

An analysis of child labor in District Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan, demonstrates the impact of socio-economic factors on primary education.

Dr Muhammad Arif  
Dr. Nisar Ahmad Meo  
Lazar Paul  
Dy. DEO (E.E) Sarai Alamgir District Gujrat, Pakistan at [razamarif@gmail.com](mailto:razamarif@gmail.com)  
Former CEO Education Nankana sahib at [nisarahmedmeo@gmail.com](mailto:nisarahmedmeo@gmail.com)  
Lecturer, Department of Education, Gift University Gujranwala Punjab Pakistan  
[lazarpaul@gmail.com](mailto:lazarpaul@gmail.com)

### Abstract

Early childhood education is becoming a prominent subject in Pakistan, and many see it as a critical Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for the global community. The nation's elementary education is greatly influenced by the population's socioeconomic status. The impoverished's economic conditions are continually deteriorating, making social problems like child labor and beggary more common (International Labour Organization, 1999). The current study aimed to identify the key contributors of child labor. Purposive sampling was used to acquire data for this study, which was carried out in the Gujarat district. We interviewed fifty brick kiln operators. It was determined that 80% of respondents were homeless, with 86% working 42 hours per week owing to poverty. The findings clearly show that child labor is linked to poverty, low income, bad living circumstances, a lack of education and knowledge, and inability to meet basic living expenses. **Keywords:** socioeconomic, primary education, child labor, correlation, Gujarat, Pakistan.

### Introduction

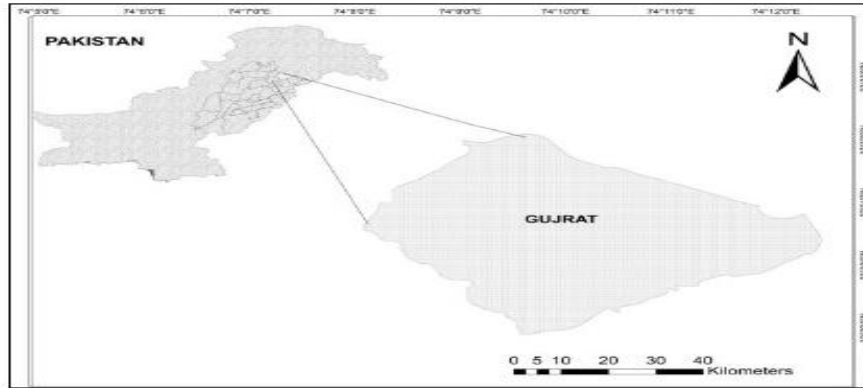
According to Naseem et al. (1991), early childhood education is the educational paradigm that focuses on nurturing, caring for, and teaching young children between the ages of birth and eight. Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan's government has placed a great premium on achieving 100% participation in basic education. In 2000, it joined 189 other nations in signing the Education for All (EFA) statement. The Pakistani government created the Early Childhood Education Policy (ECE) to prioritize fundamental education. This provision is included in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan's constitution. (the Pakistan Employment of Children Act of 1991). Estimates from the government indicate that 6 million of Pakistan's 19 million children between the ages of 5 and 9 do not attend school. Apart from that, there are a lot of dropouts. Data show that 30% of enrolled students leave middle school and 45% of enrolled children leave elementary school (National Education Policy Reviews, January 2006, p.6). UNICEF (United Nations International Children's

Emergency Fund) data indicates that up to 30% of Pakistani children between the ages of five and nine do not attend school. Early childhood education is significantly impacted by the socioeconomic position of the nation. The financial circumstances of the impoverished are always getting worse, which leads to a rise in social issues including child labor and begging (Ghayur, 1997). Beggary is the clearest indicator of subpar government performance across the board in the public domain, including social services, health, and education. Learning was seen by impoverished Pakistanis as a means of ensuring their children would have food for at least one day (Lloyd, 1994). Most of these people are from rural areas and prefer to beg instead of going to school or receiving an education. If the cost of sending their kids to school is equal to a day's labor in the fields or begging, then they will only do so.

