

## Understanding child labour: the debate of children's mental and physical health in Pakistan

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### Abstract

We understand that child labour causes serious mental and physical health issues among children in Pakistan. We borrowed positivist epistemology as a guide for the methodological application of this study to understand what are the determinants of child labour? and how do they affect children's physical and mental health? Using the laminated sampling technique, data for this study come from 100 children. After the management of data through SPSS (statistical package for social sciences), the quantitative content analysis technique helped us in data analysis. The study concludes that poverty, parents' unemployment, and children's school dropout are the major causes of child labour in Pakistan. Moreover, this study finds that child labour causes stress, frustration, aggression, and depression among the children. This study recommends that parents, government, and non-governmental organizations need to jointly devise long term policies to cope with the issue of child labour in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** child labour, determinants of child labour, physical health, frustration of children, child stress, mental health, children depression, child aggression.

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## 1. Introduction

Child labour is one of the serious social problems across the developing countries and Pakistan is no exception in this regard. The issue of child labour is mainly caused by parents' unemployment and poverty on the broad spectrum (Bikoue, 2021). As a result, these issues promote child labour which affects children's physical and mental health. Child labour is a never-ending labour pool. It has been deeply rooted in almost all parts of the world for ages. It has been associated mainly with underdeveloped countries struggling with their weak economies. Often two significant conventions, the International Labour Organization (ILO) convention 138 and the UN convention on child rights are used as a yardstick to define child labour. ILO (2004) defines child labour as "Any sort of paid or unpaid work that deprives a child their childhood, growth, and education and has detrimental effects on the child's personal, mental and physical health comes under child labour". It hinders a child's mental and physical development. According to ILO, children working in different sectors ultimately face abuse that leaves marks on their memories that cannot be erased. Children who are forced to work at a young age have to face mental health challenges as well as which might harm the long-term socio-economic development of the countries concerned (ILO,1999).

According to ILO statistics, worldwide, around 218m children aged 5-17 years are forced to do some form of work, either paid or unpaid. One hundred sixty million children are sufferers of child labour –with an increase of 8.4m during the past 4 years (ILO, 2020). Child labour has assumed a significant proportion in Pakistan. In Pakistan, 13m children are working as child labour, and only in Sindh province 5.2 million children are engaged in different sectors, showing the situation's gravity despite having laws formulated by the government. Children aged between 5 to 17 years of age are said to work 1 hour (on average) as economic activity. And children aged between 12 to 14 years have worked for a minimum of 4 hours daily as economic activity on average. Whereas. Children aged between 15 to 17 years of age have been working on average 43 hours of economic activity (Pakistan Labour Force Survey, 2017).

As per Mr Rana who is Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF; up to 10 million children are working in Pakistan. There are different forms of child labour depending on the regions, countries and cultures. It happens for many reasons, but the most prime reason is Poverty and unemployment. Unemployed parents often send their children low wages to survive their present. Adult siblings have to earn to feed the whole family in some cases. Almost all agencies in Pakistan acquiesced to curb this rampant disease. In Pakistan, children under 18 in factories are prohibited and considered illegal. Before 2020, Pakistan lacked definite laws prohibiting children from working at home. However, in June, End Child domestic Labour, a campaign, was started by Idare-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA).

The campaign came up with a proposal, a constitutional amendment that would prohibit all children under 16 from engaging in any work. On August 6, 2020, Pakistan made history by banning child domestic labour after unleashing several domestic violence cases on young workers, an amendment was passed that announced that it is illegal for children to work as domestic house helpers. The government realized the repercussions of child labour which exhausted, traumatized the child and took away the joy from his life. Child labour is also one of the main reasons for absenteeism, high school dropouts, and low school enrolments. How and where child labour is employed in different industries in Pakistan is the concern of debate in the forthcoming section.

## **1.1 Agriculture**

According to the ILO, agriculture labours have the highest proportion of child labour around the globe. In Pakistan, 17.35 % of children in the age bracket of 10 to 14 years are employed in the agriculture sector. In the province of Sindh only, there are around 6.4 million children who are not allowed to go to school and have been forced to work. According to the data collected by HWA, around 1.7 million bonded labourers in Sindh and among them there are more than 700,000 children who are bonded labourers whom their agriculture landlords enslave as security for the repayment of a debt or other obligations. They are forced to work to lessen their parents' debt, but the debt is consistently increased through high-interest rates beyond the capacity of the worker to repay. According to HWA data (2013-20), Sindh high court passed orders to release 3,030 children, including a few weeks old minors, who got freedom from the slavery of their agricultural landlords along with their families. In 2020, 915 children were released.

