



Prevalence of Child Labor in Pakistan: Unveiling The Dimensions of Child Abuse

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ABSTRACT

The problem of child labor has been a socio-economic and human right concern in Pakistan and especially in Sindh and Punjab despite the legislation change and global obligations. This paper studies the prevalence, sectoral distribution and multidimensional effects of child labor and recommends policy relevant interventions. The secondary data research design was used with the use of the data on the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Labor Force Survey (2021), International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF, and the peer-reviewed literature. A comparative and thematic analysis approach was used to combine evidence throughout the sources. Results show that the highest number of working children is in the agricultural sector; others that have a high number of working children include services and industrial sectors including the brick kilns industry, mining and textile industries. Children are introduced to dangerous working environments such as exposure to toxic substances, heavy labor as well as dangerous environments. Such exposures lead to the loss of serious physical, psychological and developmental effects, such as respiratory disease, musculoskeletal conditions, chronic stress and education deficiency. The paper concludes that the problem of child labor in Pakistan is not only an economic survival strategy but a developmental structural crisis associated with poverty, institutional-level enforcement and without access to education. Mitigation demands specific policy actions, such as poverty reduction, enhanced labor oversight, increased access to education and integrated systems of child protection.

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1. Introduction

"There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected."— Kofi Annan

Child labor remains a critical global socio-economic and human rights issue, disproportionately affecting developing countries such as Pakistan. Despite international commitments, including the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions 138 and 182, and national legislative frameworks such as the Employment of Children Act (1991), the

prevalence of child labor continues to pose serious challenges. It is estimated that 160 million children worldwide are involved in child labour with a large proportion of these children facing hazardous work which endangers their health, safety, and growth (B. UNICEF, & HAR, A. , 2021). Child labor is practiced in various sectors in Pakistan such as in agriculture, services and industry which are a symptom of structural inequalities and governance problems. The continuity of child labor in Pakistan is directly associated with a set of socio-economic and institutional elements. It is still mainly driven by poverty whereby families have to depend on the income of children as a way of surviving in the home (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005). Adults have high unemployment rates, inflation and access to good education all worsen this problem (Hazarika & Bedi, 2003; Sattar & Khan, 2010). In most instances, children are involved in work as a logical house holding measure to meet immediate financial limitations usually to the prejudice to future educational investment. The Human Capital Theory is a good explanation of this trade-off since it postulates that families in low-income environments place more value on immediate income than future returns to education (Becker, 1965; Schultz, 1960).

Child labor is most common in agriculture in Pakistan, where children are used in agricultural tasks like harvesting, application of pesticides, and livestock control. Moreover, child labor is commonly used in the domestic sphere, street and informal services, where very little regulatory control covers the field and in most cases, exploitation can be concealed (UNICEF, 2021). Children are also involved in industrial work (such as brick kilns, mining, and textiles) under hazardous conditions, which subject them to physical trauma and injuries, exposure to toxic substances, and extended hours (Sikandar et al., 2022; U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). It is a mixture of these working conditions that lead to a broad spectrum of negative effects such as respiratory diseases, musculoskeletal disabilities, psychological, and educational deprivation. Child labor has far-reaching developmental and social effects in addition to the economic and health impacts. It denies children education, lowers human capital accumulation and puts children and their offspring in intergenerational poverty cycles (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; Rosenzweig & Evenson, 1977). In addition, gender inequalities also influence vulnerability, where girls tend to do domestic works, and boys are subjected to dangerous working conditions in the public fields (Ali et al., 2022). Lack of strict implementation of labor laws, especially in the informal and rural areas, further facilitates maintenance of exploitative actions even in the light of the law (ILO, 2007). Although a vast amount of literature has been conducted on the determinants of child labor in Pakistan, most of the studies are descriptive, reporting mainly on the individual determinants such as poverty, household traits, and education (Gul et al., 2023). These researches make an important contribution but do not succeed in reflecting the interrelation of child labor as a multidimensional phenomenon that can be considered economical, health, psychological, and social.

