



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mohamed Khider University – Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Letters and English Language

Master Thesis

Letters and Foreign Languages

English Studies

Literature and Civilization

**Investigating Child Labour in “Iqbal a Brave Boy from
Pakistan” by Jeanette Winter**

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Academic year: 2023\2024

Declaration

I, **Maria Charrouf**, declare that this dissertation is my own work. It is based on research that I carried out myself, and is written in my own words. With the exception of acknowledged quotations, no part of the text of the dissertation has been copied from any other source, or written by any other person.

Dedication

To my Family

To my parents whose unwavering support, encouragement, and sacrifices made this journey possible.

I am grateful that God gave me my family and my beloved sisters Lina, Wisso Charrouf; I deeply appreciate your presence in my life

To my friends

Whose laughter, support and belief in me have made this day unforgettable; your friendship has been a source of strength and inspiration.

Acknowledgements

To reach the end of this particular journey would not have been possible without a divine intervention, I praise ALLAH as many as He has created, as large as the expansion of His Realm, and as heavy as the weight of His Throne, and as varied His blessings have been. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Asma Taalah for her support and invaluable feedback throughout the entirety of this academic work. I am also indebted to Mr. Sedrati Yasser, and Dr. Sakhri for their insightful comments and suggestions which greatly enhanced the quality of this work. I am grateful to all the teachers who provided me with every piece of information that shaped my university knowledge and who generously shared their time and insights. I would also thank all the teachers in the English Department whose guidance, resources, and expertise have been instrumental in shaping my academic journey. Your commitment to excellence has inspired me to push boundaries and strive for the highest standards.

Abstract

This research explores the story of Iqbal Masih as a case study to understand the factors contributing to child labor. Child labor thrives at the intersection of poverty, lack of education, and cultural norms. Iqbal's story serves as evidence for this hypothesis. This research employs a qualitative approach, analyzing the documented life story of Iqbal Masih and its connection to the broader phenomenon of child labor. Iqbal Masih's story exemplifies how poverty can force families to sell their children's labor to survive. Also, the lack of access to education creates a cycle where children are seen as a source of income rather than future contributors to society. Moreover, cultural norms that normalize child labor perpetuate the system and make it difficult to break free. Iqbal's bravery in speaking out demonstrates the power of individual resistance in dismantling these systems. The story of Iqbal Masih underscores the need for multifaceted interventions that address poverty, promote education, and challenge cultural norms that perpetuate child labor.

Key words: Child Labor, Iqbal Masih, Novel "Iqbal a Brave Boy from Pakistan" by Jeanette Winter.

Résumé

Cette recherche explore l'histoire d'Iqbal Masih comme étude de cas pour comprendre les facteurs contribuant au travail des enfants. Le travail des enfants prospère à l'intersection de la pauvreté, du manque d'éducation et des normes culturelles. L'histoire d'Iqbal sert de preuve de cette hypothèse. Cette recherche utilise une approche qualitative, analysant l'histoire documentée de la vie d'Iqbal Masih et son lien avec le phénomène plus large du travail des enfants. L'histoire d'Iqbal Masih illustre comment la pauvreté peut forcer les familles à vendre le travail de leurs enfants pour survivre. En outre, le manque d'accès à l'éducation crée un cycle dans lequel les enfants sont considérés comme une source de revenus plutôt que comme de futurs contributeurs à la société. De plus, les normes culturelles qui normalisent le travail des enfants perpétuent le système et rendent difficile la libération. Le courage d'Iqbal en s'exprimant démontre le pouvoir de la résistance individuelle dans le démantèlement de ces systèmes. L'histoire d'Iqbal Masih souligne la nécessité d'interventions multiformes pour lutter contre la pauvreté, promouvoir l'éducation et remettre en question les normes culturelles qui perpétuent le travail des enfants.

Mots clés: Travail des enfants, Iqbal Masih, Roman « Iqbal, A Brave Boy from Pakistan » de Jeanette Winter.

List of Abbreviations

PLFS	Pakistan Labor Force Survey
WPSE	West Pakistan Shops and Establishments Act
ILO	International Labor Organization
NCCR	National Committee for Children's Rights
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
RAEP	Regional Adolescent Empowerment Program
NCWECL	National Consultative Workshop on Elimination of Child Labor
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
CCPF	Clear Cotton Project Frame
DWCP	Decent Work Country Program
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
CHI	Child Helpline International

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General Introduction

One of the main global challenges to children's rights is child labor. In developing nations like Pakistan, the situation is much more urgent. The history of child labor and the story of Iqbal Masih are closely linked because it is a story that has touched the world by gaining global support to confront child labor. It was written by Jeanette Winter in 4 November 2014. It tells the short life of the activist boy and his suffering who has come to symbolize political movement against child labor. The story reflects some aspect of the traditions, social stigma of the Pakistani society; in addition to its impact in Pakistan and the worldwide.

Iqbal Masih was a Pakistani Christian child laborer and activist who campaigned against abusive child labor in Pakistan. He was born on 1 January 1983 in Muridke, Punjab, Pakistan. Iqbal entered the field of work when he was four years old due to his family's poverty. He was a full-time worker, that is, a full day. The child was sold by his family for \$12 to a local carpet weaver. He was working while chained to a carpet loom, along with a group of other children, to prevent their escape. He was fed little and beaten because of his constant attempts to escape. The Bonded Labor Liberation Front (BLLF) helped Iqbal to escape from the factory when he was ten years old. The child was exposed to great physical and mental pressure during his work, but he joined school to learn. He traveled to various regions of the world like Sweden and United States to show the brutal aspects behind child labor, after freeing 3,000 children from forced labor during his studies. On April 16, 1995, while he was visiting his family in Muridke, he was assassinated by a gunman. His courage became a source of strength to confront child labor and strive to reduce it in Pakistan and around the world.

The thesis uses the story of Iqbal Masih to show the history of child labor in Pakistan and explore the laws against child labor on post British industrial revolution .Also, it examine the social and cultural factors that has a great impact on the spread of this phenomena . However, the story of Iqbal Masih is a common story and has great influence around the world, so it has been of interest to most researchers.

"A Weak Thing: Iqbal Masih and the History of Child Labor in Pakistan" by Mohammed Bokhari, this thesis studies three aspects of child labor history and the influence of laws on global and national level and in post industrial revolution Britain. Also, the impact of Iqbal Masih on the world even at such a young age, he rose to prominence in his era and became a role model for youth. Because of Iqbal's efforts to raise awareness, governments have been moving to reduce child labor by enacting laws and regulations in addition to the steps being taken to put an end to child labor in all its forms, and the effects of this awareness on Pakistan as a nation.

"We Remember Iqbal Masih's Life" by Timothy Ryan, this article discusses Iqbal Masih's life following his release. Ryan, the writer, discusses Iqbal and the meeting they were having. In addition, he focuses on the issue of servitude in general and depriving people of their social shelter. Mention a few of the causes of child labor, such as poverty. This article discusses Iqbal Masih's life following his release. Ryan, the writer, discusses Iqbal and the meeting they were having. In addition, he focuses on the issue of servitude in general and depriving people of their social shelter. Mention a few of the causes of child labor, such as poverty.

The thesis raises a basic question: can the social and cultural dimensions be a motive to child labor in Pakistan through the story of Iqbal Masih? This main question will be answered by analysing these sub- questions:

_What is the story of Iqbal Masih and the history of child labor in Pakistan?

_What are the social and cultural factors that lead to child labor?

_How does the character Iqbal affect the world's view and its impact on child labor?

_What are the legislations, resisting system that is taken in order to reduce child labor?

This research seeks to study cultural norms and social dimensions of Pakistan broader understanding of the issue of child labor and its ongoing history can be gained by looking through the files analysing documentaries, interviews and media coverage. Also, it explores how the social attitude and cultural factors contribute to the spread of child labor. The study analyses the story of the activist Iqbal Masih and his experience under child labor, and how did he succeed in raising awareness and reducing child labor, and what is the impact of his story on the global and Pakistani levels.

This study aims to examine the story of Iqbal Masih, his difficult experience, and its connection to the issue of child labor. Additionally, it outlines the primary social and cultural causes of child labor in Pakistan. By examining the numerous laws and actions made against child labor, it also includes local and governmental support. This research helps readers to learn about the customs of Pakistani society and the prevailing culture around child labor through the story of Iqbal Masih.

The research contains three chapters. The first chapter looks for the historical overview of child labor in Pakistan. It examines the several laws, regulations, and international agreements that the State of Pakistan has signed. It also includes facts about Covid-19's role in child labor. The second chapter discusses the social factors that lead to child work and how Pakistani culture views this issue. The third chapter discusses and analyzes the story of the Pakistani boy Iqbal Masih under labor, his experience and his life towards freedom and the fight against child labor. It studies Iqbal's legacy on the world and other working children and how he awakened awareness in the world. In addition to the

proposed methods for combating child labor, restoring their status in society, and erasing this exploitative mindset among stakeholders.

Chapter One: Child Labor in Pakistan throughout History

Introduction

1.2 Child Labor in Pakistan and its continuation beyond.....

1.1.1 Definitions of the Term Child Labor.....

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Introduction

Child labor has been a persistent issue in Pakistan, with roots dating back to the British Empire's exploitation of children in industries. While Pakistan has implemented laws like the Employment of Children Act to combat child labor, weak enforcement and poverty continue to force children to work. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation by pushing families deeper into poverty and disrupting education, making children more vulnerable to labor. Child labor is a concern domestically due to its violation of human rights and its negative impact on children's health and education. Internationally, child labor tarnishes Pakistan's reputation and motivates global efforts to eradicate the practice. This chapter will shed light on child labor in the British Industrial Revolution and beyond. It will also present Pakistan's laws and policies that prohibited child labor. The effects of covid 19 on child labor in Pakistan will be demonstrated. Last but not least, child labor's interests domestically and internationally in Pakistan will be explored.

1.1 Child Labor in Pakistan and its continuation beyond

The British Industrial Revolution, a period of rapid economic and technological change (1760-1840), dramatically reshaped society. While innovation fueled prosperity, it also cast a dark shadow in the form of rampant child labor. This exploration of child labor during and after the Industrial Revolution serves not only to understand the harsh realities of the past but also to highlight the ongoing struggle for safe and just working conditions for all. The legacy of this period continues to resonate in contemporary discussions concerning child labor practices around the world.

