Exploring the Prevalence and Characteristics of Child Labor in District Haripur, Pakistan: A Longitudinal Study

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Abstract

With an emphasis on comparing data from April 2018 to April 2023, this longitudinal study investigates the prevalence and features of child labor in the district of Haripur, Pakistan. Individual information including age, family income, geography, and family type were looked at, along with common factors like father's occupation, education level, type of job, and reasons for child labor. Before selecting a sample for this study, an informal survey was conducted in the three tehsils of Haripur, Ghazi, and Khanpur. Workshops (street hawkers and brick-kiln workers) were the main businesses, stores, restaurants, and other establishments in these tehsils that employed children. The business district was left out. The sample respondents were chosen from a range of occupations, primarily from retail, dining, and other businesses (such as street vendors and bricklayers). The interviews included kids from various socioeconomic and professional backgrounds. The data for this study were collected over the months of March and April in both 2018 and 2023 using a pre-tested interview schedule. After being gathered, the data was then entered into the statistical program SPSS. In order to enter the variables into the software, the variables were formed, their scales were established, and the necessary values were set to each variable. The analysis was supported by the construction of frequency tables, and the study was descriptive. It also gathered the frequency for each of the research's following objectives. The results show that child labor increased significantly in the Haripur district between April 2018 and April 2023, with a larger frequency in the Ghazi and Khanpur tehsils. The study also shows that the fundamental causes of child labor, poverty and lack of access to school, have mainly not altered over time. These findings demonstrate the pressing need for policies and actions to address the problem of child labor in the district of Haripur.

Keywords: child labor, longitudinal study, socioeconomic background, poverty, lack of access to school, policies, action, descriptive analysis

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Introduction

There is a serious problem with child labor in several nations, including Pakistan. The issue of child labor still exists despite regional, national, and international efforts to abolish it. With an estimated 12.5 million children working as child laborers in areas like manufacturing, mining, and agriculture, Pakistan's situation is particularly concerning (International Labor Organization, 2020).

Haripur district is one of the areas in Pakistan where child labor is prevalent. This district is located in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan and is known for its agricultural and industrial activities. Despite being a hub of economic activity, child labor in Haripur remains a persistent issue that needs to be addressed (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The British colonizers of Pakistan used child labor as a cheap source of labor throughout the colonial era, which is where this issue has its beginnings (Niazi, 2018). Little government action was taken to address the issue of child labor after the country gained its independence in 1947 (Hussain & Tariq, 2019). To combat child labor in Pakistan, however, there have been a number of policy and programmatic interventions over the years. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which recognizes children's right to be safeguarded from commercial exploitation and dangerous labor (United Nations, 1989), was ratified by Pakistan in 1991. Following this, the government passed the Employment of Children Act in 1991, which limits children's work hours and forbids hiring them for dangerous jobs if they are under 14 (Government of Pakistan, 1991).

Child labor is still a problem in Pakistan despite these legislative and legal frameworks, especially in rural regions where children are frequently forced into labor due to poverty and a lack of educational possibilities (Khan, 2019). The International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) are two NGOs and international organizations that have put in place programs to address child labor in Pakistan (ILO, 2019; Government of Punjab, n. d.). Even while these laws and programs have helped a little bit to lessen child labor's prevalence in Pakistan, the issue still exists, especially in areas like Haripur. With the help of this study, strategies and initiatives aiming at resolving the issue of child labor in the Haripur district will be better understood. In numerous studies throughout the years, the presence of child labor in the Haripur district has been confirmed. These studies, however, have primarily been cross-sectional, giving only a snapshot of

the issue at a specific moment. By observing changes over time, a longitudinal research, on the other hand, can offer a more thorough knowledge of the problem.

This thesis uses a longitudinal study approach to investigate the prevalence and features of child labor in the Haripur district. The research will specifically look into the following research questions:

1. How common is child labor in the district of Haripur, and how has that rate changed over time?
2. What is the age, gender, and educational attainment of children working as children in the Haripur district?
3. What are the causes of child labor in the district of Haripur, and how have they changed over time?

The findings of this study can help to clarify the issue of child labor in the Haripur district and can guide programmatic and policy actions to solve it.