Although the number of studies has increased, there are no extensive analytical studies to incorporate the prevalence of child labor, the sectoral distribution, and the multidimensional effects (physical, psychological, and developmental) of child labor in certain regional settings like Sindh and Punjab. Moreover, the literature has not been able to incorporate the theoretical frameworks with empirical evidence in order to give a comprehensive picture of the mutual interaction between structural inequalities, institutional weakness, and socio-economic conditions to perpetuate child labor. This gap restricts the possibility to create specific and evidence-based policy interventions.

To address this gap, the present study adopts a systematic and integrated analytical approach to examine child labor in Pakistan. Specifically, it aims to:

- Analyze the prevalence and sectorial distribution of child labor,
- Evaluate its multidimensional impacts on children's physical, psychological, and educational well-being, and
- Propose evidence-based policy recommendations grounded in theoretical and empirical insights.

By bridging descriptive evidence with analytical interpretation, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of child labor as a structural developmental and human rights issue, rather than merely an economic coping mechanism.

2. Literature Review

Child labor as a topic has been researched widely in terms of historical, economic, and sociological prisms, and the definition of the concept has shifted significantly over the course of time. Initial historical accounts were primarily regarded as a predetermined element of economic growth, particularly industrialization, as the child labor assisted families to stay afloat and the industry to thrive (Radfar et al., 2018). Despite the fact that these perceptions explain the functional dimension of child labor in the primitive economies, they nevertheless fail to address the exploitative dimension and the developmental consequences of child labor over time. In contrast, modern scholarship views child labor as a breach of human rights and an obstacle to sustainable development. In low-income contexts, empirical studies of this framework (Rosenzweig & Evenson, 1977) have shown that families put more emphasis on short-term survival as opposed to human capital accumulation in the future. Although this theory has been successful in explaining household decision-making, it has faced criticism over its narrowness in terms of structural limitations that diminish real options open to households as being institutional weakness and labor market failures. Poverty, household income, and parental education are always identified as major factors contributing to child labor in empirical studies in Pakistan (Hafeez & Hussain, 2019; Saqib, Muhammad, & Khan, 2022). Nonetheless, the relative importance of these factors varies between the studies. An example would be Imran et al. (2016), who note that educational access and the ownership of assets in the reduction of child labor, especially in girls, are key, but household consumption pressures and parental tastes are the most important. This deviation implies that no single factor can be used to explain child labor but instead it is a product of the interaction of economic, social and cultural variables.

Sectoral analyses also indicate that there are significant disparities between the character and risks of child labor. Almost all national and international reports indicate that most child laborers in Pakistan are employed in agriculture, with informal services and industrial sectors coming next in order (International Labour Organization, 2011; U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). Nevertheless, quantitative research emphasizes prevalence and distribution, whereas qualitative research emphasizes the concealed and exploitative essence of domestic labor, with abuse, in many cases, not recorded on paper (Webbink, Smits, & De Jong, 2012). This opposition implies that there is a difference between quantifiable aspects of work and the less obvious aspects of exploitation, which implies a shortcoming of current data and methodology. Another major literature on bonded labor forms is the presence of bonded labor in brick kiln where children are trapped in debt-exploitation circles (Latif et al., 2020). These works put emphasis on structural coercion and immobility, the differentiation between bonded labor and other child labor forms. Equally, urban and semi-urban research singles out the presence of informal labor markets, with children work in informal labor markets with low wages and working under hazardous conditions since few other options exist. Although these studies offer one a lot of valuable information on the dynamics affecting the specific sector, they are usually context-specific and do not just integrate into a bigger body of analysis.

Gender disparity is another aspect of significance in literature. Studies have shown that the boys tend to be exposed to more visible and dangerous labor and girls are confined to household chores, which are less controlled, and less abused (Ali et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the current research is prone to assume gender as a secondary consideration, and it lacks a systematic analysis of gender interacting with poverty and education, which restrains the level of gender analysis. Although there is extensive literature on determinants and sectoral distribution, the major weakness is the fact that most of the studies conducted are descriptive. The majority of the studies are devoted to determining the causes or providing statistical trends, and little attention is given to the multidimensional effects of child labor, especially its physical, psychological, and developmental effects. Furthermore, not many researches combine the theoretical approach with the empirical evidence to present an overall picture of how structural inequalities, weaknesses in institutions, and socio-economic statuses are intertwined to perpetuate child labor. Moreover, in Pakistan, there is also a lack of studies on regional inequalities, specifically, between the provinces, Sindh and Punjab. Although, there are studies that offer localized evidence there is no comparative and integrative research done to determine how child labor in different regions will be manifested differently. This weakness minimizes the capacity to come up with focused and situational policy-based interventions.