## **1.2 Brick-Kiln Industry**

The brick kiln industry is notorious for trapping children in bonded labour. UNICEF estimated that about 250,000 child labourers in the brick kiln industry. The owners offer small loans or remuneration to the family heads for the work performed by the family unit, and then the spiralling debt trapping continues.

## **1.3 Garments' Industry**

Cheap labour in child labour is prevalent in countries where garment and textile production occur. The most intriguing question is how and why child labour exists in the garment industry. It is a particular issue for fashion because, in some cases, it requires low labour skills, and children better do some tasks than adults. Employers need soft and tiny hands in cotton picking tasks that do not damage the crops. Yarn spinning, harvesting crops and some other tasks which are pretty tricky are also done by children by paying a few pennies.

## **1.4 Tobacco Industry**

Unfortunately, the tobacco industry in Pakistan topped the list of its impacts on the children of our society. It is a multi-billion-dollar business that employs children as workers in a hazardous environment and impacts children's physical and mental health and society. In Pakistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the primary tobacco-growing region having only one Swabi district producing 50% of crops annually. Children as young as five years old also work in tobacco farming, where they are exposed to poisoning from different kinds of pesticides and other tobacco sicknesses.

## **1.5 Coal Mining**

The coal mining industry has turned now into a massive business. Digging mines, sorting coal, collecting iron and picking up pieces of coal spilt across the field requires a massive workforce, which is the reason behind the sight children working in the mining sector. These child labourers working in Baluchistan's dangerous coal fields are either migrants or orphans as young as nine years old, earning up to \$3 per day.

## 1.6 Understanding Child Labour Legislation in Pakistan

Following instruments of legislation deal exclusively with the subject of child labour.

- The Children (Pledging of Labour) Act 1933 (applicable in all provinces).
- The Employment of Children Act 1991 (applicable in Balochistan and ICT).
- The Employment of Children Rules 1995 (applicable in Balochistan and ICT).
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prohibition of Employment of Children Act 2015.
- Punjab Prohibition of Child Labour at Brick Kilns Act 2016.
- Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act 2016.
- Sindh Prohibition of Employment of Children Act 2017.

The employment of children at an early age that inhibits their mental and physical growth deprives them of their fundamental rights, and education is considered child labour. Not all work done by children should be classified as child labour. Positive work that does not affect their mental, personal and physical development. Specific determinants pave the way for this social evil to spread its roots in society, which now seems impossible to eradicate. Before devising policies or laws and their implementation, we must understand the gravity of this parasitic evil and its driving forces. The proposed research paper used a qualitative research method to inspect the determinants of child labour and determine that how policies control the disease.

## 2. Literature review

It is a sad yet alarming situation for the world where child labour in the 21st century still has not been defeated. It is a global phenomenon as it deprives children to get knowledge and useful skill necessary for better life (Issaka *et al.*, 2021). Even when WHO has warned that this issue will have severe consequences for the future generation, law and forces are trying to eliminate it, but it still exists. This current cause of global child labour is similar to it was 100 years ago, which indicates that there are no significant efforts to reduce or finish it. Poverty, limited access to education, and the limited banning of child labour make it going on. The three factors responsible for child labour in the US are Poverty, significant immigration, and relaxed federal child labour law (Landrigan & McCammon, 1997).

### 2.2. Determining Child Labour

Every problem in leading society has a background that leads to illegal acts being practised. Child labour is one of the world's curses, and no one takes it seriously. The question arises: What made the children exposed to work out of their capacity at a very early age. The possible causes of child labour can be Poverty, which is on the top of the list, dismissal of the bread earner, low-income level of household, parents' attitude towards children and their educational level, and who is more powerful in the household (Goswami & Jain, 2006).