It is not appropriate to classify all forms of child labor as ones that must be outlawed. Engaging children and teenagers beyond the legal working age in jobs that do not impede their education or negatively affect their personal development is generally regarded as a positive thing. This includes working after school and on the weekends to earn pocket money,

as well as volunteering at a family business. These kinds of activities help youngsters grow and improve the welfare of their families; they also equip kids with skills and experience that help them become responsible members of society as adults (International Labor Organization).

Still, the sort of child labor that is being discussed here is unlawful. The Industrial Revolution, for all its advancements, relied heavily on a brutal exploitation of child labor. These young workers, often as young as five, toiled in factories, mines, and workshops for long hours under hazardous conditions. Their small stature made them ideal for operating machinery in tight spaces, but this came at a devastating cost. They faced grueling tasks, suffered physical injuries, and were denied the opportunity for education and a proper childhood. This dark side of progress fueled economic growth but left a lasting stain on British society (TheirWorld).

The three nations with the highest rates of child labor are Nigeria, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. They also have the highest proportion of children who have been affected by war and conflicts for an extended period of time and who are not enrolled in school. The prolonged crisis in Syria has led to a significant increase in child labor and family hardship, especially because host nation governments have made it harder for refugees to obtain legal employment (TheirWorld).

1.1.1 Definitions of the term "Child Labor"

Some people refer to work that adversely impacts a child's physical or psychological development and deprives them of their youth, potential, or dignity as "child labor." It defines jobs that threaten children's mental, physical, social, or moral development; or that disrupt their education by making them miss class, force them to leave early, or need them to juggle long hours of labor with their academics. Certain forms of "work" may or may not qualify as "child labor," depending on the child's age, the nature and duration of the employment, the

working environment, and the purposes of the respective nation (International Labor Organization).

Child labor is a widespread and serious issue that has a negative impact on large portions of the world. It represents a fundamental violation of a child's most fundamental right: the right to a carefree childhood characterized by learning and exploration. These young individuals, at a critical stage in their development, are unjustly forced to endure harsh working environments, often for meager compensation. This labor can be physically and mentally taxing, exposing them to hazardous conditions that pose significant risks to their health and well-being. Furthermore, their education suffers immensely, hindering their future prospects and perpetuating a vicious cycle of poverty that traps them in a life of hardship (TheirWorld).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) defines a child as everyone under 18 unless, "under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier». In England, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Child protection guidance points out that even if a child has reached 16 years of age and is living independently, in further education, a member of the armed forces in hospital; or in custody in the secure estate they are still legally children and should be given the same protection and entitlements as any other child (Department for Education, 2023qtd in NSPCC).

The United Nations has set the age of 18 as the limit for childhood. Before reaching that age, he remains a child. For England, the child enjoys a kind of lack of commitment to any responsibilities.

A person under the age of eighteen is considered a "child" in Northern Ireland according to The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. Although the definition of a child in Scotland varies depending on the legal situation, all children and young people up to the

age of 18 are included in the legislative guidelines that accompanies the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Where a young person between the age of 16 and 18 requires support and protection, services will need to consider which legal framework best fits each persons' needs and circumstances. The National guidance for child protection in Scotland gives more detail about this and explains how professionals should act to protect young people from harm in different circumstances (Scottish Government, 2023a qtd in NSPCC).

While UNICEF utilizes a standard indicator that considers the number of hours worked per week in relation to a child's age and the nature of the work (e.g., 1 hour of economic activity or 21 hours of housework for a 5-11 year old), a more nuanced understanding is necessary. Child labor, at its core, refers to work that is detrimental to a child's physical, mental, social, or educational development. This encompasses a wide range of activities, not just those exceeding a specific number of hours. Work that is hazardous, exploitative, or interferes with schooling falls under this definition.

Contrary to the previous definition by the United Nations, UNICEF does not give importance to age, but rather focuses on the nature of the work and the extent of the harm that affects the child's development in various aspects. Child labor is not prohibited, but if it exceeds its limit, it will become dangerous for the child. UNICEF calls for Understanding child labor from this perspective.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) emphasizes the concept of "worst forms of child labor," which includes activities such as slavery, trafficking, prostitution, and work in dangerous mines or industries. Therefore, the true essence of child labor lies not just in the duration of work, but in its impact on a child's well-being and their inherent rights. It is the exploitation of young individuals that hinders their potential and steals their childhood that defines this pervasive global issue.

According to ILO, Child Labor is defined as work that has the potential to deprive children of their childhood, their dignity and is also harmful for their physical, moral and mental development and it interferes with their education (either by not allowing them to attend school, leaving school prematurely i.e., without compulsory education or forcing them to combine school attendance with heavy work.). So, the question arises as to how should we differentiate between child labor and child work? This, according to ILO, depends upon age of the child, type and hours of work performed, working conditions as well as the development stage of individual countries (“Child Labour and Pakistan -know more about child labor”).

The International Labor Organization determines the meaning or difference between child labor and child work by determining the age of the child, his working conditions, conditions, and working hours. Any work that conflicts with or affects the child’s education, moral harm, and exposure to physical torture is child labor.

From the above definitions, we can provide the following definition of child labor as the one that encompasses any work that undermines a child's well-being and fundamental rights. It extends beyond mere hours worked and encompasses activities that are:

Work that hinders a child's physical, mental, social, or educational growth falls under this category. Jobs that expose children to dangerous conditions or exploit them for cheap labor qualify as child labor. Work that forces children to miss school, leave early, or struggle to balance studies with long hours is considered child labor. Moreover, child labor is any work that deprives a child of their childhood, dignity, and potential for a healthy and fulfilling life. It is a global issue demanding attention, as it perpetuates poverty and hinders the development of future generations.

Child labor has existed since the British Industrial Revolution, thus it is not a new occurrence. Children were the main power behind several sectors in Pakistan, one of the

nations that Britain colonized. Children were employed in industries too big and too dangerous for them, as well as in challenging and dangerous environments. Employers were indifferent to the safety of their kid workers since there was no legislation against it until the 1820s, when governments began to take notice of the issue and look for solutions. This was accomplished by creating a set of laws and regulations to stop the issue from spreading and to safeguard the security of young laborers. But the employers were not committed to it (Catwright).

Public awareness about the conditions of working children began to spread through charities and writers, including Charles Dickens, who stated the painful reality of working children from the poor class. The low costs of education were considered an obstacle for some families, which led to a decrease in the percentage of children attending school. Following attempts at finding a solution through philanthropic initiatives, Sunday schools, and other means, free schools began to emerge in the 1840s. Notable examples of these were the rough schools founded by Anthony Ashley Cooper and others, with writing, reading, and math as their main tenets. Even though there were free schools available, the kids kept working until the 1870s, when rules requiring compulsory education for kids aged five to twelve did not emerge. In the Quarry Bank Mill, some of the factory owners were providing education to working children after work. During the Industrial Revolution, traditional home industry was based on the work of children, who did jobs such as hand weaving, washing and carding wool, in addition to their parents' businesses such as grocery shopping, blacksmithing, and basket weaving (Cartwright).

The agricultural sector is considered one of the most important sectors, and children continue to be present in it and their primary role is to herd animals and various agricultural activities. Some children have joined agricultural gangs, but child labor remains an integral part of the rural and urban industries that were their means of livelihood. The

industrial sector has also witnessed a major expansion, especially of coal factories, during the Industrial Revolution and the increasing demand for coal to power engines led to an increase in child labor. Children under five years old were employed to work in coal factories due to their small size, which enables them to reach narrow ventilation shafts to operate trapdoors (Cartwright).

Despite the difficulty, this work was dangerous to the safety of children, but it was necessary to ventilate the mines and avoid underground accidents. The British government looked into the situation of children working in mines through several testimonies in 1842. James Pearce said:

“I am 12 years of age. I went down to the pits about 7 years and a half to open doors. I had a candle and a fire beside me to show me light. There was one door,” he added.” About a year and a half ago I took to the girdle and chain; I do not like it; it hurts me; it rubs my skin off; I often feel pain. I get 15 dollar a-day" (from child labor in the mines 1842).

James, the youngster, describes in his testimony the difficult circumstances and suffering he experiences while working hard. James is moving coal in the direction of the mines using unique equipment. Despite suffering from terrible injuries, he persists in his profession, demonstrating the resilience and endurance of this young person. Upon finishing the day, he received some money, which helps him to put his suffering behind him.

The Industrial Revolution saw the creation of steam-powered machinery, which was especially important for the textile industry. The three main elements of working circumstances in textile factories were noise, darkness, and humidity—all of which were necessary for fabric preservation. The necessity for skilled workers—including children—was

diminished by these technologies. They carried out risky jobs like patching holes in the cloth, discarding cotton waste, and cleaning machinery. Children are not supposed to operate near machinery because if a textile machine suddenly stops, heavy parts could fall off or fly into the air, endangering their life or possibly theirs. Working children represent one-third of the workforce in the United Kingdom, and the suffering of children continued even during the end of the Industrial Revolution in 1832 (Cartwright).

Michael Sadler described the suffering of these children despite his attempts at reform when he said:

“Even, at this moment, while I am thus speaking on behalf of these oppressed children, what numbers of them are still at their toil, confined to heated rooms, bathed in perspiration, stunned with the roar of revolving wheels, poisoned with the noxious effluvia of grease and gas, till at last, weary and exhausted, they turn out almost naked, plunge into the inclement air, and creep shivering to beds from which a relay of their young work-fellows have just risen; and such is the fate of many of them at the best while in numbers of instances, they are diseased, stunted, crippled, depraved, destroyed” (from child labor in the mines 1842).

This excerpt describes the difficult working conditions that child laborers faced during the British Industrial Revolution and emphasizes the urgent need for reforms to better their lives and safeguard them during this crucial historical moment.

Britain attempted to address child labor during the Industrial Revolution by passing laws that addressed the morality and health of young workers in the cotton industry. With the provision of basic education, this law established permitted working hours from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. and specified particular working hours not to exceed 12 hours per day. Children nine years old and older were covered by this law. This law was introduced by the British Parliament in 1833 with the intention of controlling child labor. Since it forbade children under the age of nine to labor, this regulation applied to youngsters in all fields. Children from 9 to 13 years old had 8 hours of work every day, while those from 14 to 18 years old had 12 hours. Due to the physical demands and hazardous nature of the labor, girls and women were not allowed to work in mines until the Mining Law of 1842. The well-being of women and girls who were subjected to hazardous conditions in the mines seemed to be restored by this regulation. Another regulation that came into effect in 1847 was the Ten-Hour regulation, which sought to better reduce the amount of time that women and children spent working in factories so they might live in more comfort and luxury. A maximum of ten hours has been designated for working hours (Cartwright).

