

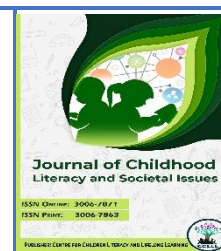


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An Analysis of the Socioeconomic and Cultural Aspects of Child Labour in District Kurram, KP, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the socio: economic and cultural determinants of child labour in district Kurram, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with particular emphasis on how it affects the education and welfare of the children. It focuses on the role of parental participation, family income and the number of children they have to feed, dress and bring up alongside harmful impacts of poverty and culture. The study hypothesizes that, child labour is a complex phenomenon influenced by socioeconomic realities and cultural norms, especially where conflicts persist and social norms prevail. Using a quantitative research design, information was gathered using a questionnaire survey from 204 child labourers working in different sectors, which demonstrated that most are (10-15) and belong to Bangash and Turi tribes with minimal education and exposure to bad working conditions. Findings show that, children in such situations earn money for their family without knowing their rights. Therefore, it calls for interventions for enhancing the access to education, working conditions and rights awareness etc. It also seeks to enlighten the policy makers and other stake-holders regarding the imperative requirement to address child labour in District Kurram through holistic measures to counter this pressing social issue, providing children in the area a better future.



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Introduction

Child labour is a universal phenomenon, which over the past two centuries has experienced a broad variety of attention (International Labour Organization, 2013). It is not restricted to one region, but in the third world countries such as Pakistan, it is most susceptible and alarming (Mazhar, 2008). Child labour is not only related to a child's work, it is a complete violation of the world's human rights (Marianne, 2007). Poverty is one of the most common cause of child labour, but social and cultural barriers also play a role in perpetuating the threat (Nafees, et al., 2012).

The UNCRC defines child, a human being under the age of 18 years, maturity is acquired earlier under the law that applies to a child (Akpan, 2003). While, a child according to the Pakistan's 1973 Constitution, is a person (male / female) less than the age of 14 years (Khan & Jamal, 2008). Child labour; is a child of the age (05 to 14) working with or without his / her parents in any kind of Job paid or not paid (Bhukuth, 2008). Child labour is a complex, multidimensional socio: economic phenomenon, characterized by tensions between a child's chronological age and their economic role in generating labour, income, or household support (Ahmad, 2015).

Asia has the largest absolute number of child labourers and Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest proportion of working children (ILO & UNICEF, 2023; World Bank, 2024).

This research is basically based on the socio-economic and cultural impacts of child labour that affects kids learning, as usual these days youths are clearly moving away from schooling and attribute less importance to the education, there can be a number of reasons for it, it may be socio: factors like parental involvement, teacher contribution or economic factors like income of the parents as well as cultural factors like traditions / norms of early marriages, domestic work considered as being part of the family's survival. These elements

can straight forwardly affect commitment of kids in the examinations.

The bigger the family, the more prominent the weakening of parental assets, and more restricted are the instructive possibilities of every youngster. Consequently, guardians face compromise among amount and instructive possibilities of kids while pursuing choices in regards to the size of their family (Teixeira, 2023).

The majority of research conducted in developed countries confirms a negative correlation between the number of relatives and educational outcomes. Additionally, it has been noted that children with stable financial situations perform better academically, while those with unstable finances perform poorly and inappropriately (Steelman, et al., 2002).

The parental involvement, size of the family, the family's overall well-being and the use of mechanical devices in the children's academic activities are the financial factors that reduces the amount of time and money that parents can devote to each child (Suleiman, et al., 2012).

Empirical research highlights the critical role of parental involvement in children's education, demonstrating consistent positive effects on academic performance. Active parental engagement such as assisting with homework, attending school meetings and fostering a learning-friendly home environment correlates strongly with improved grades, higher test scores and greater educational attainment (Hashmi, et al., 2020).

For instance, a longitudinal study by Jeynes (2012) found that children whose parents regularly monitored their academic progress scored significantly higher in standardized assessments than peers with less parental support. These findings align with Epstein's (2018) theory of overlapping spheres, which argues that collaboration between families and schools maximizes student success. Thus, parental involvement is not merely beneficial but essential

for optimizing children's educational outcomes. (Hashmi, et al., 2014).

According to the National Child Labour Survey (NCLS) 1996, of 40 million children, 3.3 million are actively engaged in labouring in Pakistan, where Punjab's share is 58.65 percent, Sindh 09 percent, Balochistan 0.42 percent and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 31.93 percent '01 million kids' (Chaudhary, et al., 2002).

But, according to the National Child Labour Survey (NCLS) 2022, Punjab has the highest number of child labourers in the country with 2.1 million in 22.4 million children, followed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 0.5 million in 7.2 million, then Sindh with 0.6 million in 9.8 million and Balochistan with 0.2 million in 3.1 million, which suggests that the incidence of child labour in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is also very high, requiring the governing elites' utmost and unique attention to curb the increasing magnitude of child labour in the province by legislation (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

Poverty is widely recognized as the most significant factor contributing to child labour. A substantial body of research confirms that poor living conditions account for approximately (75 %) of the cross-country differences in child labour prevalence (Samonova, 2014). In contexts of extreme poverty, children are often compelled to work not by choice, but by necessity to support their families' survival. Whether the work is beneficial or exploitative, it becomes an unavoidable obligation under such circumstances (International Labour Organization, 2021). This creates a vicious cycle of poverty which forces children into labour and perpetuates inter-generational poverty by depriving them of education and skill development (UNICEF, 2022).