Review of Literature

Children's wellbeing has been impacted by child labor for ages and is a global problem. Child labor is any activity carried out by children that robs them of their youth, their potential, and their dignity and that is detrimental to their physical and mental development, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO) (ILO, 2017). Child labor is pervasive and very prevalent in Pakistan, particularly in rural areas like the Haripur district (Iqbal et al., 2018). The current study sought to examine the frequency and features of child labor over a five-year period in Pakistan's Haripur area. The Haripur district in Pakistan's Khyber Paktunkhwa province is home to more than 1.5 million people. There are many rural residents in the district, and agriculture is the dominant industry. The longitudinal study by Iqbal et al. (2018) covered data gathering from 2013 to 2017. A multistage stratified sampling technique was used to choose 1,500 families for the study, and data were collected using a standardized questionnaire.

The survey found that the overall frequency of child labor in the Haripur district was 23.4%, significantly higher than the 10.7% national average (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2014). 32.7% of child laborers were female, with 67.3% of them being male. The age groups of 10 to 14 had the highest prevalence of child labor (50.6%), followed by 5 to 9 (26.7%) and 15 to 17 (22.7%). The study also found that homework (20.2%), non-agricultural work (11.9%), and agricultural work (67.9%) made up the majority of child laborers' employment.

According to the study's extra analysis of their characteristics, low-income households produced the majority of child laborers (77.1%). The percentage of people who had completed primary school was just 17.8%, and 57.6% of them were illiterate, demonstrating a relatively low level of education. The study found that poverty is one of the primary drivers of child labor in the region. The study also found that child laborers had considerably worse health outcomes than non-laborers due to their higher risk of malnutrition, respiratory problems, and accidents. Child labor has a negative impact on children's physical, psychological, and social welfare in a variety of ways. The lack of access to education for child laborers lowers their prospects for the future and keeps them trapped in a cycle of poverty. Children who labor while still young run the danger of suffering long-term physical harm and health problems. Additionally, the vulnerability of child laborers to abuse and exploitation can have a long-lasting impact on their mental health.

The study emphasizes the urgent requirement for proactive action to end child labor and enhance home socioeconomic circumstances. According to the report, programs aimed at reducing poverty and promoting education can be quite effective in the fight against child labor in the area. The report also emphasizes how crucial it is to uphold the laws and rules that shield kids from abuse and exploitation. Every community has a set of laws that specify who is responsible for what behaviors when performing domestic chores. Social norms or conventions can be used to enforce them in a variety of ways. This theory is supported by the community, and it has an effect on parents' views towards their children as well as the other way around, Shah and Asghar (2017). Despite the fact that children cannot support their families in this way, child work is damaging to them. Osment (2014), said that the primary driver of child labor is poverty. To help out financially, the majority of families started having their kids work, but their health issues frequently objected. The majority of kids in Pakistan's Swabi district are uneducated and labor nine to 10 hours a day. All students should have access to free, at least middle-level, education. Controlling population increase is necessary.

To raise public awareness of the detrimental impacts of child labor, a campaign should be launched, Ali (2010). It was determined that the issue of child labor is multifaceted and pervasive in the socioeconomic structure of society. Since there are several factors that might be attributed to this phenomenon, a comprehensive strategy is needed to solve the issue, Sheeba (2008). Edmonds and Paycnik (2006), stated that the connection between cross-country child labor and exposure to commerce (as shown by openness). They discovered that there is less child labor in nations with greater commerce. However, it appears that the positive

correlation between commerce and income is mostly responsible for these connections. In contrast to urban regions, where there is little evidence to support the poverty theory, poverty is the primary driver of child labor in rural communities. Enhancing credit availability offers a higher chance of reducing child labor and improving school attendance. The availability of substitute childcare choices, however, promises to have a significant influence on child labor, Ersado et.al. (2005). Bourguignon et.al. (2003), reports that an increasing number of developing nations are giving cash transfers to the impoverished in exchange for them carrying out specified habits, such going to school or routinely visiting medical facilities. According to the findings, the initiative attracts roughly 60% of disadvantaged 10 to 15-year-olds who are not enrolled in school. In Pakistan, children who work as laborers put in long hours without breaks or nutritious nourishment. Particularly when it comes to child labor in the carpet business, their earnings are quite low, and they are brutally mistreated.

