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Socio-Economic and Health Determinants of Child Labor: An Overview of Multiple index Cluster Survey

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ABSTRACT

This paper identifies the various determinants of child labor and analyzes the variation in child labor with different socio-economic and demographic factors in the northern Karakoram region of Pakistan. For this paper, the data related to the different socio-economic and demographic variables of child labor have been used from the Gilgit-Baltistan "Multiple Index Cluster Survey (2016-17)" of 6,213 households conducted by the provincial government of Gilgit-Baltistan. The results of the demographic determinants have revealed that the prevalence of child labor is significantly high in rural areas as compared to urban areas. The results also found that there is no significant variation in child labor with gender. While the incidence of child labor increases with age in the study area. Similarly, the findings show a positive relationship between poverty and child labor as the incidence of child labor and children working under hazardous conditions increases with the downward shift from the richest to the poorest wealth index quintile. These hazardous conditions are responsible for multiple health implication for children. Finally, in terms of variation in child labor across divisions and districts of Gilgit-Baltistan province results reveal that the prevalence of child labor is highest in the Baltistan division followed by Diamer and Gilgit division. Regarding the variation across districts, results show that the incidence of child labor is highest in district Nagar while lowest in district Gilgit. The most important measure to combat child labor in this region is the sensitization and awareness of parents about the issue of child labor.
Keywords: Demographic, Determinants, Household Level, Child Labor, Northern, Karakoram

INTRODUCTION

"The term child labor is often defined as the subset of children's work that is harmful, negative or undesirable to children and that should be targeted for elimination"(Khan & Lyon, 2015). Child labor is considered one of the major development challenges faced by the global community. Over the last few decades, governments and other donor agencies have taken some proactive measures to reduce child labor from the world especially in developing countries. Despite these efforts, a large number of children aged 5-17 years are engaged in child labor (Ahmad et al., 2020). According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2013) around 215 million children are estimated to be working as child labor globally, while 179 million children are engaged in a hazardous form of work where they are treated illegally and worked for long hours. These hazardous working conditions affect the safety, health and cognitive development of children.

Globally child labor is an inevitable phenomenon but it can be reduced through different efforts at all levels. Hussain et al., (2017) stated that child labor is a complex issue faced by the global community. Across the globe, child labor is caused by different socio-economic factors. The region of South Asia is one of the hot spots in the developing world where a large number of children are involved in child labor (ILO, 2010). It is estimated that around 16.7 million children aged between 5-17 years in South Asia are involved in child labor. Pakistan is the second-largest country by population in South Asia and in terms of child labor, Pakistan is the third-worst country in

this region after Bangladesh and India (ILO, 2013). The complex phenomenon of child labor is deeply rooted in Pakistani society where children are being forced to work due to multi-dimensional causes (Hussain et al., 2017).

At the national level, some case studies and micro-level surveys found that a significant number of children are actively participating in all sectors of the economy. For instance, the 2010-11 comprehensive child labor survey reported that about 3.4 million children are involved in child labor (ILO, 2013). Siddiqi & Patrinos (1995) mentioned that children in Pakistan are mostly involved in the informal sector, agriculture activities, and domestic work, while the ratio of children working in the formal sector is little. According to Khan (2000), in Pakistan, formal child labor is more prevalent in manufacturing, construction, trade, transport sectors, and other services in urban areas. Whereas in rural areas the major sector absorbing child labor are brick kiln industry and agriculture. While informal child labor is mostly engaged in workshops, tuck shops, tea stalls, roadside hotels, and petrol stations (Khan, 2000). Awan and Khan (1992) argued that more specifically in the manufacturing industry children are active in cottage industry, power looms, carpet weaving, sports, and surgical industry. While in the construction sector children are engaged in building, road construction and stone quarrying, etc (Ali, 1999).

The incidence of child labor in Pakistan has been caused by numerous demand and supply sides factors. At the national level different surveys, case studies, government reports and research studies have identified

different demand and supply sides determinants of child labor. But limited attention has been paid by government and researchers to study different determinants of child labor at the household level in the high mountainous Gilgit-Baltistan province of Pakistan. The Gilgit-Baltistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (GB-MICS, 2016-17) is the only survey carried out by the provincial government of Gilgit-Baltistan in collaboration with UNICEF. The survey has just identified the number of children aged 5-17 involved in child labor. By using data from this survey this paper tries to determine different socio-economic and demographic determinants of child labor at the household level in the high mountainous Gilgit-Baltistan province of Pakistan.