The aim of this legislation during the Industrial Revolution was to improve working conditions and prevent child labor exploitation. More laws and advocacy are still needed to safeguard youngsters who work. In the fight against child labor by 1900, Britain had achieved significant progress. Employers, however, opposed the legislation and voiced their objections, which led Parliament to form committees known as "Blue Books" or "Sadler Reports" to look into the issue and gather evidence. Significant infractions by factory owners were disclosed to the stakeholders. These reports were crucial in bringing child labor exploitation to light and putting a stop to it. A significant change toward a labor system devoid of children occurred when the majority of kids started attending school rather than working in factories (Says).

By 1947, Pakistan had gained its independence and was no longer a British colony. Even after breaking away from Great Britain, it kept several legal frameworks and administrative practices. In Pakistan, child labor has continued despite the existence of laws and rules prohibiting it. Lack of resources Social and economic reasons that contribute to the persistence of child labor include illiteracy and a failure to follow the law (Khan 9).

According to the 2017 and 2018 Pakistan Labor Force Survey, 13.7% of working children are between the ages of 10 and 17 with 5.4% of them engaging in hazardous child labor (“The Asia Regional Child Labour (ARC) Project; International Labour Organization”).

The results of the national survey also showed child labor In 1996, child labor was widespread in Pakistan. It was projected that 3.3 million of the 40 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 who worked full-time were among these children. It was estimated that 73% of the children were male, while only about 27% were female. This means that males made up the majority of the child population. In the subject of economics, the number of children between the ages of 10 and 14 is four times more than that of children between the ages of 5 and 9. This suggests that children who are older are more susceptible to child labor (Khan 10).

The agricultural industry has the largest percentage of child labor (approximately 67%), as youngsters work alongside their families in this field. Following the agricultural sector, where child labor is expected to make up 11% of the workforce, is the industrial sector. Children who work devote 14% of their time to family tasks. Although their labor does not supplement a family's income entirely, it nevertheless contributes to an increase in income levels(Khan 11-12).

1.2 Pakistan's Laws and Policies that Prohibit Child Labor

Pakistan has implemented a number of laws, rules, and regulations in an effort to safeguard children's rights and address the issue of child labor. Pakistan recognized the risks

that mines posed to children; therefore, in 1923 it passed the Mines Law, which, in accordance with international agreements and laws dealing to child labor, prohibited minors under the age of 14 from working in mines or mining. Working in a mine requires a physical health certificate from a registered physician, and the youngster must be at least eighteen years old to be hired. This certificate, which details the working child's physical ability, must be seen by the mining manager. To prove that the young worker in the mine is a person authorized by law to be in the mine, the youngster is given a badge with the emblem from the certificate on it (“The Mines Act, 1923, International labor organization 4).

In 1934, Pakistan passed the Factories Law, which forbade children under the age of 14 from working in factories and set rules for women and teens engaged in risky jobs. The West Pakistan Shops and Establishments Act of 1969 is a law that prohibits children under the age of 14 from entering any establishment (Pakistan’s Journey towards the Elimination of Child Labor: A Timeline). Article 3 of the 1973 Constitution (also called the Pakistani Constitution) forbids child labor and emphasizes the need to prevent all forms of exploitation and treat employees fairly and in accordance with their abilities. Article 11, which states that working in factories, mines, or any other type of workplace where children under the age of 14 are employed may endanger their life since young people are vulnerable and in need of protection from anything that could endanger their health or safety (“Child Labor Law, Children at Work in Pakistan”). Article 25 (A) mandates that children between the ages of five and sixteen receive free, compulsory education, as education is both a basic right and a means of escaping poverty. Article 37 (e) is also an article that calls for justice, equality, and ensuring humane working conditions. Especially for women and children, they are prohibited from participating in any work that is not appropriate for their age and gender. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which upholds children's rights everywhere, was

ratified by Pakistan in 1990 (Pakistan's Journey towards the Elimination of Child Labor: A Timeline).

Furthermore, it is required that children experience childhood because it is during this period that they develop both their physical and mental abilities. The Employment of Children Act of 1991 followed, which was passionate about protecting children and preventing them from engaging in dangerous or unsuitable employment. It also listed some activities that were prohibited in order to prevent dangerous dust, such as carrying people, starting fires, cleaning ash off construction sites, and building. Introductory Food service or related employment aboard railroads, cracker sales in stores were with temporary licenses (“Child Labor Law, Children at Work in Pakistan”).

Pakistan ratified the International Labor Organization's "Convention on the Prohibition of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, 1999" in 2001. This convention forbids any form of child labor that is deemed inappropriate, including forced labor, sexual exploitation, slavery, child trafficking, and work that poses a health risk to the child(Pakistan’s Journey towards the Elimination of Child Labor : a timeline).Pakistan and the same organization ratified the "Minimum Age Convention, 1973" in 2006, which raises the minimum age and requires notification of a child's entry into the labor force. It establishes 14 and 15 as the minimum ages at which children can be accepted for employment. The Child Protection and Welfare Law was approved by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2010 and was updated in 2018. The care and protection of children are outlined in this statute. Additionally, it created a commission tasked with overseeing regional and local issues pertaining to children and their rights. In order to create various programs and strategies to keep kids safe, the committee also worked with the National Committee for Children's Rights (NCRC).Its responsibilities also include reviewing draft laws that might have an impact on children's rights and revising or amending them as

necessary to keep them compliant with the Pakistani Constitution (Pakistan's Journey towards the Elimination of Child Labor: A Timeline).

Children under the age of 14 are prohibited from working by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Labor Prohibition Law, 2015; however, children over 12 may engage in light labor under the supervision of a family member. Additionally, it restricts working hours to no more than two hours each day. Moreover, it is illegal for minors under the age of 18 or under the age of 14 to work in hazardous jobs. Employers who hire minors under these age restrictions risk a fine of between 50,000 and 100,000 rupees or between six months and three years in prison. Baluchistan passed another child protection law in 2016, outlawing all forms of abuse—physical or mental—abuse, exploitation, and even sexual assault. It is believed that working in brick kilns is a hazardous employment that stunts children's growth and compromises their health. Thus, in 2017, the Brick Kiln Law was proposed. Children under the age of 14 are not allowed to work in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and violators face fines of up to 500,000 pounds and six months in prison. The Child Labor Prohibition Law was introduced in Sindh in the same year. It forbade the employment of minors under the age of fourteen in hazardous jobs or in any type of paid employment. If this legislation is violated, the offender faces a fine of 50,000 rupees or six months in prison. Employment Law It is a policy that was implemented in Punjab in 2018 with the goal of eradicating child labor and slavery as well as enhancing labor standards and worker safety (Pakistan's Journey towards the Elimination of Child Labor: A Timeline).

In the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, there is another policy that attempts to eradicate child labor and its most severe forms by educating stakeholders about the risks associated with child work. In Gilgit-Baltistan, the Child Labor Prohibition Act of 2019 forbade labor in mines, factories, or other establishments. Children under the age of fourteen are at risk. A youngster should not be exposed to prostitution or any other unlawful activity,

including drug trafficking, according to the law. Additionally, it outlaws forced labor and slavery, and anyone found in violation faces prison time or monetary fines (Pakistan's Journey towards the Elimination of Child Labor: A Timeline).

1.3 Effects of Corona Virus on Child labor in Pakistan

The International Labor Organization and UNICEF said on June 12, 2020, that the broad proliferation of child labor can be attributed to the coronavirus, despite 20 years of attempts to address this issue. Guy Ryder, the International Labor Organization's Director-General, stated: "As the pandemic wreaks havoc on family incomes, without support, many could resort to child labor". Most employees in closed or mixed industries, where the virus spreads quickly, quit due to the disease's worsening symptoms, which resulted in parents losing their jobs (UNICEF). A quicker and less expensive way to boost family income is through child work. In certain cases, child labor is linked to the absence of family income, according to research. De Hoop and Edmonds (2020) also mentioned: "Child labor will be an important coping mechanism for poor households experiencing COVID-related shocks" (Nasir et al 39).

The state of Pakistan has been impacted by the nationwide Corona virus outbreak. This COVID has caused instability in the country's economy and household earnings. The main causes of child labor during the corona virus were poverty, the loss of job resulting from preventive measures, and the infection-related deaths of elderly family members and those caring for them. During the viral era, there has been a notable rise in the quantity of child laborers ("Child Laborers Caught between Pandemic and Economic Hardship – DW – 06/12/2020").

Though children who work are inherently exposed to the dangers of their occupations, the COVID-19 epidemic has worsened the situation by cutting off their source of income and putting their health at risk. Children's health and education have been negatively impacted by

the virus, which has also led to many of them taking up jobs. Due of their mixed nature and the virus's rapid transmission among people, schools and other educational facilities were forced to close as a result of the outbreak. For some children, staying at home and giving up on their education was not a wise idea. Parents choose to send their kids to work in order to save more money. Kaur and Byard (2021) noted that lack of employment, parents' low educational attainment, and families' low income levels are the main factors influencing parents' decisions to send their kids to work. The biggest mistake parents may make against their children is to not be aware of the virus's potential health consequences to youngsters who work. According to some studies (Owusu et al. 2020), schools serve free meals to students, therefore for some kids from low-income households, they served as a source of food in addition to being a place of education. Due to the fact that working parents can no longer afford to take their children to school, closing schools has a negative impact on this particular group of impoverished families, rendering them even poorer (Nasir et al 36).

1.4 Interests of Child Labor in Pakistan: Internationally and Domestically

Pakistan has gained widespread national and international attention regarding the phenomenon of child labor. Pakistan signed a memorandum of understanding in June 1994 with the International Labor Organization to eliminate child labor within the framework of an international program aimed at reducing this phenomenon and developing effective ways to prevent it. During 1997, the program occupied priority among 20 similar programs around the world. UNICEF and technical assistance supported the State of Pakistan in 2016 by developing a draft child protection law (Combating Child Labor IPEC in Pakistan).

