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Abstract

The aim of the study is to present a comprehensive examination of the resources that determine whether Pakistan's child labor regulations are implemented successfully or not. The government appropriately complies with the international human rights rules on child labor. Despite the signatories to the international convention, and the efforts and objectives to enhance the child protection system, the outcomes were mostly bad. Currently, millions of youngsters are employed in various auto-mechanic shops and industries. The main factor contributing to the increase in child labor cases is the poor implementation of policies and initiatives aimed at supporting the child protection system. It is clear from the constitution and laws that child labor is a harsh and unlawful practice that eventually impairs children's moral, social, and psychological development. The purpose of this study is to investigate and evaluate child labor, child abuse, and the denial of children's rights in Pakistan for these reasons.

Key Words: Child Labour, Protection, Domestic Law, International Law

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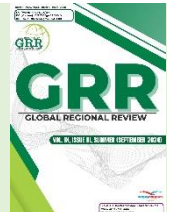
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Abstract

The aim of the study is to present a comprehensive examination of the resources that determine whether Pakistan's child labor regulations are implemented successfully or not. The government appropriately complies with the international human rights rules on child labor. Despite the signatories to the international convention, and the efforts and objectives to enhance the child protection system, the outcomes were mostly bad. Currently, millions of youngsters are employed in various auto-mechanic shops and industries. The main factor contributing to the increase in child labor cases is the poor implementation of policies and initiatives aimed at supporting the child protection system. It is clear from the constitution and laws that child labor is a harsh and unlawful practice that eventually impairs children's moral, social, and psychological development. The purpose of this study is to investigate and evaluate child labor, child abuse, and the denial of children's rights in Pakistan for these reasons.

Keywords: [Child Labour](#), [Protection](#), [Domestic Law](#), [International Law](#)

Introduction

One of the worst challenges to children's rights in developing countries is child labor. The problem of

child labor is not just a domestic issue, it is a global issue that continues to have an impact today. The history of children working has been continuous



throughout history. It used to be that family members worked on easier and more age-appropriate tasks before the Industrial Revolution, but when working knowledge, locations, and techniques changed, the situation changed. In factories that produce mass quantities, not only men but also women and children are employed. In this time period, the owners of the companies/factories searched for an increase in women's and children's labor with a smaller amount salary. In such a situation, children who are vulnerable in the labor market are exploited.

The issue of child labor in Pakistan is still quite serious, particularly from the perspective of international human rights regulations. A significant number of Pakistani children still labor in dangerous jobs in spite of several international agreements, frequently depriving them of safety, health care, and education. In developing countries that manufacture labor-intensive items and commodities, child labor is widespread. The most disheartening aspect is that both domestic and international companies purchase goods manufactured by companies that employ child labor. In developing nations like Pakistan, where an estimated 12.7 % of boys and 5.9% of underage girls are victims of child labor, the problem is much more serious (Hafeez, [2024](#)). Article 11 of Pakistan's 1973 constitution states that work done by minors less than 14 is considered child labor. The idea that child labor is a horrible crime has been influenced by the numerous negative effects it has on society's general stability and growth. It is justified as a crime that has to be eradicated from society by the numerous laws and constitutional restrictions (Article 11).

Pakistan has enacted legislation to prevent child labor and is a signatory to several international agreements. However, poverty, limited educational opportunities, and enforcement disparities continue to be the main issues. According to the International Labour Organization, [n.d.](#) (Article 3), child work is defined by the effects it has on children, and child work is the factor that affects intellectual, emotional, psychological, and educational development. The main objective of international conventions like the International Labour Organization's (ILO) agreements and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is to shield children from exploitation (Hanson & Vandaele, [2003](#)). The World Labor Organization estimates that 160 million children

work as part-time underage employees and that over 97 million boys and 63 million girls work full-time in various businesses, factories, farms, etc (ILO, Article 3). Even though it goes against the World Health Organization and International Labour Organization enlightenment nothing much is being done about it.