According to a 1998 assessment on the "Situation of Child Labor in Pakistan", NCCR-UNICEF (1998), just 10% of children work in cities compared to 23% who live in rural areas. Buchmann (2000), examine the effects of parental attitudes, home chore distribution, and family history and structure on children's engagement in education. The findings imply that programs intended to increase school demand in underdeveloped nations may be ineffective. Instead of gender stereotypes or a reliance on child labor, evaluations of the returns to school are a better explanation for educational inequality. Children spend a lot of time in filthy or unhygienic environments, which can have a harmful effect on their health, according to UNICEF. According to Rahatullah (2001), child labor rates were much higher in rural than in urban regions. The majority of them were younger than 8 years old. Khan (1982), discussed that in the Swat area of Mingora, child labor has social and economic factors. Further, they discovered that the financial situation of respondents' families is one of the causal variables. The research suggested that in order to increase the income of the poor, the government should support revenue-generating activities. These working youngsters in Pakistan are typically 11 years old and had to support their family on a daily basis. 100 kids who were employed in various trades in Lahore, Gujranwala, and Sialkot were the subject of a survey. According to her research, poverty, familial traditions, and the struggle for survival are the main drivers of child labor. Considering how hard and impoverished their parents' lives are, the bulk of child laborers are impacted by them. Children under the age of 15 who are employed as child labor are more likely to be female than male. Even though these kids labor up to 70 to 90 hours each week, their pay is

insufficientto even sustain their families. The use of child labor, which affects some 350 million children worldwide, is a serious issue (Human Rights Watch, 2004), Bassu (1999). The types of child work differ depending on the country's culture, the family, the location of residency, the economy, and the stage of development, H o l g a d o e t . a l (2 0 1 4) . In Pakistan, child labor is a widespread problem. Children are usually subjected to rigorous moral standards, and it invades their education and causes them toskip school. Pakistanis who live in poverty make up about 39% of the population. This implies that the people won't be able to access their fundamental requirements, Tesfay (2003). Every community has a set of laws that specify who is responsible for what behaviors when performing domestic chores. Social norms or conventions can be used to enforce them in a variety of ways. This theory is supported by the community, and it has an effect on parents' views towards their children as well as the other way around, Calva (2001).

According to the report, the main causes of child labor in the Haripur district are poverty, illiteracy, and cultural norms. The main contributing factor is poverty since families that are unable to pay for their children's basic needs are more inclined to send them to work. Lack of education is also a major factor, as uneducated parents cannot appreciate the value of education and see it as an extravagance they cannot afford. Additionally, cultural norms in rural communities frequently place a higher value on children's employment than on their education because kids are expected to support their family financially.

The study also emphasized how child labor has a negative impact on kids' physical and mental health. Compared to non-laborers, child laborers had much worse health outcomes because they were more likely to have injuries, hunger, and respiratory issues. Additionally, child laborers' future social and economic prospects were adversely affected by their much lower levels of self-esteem, confidence, and emotional stability. The research makes various recommendations for stopping child labor in the district of Haripur. The main goal is to improve economic conditions and combat poverty through employment opportunities, initiatives that generate money, and programs that target poverty.

Methodology

By comparing data between April 2018 and April 2023, this longitudinal study examines the frequency and features of child labor in the Pakistani district of Haripur. Age, family income, geography, and family type are among the individual data gathered in this study. Other common factors include the father's occupation, education level, type

of job, and reasons for child labor. This study's main focus is on kids who work in jobs that rob them of their youth and interfere with their ability to learn and grow as people.

An informal survey was carried out in the three tehsils of Haripur, Ghazi, and Khanpur before selecting a sample for this study in order to determine the main enterprises, stores, restaurants, and other facilities that exploited child labor. The commercial district was left out of the study, making workshops like street vendors and brick-kiln workers the most prevalent child labor employers in these tehsils. The sample respondents were picked from a variety of activities in both 2018 and 2023, primarily from shops, eateries, and other businesses that used child labor, including street vendors and bricklayers. The interviews included kids from various socioeconomic and professional backgrounds.

Data for this study were collected during the months of March and April in both 2018 and 2023 using a pre-tested interview schedule. The statistical program SPSS was used to enter the data after it had been gathered. In order to enter the variables into the software, the variables were formed, their scales were established, and the necessary values were set to each variable.

The study is descriptive in nature, and frequency tables were made to support the analysis. The frequency for each of the research's subsequent objectives was determined using the frequency tables. To find any shifts or trends in the prevalence and features of child labor in the district of Haripur, the data collected between 2018 and 2023 will be compared.

