

Child Labor as a tool of Child Abuse in Pakistan

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Abstract

Child labor and abuse are profoundly concerning issues that require immediate attention in Pakistan. In this article, we delve into the heartbreaking reality faced by countless children who are forced into labor at a tender age. We explore the underlying causes, such as poverty, limited access to education, and societal norms perpetuating this cycle. By shedding light on the various forms of abuse these children endure, including hazardous working conditions and exploitation, we aim to raise awareness about the physical, emotional, and psychological toll it takes on their wellbeing. Additionally, we discuss the long-term consequences, such as limited opportunities for education and prospects and the perpetuation of poverty. However, amidst the challenges, we also highlight the efforts being made to combat child labor and abuse. Through advocacy, policy reforms, and grassroots initiatives, organizations and individuals work tirelessly to protect children's rights and create a safer environment. By raising awareness and fostering a collective commitment to change, we can strive towards eradicating child labor and ensuring a brighter future for the children of Pakistan.

Keywords: *Exploitation, Education, Legislation, Poverty, Sexual, Emotional Abuse.*

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1. Introduction

Child labor and abuse are two unfortunate realities that continue to plague Pakistan. Despite various laws and regulations aimed at protecting the rights of children, the problem persists, impacting the lives of thousands of young individuals across the country. In Pakistan, child labor is a major problem as young people are frequently made to work in dangerous and exploitative environments. Pakistan has one of the highest rates of child labor worldwide, according to the International Labor Organization. Millions of children in Pakistan are engaged in various forms of labor, including agriculture, domestic work, and manufacturing. These children are often deprived of their right to education and are vulnerable to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse (Gilani et al., 2022).

Child abuse is another significant concern in Pakistan, with reports of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse being alarmingly common. The exploitation and mistreatment of children often occur within the confines of their own homes, as well as in schools, workplaces, and religious institutions. Despite efforts to raise awareness and implement stricter laws, the prevalence of child abuse remains a pervasive issue in Pakistani society. These problems are further exacerbated by poverty, lack of education, and a culture of silence and impunity. Many families are forced to send their children to work to make ends meet, while the lack of awareness and resources often results in the underreporting of child abuse cases.

There are two main parts to the problem of child labor. First of all, it concerns minors, whose age is defined differently in different legal systems. The ages of majority and minority are determined by legal frameworks, and employment done by minors less than 14 is considered child labor in Pakistan according to "Article 11 of the 1973 Constitution." Second, unlike child labor, it entails effort or labor for monetary reward. Child labor is defined as employment for financial benefit performed by those younger than the age of majority (Edmonds et al., 2017).

Due to the detrimental effects child labor has on the stability and general development of society, it is widely recognized as a horrible crime that is protected by a number of legal statutes and constitutional clauses. The 2018 Human Rights Report draws attention to the exploitation and discrimination that the most marginalized members of society—including children—face. Although reliable prevalence numbers are hard to come by in Pakistan, estimates place it at approximately 30%, which is in line with neighboring nations (Hyder & Malik, 2007). With 70 million children under the age of 18, Pakistan's young population suffers issues including homelessness, child labor, hunger, and poverty (Shah, 2002).

The social taboo around child work is exacerbated by conservative cultural views and physical punishment, making efforts to address this delicate subject more difficult (Hyder & Malik, 2007). Children are at risk of abuse due to a lack of knowledge and inadequate financing for child protection on a national and institutional level. Notwithstanding obstacles, the Pakistani government has enacted a National Child Protection Policy, adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and acknowledged underfunding in order to resolve concerns and fortify legal frameworks (Ali, 2010).

According to the agreement of the International Labor Organization (ILO), child labor is not determined by the type of work but rather by the detrimental effects it has on children (ILO, 2002). Particularly in workshops and the car sector, child labor has frequently resulted in physical and sexual abuse (Iqbal et al., 2021). In Pakistan, a large number of young people work in car factories to hone their skills and support their families. But throughout the training phase, threats, maltreatment, and abuse frequently accompany the gain of abilities. Children experience emotional abuse in addition to physical and sexual assault, which impedes the development of their personalities (Bandura, 2004). traumatic events throughout life and traumatic childhoods are strongly correlated. The rights of children are essentially violated by child work (Guterman, 2004).