The major focus of this paper was to identify the socio-economic and demographic determinants of child labor in the northern Gilgit-Baltistan province of Pakistan. Furthermore, this paper tries to answer questions like how and to what extent child labor varies with diverse socio-economic and demographic determinants. Finally, this paper explores the variations in child labor across ten districts of the Gilgit-Baltistan province of Pakistan. Based on the variations in child labor this paper suggests area-specific policy options to mitigate the phenomenon of child labor. This paper offers unique insights into theoretical and critical debates in social policy studies, especially concerning labor and development. The study adds the body of knowledge to the existing literature in the field of labor and development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The phenomenon of child labor can be caused by several demand and supply factors and determinants. The major focus of this paper is on the supply-side determinants of child labor at the household level. The occurrence of child labor at the household level has been explained by many scholars and theorists from across the world. In the first sections of this chapter, the phenomenon of child labor at the household level has been explained through major approaches i.e. poverty hypothesis and the socialization theory. According to both these micro-level theories, cultural and economic factors are the major determinants of child labor at the household level.

a. The poverty hypothesis:

The poverty hypothesis argues that child labor is mainly caused by poverty (Amin, 1994). This approach further argues that child labor is unavoidable in most of the underdeveloped countries where there is a low level of technological advancement, low wages, high level of unemployment, and declining household incomes. Under these circumstances, children's participation as a labor force is crucial for managing economic stress and meeting consumption requirements at the household level. According to the poverty hypothesis in the time of economic crises child labor is a mandatory part of the household's survival strategies. For instance, when parents are unemployed, they forced their children to work for the family's survival. The empirical studies from the underdeveloped regions of Africa, Latin America, and Asia have supported the major arguments of the poverty hypothesis (Bonnet 1993; Gill 1994; Cartwright 1999; Emerson and Souza 2003). These studies have found a strong correlation between the occurrence of child labor and economic pressure at the household level.

b. Socialization theory:

According to this theory, child labor at the household level occurs through the process of socialization. This theory further argues that cultural traits at the household level i.e. education and occupation of the parents may decide whether a child should work or not. The children's future occupation and type of work usually depend on the occupation of parents. A child may be more likely to participate in the labor force if his/her parents are working as laborers. For instance, if the father is a carpenter then his child's future occupation is likely to be a carpenter. Numerous studies from across the world (Grootaert 1999; Francavilla and Lyon 2002) have supported the basic theme of the socialization theory that the socio-cultural factors have influenced the phenomenon of child labor.

The socioeconomic and demographic determinants like parents' education, age, gender, area of residence and income, etc. have been discussed by scholars from across the world. The proceeding section presents how child labor varies with different socio-economic and demographic factors at the household level and from the global perspectives with a special focus on the developing countries where the phenomenon of child labor is more prevalent.

c. Socio-economic determinants of child labor across the world Parent's education and child labor:

The existing literature presents a two-way relationship between parents' education and child labor. The studies like (Binder and Scrogin 1999; Cartwright 1999; Emerson and Souza 2003) in Latin America, (Canagarajah and Nielsen 2001; Francavilla and Lyon 2002) in Africa and (Gill 1994; Deb and Rosati 2002) in Asia found a negative relationship between parent's education and the incidence of child labor. The findings of these studies conclude that a higher level of parents' education reduces the probability of children working. Hence there is a negative relationship between both variables. Whereas some scholars have found a neutral relationship between child labor and parents' education. For instance, in Ecuador and Colombia, the education of household heads does not have any influence on child labor (Cartwright, 1999).

d. Parent's income and child labor:

Parent's income is one of the major determinants of child labor at the household level. Hai et al., (2010) cited that at the household level income plays a significant role regarding child labor decisions. The relationship between the incidence of child labor and household income has been discussed by many scholars and found diverse results. Moreover, the studies by (Gill, 1994; Blunch and Verner 2000; Deb and Rosati 2002) also found an inverse relationship among both variables. Whereas, the results of the studies conducted by (Binder and Scrogin 1999; Cartwright 1999; Canagarajah and Nielsen 2001; Francavilla and Lyon 2002; Emerson and Souza 2003) revealed a neutral relationship.

e. Parent's occupation and child labor:

