector (74%) while the urban ones are busy in manufacturing areas.

## **2.2 Domestic Scenario**

Working children are a very common sight in KPK, where according to official figures, 1.1 million children, out of a total of 3.6 million countrywide, are engaged in various forms of hazardous labor despite the extensive legislation that is supposed to regulate the practice. The Employment of Children Act 1991 clearly states that no child below the age of 14 shall be permitted to work or be employed in any establishment in the country. Similarly, articles 11, 35 and 37 of the Pakistani constitution also prohibit child labor. But a recent survey conducted by the UN children's agency UNICEF indicated that at least eight million children are at work in Pakistan out of its total population of 150 million. According to the figures of International Labor Organisation (ILO), the KPK has a literacy rate of 37.3 percent, much lower than the country's overall figure of 49 percent. The provincial drop-out rate at primary school level is almost 50 percent, which indicates that a disproportionately high number of children are working. Official figures released by the Federal Bureau of Statistics (FBS) placed the number of child workers in Pakistan at approximately 3.3 million. Officially children make up about 7 percent of the total workforce. However, government statistics omit children who are working in family and small businesses that are not registered with the government. The official figures were released more than eight years ago. A new survey to find out the latest magnitude of this problem in Pakistan is long overdue.

Without more recent figures, it is impossible for the government and other stakeholders working to eliminate child labor to determine what impact their programs and interventions have had, if any, and to plan future interventions on a scale appropriate to the number of children affected. According to the FBS survey, about 73 percent (2.5 million) of working children are boys and 27 percent (950,000) are girls. About 2.1 million are between 10-14 years, and the rest are between five and nine years. The survey concludes that more than 2.9 million children work in rural and 400,000 in urban areas, making the number of working children in rural areas more than seven times that of urban areas. About 60 percent (1.94 million) of working children are found in the Punjab, followed by KPK with 1.06 million young workers, Sindh with 298,000 and Balochistan with 14,000 child workers, the survey report says. The survey found that about 71 percent of the total working children are engaged in agriculture, sales and services, mining, construction, manufacturing, domestic service and transport sectors. About 46 percent of the children work more than 35 hours a week, while 13 percent work more than 56 hours a week. Seven percent suffer frequent illness and injuries. In Peshawar alone there are more than 5,500 auto workshops, furniture factories, shoe factories, brick kilns, carpet weaving centres and tyre repair centres where more than 43,000 children labor, the ILO report revealed. In addition, there are hundreds of small hotels and tea stalls and thousands of shops in the city where thousands of children are engaged in various kinds of labor, while a sizeable number of children are associated with the business of selling small goods in city streets and bazaars. Another reason for an increase in child labor in the province is the uninterrupted flow of drugs from neighbouring Afghanistan to Provincial Metropolis and other population centres in KPK.

Research evidence suggests that heroin-addicted parents often force their children into work to help pay for their habit. There is also evidence of the sexual abuse of working children, many of whom are vulnerable to being molested by their employers, older children or by paying customers. The sources said that child labor was embedded in the culture of KPK and that poverty and a lack of education were responsible. "We don't ask the children to work. Instead their elders bring them here. You tell me what these children would do, even if they got an education?" Gul Khan, the owner of a car repair shop employing 12 children, told "The Frontier Post". "The government and NGOs should be grateful to us because we are imparting free-of-cost skills to these children," the man shouted above the din of a diesel truck. A Peshawar-based social worker, Omer Khan, said that most local NGOs working to combat child labor were paid by the donors through the ILO. He said that NGOs could only do so much to combat child labor. "Until the government takes practical steps and implements the laws pertaining to child labor the practice will continue. The NGOs alone cannot do it," he remarked. The government of KPK had set up a commission to review the child labor issue in the MMA regime. But a top provincial government official, on condition of anonymity, said child labor would be around for a lot longer in KPK. "We have no intention of tackling this issue on the basis of existing legislation. The existing laws may suit the West but the needs of our

Khan et., al.: Analysis of determinants of child labor in KPK province of Pakistan society are totally different," he remarked. Usman is just 11 years old. Dressed in ragged, greasy clothes, he holds heavy engine parts as he awaits orders from his employer, who is busy fitting a head gasket to a taxi. For a 10-hour day he earns a very small return at a car repair workshop in the city. "What else can I do? I do want to study but being the lone earner in my family, I am forced to work. If I do not work, who will feed those who depend on me?" he wondered. The rise in employment of children at low wages creates a cycle in which already inadequate adult wages are further depressed to a point where a single adult salary is not sufficient to sustain a family. Hence child labor leads adult under-employment and unemployment. According to the ILO, it is the fastest growing area of child labor in developing countries, fed by rural to urban migration and the break-down of production into decentralized units.

