



Research Article

Economic Survival vs. Childhood: Investigating Child Labour in the Fishing Industry of Daam, Balochistan

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Abstract

Child labor is a global social issue, with its primary causes rooted in socio-economic factors. The main objective of this study is to analyze the causes of child labor in the fishing industry of Lasbela District, Balochistan. A qualitative research approach was adopted for this study, through which data was collected using surveys and interviews. Children engaged in child labor are included in present study. A total of 103 working children were interviewed, to know about their lives and causes to get work in fishing factory “Damm”. For analysis, descriptive analysis and the Chi-Square Test were used to determine the relationships between variables. The results revealed that most children earning between PKR 9,000 to 11,000 per month had been engaged in labor for over a year. Moreover, children whose fathers were illiterate were found to be involved in work for a longer period compared to those whose fathers had at least a primary or middle-level education. A statistically significant relationship was found between parental education and child labor. The study confirmed a meaningful correlation between child labor and factors such as children's income, father's education, and family education. It concluded that population development, access to free education, and the provision of employment opportunities can play a vital role in reducing child labor.

Keywords

Child Labor, Socio-Economic Factors, Fishing Factory Damm

1. Introduction

The children are the contusion of human societies. Similarly, various arising and burning issue in the globally, alike child labor is societal' growing issue in developing countries, such as India, Pakistan and etc. mostly parents engaged their children in earning in early stage of life 4-15 years. Child labor is directly consequence of poor economics. On the other way economic unstableness, large family members, low down income are the key causes of child labor [1]. According to Article 32 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), states are obligated to protect children from

work that hinders their education or is harmful to their physical, mental, psychological, social, or spiritual development [2]. In certain private sectors in Pakistan, there exists a perception that child labor serves as a form of training, enabling children to better cope with future unemployment challenges. Although the International Labor Organization (ILO) has undertaken commendable efforts to declare the Sukkur district free from child labor and public awareness on the issue has increased, there remains a pressing need for further awareness campaigns. In particular, carpet weaving is regarded as one of

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the worst forms of child labor and constitutes a serious violation of children's rights [3]. According to the hazardous work list issued by the Government of Pakistan, certain occupations and tasks are considered so dangerous that employing children in these fields is strictly prohibited. The purpose of this list is to protect children from work that may be harmful to their physical, mental, or moral development [4]. The aim of this study is to examine child labour in District Khoran, Balochistan, and identify the key factors contributing to its prevalence. The study seeks to explore the social, economic, and political causes of child labour and assess its impact on society. It also reviews the efforts made by the Government of Balochistan to address this issue and provides a qualitative understanding of the problem in the study area. [5]. Child domestic labour (CDL) in Pakistan, particularly involving girls under 18, is widespread in both urban and rural areas. These children endure long hours, little or no pay, and physical and psychological abuse. Official data underrepresents the scale, but estimates suggest millions are affected, driven by poverty, inequality, and employer exploitation. Although Pakistan has ratified international conventions and introduced laws—such as those in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan limiting work for children under 12–14—enforcement remains weak. Factors like inconsistent legal definitions, lack of official training, limited public awareness, and societal attitudes hinder effective action. Despite efforts by bodies like the National Commission for Child Rights, children's health, education, and well-being suffer [6]. We are living in a world where 306 million children reside [7]. Among them, approximately 215 million are engaged in various forms of labor, with 115 million children compelled to work in hazardous and life-threatening conditions [8]. Lasbela District, a significant region of Balochistan province, holds the status of an industrial zone, largely due to its proximity to Karachi. The district has defined geographical boundaries, which establish it as a distinct administrative unit. During the fiscal year 2004–05, Lasbela was categorized among those districts in Balochistan with a high poverty rate. A substantial portion of the region's population was living below the poverty line during this period [9]. Rising poverty in the region has turned childhood into a struggle for survival—where children of school-going age are forced to work in bicycle repair shops, workshops, hotels, and petrol stations. These children not only earn meager wages but also endure harsh and unsafe working conditions. According to a survey conducted during 2010–11, in some districts, up to 62% of the population was living below the poverty line. Poverty is not only robbing these children of their childhood but also closing the doors to education. When hunger outweighs the pursuit of knowledge, generations are left deprived of learning.

