

**AN ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION OF
CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF HAZARDOUS WORK
ENVIRONMENT IN PAKISTAN**



RESEARCH REPORT

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**THIS RESEARCH REPORT IS *AS PER* THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF LLB DEGREE
(5 YEARS)**

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SESSION 2017-2022**

RESEARCH COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

It is hereby certified that Ms Aiman Noman of LLB Honours (Session 2017-2022), Nadira Hassan Law Department, has carried out this work entitled “An Analysis of economic exploitation of children: A case study of hazardous work environment in Pakistan” under my supervision.

It is assured that the research work is original and has not yet been published anywhere else.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude towards Allah Almighty for providing me the opportunity, health and strength for being able to complete this thesis. I would like to then extend my thanks to Kinnaird College and the entire faculty of Nadira Hassan Law Department and my Head of Department Ms Ayesha Jawad to whom I am incredibly indebted to, for providing me years of knowledge and facilitating me and polishing my analytical and research skills. I would like to specially thank Ms Ayesha Jawad again for being my Supervisor, for thoroughly reading my report multiple times and encouraging me in pursuing this research report. Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and family for their entire support and pushing me towards success especially my parents, Noman Saleem and Marrium Noman, for constantly believing in me and providing me with all the facilities to being able to pursue this research report with confidence.

This research report would not have been possible without the support of any of the people mentioned above.

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ABSTRACT

Child labour or bonded labour is the most common form of modern slavery in brick kilns and glass bangle making industries of Pakistan. Over the years, it has been strongly linked to socio-cultural aspects of the society. This type of complex child labour allows the child as well as their families to associate themselves physically as well as economically so that they become a part of this vicious cycle from which they are unable to break-free. The reason for this never-ending cycle mainly lies in the socio-economic factors which force a society to undertake such bondage. To eliminate such practises our country needs to devise a strategy which includes the economic uplifting, educational training and social stability of such families. This research report will help in understanding the extent to which the child labour has impregnated in such hazardous work environments mainly in brick kiln and glass bangle making industry and its adverse effects on mental and physical health of the children. Moreover, this paper will also emphasize on the international and national legal regimes which have helped in abolishing this threat to our industries and our bonded children over the span of years.

Key words: child labour, hazardous work environment, international legal regimes, brick kilns, glass bangle making industry, national laws

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ILO	International Labour Organization
WFCL	Worst form of child labour
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
TB	Tuberculosis
Chotta	Child worker
Bharai wala	person loading and unloading the bricks at the kiln
Jalai wala	person firing and baking the bricks blocks
Pathera wala	person preparing the clay and stacking the mud bricks
Mistri	skilled person
Bhatta	brick kiln
Nikasi Wala	person for unloading and stacking of brick to be delivered
Taar	wire
Sancha	type of shovel
Bhatti	oven
Sadai	arranging
Jurrai	welding of the bangles
Katai	cut-work
Murrai	moulding/ curve design
Chapai	painting on bangles

Boond	heel
Chaklai	packaging of the bangles
Chatakh	slashing
Tora	sets of bangles
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
PILER	Pakistan Institute of Labour education and research
CPWB	Child Protection and Welfare Bureau
CPIs	Child protection institutions
OHS	Occupational health and Safety study by ILO

LIST OF CASE LAWS

1. Muhammad Suleiman v Station House officer PLD 2020 534 LHC

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years globalisation has led to an increase in local issues and child labour is one of them. In Pakistan, children are working in various hazardous industries including brick kilns, mines, tanneries, carpet and glass bangle manufacturing industries. These hazardous industries employ a silent majority of child labour although they tend to know the menacing nature of the work.

