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Socio-Economic Situation of Child Labours in Peshawar, Pakistan: A Study of Peshawar, Saddar

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Abstract: This study focuses on the socio-economic situation of child labours in Peshawar's Saddar area. The study employed a quantitative research strategy, involving 70 child labourers from various professions. It paid attention to the demographic characteristics of child labourers, their financial and educational status, the nature of their work, and their working conditions. Structured interviews were used to collect data using snowball sampling techniques. Cross-tabulation was also used in the analysis using SPSS software. Based on the findings, most child labourers only receive primary education because they do not have the means to continue with their studies due to poverty. However, a lot of them are concerned about additional learning. Most of them start working before the age of ten, usually in a family with five or more members. The majority receive less than 400 rupees per day or week, and a very large percentage are employed in mechanical workshops without safety equipment. Such children are regularly employed for more than ten hours every day, which can have adverse consequences on their physical and psychological well-being. They are frequently subject to verbal abuse but continue to interact socially with peers daily. They are employed mostly due to financial necessity, and most of the income is used to sustain their families, especially fathers who are the breadwinners. It is essential to note that not many individuals are involved in child labours prevention programmes, as most of them are focused on supporting household finances and do not have the time to concentrate on self-development programmes.

Keywords: Social Capital, Neighbourhood Security, Community Trust, Social Cohesion, University Students

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Introduction

Developing countries across the world, including Pakistan, have acknowledged child labour as a significant and challenging problem. In Pakistan, children are often labourers, providing services to both formal and informal economies (Baghal et al., 2015). Childhood is a time of fun, learning, and family bonding. It, however, also has child labour whereby innocent children work long hours to fulfil family needs. This illegal practice, varying by country and government, is considered manipulative by the United Nations and other international organisations. Child labour is an emerging challenging issue all over the world. Child labour is mainly caused by parental unemployment, low-income background, high population density, large family size and migration. Child labour, especially among lower socioeconomic classes, causes damage to physical and mental health and deprives children of fundamental rights whilst working in the shops of the bazaar selling goods (Goel et al., 2012). Child labour continues to be a global challenge in both industrialised and developing nations, endangering children's physical, emotional, social, ethical, and cognitive development. Although considered one of the methods to reduce poverty, it remains a major concern in economically disadvantaged areas (Shabbir et al., 2020).

Problem Statement

The problem of child labour has increased in the 21st century, especially in developing countries. This is a result of weak policymaking and implementation, a lower commitment to resolving child protection issues, and a lack of well-defined strategies in developing countries. Even with initiatives to reduce child labour, Pakistan is a developing country where the number of child labourers is rising day by day. Furthermore, it will assist the government and non-government in formulating policies concerning this significant matter (Zafar et al., 2016). The number of child labour in terms of 5-17 years old stands at approximately 138 million. One out of five children are involved in child labour. (UNICEF, 2025). Child labour is considered a social problem, as it negatively affects their physical, mental, and emotional health and their education and development, which has existed in developing countries, including Pakistan, for decades, with a growing rate in Peshawar city due to low-income backgrounds. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), child labour has harmful effects on children, such as slow growth and depriving them of educational opportunities, recreational activities, or the act of work itself, feeding a family (Lambon-Quayefio & Owoo, 2021). ILO documents indicate that there are 168 million child labourers worldwide, of whom 85 million are involved in hazardous labour, with more than 80% located in developing Asia, the Pacific, and Sub-Saharan Africa (Sadler Lawrence,

2020). International concern over labour-related child abuse, especially in developing countries, is growing, but limited research exists on their mental health despite various risk factors and social needs (Thabet et al., 2011). Child labour not only puts an end to the life of a child, but it also destroys the lives of children and calls into question the moral system of society, besides having various political, social, and economic repercussions for the society in question (Raza Shah Gilani et al., 2022). This problem is widespread in low-income countries, where families are forced to rely on the income their children earn due to poverty (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005). Globally, child labour is still a significant problem that is caused mainly by complicated socioeconomic variables, such as poverty, a lack of education, and the passing down of work practices from generation to generation. Their social and economic situation is often weak. There is ample evidence from several studies that poverty and child labour are related, showing that children from low-income families are far more likely to work rather than go to school. For example, studies conducted in Indonesia have shown that a 3.7% rise in child work involvement corresponds to a 100% increase in the poverty rate (Sandra et al., 2020).

