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# Help to Helpers: A Quantitative Study on Child Labor in Pakistan and its Dynamic Solutions

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## 1. Introduction

We live in a world where 306 million children are employed (ILO report, 2010). Among those children 215 million children are proclaimed as child labor in which 115 million children are compelled to work in hazardous work conditions.

Pakistan is suffering from extremely tender socio-economic and political chaos. There are many reasons why share of child labor is increasing such as poverty, large family sizes, social attitudes and low literacy rate, worst economic crises, symmetry of natural disasters; devastation of infrastructure due to country-wide floods, earthquake, and large increase of unemployment (Human Rights Report, 2010; Bhalotra, 2007; Ahmed, 1991).

There is no recent data available in Pakistan about child labor before 1996. Most recent data available is from 1996 where a survey was conducted that showed that there are 3.3 million children in Pakistan who are victims of child labor. Human Right Commission Pakistan estimated in 2005 that there are 10 million underage children linked to labor in Pakistan.

In addition, one more report by Federal Bureau of Statistics under the Labor Force Survey 2007-2008 shows more eye-opening facts according to which there are 21 million children in Pakistan between the ages of 10 to 14. The ratio of gender is 73 to 27 percent in boys and girl relatively.

These statistics are significantly more than the facts and figures used to be in 1996. These drastically severe statistics demonstrate that child labor is continuously increasing in Pakistan. On the one hand according to the International Labor Organization, around the globe there was a major decline in child labor during 2004 and 2008 (ILO, 2010). But on the other hand, according to ILO, effort for elimination of child labor was worst in Pakistan (Human Rights Commission, 2010). HRC report also implies that there has been the 18th Amendment to the Constitution in Pakistan according to which this matter and elimination of this issue has been transferred to the provincial government. The report also proclaims it a positive step that can enhance the area centric policies towards elimination of child labor. Although, it could happen if 18th Amendment Act 2010 is fully enforced. Current situation, according to that report, is that government did not show much enthusiasm as there was no publicity, advertisement, public campaign program, and clear policy come into sight until 2010. On the contrary, some positive steps are carried out by the Provincial Child Labor Unit (PCLU), in which all four provincial governments at different times and in diverse conditions are focusing on the neutralizers of child labor in Pakistan in terms of education, skill training programs, small credit plans and community watch. These units were established with the collaboration of government's (provincial) labor departments, ILO and European Commission. (Human Rights Commission, 2010).