Child labour has emerged as a serious social issue in the Lasbela district of Balochistan, necessitating a comprehensive study into its causes and consequences. Located in the south-eastern region of Balochistan, approximately 100 kilometers northwest of Karachi [10], Lasbela is characterized by its predominantly peri-urban and semi-rural landscape. The district

is home to a diverse population including Lasi, Baloch, Brahui, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Hindu communities, presenting a multicultural and economically imbalanced social structure. In such a diverse yet underdeveloped region, it is crucial to examine the prevalence of child labour, as this phenomenon not only infringes upon the fundamental rights of children and restricts their access to education [11], but also poses long-term negative implications for the social fabric and future generations. An additional and equally important aspect of this study is to assess the effectiveness of government-led poverty alleviation programs in addressing this issue. The research aims to identify the factors that have limited the success of these initiatives in curbing child labour. Aspects such as program scope, implementation mechanisms, and public awareness are critically examined to inform future policy development and intervention strategies.

2. Research Objectives

- 1) To investigate the socio-economic causes of child labor in fishing industry, District Lasbela Balochistan.
- 2) To observe that Education as a Powerful Tool to Combat Child Labor.
- 3) To Identify Family Structures and Dynamics That Contribute to the Prevalence of Child Labor.

3. Significance of Study

The study of child labor in winder, Balochistan, is significant due to the region's prevalent poverty, lack of access to quality education, and deeply rooted cultural traditions that compel children to engage in labor, thereby violating their fundamental rights. This research highlights how child labor perpetuates underdevelopment and assists in formulating policies tailored to local conditions. Understanding tribal and cultural dynamics is essential for designing effective interventions. Such studies also contribute to raising social awareness, promoting educational inclusion, and advancing the region's sustainable development.

4. Literature Review

Socio-economic disparities, limited access to education, and misleading cultural and religious beliefs play a significant role in the perpetuation of child labor. These factors deprive children of education and endanger both their fundamental rights and future [12]. The alliance between state institutions and the exploitative private sector has been effectively nexus exist, which obstacle, to imply child labor law on ground [13]. A comparative analysis of the determinants of child labor in urban and rural areas of two districts in Pakistan, using a Probit model to examine the allocation of children's time. in urban areas, the education level of the household head and maternal employment have a positive impact on children's schooling.

In contrast, in rural areas, maternal employment and poverty exert a negative influence. Additionally, gender disparities and age-related trends in children's participation in the labor force differ significantly between urban and rural settings [14]. The impact of trade liberalization on child labor using micro-level data from urban Pakistan. The findings indicate that a reduction in import tariffs led to a decline in child labor, particularly in regions more exposed to trade liberalization. A strong statistical association is observed between lagging tariffs and child labor, and the results remain robust across various control variables [15]. Poverty, gender bias, parental education, and household structure are the primary determinants of child labor [16]. Inequality in access to education is a barrier to development, especially for low-income households that face a lack of financial resources. According to a study, remittances generated through temporary economic migration increase household income, thereby promoting investment in children's education—particularly for girls—and reducing gender disparities in education. However, these benefits are primarily linked to the increase in financial resources rather than the mere expectation of future migration [17]. This study investigates the effect of household wealth on the dual engagement of children (ages 5–15) in schooling and work in Balochistan, using microdata from the “Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2010)”. Key determinants include household economic status, parental education and presence, child's age, gender, and residence. Urban children are more likely to combine school and work. The study recommends promoting equitable education, improving rural economic conditions, and enforcing child labor laws to address child labor and enhance educational outcomes [18]. Child labor is a significant issue in Pakistan's coastal regions, especially in Balochistan, where around 30% of children work in the fishing sector. Research shows that beyond poverty, key contributing factors include the perception of children's income as essential family support, limited access to quality education, high schooling costs, and a weak education system. Many parents view formal education as unhelpful compared to early skill acquisition through work. Although laws like the Child Labor Act exist, poor enforcement limits their impact. Addressing child labor requires accessible, compulsory education, vocational training, poverty reduction, and a shift in societal attitudes. A long-term solution depends on coordinated socio-economic reforms [19]. This study, based on 2010 data from Balochistan, explores how household wealth affects children's involvement in both