The occupation of parents is an influential factor for the incidence of child labor and it is evident from the literature that both negative and positive relationships exist among both variables. Hai et al., (2010) found a positive

relationship between child labor and parents' occupation. They revealed that the incidence of child labor is high among the children in coastal Baluchistan of Pakistan where fishing is the predominant occupation of the majority of households. In this region, more than 91.0 % of children are engaged as child laborers in the fishing sector. On the other hand, the children are less likely to work in the labor force if their parents have better socioeconomic status in terms of occupation as compared to parents having lower occupational status (Blunch and Verner 2000; Canagarajah and Nielsen 2001; Francavilla and Lyon 2002). This shows that better occupation of parents improves the socio-economic status of a household hence discouraging child labor.

f.   Demographic determinants of child labor across the world:

Like socioeconomic determinants, demographic determinants (area of residence, age, gender) have also significant influence on the incidence of child labor. Several studies have found that children living in rural areas are more likely to involve in the phenomenon of child labor as compared to their urban counterparts (Ahmad et al., 2020). Webbink et al., (2013) mentioned that children work more in rural areas, particularly if there are more traditional urban areas and more unskilled jobs. Similarly, the incidence of child labor is considerably higher in rural areas, where children are mostly involved in labor-intensive agriculture activities and the mining industry (Hindman, 2009). Whereas in developing countries like India, Bangladesh, and Mali, the incidence of child labor is more in urban areas. In these countries, commercial child labor is mostly absorbed by factories, the cigarette industry, and the carpet industry.

In the case of the relationship between age and child labor, different scholars have different findings. Spierings et al., (2010) in their study found that both boys and girls work more when they grow older, while variation in child labor with age is higher for boys as compared to girls. Similarly, In the South Asian region, Khan & Lyon (2015) compiled a report from national household surveys of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka. They concluded that the incidence of child labor has been increased from below 4.0 % for 7.0 years old to more than 20.0 % when children turn 17 years old. In terms of gender disparities in child labor, more boys are involved in child labor in Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka, whereas more girls are reported as child laborers in Bhutan, Maldives, and Pakistan. Khan & Lyon, (2015) reported that four South Asian countries have the highest gender disparities globally. The ratios for boys and girls in terms of child labor are reported as Pakistan (82:100), Afghanistan (71:100), Bangladesh (94 boys: 100 girls), Nepal (92:100) respectively.

g.   Socio-economic and demographic determinants of child labor in the context of Pakistan:

Pakistan is the second-largest country by population in South Asia and in terms of child labor, Pakistan is the third-worst country in this region after Bangladesh and India where around 3.4 million children age 5-17 years are involved in child labor (ILO, 2013). This high incidence of child labor in Pakistan is attributed to several socio-demographic factors based on the different socio-cultural and geographical settings of different regions across the country. At the national level, several studies have been carried out by different scholars to study various socio-demographic determinants of child labor.

In Pakistan, the incidence of child labor varies with socio-demographic factors like the area of residence, age, gender, education of parents, occupation of parents, and household income. Ali and Khan (2004) in their analysis of supply-side determinants of child labor in urban areas of Pakistan found that in urban areas girls have less engaged as a labor force as compared to boys because of socio-religious factors. They also found that assets ownership or family business is also one of the major causes of child labor for boys at the household level.

Parents' decisions have an important role in the incidence of child labor at the household level in Pakistani society. Parents' decision about their children's work in the context of Pakistani society has been examined by Karim (1995) and found that at a household level low household income, low education of parents, and large family size are the major contributing factors towards the occurrence of child labor. Similarly, the findings of the study conducted by Ali and Hamid (2004) in Multan Pakistan on female child labor illustrated that large family size and parents' low income push the girls to work.

The results of GB-MICS (2016-17) show that the situation of child labor in the Karakorum region is different from the rest of the country based on its geographical location and socio-economic settings. The government and other stakeholders have paid limited attention to the said issue in this region. Very limited research studies have been carried out by researchers. This paper tries to fill the existing gap by identifying, what are the socio-economic determinants of child labor and how child labor varies with different socio-economic and more specifically with demographic factors.

DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

The secondary data have been used in this research which are derived from the Gilgit-Baltistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (GB-MICS, 2016-17). This survey was carried out by the Planning & development Department of the Gilgit-Baltistan in collaboration of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). This survey was designed to estimate the situation of children and women at the household level against 121 key development indicators in the Gilgit-Baltistan province of Pakistan.
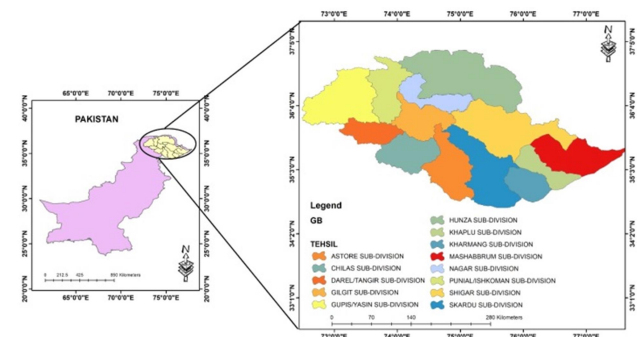
The survey was conducted between October 2016 and February 2017 and the sample size used for this survey was 6,213 households. For this paper, the data related to the child labor indicators and different determinants have been used. The province of Gilgit-Baltistan is situated in the extreme north of Pakistan at the intersection of Karakoram, Hindu Kush, and Himalaya's Mountain ranges. In total, this province comprises 10 districts under 3 divisions (Gigit, Skardu, and Diamer). This paper uses the data from all 10 districts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of socio-demographic variables (areas of residence, gender of HHH, number of HH members, and education of parents, etc.). The total successful households interviewed for this study were 6213 and out of this total 17.5 % of households were residing in urban areas while 82.5 % were residing in rural areas. As illustrated in table 1 out of the total households interviewed 86.8 % of households were headed by a male while only 13.2 were headed by a female. As far as the household size is concerned 34.6 % HH have 4-6 members, 33.5 % have 4-6 members, 24.4 % have 10 and more members, and 7.5 % have 1-3 members respectively. Furthermore, table 1 presents the education of the households in percentages. Among surveyed HH 46.5 % HHH have no education, 17.2 % HHH have primary education, 10.4 % have middle education, 10.2 have secondary education, and 15.6 % HHH have higher education respectively.

**Table 1: Percentage and frequency distribution of demographic variables**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Total households interviewed	6,213	100
Area of residence		
Urban	1,090	17.5
Rural	5,123	82.5
Gender of household head		
Male	5,395	86.8
Female	818	13.2
Number of household members		
1—3	466	7.5
4—6	2,151	34.6
7—9	2,082	33.5
10 and more	1,513	24.4
Education of household head		
None	2,890	46.5
Primary	1,067	17.2
Middle	645	10.4
Secondary	632	10.2
Higher	969	15.6
Source: Authors calculation from GB-MCIS (2016-17)		

Figure 1 shows the variation in child labor with the change in the area of residence in percentages. Out of the total number of children aged 5-17 years, about 82.2 % reside in rural areas whereas 16.8 % reside in urban areas. Figure 1 further illustrates that in total 44.9 % of children aged 5-17 years are involved in child labor. It is evident from figure 1 that the prevalence of child labor is almost double in rural areas with 48.8 % as compared to 25.8 % in urban areas. Whereas, in total 42.3 % of children aged 5-