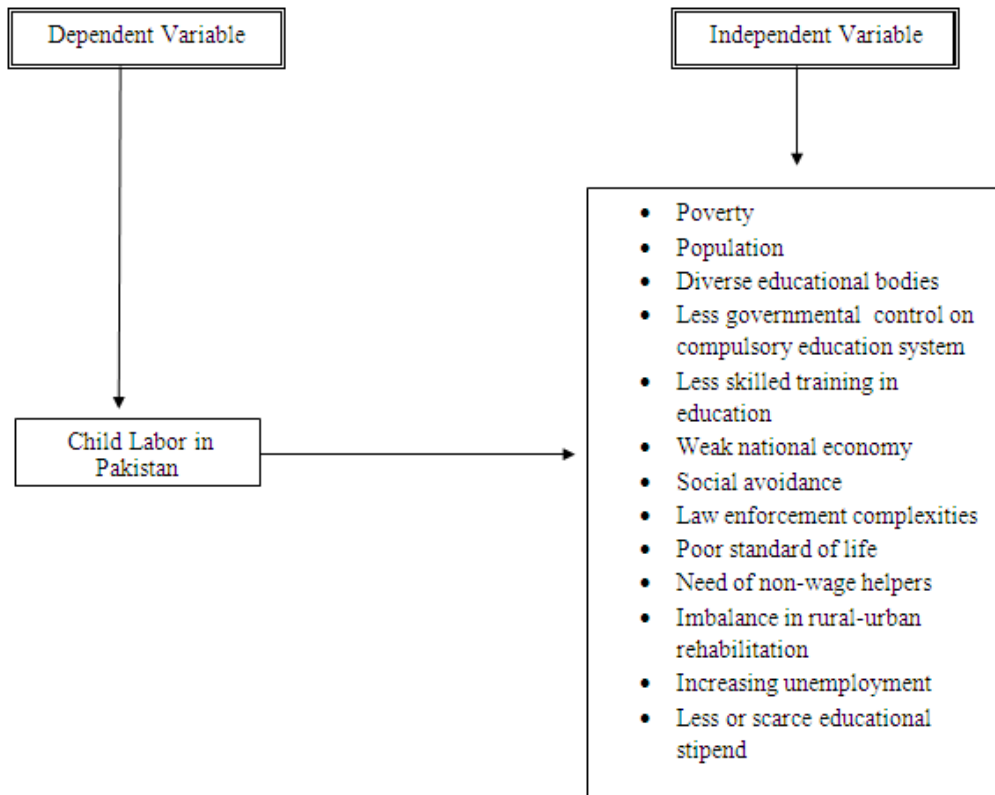
### 1.1 Aims and Objectives

- To explore the situation of Child Labor in Pakistan
- To study the factors involved in child labor
- To investigate sufficient alternatives for elimination of child labor in Pakistan
- To provide pragmatic solutions and recommendations for Pakistani community, government and international community

### 1.2 Methodology

This study has been conducted by the primary data in quantitative research framework (Cresswell, 1994), derived from 439 Pakistani samples (through stratified random sampling) from different cities of Pakistan. Fifteen responses were from Denmark and twenty six from the UK. The likert-scale based questionnaire was distributed by hand, email and a social networking website (Facebook.com). For acquiring best understood responses the questionnaire was written in Urdu language but some respondents asked for English version therefore it was also translated into English. For data analysis computer software SPSS was used for Reliability, Frequency, and one-sample statistics; and computer software PHStats was used for Z-Test.

Conceptual Framework:



Equation: The formula for calculating Z value is as under:

$$Z = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu}{\frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}}$$

Where

$\bar{x}$  represents the sample mean;  $\mu$  represents the population mean; and  $\frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}$  is standard error

At the Level of Significance  $\alpha = 0.05$ , the critical values will be  $\pm 1.96$ . The value of  $\mu$  is taken as 3.

### **Hypothesis**

H1: Child labor is an important problem in Pakistan

H2: Using children as labor force is unethical

H3: Socio-economic problems are reasons of child labor in Pakistan

H4: Government efforts are important for elimination of child labor

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Defining the Child Labor**

International consensus by UN convention on Rights of Children Article 1 (1989) defines a 'child' as an individual under the age of 18 years (UNESCO). Internationally the child labor is defines as the economically active population. (Edmonds, 2008; Becchetti & Trovato, 2005; Beegle & Dehejia & Gatti, 2005; Neumayer and De Soysa, 2005; Shelburne, 2001; Cigno et al, 2001; Hussain and Maskus, 2003).

Child labor is a historic phenomenon; Horn (1994) refers child labor history to pre-industrial era that was increased during the Industrial era. That was the time when most of child work used to be in agricultural societies (Shahrokhi, 1996). Pettitt (1998) explains that non-agricultural and industrial employment caused long hours working conditions in unhealthy, dank and sometime cramped work places. First legislative effort for elimination appeared in 1802 when child labor was restricted in cotton-mill industry in England (McCall-Sarbaugh & Zald, 1989). Donnelly & Petherick (2004) and Siddiqi & Patrinos (1995) estimate initial probable internationally organized efforts for elimination of child labor in 1980 with first International Labor Conference at Berlin