Except this, the worsening situation of law and order in the country and especially Pakhtun belt further worsen the issue and the miseries of common man have increased manifold (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2019). In Pakistan's rural areas, children are engaged in practically observable

activities such as domestic work, herding, agriculture, automobile workshops and as daily wagers (Welay, 2014).

Poverty, parental socio-economic status, cultural and religious considerations, absence of laws and their enforcement are regarded as obstacles of child labour in developing nations such as Pakistan (Radfar, et al., 2018). Poverty has become an inevitable issue in a country like Pakistan, where there is political instability, economic uncertainty as well as population explosion (Khan, 2011).

As a result, in the third world countries like Pakistan, the issue of child labour is not simply a financial one, but also a socio-economic and cultural one that can be addressed by taking certain efforts to enhance the society's economic situation and enable it to give education and leisure to the children. Simultaneously, effective legislation and enactment are needed in this regard (Gulzar, et al., 2009).

Background of the Study Area

District Kurram, located in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan has its own socio: economic and cultural factors which determine the incidences of child labour. In order to understand the situation of child labour in Kurram, it would be pertinent to discuss different facets like; economic factors, culture, family background / structure, and the situation of working children etc. This paper offers an outline of all these aspects so as to discern the causes of child labour and the lives of child labourers in Kurram.

The welfare of the people of Kurram is determined by a numerous inter-related challenges, most of which are rooted in the culturally aware and historically sensitive social fabric of the area. Despite of the fact that, there has been some physical, social and economic developments in the district, it also experiences enduring social vices that undo progress, most notably in the battle against child labour. Low per capita income, school drop-out at an early age, high rates of youth unemployment and under-employment are some

of the major drivers forcing children into the workforce. These socio: economic pressures combined with the lack of educational and livelihood opportunities continue to erode the rights and well-being of children across the region (Hussain & Khan, 2021).

These economic pressures are further compounded by ongoing political instability and insecurity, including sectarian violence and conflict over land disputes, which have a detrimental impact on the ability of local authorities and organizations to enact and implement effective policies and programs to address child labour in the region (National Commission for Human Rights Pakistan, 2025; The Express Tribune, 2025; Voicepk.net, 2024).

Kurram has a notable child labour prevalence of (19.8 %), according to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Labour Survey (KPCLS, 2022). This emphasizes the urgent need for focused interventions that take into account the district's socio: economic and security dynamics (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2024).

These problems are made worse by;

- **Financial Insecurity:** Over (62 %) of the households in Kurram live below the poverty line, forcing children into exploitative labour for their survival (KP Bureau of Statistics, 2022).
- **Educational Gaps:** (37 %) of the children aged (6–16) are out of schools, with girls disproportionately affected due to cultural norms (Alam, 2023).
- **Failures in the Labour Market:** (45 %) of the under-employed youth creates inter-generational reliance on child labour in agriculture and informal sectors (ILO, 2022).

Policy Implications: includes;

- Targeted cash transfers (e.g. Zewar-e-Taleem incentives for schooling)
- Vocational training for unemployed youth

- Strict enforcement of KP Prohibition of Child Labour Act, 2021

It is also worthy to note that the cultural aspect of Kurram also contributes to child labour as a relevant factor. This is because most of the societies are ignorant of the children's rights due to the traditional cultures that support child labour due to social expectations. Moreover, the social political factors compounded the problem such as the region operating as a theatre of war and the high rates of IDPs (internally displaced persons) (UNICEF, 2023 & Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2022).

To achieve this goal, detailed analysis of socio: economic and cultural factors of child labour in Kurram is devoted. The essential feature that needs to be assessed includes the conditions under which children work, their family background and the perception that society holds about child labour, so as to determine intensity of the problem that needs to be tackled (UNICEF, 2020).

When it comes to policies and programs that can address child labour and find practical solutions to this issue in district Kurram, the end user should be the primary beneficiary of the research findings and recommendations. This guarantees that the district's children's future is not jeopardized (International Labour Organization, 2021 & International Labour Organization, 2023).

Literature Review

In relation to a literature review, there is a small and scattered literature on the socio: economic and cultural dimensions of child labour in our country. That's why, understanding the impacts of child labour on the basis of socio: economic and cultural determinants would be important in avoiding the negative counter effects and for choosing the right policies in this regard. Therefore, all relevant sources, including books, thesis, journals, working papers, research articles, policy papers and questionnaires etc. are carefully studied and then the whole information was divided into different categories and sub-categories to summarize the review process.

Poverty remains a serious concern in Pakistan, with (33 %) of the population living below the absolute poverty level, i.e. they earn only one dollar per day. This has particular repercussions for children in Pakistan, where (43 %) of the population is under the age 15 of years (Nadeemullah, 2012).

Poverty, socio economic status of parents, cultural and religious considerations and lack of laws & their enforcement are considered to be the obstacles of child labour in emerging nations like Pakistan. In a country like Pakistan, where there is political fluctuation, economic instability and as well as population explosion, poverty has become an unavoidable problem. Furthermore, children's work on farms and in other unregulated areas of the economy remains largely unmonitored, leaving them vulnerable to economic exploitation and (in some circumstances) life threatening situations owing to hazardous working conditions (Butt, 2010).

Causes of decline of education in Pakistan and its remedies analyzed the system of education, failure of education and possible solutions for its decline. The methodology used is history-based papers, literature, articles, students and teachers. The study was delimited to the documents of education commission of Pakistan and economic survey of UNESCO (Ghazi, et al., 2010).