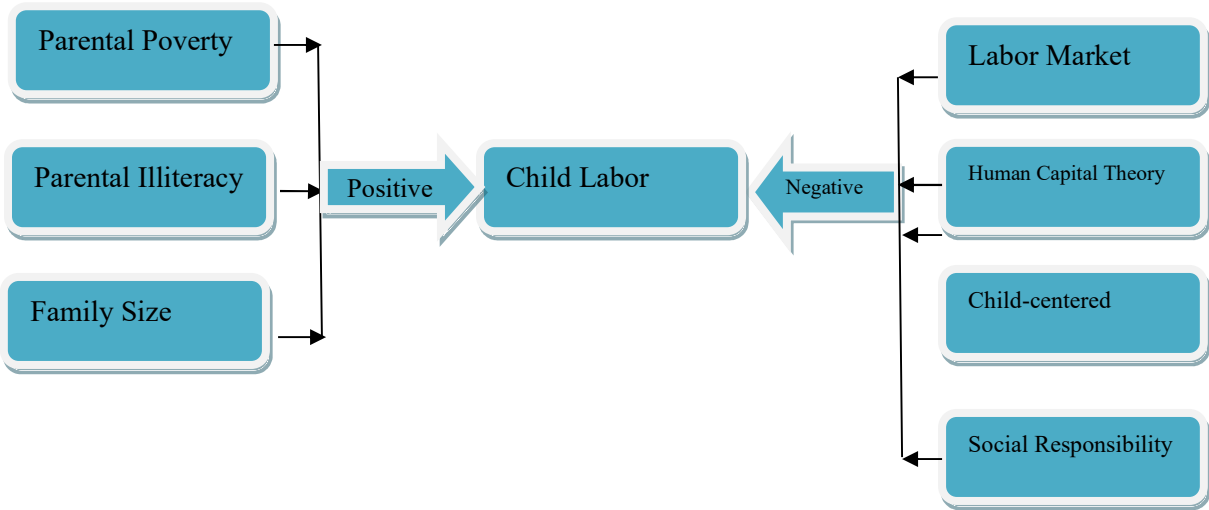
2.3 Theoretical Framework

Literature reveals various theories that can provide analytical grounds to point directly or indirectly to the conclusion that children should not work. Ennew et al. (2005) identifies four distinct constructs of child labor as being influential today. These are the “labor market” discourse which views children’s work as a sign of underdevelopment; the “human capital” discourse which presents education before and in opposition to participation in labor and the “social responsibility” discourse which views child labor as an outcome of social exclusion and the “child-centered” discourse which emphasizes children’s right to be protected from exploitative labor and/or set the condition under which they should work.

Since the study in questions aims at verifying the tentative relationships established between child labor reservoir and (parental poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness, large family size, low quality of education and poor educational infrastructure and apprenticeship to learn skills). The study also attempts to analyze theory based descriptions to eradicate or minimize child labor. Thus the following hypothesis can be framed:

- 1. There is a direct relationship between parental poverty and child labor
- 2. There is a direct relationship between parental illiteracy and child labor
- 3. There is a direct relationship between family size and child labor
- 4. There is an indirect relationship between quality of education and child labor
- 5. There is an indirect relationship between quality of educational infrastructure and child labor
- 6. There is an indirect relationship between enforcement of related legal and constitutional provisions and child labor
- 7. There is an indirect relationship between social responsibility and child labor.

2.4 Schematic view





### 3. Methodology

Survey method was used to collect first hand data through the personal administration of close ended questionnaires followed by in-depth interviews. District Chitral of KPK province comprising population of 400000 individuals constituted population for the given study. The entire population was classified into five clusters and a sample size of 30 respondents (below 18 years of age) from each cluster was randomly selected. Response rate remained 80 percent and 100 questionnaires complete from all respects were included for analysis. Twenty children and five employers were interviewed. Work places from where respondents were auto workshops, shops, furniture workshops, hotels, and houses. 75 respondents were boys and 25 were girls. Girls were working in houses. Descriptive statistics were applied to analyze the data findings were interpreted in percentages.

### 4. Findings and Conclusions

Child labor is a worldwide phenomenon. All countries whether developed or under developed are facing this issue the root cause is the poverty but there are also several reasons of this socio economic problem, like large family size, education problem, poor literacy of parents and so many other reasons are there. Some of the findings and conclusions of this study are given below;