This article will examine how Pakistan's socioeconomic issues have contributed to the high rate of child labor by emphasizing the complex relationships between social issues, poverty, limited possibilities, and inadequate infrastructure. It will look more closely at these underlying reasons, investigate the effects of child labor, and offer some possible remedies for this pressing problem. It indicates that not all types of child labor are harmful; some, including babysitting or library employment, may even be advantageous instead. But the worst are child trafficking and pornographic acts, which affect the children's mental health.

Research Question

1. What financial role does the government have in stopping child labor?
2. Why is the growing trend of child work mostly caused by social and economic issues?
3. What crucial part can political leadership play in putting the legislation into effect?

Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis is developed in light of the debate that came before it: based on the perspective of international human rights law, the government of Pakistan has a social and economic role in preventing the labor of children.

The Study of Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative data will form the basis of the study. The literature, journals, and previous studies will all be used in secondary research to collect the quantity of data. Surveys and interviews will be used as primary sources for the quantitative study at the same time. It is getting primary data; we poll people and conduct interviews. Data will be gathered by interviewing 25 youngsters who work in various industries, such as factories, small hotels, and auto repair shops. The child laborers employed as mechanics in several medium-sized companies in Peshawar conducted interviews for this study.

Discussion and Analyses:

Improper Enforcement of Laws

In government of Pakistan's continuous use of child labor is a result of ineffective legal enforcement. Even though child labor is illegal, companies are nevertheless able to take advantage of youngsters for cheap labor due to weak law enforcement, corruption, and a lack of knowledge about the law (Fatima, 2017). In addition to preventing children from accessing school, this lack of enforcement supports the cycle of child labor. For instance, the Employment of Children Act of 1991 restricted the employment of youngsters under the age of 14. However, 13.7% of youngsters between the ages of 10 and 17 are working, giving rise to about 4.5% being involved in hazardous labor children (Employment Act, 1991). So, schools are severely underfunded and powerless to stop youngsters from finding work due to the small amount of money distributed to each province from the federal budget.

The Ministry of Human Rights in Pakistan has been working to solve this issue. According to Pakistani law, child labor in harmful jobs is forbidden, but law enforcement can be difficult in societies, particularly in unorganized industries like small-scale manufacturing, car repair shops, and agriculture. The Ministry needs to develop policies and initiatives to end child labor in partnership with national and international organizations, like the International Labour Organization and UNICEF (UNICEF & ILO, 2023). Pakistan's Ministry of Human Rights is tasked with protecting and advancing human rights throughout the nation, including the crucial domains of policymaking and implementation. These duties are essential to guaranteeing the protection and observance of the rights of all people, particularly those who are most in need.

Certainly, the government of Pakistan still has difficulties enforcing its comprehensive child labor regulatory framework because of a number of complicated socioeconomic issues (Maha Batool, 2023). One of the main causes of child labor is ingrained poverty, which forces families to depend on the earnings of their children in order to survive. This problem is made worse by limited access to high-quality education, as many families find employment as a more practical and immediate solution than education. There are still issues with

implementation and enforcement, and more work is required to successfully stop child labor.

Making Laws Stronger and Implementing in Societies

In the campaign against child labor, developing and implementing strong legal and regulatory frameworks is a crucial first step. The primary reason why child labor is still so common in Pakistan is that, despite the country's passing of specific laws and regulations, they have not been implemented. The four provincial assemblies around the country have enacted a growing number of various provincial laws. For instance, the Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act 2004 requires the provincial government to create child protection institutions, to guarantee their welfare in the event that their parents or guardians are unable to do so or if they are without parents (Punjab, 2004). This category includes a number of children who are vulnerable to abuse, including those who are engaged in child labor.

The Employment of Children Act 1991, section 14 states that anybody who hires a child or permits a child to work in any of the jobs and procedures listed in the Act faces up to a year in jail and a fine (Employment Act, 1991). However, this is not enforced as it ought to be, which ultimately fails to achieve its objective of preventing child labor. Because legislation alone has little effect in the absence of other institutional and policy frameworks, there is no clear vision or plan for the Act's implementation. Other nations, like Egypt, have put in place a National Action Plan to eradicate child labor by 2025 (UNICEF, 2024); Pakistan needs to do the same. Additionally, Egypt hosted an awareness-raising event for around 40 families, including 87 children, from different migrant groups in Cairo. In honor of World Day Against Child Labour, the International Organization for Migration in Egypt organized this event, which aimed to raise awareness of children's rights while investigating strategies to stop exploitation, maintain environmental sustainability, and highlight the importance of mental health and wellbeing for both parents and children (UNICEF Egypt, 2024). These kinds of initiatives might be used in Pakistan to increase public awareness of the harmful effects of child labor and to create a successful plan to stop the practice from occurring.