The effects of using educational technology in private secondary schools of Karachi, Pakistan states that, over one million children (05-14) years of age are economically active in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa according to the NCLS, 1996. So, one can imagine that what is the situation now-a-days. Therefore, it is difficult to gauge the real magnitude of child labour in the province (Shakil, 2013).

Child labour still a hurdle in country's development writes that; child labour is not an isolated issue. It relates to financial conditions of a state. Child labour also depends upon social behaviors of a society. But it's still true after a decade. The author highlights the factors that contribute to child labour in Pakistan as that, it is

difficult for an underprivileged economy like Pakistan to provide basic needs of life to its whole population. That's why; parents are enforced to place their children in various jobs in order to have a better life (Nasrullah, et al., 2013).

Poverty is the main determinant of child labouring because 75 % of the cross country variations of child labour are due to poor livelihood conditions (poverty), because in the context of extreme poverty the child has the responsibility to work and earn for survival of their family whether it has positive or negative on them by and large (Samonova, 2014).

According to ILO, 2013 despite the fact that it is illegal, the majority of child labourer's engage in hazardous jobs and the total number of child workers is growing (Osment, 2014). Similarly, UNICEF states that, child labour has assumed epidemic situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and different studies illustrates that, no labour market in the province is free of child labour. As a result, it is now acknowledged as a major social concern in the region, one that is incompatible with the province general growth (Shujaat and Mirza, 2015).

The effect of parent's attitude on secondary school students' academic performance in Pakistan: explore the parent's attitude on students' academic performance and to find the effects of parental attitude on child performance. It is a descriptive type of survey in which questions are asked from parents, teachers in both the public and private schools of three districts of Punjab, Pakistan (Ahmad, et al., 2019).

As a result, the problem of child labour in third world countries such as Pakistan is not only a financial one, but also a socio: economic and cultural one that can be addressed by taking steps to improve the community's economic conditions and enable it to provide education and leisure time to the children. At the same time effective legislation and execution is required in this regard.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does child labour exist in the study region?
2. What are the socio: economic and cultural aspects of child labour in the district?
3. What are the impacts of child labour in the study area?
4. How to eradicate child labour from the region under study?

Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed method research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to examine the multi-faceted issue of child labour in the district Kurram. Given the complexity of this topic, a diversified methodology is essential, drawing from various data sources and analysis techniques. The research framework is basically analytical and descriptive, facilitating an exploration of personal experiences alongside the measurement of observable trends.

The qualitative component seeks to clarify social realities, beliefs and cultural influences impacting child labour in the region through questionnaire survey with child labourers, field observations and content analysis of relevant texts and policies. The quantitative aspect focuses on collecting numerical data regarding school dropout rates,

income levels, child labour prevalence and household demographics, which will be statistically analyzed to identify patterns and correlations.

Data Collection Methods and Analysis:

The present study has been carried out as;

Both primary and secondary data sources has been utilized in the study, but primary data is collected by means of field surveys and direct observations in communities of the district Kurram. While, secondary data is obtained from government reports, academic journals, policy documents, official statistics, and previous research studies. Libraries and institutional archives are also visited to ensure the comprehensive collection of relevant and credible materials. At the end, all the information will be coded in an orderly and thematic fashion, so that it can be effectively analyzed across various variables like; age, gender, socio: economic status and geographical location etc.

Step 1.

First of all, questionnaires are prepared which are composed of about 77 open ended and close ended questions. Then, it is distributed among 204 child labourers in different sectors and areas of the study region to collect data by Krejcie & Morgan sampling method.

S.No	Category	No: of Child Labourers
		Kurram
1	Automobile Workshops	51
2	Wood Industry (As Carpenter)	07
3	Petrol Pumps	07
4	Welding Industry	11
5	Conductor	12
6	Hotels / Restaurants	15
7	House Construction Industry	12
8	Daily wager	30
9	Beggars	07
10	Sweepers	03
11	Collecting / Selling Scrap	10
12	Denting / Painting Industry	04
13	Tailoring	03

14	Barber	03
15	Shoes Mender & Polishing	01
16	Painter	08
17	Cart Puller	06
18	Farmer	01
19	Snuff Seller	02
20	Driver	01
21	Property Dealer	04
22	Shop Keeper	02
23	Vegetable / Fruits Vendor	01
24	Electrician	03
	Total	204

Step 2.

Then, data would be gathered in a systematic way to take it into the right place by means of different quantifying methods (SPSS) in a study.

Step 3.

At last, the data collected would be analyzed and compared, from which conclusion, findings and recommendations are drawn.

Descriptive Statistics of Parents & Child Labourers

The demographic profile of child labour in district Kurram is described by the following section of descriptive statistics that contain details of socio-economic characteristics of child labour. These statistics have been established with the help of survey questionnaires that were administered amongst child labourer's in the region. It presents useful information about the demographic characteristics, educational background, working environment and cultural background of the child labourer

The gender distribution of child labourers in district Kurram shows a significant balance, with a pre-dominance of male children involved in labour activities. The data reveals that out of the 204 child labourers surveyed, all are the male, accounting for (100 %) of the total sample. This high percentage indicates that boys are overwhelming more likely to be engaged in child labour activities as compared to girls and as well as its also due to the tribal culture and traditions that females are mostly confined to their household activities.