1. From the study it is observed that 75% of the child labor in the project area is male and that of 25% of the Childs are female. It is concluded that the ration of male child labor are more than females.
2. 1 respondent out of 100 respondents being 1% belongs to age of just 11years. 9 respondents out of 100 being 9% belong to the age of 12 year. 30 respondents out of 100 being 30% belong to age of 13 year. 34 respondents out of 100 being 34% belong the age of 14 year. 14 respondents out of 100 being 14% belong to age of 15 year. 10 respondents out of 100 being 10% belong to age of 16 year. 2 respondents out of 100 being 2% represent the age group of 17 year respectively. So, it is observed that most of the children that are involved in the child labor are belonging to the age of 14 year.
3. From the study it is found that most of the child labor are Pakistani (84%) and 16% Childs are having Afghan Nationality.
4. From the study it is found that majority of the respondents i.e. 48% in the project area are illiterate, 34% are Primary pass, 17% are middle pass and 1% is Matriculate. So, it is concluded that mostly illiterate Childs are forced towards child labor.
5. From the study it is observed that majority of the child labor belongs to the large family members that is 70% of the respondents have a family size between 8 to 14 members. 29% Childs have family members from 1 to 8 that is normal family size in Pakistan. So, it is concluded that mostly large family size child are pushed into child labor.
6. From the study it is fond that most of the Childs have their own homes (77%) and only 23% of the respondents are living in the rented house.
7. From the study it is found that majority of the children in the project area are working in the automobile workshops. 21% are working in the Hotel and 39% are working in other places like shops and houses.
8. From the Study it is observed that most of the respondent's parents are alive and only 2% respondent's parents are not alive. 11% respondent's father is died and 20% respondent's mother is died.
9. From the study it is found that 80% of the respondents' fathers are illiterate and only 20% Childs father are educated. So it is concluded that mostly those Childs are involved in child labor whose parents are illiterate.
10. From the study it is found that majority of the child labors in the project area are working up to 10 hours i.e. 53%. 20% are working 12 or more than 12 hours work in day 27% of the child works up to 8 hours in a day. So it is concluded that child labor working hours is against the child labor laws.
11. From the study it is found that majority of the child feel tired after long working hours i.e. 67%. And 29% child feel mentally disturb and 4% feel socially uncomfortable. So, it is concluded that due to long working hour they feel tired and mentally disturb, so there is a chance that they will face mental disturbance or any other diseases.
12. From the study it is found that majority of the Childs are just given 80 to 100 rupees per day i.e. 34%. And 16% are just receiving 50 to 60 rupees per day. so, it is concluded that these Childs are being exploit because 50 or 100 rupees for whole day work is nothing now a days.
13. From the study it is Found that majority (53%) of the respondents have monthly family income of 8000 to 12000 thousand rupees per month. 24% of the respondents have monthly family income less than 8000 thousand rupees. Only 16% of the respondent's family income is more than 16000 thousand rupees. In present economic condition of Pakistan these incomes are in sufficient to full all of the family expenditure.

So, it is concluded that most of the Childs are pushed towards child labor because their parents are unable to afford the educational expenses of their Childs.

14. From the study it is found that majority of the child labors in the project area are working due to poverty i.e. 90%. And 10% are working for other reasons like seeking technical education. So it is concluded that mostly Childs are pushed towards child labor because of poverty.
15. 19% respondent's fathers are Govt. servants, 23% respondent's fathers were Private servant, 23% respondent's father were small business holder, 25% respondent's father were daily wagers and 10% respondent's fathers were involved in any other occupation. So, it is concluded that no matter where the fathers are working, the Childs of all occupational fields are involved in child labor.
16. It is found from the study that 59% of the respondent's income is supplementing their family income and 41% respondents is not supplementing their family income. So, it is concluded that most of the Childs are supplementing their family.
17. From the study it is found that there is no organization working for the welfare of child labor, no organization working for the education of child labor and no organization working for the health of child labor. So, it is concluded that child is pushed towards child Labor Day by day because no any Govt. or private organization is working to reduce the child labor.
18. From the study it is found that all the child are ready to leave the child labor if they are provided the chance of schooling, and they are interested in religious, modern and mostly in technical education. So, it is concluded that the child labor can be reduce by providing schooling chance to these Childs
19. From the study it is found that most of the bosses do not explain how to perform different works. So it is concluded that these Childs are exploit, these Childs learn the work after long time. Become expert after more time, till that time it is difficult for them to supplement their family.
20. It is found from the study that majority of the bosses punish the Childs. If they do mistakes. So, it is concluded that if the Childs make mistakes, they try to hide them and leads them towards criminal morality.
21. It is also found that most of the bosses use rough languages to their child workers. It is concluded that it makes the mind of the small kids bad, like their boss they will also use rough language with others.
22. It is also found from the study that most of the bosses do not keep friendly relationship with Childs. So, it can depress the mind of the child. They will have no confidence because of strict relationship of boss.
23. From the study it is found that 48% of the Childs are involved in the drug usage like cigarette and answer. 52% Childs are not involved. So, it is concluded that the environment of the workplace damaged the habits of Childs and they start using different drugs that are not good for health from the initial age.
24. It is found from the study that 78% of the Childs are being provided medical facility if they become ill and 22% are not.
25. It is found that majority of the project area one holiday is given to these Childs.
26. It is found from the study that 82% of the respondents are given allowance 18% are not given.

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