3. Conceptual Framework

Human Capital Theory and Structural Inequality Perspective are integrated in this study to develop an overall conceptual framework that is used to explain the persistence and effects of child labor in Pakistan. The Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1965; Schultz, 1960) is a concept of child labor, which views it as a rational household choice in which families and especially in low-income setting, households, do not invest in education at the cost of getting a quick pay. In this viewpoint, the involvement of children in labor is a product of opportunity cost of schooling whereby the cost of foregoing earnings serves as a detrimental factor to education. This argument is supported by the empirical studies (Rosenzweig & Evenson, 1977) which prove that households that are economically constrained tend to replace education with labor as a survival strategy. Nonetheless, although the Human Capital Theory is a good theory in explaining decision-making in the household setting, it has been criticized greatly due to its inability to view structural factors in a bigger picture. Thus, this paper has also integrated the Structural Inequality Perspective which underlines that child labor is not only an issue of personal or family choice but is profoundly rooted in the systemic factors including poverty, unemployment, ineffectiveness of the institutions and the inability to get quality education (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005). This viewpoint emphasizes the fact that structural limitations limit actual options that families have and child labor is an imperative and not a desire. A combination of these two approaches enables the current research to conceptualize child labor as a multidimensional concept that occurs under the influence of both micro-level (decision-making in a household) and macro-level (structural and institutional) processes. The framework also assumes that child labor results in negative consequences such as physical health risks, psychological stress, and educational deprivation that all decrease human capital development and entangles generations in poverty.

4. Research Methodology

The research design is a systematic secondary data analysis to investigate the prevalence, distribution of child labor by sector, and multidimensional effects of child labor in Pakistan, especially in Sindh and Punjab. Secondary research should be used because it allows incorporating the extensive national data, institutional reports, and peer-reviewed data to help obtain a multi-faceted and evidence-based picture of the problem and overcome the ethical limitations that can be faced when using primary data collection that involves vulnerable populations (Kolb, 2012). Various reliable national and international sources were used to obtain the data, such as the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), Labor Force Survey (2021), International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF reports, Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), and the studies by different scholars. In order to assure the reliability and topicality of the analysis, sources have been chosen with references to particular criteria, such as credibility, a recentness (preferably 2015-2025), relevance to child labor in Pakistan, and the presence of sectoral and socio-economic data (especially that of Sindh and Punjab). The analysis is conducted in a mixed format involving the descriptive, thematic, comparative, and policy analysis methods. Patterns regarding the prevalence and sectorial distribution of child labor are studied through descriptive analysis, whereas the physical, psychological, and educational consequences of child labor are analyzed using the thematic analysis. This is done by comparative analysis to ascertain regional differences between Sindh and Punjab and policy analysis to determine the efficacy of the current legal provisions such as the Employment of Children act (1991). Triangulation can be achieved through the use of various data sources, which increases the validity of the findings. The ethical aspects were upheld by using publicly available data only, and not direct communication with child laborers.