2. Research Justification

Child labor and abuse in Pakistan are intricately linked to poverty, where families depend on their children's income for survival. Inadequate resources limit access to education, exacerbating the problem. Cultural acceptance of child labor, coupled with weak enforcement of labor laws, allows exploitation to persist. Migration and displacement further heighten vulnerability. Lack of awareness about child rights perpetuates these issues. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach: poverty alleviation, improved education, strengthened labor laws, heightened awareness, and social protection programs. By tackling these root causes, a safer

environment for Pakistani children can be established, ensuring their wellbeing and development. Prioritizing children's rights is crucial to breaking the cycle of abuse and labor and fostering a future where children are protected and empowered. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including poverty alleviation, improving access to education, strengthening labor laws and enforcement, promoting awareness, and providing social protection programs.

3. Research Objectives

1. Prevalence of Child Labor: The extent and occurrence of children engaged in work, often in conditions detrimental to their health, education, and wellbeing, across various sectors and regions in Pakistan.

2. Vulnerability: Specific characteristics such as gender, socioeconomic status, and geographic location that make certain groups of children more susceptible to being involved in child labor.

3. Legislative Framework: The body of laws and regulations established by the government of Pakistan to address and regulate child labor, assessing their effectiveness, enforcement mechanisms, and potential shortcomings.

4. Educational Impact: The consequences of child labor on children's access to education, including factors such as school dropout rates, attendance, and the overall quality of their educational experiences.

5. Health and Wellbeing: Consider the physical and mental health implications for children engaged in labor, including factors like exposure to hazardous conditions and malnutrition and the broader impact on their wellbeing.

6. Supply Chain Dynamics: The mechanisms within industries and supply chains that contribute to or mitigate child labor, focusing on understanding the role of businesses in various sectors.

7. Forms of Child Abuse: Different types of harmful actions towards children, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, highlight the variety and severity of abusive practices.

8. Perpetrator Characteristics: The traits and characteristics of individuals involved in exploiting children for labor or engaging in abusive practices, encompassing both employers and those within the family or community.

9. Access to Social Services: The availability and accessibility of support services, such as counseling, rehabilitation, and legal aid, for children who have experienced child labor or abuse in Pakistan.

10. Cultural and Societal Factors: The prevailing beliefs, norms, and values within Pakistani society that may influence the acceptance or tolerance of child labor and abuse.

11. Effectiveness of Interventions: The impact and success of governmental and non-governmental initiatives aimed at preventing child labor and addressing the consequences of abuse in Pakistan.

12. Barriers to Reporting: The obstacles and challenges that hinder the reporting of child labor and abuse cases in Pakistan, considering factors like fear, lack of awareness, and social stigma.

4. Research Methodology

This study utilized a systematic review approach to establish its research framework, with its objectives set accordingly (Komba & Lwoga, 2020). Extensive literature exploration on the topic was conducted, as indicated by the research findings being categorized based on their content (Hiver et al., 2021; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). It was structured using headings to incorporate this classified information into the study (Gan et al., 2021; Pawson et al., 2005). The study's progression was determined by evaluating the classified information and titles (Page, 2021; Rahi, 2017), ensuring the research subject's contents' integrity (Egger et al., 2022; Victor, 2008).

5. Literature Review

In the research article titled "Child Abuse in Pakistan- Current Perspective" by Aisha Mehnaz, published in the National Journal of Health Sciences in 2018, the author extensively explores the multifaceted nature of child abuse. Mehnaz argues that child abuse extends beyond mere physical torture, encompassing various forms, with sexual abuse being the most severe manifestation. This form of abuse not only inflicts physical harm but also leaves deep emotional and psychological scars, hindering the overall development of children (Mehnaz, 2018).

Furthermore, Mehnaz contends that child abuse is not limited to a specific country, region, or community; instead, it is a global phenomenon prevalent across different societies. The vulnerability of children makes them susceptible to discrimination and exploitation, necessitating intervention from the state, as per the concept of *Parens Patriae*, where the state acts as the guardian of children (Mehnaz, 2018).

Historically, children have been subjected to abuse under the guise of various traditions, with girls often bearing the brunt of such maltreatment. While developed countries possess robust criminal justice systems to combat child abuse, developing nations like Pakistan face challenges in effectively addressing this issue, exacerbating the plight of children (Miller-Perrin, 2012).