It has also been observed that the majority of impoverished households view education as a way to acquire skills that would enable them to generate revenue. It is thought that with an education, he or she would be able to support a reasonable level of living and have a fulfilling life (Azam et al. 2015). The general people in Pakistan had similar views, stating that education is not necessary for children from low-income families and is instead a luxury enjoyed by the wealthier classes of society. (Dessy and Pallage 2001). Article 32 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) defines child work as any activity that interferes with a child's education and negatively affects their physical, mental, and social development. It is believed that this is a crucial socioeconomic component of early childhood education. On the Global Slavery Index (GSI), Pakistan is ranked third. In Pakistan, child labor is pervasive because of poor pay, overcrowding, inefficient resource distribution, and unstable finances for disadvantaged households. Many see teenage labor as a means of preventing unemployment in the future. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that one million bonded laborers are employed in Pakistani brick kilns. The proprietors of the brick kilns hold these workers in bondage and require them to work in exchange for an upfront monetary payment. An concerning increase in primary school dropout rates before the fifth grade is indicated by all of these factors.

(Encarta

2006).



We determine that it is most appropriate to critically examine all efforts influencing basic early childhood education (primary level in Pakistan) based on the criteria outlined above. All children should be required to attend ECE classes. In order to evaluate the present level of child labor in District Gujrat, the current study was conducted there.

### Literature Review

Any action that puts a child's physical health or education in jeopardy is considered child labor (Encarta 2006). As per Britannica (2005), it is a type of work performed by individuals who are not yet of legal age. Many organizations, including social welfare organizations, NGOs, CBOs, and ILOs, have given different definitions to child labor. 180 million people, or 21% of Pakistan's population, live in poverty, according to the UNDP. Pakistan was placed sixth in the world this year by the Maplecroft Risk Research Group, while eleven other countries had the lowest rankings with regard to child labor. A study on Pakistan's basic education system's state turned out some alarming information regarding the nation's public schools. According to Naseem and Iqbal (1991), a significant fraction of Pakistan's schools are devoid of a school building as well as fundamental supplies including charts, blackboards, chalk, furniture, clean, safe drinking water, electric fans, and rooms.

The majority of schools are devoid of restrooms, and others have dangerously low or nonexistent boundary walls. Public schools have ongoing challenges in keeping pupils throughout the primary cycle due to a lack of resources for maintenance and improvement. If funding is provided, it is typically restricted by such stringent disbursement guidelines that administrators cannot satisfy the urgent needs of the institution. Their careless spending choices don't really advance things. (HRCP, p. 22). In order to improve cooperation between the local government and the school administration in this area, a devolution program was initiated to raise

public authorities' and local body electorates' involvement. This might be very helpful in creating rules for successful management and school reform, as well as for decision-making and responsibility among school administrators when it comes to resolving neighborhood problems. (Kousar et al., 2005).

### Methodology

#### Demography Of District Gujrat

Gujrat is the administrative hub of Gujrat District and a city in Pakistan's Punjab Province. It is Pakistan's eighteenth-largest city. Gujrat district had a total population of 2,048,008 in 1998, with 1,026,000 males and 1,022,000 females, or 642 persons per square kilometer, according to the Pakistani census. 75% of the population was classed as rural, and over 25.62% as urban. By 2016, 3749800 people are expected to live in Gujarat (assuming a 1.97 percent annual growth rate).



Figure 1: Map of District Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan

#### Sampling Design

In order to reduce heterogeneity within a target population, purposive sampling was employed. Fifty children, ages six to twelve, were selected for this research from several brick kilns. A completely new screening questionnaire was used in this investigation. In order to perform the surveys, the parents of the participants were questioned on a variety of subjects, including their working children and families, working hours, honoraria, family member and family income, education level, and illness.

#### Data Analysis

Using SPSS version 16.0, the collected data was examined both descriptively and inferentially. In order to facilitate the presentation and comprehension of data, descriptive statistics deals with the collection and display of data in a variety of formats, including tables, graphs, and the computation of averages.

#### Results And Discussion

Based on a quick comparison of respondents according to socioeconomic factors, 86% of all respondents in the investigation stated that their children were forced to work in brick kilns because of their poverty. The remaining 5% claimed they couldn't bring their kids to school because it was too far away, while the remaining 4% showed little interest in learning. Just 4% of parents do not know the goals and scope of schooling. According to research done on similar

topics by Ahmad (1991), children did not have access to schools and their schools were far from their homes. They chose not to go to school in favor of working in a brick kiln as they lacked a means of transportation. Khan et al. (2010) claim that in addition to illiteracy, low BMI, disease, inadequate nutrition, and lack of education, poverty is a major contributing factor to child labor.