#### 2.2.1. Poverty

Poverty is the main cause of child labour in most parts of the world (Mustafa *et al.*, 2017). It keeps the children away from school and has some human skills. These individuals grow up as unskilled workers earning low wages, continuing the cycle. Poverty is what people face through

generations and never try to change the trend for their children. Parents who probably had been working since childhood tended to expose their children to work. Sending them to school has never been an option for them because they could not afford the basic necessities of life. Even if the child is interested in studies, the parents never encourage them to continue.

A study in Ghana revealed that children from poor households work long hours than children from non-poor families (Canagarajah & Coulombe 1997). More rural households expose their children to child labour than urban areas. Gender discrimination is at its peak in Ghana, where parents think it is better to educate a son than the daughter because what would she do with education in the future. So, girls are more exposed to child labour than boys. This attitude is also seen in South Asian countries where parents expose girls to child labour and early marriages and consider it their norm and part of the culture. Here it can be seen that the culture emotionally drives parents to not educate their daughters, so Poverty is not the only factor that drives children away from going to school (Verner & Blunch, 2000).

Another study supports that Poverty is the most important determinant of child labour that exposes children to work. A survey across Bangladesh indicates that families with low income and many mouths feed to put their children into work to earn some money. Mostly the older kid is the ones who work more than the younger ones. Girls are more exposed to working as maids at different homes. Usually, mothers involve girls with them at an early age to learn about the work. Exposing girls to work at a very early age seriously impacts physical and mental health. Also, the girl's well-being is put at risk (Amin *et al.*, 2004).

A cross-sectional study was conducted in Karachi, Pakistan, where 200 children from a district have been interviewed through a questionnaire regarding the nature of the work, their house income, the guardian profession, and the total number of family members. Upon asking some questions, it was concluded that most of the boys were exposed to some skilled work, such as working at a mechanic shop. Whereas girls worked as either house servants or picked papers from the garbage in general. 83% of the children were working because of Poverty being the top issue in their household. Parents tend to have a severe attitude towards sons rather than daughters. Besides child labour, gender discrimination is also seen in Asian countries (Naeem *et al.*, 2011).

The past study concluded that child labour results from poverty transmission in generations. During their childhood, labourers were most likely to send their children to work. There is a double chance of children being exposed to work if the parents were forced to labour. In addition, it is also seen that parents try to save their children from such work, which can exploit them sexually. Nevertheless, these parents have no other option than to send their children to work to fulfil the basic living standards (Wahba, 2001).

### **2.2.2. Parents' Education**

The more educated parents, less chance of child labour. Parental education and child labour are related to each other (Kaur & Byard, 2021). A study suggests that parents with the mind-set of not educating their children expose them to work very early in family businesses such as household work, factories, farms, or garages. Their concern is that if they give employment to any non-family member, it will turn down their business, and after a while, the business will be taken away from someone else. This practice is primarily seen in rural areas where farmers,

maids, and mechanics bring their children to urban areas to work with them in different places. Also, the business owners in urban areas such as textile, gold, and elite do not educate their children only because they want them to take their business to the next generation.

It is also seen that parents' education plays an essential role in children's life. The educated the parent will be the tendency of child labour reduces. Parents with good educational backgrounds never expose their children to work; instead, they try to provide for them no matter what circumstances they face. The mother's education plays a vital role in a child's life. The amount of time they spend with the mother is more than with the father. Mothers will try to incorporate the child with a work that does not question his dignity. Most mothers with low-income levels teach at schools, give personal tuition at home, and involve their children. Indeed, it is the best way to keep the child motivated, and it does not harm their mental and physical health (Mukharjee & Das, 2008).

A study from India revealed that parents' attitude toward children is crucial for child labour. Parents with non-serious attitudes towards their children and those who are not educated expose their children to work to save themselves from paying their school fees. Specifically, looking into such households where parents have this kind of attitude have fathers who control the system and have more bargaining power than mothers. Mothers are mostly emotionally driven when it comes to their children and never wants their child to face the harsh realities of their surroundings (Sakamoto, 2006).

A similar study has been conducted in Pakistan's province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa shows that the head of household's education and the average income of the house significantly affect the decision of exposing a child to work. It also depends on the number of family members, age of children, and the number of household earners. Mostly the elder siblings of the family have to leave their studies to earn for the family and support the younger ones if they have a passion for studying. It indicates that parental education plays a vital role in a child's life. An educated parent takes out healthy ways of earning such as teaching, baking, crafting, etc (Ahmed *et al.*, 2012).