The valid percentage also stands at (100 %) re-affirming that almost all the surveyed child labourers are males. The cumulative percentage reaches (100 %) at this point, highlighting the gender disparity in child labour within the district. In contrast, no female child labourers are identified, making up a (zero %) of the sample. This scenario shows that there may be cultural, social or even economic reasons for the increased number of male child labourers in the district Kurram.

Table # 1. Age Analysis of a Child Labourer (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	5-10	45	22.1
	10-15	159	77.9
	Total	204	100.0

A significant portion of child labourers (77.9 %) are between the ages (10-15), indicating that here in the district Kurram predominantly older children are involved in child labouring. However,

(22.1 %) of the child labourers are between the ages (05-10), showing that even very young children are also involved in child labouring activities.

Table # 2. Caste of a Child Labourer			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Turi	74	36.3
	Bangash	61	29.9
	Para Chamkani	14	6.9
	Mengal	18	8.8
	Ali Sher Zai	05	2.5
	Orakzai	01	0.5
	Zazi-Jaji	01	0.5
	Kharoti	01	0.5
	Ghaljay	02	1.0
	Zadran	03	1.5
	Afridi	03	1.5
	Hazara	08	3.9
	Khoshi	01	0.5
	Masozai	01	0.5
	Mamozai	02	1.0
	Paracha	03	1.5
	Tajak	02	1.0
	Matani	02	1.0
	Kochi	01	0.5
	Lasyanri	01	0.5

The largest caste group among child labourers are Turi's, making up (36.3 %) of the sample, followed by Bangash at (29.9 %). Other significant groups include; Mengal (8.8 %) and Para Chamkani (6.9 %). Other castes are presented

in comparatively fewer numbers, which show the ethnic distribution in Kurram District. This distribution also shows the different cultural and social circumstances of the children working in this area.

Table # 3. Religion of a Child Labourer (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Islam	191	93.6
	Christianity	08	3.9
	Hinduism	03	1.5
	Sikhism	02	1.0

The majority of child labourers (93.6 %) are Muslim, reflecting the pre-dominant religion in the region. Christianity accounts for (3.9 %) of the child labourers, while Hinduism and Sikhism

account for (1.5 %) and (1.0 %) respectively. This distribution indicates the religious distribution endorsed by child labourers in Kurram, though almost all practice Islamic values.

Table # 4. Family Type of a Child Labourer (n= 204)

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Nuclear	128	62.7
	Extended	76	37.3

The majority of child labourers (62.7 %) come from nuclear families, while (37.3 %) come from extended families. As a result, this reveals that

majority of working children are in small families, but also several in large families inclusive of extended families.

Table # 5. Marital Status of a Child Labourer (n= 204)

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Married	37	18.1
	Unmarried	167	81.9

The majority of child labourers (81.9 %) are unmarried, while (18.1 %) are married. This is a clear hint that most of the child labourers are single, but

there is a plethora of married children involved in labouring activities reflecting the Tanzanian culture.

Table # 6. Household's Size of a Child Labourer (n= 204)

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	00-05	25	12.3
	06-10	126	61.8
	11-15	28	13.7
	15 & Above	25	12.3

The majority of child labourers (61.8 %) come from households with (6-10) members. Smaller households of (0-05) members account for (12.3 %) of the sample, while households with (11-15) members make up (13.7 %). Additionally, (12.3

%) of the child labourers come from households with more than 15 members. As, it is seen in this distribution, a vast majority of the child labourers are from moderately big families and another big chunk is from very large families indeed signifying their household's economic pressure.

Table # 7. Father's Monthly Income of Child Labourer (n= 204)

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	5000-10000	19	9.3
	10001-20000	42	20.6

	20001-30000	38	18.6
	Above 30000	33	16.2
	None / NA	72	35.3

A significant portion of the fathers (35.3 %) report no income or it is not applicable. Among those who have an income (20.6 %) earn between 10,001-20,000 PKR, making it the most common income range. This is followed by (18.6 %) who earn between 20,001-30,000 PKR and (16.2 %) with income above 30,000 PKR. Only (9.3 %) of

the fathers earn between 5,000-10,000 PKR. From this distribution, it is likely to be guessed that most families financially struggling to make ends meet, thus the young would have to make their own contribution to the household income by working as labourer.

Table # 8. Mother's Monthly Income of Child Labourer (n= 204)

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	5000-10000	03	1.5
	10001-20000	09	4.4
	20001-30000	01	0.5
	Above 30000	01	0.5
	No Income	190	93.1

The majority of mothers (93.1 %) report no income, indicating that they do not contribute financially to the household. A small percentage of mothers earn between 5,000-10,000 PKR (1.5 %) and 10,001-20,000 PKR (4.4 %). Only (0.5 %) of mothers has income in the range of 20,001-30,000

PKR and above 30,000 PKR, respectively. This distribution clearly exemplifies poor economic status and low participation of mothers in the region's economic sector leading to implications of child labouring by bringing in more money into the family.

Table # 9. Monthly Income of a Child Labourer (n= 204)

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Below 5000	28	13.7
	5001-10000	85	41.7
	10001-20000	74	36.3
	20001-30000	05	2.5
	Above 30000	02	1.0
	No Idea	10	4.9

The majority of child labourers, (41.7 %) earn between 5,001-10,000 PKR monthly. Another significant portion, (36.3 %) earns between 10,001-20,000 PKR. A smaller percentage, (13.7

%) earns below 5,000 PKR, while (2.5 %) earn between 20,001-30,000 PKR. Only (1.0 %) of the child labourers earn above 30,000 PKR and (4.9 %) have no idea about their income. This

distribution shows that many child labourers are paid meager wages, an aspect that shows the hardships children undergo while working.