17 years are working under hazardous conditions. Again, the percentage for children working under hazardous conditions is more (45.8 %) in rural areas as compared to 25.6 % in urban settings.
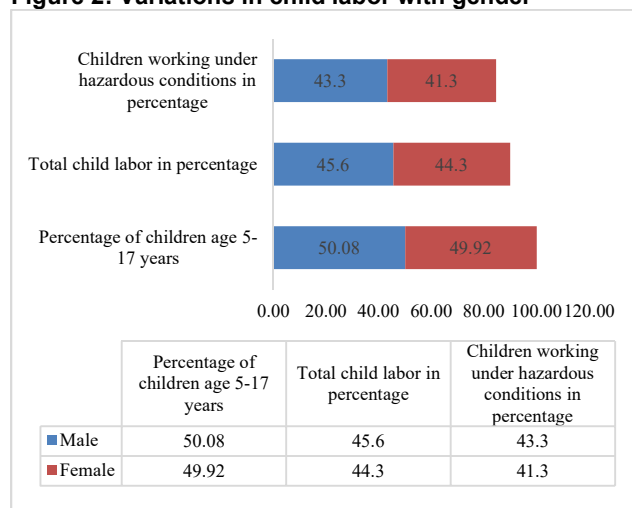
Figure 1: Variation in child labor with the area of residence
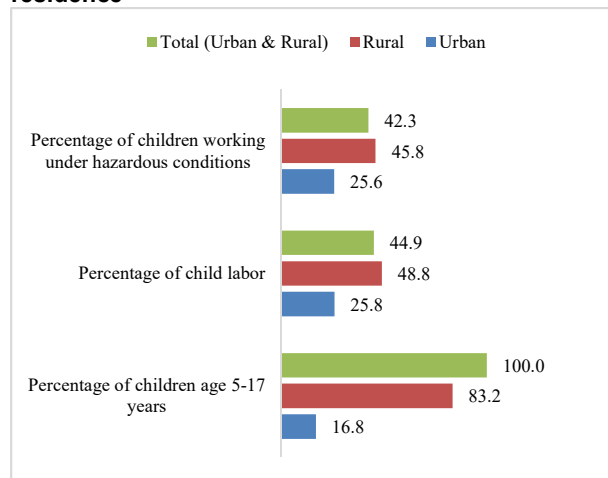
Source: Authors calculation from GB-MCIS (2016-17)

Figure 2 depicts the variations in child labor with gender in percentages. As shown in figure 2 out of the total children aged 5-17 years surveyed 50.08 % were males while 49.92 % were female children. Figure 2 further presents that in terms of child labor there seems no significant variations in child labor concerning gender as 45.6 % male and 44.3 % female children were found involved in child labor. Similarly, 43.3 % of children aged 5-17 years were found working under hazardous conditions as compared to 41.3 % of female children.

Figure 2: Variations in child labor with gender

|	Percentage of children age 5-17 years	Total child labor in percentage	Children working under hazardous conditions in percentage
Male	50.08	45.6	43.3
Female	49.92	44.3	41.3

Source: Authors calculation from GB-MCIS (2016-17)

Figure 3 presents variations in child labor with the age of children. According to figure 3 out of total children aged 5-17 years, 58.0 % of children were 5-11 years old, 23.0 % were 12-14 years old and 19.0 % were 15-17 years old

respectively. As far as the percentage of child labor is concerned 58.0 % of children aged 15-17 years are involved in child labor as compared to 57.3 % for 12-14 age category and 35.6 % for 5-11 years age category. Similarly, the percentage of children working under hazardous conditions is highest (57.4 %) for the 15-17 years age category, 55 % for the 12-14 years age category, and 32.1 % (lowest) for the 5-11 age category. This shows that the highest percentage of children were from the 5-11 age category but the highest number of child labor and children working under hazardous conditions were from the 15-17 age categories. It can be concluded from the results that the incidence of child labor and children working under hazardous conditions increases with the increase in the age of children.

Figure 3: Variations in child labor with the age
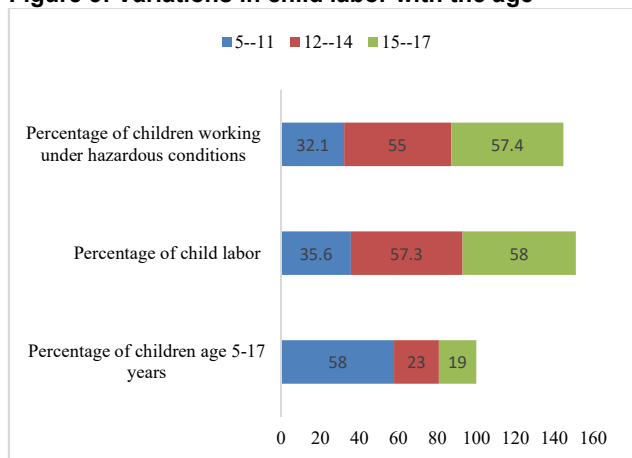
Source: Authors calculation from GB-MCIS (2016-17)

Table 2 show the variations in child labor concerning different wealth index quintile. To check the variation in child labor with income the population was divided into five quintiles. Table 2 further reveals that the highest percentage (56.6 %) of child labor was reported in the poorest quintile, whereas the lowest percentage (26.2 %) of child labor was reported in the richest quintile. Similarly, the percentage of children working under hazardous conditions was highest (52 %) in the poorest quintile while the lowest (24.5 %) in the richest quintile. It is evident from the results that there is a positive relationship between poverty and child labor as the incidence of child labor and children working under hazardous conditions increases with a downward shift from the richest to the poorest wealth index quintile.