Research Objectives

1. To dig out demographic information of child labourers in Peshawar Saddar.
2. To highlight the nature of child labour and the workplace environment of child labours in Peshawar Saddar.
3. To explore the educational and financial condition of child labour in Peshawar Saddar.

Questions

1. What are the socio-economic conditions of child labourers in Peshawar Saddar?
2. What work-related conditions and risks are experienced by child labourers in Peshawar Saddar?

Literature Review

Concept of Child Labor

According to international organisations, a child labourer is an individual who is working to earn money under the age of 18. It considers child labour in the bazaar, where children learn skills without access to basic education, a violation of the fundamental right to education that every child is entitled to in every country. Furthermore, child labour is defined as employment that involves economic exploitation of children as well as work that may be dangerous, disrupt their education, or negatively impact their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development; it refers to work that is socially, mentally, physically, or morally dangerous and harmful to children (Lumba, 2009). While acknowledging certain

instances in which early work aids in skill development, the article defines child labour as work activities that limit children's physical and psychological development (Jariego, 2021). Child labour is a complex problem because it is correlated to poverty, education, health, and other socioeconomic problems, and cannot be discussed in a vacuum (Cigno, 2002).

Pakistani Perspectives on Child Labor

Child labour is a global societal problem, especially in Pakistan, which has faced a child labour problem for decades. Children working in workshops, in break companies, in street labour, in domestic labour, as employees in rich people's homes for caring for their children, etc. There are so many international and national organisations fighting against the child labour issue. According to statistics, two-thirds of Pakistan's eight million children who work in various occupations are full-time employees.

Child labour is a blatant violation of children's fundamental rights, which include survival, education, protection, and development. Extreme poverty is the leading cause of child labour since it compels parents to hire their children to make ends meet. The purpose of this study was to gather data on the characteristics of children who work and to determine the connection between child labour and poverty in Pakistan (Naeem, Shaukat, & Ahmed, 2011).

Another study estimates that 11–12 million Pakistani youngsters, half of whom are under ten years old, are working (Gulzar, Vertejee, and Pirani 2009). Furthermore, child labour is still a significant problem due to several intricate socioeconomic, political, and demographic variables (Hussain & Kashif, 2013). This pervasive practice hurts children's health and the country's social cohesion. Child labour's numerous negative repercussions disrupt the social fabric of society, and the government of Pakistan is alarmed by the rising numbers. It is taking all necessary steps to battle this curse (Zafar, Sarwar, and Haider 2016).

Socio-Economic Factors of Child Labor

Poverty is the mother of all social evils, and Pakistani society is suffering from many social problems. If we think about it, there is not only one factor responsible for child labour in Peshawar; different influences are connected with the reason for the child labour issue in Pakistan. These factors include gender inequality, poverty, illiteracy among adults, large family size, absence of education, low parental income, generational illiteracy, lack of motivation, lack of peer motivation, lack of proper guidance and counselling centres, lack of future planning, lack of monitoring and evaluation of child protection, and non-governmental organisations, etc (Siddhanta & Nandy, 2003).

Rendering to the analysis, child labour is crucial to the family's financial survival at some poverty levels. Since children currently have economic value, parents should utilise their financial resources to meet their fundamental needs and maximise their utility (Khan, Chaudhary, & Khan, 2002).

Child Labor's Impact on Education and Health

When a child under 18 is employed, it can negatively impact their schooling and overall well-being. Some studies indicate that children who work have lower educational achievement and less school involvement, demonstrating the substantial detrimental effects of child labour on education. However, there is limited evidence of serious health consequences; therefore, the health implications are less noticeable. It is interesting to note that child labourers may earn more money as young adults, which could compensate for the financial losses resulting from less education, especially for girls (Beegle, Dehejia, & Gatti, 2009).

Child labour has several root causes, such as family dissolution, poverty, and greed (Agbo, 2017). The child labour issue is a substantial barrier to attaining widespread education, but education is also a crucial component in reducing child labour. Children's capacity to enrol, attend, and benefit from education is compromised by child labour, which encompasses both economic activities and domestic duties. One of the most crucial factors in determining how child labour affects schooling is the intensity of the activity, whether it is home-based or economic (Guarcello, Lyon, & Rosati, 2006).