5. Findings

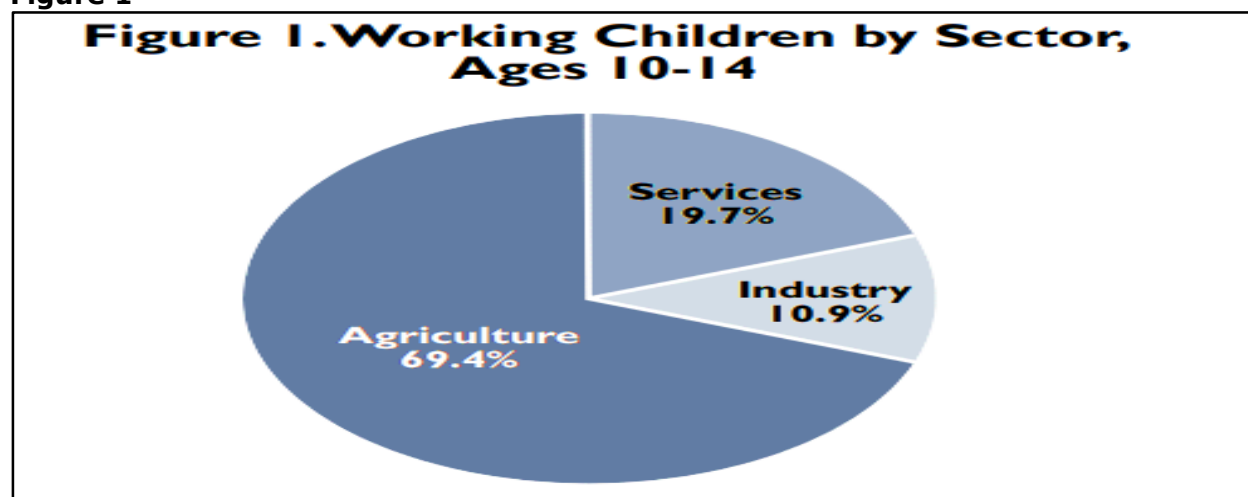
Child labour in Pakistan is also widespread in various sectors of the economy meaning that it is pervasive and systemic. National and international data indicate that children are involved in agriculture, services, and industrial work, with each particular kind of work being either associated with a certain form of work and different levels of risk values. These sectors are characterized by the distribution of child labor which is a measure of economic structure as well as dominance of informal labor market.

5.1. Sectoral Distribution of child labor

The child labor sector distribution indicates a high level of concentration of child labor in the agricultural sector. According to available statistics, one in five children who works is in the agricultural sector; about 69.4 percent (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). Kids in this industry

carry out a variety of tasks, such as harvesting of crops, spraying of pesticides, irrigation, and handling of animals. These are mostly carried out in physically demanding conditions, which include a long time working in extreme conditions, exposure to chemical substances, and laborious manual work. Child labor in the service sector is a large sector of about 19.7 percent, which involves domestic work, street selling, hotel work, scavenging, and work in small workshops (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). The importance of domestic labor is that it remains hidden since it occurs inside the homes, and no one can track the activities that occur in those homes because the monitoring systems are weak. There is evidence available that children in this industry often have to work long hours and can be subjected to exploitative practices. Industrial rank as one of the main sources of child labor: about 10.9 percent of child laborers work in industries that are dangerous to the environment, including brick kilns, carpet weaving, glass manufacturing, and the mining sector (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). These conditions subject the children to hazardous machine work, poisonous materials and elevated temperatures. It has been reported that there is a bonded system of labour in the Sindh and Punjab where children are taken to work together with their families in a system of debt (Khan & Shahzadi, 2021). Besides these main areas of activity, there is also construction, transport, fishing, mining, and garbage collection that children are occupied with. Such activities are characterized by a lot of occupational risk such as exposure to physical injuries, environmental risks and work hazards.

Figure 1



Source: 2020 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Pakistan. U.S. Department of Justice https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2020/pakistan.pdf

Table 1

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, including harvesting cotton (3,5,8,9)
	Fishing, including deep sea fishing (10,11)
Industry	Manufacturing glass bangles,† surgical instruments,† and jewelry (3-5,9,10,12-15)
	Weaving carpets,† producing garments, and tanning leather† (3,10,13,15,18-21)
	Producing bricks (1,3-5,15,19-24)
	Mining coal† and gemstones, and crushing stone† (10,19,22,25-27)
Services	Domestic work (2,4,5,28,29)
	Working in hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and automobile repair (3-5,19,21,30-33)
	Scavenging† and sorting garbage and recyclables, begging, and street vending (3,5,21,30,34-36)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Forced labor in agriculture, brickmaking, carpet weaving, and coal mining (1,3,5,37-39)
	Forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,3,28,39)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, including use in the production of pornography, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3-5,15,39-43)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,39)
	Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (39)
	Use in illicit activities, including the trafficking and production of drugs (3,5,21,36)

Source: U.S. Department of Labor. (2020). Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Pakistan. Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2020/pakistan.pdf

5.2. Nature and Working Conditions of Child Labor

Working conditions of children utilized in these industries are usually grueling and hazardous. Children often work with pesticides and fertilizers in the agricultural sector without any protection equipment. Their activities in the industries involve use of heavy machines, sharp objects, and dangerous substances. Children are also exposed to working in harsh conditions without much law enforcement in the service industry, especially the domestic labor. The hours are likely to be extended and the provision of basic amenities like rest periods, sanitation and even healthcare is minimal. Most children are in informal workplaces that have either lax or no labor laws.