Educational Status of Parents & Child Labourers

This section gives detail education profile of child labourers in district Kurram like; School

attendance, education level and type of school etc. Here, it is important to comprehend that the educational history of child labourers plays a key role in understanding the importance of education in the child labourer's community. Literacy emerges as the primary tool for escaping poverty and child labour to open the doors for a more favourable outcome in children's lives.

Table # 10. Have You Ever Attended School? (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	130	63.7
	No	74	36.3

Table # 10 shows that (63.7 %) of the child labourers in district Kurram have attended school at some point, while (36.3 %) have never attended school. This means that, over-whelming majority of the child workers has some schooling, while a substantial number have no schooling at all. It is an alarming sign, which indicates that due to poor

socio-economic situation in the region children mostly drop out or even do not go to school. Hence, it is need of the time for all the concerned authorities to be given specific attention in this regard.

Table # 11. Educational Qualification of a Child Labourer (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Primary	65	31.9
	Middle	63	30.9
	Matriculation	05	2.5

Table # 11 provides information regarding the educational qualification of child labourers in district Kurram who have attended school. According to the data, majority have achieved either a primary (31.9 %) or middle (30.9 %) level of education. While, a smaller percentage has completed matriculation (2.5 %). Notably, (34.8 %) have not achieved any formal educational

qualifications or doesn't attended school. This distribution also gives information that, although most of the child labourers have gone to school, but a large number of them have completed only a primary or middle level of education, which suggests that a portion of them might be out of schools and might not have been able to progress to a higher level of education.

Table # 12. Type of School do You Attended (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Government	117	57.4
	Private	18	8.8
	NA	69	33.8

Table # 12. indicates the type of schools attended by child labourers in district Kurram. According to the data, majority of them attend government schools (57.4 %), indicating a reliance on public educational institutions. A smaller portion attends private schools (8.8 %). Additionally, (33.8 %) of the respondents did not provide information on their school type, suggesting that they haven't attend any school. It also shows that due to poverty child labourers have poor option to attend private schools and the major portion of them attends government schools only.

Parental Information of Child Labourers

This part gives further elaboration of the idea of guardians of youngster work in Kurram region

with respect to schooling status of guardians, working status and pay etc. because financial foundation of guardians ought to be viewed as to have an understanding into the components that urge kids for work.

Table # 13. Father is Alive / Dead (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Alive	178	87.3
	Dead	26	12.7

Table # 13. Summarizes responses to the question "Your father is alive / dead?" with two possible answers: "alive" & "dead." Out of a total of 204 respondents, 178 individuals or (87.3 %) indicated that their father is alive. Conversely, 26 respondents representing (12.7 %) reported that their father is deceased. The percentages are

consistent when considering only valid responses with (87.3 %) for "alive" and (12.7 %) for "dead." The cumulative percentage depicts that; all the respondent's answers have been covered in a way with (87. 3 %) reporting "alive" and the rest (12.7 %) reporting "dead."

Table # 14. Educational Status of a Father of Child Laborer (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Primary	44	21.6
	Middle	29	14.2
	Matric	19	9.3
	Inter	04	2.0
	Bachelor	05	2.5
	Master	01	0.5
	None	102	50.0

Table # 14. represents the educational status of fathers of child labourers in district Kurram. Half of the fathers (50 %) have no formal education, indicating a significant portion of the population with limited or no schooling. Amongst those who are educated, (21.6 %) have completed primary

education and (14.2 %) have attained middle school. Fewer have reached matriculation (9.3 %), intermediate (2.0 %), bachelor's (2.5 %) and master's level (0.5 %), which shows that majority of the fathers are un-educated or poorly educated.

Table # 15. Employment Status of a Father of Child Laborer (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Employed	125	61.3
	Unemployed	79	38.7

Table # 15. shows the employment status of fathers of child labourers in district Kurram indicating that majority (61.3 %) are or were employed, while (38.7 %) have not been

employed. This shows that a good number of fathers are engaged in income generating activities in the economy, though some remains still jobless.

Table # 16. Father's Monthly Income of Child Laborer (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	5000-10000	19	9.3
	10001-20000	42	20.6
	20001-30000	38	18.6
	Above 30000	33	16.2
	None / NA	72	35.3

Table # 16. describes the monthly income distribution of fathers of the child labourers surveyed. It indicates that, (9.3 %) of father's have a monthly income b/w 5000-10000, while (20.6 %) earn b/w 10001-20000. A further (18.6 %) of father's make b/w 20001-30000 each month.

Additionally, (16.2 %) of fathers earn more than 30000. However, a substantial portion (35.3 %) did not work or the information cannot be provided showing that child labourers families earning profile is varied greatly.

Table # 17. Mother is Alive / Dead (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Alive	192	94.1
	Dead	12	5.9

Table # 17. shows that a significant majority of the respondents mothers are alive (94.1 %). Only a small percentage (5.9 %) has mothers who are deceased.

Table # 18. Educational Status of a Mother (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Primary	39	19.1
	Middle	06	2.9
	Matriculation	05	2.5
	None	154	75.5

Table # 18. represents educational status of the respondents' mother's, which shows that a significant majority of the mothers have no formal education, accounting for (75.5 %) of the sample. Amongst those who have received some level of education are (19.1 %) whose completed primary

education, (2.9 %) have completed middle level and (2.5 %) have completed matriculation, which indicates that a massive percentage of mother's have no formal education and it may be a one reason of child labouring in the region.