The decision was made to choose the following sample size for the study since the population or study universe is quite vast. Following the interviews with the 100 respondents, the distributions were as follows.

Table 1
Distribution of Sample of Activities with Child labor

Types of Activity	Haripur	Khanpur	Ghazi	Frequency	Percentage
Shops	24	02	02	28	28%
Workshops	23	05	05	33	33%
Restaurants/Hotel	08	02	01	11	11%

Others	24	02	02	28	28%
Total	79	11	10	100	100%

Results and Conclusion

The three tehsils of Haripur district Haripur, Ghazi, and Khanpur were the locations of the survey.The respondents were chosen from among those working in restaurants, stores, and other places.The outcomes and key conclusions of this study are as follows:

Table 2
Tehsil wise distribution of sampling units

Area/ Tehsils	Frequency	Percentage
Haripur	79	79%
Khanpur	11	11%
Ghazi	10	10%
Total	100	100%

100 respondents made up the study's overall sample, with 79 coming from the tehsil Haripur, 11 from the tehsil Khanpur, and 10 from the tehsil Ghazi. Following the survey, there were 100responses, or in three tehsils in the district of Haripur.

The following table displays the respondents' descriptive information, including their age, familyincome, whether or not the children attend school, the father's employment, and the type of job they do. All of these factors are associated to child labor.

Table 3
Descriptive Information of Respondents in 2018

2018			
Variable	Interval	Frequency	Percent
Age	08-12	12	12%
	13-18	88	88%
	<10,000	3	3%

Family Income	10,000-20,000	20	20%
	20,000-30,000	40	40%
	30,000-40,000	24	24%
	>40,000	13	13%
School Going	Yes	24	24%
	No	76	76%
	Daily Wages	8	8%
	Farmer	14	14%
	Govt. Servant	11	11%
	Driver	18	18%
	No Work	14	14%
	Died	11	11%
	Hotel	5	5%
	Mason	9	9%
Occupation of Father	Shop	6	6%
	Tailor	4	4%
	Shop	28	28%
	Workshop	33	33%
Nature of Work	Restaurants/Hotel	11	11%
	Other	28	28%

Table 3 provides descriptive information about the respondents

who participated in the study in 2018. The table shows the distribution of respondents by their age, family income, school attendance, occupation of father, and nature of work. 88 percent of the 100 respondents were between the ages of 13 and 18 while the remaining 12 percent were between the ages of 8 and 12. The plurality (40%) of families had an annual income between 20,000 and 30,000 Pakistani Rupees, while 24% made between 30,000 and 40,000. Only 3% of those surveyed reported having a family income of under 10,000 PKR. 76% of the respondents said they were not enrolled in any educational program, compared to 24% who said they were attending school. The most prevalent professions among individuals who were not in school were daily wage labor (8%), farming (14%), and driving (18%). 11 percent of respondents said their fathers had died, which is a considerable percentage. According to the respondents' employment status, 33% of them worked in workshops, 28% in shops, and another 28% in various kinds of establishments. Inns and restaurants only employed 11% of the workforce.

Table 4
Descriptive Information of Respondents in 2023

	2023		
Variable	Interval	Frequency	Percent
	08-12	19	19%
Age	13-18	81	81%
	<10,000	9	9%
	10,000-20,000	23	23%
Family Income	20,000-30,000	32	32%
	30,000-40,000	27	27%
	>40,000	8	8%
School Going	Yes	17	17%
	No	83	83%
	Daily Wages	11	11%

	Farmer	9	9%
	Govt. Servant	7	7%
	Driver	21	21%
	No Work	19	19%
	Died	13	13%
	Hotel	5	5%
	Mason	12	12%
Occupation of Father	Shop	2	2%
	Tailor	1	1%
	Shop	23	22%
	Workshop	47	47%
Nature of Work	Restaurants/Hotel	16	16%
	Other	14	14%

A total of 100 respondents took part in the study in 2023, with 19% of them being between the ages of 8 and 12 and 81% being between the ages of 13 and 18. The majority of families (32%) had an income between $20,000 and $30,000, followed by 27% between $30,000 and $40,000, and 23% between $10,000 and $20,000. Only 17% of those surveyed said they were currently enrolled in school. The majority of respondents (21%) who were asked about their dads' jobs said that they were drivers, followed by those who weren't now employed (19%) and workshop workers (47%). Working in a workshop was the most frequent type of work mentioned by respondents in 2023 (47%), followed by working in a restaurant or hotel (16%). According to the data, child labor appears to have been more common between 2018 and 2023 in the district of Haripur.