5.3. Physical Health Outcomes

There is available evidence that child labor has a variety of negative physical health effects. In the agricultural and industrial sectors, children are often exposed to harmful substances, thereby contracting respiratory diseases, skin conditions and developing health issues in the long term (Saqib, Muhammad, & Khan, 2022). Monotonous physical work has a cause of musculoskeletal diseases, exhaustion and slowed development. In industries like mining and construction, children are also exposed to other risks of injuries, fractures, and long-term disability as a result of hazardous working conditions. The act of waste construction and scavenging predisposes children to infectious wastes, which in turn pose the risk of contracting communicable diseases like hepatitis and tetanus.

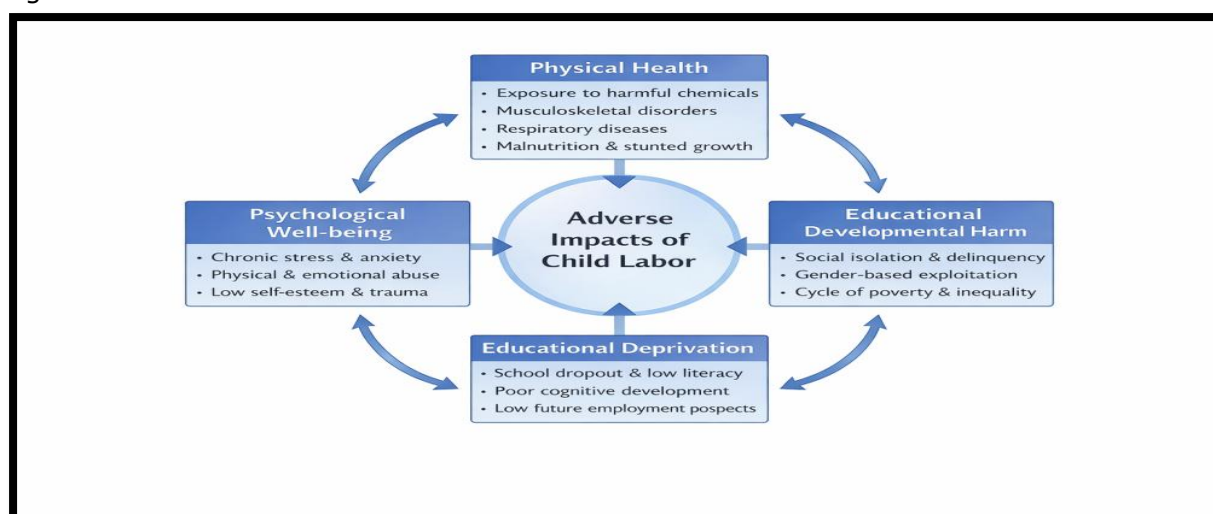
5.4. Psychological and Emotional Consequences

There are also considerable psychological and emotional effects of child labor. It is proven that working children tend to be stressed, anxious, and emotionally exhausted, especially, when the working conditions involve exploitation and abuse (Radfar et al., 2018). The children in the labor are those that are particularly vulnerable because their labor is not visible to see by others and therefore cannot be monitored. Children under bonded labor systems might face forced labor and lack of freedom thus forming chronic stress and mental agony. These conditions are aggravated by exposure to cruel treatment, such as verbal and physical abuse.

5.5. Educational Outcomes

Child labor has a direct impact on children's educational attainment. Evidence shows that children engaged in labor are more likely to experience school absenteeism, reduced academic performance, and early dropout (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005). In many cases, children either do not attend school or combine schooling with work, resulting in limited learning outcomes. The opportunity cost of schooling is particularly evident in low-income households, where children's earnings contribute to family income. As a result, participation in labor reduces time available for education and skill development.