schooling and work. Key factors include low income, limited parental education, and parental absence. Age, gender, and urban residence also influence this dual engagement, with urban boys more affected. The study highlights the need for equitable education access, rural economic development, and strict enforcement of child labor laws [20]. In Lasbela district, Balochistan, agriculture holds significant economic importance, and a large number of children are involved in child labor. The primary causes of this issue include poverty, low household income, lack of education, school dropout, pressure to contribute to family income, and inherited poverty. Most of the working children are illiterate and suffer from physical and mental health problems, working in agriculture to improve their families' financial conditions [21].

5. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and conditions of child laborers. Primary data was collected through personal interviews and structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were designed in accordance with the objectives and research questions of the study and were formulated in simple, easy-to-understand language to ensure clarity and accessibility.

A purposive sampling technique was used for data collection. Through this method, participants were deliberately selected based on specific criteria — particularly children under the age of 15 who were engaged in various forms of labor. These included activities in the fishing industry, informal work in offices, and small-scale jobs on streets.

The primary focus of the study was on children engaged in labor within the fishing industry in the Lasbela District. A sample of 103 participants was selected, which was deemed adequate and representative for the purpose of this research.

6. Result and Discussions

6.1. Univariate Analysis

This section presents the univariate analysis of the study variables based on survey data collected directly from children engaged in labor activities in the Lasbela district of Balochistan, Pakistan.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

Categories	Frequency	Percent
Respondent's Gender		
Male	103	100.0
Respondent's Age		

Categories	Frequency	Percent
5-8 years	11	10.7
9-11 years	10	9.7
12-14 years	24	23.3
14-16 years	58	56.3
Total	103	100.0
Respondent's Monthly Income		
Less than 4000	23	22.3
6000-8000	45	43.7
9000-11000	17	16.5
13000-15000	15	14.6
More than 20000	3	2.9
Total	103	100.0
Respondent's Education		
Illiterate	39	37.9
Primary 1 st to 3 rd	18	17.5
5 th to 7 th	20	19.4
Middle	23	22.3
Matric	3	2.9
Total	103	100.0

The table above presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in the study. The first column lists the categories within each demographic variable, the second column displays the frequency of each category, and the third column provides the corresponding percentages. Each row represents a distinct demographic variable and its respective categories.

The data indicate that all 103 respondents (100%) are male, highlighting the absence of any female participants in the study conducted in Lasbela district of Balochistan, Pakistan.

In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents (58 individuals, 56.3%) fall within the 14–16 years' age group. Additionally, 24 respondents (23.3%) are aged 12–14 years, 11 respondents (10.7%) are aged 5–8 years, and 10 respondents (9.7%) are aged 9–11 years.

Regarding monthly income, the highest proportion of respondents (45 individuals, 43.7%) earn between PKR 6,000 and PKR 8,000. Furthermore, 23 respondents (22.3%) earn less than PKR 4,000, 17 respondents (16.5%) earn between PKR 9,000 and PKR 11,000, 15 respondents (14.6%) earn between PKR 13,000 and PKR 15,000, and a small proportion (3 respondents, 2.9%) earn more than PKR 20,000 per month.