UNICEF has also supported Pakistani provincial governments to advocate for reform. The Regional Adolescent Empowerment Program is a program in Pakistan that aims to improve the lives of adolescents by engaging them in social media programs for the purpose of developing self-esteem and communication. National Consultative Workshop on

Elimination of Child Labor in Agricultural, Textile, Cotton and Apparel Value Chains in Pakistan ,2018-2022 ; The International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) collaborated on a project on Tuesday in Islamabad, Pakistan, with the goal of preventing child labor and forced labor in the cotton, apparel, and textile industries. The Clear Cotton Project Frame served as the venue for this session. The Minimum Working Age Convention (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (No. 182), both of which are in accordance with the International Labor Organization, have been ratified by Pakistan as well (“Eliminating Child Labor and Forced Labor in the Cotton, Textile and Garment Value Chains: An Integrated Approach | International Labor Organization”).

The goal of the Decent Work Country Program in Pakistan 2016–2020 is to bring the issue of child labor to the attention of federal and regional policymakers, given the problem's significant expansion into the rural sector. The problem of child labor in Pakistan has also gained great attention through the State of Pakistan enacting a set of laws and policies aimed at permanently stopping child labor, strengthening their rights, and protecting them from exploitation (“Child Labor in Pakistan; International Labor Organization”).

Conclusion

Overall, Pakistan’s history of child labor is entwined with numerous social and cultural elements. In the past, child labor has been more common due to elements including traditional family arrangements, poverty, and illiteracy. Children are forced to work from an early age due to economic challenges that force families in many parts of Pakistan, particularly in rural areas, to rely on the revenue that their children earn. Furthermore, the practice of child work is sustained by cultural norms that place a high value on children’s help of home duties and contribution to the family income.

Chapter Two: The Social and Cultural Factors that Contributed to Child Labor in Pakistan

Introduction

2.1 Pakistan’s Child Labor, Poverty, and Lack of Education

2.2 Gender roles in Pakistan and Patriarchal Traditions

2.3 The Perspective of the Pakistani Community Regarding Child Labor

2.4 Migration and Urbanization Effects on Child Labor

2.5 Decision-Making and Family Dynamics

Conclusion.....

Introduction

Millions of children in Pakistan are employed in various forms of child labor, depriving them of the opportunity to attend school and enjoy their childhood. In Pakistan, there are numerous social and cultural elements that are firmly embedded in the fabric of society that impact the occurrence of child labor. It is essential to comprehend these elements in order to develop methods that effectively oppose child labor and advance children's rights and welfare. Social factors such as poverty, limited educational opportunities, and insufficient legal safeguards for children might force families to depend on child labor as a means of subsistence. In certain communities, child labor practices are sustained by cultural customs, social norms, and views on education and child labor. Comprehending these variables is crucial in formulating efficacious tactics to counter child labor.

2.1 Pakistan's Child Labor, Poverty, and Lack of Education

Children work to provide for their families, and sometimes their families force them to work. The primary cause of child labor is poverty. There are millions of impoverished youngsters in the world. There are differences between the ways that various communities view child labor. There are others who think it's something that must be done. While some contend that passing it on harms a child's life from an early age, others think it influences a child's personality development.

One of the reasons that led to falling into poverty is:is the underdeveloped agricultural sector, which employs over 66% of the rural poor in the nation. Pakistan's cultivated land is not distributed fairly, according to the results of the agricultural census conducted in the 1990s. The destitute are impacted by the lack of access to modern technology, affordable and sufficient fertilizer, pesticides, premium seeds, water, and consultation services. Because poverty is more prevalent in rural areas and they lack the capital to develop their land, their income is lower..and a host of other factors, such as an unequal income distribution among

populations. The nation's population is expanding quickly, the rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer. Pakistan has the greatest population rate in the region at 1.8%, making it the sixth most populous country in the world. The fixed income class is subject to regressive taxes, chief among them being inflation. The group with fixed incomes and salaried employees is more affected by inflation than the business class. Inadequate system of testing. Output and economic activity would be slow if the tax structure did not benefit the investing and general public sectors. Poverty is the result of ineffective government. Growth and progress are contingent upon the presence of good governance (“SU LMS”)

Debt pressure from their circumstances forces impoverished families to send their kids to work in order to supplement their income. Girls are more likely to experience racism, and the widespread belief that they do not need as much schooling permeates all countries. Parents are often unaware of the detrimental effects of this mindset, which stunts girls' intellectual growth.

Youngsters from larger families work longer hours than youngsters from smaller homes because their parents cannot produce enough money to feed the family. A factor that influences parents to direct their children away from education and toward work is the scarcity of educational facilities or the poor quality of education that can be found there. The majority of parents view education as an extraneous, pointless concern since they are unable to cover the costs. As stated before, the belief is that ladies learn their talents and become adults through their profession, not through schooling. Without an education, children who labor have a hard time gaining the skills necessary for the job and eventually become incompetent to enhance their practical abilities.

Experts believe that broken homes and financial difficulty are the main reasons behind the increase in child labor in larger cities. Families under financial strain often struggle to keep up with their kids' growing demands and may even forget to provide them a nutritious

diet. It appears that kids look for independent sources of money mostly for this reason. Unhealthy relationship dynamics may accompany financial challenges in families that are socially disadvantaged, morally bankrupt, or alcoholic. When all these elements come together, kids are forced into the streets—whether for good or ill—becoming vagrants who have to start making their own decisions at a young age. As such, it is simple to identify financial hardships and dysfunctional families as the primary reasons of child labor. Additionally, the researchers identify the nation's overall social and economic circumstances as a significant contributing element (“Causes; International Labor Organization”).

In addition, some cultural and societal conventions, such as a lack of awareness of child labor, may also support child labor. In other words, “the belief that employment helps children develop their skills and character” essentially pushes parents to send their kids to work even when they are ignorant of the risks involved in child labor and how those risks ultimately affect the health, safety, and well-being of their kids. In addition, climate change and earthquakes "Farmers in rural areas are forced to send their children to work when they witness their crops destroyed by climate change." Concerns about the effects of climate change and natural disasters are becoming more prevalent. Families in rural areas who depend on regular farming seasons are particularly vulnerable to weather extremes, soil erosion, and changes in rainfall patterns. When farming land is destroyed or harvests are lost, families find it difficult to make ends meet and are more likely to send their children to work on neighboring farms (ECLT Foundation)

Another factor is large-scale migration and hostilities. Child labor is strongly correlated with conflict and disaster situations. According to the ILO, children make up more than half of all individuals who are displaced as a result of war. Due to the increase in economic shocks, the breakdown of social services, education, and basic necessities, as well as the disruption of child protection programs, these children are more vulnerable to child

labor and other forms of exploitation. Child labor cases in countries afflicted by conflict are almost twice as prevalent as the global average. Engaging children in armed battles is one of the worst forms of child labor, and it carries additional risks for them(ECLT Foundation).

Yet other factors are addiction, illness, or impairment. A lot of families do not have a wage earner due to illness, alcoholism, or disabilities; in these situations, the family's only source of money comes from the child's earnings. Population growth not only increases unemployment but also undermines efforts to stop child labor. Parents are consequently willing to send their children to work instead of school in order to increase family income (More).

The dearth of suitable facilities and infrastructure in many areas of Pakistan is one of the most obvious problems with the country's educational system. Gender differences in educational access continue to be a major source of concern. Girls frequently confront obstacles in their pursuit of an education, which feeds into inequity. Deeply ingrained cultural customs and conventions can occasionally dissuade parents from sending their daughters to school. Girls' chances to pursue an education are limited by early marriages and societal expectations. In Pakistan, addressing gender inequality is essential to attaining universal education(redmarker)

Besides, Individuals who find themselves in challenging financial circumstances are forced to take out loans; the uneducated turn to moneylenders for debt relief when they are in need. Moneylenders make their borrowers work for them when they eventually realize they cannot afford to pay back the loans plus the interests. The debtors then ask their children for assistance in repaying the loans. What is referred to as "bonded child labor" is the practice of forcing minors to work as slaves in order to pay debts. Not the children, but their guardians or relatives—usually a parent—acquire the debt that ties them to their jobs. Based on the industry, the child's age, and skill level, these "loans" are offered to poor parents by their

creditors who have now become employers in an effort to get child labor, which is usually cheap but much more so in a bondage situation. If a child's family is using the child as collateral for a loan, debt, or societal obligation, then the term "bonded child labor" describes the child's work (More).

The worst kind of child labor, child "marriage" is unlawful and completely against human rights. It is prohibited because it violates girls' rights as minors, puts them in danger, and alters the course of the rest of their life. Its victims face greater exposure to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like HIV, high-risk pregnancies, recurrent rape, and potentially fatal complications giving delivery. They are snatched away from their legitimate families, denied freedom, education, and leisure time, and made to perform menial, unpaid labor at a young age. Additionally, their potential and free will are taken from them. It is necessary to refer to it as "child labor," since millions of girls across the globe are subjected to this terrible and inhumane type of work ("The Problem; Child Marriage Is Child Labor").

One of the main societal factors causing child labor to proliferate in Pakistan is poverty; over 83% of children in Pakistan are estimated to be working as a result of their circumstances. Even if their earnings are meager, children in impoverished homes who lack food and clothing send their kids to work to supplement their income. Children are employed in a variety of jobs, such as manufacturing, agriculture, and other jobs. Among the respondents, 22.6% of parents reported that their children had to get a job because of the family's poverty (Sikandar et al 135).

One of the factors that encourages parents to hire their kids is poverty, and the proportion shows how many parents there are and how they view their kids. Even at the cost of their children's life, their only objective is to flee the cold and starvation. In such a situation, the children are considered as the entities which could be utilized for the purpose of complementing their income (Gilani et al 202).

It is common in rural areas to view a child as nothing more than an element of the family's source of income. The majority of parents with poor educational attainment devote their children solely to work, elevating and transmitting labor as sacred. In addition, low-income families are unable to cover the expense of uniforms and schooling. And the school supplies their kids require or it is also conceivable that disadvantaged communities lack access to educational institutions or that they are hard to find. Most children who work are those who dropped out of school, which impacts their ability to develop their skills and abilities, which is one of their rights(Rehman).