Child labor is horrifyingly common in Islamabad, where young people work in hotels, car workshops, and other establishments. According to the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the minor (SPARC), one in every four Islamabad families employs a minor domestic servant, putting them to daily mental, sexual, and physical abuse. Furthermore, a considerable proportion of children living in impoverished regions work as minors, which exposes them to further forms of abuse and exploitation. Remarkably, records from NGOs like Sahil show that there are also a lot of incidences of child sexual assault in Islamabad.

Based on thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with children employed in automobile workshops and their masters, it was found that most of these children were in their adolescent years, typically aged between 14 and 17. Many had dropped out of school early on, as their families encouraged them to work in these workshops to contribute financially. Their daily earnings averaged around 100 to 150 rupees, supplemented by meals provided by their masters during work hours (Rashid et al., 2015).

These children often worked with the consent of their families, with fathers frequently maintaining close contact with the masters and insisting on strict supervision during training sessions. However, this dynamic also led to masters feeling entitled to physically abuse the children under the guise of training, resulting in injuries and hospitalizations. Poverty drove these children to labor as their families struggled to make ends meet, leaving them with no alternative but to work in hazardous conditions (Khan et al., 2018).

The doctrine of "*Parens Patriae*" asserts the state's role as the ultimate guardian of children, necessitating proactive intervention in cases of child abuse. This concept marks a shift from treating children and adults alike to recognizing children as the most vulnerable members of society, requiring special protection from the government. Through the implementation of effective criminal justice systems and rehabilitation mechanisms, governments can fulfill their duty to safeguard children (Felson & Lane, 2009),

6. Child Labor: An Ethical Dilemma in Pakistan

1. **Child Labor: An Ethical Quandary:** In the intricate fabric of societal moral systems, an ethical conundrum persists – child labor. While legal systems wield enforceable sanctions, morality operates without such binding authority. Despite this distinction, the tacit acceptance of child labor raises profound moral questions. Exploiting children for financial gains is inherently immoral, and

their tender age should exempt them from the burdens of labor. Consequently, child labor is not only a legal concern but also a moral issue obscured by societal silence (Baland, 2000).

2. **Child Exploitation Veiled as Labor:** A disquieting facet of child labor in Pakistan unveils a distressing trend – the pervasive abuse suffered by these young workers. Whether toiling in agriculture, workshops, or alternative settings, employed children find themselves vulnerable to abuse, their voices stifled by the inability to articulate their suffering. Within labor contexts, child abuse takes on multifaceted forms, including physical torment, emotional distress, and neglect, underscoring a profoundly troubling pattern (Fallon & Tzannatos, 1998).

3. **Exploitation of Girl Child Labor:** Within the intricate tapestry of child labor in Pakistan, the plight of girl children emerges with distinctive gravity. Their involvement in labor introduces more intricate dynamics, often marked by severe exploitation. Many endure physical abuse, particularly when engaged as housemaids. The notorious Tayyaba torture case stands as an emblematic example, shedding light on the urgent need to address the overlooked phenomenon of girl child labor in the country.

4. **Safeguarding Fundamental Rights of Children:** Pakistan's constitutional framework and the international treaties it has embraced delineate fundamental rights for children. The 2018 Human Rights Commission report underscores children's vulnerability, prompting a closer examination of their rights. Within this purview, constitutional provisions and international treaties assume paramount importance in defining and safeguarding the rights of children in Pakistan.

5. **Constitutional Safeguards:** Embedded within Pakistan's constitutional tapestry, Part 2 intricately addresses fundamental rights, including specific provisions aimed at safeguarding children's rights. These constitutional mechanisms aspire to shield children's wellbeing and uphold their rights across various facets of life.

6. **UNICEF Standards on Child Labor:** Concurrently, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) sets a standard designating work undertaken under the age of seventeen as detrimental child labor, affecting mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. Diverse factors, such as extreme poverty, inadequate educational policies, financial constraints, high population growth, and single parenthood, converge to propel children into labor (UNICEF, 2001).

Working children grapple with onerous conditions, enduring protracted hours in unsafe environments, with repercussions on their physical, mental, and emotional development. Often bereft of fair compensation, they face both physical and mental abuse, driven solely by the pursuit of technical skills (Basu & Van, 1999).