### **2.2 Reasons of Child Labor**

There are many scholars disclosed the factors and reasons of child labor. Basu and Van (1998) and US Department of Labor (2000) proclaim the household poverty constraints a primary reason. Fallon & Tzannatos (1998) and Udry (2003) also state that household income is a significant determinant of child labor. On the other hand Krueger (1996) believes that geographic division of child workers and the financial account of particular regions reveal a negative relationship between child labor and cumulative income. Different researchers argue that formulation of effective policies are very important in reducing and finally eliminating it. (Patrinos & Psacharopoulos, 1997; Jensen & Nielsen 1997). Apart from this, Bhatta (1998) furnished a survey in India and investigated that the population

increase, child schooling and child labor are interdependent so this is very important, giving special attention to this interaction and making policies with the help of this close relationship. Becker (1965), Chernichovsky (1985) and Rosenzweig & Evenson (1977) also insist on schooling variable as a significant factor of child labor. Grootaert & Kanbur (1995) include social inequality as a determinant.

Swaminathan (1998) relates economic growth increases with the demand for the child labor force especially when government does not intervene for resolving this problem. This is a factor why labor market opens up its doors for child labor. In some research works such as Kambhampati & Ranjan (2006), Tesfay (2003) and Kak (2004), it is highlighted that the ratio of child labor reduces with the economic development. Tesfay (2003) determines considerable consequences about participation of child labor which primarily enhances with economic growth but reduces in the subsequent periods in the underdeveloped countries that have 1000 USD or more per capita GDP. Kak (2004) concludes that economic development is a factor explaining the scale of child labor and there is a non linear relationship between each other. Kambhampati & Ranjan (2006) mention equilibrium between the economic development that increases the demand of child labor and the economic development that decreases the supply of child labor. Lopez-Calva (2001) links the social and cultural norms with the child labor and argues that there is a tendency for higher social acceptance for child labor in developing countries. He also mentions that increase of globalization can decrease this social acceptance and people may prefer to send their children to education centres rather to work place. Similar alternative is derived by Davies & Voy (2009) in which they insist parents send their children to the school that is according to them a 'substitution effect' for child labor. This purposeful discussion provides very useful variable to be tested and these variable are used in establishing the questionnaire.

### **2.3 Child Labor in Pakistan**

The Constitution of Pakistan respects the children rights and provides for defending children. According to the Constitution, no child under the age of fourteen shall be employed in any factory or mine or any other hazardous employment. (Online resource: [www.Pakistani.org](http://www.Pakistani.org) )

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2010) reports poverty, social attitudes, large family size and low literacy rate as factors of child labor in Pakistan. Bhalotra & Heady (2003) and Dumas et, al. (2004) also connect the child labor with household poverty, lack of connectedness between subsistence requirements and other income resources. Ahmed (1991) calculates the reasons of child labor as poverty, illiteracy, survival, large families, rural and urban migration and labor troubles. He also discusses the inadequacy of enforcement of elementary education laws, very high birthrate and the lack of economic resources. This is the reason why he believes the proportion of children in Pakistan as larger than most other countries.

A research conducted by Ray (1988) investigates the comparison between Pakistan and Peru in terms of child labor. He examines some similarities between

both countries, for example the impact of child's age, gender and level of education for females in the household are quite similar in both countries. On the other hand, in description of dissimilarities he indicates that the household expenditure and cultural impact are two important dissimilar variables in both countries. He also worked on the comparison between Pakistan and Nepal (2001), a comparative research between Pakistan and Ghana is conducted by Bhalotra, et al. (1997).

Pakistan is multi-linguistic and diverse society. Rana (2003) indicates a comparison between two cities (Faisalabad and Pakpattan) of Pakistani Province Punjab. Barki and Fasih (1998) examine that the cultural and demographic disparities among four provinces of Pakistan are the reasons why the determinant may differ across provinces.

This report investigates the intense condition of this issue in Pakistan. According to the report the violence with child laborers is a worse problem in Pakistan that had been persistent in year 2010. Most of the time, this type of violence is being unaccounted for and unnoticed. It is also not even covered by labor laws. An NGO (Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child) estimated that nearly one million children (most of them were girls) were associated with the working as domestic servants. Often time these Children during domestic serving are victimized physically and sexually (HRCP, 2012).