Providing High-Quality & Affordable Education to Everyone

Pakistan can drastically lower the number of children involved in child labor by guaranteeing that they finish their basic school and providing them with high-quality, easily accessible education. The amount of state money allotted to education will need to be significantly increased in order to achieve the aim. Pakistan's main aim is to ensure that all children, particularly those from marginalized communities, have access to free and mandatory education. Spending on curriculum development, teacher preparation, and educational infrastructure is subsequently important (Sain, 2022). Pakistan must reevaluate and reorder its financial expenditures if it is serious about reducing child labor, given the existing low priority given to public sector education.

Education is difficult for many Pakistani children because of poverty, gender discrimination, less access to school, and disability. In order to promote equitable access, the government must fund policies and infrastructure. Examples of these include expanding the number of schools in rural regions, offering scholarships, and putting in place transportation alternatives for students who live far away (Chishti, 2011). In order to provide equitable learning opportunities for girls, students with disabilities, and other oppressed groups, inclusive education must be given top priority. Policies that foster gender equity, culturally relevant instruction, and special education support are necessary for development (Chishti, 2011). The education funding must be sustained in order to improve teacher pay, instructional resources, and school infrastructure. Establishing accountability systems will also assist in guaranteeing that resources are spent efficiently and that student accomplishment results are quantifiable. These steps will contribute to national growth and global competitiveness by reducing child labor and increasing the population's level of education and skill.

NGO and International Organization Roles

The state's failure to prioritize education has forced foreign and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to take over. It is imperative that the state continues to participate in order to utilize its aid and support. For instance, Pakistan's main organization for protecting children's rights locally, including

against child labor, is the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (Jillani, 1992). The International Labour Organization (ILO) and SPARC collaborate to offer child protection services throughout Pakistan. The basic agreements, which are essential tools for nations to develop effective legislative frameworks, include the Minimum Age Convention (ILO. No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (ILO. No. 182). According to a 2018 report, the ILO Committee of Experts expressed satisfaction with several of Pakistan's legislative amendments relating to the Minimum Age Convention (Employment Act, 1991). The government stated that it has put up draft legislation in the provinces of Sindh, Baluchistan, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the Islamabad Capital Territory with the intention of defining hazardous work practices and establishing a minimum working age of at least 14 years (Employment Act, 1991). The Committee further encouraged the government to take the necessary steps to end child labor nationwide and to guarantee that these laws are implemented effectively. The problem of child labor may be readily resolved if law enforcement organizations operate effectively. Non-governmental organizations fight against child labor and try to educate youngsters. Thus, Pakistan may create a strong legal and regulatory framework to prevent child labor if it complies with the ILO's guidelines and maintains its dedication to the organization's core principles (Ahmed & Tayyab, 2023). The government of Pakistan's ability to reduce its prevalence can be greatly enhanced by enlisting the aid of non-governmental organizations and foreign organizations.

Initiatives of Social Welfare

In Pakistan, some provincial governments can provide economic assistance programs like Ehsas education scholarship, baith-ul-mal, child protection, and welfare bureau for low-income families to keep parents from forcing their children to work. Together, these initiatives seek to reduce child labor by expanding educational opportunities, offering financial incentives, and offering protective assistance to children who are in danger (Khalid, 2004). Both federal and provincial governments should provide funds and establish programs for the development of adult skills, job creation, and income assistance for poor families. Reducing

financial burdens and decreasing their dependence on child labor, unemployment compensation, vocational training, and other such services would give families the opportunity to gradually escape poverty, and this will also necessitate a major reallocation of funds and the creation of a social protection plan for child's labor (Yuningsih, [2018](#)).