Based on the data pertaining to child salaries, 20% of the participants stated that their children earn between 1000 and 2000 PKR per month, and the remaining 40% think their children receive between 2000 and 2500 PKR per month. In a similar vein, 40% said their kids got between 2500 and 3000 PKR. When asked how much they made each month, 80% said it was up to 4000 PKR, 14% said it was up to 5000 PKR, and the remaining 6% said it was up to 8000 PKR. 60% of respondents said they were illiterate, 30% had attended preschool, and 10% had received informal education. Parents said that the majority of their kids had a range of illnesses, such as joint discomfort (20%), stiff necks (20%), headaches (10%), and backaches (60%). Young individuals who work in a range of industries, brick kilns, hazardous waste sites, and the heavy metals waste industry are exposed to a number of health concerns, according to Hamid (1994). Azam et al. (2015) found heavy metals in District Gujarat's industrial sector, and these metals are all severely damaging human health. Of the samples that were collected, only 20% of respondents knew the fundamentals of using a first aid kit, and 60% of respondents were not familiar with first aid and emergency scenarios (Table 1). Khan et al. (2011) listed several conditions brought on by cuts, scrapes, tetanus, infections, hemorrhage, and respiratory issues associated to dust. Joshi and associates. Joshi et al. (1996) claim that children's health is negatively impacted by lengthy work hours and demanding tasks, leading to underweight and physically weak children.

### **Conclusion**

The main reasons of child labor are low incomes, improper resource allocation, and economic instability in low-income households. Kids did not have easy access to learning materials, and schools were far from homes. Due to a lack of access to transportation, many people chose to work in brick kilns rather than go to school. Most of the children suffered from a variety of illnesses, such as joint pain, headaches, backaches, and stiff necks. We determine that it is most appropriate to critically examine all efforts influencing basic early childhood education (primary level in Pakistan) based on the criteria outlined above. All children should be required to attend ECE classes. It also highlights other economic factors that have a detrimental effect on children's social and mental development, such as the prevalence of child labor. A complete policy has to be created by the government at the federal, provincial, and local levels. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is able to help this nation end child labor.

### **Policy Recommendation**

- i. Based on the study's findings, we urge that our government and policymakers examine the following recommendations.
- ii. Based on prior study findings, we highly advise our government and authorities to adopt the following recommendations.
- iii. Enroll children in local public schools to guarantee regular attendance.

- iv. The provincial government may create a constitution, policies, and laws to combat child labor.
- v. Conduct an annual survey to monitor the number of primary school-aged children.
- vi. Poor families working in brick kilns might get modest loans to establish their own companies.
- vii. Establish free and accessible vocational training institutions at provincial, district, and Tehsil levels.
- viii. Social workers, welfare groups, NGOs, and ILOs can start awareness campaigns. Furthermore, public marches, protests, films, large-scale gatherings, discussion programs, billboards, and banners should be planned to combat child labor.
- ix. 2017 should be proclaimed "The Year of Elimination of Child Labor in Pakistan" and the government should impose strong restrictions on child work.
- x. It can provide baseline information on this social issue to academics and policymakers.