Studies find that child labour is a significant public social issue after conducting an intensive and systematic evaluation during fieldwork data collection. There is still a negative correlation between child work and the physical and emotional health of the children involved. A greater frequency of various health conditions was observed among working children in contrast to the general population or control groups. However, because the included studies were cross-sectional, it was unable to demonstrate a cause-and-effect relationship. This indicates that measures have not been successful in making child labour safer, as well as in ending it. Even if fewer youngsters are working, those who continue to work as children appear to have a poor quality of life (Ibrahim, Abdalla, Jafer, Abdelgadir, & De Vries, 2019).

Child Protection Laws in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

According to the Employment of Children Act of 1991, Children under the age of 14 are prohibited from working in hazardous settings, such as mines, factories, or carpet industries (Shahid, 2020). According to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Unit (2010) Act, a child at risk

engages in begging in the streets, one who has lost one or both parents, one who lacks sufficient income, one who needs support to study, and one who needs to be monitored on the implementation and violation of the child protection, welfare, and rights. This includes the prevention of child labour and encompasses orphans, children with disabilities, children of migrant workers, children working or residing on the streets, children in conflict with the law, and children living in extreme poverty (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government, 2010).

Methodology

Research design

In this research, the socio-economic conditions of child labourers in Peshawar Saddar are to be examined. A cross-sectional research design is adopted, and descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and frequency analysis will be used. It is quantitative research in nature, focusing on data gathering and its mathematical quantification to give a holistic perspective of the social problem.

The researcher employs snowball sampling to select a sample of 70 child labourers in the city of Peshawar, specifically in the Saddar area, Pakistan. Data was gathered through structured interviews featuring a mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions from the child labourers in Peshawar Saddar. The collected data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Participations

The socio-demographic features of the respondents are given in Table 1. As shown by the findings, most of the child labourers were male (91.4) and under the age of 12 years (62.9). The majority of respondents were educated on primary level (67.1) with a significant number having zero education or having religious education. Regarding the family structure, the number of households with five or more family members was the highest and a large majority of the respondents (71.4) had their family structure consisting of more than five family members. In the case of birth order, a significant percentage (41.4) of the respondents were the lastborn and the middle and the firstborn separately.

Table 1

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	64	91.4%
	Female	6	8.6%
Age Group	Below 12 years	44	62.9%
	12 years and above	26	37.1%
Education Level	Primary	47	67.1%
	Middle	15	21.4%

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Family Size	Religious (Madrasa)	2	2.9%
	None	6	8.6%
	Less than 5 members	20	28.6%
	More than 5 members	50	71.4%
Birth Order	Youngest	29	41.4%
	Middle	23	32.9%
	Eldest	18	25.7%

Results

Question One Results: What are the Socio-economic conditions of child labour in Peshawar Saddar? The frequencies and percentages were applied to respond to the first research question to determine socio-economic status of child labourers in Peshawar Saddar.

Table 2

Reasons for not attending school and continuing to wish in Education

Reason for not attending school	Willing to continue education (Yes)	Willing to continue education (No)	Total
Poverty	24 (80.0%)	6 (20.0%)	30 (100%)
Family pressure	7 (63.6%)	4 (36.4%)	11 (100%)
Not interested	6 (33.3%)	12 (66.7%)	18 (100%)
None	9 (81.8%)	2 (18.2%)	11 (100%)
Total	46 (65.7%)	24 (34.3%)	70 (100%)

Table 2 is the answer to the questions of school non-attendance causes and the desire of children to continue with their education. The results indicate that poverty was the most common reason given as over not going to school (42.9%). Nonetheless, most of the respondents (65.7) indicated that they were willing to go back to school in future. Remarkably, those children who mentioned poverty and family pressure displayed more interest in resuming the learning process, and the absence of interest in attending school was linked to less willingness to resume education.

Besides the educational conditions, the analysis also looks at the work activities and patterns of financial support of children in their families which constitute a major part of their socio-economic situation.

Children's Work Activities and Family Support results

Frequency distribution and percentages were used to address the second research question; the study explored the work-related conditions and risk faced by children labourers in Peshawar Saddar such as income patterns, type of work, working hours and safety in the work place.