Figure 1: Year wise Bar Chart for Descriptive Information of Respondents.
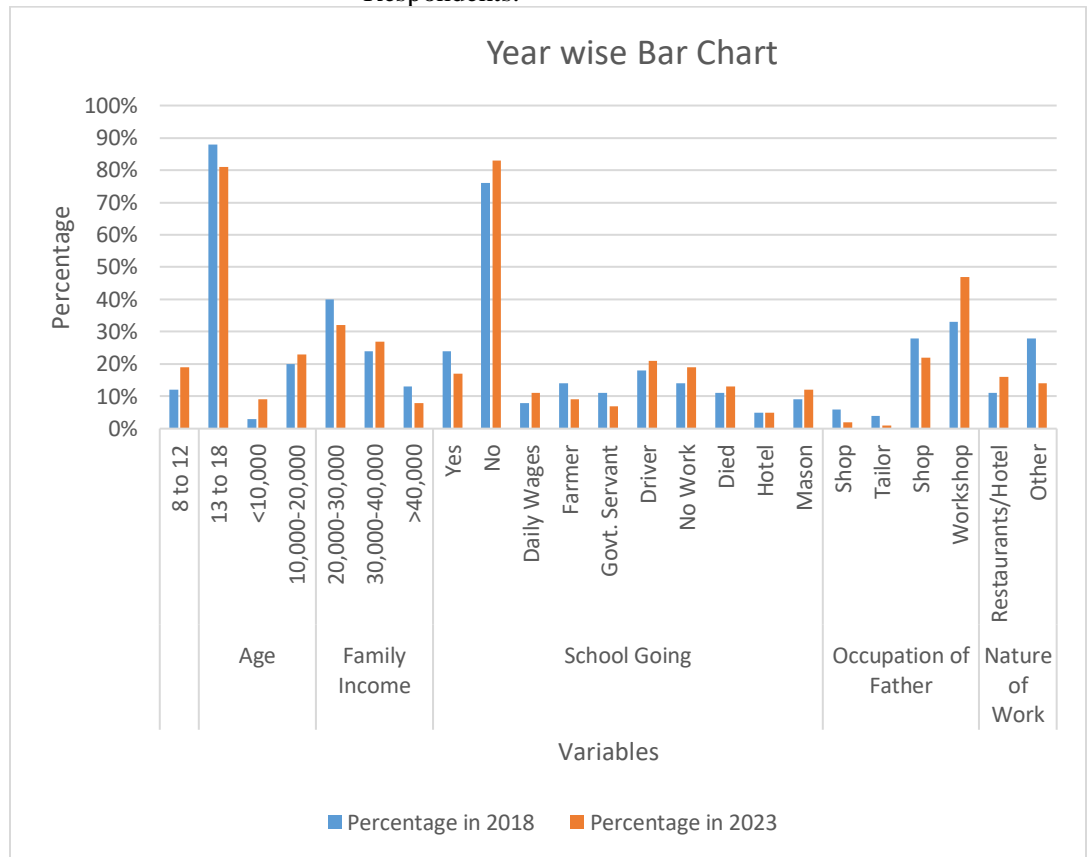
It is evident from a comparison of the data from 2018 and 2023 that child labor is still a problem in the Haripur area. While the percentage of child laborers in this age group fell slightly from 88% in 2018 to 81% in 2023, the bulk of those interviewed in 2018 were 13 to 18 years old (88%). However, from 12% in 2018 to 19% in 2023, more kids between the ages of 8 and 12 were working. In terms of family income, the

proportion of households earning between $20,000 and $30,000 increased somewhat from 2018 to 2023. The district's high rate of poverty is still a major factor in the prevalence of child labor, as evidenced by the fact that the percentage of households earning less than 10,000 remained essentially same in both years. Both in 2018 and in 2023, driving was the most popular profession for dads of child laborers. However, there was a considerable rise (from 14% to 19%) in the proportion of child laborers whose fathers were unemployed in 2023 compared to 2018. This indicates that child labor may be more common than previously thought due to unemployment.