With respect to educational attainment, a significant proportion of respondents (39 individuals, 37.9%) are illiterate. Among the remaining participants, 18 (17.5%) have completed primary education (1st to 3rd grade), 20 (19.4%) studied up to 5th to 7th grade, 23 (22.3%) have attained middle-level education, and only 3 respondents (2.9%) have reached the matriculation level.

Table 2. Socio Aspects of Child Labor.

	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
How long have you been working here?			What is the source of your family's income?		
Less than 1 year	22	21.4	Household	25	24.3

	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
1 year	27	26.2	Farming	21	20.4
2 years	32	31.1	Salaried	22	21.4
3 years	20	19.4	Labor	25	24.3
More than 4 years	2	1.9	Shopkeeper	10	9.7
Total	103	100.0	Total	103	100.0
Who asked to work at early age?			How is the behavior of your boss towards you?		
Your self	20	19.4	Bad	18	17.5
Parents force	29	28.2	Good	38	36.9
Family compulsion	28	27.2	Satisfactory	23	22.3
For household expenditure	21	20.4	Excellent	16	15.5
Friends and family	5	4.9	No comment	8	7.8
Total	103	100.0	Total	103	100.0
How many hours do you work in a day?			How do you find the environment at workplace?		
2-3 hours	17	16.5	Bad	24	23.3
3-4 hours	27	26.2	Good	35	34.0
5-6 hours	25	24.3	Satisfactory	22	21.4
7-8 hours	17	16.5	Excellent	17	16.5
More than 10 hours	17	16.5	No comment	5	4.9
Total	103	100.0	Total	103	100.0
Who helped you to get this job?			How are the attitudes of your colleagues at workplace?		
Through own effects	18	17.5	Bad	21	20.4
Through parents	34	33.0	Good	32	31.1
Through relatives	25	24.3	Satisfactory	30	29.1
Through friends	16	15.5	Excellent	18	17.5
Through agent	10	9.7	No comment	2	1.9
Total	103	100.0	Total	103	100.0
Nature of work is			How much you are earning for support your family financially?		
Skilled	23	22.3	Little bit	28	27.2
Unskilled	80	77.7	Good	28	27.2
Total	103	100.0	Average	33	32.0
How many siblings do you have?			Not enough	13	12.6
1	20	19.4	No comment	1	1.0
2	21	20.4	Total	103	100.0
3	28	27.2	What is the feeling of your village members about you?		
4	26	25.2	Negative	39	37.9
More than 5	8	7.8	Positive	23	22.3
Total	103	100.0	Unknown	35	34.0
			Silent	5	4.9
			No comment	1	1.0

Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Total		103	100.0

The table provides a detailed summary of the socioeconomic conditions and workplace experiences of child laborers in the Lasbela district of Balochistan, Pakistan. The information was collected through direct responses from 103 children engaged in various labor activities.

Duration of Employment: The data show that the largest proportion of respondents (32 children, 31.1%) have been working for 2 years, followed by 27 children (26.2%) who have been working for 1 year, and 22 children (21.4%) for less than 1 year. A smaller number of respondents reported having worked for 3 years (20 children, 19.4%), while only 2 children (1.9%) worked for more than 4 years.

Sources of Family Income: When asked about their family's source of income, 25 respondents each (24.3%) reported household-based work and labor as the main sources. Salaried employment was reported by 22 respondents (21.4%), followed by farming (21 respondents, 20.4%) and shopkeeping (10 respondents, 9.7%).

Reason for Entering Work at an Early Age: A significant number of respondents (29 children, 28.2%) stated they were forced by their parents to work. Additionally, 28 children (27.2%) cited family compulsion, 21 (20.4%) reported working to support household expenditures, 20 (19.4%) indicated it was their own decision, and 5 (4.9%) were influenced by friends or extended family.