According to estimates, 264,000 girls work as domestic slaves in households as nannies or cleaners. This might have a negative impact on the girls by exposing them to violent or sexually harassing acts .At the age of eight, Zohra Shah, a girl, began working as a domestic worker. The youngster worked for her family's advantage.Her innocent spirit was stolen because of the sexual abuse and harassment she endured from her bosses. Remorse for the choice she made that ultimately resulted in her daughter's death was expressed by Zohra's mother, Samina Abbas (“Pakistan: 8-Year-Old Zohra Shah, a Caged Soul Killed for Setting Birds Free”).

The civil judge and his spouse supported the employers in the case of fourteen-year-old Rizwana, a housemaid who suffered harsh beatings and torture at their hands.In July of 2023, this story took place in Islamabad. Her monthly pay was ten thousand rupees, or \$32.88. The awful reality that Rizwana and thousands of other maid girls had to endure what was depicted in her account. These accounts highlight a small portion of the traumatic side of the millions and thousands of Pakistani children who are forced into child labor, losing out on their childhood, education, and mental growth in the process (“‘Battered and Broken’: Rizwana's Wounds Cast Light on Child Labor in Pakistan”).

Children who skip school, discontinue their education, and enter the workforce at a young age are other causes of child labor. Pakistan ranks second globally in terms of the proportion of children who do not attend school, according to UNICEF. Education and poverty are related factors as well. Families struggle to pay for necessities like books, transportation, and education. Some kids work during school hours, so they are not always dedicated to their education. Children who studied part-time were projected to be 81.8% of the total (Shah et al 4).

Girls' education is discouraged in rural regions due to customs that prohibit them from attending school. Given that 32% of females are thought to be absent from elementary school, girls are the group most affected ("Millions of Children in Pakistan Are Being Deprived of an Education, Reports HRW"). As attested to by Liesl Gernholtz, Human Rights Watch's director of women's rights: "Many of the girls we interviewed desperately want to study, but instead grow up without the education that would help them have options for their future" ("Millions of Children in Pakistan Are Being Deprived of an Education, Reports HRW"). Fatima was among those who suffered from her school absences. She really wanted to go to school, but that was not going to happen. Fatima is a seven-year-old Bahawalpur inhabitant. Rather than go to school, she and her mother worked in the fields. According to Fatima, in an interview, she expressed how much she wanted to attend school in order to learn (Reuters).

There is a clear educational gap between rural and urban communities. Rural areas typically face disadvantages due to the lack of higher educational resources and possibilities found in urban centers. In Pakistan, poverty is a major barrier to education. Many times, financially strapped families are unable to afford to send their kids to school. In Pakistan, a lot of families place more importance on putting food on the table than on their kids attending school. Many kids are forced into child labor by this economic pressure in order to support their families. It will take skill to break the cycle of poverty and lack of education.

In some areas, girls' educational chances are restricted by ingrained beliefs and conventions. Achieving gender equality in the educational system requires overcoming these cultural hurdles and elevating the value of education for females (redmarker)

In addition, the lack of schools in rural areas or their distance from one another may be contributing causes to youngsters giving up on their education. Half of the 4,000 residents in the Punjab region are under the age of twenty. There are just two schools there, and neither one is hygienic or equipped with basic supplies like water. There are occasionally power interruptions in the classrooms for the kids (Saleem 36). 49.3% of the children wanted to complete their education, but their financial circumstances made it impossible for them to do so (Shah et al 4).

2.2 Gender Roles in Pakistan and Patriarchal Traditions

Pakistani society is a society in which there is a large group of Muslims. The idea of sexual discrimination is an idea modified and applied in a way that helps the thinking of Pakistani society. It is due to the fact that men today are stronger than women in terms of the physical aspect and responsibility, meaning everything goes according to the man's decision, so from this idea Thought continues until it becomes inherited. Pakistan is regarded as having a traditional and conservative culture. Boys have a more advanced educational approach than girls because of their lower social status. It is believed that in Pakistani culture, males are indoctrinated to govern and dominate the other sex, to be better than them in all pursuits, and to see women as submissive objects to be submitted to their power. Since the daughter has always been subject to their limitations, they think that education will not help her to have a different perspective. The dread of having to leave is overwhelming them. The unfavorable views of her family toward education affect Sumaira, a young girl who said:

“My uncle and grandmother were upset with my parents. They argued with my parents that why are you sending the young girls to school, they are grown up now. In their opinion we should be married now. When my uncle hears the incidents about girls running away with boys, he gets disturbed. He is afraid that these incidents will make us corrupt and pollute our minds and we will do the same bad things. That is why he is not in favor of job or education. Because of him many times there were disputes and fights in our home” (Saleem 45).

This paragraph emphasizes family strife, generational conflicts, and the negative effects of child labor on females' education. Older generations are probably impacted by conventional views about the responsibilities of women. The passage's overall message highlights the complicated family dynamics that are influenced by societal pressures, varying attitudes toward education, and gender roles.

Early marriage or forced marriage is a situation that has led to fear of females running away with their boys. Some households consider their daughters to be an inconvenience that has to be removed. To give up on the trend of increasing numbers and reduce spending, marriage is the solution. For financial reasons, such as money, past financial problems, or other issues, some of them marry their daughters, "they have been abandoned like animals," Mai remarked in reference to this. Girls are now just objects whose bodies are traded for money (Welle). Furthermore, Khan said, “In newly merged tribal districts and Malakund district, people take 500,000 rupees (€2,660, \$3,180) to 2,000,000 rupees from men wanting to marry their underage girls. Most of these men are wealthy and already married” (22).

The majority of older and wealthier men are the ones that approach young ladies with the goal of getting married to them. Reality gets more chaotic after marriage. The majority of girls are mistreated, made to serve as these men's slaves, or used as sex objects for amusement. There is a rule or custom in the family that the eldest male is in charge of making family-related choices. These judgments, which frequently go against the preferences of the kids, must be followed by the other family members (Batool et al 562 to 564).

This judgment alone represents a crime committed by affluent males against Pakistani girls and women in general. They believe that everything is sheep and that money can easily obtain anything because women's status has reached unacceptable levels .

Families usually rejoice when they have a child, but they feel unhappy when they get a girl since she adds a lot of responsibility to the family. The conventional portrayal of the sexual role in Pakistani society is that the boy is valuable in all spheres of work and just needs to do housework; on the other hand, the female is solely rewarded for her labor. According to the statement of one married women in FGD Astore: "when my son was born, I was satisfied as now nobody would pressurize me. I noticed a huge difference in the behavior of my in-laws after I gave birth to my son. I felt I have an existence in their family" (Ali et al 19 to 21).

2.3 The Perspective of the Pakistani Community Regarding Child Labor

In Pakistani society, child labor is accepted as natural and should not be taken seriously. Child labor at home is generally encouraged by parents. From an early age, they instill in their kids the values of accountability and independence. A few of the kids said they were scared of their parents and that, when they don't give them money, their parents or older brothers will sometimes beat them (Nafees 13).

Society's view differs due to the difference in the environment in which they grow up, and due to the difference in the religious aspect that plays a role in judging the phenomenon. War has an impact on people's psychology, which is a hidden source for all decisions.

According to a girl from Rehri Goth who had never attended school at all, some moms discourage their daughters from studying and treat it as a secondary or insignificant aspect of their lives. Instead, they advise them to quit working. When asked if she wanted to study, the girl replied: “I won’t. My mother says I have grown older now, and I should spend time in doing domestic chores instead of going to school” (Nafees 14).

From birth until they reach adulthood, children are exposed to the concept of working; parents, in an effort to win their children over, present a positive picture of labor while concealing its risks.

Within traditional Pakistani society, a complex interplay of cultural norms and economic realities shapes attitudes towards child labor. One prevalent perspective views children not just as dependents, but as valuable assets. This stems from the emphasis placed on family structure and intergenerational support. Children are seen as contributing members who can alleviate financial burdens and ensure the well-being of the entire family unit. Furthermore, some segments of society subscribe to the belief that work is not simply an activity, but an inherited mantle. This view emphasizes the transmission of skills and knowledge from generation to generation, often within specific trades or professions. For these individuals, child labor becomes not just a necessity, but a way of instilling work ethic and ensuring the continuation of a family’s legacy (Mazhar 17).

To sum up, regarding the phenomenon of children working at home, parents’ perspectives continue to diverge. The extent to which child labor is tolerated in Pakistani culture is one of the factors that encourages the growth and persistence of child labor.

2.4 Migration and Urbanization Effects on Child Labor

The complex relationship between migration, urbanization, and child labor presents a significant challenge to child protection efforts globally. Rural-to-urban migration, often fueled by economic hardship in search of better livelihoods, can disrupt established family

structures and social safety nets. Children, particularly those accompanying migrating parents, may be forced to enter the labor force to supplement family income. Urbanization itself, while offering potential for economic growth, often creates a breeding ground for child labor in informal sectors, with limited regulation and oversight. These environments frequently expose children to hazardous working conditions, long hours, and exploitation, jeopardizing their health, education, and overall well-being. Understanding this intricate web of factors is crucial for designing effective interventions that address the root causes of child labor and promote sustainable solutions for both migrating families and rapidly growing urban centers.

One of the things that influence child labor in households is migration, and some people may view it as a means of achieving financial security that they are unable to offer. Studies conducted by Child Helpline International (CHI) and the International Labor Organization in Kenya, Nepal and Peru in 2012 show that migrant children work in harsh working conditions compared to other working children (Aman et al 5).

The issue of people moving from rural to urban areas is one that arises from the dearth of fundamental essentials for survival in those locations. The state's failure to provide employment possibilities and a variety of industries in rural areas forces those living there to relocate to areas with greater employment options and higher standards of living.

Aman's et al observations in Pakistan indicate that migrant children face marginalization, including being forced to work longer hours and receiving less schooling than native children. Additionally, migrant children are generally seen as more likely to enter the workforce than other children. These working children carry out a variety of challenging jobs, including cooking, cleaning, caring for newborns, washing clothes, and utensil washing. These jobs have the potential to cause mishaps and injuries like burns and wounds. They will face assault and punishment in addition to humiliation and emotional ruin if they are unable to

master their task. They work long, hard, and nonstop hours, and they only get to see their families once a year, sometimes even twice (2).