Table # 19. Mother's Employment Status of Child Labourer (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Employed	13	6.4
	Unemployed	191	93.6

Table # 19. shows employment status of the respondents' mother's. A small proportion (6.4 %) of the mothers were or are employed, while the vast majority (93.6 %) were or are not employed,

which indicates the tribal culture & traditions where often females are not working or employed as in cities culture.

Table # 20. Mother's Monthly Income of Child Labourer (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	5000-10000	03	1.5
	10001-20000	09	4.4
	20001-30000	01	0.5
	Above 30000	01	0.5
	No Income	190	93.1

Table # 20. outlines the monthly income of mothers of child labourers. It shows that only a small percentage of mothers earn between 5000-10000 (1.5 %) or between 10001-20000 (4.4 %). Even lesser earn between 20001-30000 (0.5%) or above 30000 (0.5 %). The majority, 93.1 % have no income because of tribal culture and traditions, i.e. they only work in household chores.

Working Conditions and Experiences of Child Labourer

This section takes a look at working conditions and experiences in various dimensions of children in district Kurram. It focuses on the nature of settings in which these children work, the tasks they do, and difficulties they encounter each day.

Working Environment: Elements related to children's working conditions are also scrutinized in terms of safety and comfort of the working environment. Assessment involves determination, if the area has dangerous conditions and the working facilities are in-sufficient, it has effects on the children including their physical and psychological well-being.

Type of Work: General description of the various jobs performed by children is given, which entails determining the prevalence of occupations and the activities that correspond to it; whether it is in a physical or administrative capacity, or serve in factories. The degree of specialization of work assess the likelihood of adverse effects in accordance with each type of activity.

Working Hours & Compensation: The following part looks at working hours of child labour, scope and size of over-time. It also reviews the compensation that various personnel get, determining if it is adequate and proportional to their work. This includes examining the role of earnings with reference to the child's family and whether those earnings are enough to provide the child with basic needs.

Abuse & Mistreatment: Chronicling further the various types of abuse that child labourers undergo gives way to the succeeding part linking up with the next investigation. These are as follows; physical abuse such as beating, verbal abuse such as insults, emotional abuse such as neglect and sexual abuse etc. This section evaluates the experiences of children's mental, emotional well-being and the impressive extent of prevention from such abuses.

Table # 21. In which Age You have Started Working as a Child Labourer? (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Under 05 Years of Age	12	5.9
	05-10 Years of Age	90	44.1
	10-15 Years of Age	96	47.1
	No Idea / NA	06	2.9

Table # 21. reveals that a notable proportion of child labourers began working at a very young age. Specifically, (5.9 %) started working under the age of 05, while a significant (44.1 %) began between the ages of 05-10. The majority (47.1 %) started labouring during their teenage years

between (10-15). Only (2.9 %) were unsure or did not provide information about their starting age. This distribution shows that a significant amount of child labourers starts working right from the early age, though the mean start age range is between (10-15) years.

Table # 22. Industry You are Working as a Labourer (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Daily Wager	30	14.7
	Automobile Workshop	51	25.0
	Petrol Pump	7	3.4
	Welding Industry	11	5.4
	Hotels/ Restaurants	15	7.4
	House Construction Industry	12	5.9
	Collecting / Selling Scrap, Plastic Bottles, Wrappers	10	4.9
	Beggar	07	3.4
	Sweeper	03	1.5
	Denting / Painting Industry	04	2.0
	Tailoring	03	1.5
	Barber	03	1.5
	Shoes Mender & Polishing	01	0.5
	Painter	08	3.9
	Conductor	12	5.9

	Carpenter	07	3.4
	Cart Puller	06	2.9
	Farmer	01	0.5
	Snuff Seller	02	1.0
	Driver	01	0.5
	Property Dealer	04	2.0
	Shop Keeper	02	1.0
	Vegetable / Fruits Vendor	01	0.5
	Electrician	03	1.5

Table # 22. shows the distribution of child labourers by industry. The largest segment is involved in automobile workshops making up (25 %) of the workforce, following by daily wage earners comprising (14.7 %) of the total. Other significant businesses include hotels / restaurants (7.4 %), house construction industry (5.9 %) and

welding (5.4 %). Smaller proportions are found in sectors such as collecting / selling scrap (4.9 %) and tailoring (1.5 %). This distribution shows a vast area of operations in which child labourers can be easily found in the region, while the common sector where it is dominant is automobile workshops.

Table # 23. Working Conditions (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Harsh	48	23.5
	Bad	74	36.3
	Fair	48	23.5
	Good	33	16.2
	Unspecified	01	0.5

Table # 23. illustrates the nature of working conditions experienced by child labourers. The majority find their conditions to be bad, accounting for (36.3 %) of the responses. Harsh and fair conditions each affect (23.5 %) of the workers. A smaller percentage describes their working conditions as good (16.2 %), with a minimal (0.5 %) reporting as unspecified or other

condition. This distribution therefore reveals a portion of child labourers that are exposed to harsh or unfavourable working conditions.

Table # 24. Exposed to Verbal Abuse by Employers / Supervisors / Fellow Workers (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	119	58.3
	No	85	41.7

Table # 24. shows that (58.3 %) of the child labourers have been exposed to verbal abuse from

employers, supervisors or fellow workers. Conversely, (41.7 %) have not experienced verbal

abuse. This means that a high percentage of child workers undergo verbal abuse in their working places, which is alarming.