Figure 2



Source: Author's conceptual framework (2026)

6. Discussion

The results of the paper indicate that child labor in Pakistan is not a problem or a sector issue but a structural phenomenon that is greatly influenced by economic, institutional and social factors. The prevalence of agriculture as the main sector that has been using child labor indicates the existence of an informal economic setup where regulating bodies are few and regulatory enforcers are weak. This is in line with the available literature that indicated that child labor tends to be more in rural and informal sectors because it is less monitored and more economically dependent on labor by family members (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; Hazarika & Bedi, 2003). Although the findings confirm that poverty is a core driver of child labor, the evidence also suggests that the economic deprivation is not a comprehensive explanation on why child labor does not disappear. Rather, child labor is the result of the interaction between a number of structural constraints, such as access to education, institutional inefficiency, and socio-cultural practices like normalization of children economic activity. This is aligned with Structural Inequality Perspective that it is not only a household choice to practice child labour but a manifestation of system inequalities that limit possible options that can be adopted by the vulnerable groups (Basu, 2003; Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005).

Theoretically, the findings are partially alignable with the Human Capital Theory that explains child labor to be a rational trade off between immediate profits and long-term investment in education (Becker, 1965; Schultz, 1960). However, the statistics show that this framework might not be detailed enough to describe the case of child labor in Pakistan. The rational choice structural limitations presuppose that households are often limited in their situations by the lower agency and the inability to access opportunity. In such cases, child labor is a conditioning and not a choice and a consequence of financial incapacity and institutional abandonment. It is also shown by the industry analysis that there are significant differences in the nature of child labor. The agricultural concentration of children illuminates the life of the family-based labor systems where children work is usually accepted and normalized by the society. The service, particularly domestic work, is the illustration of the invisibility and unregulated nature of child labor, on the contrary. Compared to agricultural or industrial labor, household work is done in confined areas, and hence it is hard to watch over and control. This invisibility predisposes the vulnerability to exploitation and abuse, which has been reported in the past (Radfar et al., 2018). The results thus indicate that traditional ways of measuring child labor might not give the actual picture that child labor is at its real cost especially in the informal and household based contexts. The practice of child labor in the dangerous sectors like the brick kiln, mining and manufacturing also further reinforces the factor of structural coercion especially in bonded labor. These mechanisms establish a situation when children become locked in debt and immobility cycles, and the intergenerational exploitation trends become easier to sustain (Mulkeen, 2023). The difference between this type of labor and other forms of labor is that it is not only economically necessary but also requires some components of coercion and limited freedom, and this is a serious human rights issue.

The resulting impacts found in the results are multidimensional; physical, psychological, and educational, which underscores the cumulative and interconnected nature of child labor. These effects are not independent but rather they are a reinforcing cycle. As an example, the poor health results of children due to hazardous working conditions decrease the possibility of children attending education. Lack of education is also limiting the future prospects of employment, hence keeping the citizens in poverty and enhancing the chances of child labor in the future generations (Rosenzweig & Evenson, 1977). Such a relationship is a cyclical support to the conceptual frame of the study and shows how child labor leads to the deficit of human capital in the long term. The psychological aspect of child labor, which is not that visible, turns out to be equally important. The results imply that the experience of exploitative conditions, especially when it comes to domestic and bonded labor, may be one of the reasons as to why chronic stress, emotional instability, and long-term trauma may occur. Such consequences extend beyond personal welfare, into social participation, development of behavior, and economic productiveness in the future. In the literature, there has been a growing acceptance of the relevance of such non-economic effects, as child labor is now viewed as a public health concern, as well as a social development problem (Radfar et al., 2018).