Behavior of Employers: The employer's behavior was reported as good by 38 respondents (36.9%) and satisfactory by 23 (22.3%). Conversely, 18 respondents (17.5%) rated their employer's behavior as bad, while 16 (15.5%) considered it excellent. Eight respondents (7.8%) chose not to comment.

Daily Working Hours: Working hours varied among the respondents. The highest proportion, 27 children (26.2%), reported working 3–4 hours per day. A similar number of respondents (25, or 24.3%) worked 5–6 hours daily, while 17 children (16.5%) each reported working 2–3 hours, 7–8 hours, or more than 10 hours.

Workplace Environment: The workplace environment was described as good by 35 children (34.0%) and satisfactory by 22 (21.4%). However, 24 respondents (23.3%) described it as

bad, 17 (16.5%) found it excellent, and 5 respondents (4.9%) did not provide a comment.

Assistance in Finding Employment: Most respondents (34 children, 33.0%) indicated that their parents helped them secure employment. Others received assistance from relatives (25, or 24.3%), relied on their own efforts (18, or 17.5%), received help from friends (16, or 15.5%), or through an agent (10, or 9.7%).

Attitudes of Colleagues: Colleagues were perceived as having a good attitude by 32 respondents (31.1%) and satisfactory by 30 (29.1%). Conversely, 21 children (20.4%) rated their colleagues' behavior as bad, while 18 (17.5%) considered it excellent. Two respondents (1.9%) did not comment.

Nature of Work: The majority of respondents (80 children, 77.7%) were engaged in unskilled labor, while only 23 (22.3%) were involved in skilled work.

Contribution to Family Income: In terms of financial contribution, 33 respondents (32.0%) stated their income was average in supporting the family. Equal proportions (28 respondents each, or 27.2%) rated their contribution as "little bit" or "good." Thirteen (12.6%) felt their earnings were not enough, and one respondent (1.0%) did not comment.

Number of Siblings: The majority of respondents reported having 3 (28 respondents, 27.2%) or 4 (26 respondents, 25.2%) siblings. Twenty-one (20.4%) had 2 siblings, 20 (19.4%) had 1 sibling, and 8 respondents (7.8%) reported having more than 5 siblings.

Community Perception: Regarding the community's perception, 39 respondents (37.9%) reported a negative attitude from their village members. Twenty-three (22.3%) said the community's view was positive, while 35 (34.0%) were uncertain or unaware. A small number remained silent (5 respondents, 4.9%) or did not comment (1 respondent, 1.0%).

Table 3. Economic Aspects Child Labor.

	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Who do you give your money?					
Your self	19	18.4		6	16.5
Household expenditure	37	35.9	More then 6	16	15.5
Siblings schooling	27	26.2	Total	103	100.0
Father plan	14	13.6	What are main causes your child labor?		

	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
For friends and family	6	5.8	Lack of school	16	15.5
Total	103	100.0	Poverty	42	40.8
What is the source of your parent's income?			Unemployment	17	16.5
No income	19	18.4	Illiteracy	20	19.4
5000-80000	15	14.6	Bad Governance	8	7.8
9000-11000	25	24.3	Total	103	100.0
12000-15000	19	18.4	What is the educational background of your father?		
More than 20000	25	24.3	Illiterate	54	52.4
Total	103	100.0	Middle pass	16	15.5
How many members of your family are at work?			Matric	10	9.7
No One	21	20.4	Bachelor	11	10.7
1	44	42.7	Master	12	11.7
2	22	21.4	Total	103	100.0
3	11	10.7	How many of you are highly educated?		
More than 4	5	4.9	No one	52	50.5
Total	103	100.0	1	28	27.2
How many family members are dependents on your earning?			2	14	13.6
Less than 3	23	22.3	3	3	2.9
4	25	24.3	More than 4	6	5.8
			Total	103	100.0

This section presents the economic dimensions influencing child labor, based on survey data collected from 103 working children in the Lasbela district of Balochistan, Pakistan. The table outlines patterns of income usage, family economic conditions, parental education, and other contributing economic factors.