7. **Abuse in Automobile Workshops:** A distressing narrative unfolds within the precincts of automobile workshops, where children engage in repairing and maintenance. Supervisors, often termed "USTAD," perpetrate physical, sexual, and emotional abuse during training programs. This abuse not only inflicts physical harm but also hampers the mental development of these young apprentices. The inhospitable working conditions and exposure to hazardous tools pose significant risks to the holistic wellbeing of these children (Iqbal et al., 2021).

8. **The Convention of the Rights of Children-1989:** The most extensive international agreement pertaining to children's rights to date is the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted in 1989. Each of the 54 provisions of the treaty addresses a certain child's right. The state is required under Article 27 of the Convention to establish an environment that is favorable to the social, moral, and spiritual development of children. Similarly, Article 32 mandates that governments adopt certain measures to shield minors from being exploited by the child labor system. Similar to this, children's rights are covered in the last article of the convention. It serves

as a guide for the state's protection of children's fundamental rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by Pakistan in 1990.

It was a significant milestone regarding children's rights and was instrumental in formulating various laws about children (Gilani et al., 2022).

7. Child Protection Laws in Pakistan

The Children's Employment Act of 1991 The Employment of Children Act of 1991 has been the most comprehensive law regarding child work. The legislation contains a number of child labor-related measures. According to the statute, child labor is forbidden in Pakistan and there is a legal system in place to defend against it. Following Pakistan's 1990 ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Children, the parliament approved these laws. The National Committee for Children's Rights is established by the statute, which also forbids child work (Basu & Van, 2001).

ICT Child Protection Act 2018, enacted by the Pakistani parliament and allowing for the establishment of any facility where vulnerable children may be housed, was also a crucial step (Gilani et al., 2022). According to the laws, a child protection institute has been established in the nation's capital to house vulnerable youngsters. The understanding that children in the country have been impacted in various ways led to the passage of the legislation (Cigno et al., 2012).

The number of legislation passed by the four provincial assemblies in the nation has significantly increased, at least since the second democratic transition. The country's provincial assembly has recognized the rising incidence of child labor. As a result, they have passed several legislation to address the problem and stop it from happening again. The province of Punjab took the lead in this regard by passing the "Punjab Destitution and Neglect Children Act 2004." Additionally, it has put into effect a brand-new rule known as the "Punjab Prohibition of Child Labor at Brick Kiln Ordinance-2016."

In an identical vein, the Sindh province passed the "Sindh Child Protection Act 2011," designed to protect children at risk in society. Similarly, the KPK province passed the "KPK Welfare and Protection Act 2010." As a result, province assemblies have taken the initiative to pass legislation creating procedures for protecting children in society after the nation's democratic transition (Beegle et al., 2019).

8. Discussion

Child labor and abuse are deeply entrenched issues in Pakistan, casting a shadow over the wellbeing and rights of its children. The complexity of the problem stems from a confluence of factors, including poverty, lack of education, and limited employment opportunities. Children are often forced into hazardous work environments, robbing them of their right to education, health, and a normal childhood. In Pakistan, child labor extends across various industries, such as agriculture, domestic work, and the informal sector.

The hazardous conditions these children face perpetuate a cycle of deprivation, hindering their overall development. The dire situation is exacerbated by the prevalence of child abuse, with instances of exploitation, violence, and even sexual abuse reported in workplaces. It compromises their physical and mental wellbeing and obstructs their holistic growth. Addressing these multifaceted issues demands a comprehensive approach. Strengthening laws is crucial but must be accompanied by efforts to improve access to quality education. Awareness campaigns about the consequences of child labor and abuse are essential, as is providing support to families living in poverty. Collaboration among the government, civil society organizations, and communities is paramount to creating a safer environment for children.