Another important pathway by which child labor has an impact on the long-term outcomes is educational deprivation. The results further suggest that the children who are involved in labor

have higher chances of dropping out of school or achieving poor educational results, thus, they are not able to develop skills which can enable them to move up the ladder. Although child labor might seem to be a temporary economic measure taken by the household, the expenditure in terms of human capital lost and productivity is huge in the long run. This supports the claim that child labor does not only destroy the personal development but also the general growth of the economy and the country at large (Becker, 1965; Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005). Also, the results have significant gendered aspects of child labor. Boys tend to be occupied in more noticeable and dangerous jobs in the agricultural and industrial sector, whilst girls are overrepresented in more controlled labor in the domestic sector which is capable of being hidden by exploitation (Begum Sadaquat & Sheikh, 2011). Such division of labor is based on gendered views and wider social-cultural ideals and causes unequal access to education and opportunities. Nevertheless, current policies tend to focus on these gender-related weaknesses, signifying that there is disconnect between policy formulation and actualities. Policy wise, the conclusions are that legislative actions are not enough to solve the child labor issue. Despite signing international conventions and passing of national laws, Pakistan has weak enforcement mechanisms especially in the informal sectors, which restrict their efficacy (International Labour Organization, 2007). This shows that child labor needs a more holistic solution, which includes both legal measures and socio-economic ones, including poverty, education, and community education. In general, the discussion shows that child labor in Pakistan is multidimensional and deeply entrenched phenomenon that is predetermined by the combination of such factors as economic need, institutional vulnerability, and social customs. The results underscore the fact that effective interventions should go beyond the individual policy actions and focus on the structural factors that perpetuate child labor.

6.1. Recommendations

This research shows that child labor in Pakistan is focused in informal sectors including agriculture, household work and the hazardous industries and is highly associated with poverty, lack of education as well as poor implementation of labor laws. Policy responses should therefore be evidence-based, focused on the sector and targeted.

- Firstly, the government must establish sector-specific labor inspections in rural zones, especially the pesticide usage and dangerous agricultural activities since agriculture is where child labor is highly concentrated (69.4). These should involve coordination with the local agricultural departments to detect the participation of the child in the high-risk activities.
- The covert aspect of domestic child labor needs formal acknowledgment and putting of the domestic work under the child labor laws. Monitoring and curbing the abuses of domestic workers in the private homes can be done by creating a compulsory registration system and enhancing the mechanisms of complaints.
- To combat dangerous industrial work, especially in the brick kilns and mines, special enforcing bodies need to be formed to control the practice of bonded labor. These units are supposed to cooperate with the local law enforcement bodies to recognize and destroy the debt-based child labor systems.
- Since the results indicate that there are close correlations between child labor and lack of education, the government needs to increase the number of conditional cash transfer programs that encourage school attendance among children with low-income families in Sindh and Punjab. This would minimize economic dependency on child labor as well as the development of human capital.
- There should be a community-based awareness campaign to tackle socio-cultural norms that condone child labor. Targeting of these programs should be on parents, employers and the local leaders with stress on the economic and social losses of child labor in the long run.
- Mechanisms to rehabilitate should be enhanced by organizing child protection and reintegration centers especially in the high risk districts. These facilities must educate, train the vocation, and offer psychological assistance to the rescued children.
- Lastly, there should be the enhancement of data collection systems, achieved by the regular national surveys and district level monitoring, especially in informal sectors where child labor is currently underreported. This will allow more precise policy planning and interventions.

7. Conclusion

This paper has explained prevalence, sectorial distribution and multi-faceted impacts of child labour in Pakistan and within Sindh and Punjab. These findings show that agricultural sector is the biggest concentration of child labor followed by services and industrial sectors and is marked by hazardous work environments and absence of regulatory practices. It also shows that child labor has intense physical, psychological and educational impacts that when joined together throttle growth of human capitals and reinforced poverty in the succeeding generation. Such findings confirm the notion that child labor is not only a survival tippie in the economic context but a structural and multi-dimensional issue, which is founded on the social-economic inequity and institutional limitations. Even though the legal frameworks that exist provide a platform on which the issue of child labor can be addressed, they are not effective due to the lack of effective enforcement, particularly in the informal sector. Therefore, child labor should be addressed with the help of policy changes and the implementation of policies based on such a set of socio-economic intervention policies as more convenient access to education, poverty reduction and sector-specific policies. Lastly, child labor in Pakistan requires a legislative and institutional dedication and situational interventions to be eliminated. To ease child welfare, human capital and guarantee future socio-economic growth, the structural drivers identified in this paper should be tackled.

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