### **2.2.3. Parental illness and its consequences**

Another cause of child labour is the long-term illness of parents or the death of the earning member of the family. Children with such conditions are helpless and tend to start working after losing their father or mother, the family's sole breadwinner. Illness of a family member brings a large amount of expenses in the form of medicine and treatment (Kis-katos & Sparrow, 2009). Tanzanian survey revealed that children with parents having long years of illness affect their school attendance, and sometimes they had to permanently leave the school to look after the ill parent or work to meet the income gap. Mainly children with a father who is ill or died have faced financial issues and decreased school attendance; most of them had to work to earn for the house. No evidence found if the mother was ill or died impacted the child's education or link with child labour (Alam, 2015).

An Ethiopian study revealed that parents' sickness or death has long-lasting effects on children's mental and physical health (Dinku *et al.*, 2018). It was found that children who have sick fathers are more likely to spend time in income-generating work, and most boys are the ones who had to head out of the house to search for jobs to survive. On the other hand, maternal

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sickness or death affects the daughters the most. Maternal sickness or death increases children's time spent on domestic work, and most girls are affected by this. A significant amount of evidence suggests that the health conditions of the earner of the house directly impact the child's education and child labour (Dinku *et al.*, 2018).

### 2.3 Child Labour and Children's Mental Health

Many researchers have given evidence that child labour can seriously impact a child's mental health, which can have long-term effects in life. A study taking place in Vietnam and India revealed that child who is engaged in child labour suffers from mental health issues such as depression, insomnia, panic attacks, and anxiety. It is also seen that children exposed to child labour have developed less prosocial behaviour in both countries. Reduced prosocial behaviour means they do not like to give any help or benefit to others, and they are not willing to help anyone in dire need of help or urgent help is required. This behaviour reveals that they are mentally disturbed and do not feel for anyone else (Trinh, 2020). A survey in Jordan indicates that children exposed to child labour and attending school simultaneously have more mental health issues than working and unschooled children (Al-Gamal *et al.*, 2013).

Child labour harms the physiological health and development of the child. The working and school-going kid was more emotionally disturbed because of the questioning and bullying at school about his family status. The pressure of academic fulfilment and the pressure of the employers impacted the child's mental health a lot. These children were into many psychiatric problems compared to those who did not attend school and work (Al-Gamal *et al.*, 2013). Systematic literature shows that child labour in low and middle-income countries is increasing day by day, and it has long-term consequences on the mental health of children across the globe. Seven out of twelve published studies reveal a negative relationship between child labour and mental health. Some internal and external psychological problems have been identified in the children exposed to child labour. The factor affecting the child's mind was domestic labour, higher intensity of work and young age, physically drained, and aggressive employer.

Low self-esteem, isolated and self-centred characteristics have been identified in the children exposed to child labour (Sturrock & Hodes, 2016). Another survey conducted on children between 9-12 suggested that the children who were introduced to child labour at a very early age suffer mentally and emotionally. They are on the verge of running away from their homes. Due to Poverty, parents expose them to work under unfavourable circumstances where they have to work out of their capacities. All child's common symptoms were depression, abnormal sleeping disorders, emotional distress, suicidal behaviour, low self-esteem, and behavioural disorders. These children were prematurely ageing, and due to severe pressure from the employer, they suffered mental distress (Agarwal, 2017).

Talking about child labour in Pakistan, according to the human rights commission of Pakistan, the estimated number of children working is around 11-12 million, and half of them are children under the age of 10. This shows the country's attitude towards children and their rights. The possible reason for child labour is Poverty, non-supportive parent, uneducated family or no guardian. Pakistan has to improve its policies and implications to reduce this number of child labour and change society's attitude towards childcare (Gulzar *et al.*, 2009).