The journey to combat child labor and abuse is undeniably long, but understanding the root causes is a pivotal first step. Effective strategies must be implemented to protect the rights and wellbeing

of children. The 2018 Human Rights report sheds light on the challenges faced by not only children but also minorities and laborers. Eliminating child labor requires a collective effort to ensure every child has access to education and healthcare. The rise in child abuse cases further exacerbates the challenges. Factors such as lack of proper law enforcement, parental negligence, and insufficient awareness contribute to this alarming trend. The heartbreaking reality of desperate parents sending their children to work in affluent homes underscores the urgent need for better protection and care. Raising awareness, strengthening laws, and creating a safer environment are critical components of the solution. Despite the grim picture, Pakistan has made strides in addressing these issues. Constitutional provisions like Article 25A and Article 11, along with legislative acts such as the Islamabad Capital Protection Bill and the Zainab Alert, Response, and Recovery Act of 2019, offer hope. Proper implementation of these laws promises a significant impact in preventing child abuse. Together, through sustained efforts and collaboration, we can pave the way for a safer and brighter future for the children of Pakistan.

9. Conclusion

The pervasive issues of child labor and abuse in Pakistan demand urgent and concerted efforts to safeguard the wellbeing and rights of its children. Child labor, a complex problem entrenched in various industries, subjects children to hazardous conditions, depriving them of essential rights such as education, health, and a normal childhood. Poverty, lack of education, and limited job opportunities exacerbate this predicament, making it imperative to address the root causes comprehensively.

Child abuse compounds the challenges, with children engaged in labor facing exploitation, violence, and even sexual abuse in their workplaces. It not only inflicts severe physical and mental harm but also obstructs their overall development. To combat these deeply entrenched issues, a multifaceted approach is necessary.

Crucial steps include strengthening laws to provide robust protection for children, improving access to quality education, and raising awareness about the dire consequences of child labor and abuse. It is equally essential to provide support to families living in poverty, addressing the systemic issues that contribute to the prevalence of child labor.

Collaboration among the government, civil society organizations, and communities is paramount. This collective effort can create a safer environment for children in Pakistan, fostering conditions conducive to their holistic development. The journey to eliminate child labor and abuse may be long, but understanding the root causes and implementing effective strategies is crucial in progressing toward a society that protects the rights and wellbeing of its children.

The disheartening situations highlighted, whether through the Human Rights Report of 2018 or the rise in child abuse cases, emphasize the need for immediate action. Addressing contributing factors such as lack of law enforcement, parental negligence, and societal awareness is crucial. Parents play a pivotal role in ensuring the safety of their children, and society must rally together to provide better protection and care for these vulnerable individuals.

Encouragingly, Pakistan has made significant strides in addressing child abuse and exploitation. Various institutions and laws have been instituted to eliminate discrimination against children. Constitutional provisions like Article 25A and Article 11, along with legislative acts like the Islamabad Capital Protection Bill and the Zainab Alert, Response, and Recovery Act of 2019, showcase the commitment to strengthening child protection mechanisms. Effective implementation of these laws is essential for these efforts to bear fruit. Together, through sustained dedication and collaboration, we can create a safer environment for children in Pakistan, ensuring they can thrive and contribute positively to the nation's future.

10. Recommendations

- 1. Strengthen Legal Frameworks:** Enhance and enforce existing laws related to child abuse and child labor, ensuring stringent penalties for perpetrators and providing effective deterrence.
- 2. Comprehensive Education Initiatives:** Put in place extensive and readily available education initiatives to highlight the value of education for all children and to increase public knowledge of the adverse effects of child labor and abuse.
- 3. Community Engagement:** Foster community involvement through workshops, seminars, and outreach programs, encouraging active participation in preventing child abuse and promoting children's rights.
- 4. Poverty Alleviation Programs:** Create and implement focused initiatives to reduce poverty that address the underlying reasons for child labor and give families in need of assistance access to resources and money.
- 5. Access to Quality Healthcare:** Ensure accessible and quality healthcare services for families to address underlying health issues contributing to child labor and abuse.
- 6. Strict Monitoring of Workplaces:** Establish and enforce rigorous monitoring systems in workplaces to identify and prevent child labor, imposing penalties on businesses exploiting children.
- 7. Crisis Hotlines and Support Services:** Provide children who are being abused or who are engaging in child labor with instant aid and counseling through helplines and support services.
- 8. Parental Education Programs:** Establish parent education initiatives that encourage conscientious guardianship and parenting by educating parents about the long-term effects of child labor and abuse.
- 9. Skills Training for Parents:** Provide skill development and vocational training programs for parents, empowering them to secure alternative and sustainable employment opportunities.
- 10. Public Awareness efforts:** To create a culture of intolerance towards child labor and abuse, start extensive media efforts that educate the public about the detrimental effects of these activities.
- 11. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Promote ethical corporate practices using CSR programs that actively aid in eradicating child abuse and labor.
- 12. International Cooperation:** Work together to address child labor and abuse by sharing resources, best practices, and experience with neighboring nations and international organizations.
- 13. Child-Friendly Policies:** Advocate for and implement child-friendly policies in all sectors, ensuring that government policies prioritize the wellbeing and protection of children.
- 14. Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms:** Establish confidential reporting mechanisms for child abuse and labor cases, encouraging the community to report instances without fear of retaliation.
- 15. Inclusive Rehabilitation Programs:** Develop rehabilitation programs that cater to the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of children who have been victims of abuse or involved in child labor, ensuring their smooth reintegration into society.