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan also suggests some very considerable recommendations which are very remarkable for this research to attain an appropriate research framework. According to HRCP (2012) Pakistan suffered deadly natural disaster during last decade that destroyed the infrastructure. So it is very important to give serious attention to recovery mechanism which has a connection with increase of child labor. The report also recommends government to expedite restoration of schools destroyed in natural disasters (horrible earthquake and floods) and in the conflict in the northwestern areas of Pakistan. Secondly the Human Rights Commission suggests giving full rights to provincial governments to play their role in the elimination of child labor under the umbrella of 18th amendment of Constitution. Third, explicit rules, regulations and policies against domestic child and protecting house servants must be formulated. Fourth, there should be a new child labor survey conducted to evaluate the existing condition and to develop properly the rules and policies accordingly. And fifth, the government should develop special training for judges, prison staff, probation officers, and police. (HRCP, 2012)

### **3. Data Analysis and Findings**

**3.1 Reliability:** The reliability test finding of the data through SPSS software's evaluation is as below:

**Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	433	98.6
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	6	1.4
	Total	439	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.863	33

The Cronbach’s Alpha is commonly used for measurement of internal consistency or reliability. This is very useful for likert-scale questionnaires for testing reliability. Cronbach’s alpha is 0.805 that indicates a high level of internal consistency.

**3.2 One-Sample Statistics**

One sample statistics are used to compare whether a population mean is notably different from some hypothesized value. One sample statistics acquired through SPSS are as below:

**One-Sample Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
H1	439	4.2620	1.02355	.04885
H2	439	4.0173	.64777	.03092
H3	434	3.8338	.57209	.02746
H4	435	4.1011	.59907	.02872

**One-Sample Test**

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
H1	25.833	438	.000	1.26196	1.1659	1.3580
H2	32.905	438	.000	1.01731	.9565	1.0781
H3	30.363	433	.000	.83381	.7798	.8878
H4	38.337	434	.000	1.10115	1.0447	1.1576

**3.3 Hypothesis 1:** First hypothesis covers the attributes/dimensions of understanding the view point of Pakistan public about child labor whether they generalize this as a problem or not. This aspect also covers the notion that most people think this a negative phenomenon.

HO1: Child labor is NOT an important problem in Pakistan

HA1: Child labor is an important problem in Pakistan

Hypothesis 1	
Null Hypothesis m=	3
Level of Significance	0.05
Population Standard Deviation	1.02355
Sample Size	439
Sample Mean	4.262

Intermediate Calculations	
Standard Error of the Mean	0.048851376
Z Test Statistic	25.83345852

Two-Tailed Test	
Lower Critical Value	-1.959963985
Upper Critical Value	1.959963985
p-Value	0
Reject the null hypothesis	

**3.4 Hypothesis 2:** This hypothesis covered five elements/attributes in which people were asked to furnish their response whether it is unethical to allow work to children under eighteen, it is unethical of the parents to send their children to work, and it is a crime to send children to work under the age of 14 and use of children as non-wage helpers.

HO2: Using children as labor force is NOT unethical

HA2: Using children as labor force is unethical

Hypothesis 2	
Null Hypothesis m=	3
Level of Significance	0.05
Population Standard Deviation	0.64777
Sample Size	439
Sample Mean	4.262

Intermediate Calculations	
Standard Error of the Mean	0.030916375
Z Test Statistic	32.905

Two-Tailed Test	
Lower Critical Value	-1.959963985
Upper Critical Value	1.959963985

p-Value	0
Reject the null hypothesis	

**3.5 Hypothesis 3:**

This hypothesis covers the reasons of child labor such as poverty, population, diverse educational bodies, less governmental control, weak national economy, social avoidance, law enforcement complexities, poor standard of life, need of non-wage helpers, imbalance in rural-urban rehabilitation, unemployment, less or scarce educational stipend and non-schooling.