#### References

- Azam, I., Afsheen, S., Zia, A., Javed, M., Saeed, R., Sarwar, K., Munir, B. (2015). Evaluating insects as bio-indicators of heavy metal contamination and accumulation near industrial area of Gujrat, Pakistan. *BioMed Research International*, vol. 2015, Article ID 942751, 11 pages, 2015. doi:10.1155/2015/942751
- Naseem, M. Iqbal, Farooqui, (1991). Some Correlates of Children's Participation in Labour Force in Pakistan. *Pakistan Population Review* 2:1.
- Ghayur, Sabur, (1997), Labour Market Issues in Pakistan: Unemployment, Working Conditions, and Child Labour. *The Pakistan Development Review* 35:4 789-803.
- Dessy, Sylvain E. and Stéphane Pallage (2001) "Child Labor and Coordination Failures," *Journal of Development Economics*, 65, pp. 465 – 476.
- Kousar, A., Akhtar, S., Shazad, F., Asma, S., Akhter, N., Nighat, S.,(2005). Causes and Consequences of Child Labor in Carpet Weaving Industries; *Journal of Agriculture & Social Sciences*; 1813–2235/2005/01–1–58–59.
- Rosati, F.C., Rossi, M., (2003). Children's Working Hours and School Enrollment: Evidence from Pakistan and Nicaragua. *The World Bank Economic Review* 17(2), 283–295.
- Sawada, Yasuyuki, and Michael Lokshin (2000) Household Schooling Decisions in Rural Pakistan. Study conducted by Japanese Ministry of Education, The Foundation for Advance Studies on International Development, and Matsushita International Foundation, Japan.
- Ahmed, M (1991). "Child Labour - A Time to Reflect" UNICEF, Pakistan and Govt. of Balochistan, Pakistan.
- Khan, R. E. A. (2001). Socioeconomic Aspects of Child Labour - A Case Study of Children in Auto Workshops. *The Lahore Journal of Economics*. Vol 6. No. 1.
- Chirla, A.P., (2008). Hanging by a thread, down to earth. *Science and Environment Fortnightly*, April 15, 2008.
- Ayaz A. (2012). Poverty, Education and Child Labour in Aligarh City-India. *Stud Home Com Sci*, 6(3): 165-172



- Jones, G. W. (1990). "Population dynamics and educational and health planning". Background paper for training in population # 8. Human Resource and development Planning. ILO. Geneva.
- Lloyd, C. B. (1994) "Investing in the Next Generation: The Implication of High Fertility at the Level of the Family" Research Division Working Paper # 63. New York Population Council, New York.
- Convention on the Rights of Child. United Nations human rights. (Accessed on 19-03-2014)  
<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- Pakistan Employment of Children Act (1991). National Laws on labour, social security and related human rights. (Accessed on 19-03-2014)  
<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/22707/64834/E91PAK01.htm>
- Awan, MS, Waqas, M & Aslam, MA 2011, 'Why do Parents Make their Children Work? Evidence from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey', International Journal of Academic Research, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 545-549, viewed 09 March 2015  
[http://information.hanyang.ac.kr/eds/brief/discoveryResult?st=KWRD&service\\_type=brief&si=SO&q=%22International+Journal+of+Academic+Research%22](http://information.hanyang.ac.kr/eds/brief/discoveryResult?st=KWRD&service_type=brief&si=SO&q=%22International+Journal+of+Academic+Research%22)
- Britannica 2005, DVD, 'Child labor', Encyclopedia Britannica, viewed 15 January 2015
- Encarta 2006, DVD, 'Child labor', Microsoft Encarta, Technical report, Microsoft Corporation, viewed 23 February 2015
- International Labour Organization 1999, Eliminating the worst forms of child labour, A report of the ILO Caribbean tripartite meeting on the worst forms of child labour, viewed 10 December 2014.
- International Labour Organization 2002, A future without child labour: global report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, International Labour Conference (90th : 2002 : Geneva, Switzerland) International Labour Conference, 90th Session, 2002, ISBN 92-9, viewed 17 Jan 2015  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_publ\\_9221124169\\_en.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_publ_9221124169_en.pdf)
- International Labour Organization 2006, The end of child labour within reach: global report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, International Labour Conference, 95th session, 2006, ISBN 92-2-116603-1, viewed 10 Feb 2015,  
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc95/pdf/rep-i-b.pdf>
- International Labour Organization 2013, Marking progress against child labour - Global estimates and trends 2000-2012 / International Labour Office, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) – Geneva, ISBN: 978-92-2-127182-6 (Web PDF), viewed 09 March 2015.  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/ed\\_norm/ipec/documents/publication/wcms\\_21894.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/ed_norm/ipec/documents/publication/wcms_21894.pdf)
- United Nations Children's Fund 2007, The State of the World's Children: 2007. ISBN- 13: 978-92-806-3998-8, UNICEF, viewed December 2014  
[http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/The\\_State\\_of\\_the\\_Worlds\\_Children\\_2007\\_e.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/The_State_of_the_Worlds_Children_2007_e.pdf)