Although the proportion of children working in workshops climbed dramatically from 33% in 2018 to 47% in 2023, workshops remained the most prevalent type of job for children in both years. This might be a result of the district's recent surge in industrialization.

Overall, the data from 2018 and 2023 show that despite efforts to stop it, child labor is still an issue in the district of Haripur. According to the data, child labor is more common than it formerly was because of industrialization, unemployment, and poverty. Therefore, in order to significantly reduce child labor in the area, it is imperative for policymakers and stakeholders to address these fundamental problems.

Table 5
Sample respondents describing reason of their work in 2018

2018		
Reason of work	Frequency	Percent
To support family	82	82%
To learn skill	18	18%

Table 6
Sample respondents describing reason of their work in 2023

2023		
Reason of work	Frequency	Percent
To support family	91	91%
To learn skill	09	09%

The arguments provided by 100 children who claimed to be child laborers in Pakistan's District Haripur are shown in Tables 5 and 6. The two stated reasons are "To support family" and "To learn skill." The "Frequency" column displays the number of children who selected each option, while the "Percent" column displays the proportion of children who did so among all children. Table 5 shows that 82 out of 100 children (or 82%) reported working in 2018, whereas 18 out of 100 children (or 18%) reported working to develop new skills. The majority of the kids in this group were working to support their families financially.

The percentage of kids working to support their families has significantly increased, as seen in Table 6, which contains data from 2023. Only 9 out of 100 kids this year reported working to pick up a new skill, compared to 91 out of 100 kids who said they were working to support their families. This shows that the economic situation in District Haripur might have gotten worse in the intervening years, making it more common for families to rely on the money that child labor brings in.

In general, these tables offer important information regarding the causes of child labor in District Haripur, Pakistan. They assert that the main reason children work is to assist their families financially, and that this reason has grown more common over time. In order to address the core causes of child labor and safeguard the rights and wellbeing of children in District Haripur and other comparable locations, policymakers and other stakeholders must first understand why children participate in labor.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this longitudinal study's findings show a concerning rise in the incidence of child labor in Pakistan's Haripur area between April 2018 and April 2023. Numerous causes, such as poverty, a lack of education, and insufficient legal protection for children's rights, are to blame for the rise in child labor. The survey found that street vendors and brick kiln employees were the main companies employing children, and that these firms employed children from a variety of backgrounds and occupations. Important insights into the characteristics of child labor in the district of Haripur were gained from the examination of individual data including age, family income, location, family type, father's employment, education level, type of job, and reasons for child labor. The majority of child laborers, according to the survey, were

male and from low-income families. Children typically worked to support their family and to pay for their own schooling.

➢ The results of this study point to the urgency of taking immediate steps to address the growing problem of child labor in the district of Haripur. We advise the following suggestions:

➢ The government should step up enforcement of current child labor rules and make sure offenders are held accountable.

➢ The government should create and put into effect measures that deal with the fundamental issues that lead to child labor, like poverty and lack of educational opportunities.

➢ To raise public knowledge of the risks and detrimental impacts of child labor on children's physical, mental, and emotional health as well as their opportunities for the future, the government should support awareness-raising efforts.

➢ Monitoring, reporting, and campaigning for the preservation of children's rights should all be priorities for civil society organizations.

➢ In order to ensure that children are able to finish their education and reach their full potential, families should be encouraged to send them to school and to give them the support they need.

It is intended that by putting these suggestions into practice, child labor will become less common in the district of Haripur and children's wellbeing will increase.

Limitations of the Study

The "Exploring the Prevalence and Characteristics of Child Labor in District Haripur, Pakistan: A Longitudinal Study" has a number of limitations. First, the study's narrow geographic emphasis on just one district, Haripur, may make it harder to generalize its findings to other areas. The study only looks at child labor between 2018 and 2023, thus it might not paint a complete picture of the presence and features of child labor in the region across a longer time frame. Third, the generalizability of the results may be constrained by the possibility that the study's sample of child laborers is not typical of all child laborers in Haripur. Fourth, because the study depends on self-reported data, it may contain errors or biases as a result of recall bias or social desirability bias. Last but not least, the study lacks information on the precise sorts of work that children are doing, which may make it more difficult to create interventions that are specifically tailored to the issue

of child labor in the area.

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