Table # 25. Exposed to Physical Abuse (Beating) by Employers / Supervisors / Fellow Workers (n= 204)

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	113	55.4
	No	91	44.6

Table # 25. shows that over half of the child labourers, specifically (55.4 %) have been exposed to physical abuse (beating) by employers, supervisors or fellow workers. In contrast, (44.6

%) have not experienced such abuse. This implies that a large number of child labourers are subjected to physical abuse in their work places, which is unethical and alarming sign.

Table # 26. Exposed to Sexual Abuse by Employers / Supervisors / Fellow Workers (n= 204)

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	52	25.5
	No	152	74.5

Table # 26. indicates that (25.5 %) of the child labourers have been exposed to sexual abuse by employers, supervisors or fellow workers. In contrast, (74.5 %) have not experienced sexual

abuse. This has suggested, although a large percentage of child labourers suffer from sexual abuse and majority of the child labourers rarely reveal the experience.

Table # 27. Exposed to Emotional Abuse (Neglect / Forgotten) by Employers / Supervisors / Fellow Workers (n= 204)

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	109	53.4
	No	95	46.6

Table # 27. reveals that (53.4 %) of the child labourers have faced emotional abuse, such as neglect or being forgotten by employers, supervisors or fellow workers. On the other hand, (46.6 %) have not experienced such emotional mistreatment. This means that over 50 percent of the child labourers experience emotional abuse in their working environment, which is alarming.

Table # 28. Suspected by Employers / Supervisors / Fellow Workers (n= 204)

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	85	41.7
	No	119	58.3

Table # 28. shows that (41.7 %) of the child labourers have been suspected or accused by employers, supervisors or fellow workers. Conversely, (58.3 %) have not faced any such

suspicion. This goes to prove that a reasonable number of child labourers are either considered or found to be suspicious in their work places.

Table # 29. Mistreated by Employers / Supervisors / Fellow Workers (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	110	53.9
	No	94	46.1

Table # 29. indicates that (53.9 %) of the child labourers have experienced mistreatment by employers, supervisors or fellow workers. In contrast, (46.1 %) have not faced any such

mistreatment. This shows a large number of child labourers who have to suffer from different types of abuse in their work places.

Table # 30. Insulted by Employers / Supervisors / Fellow Workers (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	109	53.4
	No	95	46.6

Table # 30. shows that (53.4 %) of the child labourers have been insulted by employers, supervisors or fellow workers, while (46.6 %) have not experienced any such insults. This

perhaps might explain why well over (50 %) of the child labourers have experienced some form of verbal harassment at their work places.

Table # 31. Neglected by Employers / Supervisors / Fellow Workers Denied of Food (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	80	39.2
	No	124	60.8

Table # 31. indicates that (39.2 %) of the child labourers have been denied of food by employers, supervisors or fellow workers, while (60.8 %) have not faced any such neglect. Thus, it is evident

that a large number of child labourers have been affected by food deprivation as part of their working environment.

Table # 32. Neglected by Employers / Supervisors / Fellow Workers Denied of First Aid (Medical Facilities) in Case of Injury / Illness (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	79	38.7
	No	125	61.3

Table # 32. reveals that (38.7 %) of the child labourers have been denied of access to first aid or medical facilities in case of injury or illness by their employers, supervisors or fellow workers. In contrast, (61.3 %) have not experienced any such

neglect. This is an indication that (38.7 %) percent of working children lack sufficient medical attention, which needs to be addressed on priority basis.

Table # 33. Duration of Work / Day (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	04 Hours a Day	16	7.8
	06 Hours a Day	31	15.2
	12 Hours a Day	104	51.0
	16 Hours a Day	52	25.5
	20 Hours a Day	1	.5

Table # 33. indicates that majority of the child labourers work extensive hours each day. Specifically, (51.0 %) work for 12 hours a day and (25.5 %) work for 16 hours a day. A smaller proportion works 06 hours a day (15.2 %) or 4

hours a day (7.8 %). Only (0.5 %) of the labourers work for 20 hours a day. In light of this evidence, this data reveals the long working hours that child labourers have to undertake in any given day.

Table # 34. Who is Responsible for a Work You Are Doing? (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Parents	77	37.7
	Government	79	38.7
	Society	25	12.3
	No Idea	23	11.3

Table # 34. shows the perceived responsibility for a work done by the child labourers, i.e. majority (38.7 %) believes that the government is responsible for it, closely followed by those who think that their Parents are responsible are (37.7 %). A smaller portion attributes responsibility to Society (12.3 %), while (11.3 %) have no idea about it that who is responsible. This brings out different stakeholder's viewpoints on an issue as sensitive as child labour and its accountability.

Family Dynamics of Child Labourers

Our analysis in this section aims to investigate the nature of family among child labourers in district Kurram, specifically the role and structure of the family that these children belong to as well as the relations between child labourers and their families. It comprises the relationship with parental support, financial obligations, and impact of work on family unity and health.

Table # 35. Parents are Living Together / Not (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	170	83.3
	No	34	16.7

Table # 35. shows the living arrangements of parents of child labourers in district Kurram. Out of the total respondents, a significant majority

(83.3 %) have parents who are living together. In contrast, (16.7 %) have parents who do not live together due to separation or other reasons.

Table # 36. Parents have Any Kind of Permanent Illness / Disability (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	63	30.9
	No	141	69.1

Table # 36. indicates the health status of child labourers parents in district Kurram. About (30.9 %) of the respondents reported that their parents have some form of permanent illness or disability.