There is no specific definition of a child followed among states. There are different thresholds of identifying a human being as a child. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children has defined a child as *“every human being below the age of 18 years.”* ("Convention on the Rights of the Child", 1990) Moreover, the ILO worst form of child labour convention no 182 has also set down the age limit for child below the age of 18. ("Convention C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)", 1999) While under the Pakistani law the minimum age of a child is 14 years as per Article 11 of the 1973 constitution and Employment of Children Act 1991 which states that *“children under the age of 14 shall not be employed in hazardous work environment.”*

CRC defines child labour as *“work that interferes with the mental and physical health of a child. It looks at the social well-being and development of a child”*. ("Convention on the Rights of the Child", 1990) In contrast to this, the UNICEF defines child labour as *“work that exceeds the minimum hours of work. Such works are to be prohibited and considered harmful.”* ("Child protection", 1946)

The constitution of Pakistan deals with socio-economic wellbeing of children and also safeguards the fundamental rights to security of life, liberty, abolition of slavery and forced labour. The republic government of Pakistan guarantees under article 11 of the constitution that *“no child below the age of 15 shall be allowed to indulge in any hazardous means of employment.”* With time, when the significance of education was realised, article 25-A was enshrined by the 18th amendment of constitution in 2010 stating that how important it was for the children of age 5-16 to be educated and how it is one of the powerful weapon to combat against child labour. Another article i.e. article 35(e) was included which ensured that *“no women or child were to be involved in any labour unsuitable to their age”*. These article of the

1973 constitution of Pakistan expressly prohibit exploitation of children in hazardous work environments.

It is very important to bifurcate the definition of hazardous work and what types of working conditions are considered to be hazardous in nature. The ILO convention No. 182 describes hazardous work as the worst form of child labour (WFCL). It includes all forms of slavery, trafficking of children, offering a child for prostitution, debt bondage, forced or compulsory labour. It includes any work environment which is likely to harm the health, morals and safety of a child (International Labour Organization, 1919). It is mostly argued that a work environment which is likely to harm the health and safety of a child is the area that has received the least amount of limelight. There are no such conventions which provide a comprehensive list for hazardous work environments, instead states have the power to decide the hazardous work list on their own. However, the international law regime aims to protect children in every sphere and has provided some recommendations regarding what types of hazardous works should be prohibited which countries must take into consideration. As per the ILO *worst form of child labour Recommendations 1999 (No 190)* ("Recommendation R190 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190)", 1999) the works that shall be prohibited should incorporate the following:

1. work that exposes children to sexual, physical or emotional abuse
2. Underground work
3. Work involving dangerous machinery, tools or equipment
4. Work in an unhealthy environment for example children being exposed to noxious chemical substances

The term hazardous work environment has also been clearly explained under the national laws as per section 4 of the Employment of children act 1991 where the federal government has provided an extensive list of hazardous environments in which children are strictly prohibited from being employed. The second part of the schedule mentions the processes where employment of children is prohibited including:

1. Work inside underground mines
2. Work in leather tanneries
3. Sandblasting
4. Work with exposure to toxic chemicals

5. Work in glass or metal furnaces or glass bangle manufacturing
6. Stone-crushing
7. Carpet weaving
8. Work in boiler rooms etc.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan states that the child labourers are usually under the age of 10 numbering between eleven and twelve million. (University of San Diego law journal 2001)

The most common factories that use child labour in huge numbers are the brick kilns, carpet weaving, and glass bangle and soccer ball industries. Historians have suggested the basic reason behind a high trend in child labour in Pakistan is the ability of our educational system to accommodate children upon a certain age and a high birth rate. Some families are compelled to sell their children to nearby factories, therefore contributing to the common practice of bonded labour. (asher Ben-arieh, 2016) Despite this, the Pakistani government plays no role in banishing such activities; neither the banks allow loans to families who are in need of money, so as a result the head of the family is forced to give their child into bonded labour in order to pay back the loan. Factory owners usually employ child labour as they are cheaper, more energetic, and more efficient and do not tend to oppose their boss unlike adult labourers. Moreover, they work more with less pay which is very cost effective for any owner of the factory.

Lastly, Pakistan has been chosen as a case study for this research paper because Pakistan is in the phase of developing itself economically and politically and one of the reasons of its development is the involvement and exploitation of children in life threatening industries. These industries produce products for export and in this way Pakistan will be able to boost its economy through foreign currency. Moreover, such industries host a major concentration of child labour which is cheap and easily available for economic gains.