Major cities in the region have experienced rapid urbanization over the past few decades, resulting in massive rural-to-urban migration, increased urban poverty, and practices of dangerous child labor in industrial employment(Ensing, World Vision, qtd in Hoque). The primary objective of migrants, including children, is to find employment in cities to support themselves and get away from the pervasive poverty in rural areas.

2. 5 Decision-Making and Family Dynamics

Due to the fact that the oldest children are expected to support their family—especially those with low incomes—large families are seen to be the ones who promote child labor the most. The aging of their parents, whose failing health makes it harder for them to provide for the family's needs, is another factor driving the eldest kid to work. Representing the family and endowed with the power to govern its members is the head of the household. In cases where the father passes away, sometimes the grandfather is at fault and sometimes the father is. This could be implying that in situations where the father dies and the family suffers financially, the blame might be placed on the grandfather for not providing enough support (e.g., not leaving an inheritance, not helping financially during the father's life). This could also be flipped, with blame placed on the father for not being financially responsible enough to prepare for his own death and leave his family secure. Many decisions pertaining to the family or any member are made by the head of the family. It's common for the elder child to take charge supporting them monetarily and acting as a father figure while he's away. Due to immigration, a tragic illness that claimed their lives, or other circumstances, some of the children are fatherless. To be responsible for both themselves and their brothers, these kids go to work (Ali et al 16-17).

It is practically a habit to inherit the sense of responsibility that the eldest in the family assumes, leading families to use it without realizing the repercussions.

According to research done in 2015 by Haider and Qureshi in Punjab, south of Pakistan, poverty, together with the father's income and a big family size, is a major factor influencing child labor. Considering the size of the family, having five or seven members is a big amount. The parents' educational attainment has a significant impact on encouraging their children to pursue careers. Without thinking about the repercussions of his actions, the father sends his kid or daughter to fetch money, and the child continues to be made to labor against their will. Another factor that increases a child's likelihood of working is birth order; if the father loses his job or the family's income drops, the oldest child is more likely to work (Hussain et al 149).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the widespread presence of child labor in Pakistan demands a multifaceted approach to its eradication. While the immediate consequences lie in lost educational opportunities and stolen childhoods, the factors fueling this issue are deeply rooted in social and cultural realities. Understanding these drivers, including poverty, limited educational access, and inadequate legal protections, alongside the influence of cultural norms and traditional views on work, is paramount. Only by acknowledging this complex interplay can one develop effective strategies to combat child labor, ultimately safeguarding children's rights and fostering a brighter future for generations to come.

These social and cultural reasons in Pakistani society were a devastating cause for many Pakistani children. Iqbal was one of these children. His exposure to child labor was behind the social conditions of his family, as well as the inherited culture around child labor. Iqbal's life was not long, but it was immortal after his death. The story of Pakistani boy Iqbal Masih, who grew to authority in his fight against child labor, sheds light on the complex

interplay between social and cultural variables that contribute to child labor. Child labor is a cycle that is perpetuated in many nations by poverty, lack of access to education, and cultural norms that value economic contributions over children's rights. Iqbal's tale shows the intersection of these elements, as his family's poverty and cultural expectations drove him into bonded labor. His terrible story serves as a reminder that in order to effectively prevent child labor and advance children's rights around the world, societal and cultural issues must be addressed.

Chapter Three: Child Labor and the Story of Iqbal Masih

Introduction

3.1 Iqbal Masih’s Rising under the Shadow of Labor

3.2 Iqbal Masih’s Journey from Bondage to Liberation

3.3 Effects of Iqbal on Both domestic and Universal labor

3.4 Strategies for Ending Child labor in Pakistan

Conclusion

Introduction

Child labor is still a major problem in Pakistan, as millions of children work in dangerous jobs rather than going to school. Child labor persists in the nation due to a number of factors, including poverty, limited access to education, and societal views that place a higher priority on economic contributions than on the rights of children. Legislative actions, educational programs, and awareness campaigns are some of the ways that child labor is addressed in Pakistan; however, more has to be done to completely end this destructive practice. This chapter will shed light on Iqbal Masih, an innocent Pakistani man who came to represent the struggle against child labor. His time spent working as a child was difficult. After managing his escape, Iqbal became an outspoken critic of child labor and advocate for the rights of children. By traveling to Pakistan and other nations, he told his story and raised awareness of the plight of child laborers. For his efforts, he was recognized internationally and was awarded the Reebok Human Rights Award in 1994. Iqbal's efforts tragically came to an end when he was killed. Iqbal was away too soon, but his memory lives on as a source of inspiration for international efforts to end child labor.

3.1. Iqbal Masih's Raising under the Shadow of Labor

Iqbal Masih was born in Muridke, a village outside Lahore in Punjab, Pakistan, in 1982 into a low-income Catholic Christian family. His parents are named Inayat Bibi, and father, SaifMasih respectively. His father was a slave trader, while his mother was a household worker.

Iqbal did not engage in child labor. He was considered a slave because he was destined to be. He was young and loved his family, and despite his age, he was smart. He helped his brothers with work. He was considered a slave because he did not have any opinion about his involvement in work. He did not have the slightest idea about the nature or true meaning of

child labor until he tasted the suffering. Iqbal's father's psychology was affected because he was a slave, and this deficiency was reflected in his son, Iqbal.

Iqbal's father was unable to handle the responsibility once the child was born. Iqbal left his family alone since he could not make enough money to support them. Iqbal's sisters raised and looked after baby Iqbal while Iqbal's mother kept working to provide for the family. For several years, this went on Iqbal, the young youngster, was an active and playful boy. In 1986, his older brother decided to get married, but the lack of money caused an obstacle for the eldest son and his father. The wedding party was an important thing in Pakistani society. It was a symbol of appreciation and respect, and it was SaifMasih's duty as a father to provide this party for his son.

After thinking, the father decided getting a loan in Muridke; some people go to Thekedar to obtain loans. Thekedar is a local business owner who owns a carpet factory, and he was asking for collateral for the financial loan. After Iqbal's father and uncle agreed to obtain a financial loan by using one of his sons as collateral, Iqbal was the chosen son for this sacrifice. This loan is called "peshgi" and it is an informal deal in which the lender adds arbitrary expenses and payments apart from the required amount. The father sold his son Iqbal for 600 rupees ("Iqbal Masih – Wikipedia").

Iqbal did not attend school and did not receive any education because education was not very available in Pakistan and only a few poor children learned to write and read. Iqbal spent his time playing in the fields and farms until he was four years old and was sold. Iqbal started working in a carpet manufacturing. At four in the morning, the Kidar took him to start work. The factory was a dangerous place with extremely tough conditions. Because the windows were completely shut to keep any dangerous insects from getting into the wool, the air was damp and devoid of oxygen. Iqbal was put in a big room with too little oxygen to support twenty looms and light that scarcely reached the room's boundaries. Iqbal sat on a

wooden platform facing a wooden carpet loom as he started getting to know the area. To weave carpets, large, colorful balls of wool were hung on the loom vibrant, including illustrations of animals or landscapes. The technique of 'knotting,' or tying wool strands into carpets, is imparted to these kids. The carpets are four by six feet in length and have one million knots.

After Iqbal completed his mission as a trainer for a full year, he was ready to work. He was not the only one, but rather he was with twenty other children, and they were not allowed to talk to each other while working. This is what Iqbal stated: "If the children talk, they are not paying full attention to the product"("Iqbal's Brief Biography – Iqbal Masih").

They are vulnerable to making mistakes because the work requires a lot of concentration and precision in holding the threads in place and also requires small hands, which makes this one of the reasons for bringing children to work on carpets.

Iqbal works from 4 am to 7 pm and receives one rupee per day. Iqbal had to labor six years to pay back the loan that his father had taken out. Iqbal was exposed to dust and wool lint from the surrounding air, which caused his work at the company to end prematurely. Things grew worse. The child's breathing became labored, he began to sweat and cough, and his movements slowed. Because he was too tired to work there any longer, Iqbal was sent back to his home. "If we try to escape, we are threatened to be thrown into boiling oil," Iqbal declared after he had gone back to work. "If we are too slow, we often get whipped on our backs and heads." He added ("Iqbal's Brief Biography – Iqbal Masih").

It is strictly prohibited for employees to leave the workplace while they are working, and even little infractions like knotting anything up will result in harsh penalties like beatings or torture. During his work, Iqbal encounters a few accidents such cutting and scraping his fingers on a pointed, crescent-shaped weaving tool. He was once more left with a profound wound. Iqbal was so exhausted at work that he dozed off due to the sharp textile tool in his

finger. Thekedar, the owner of the factory, was only thinking about the wool. With a loud yell, “hold your hand up ! ‘Don’t let the blood drip!” (“Iqbal’s Brief Biography – Iqbal Masih”).

In order to prevent Iqbal's blood from causing harm to the wool, he applied hot oil to the wound. Iqbal cried out in terrible pain, but Thekedar beat him and instructed him to carry on with his duties.

Child weavers are also susceptible to a variety of illnesses, including emphysema or TB, scabies, and skin disorders brought on by wool, as a result of extreme heat, air tainted with wool fibers, and hard-working conditions. As a result of working long hours on the wooden platform, they have joint, back, and curvature pain. Children who suffered from such illnesses were tied to their looms or whipped. They were hanged upside down or locked in the “punishment room,” a dark area, if they reported being sick or confronted the factory owner. Because he challenged his master, Iqbal received the most beatings out of all the kids. “I was fined sometimes,” he stated (“Iqbal’s Brief Biography – Iqbal Masih”).

Iqbal claims that a beating is preferable to a fine because the latter increases his stay in the prison and makes the path towards freedom a bit longer. Unfortunately, Iqbal’s family requested additional funds in order to operate on his mother, extending the length of time he was forced to labor as a slave at a carpet factory. Not just the factory where Iqbal worked, but other factories of a similar nature also practiced this kind of torture. A lot of kids suffered from torture. According to the researchers: “Once, after he made a terrible mistake, the foreman took a shearing knife and made a deep cut between Salim’s thumb and index finger. the boy was so terrified of the foreman that he didn’t dare make a complaint” (“Iqbal’s Brief Biography - Iqbal Masih”)

The children took lunch for thirty minutes each day. They had a small amount of rice and lentils for dinner, but it was insufficient to satisfy their hunger. Iqbal remarked, “We

remained hungry” (“Iqbal’s Brief Biography – Iqbal Masih”). Thekedar added the cost of the lunch to the children's maintenance, increasing their debt and length of factory work.