Table 3

Children's Work Activities and Family Financial Support

Purpose of earning income	Primary family financial supporter	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Support family	Father	37	52.9
	Mother	2	2.9
	Brother	7	10.0
Save for the future	Father	11	15.7
	Brother	4	5.7
Personal needs	Father	7	10.0
	Brother	2	2.9
Total	—	70	100.0

Table 3 shows the children labour activities and patterns of family financial support. The results indicate that most of the respondents (52.9%) stated that they worked to maintain their families with fathers in most cases being the primary providers. A lower number of the children indicated that they saved money to save or used the earnings to meet their personal needs. These findings indicate high level of economic dependence on child labour income by households which indicates that family financial structure influences children, participation in work.

Question Two Results: What work-related conditions and risks are experienced by child labourers in Peshawar Saddar?

Daily income of child labourers

Table 4

Payment Status and Daily Income of Child Labourers

Payment for work	Daily income category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Paid	Less than 400 PKR	36	51.4
	More than 500 PKR	28	40.0

Payment for work	Daily income category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	Not paid (learning skills)	1	1.4
Not paid	Not paid	5	7.1
Total	—	70	100.0

Table 4 gives data on child labourers’ payment status and daily income. The findings show that most respondents (92.9) indicated that they received some payment (in the form of money) to do their job but the income level was very different. A huge percentage of the respondents had less than 400 Pakistani rupees per day and a sizeable percentage had above 500 rupees. Very few children said that they were not paid directly because they were kept doing so mainly to acquire skills. These results bring to the fore income insecurity and unpredictability among child labourers in Peshawar Saddar. In addition to the income and pattern of payment, the results discussed below looks into nature of work done by child labourers and availability of safety measures in their workplace.

Nature of child labour & Safety in the workplace results

Table 5

Nature of Child Labour and Provision of Safety Equipment in the Workplace

Nature of work	Safety equipment provided (Yes)	Safety equipment provided (No)	Total
Shop work	4 (5.7%)	16 (22.9%)	20 (28.6%)
Mechanical workshops	11 (15.7%)	25 (35.7%)	36 (51.4%)
Collecting scavenged materials	0 (0.0%)	7 (10.0%)	7 (10.0%)
Begging	0 (0.0%)	7 (10.0%)	7 (10.0%)
Total	15 (21.4%)	55 (78.6%)	70 (100.0%)

Table 5 shows the character of the child labour and use of safety gear at the workplace. The results indicate that over half of the interviewees had been undertaking mechanical workshop duties (51.4%), shop work (28.6%). A considerable portion of child labourers (78.6%) also indicated that none of them were given safety equipment at their workplaces. It is interesting to note that children who were employed in the mechanical workshops and in other unskilled tasks like scavenging, and begging were mostly at risk of unsafe working conditions, which are indicative of increased occupational risks by child labourers in Peshawar Saddar.

Besides the nature of work and safety conditions, the analysis examines working hours a day and exposure of children to verbal abuse in the work places.

Labour hours and the use of abusive words in their workplace

Table 6

Working Hours and Exposure to Verbal Abuse in the Workplace

Working hours per day	Verbal abuse (Often)	Verbal abuse (Sometimes)	Verbal abuse (Never)	Total
Less than 10 hours	6 (8.6%)	19 (27.1%)	4 (5.7%)	29 (41.4%)
More than 10 hours	7 (10.0%)	24 (34.3%)	10 (14.3%)	41 (58.6%)
Total	13 (18.6%)	43 (61.4%)	14 (20.0%)	70 (100.0%)

The correlation between the number of hours worked and verbal abuse at the workplace was given in Table 6. It shows that most of the respondents (58.6%) were more than ten-hour workers. Verbal abuse was also widely reported with majority of the children reporting that they were at times subjected to abusive language at work (61.4%). It is important to note that children who worked more hours were more exposed to verbal abuse, and this indicates difficult and stressful working conditions of child labourers in Peshawar Saddar.

In addition to working hours and workplace treatment, the next results are the age at which children had to enter the labour force and the way they interact with peer groups in the free time.