## 2.4 Child Labour Affecting Children's Physical Health

The physical health of a child exposed to child labour is feeble; it is seen that children experiencing workload which is greater than their capacity are suffering from poor health conditions. A descriptive survey in Peshawar, Pakistan, where boys under 15 were interviewed working on automobile workshops. The most common reason for involvement in child labour was fathers with little education, underpaid jobs, unemployed, or dying. Around 40% of the boys choose to work on a workshop to gain experience in the field. The common health issues they faced were watery and itchy eyes, stomach disorders and diarrhoea, and chronic cough. 38% of them had suffered serious injuries while on the job due to exposure to heavy tools and an unsafe environment (Khan *et al.*, 2007). Another study conducted in Nigeria, which took place in 6 states, revealed that children involved in child labour such as begging, carrying heavy loads, domestic workers, and hawking are experiencing many health issues and educational problems. The health issue was related to unhealed injuries, accidents on roads, body aches, food poisoning, pneumonia, diarrhoea, difficulty breathing, and other serious physical problems.

Besides health, child labour has affected the children's education; the parents stopped the children who wanted to study due to Poverty. The causes of child labour in Nigeria was Poverty, broken family, greedy guardians or deceased parents. A study that shows adverse environment can affect child health conditions has identified some serious health issues. More than it affects the health, but also the development of the child is at risk. Children exposed to child labour are more prone and at risk of serious health issues. Due to the rapid growth of skeleton, organs, and tissues, a poor environment can damage the development. The greater need to rest and food causes malnutrition, fatigue, and anaemia. The heat tolerance in kids is less, which can make them dizzy and cause shortness of breath. Lack of sleep can cause underlying health issues in the long run, and due to Poverty, the injuries which are not healed can cause serious infections and tumours (Yadav & Sengupta, 2009).

According to a study conducted on children between the age of 9-12, children exposed to child labour are the ones who suffer extreme Poverty. Due to Poverty, their parents have not sent them to school and forced them to do any work to earn money for their livelihood. When answering the survey questions, these children indicated that they suffer emotionally and physically both. Severe nutritional deficiencies were recorded among them, and due to long hours of work, they were secretly ageing. Also, due to the bad working conditions, any injury caused by heavy machinery or tools does not get any treatment and care on time, leading to severe infections and causing deaths. Besides the physical problems, these children were involved in illegal acts such as alcoholism, drugs, sexual activities, and criminal acts. Because of these acts, they suffer physically from unwanted pregnancies and abortions, various health issues due to heavy smoking and drinking, and emotional distress due to criminal activities (Agarwal, 2017).

A Brazilian survey team surveyed the Brazilian region where child labour is common. Although the Brazilian government has strict rules for child labour due to Poverty in most parts of the country, children are encouraged to do work very early. The study suggested that children exposed to child labour with long working hours are more affected than children who work 2-3 hours per day. It is also seen that children working in a hazardous environment are three times more likely to have health problems such as asthma, anaemia, chronic illness, and stomach

infections. Also, children working in the service sector are more prone to health issues because of the constant exposure (Nicolella & Kassouf, 2018).

Figure 1 shows the theoretical framework of the study. This study has developed the comprehensive framework to empirically investigate the impact of child labour and its determinants on mental and physical health of study participants. This study framework is basically based on the determinants of child labour such as poverty, parents' education, parents' illness and Covid-19.

## 2.5 Conceptual Framework



## 3. Research methodology

The study analysed child labour, determinants of child labour, and its impact on children's physical and mental health in the context of Pakistan. Positivist epistemology guided the methodological protocols of this study. Using a structured questionnaire, 100 participants (children) were recruited for data collection. It is pertinent to mention that data were collected from the participants working in auto workshops, brick kilns, fan industries, furniture factories, and the pottery industry. The structured questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part first included questions regarding participants' parent's employment, family financial status, and participants' schooling. The part second was comprised of questions about the effects of child labour on the physical and mental like stress, tension, frustration, aggression, and depression. These questions were measured by Likert scales and the reliability and validity were insured. The collected data were managed through SPSS. After the management of data, two types of statistical techniques were used. Descriptive statistics were applied to determine the frequency and percentage of the participants' socio-demographic information. An inferential statistical test i.e., chi-square was used to find out the impact of child labour on children's physical and mental health. After statistical applications, quantitative contents were extracted and discussed in the following manners.