HO3: Socio-economic problems are NOT reasons of child labor in Pakistan

HA3: Socio-economic problems are reasons of child labor in Pakistan

Hypothesis 4	
Null Hypothesis m=	3
Level of Significance	0.05
Population Standard Deviation	0.57209
Sample Size	439
Sample Mean	4.262

Intermediate Calculations	
Standard Error of the Mean	0.027304366
Z Test Statistic	30.363

Two-Tailed Test	
Lower Critical Value	-1.959963985
Upper Critical Value	1.959963985
p-Value	0
Reject the null hypothesis	



**3.6 Hypothesis 4:**

This hypothesis covers governmental efforts through social security rehabilitation, macroeconomics, and less governmental control on law enforcement.

HO4: Government efforts are NOT important for elimination of child labor

HA4: Government efforts are important for elimination of child labor

Data	
Null Hypothesis m=	3
Level of Significance	0.05
Population Standard Deviation	0.59907
Sample Size	439
Sample Mean	4.1011

Intermediate Calculations	
Standard Error of the Mean	0.028592051
Z Test Statistic	38.337

Two-Tailed Test	
Lower Critical Value	-1.959963985
Upper Critical Value	1.959963985
p-Value	0
Reject the null hypothesis	

**4. Conclusion**

Our first hypothesis test proved that 50.1% respondents strongly agreed and 39.9% generally agreed that child labor is an important problem of Pakistan. It also shows that they believe this issue is a negative aspect of Pakistani society.

On the other hand, in the case of hypothesis two, 8.4% respondents strongly agreed and 59.2% respondents agreed that child labor is an unethical phenomenon. Most of questions regarding hypothesis two were designed for asking different facets of paid or unpaid child labor, some associated law for elimination, use of children as helpers, some barriers in law enforcement. The

respondents recognized that this is an immoral and unethical issue that needs to be resolved.

Third hypothesis was based on the key factors and root causes of child labor. The responses received were extremely varied in which Pakistani samples explained that some social issues especially the poverty, weak economy, civic negligence, parental no awareness, unemployment, and worse standard of life.

Last hypothesis was about governmental efforts for elimination of child labor. 71% respondents replied that government can play a very important role eradicating this problem. It shows that Pakistani people are eager to their government for playing a vigorous role.

## **5. Recommendations**

- Responses on question No. 23 show that lower standard of life is an important factor for child labor so Government needs to increase the life style of a common man.
- Question No. 5, 10, 11, and 18 relate child labor to low state economy so rapid policies are needed to adopt for macroeconomic rehabilitation.
- Responses on question No. 12 show that people believe that fast action are required for enforcement of labor laws.
- Situation of law & order and political instability should be controlled.
- It must be ensured that children spend their childhood in the school. Control on compulsory education should be entrained.
- This is recommended to conduct an up-to-date child labor survey for knowing current situation in the country (HRCP, 2010).
- One very important reason of child labor is lack of control due to untrained authorities. So it is recommended that government should arrange special training programs for police, judges, probation officers, prison staff and other authoritative agencies. (HRCP, 2010)
- As per responses on question No. 9 and 17, there should be furnished campaigns for social awareness and boosting civic sense about child labor.
- Question No. 21 shows that a reason of child labor is population so along with the government, the parents should work on family planning according to their resources.
- Responses on question No. 25 show that Pakistani samples do not believe that International Community is playing an appropriate role in elimination of this problem. The respondents insisted that Pakistan has its own demography and cultural norms so there may need different elimination models than the Western Europe, U.S.A, Australia or any other developed country. It is recommended to adopt models accordance with the necessities of Pakistani demography and culture.
- Question No. 7 was about free education and in question No. 8, respondents insisted for appropriate stipend.
- Role of NGOs in Pakistan is very important. This contribution needs to more enlarge.

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