Creating Capacity

The government of Pakistan must improve monitoring and enforcement systems if it is to successfully eradicate child labor. In order to detect and address violations of child labor, the government ought to fund the education and development of labor inspectors. The cooperation between communities, civil society organizations, and law enforcement authorities can improve the effectiveness of monitoring efforts. Also, public awareness campaigns may be quite successful in educating the public about the detrimental impacts of child labor and promoting social responsibility. Among other steps, Pakistan can put legislation into effect, educate labor inspectors, and follow up with monitoring and enforcement systems (Khalid, [2021](#)). Pakistan has the same opportunity to initiate as Nigeria, Fiji, Mali, and Sri Lanka in 2021. Increasing and strengthening the legal framework concerning child labor was the goal of each of these nations' action commitments. The government also raised the working age in Sri Lanka and Mali to 16 years old, it intended to hire more labor inspectors, give NGOs technical assistance, and put a stop to the worst kinds of child labor that exist there (UN ILO-Report, [2021](#)). After that, an annual report detailing the efforts done over the year is published.

Impacts of Child Labour

The children are at risk for unintentional accidents and other harm at employment places. So, they ought to be safeguarded against social, financial, and bodily injury that will continue to impact them throughout their lives. These include general child maltreatment and injuries, such as burns, cuts, lacerations, fatigue, fractures, lightheadedness, and extreme anxiety and nightmares (Ahmed, [2021](#)). The physical abuse includes physical punishment and emotional abuse such as verbal attacks, humiliation, rejection, blaming, demeaning, and derogatory comments, as well as emotional neglect, which includes denying family members love and

attention, which leaves them feeling alone and forlorn (Roggero, [2007](#)). Physical neglect includes things like inadequate access to food, clothing, shelter, and medical care. Their life in poverty is prolonged since they lack greater abilities and educational credentials due to their lack of education. The competition between youngsters and adult workers results in low earnings and pay (Houshmand, [2014](#)). In addition, the stated earlier, the country can't develop the higher skills and technological capabilities needed for economic development or transformation in order to achieve higher incomes and improved standards of living if older children aren't given the chance to pursue higher education.

Recommendation

A number of recommendations are offered for eradicating child labor, either individually or collectively.

1. A government campaign should be conducted to inform the public about the harmful effects of child labor.
2. The government should improve education, which will result in better living standards and a reduction in poverty, which will further reduce child labor.
3. It is the government's responsibility should provide sustainable income to families who are unable to make ends meet.
4. Strict adherence to child labor laws is required by government officials and ministries.
5. Food, clothing, medicine, and education should be provided free by the government.
6. Efforts must be made to ensure equality and justice in society.

Conclusion

Child labor is still a major problem in developing countries, Pakistan is still working on solving child labor issues but unfortunately no better result. It is possible to identify the problem of child labor as a crime by offering several viewpoints. These viewpoints might be found in the legal, International Labour Organization, and social perspectives. The legal perspective is that the majority and minority ages are prescribed by every legal regime. It is illegal for minors to conduct any kind of labor. Similarly, the International Labour Organization claims that child labor is illegal in and

of itself because of the numerous harmful effects it has on children, including physical and mental abuse as well as effects on society's general development. The child's work is sometimes seen from a sociological standpoint as an expression of society's dysfunction. Child labor affects the stability of society, thus in addition to implementing reforms at many levels, the political branch must take specific measures to stop it by making it a crime. The prevention of child labor might avert a descent into instability and tragedy.

To solve this problem, all-encompassing approaches are needed, including enforcing the law, delivering high-quality education, improving

monitoring, involving NGOs and international organizations, and adopting best practices from other nations. Additionally, it necessitates a thorough comprehension of the nation's fundamental socioeconomic issues, which inexorably contribute to child labor. Through the development and application of the above-listed methods, Pakistan can endeavor to eradicate child labor. However, it is important to recognize the challenges associated with putting these solutions into practice in the near future. Thus, Pakistan must so endeavor to create a long-term plan to stop child labor, which requires a number of choices to be taken at various state bureaucratic levels.

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