Conversely, (69.1 %) of the respondents reported that their parents do not have any permanent illness or disability.

Table # 37. Brothers / Sisters below 15 Years of Age (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	182	89.2
	No	16	7.8
	Unclassified	06	2.9

Table # 37. shows that a significant majority of respondents, (89.2 %) have brothers or sisters below the age of 15. In contrast, (7.8 %) do not have younger siblings in this age group. While,

(2.9 %) of the data is unclassified or does not fit into the given categories. It shows that, majority of the child labourers also have to support their teenage brothers / sisters.

Table # 38. People Do You Support Financially (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Just Yourself	23	11.3
	Just Parents	13	6.4
	Whole Family	168	82.4

Table # 38. reveals that a large majority of respondents, (82.4 %) support their entire family financially. In contrast, (11.3 %) support only themselves and (6.4 %) support only their parents.

Awareness and Satisfaction of Child Labourers

This portion gives information on extent of human awareness among child workers of district Kurram on their rights and level of contentment on their family lives now.

Table # 39. Satisfied with the Family Life Right Now as a Labourer / Not (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	63	30.9

	No	141	69.1
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Table # 39. indicates a significant level of dissatisfaction among child labourers in district Kurram regarding their family life. Specifically, (69.1 %) of the respondents express dissatisfaction with their current family life, highlighting the challenges they face in balancing

their work and familial responsibilities. In contrast, only (30.9 %) being satisfied with their family life. Based on this disparity, we can conclude that this pressure and demand of labour may have an influence of lowering the satisfaction to their family.

Table # 40. Awareness about Rights of the Children (n= 204)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes	60	29.4
	No	144	70.6

Table # 40. shows that a substantial majority of the child labourers in district Kurram are not aware of their basic rights. Specifically, (70.6 %) of the respondents indicate that they are unaware of child rights. In contrast, only (29.4 %) have some awareness about their rights. This ignorance clearly calls for a better awareness-raising and sensitization initiatives are needed to help child workers comprehend their legal rights and benefits.

Conclusion

This research study gives an account of child labourers in district Kurram based on demography, education level, employment status, working conditions, family background and information regarding awareness about basic rights of the children. By evaluating the findings, it has been observed that majority of the child labourers is within the age group (10-15) years which are employed in different sectors of the region, like; daily wagers, automobile workshops, hotels and construction businesses etc. This workforce comprises the different caste and religious groups of labourers originating from diverse regions. But, the most dominant castes include the Turi and Bangash tribes, whose are Shia Muslims by religion. Majority of these child workers are from nuclear families and most of them are not formally married.

As far as their education level is concerned, the data on child labourers shows that most of them have attended school from primary level to middle level. However, majority of the child labourers have not gone further than these levels and a large number of them are in government schools. Concerning educational level of the parents, majority of them only have a primary education or no education at all. Indeed, most parents are working people, but there are others who are not working, which makes the economic status a mixed one.

Similarly, employment conditions of child workers are poor and more than half of the child workers said that they are subjected to physical, verbal, emotional and even sexual abuse at work places. Many of them have been neglected even in terms of fundamental needs in their lives as food and medical care etc. Working hours are generally long and many employees work for 16 hours a day. The child labourers themselves take the blame both on their parents and on the government, that both are responsible for child labouring, which makes it a structural problem.

Relationship within the families shows that, majority of the child workers parent's co-habit, however, a significant number of families are facing permanent sickness or impairment. Most of the children who work meet the financial needs of

not only themselves, but also their families. Similarly, most of them have young siblings below the age of 15 years. Presumably, this has worsened their financial and emotional statuses.

With regards to level of awareness and satisfaction, majority of them can hardly claim any awareness of their basic rights and only a handful knows something about it. Another reason is dissatisfaction with the family life and most of the clients expressed their dissatisfaction with the family life right now. This is a significant area that lacks knowledge regarding the situation and general health among child labourers in the district.

After all, this study highlights the composite nature of exploitation of child workers in district Kurram, i.e. education is not available or acceptable to everyone, working conditions are also not good, having major responsibilities and they are not aware about their basic rights. As a result, the study emphasizes the obvious need to develop initiatives that fill in the gaps in these vulnerable children's educational status, career opportunities, and awareness campaigns.

Recommendations

Child labour in District Kurram remains a deeply entrenched issue, rooted in complex socio-economic vulnerabilities and reinforced by traditional cultural norms. Addressing this challenge demands a sustained, multi-dimensional

Author Contributions

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approach that targets the root causes while maintaining sensitivity to the local context. A comprehensive strategy must incorporate poverty alleviation, cultural change, improved access to education, and stronger legal protections. This requires not only consistent political will and proper resource allocation but also active collaboration between government institutions, non-governmental organizations, and local communities, including families themselves.

Key interventions include socio-economic measures such as targeted cash transfer programs tied to school attendance, adult vocational training aligned with local markets, and infrastructure development to reduce economic pressures that lead to child labour. Alongside these, community awareness campaigns should engage religious and tribal leaders to promote the value of education and the harmful effects of child labour. Educational reforms are equally critical—ensuring access through improved school infrastructure, free learning materials, and the provision of non-formal education options for working children. Strengthening legal enforcement, labour inspections, child protection systems, and birth registration will further consolidate efforts to eliminate child labour in the region. Only through such integrated and contextually appropriate action can meaningful and lasting change be achieved in Kurram.

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