Utilization of Child's Earnings: A significant number of respondents (37 children, 35.9%) reported that their income is used to cover household expenditures. A substantial proportion (27 respondents, 26.2%) indicated that their earnings are directed toward the schooling of siblings, while 19 children (18.4%) retained their income for personal use. Other uses included contributing to the father's plans (14 respondents, 13.6%) and providing money to friends or extended family (6 respondents, 5.8%).

Parent's Source of Income: When asked about the primary source of income for their parents, 25 respondents each (24.3%) reported household incomes exceeding PKR 20,000 and within the range of PKR 9,000–11,000. Additionally, 19 respondents (18.4%) stated that their parents had no income at all, 19 (18.4%) reported parental income between PKR 12,000–15,000, and 15 (14.6%) indicated a range of PKR 5,000–8,000.

Number of Earning Family Members:

The majority of children (44 respondents, 42.7%) stated

that only one family member, including themselves, is working. Twenty-two respondents (21.4%) reported having two earning family members, followed by 21 children (20.4%) who indicated that no one else in the household was working. Eleven respondents (10.7%) mentioned that three members of their household were employed, and five (4.9%) reported more than four earners in the family.

Number of Family Members Dependent on Child's Income:

The economic burden on working children is notable, with 25 respondents (24.3%) supporting four family members and 23 respondents (22.3%) supporting fewer than three. Additionally, 22 respondents (21.4%) had five or more dependents, while others supported three (13 respondents, 12.6%) and more than four (6 respondents, 5.8%) family members.

Number of Siblings Also Working:

Children also reported whether their siblings were engaged in labor. Twenty-two respondents (21.4%) stated that five of their siblings were also working. Seventeen respondents (16.5%) reported six working siblings, while sixteen respond-

ents (15.5%) indicated more than six siblings in labor. The remaining participants varied across lower sibling counts engaged in work.

Primary Causes of Child Labor:

When asked about the main reasons for their engagement in labor, the majority (42 respondents, 40.8%) cited poverty. Other contributing factors included illiteracy (20 respondents, 19.4%), unemployment (17 respondents, 16.5%), and lack of access to schools (16 respondents, 15.5%). A smaller portion (8 respondents, 7.8%) attributed child labor to bad governance and systemic failure.

Educational Background of Fathers: Parental education, particularly the father's, was generally low among the sample. Over half of the respondents (54 children, 52.4%) reported

that their fathers were illiterate. Only 16 respondents (15.5%) had fathers who had completed middle school, 12 (11.7%) reported fathers with a master's degree, 11 (10.7%) with a bachelor's degree, and 10 (9.7%) whose fathers had completed matriculation.

Number of Highly Educated Family Members: Educational attainment within the families was also limited. Half of the respondents (52 children, 50.5%) indicated that no one in their family was highly educated. Twenty-eight (27.2%) had one highly educated family member, 14 respondents (13.6%) had two, three respondents (2.9%) reported three, and six (5.8%) indicated more than three educated individuals in their household.

Table 4. Education Aspects Child Labor.

	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Have you ever attended school?			No comment	6	5.8
Yes	58	56.3	Total	103	100.0
No	45	43.7	What is the importance of education in your village?		
Total	103	100.0	Zero	18	17.5
If yes, why did you stop?			Little bit	34	33.0
Self interest	14	13.6	Very less	24	23.3
Schooling is expensive	17	16.5	Extremely high	17	16.5
poor in study	16	15.5	No comment	10	9.7
Irresponsibility of parents	7	6.8	Total	103	100.0
Family compulsion	4	3.9	What is the government attention towards education at your village?		
Total	58	56.3	Zero	25	24.3
What is the importance of education in your family?			Little bit	21	20.4
Zero	32	31.1	Very less	32	31.1
Little bit	17	16.5	Extremely high	15	14.6
Very less	27	26.2	No comment	10	9.7
Extremely high	21	20.4	Total	103	100.0

This section presents the educational background and perceptions related to education among child laborers in the Lasbela district of Balochistan, Pakistan. The data offer insight into school attendance, reasons for school dropout, and the perceived importance of education at the individual, family, community, and governmental levels.