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1. Inferential Statistics

This part of the analysis includes frequency distribution and the percentage of the participants' socio-economic, and demographic characteristics. The respondents' socio-economic background is shown in table-1, which illustrates the reasons for early work. The kid's age is an essential element that defines the choice to work, the entrance to work, and the child's intensity. The statistics show that the majority, 43% of responses, was in the 11-13-year age range, with 30% being in the 8-10-year-olds. The data were gathered from 8 to 14 years since

the ILO defines the age category (5 to 14 years). In comparison to age groups (8–10) and (13+), the children aged 11–13 were more likely to be engaged in child labour because of the increased vulnerability of that group of youngsters. They were more effective and lasted than the preceding age group (8-10). Employment age varies greatly across work, industry, and the neighbourhood, urban and rural areas. Studies on child labour have shown that the older the kid, the higher the pay (Emerson & Souza, 2008). A child worker is positively connected with the kid's age in the labour market. This may have been one reason why a particular age group was chosen in this research too. This is reflected in the probability of children being involved in employment early.

Table-1: Respondent's socio-economic characteristics

S. No.	Strata	Population Child Labour
1	Pottery Making	20
2	Fan Industry	10
3	Auto workshops	20
4	Brick Kiln	35
5	Furnisher Factories	15
Total		100

Table-2 presents the demographic characteristics of respondents. It shows the kids' age when they started to work in the labour market. 54% of individuals found that the employee had begun at the age of (9 to 12 years); some (37 %) started at the age of 5 and 8, while others (9%) began work at or above the age of 13. There have been a limited number of individuals working. Moreover, it also includes the degree of education of respondents, reasons for their drop-out, analphabetism and family type. Most (56%) of the respondents were analphabets, 40% left school after their primary level, and some (4%) achieved their middle education level. According to prior research, the child's education level has a detrimental effect on work. The likelihood to work by 4.2 per cent lowers each extra year of child education (Fallon & Tzannatos, 1998). Child labour reduces the kid's education possibilities so that children's work and education interact (Cigno et al., 2002).

The results also indicate the reason for the departure. The majority (48%) were dropped out of school due to the appalling economic situation in their homes. Less than half of those questioned (32%) said that their parents never sent them to school. Sawada and Lokshin (1999) found that pupils in Pakistan are stopping their school due to their high education costs. Also, 22% answered that they dropped out due to a lack of interest in studies. Likewise, Syed et al. (1991) reveals that 72% of child labour leaves school because of compulsion to poverty. Deprivation of the economy is a significant barrier to education for children (Chao & Alper, 1998). The significant links between education and family income were assessed by Behrman and Knowles (1999) in 21 countries. They demonstrated that children with higher income are schooled than children from poorer households. As a result, more youngsters work as workers because of bad economic conditions.

Table-2 indicates that the majority (56%) lived in a nuclear family, while 26 lived in a more prominent family structure, and 18% lived in a joint family. This is also one reason why the early labour was driven. 38.7% identify lousy work as a significant cause of their job and 20.7%

due to their large family size, 26.3% due to illiteracy, and unemployment as child labour, while 14.0% because there was a lack of interest in education participated. Several studies in Pakistan have revealed that most child labour comes from households with lower income rates, as more persons live below the poverty line in Pakistan. According to studies, the leading cause of child labour is low family income. He also found that the decision of parents to work as children is negatively affected by family earnings. Lloyd (1994) demonstrated that a child works in larger homes and that the bottom socio-economic family controls this. Ray (2000) has shown poor socio-economic status as a significant predictor of child labour. He also said that young people are pushed to work for economic practicalities, not their choices, by their parents.

Table-2: Respondent's demographic characteristics

Age	Started working at age	Education	Reasons for school dropout	Family type
8–10 (30) 26.8%	8–10 (37) 37%	Illiterate (56) 56%	Poor economic condition (48) 48%	Nuclear (56) 56%
11–13 (43) 43%	11–13 (54) 54%	Primary (40) 40%	Not sent by parents (32) 32%	Joint (18) 18%
13+ (27) 27%	13+ (9) 9%	Middle (4) 4%	Lack of interest (20) 22%	Extended (26) 26%

## 4.2 Inferential Statistics

This section is comprised of data analysis regarding the impact of child labour on the participants' physical and mental health. The national health statistics of children's employees are not accessible, but micro-level study on fatigue and health hazards shows that children are usually compelled to labour for 8-12 hours (Adkins, 1999). According to UNICEF, most children with illnesses and injuries work in industrial facilities, followed by 9% in manufacturing and 8% in services (2010). The majority (86%) stated they had different physical and psychological problems in the research (table-3).