3. 2 Iqbal Masih’s Journey from Bondage to Liberation

Iqbal started to see that there had to be a different path for his life after years of suffering in the carpet factory. His consciousness expanded, and he saw that the problem of child labor violated their rights and freedoms. He discovered that in 1992, the Pakistani government outlawed loans of any kind, including the forced labor system under which he had been employed. Iqbal initially learned about the Bonded Labor Liberation Front (BLLF), an organization that fights for the freedom and liberation of children who are legally employed, when he was ten years old. Established by Ihsan Ulla Khan, the organization’s stakeholders and factory owners threaten to beat or cease employment if workers deal with any Slave Labor Liberation Front members or advocates who disseminate information about the country’s permanent elimination of child labor. Pakistan also experienced challenges and disputes with mining, agriculture, and the leather sector as employment (Khan).

Iqbal did not lead a perfect life. Conversely, he did not have the childhood that all children his age should have had. Iqbal's life was damaged at an early age by their conventions and traditions, his father's money-grubbing, and the poverty that served as the driving force.

Despite the challenges, this organization persisted in its efforts until, from 1999 and 2009, it was able to free 30,000 slave laborers in four regions of Pakistan through legal challenges and judicial approvals. Forty-five percent of them work as youngsters in a range of sectors, including as brick kilns, agriculture, and other jobs (“Iqbal’s Brief Biography – Iqbal Masih”).

Ehsan Ulla Khandeclared:

“Our victories amount to a hardship, the state has done nothing to enforce the anti-slavery laws or even to inform the public that child and bonded slavery have been outlawed. It’s evident that if the enslaved workers are to be delivered from bondage, private citizens will have to do the delivering. That is, we will have to proclaim the end of slavery, educate workers, monitor employer compliance, and take legal action when necessary, because the state lacks the will and resources” (“Iqbal’s Brief Biography – Iqbal Masih”).

The passage express dissatisfaction with the government’s lack of action to end slavery and suggests a solutions in which private citizens take on the duties normally performed by the state to uphold the law and defend the human wrights .it emphasis how crucial community involvement and grassroots effort are to resolving social inequities.

The public was unaware of this pervasive problem and the laws prohibiting child labor were not well implemented, and as a result, child labor remained illegal. As a result, it was discovered that the Bonded Labor Liberation Front group was fighting this problem on its own and without outside assistance. The BLLF made the decision to go to combat against child labor in businesses. This was connected to two fronts and raised awareness by publishing the “The Charter of Freedom," a document that covers a range of workers’ rights, across Pakistan (“Iqbal’s Brief Biography – Iqbal Masih).

It was not easy for Iqbal to live with the difficult working conditions. After he was sold, he was subjected to physical and verbal abuse, and he did not have the opportunity to obtain basic education, which was one of his basic rights as a child.

When Iqbal was ten years old, he was finally able to escape the factory and witness the freedom that he had always dreamed of, but his enjoyment was incomplete. He had finally run out of patience and was exhausted. When Iqbal went to the police station complaining about the factory owner's mistreatment of his employees, the police brought Iqbal back to the owner of the factory in order to receive payment in exchange for the runaway slave laborers' return. As punishment for breaking out from the carpet factory, Iqbal was made to labor twice as much as he was paid, tortured, and deprived of food and drink.

Iqbal tried to escape from a second time with the help of BLLF. He attended one of this organization's meetings and had experience in all aspects of child labor. After telling the children in attendance his experience and going through a lot of pain, Iqbal gained popularity and significance from this meeting. Iqbal enrolled in "Our Private School," a Slave Labor Liberation Front School for former slave children, in Muridke, which was located in Lahore. He was intended to study for four years, but instead he worked and studied there for two. The slave children started studying, and he was glad to be a part of the school. Iqbal said in his speech:

"I am one of those millions of children who are suffering in Pakistan through bonded labor and child labor, but I am lucky that due to the efforts of Bonded Labor Liberation Front, I go out in freedom I am standing in front of you here today. After my freedom, I joined BLLF School and I am studying in that school now". Today, you are free and I am free too" (Human Rights Youth in Action Award 2016 quoted in Iqbal Masih).

the passage serves as a poignant reminder of the realities faced by children in bonded labor, while also highlighting the hope and

transformation that can be achieved through dedicated efforts of liberation organizations and the power of education in breaking the cycle of exploitation.

Iqbal was not satisfied with his freedom, but he was doing everything he could to reduce child labor and contributed to the liberation of 3,000 children in various sectors such as textile factories, brick factories, and others. He was risking his freedom and pretending to be a factory worker and bringing the necessary information to free the children (Silvers 90; Carpet Weaver, Child Labor Activist).

Iqbal lived with the BLLF and when he went to Muridke to visit his family for the first time, he received many threats from carpet factory owners. "You have to go back to work," said the owner of the carpet factory, Ghalah. Then the other children will come back too." A carpet factory owner threatens Iqbal's father to kidnap him if he does not pay his debts. Another says, "Your brother walks like a judge in the streets when he comes home." But one day we will get it" (Bergmar).

The role of this organization was embodied in supporting the freedom of Iqbal and other children from the torment and suffering to which they are subjected. Iqbal's case received global support and touched many people who may have lived in the same situation.

Iqbal paid no attention to the issue and was happy with his freedom. He became an important figure, giving speeches at BLLF meetings and presenting his experience to the media and international visitors. He began to receive invitations outside Pakistan, such as Sweden, to be honored by the International Labor Organization. In 1994, the United States invited him to honor him with the Reebok Human Rights Youth Action Award and he went to Broad Meadows Middle School in Quincy, Massachusetts for a visit. In several significant American television networks, he was the "Person of the Week." The owners of carpet producers were furious because Iqbal's story had gained traction and if consumers related to

it, selling carpets abroad may become difficult and unpopular. After coming back to Pakistan, Iqbal went to Muridke to be with his family and home (Bergmar).

Lyaqat's father works in the fields in the hamlet of RakhBaoli, which is located 25 kilometers from Lahore. On April 16, 1995, in the evening, Iqbal, Lyaqat, and Faryad Masih rode bicycles there. It was eight o'clock in the evening, and it was dark. Abruptly, Iqbal was shot by an armed man, and then the criminal escaped. Iqbal passed away at the age of 12 on April 16, 1995, which happens to be Easter in the Christian calendar. By means of the primary police investigation and the testimonies of witnesses (Faryad and Lyaqat), the kids surprised Muhammad Ashraf, the farmer known as "Hero." He was taken out by the farmer. Iqbal Masih and his family were shot at with a 12-caliber rifle, resulting in Iqbal's immediate death and the injuries of other two relatives ("Iqbal Masih's Murder").

According to the report, Farmer Hero claimed he began to shot at children. Just two bullets hurt his relatives, but the killer's desired was Iqbal. As he was trying to run away and taking his last breath, he was hit by 120 bullets around and one in his back. The Pakistani Human Rights Commission verified the police report and named Farmer Hero as the murderer. It said there was no connection between carpet manufacturers and the assassination of Iqbal. The globe and Pakistan were informed of the news. FerozeWallah is looking into the case, and Ashraf Hero's family—his brother Arshad and his blind parents—has been detained in order to look into and arrest the missing criminal. For the purpose of an investigation, Zaki Hussein and Ali Hussein from the village of RakhBaoli have also been taken into prison. Because the murder weapon was discovered by the police dropped into their home. Zaki Hussein's servant Ashraf Hero stated to TFT: "I admit that Ashraf was my servant and that he had stolen my licensed gun and used it on Iqbal under provocation, but how am I to blame for it? The police have subjected me and my brother Ali Hussain to torture. We have no contact with the killer and don't know where he is" ("Iqbal Masih's Murder").

Ashraf's brother stated his statements:

“My brother Ashraf was a heroin addict which Zaki Hussain supplied him so that he would work at this farm. My parents and I have been arrested, and I have been beaten mercilessly at the police station. My brother has been an addict for the past two years, and has worked for various masters to satisfy his urge for heroin. He is no longer a part of our home and we don't know where he can be found” (“Iqbal Masih's Murder”).

The investigation also included workers at the Bonded Labor Liberation Front offices in Regal Chowk, Lahore. They thought the carpet mafia and carpet factory owners of being the only parties involved in the death of the Pakistani child, Iqbal, as he had been receiving threats for two weeks before his death. However, The Carpet Factories Union refuted the charge brought against them by the BLLF regarding the cause of his death and the person who killed him, opinions varied. Some of them said that Hero the farmer killed Iqbal by accident and that Hero was drunk as a consequence of his heroin addiction. Some claimed that Hero killed him on purpose. Robert Kushner, a forensic specialist and former medical examiner from Illinois with experience in forensic human rights investigations stated that it was discovered in a number of nations that the autopsy record and the police report on Iqbal's murder did not match. In a letter to Reebok's Doug Cahn he wrote:

“The information in the [First Information Report] does not appear to be consistent with injury pattern described in the autopsy protocol. Further investigation is clearly necessary to resolve the discrepancies between the pattern

of injuries and the alleged circumstances of the attack.”

(Harvey)

Iqbal’s case remains open until the killer is arrested. The investigation might be stagnant due to a lack of leads or new evidence. While technically open, it wouldn't be actively pursued by law enforcement.

3. 3 Iqbal's Impact on Domestic and Universal Labor

International and global news networks reported Iqbal's passing in great detail. Because of his narrative, most people were in favor of ending child labor, as were several organizations. His legacy lives on as a testament to his bravery, tenacity, and determination. He raised awareness of the dangers of child labor throughout the world.

Students from Broad Meadows Middle School organized an educational campaign in the seventh grade. They addressed letters to senators, congressmen, and anybody else who could assist with the child labor issue. A series of inquiries concerning the carpet industry are included in the letters. Stakeholders were so incensed by this campaign that they asked for a ban. Letters from the school, but the rejection of the application by the school presented them. The children made the decision to construct a school in Iqbal’s honor. Because it represented both the age at which Iqbal passed away and the amount (\$12) that he received as payment for winning the Reebok Human Rights Award, the number 12 was significant. The required sum and additional funds were gathered to construct the school from. With the help of students and even previous students, the school was finished in 1997(“Iqbal Masih – Carpet Weaver – Slavery Activist – Life on the Job”).