School Attendance: Out of the total 103 respondents, 58 children (56.3%) reported that they had attended school at some point, whereas 45 children (43.7%) stated that they had never been enrolled in school.

Reasons for Dropping Out of School: Among the 58 children who had previously attended school, the most common reason for discontinuing education was the high cost of

schooling, reported by 17 respondents (16.5%). Additionally, 16 children (15.5%) attributed their dropout to poor academic performance, and 14 (13.6%) cited a lack of personal interest. Other reasons included parental irresponsibility (7 respondents, 6.8%) and family compulsion (4 respondents, 3.9%).

Importance of Education in the Family: The perceived importance of education within the respondents' families varied

significantly. Thirty-two children (31.1%) stated that education held no importance in their household, while 27 (26.2%) described its importance as "very less." Seventeen respondents (16.5%) perceived a "little bit" of importance, and 21 children (20.4%) reported that education was considered "extremely important" by their families. Ten respondents (9.7%) did not comment.

Perception of Education in the Village: At the community level, 34 respondents (33.0%) described education as having "little bit" importance in their village, followed by 24 (23.3%) who believed it had "very less" importance. Eighteen children (17.5%) stated that education had no importance at all in the village context. Only 17 respondents (16.5%) regarded education as "extremely important" in their community. Ten children (9.7%) did not provide a response.

Perception of Government Attention Toward Education: When asked about the government's role in promoting education within their village, 25 respondents (24.3%) stated that

there was "zero" attention from the government. Thirty-two respondents (31.1%) believed the attention was "very less," and 21 (20.4%) perceived it as "little bit." Only 15 respondents (14.6%) believed there was "extremely high" government attention toward education in their area, while 10 respondents (9.7%) did not comment.

6.2. Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis of the items used in the scales of the survey questionnaire is essential prior to examining the relationships or associations among the variables of the study. This step ensures that all items of the scale accurately and consistently represent the intended construction. This section presents the reliability analysis of the scales used in the study to ensure that the results obtained from the data are valid and grounded in scientific principles.

6.3. Reliability Statistics

Table 5. Reliability Analysis.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.724	28

Overall reliability analysis indicates the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.724 which is acceptable and that is actually good for further analysis.

Table 6. Item-Total Statistics.

Variable	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Gender	70.93	120.311	.725
Age	68.67	120.961	.736
Income	69.40	112.980	.714
Education	68.90	113.077	.715
How long have you been working here?	69.14	109.209	.706
Who asked to work at early age?	68.88	111.511	.711
How many hours do you work in a day?	68.78	108.107	.705
Who helped you to get this job?	69.10	115.007	.727
Nature of work is	70.14	120.753	.728
How many siblings do you have?	68.81	113.735	.721
What is the source of your family's income?	69.00	107.719	.706
How is the behavior of your boss towards you?	69.21	106.448	.701
How do you find the environment at workplace?	69.41	108.528	.705
How are the attitudes of your colleagues at workplace?	69.45	110.076	.708

Variable	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
How long you're earning for support your family financially?	69.48	111.517	.711
What is the feeling of your village members about you?	69.83	114.636	.719
Who do you give your money?	69.28	111.151	.713
What is the source of your parent's income?	68.52	109.903	.715
How many members of your family are at work?	69.57	115.127	.720
How many family members are dependents on your earning?	68.91	112.852	.722
What are main causes your child labor?	69.10	115.673	.727
What is the educational background of your father?	69.74	111.493	.718
How many of you are highly educated?	70.03	110.701	.710
Have you ever attended school?	70.93	120.311	.725
If yes, why did you stop?	69.45	114.918	.723
What is the importance of education in your family?	69.21	115.956	.727
What is the importance of education in your village?	69.24	111.871	.714
What is the government attention towards education at your village?	69.03	109.858	.709

All of the items within each factor have Cronbach's Alpha more than 0.7. The reliability analysis shows that the adopted scale used to measure these variables in the data is reliable. The data in this form is acceptable and can be used in further analysis.