The State working age for a child

Table 7

Starting Age of Work and Interaction with Peer Groups During Free Time

Starting age of work	Interact with peers (Yes)	Interact with peers (No)	Total
Below 10 years	27 (38.6%)	21 (30.0%)	48 (68.6%)
10 years and above	14 (20.0%)	8 (11.4%)	22 (31.4%)
Total	41 (58.6%)	29 (41.4%)	70 (100.0%)

Table 7 shows the age of starting work and interaction of children with peer groups in free time. The results show that a significant percentage of questionnaires (68.6%) started their employment at early age before the age of ten. Although most of the children were forced to enter into labour early, majority of the children (58.6%), said that they kept in touch with their colleagues during free time, and a significant number (41.4%) said that they had little or no contact with their colleagues. These findings indicate that the earlier exposure of children to child labour can limit, but not totally eliminate the social interaction of children with other children.

Lastly, the analysis is done on the involvement of children in institutional programmes, and their readiness to make monetary contributions towards their families.

Table 8

Participation in Child Labour Programmes and Willingness to Contribute Financially to the Family

Participation in child labour programmes	Willing to contribute financially (Yes)	Willing to contribute financially (No)	Total
Yes	9 (12.9%)	1 (1.4%)	10 (14.3%)
No	51 (72.9%)	9 (12.9%)	60 (85.7%)
Total	60 (85.7%)	10 (14.3%)	70 (100.0%)

Table 8 shows the child labourers involvement in institutional programmes and willingness to contribute towards their families financially. The results indicate that a low percentage (14.3) of the respondents had attended government or non-government child labour programmes. Although the institution was not much involved, a significant number of children (85.7) were willing to provide financial support to their families. These findings indicate that economic responsibility controls the priorities of child labourers over institutional support in Peshawar Saddar.

Discussion

The current research gives a descriptive observation of the socio-economic and work related reality of child labourers in Peshawar Saddar. On the whole, the results can be compared with the general literature that conceptualizes child labour as a multidimensional social issue which is highly influenced by poverty, household vulnerability, and lack of access to education (Edmonds and Pavcnik, 2005, Cigno, 2002). The findings also reveal that child labour is not simply a personal decision, but a household survival tactic within the economically disadvantaged background. This observation can be related to the previous data that has been associated with low household income, high family size and few opportunities of adult employment as being linked to early entry of children into the labour market (Khan et al., 2002; Siddhanta and Nandy, 2003).

One of the most notable trends in the results is that child labourers have relatively low educational level, and are at high risks of not attending school. This aligns with known studies that child labour tends to break the schooling of children and lower the educational attainment levels hence perpetuating their disadvantages in the long run (Guarcello et al., 2006; Beegle et al., 2009). Notably, the research also indicates that a significant number of working children are interested in further schooling and this is why it is appropriate to believe that the financial inability, not the lack of interest in education, is often the biggest obstacle to schooling (Guarcello et al., 2006). This means that any intervention that is aimed

at lowering the direct and indirect expenses of schooling can be effective, especially when it targets the vulnerable households.

The result also indicates that there is high economic accountability on the earnings of children in family units. This further supports the argument that in some degree of poverty, families use children labour as a survival tool particularly when other sources of income are volatile or non-existent (Khan et al., 2002; Edmonds and Pavcnik, 2005). This dynamic is also widely reported in developing situations where the child labour is integrated in the household livelihood approaches and it is being passing across generations as a customised routine (Cigno, 2002). Although some literature also indicates that in some contexts, the initial work can be described as the learning of skills, the overall agreement is that work becomes child labour when it interferes with the education, health, or development (Jariego, 2021; Lumba, 2009). The severity of the work and the working conditions reported in the current study imply that the labour of the children is prolonged to the scope of economical growth into labour relations as well as into the developmental-perilous forms.

On the issue of working conditions, it is found that a high percentage of the child labour is working in the informal and strenuous jobs especially ones that are related to workshops. This trend is similar to Pakistani-based scholarship characterizing the high rate of child labour in informal sectors like workshops, domestic labour and street-based activities where children are prone to exploitation because of weakening regulatory control measures (Naeem et al., 2011; Gulzar et al., 2009). The reported lack of protective measures and safety equipment also reflects the unsafe working conditions and is another reflection of the international evidence according to which child labour is often associated with unsafe working conditions that jeopardize the physical health of the children (Goel et al., 2012; Ibrahim et al., 2019). Even cross-sectional studies can only imply causality, so systematic reviews indicate that working children have more different health issues than non-workers despite their disadvantages (Ibrahim et al., 2019).