11. Research Limitations

- 1. Data Availability:** There is limited access to comprehensive and accurate data due to underreporting, a lack of reliable statistics, and cultural sensitivities surrounding these issues.
- 2. Sampling Bias:** Difficulty in obtaining a representative sample due to inaccessible or marginalized populations, such as children working in informal sectors or living in remote areas.
- 3. Ethical Constraints:** Challenges in conducting research ethically, mainly when dealing with sensitive topics involving children, their families, and communities.

4. Language and Cultural Barriers: Language barriers and cultural nuances may hinder effective communication with respondents, affecting the quality and depth of data collected.

5. Governmental Restrictions: Government regulations or censorship may limit the scope of research or access to certain areas, hindering the researcher's ability to gather comprehensive data.

6. Resource Constraints: Limited funding, time, and personnel may restrict the scale and depth of research studies on child labor and abuse in Pakistan.

7. Social Stigma and Fear: Fear of repercussions or stigma associated with reporting child labor or abuse cases may result in underrepresentation or biased reporting in research studies.

8. Longitudinal Studies: Difficulty in conducting longitudinal studies to track the long-term effects of child labor and abuse due to logistical challenges and attrition rates.

9. Validity of Self-Reported Data: Reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias or inaccuracies, as children or caregivers may underreport or misrepresent their experiences due to fear or shame.

10. Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Limited collaboration between disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and public health may restrict a holistic understanding of the root causes and impacts of child labor and abuse in Pakistan.

12. Research Implications

Research on child labor and child abuse in Pakistan holds significant implications for policy, practice, and advocacy. Firstly, understanding these phenomena's prevalence, causes, and consequences is crucial for designing effective interventions and policies to combat them. Research can shed light on the socioeconomic factors driving child labor and abuse, as well as the specific vulnerabilities of different groups, such as girls, rural children, or those from marginalized communities.

Moreover, exploring the interplay between cultural norms, legal frameworks, and enforcement mechanisms can inform strategies for prevention and protection. Additionally, research can identify gaps in services and support systems for affected children and families, guiding resource allocation and capacity-building efforts. Furthermore, longitudinal studies tracking the trajectories of survivors can provide insights into their long-term outcomes and inform trauma-informed care approaches. Lastly, research findings can serve as evidence for advocacy efforts to raise awareness, mobilize resources, and hold policymakers accountable for fulfilling their obligations to protect children's rights. Overall, research on child labor and abuse in Pakistan is essential for informing evidence-based solutions to safeguard the wellbeing and future of its children.

13. Future Research Directions

In the future, researchers should find ways to prevent child labor and child abuse should focus on understanding the unique sociocultural contexts and systemic factors driving these phenomena in Pakistan. It includes investigating the interplay between poverty, lack of access to education and healthcare, cultural norms, and legal frameworks. Research should also explore the specific vulnerabilities of different groups, such as girls, rural children, and those from marginalized communities.

Additionally, there is a need to assess the effectiveness of interventions and policies in preventing and addressing child labor and abuse, with a particular emphasis on innovative approaches tailored to the local context. Longitudinal studies tracking the trajectories of survivors can provide valuable insights into their long-term outcomes and inform the development of targeted support services. Ultimately, future research should aim to generate evidence-based recommendations to guide policy, practice, and advocacy efforts to protect the rights and wellbeing of children in Pakistan.

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