6.4. Chi-Square Test of Independence

The Chi-square test is a statistical method used to examine the independence between the categories of a dependent and

an independent variable. It is an effective technique for analyzing the relationship between two categorical variables. This section presents the results of the Chi-square test along with their interpretation.

Table 7. Chi-square test on Child Labor and Child Earnings.

Chi-Square Tests				Symmetric measure				
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	34.612	16	.004	Phi	.580			.004
Likelihood Ratio	31.997	16	.010	Cramer's V	.290			.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.363	1	.000	Contingency Coefficient	.502			.004
N of Valid Cases	103			Kendall tau	.319	.077	4.052	.000
				Spearman Correlation	.372	.089	4.022	.000 ^c
Cross Tabulation								
	How long have you been working here?							
Income	<1 year	1 year		2 years	3 years	More than 4 years		Total
Less then 4000	8	10		3	2			23
6000-8000	10	12		15	6	2		45

Chi-Square Tests			Symmetric measure				
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
9000-11000	2	2	10	3			17
13000=15000	2	3	4	6			15
More than 20000				3			3
	22	27	32	20	2		103

18 cells (72.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .06

The Pearson Chi-square value of 34.612 with a significance level of 0.004 indicates a statistically significant relationship between children's income and child labor activities. Cross-tabulation reveals that the majority of children earn Rs. 8,000 or less have been engaged in labor for over a year. Although some cells have low expected counts (72% of the cells have expected counts less than 5), the results remain statistically significant. Measures of association—including Cramer's V (0.290), the Contingency Coefficient (0.502), Kendall's tau (0.319), and Spearman's rho (0.372)—all indicate a meaningful correlation. These findings support the study's first hypothesis: that children's earnings have a significant impact on their involvement in child labor activities.

7. Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the alarming prevalence of child labor in the fishing industry of Lasbela district, driven by deep-rooted socioeconomic challenges. The practice is spreading like malignant cancer within society, exacerbated by factors such as poverty, illiteracy, lack of family planning, insufficient social protection mechanisms, and rising unemployment [22]. The state's failure to ensure the fundamental rights of children further compounds the issue. The study reveals that the majority of child laborers in this sector are boys aged between 12 and 14, many of whom work more than 10 hours a day in unskilled roles, earning meager wages. Cultural limitations prevented the inclusion of female child laborers in the study, suggesting an even broader and underexplored dimension of the issue. Most of these children have no formal education, and approximately 44% have never attended school, largely due to financial constraints and a general lack of emphasis on education within their families and communities. Despite the hardships, many children reported positive relationships with their employers and coworkers. However, they also experienced social stigma and negative attitudes from their communities after joining the labor force. A significant proportion of the children contribute their income to support household expenses, with most citing poverty and the burden of being part of single-income families as key reasons for en-

tering the workforce at such a young age. This study underscores the urgent need for comprehensive policy interventions focused on poverty alleviation, access to quality education, community awareness, and robust child protection frameworks. Without targeted and sustained efforts from both governmental and non-governmental actors, the cycle of child labor in Lasbela's fishing industry is likely to persist, depriving future generations of their right to a safe, educated, and dignified childhood.

Abbreviations

UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
ILO	International Labor Organization
CDL	Child Domestic Labor

Author Contributions

Latifa Kamal: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The authors have fully disclosed any potential conflicts of interest related to patents or product ownership. All such interests have been properly managed to maintain the integrity of the research. This study was conducted independently, and no commercial influence affected the results.

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