Table 2: Variations in child labor with wealth index quintile

Quintile	Number of children age 5-17 years	Total child labor in percentage	Children working under hazardous conditions
Poorest (20 %)	3,553	56.6	52
Second (20 %)	3,425	48.6	45.2
Middle (20 %)	3,052	43.7	41.4
Fourth (20 %)	3,112	45.7	44.7
Richest (20 %)	2,796	26.2	24.5
Source: Authors calculation from GB-MCIS (2016-17)			

Table 3 presents variations in child labor across three divisions of Gilgit-Baltistan province in percentage. According to table 3 around 5,894 children, ages 5-17 were reported in the Gilgit division and under Baltistan and Diamer divisions 5,452 and 4,592 children aged 5-17 years were reported respectively. The prevalence of child labor was reported highest (46.9 %) in the Baltistan division and second highest (44 %) in the Diamer division and lowest (44 %) in the Gilgit division respectively. In the same way, the percentage of children aged 5-17 years working under hazardous conditions was reported highest (44.3 %) in the Baltistan division whereas the second highest (42 %) was reported in the Gilgit division and the lowest (40.2 %) was reported in Diamer division respectively.

Table 3 also presents the variations in child labor across ten districts of Gilgit-Baltistan province. As depicted in table 3 the highest number (3,438) of children aged 5-17 years were reported in district Diamer and the lowest number (401) of children were reported in district Hunza. Similarly, the second-highest number (2,820) of children aged 5-17 years were reported in district Gilgit whereas the second-lowest number (505) of children aged 5-17 years were reported in district Kharmang. As far as child labor is concerned it was reported highest (67 %) in district Nagar while lowest (22.4 %) in district Gilgit. For the rest of the district, the percentage of child labor were reported as Astore (52.9 %), Diamer (41.1 %), Ghanche (44.8 %), Ghizer (63.7 %), Hunza (54.2 %), Kharmang (38.4%), Shigar (49.9 %) and Skardu (48.6 %) respectively. Table 3 further reveals that the percentage of children working under hazardous conditions was reported highest (65.8 %) in district Nagar and lowest (20.3 %) was reported in district Gilgit. It is quite alarming for district Nagar that despite a low number (888) of children aged 5-17 years it has the highest percentage of child labor and children working under hazardous conditions.

Table 3: Variations in child labor across divisions & districts of Gilgit-Baltistan province

Division	Number of children age 5-17 years	Total child labor in percentage	Children working under hazardous conditions in percentage
Gilgit	5894	43.8	42
Baltistan	5452	46.9	44.3
Diamer	4592	44	40.2
District	Number of children age 5-17 years	Total child labor in percentage	Children working under hazardous conditions in percentage
Astore	1154	52.9	50.5
Diamer	3438	41.1	36.7
Ghanche	1403	44.8	40.8
Ghizer	1785	63.7	62.4
Gilgit	2820	22.4	20.3
Hunza	401	54.2	51.9
Kharmang	505	38.4	34.2
Nagar	888	67	65.8
Shigar	831	49.9	47.6
Skardu	2714	48.6	47
Source: Authors calculation from GB-MCIS (2016-17)			

CONCLUSION

The incidence of child labor can be caused by different demand and supply-side factors and determinants. The major focus of this paper is on the supply side determinants of child labor at the household level. The occurrence of child labor at the household level has been explained by many scholars and theorists from across the world. The findings of government reports and researchers from across the world show that the phenomenon of child labor has been influenced by several socio-economic and demographic determinants i.e., education of parents, the income of parents, occupation of parents, area of residence, age of children, and gender of children. Children are more likely to be involved in child labor as they grow older. Child labor is also higher in rural area as compared to urban areas. This research witnesses very little variation by sex. As child labor is higher among children whose mother's education is low and children living in the poorest household. Moreover, it can be concluded that the incidence of child labor and children working under hazardous conditions increases with the increase in the age of children. The ratio of child labor is much higher in the poorest quintile of the population. Reducing household poverty in the region is the second significant measure to combat child labor, as household poverty is a major cause of child labor in the region. An important measure to combat child labor in this region is the sensitization and awareness of parents along with the provision of technical education in the remote rural areas.

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