The Iqbal Masih Shaheed Children’s Foundation was founded in February 2003. This non-governmental organization works to advance community development and children’s rights (“Iqbal Masih Shaheed Children Foundation”).Iqbal's passing gave bravery and inspiration to Craig Kielburger, who was inspired by Iqbal's narrative and went on to launch

"Free the Children" in 1995. Craig was shocked by the reality that children in his age were living in because he was 12 years old at that time. The organization was awarded the Human Rights Prize by the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in addition to winning the Children's Nobel Prize, also known as the International Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child. Its main objective was to free children from exploitation and child labor, and it accomplished this by building 650 schools and school rooms worldwide ("Free the Children (FTC); Devex").

3. 4 Strategies for Ending Child Labor in Pakistan

Poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy are the causes of Pakistan's rising child labor rate. If the problem is to be handled, these issues must be addressed. NGOs and the Pakistani government are working to ban child labor. The Pakistani Constitution mandates that children must receive an education and prohibits them from working in hazardous industries like factories and mines ("Ending Child Labor in Pakistan").

The World Day Against Child Labor has been set on Monday, June 12, inclusive. This event is intended to take place in Pakistan. Every year on this day, marches and seminars are held all around the world to bring attention to this situation. The entire number of child labor cases indicated in a child labor declaration was verified by Peter Boimbo, an official from the ILO country office. He commended the state of Pakistan for signing eight ILO treaties, including Convention No. 138 in 2006 and Convention No. 182 in 2001, and for passing laws both domestically and internationally. Nation should set a stop to the practice of child labor, particularly in risky jobs. Additionally, he discussed the concept of stakeholders collaborating to find a solution and accomplish sustainable development and advancement (Qureshi).

This focused program, known as the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), aims to eradicate poverty and violence while fostering social integrity among the lower socioeconomic classes. Since the commencement of the Benazir Initiative, the Pakistani

government has enrolled 11.8 million children in schools and disbursed 63.3 billion rupees, of which 24.4 billion have been allocated. It was distributed in 2023, spanning July through March. In 2022–2023, the current economic survey was used to capture all of these findings. Students were given a scholarship of 1,500 rupees for boys and 2,000 rupees for girls in primary school, while secondary students received 3,500 rupees for girls and 4,000 rupees for boys (Various Measures Already in Place, Experts Stress Elimination of Child Labor in Pakistan).

The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) was founded with the intention of transforming the deprived class's existence into one that is wealthy and decent. It works in 147 regions of Pakistan with community participation to bring about significant changes in lifestyle, health, and education (Quureshi).

The interest-free loan program (IFL), one of the main initiatives run by the Fund in collaboration with its partners for 21 years, is housed inside the PPAF program's structure. There are between 20,000 and 75,000 rupees worth of loans. Through an interest-free loan spread over four years, this program supports individuals who are unable to work and assists low-income families. Additionally, the Workers Welfare Fund (WWF) was founded and is reflected in the Social Welfare Act of 1971. Its functions include improving worker conditions at work, offering low-wage housing, marriage and death grants, talent grants, and health and education services to industrial workers. It seeks to The purpose of this fund is to provide funding for the construction of livable homes for industrial workers and their welfare (economic survey 2022/21).

IPEC played a major role in combating child labor by developing a strategy in Pakistan by analyzing situations in various sectors to reach the root causes of child labor. It supports ILO organizations and various social partners to open branches to expand the idea of reducing forced labor. The goal is to develop laws that protect child labor and place the

problem of child labor within developmental social programs (Combating Child Labor IPEC in Pakistan).

To combat this phenomenon, the government and organizations support each other with the people's support and cooperation, and give the initiative to judge child labor, by working conscientiously to preserve children and give them their rights that are supposed to be theirs without conflict.

Conclusion

To conclude, Iqbal Masih's story is a terrible but inspirational one. At the age of four, the Pakistani youngster in question was sold into forced labor and made to work in a carpet factory. Despite his situation, he was able to flee and go on to become a global speaker against child labor. Sadly, he was killed when he was twelve, but his memory endures and motivates campaigns around the world to end child labor. His narrative emphasizes the value of speaking out against injustice and the continuous need to defend children's rights around the globe. Pakistan can make significant progress in ending child labor and guaranteeing a better future for its children by putting strategies like international collaboration, community engagement, social protection, awareness and advocacy, and comprehensive and collaborative enforcement of laws against child labor into practice.

General Conclusion

Child labor was formerly a major problem that affected many countries, including Pakistan. A number of reasons, including the lack of laws designed to prevent child labor and the general lack of awareness about the dangers of this issue in society, can be blamed for the emergence and continuation of this epidemic. Pakistan was not the only place where child slavery was used throughout the Industrial Revolution; it began there during the British colonial era. Because of this, it's said that's where the idea of child slavery first appeared and has remained ever since.

To prevent child trafficking nationwide, Pakistan has enacted a number of laws and legislation that is heavily sanctioned. Since the advent of the worldwide virus known as COVID-19, the problem has become worse. A large number of young people are now employed, and child labor has increased as a result of industries and educational institutions closing. However, child labor gained national and international attention as it was discovered how dangerous the situation was. The government of Pakistan has established several international links and cooperation efforts with other countries in an attempt to raise awareness about the exploitation of children for public purposes and to get people to stop thinking about the possible harm it might do.

When talking about the history of child labor, one cannot ignore the story of Iqbal Masih. Despite his early age and short life, he was able to accomplish his intended aim and realize the aspirations of countless youngsters.

This research was undertaken to look into Iqbal Masih's experience as a child slave in Pakistan in order to analyze the social and cultural conditions or causes there. Iqbal's family's poverty was the primary driving force behind his decision to work, and his low academic standing is evident in his father's ignorance of the risks this labor posed to his son's health. The loan that the father took out to celebrate his oldest son's wedding—a significant

custom in Pakistani society—demonstrates the complex interplay between tradition and economic realities which highlights the tension between honoring cultural traditions and the harsh economic realities faced by many families in Pakistan. Additionally, even if achieving them necessitates sacrifice, Pakistani rituals and traditions hold great significance. Iqbal had little choice but to report to work because, contrary to Pakistani customs, it is customary for family members to defer to the eldest because they believe that he makes wise decisions. It was a choice that would ruin his life.

Iqbal's life story and the details of his challenging childhood and road to freedom attracted the attention of people all over the world, including the state of Pakistan, who wanted to speak out against the misery that he and many other children had to face. The Bonded Labor Liberation Front's (BLLF) position played a significant role in Iqbal's life since it provided him with a safe place following his freedom and an occasion from which to share his viewpoint and story with the world in an effort to uplift children who were the same as him. Many youngsters were able to find new paths towards independence, education, and most importantly, childhood, due to Iqbal's story.

However, society as a whole must reconsider the problem of child labor and eradicate the belief that children are nothing more than living things. They are machines that can be controlled in any way and have no rights of their own. After turning to legal protection, the form proved to be an efficient remedy. Laws against child slavery include severe penalties for offenders, as well as ongoing inspections to uncover any illegal or covert activity.

Economic strategies must be developed in order to mitigate the poverty issue and support low-income households. Granting children freedom, obligatory education so they can acquire the knowledge they need to develop their abilities. Encouraging the evils of child slavery in national and international conferences, meetings, and economic activities is crucial to preserving children's rights and, consequently, to improve the lot of the impoverished.

In my opinion, the story of Iqbal Masih is a heartbreaking yet inspiring testament to the human spirit's resilience in the face of injustice. Iqbal's brief life, tragically cut short by violence, serves as a stark reminder of the devastating realities of child labor. His story compels us to confront the complex issue of child labor in Pakistan, a problem deeply rooted in poverty, cultural norms, and a lack of adequate legal protections. Iqbal's courage in escaping his bonded labor situation and becoming a vocal advocate for children's rights highlights the power of individual agency. He defied the oppressive system that sought to exploit him and inspired countless others to dream of a future free from forced labor.

However, Iqbal's story is just one among millions. Eradicating child labor in Pakistan requires a multifaceted approach. Addressing the root causes of poverty through economic development initiatives is crucial. Strengthening educational opportunities can empower families to see education as a viable alternative to child labor. Enacting and enforcing stricter child labor laws with robust inspection mechanisms is also essential. Furthermore, challenging cultural norms that view child labor as acceptable requires ongoing social awareness campaigns and community engagement. Iqbal's story can serve as a powerful tool in these efforts, reminding communities of the human cost of child labor and the importance of prioritizing children's well-being.

In conclusion, while Iqbal's life was tragically short, his legacy lives on. He serves as a symbol of hope in the fight against child labor, reminding us that change is possible and that even the most vulnerable can have a profound impact. By learning from Iqbal's story and taking collective action, we can work towards a future where every child has the opportunity to thrive, free from the shackles of forced labor.

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المخلص

يستكشف هذا البحث قصة إقبال مسيح كدراسة حالة لفهم العوامل التي تساهم في عمالة الأطفال. وتزدهر

عمالة الأطفال عند تقاطع الفقر ونقص التعليم والأعراف الثقافية. وقصة إقبال بمثابة دليل على هذه

الفرضية. يستخدم هذا البحث منهجاً نوعياً، حيث يحلل قصة الحياة الموثقة لإقبال مسيح وارتباطها

بظاهرة عمالة الأطفال الواسعة النطاق. وتجسد قصة إقبال مسيح كيف يمكن للفقر أن يجبر الأسر على

بيع أطفالها من أجل البقاء. كما أن عدم الحصول على التعليم يخلق حلقة حيث يُنظر إلى الأطفال

كمصدر للدخل وليس كمساهمين في المجتمع في المستقبل. علاوة على ذلك، فإن المعايير الثقافية التي

تعمل على تطبيع عمالة الأطفال تعمل على إدامة النظام وتجعل من الصعب التحرر منه. إن شجاعة

إقبال في التحدث علناً تثبت قوة المقاومة الفردية في تفكيك هذه الأنظمة. وتؤكد قصة إقبال مسيح على

الحاجة إلى تدخلات متعددة الأوجه لمعالجة الفقر، وتعزيز التعليم، وتحدي الأعراف الثقافية التي تديم

عمالة الأطفال.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عمالة الأطفال، إقبال مسيح، رواية "إقبال فتى شجاع من باكستان" لجانيت وينتر.