The other urgent problem is that the working hours are often extensive and verbal abuse in the workplace. These results represent the psychosocial aspect of child labour, which proves that child labour is not purely a financial and educational problem, but it is a threat of emotional and psychological damage (Thabet et al., 2011). According to the international accounts, child labour undermines emotional and social growth of children and subjects them to detrimental power relations within the workplace environments (Sadler Lawrence, 2020). Although children still have some socializing with other children in those areas, they can continue to have a reduced recreation and social development due to sustained work commitments even those who may have some social interaction with the peer groups (Guarcello et al., 2006).

It is also interesting that the working children are involved in the support or prevention programmes to a limited degree. The trend can indicate the limitation of access to programmes, the low effectiveness of outreach, inadequate time and capacity of working children and their families to participate in self-development programmes. This kind of gap speaks to the anxieties in the literature that policy implementation and child protection systems can be inadequate, especially in an environment where the pressures of poverty take centre stage in the family decision-making process (Zafar et al., 2016). The findings of the study thus support the necessity of these integrated responses that would combine economic support to the families, better access to education and better enforcement of labour and child protection. There are legal frameworks in place (e.g., work restrictions on hazardous work of children), but the results are affected by their implementation, monitoring, and accountability on the community level (Shahid, 2020; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government, 2010).

Overall, the research helps confirm the opinion that the structural socio-economic causes of child labour in Peshawar Saddar are poverty, family economic dependency, and lack of educational persistence as well as vulnerable working environments and poor institutional involvement. This fact follows up on the previous studies which explain child labour as the outcome and as the cause of poverty and social inequality and such interventions should be multi-sectoral and not limited to a single programme (Edmonds and Pavcnik, 2005; Siddhanta and Nandy, 2003).

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the socio-economic background and working experiences of child labourers in Peshawar Saddar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The results prove that the problem of child labour in this situation is determined by the complex of the economical, educational, and workplace-based issues. The poverty and financial vulnerability of households continue to be prime causes of the early involvement of children into labour as well as restrictions in access to formal education. With such limitations, most child labourers still show a strong desire to attain education, which is a strong indication that not being in school is not a choice, but rather a necessity.

The study also points out that children within large families and those working in informal and mechanically intensive jobs are at increased risks especially in case there are no safety precautions and extended working hours. These situations expose child labourers to physical risks and psychosocial stress supporting the argument of the previous research about the exploitative and harmful aspects of child labour in informal sectors. The restricted intervention of the social activists and institutional programmes towards these vulnerabilities points out to the lack of outreach, coordination and proper execution of child protection programs.

In general, the results indicate that child labour in Peshawar Saddar does not just occur as a consequence of personal or family decision, but is structural, and caused by poverty, low educational progression, and poor institutional provision. To solve this problem hence, there is a need to ensure that interventions are integrated and long lasting so that economic survival needs are not compromised on at the expense of children to their right to education, safety and healthy development.

Challenges

Although there has been increased awareness on child labour, there are still a number of challenges affecting successful responses in Peshawar Saddar. Constant poverty and high number of children in the family subject the family to a lot of economic burden that child labour is a survival mechanism. The informal work places especially the workshops are not controlled by the regulations and safety standards and children are exposed to hazardous working conditions. Also, poor coordination between government agencies, non-governmental organisations and community actors undermines the penetration and efficacy of any current child labour prevention efforts. Lack of available flexible educational options also does not allow working children to re-enter the education sphere.

Policy implication and Future outlook

The necessity to arrange and context-specific interventions to enhance the well-being of child labourers is evident. Vocational training programmes should be expanded in workshops, especially in car and motorcycle repair industries, which would allow controlling the acquisition of skills, as well as prevent exploitation. Enhancement of education provision by use of informal and non-formal models of schooling would help the working children to pursue further their education without hurting the family livelihoods. Additionally, it is important that the efforts of government organisations, NGOs, educators and community organisations should be coordinated to strengthen the outreach, enforcement and support systems towards vulnerable children.

Future Research Recommendation

Longitudinal and mixed-method research should also be discussed as the future of the study as it will provide the opportunity to explore the long-term socio-economic and educational paths of child labourers. Comparative research in various parts of Pakistan would determine region specific drivers and protective factors that are related to child labour. Additional research in the area of gendered child labour experiences and the efficiency of both vocational and non-formal education programmes would also present useful evidence-based policy-making information.

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