Table-2: Respondent's health problem

Health Problem	Frequency (%)
Yes	86 (86%)
No	14 (14%)
Total	100 (100%)

Table-4 illustrates the findings of the children involved in work regarding physical health problems. 53% of respondents faced breathing difficulties, according to the data. However, 17% of respondents answered that sometimes breathing was difficult. It also documents the fever results experienced regularly by children. Most of those (46%) frequently suffered from fever. The above table-4 shows that most respondents answered by 42% to cough frequently, while 23% stated they occasionally suffered from cough. The results of chest discomfort during/after work in table-4 may also be seen. About 17% of those surveyed claimed never having experienced chest discomfort. Thirty-nine per cent frequently experienced chest discomfort, suffering. 28% and 16% of respondents said that this issue is occasionally and seldom seen. Hafeez (1991) assessed the risk to children working for various conditions by the proportion of children and found that 0.54% of children suffer from chest discomfort.

Table-4 shows that 54% of those interviewed reported a backache issue. Sometimes the second majority of respondents experienced back pain by 18%. It also indicates that a substantial proportion of the respondents (45%) were frequently sick, and 21% had muscular pain at times. Table-4 further indicates that 47% of those interviewed frequently have headaches, and 23% occasionally have headaches. These results are consistent with the findings of Alem et al. (2006) that children involved in child labour who reported regular headaches. In addition, Mohamed et al. (2009) report that, as a result of their job in the field of breathing, skin illness, physical discomfort, eye trouble and intellectual disturbance, child workers usually face numerous health issues. Mohamed et al. (2009) studied 80 youngsters; 90% of them experienced physical discomfort; 72.5% had difficulties with their respiration, slightly more than 71% had problems with their eyesight; and 40% were deemed emotionally disturbed and psycho-immature.

Table-4: Categorization of children according to physical health

Health Problems	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Difficulty in breathing	8% (8)	22% (22)	17% (17)	53% (53)
Fever	16% (16)	23% (23)	15% (15)	14% (46)
Cough	13% (13)	22% (22)	23% (23)	42% (42)
Chest Pain	17% (17)	16% (16)	28% (28)	39% (39)
Backache	12% (12)	16% (16)	18% (18)	54% (54)
Muscle ache	16% (16)	18% (18)	21% (21)	45% (45)
Headache	13% (13)	17% (17)	23% (23)	47% (47)

Table-5 shows findings on child workers' psychological health issues. The results suggest that 38% of respondents have occasionally been affected by depression and 19% frequently have psychological health issues. In addition, 24% of respondents have expressed frustration. The following data also shows stress and aggressiveness among child workers. 31% of respondents experienced stress frequently, while 26% reported stress on a specific basis. According to answering, 39% frequently experienced problems with aggressiveness, while 21% thought that their job was occasionally hostile.

Table-5: Child workers' psychological health

Variables	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Depression	17%(17)	26%(26)	38% (38)	19% (19)
Frustration	29%(29)	43%(43)	24% (24)	4% (4)
Stress	37%(36)	6% (6)	26% (26)	31% (31)
Aggression	23%(23)	17%(17)	21% (21)	39% (39)

## 5. Conclusion

This study concludes that child labour is a complex social problem in the Pakistani context because it is caused by various factors like poverty, unemployment and parents' uneducated status. Hence, child labour in return affects children's mental and physical health. This study finds that poverty is one of the major social issues in Pakistan that compels parents to send their children for earning. Moreover, parents' unemployment and their uneducated status also push them to send their children to the industry for earning. Child labour in return, fuelled by these factors, causes various mental and physical problems among children in Pakistan. Mentally, children become aggressive, frustrated, stressed and remain depressive all the time.

Moreover, children's physique goes down and they remain unable to survive like normal and healthy children. This study recommends that parents, government, non-governmental organizations, and civil society need to take proper measures to overcome the issue of child labour in Pakistan. Parents must be held responsible for the proper schooling of their children. The government must devise and implement policies to immediately stop child labour. The general industry like brick-kiln, garments industry, tobacco industry, and coal mining industry should be banned from recruiting children.

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