1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The researcher aims to shed light upon the concept of child labour and how children are brutally tortured in hazardous work environments of the industrial sectors especially in brick kilns and glass bangle making industry. Through this study the author will provide an in-depth analysis on the processes involved in such industries and what roles are played by children at different stages in such industries. Lastly, the study will focus on the flaws of the existing legislation which does not provide justice to children for their rights violations and will provide recommendations which can then be used by the government officials and stakeholders to draw inference from in order to mitigate the violations whenever children are exploited in hazardous work environment.

1.2 PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this study include:

- To evaluate the definition of hazardous work environment under international law.
- To examine how the concept of child labour in hazardous work environment developed in the historical era.
- To analyse the process of brick making and glass bangle making in Pakistan and the involvement of children in these harmful work environments.
- To ponder upon the weaknesses in the national laws for child protection.
- To provide recommendations regarding the implementation of international and national laws which seek to secure the rights of children in hazardous work environments.

1.2.2 Research Questions

1. Who is a child and how is child labour defined under international and national jurisdictions?
2. What does hazardous work environment mean and how did the concept of child labour develop in the historical era?
3. What is the role of glass-bangle manufacturing and brick making industries in economically exploiting children from a young age?
4. What are the existing international and national regimes followed in Pakistan for the protection of children against these hazardous work environments?
5. What are the flaws in the current legislation to ensure the protection of children against harmful work environments and what can be done to provide children their rights in such a stringent work environment?

1.2.3 Nature of the Study

Due to the current pandemic (Covid-19) this study has been conducted in a qualitative nature. The data shall be collected through secondary resources which include books, journal articles, research papers, newspaper articles, government websites and official websites of various human/child rights organizations.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Mohamad Abbas Ali (2017) in his article “*Hidden hazardous child labour as a complex human rights phenomenon: a case study of child labour in Pakistan’s brick-making industry*” clearly underlines that Pakistan is the third-largest country for producing brick and most of the workers in such industries are children below the age of 18. Moreover, the author highlights conditions under which the children work including working 6 days a week for a maximum of 12-15 hours per day, working under the scorching heat of the sun and inhalation of noxious fumes. The children are forced to work in harsh environments without adequate medical and health facilities. Lastly, to prove his point the author mentions some of the incidents that occasionally happened with children in such industries.

University of San Diego School of Law (2005) “*Child labour: The Pakistani Effort to end a scourge upon humanity — is it enough?*” Concentrates on how the worst forms of child labour can be reduced. The paper provides an ideal solution by making all the worst forms of child labour a jus cogen norm that will be accepted by all international communities and from which no derogation can be accepted. It also provides an extensive list of international and national laws that prohibit the exploitation of child labour in the hazardous work environment and how such exploitation is considered a crime under torture and slavery as a jus cogen norm.

Muhammad Asif Khan LL.M University of Liverpool (2004) in his paper “*Implementing laws against child labour: a case study of Pakistan*” dissects the word child according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF. Further, the author discusses the historical background of the concept of child labour. Pakistan after independence from the British was still under the influence of the British and had the same patterns of child labour as that in Britain in the 18th and 19th centuries. The province of Punjab had the highest level of population, thus more children were exploited for work. Pakistan started developing and children were hired to work in industries including football, glass bangle, carpet, and brick-making industries.

Ayaz Qureshi and Ali Khan (2016) in their book “*Bonded Labour in Pakistan.*” Evidently explain the process of brick-making in brick kilns and the involvement of children in such processes. The children mostly work as patheras, bharaiwalas, and nikasiwalas. Children are involved in loading and unloading the brick. The patheras load the bricks from the fields onto the donkey carts and take them to the kilns. They then work under the supervision of mistri to bake the bricks at the highest temperature and once they are baked children work as nikasiwalas and are required to go sell them in the urban areas.

Working paper (2004) on “*A rapid assessment on bonded labour in hazardous industries in Pakistan: glass bangle-making industries*” provides an extensive study as to how children are employed in glass-bangle manufacturing industries. Children are exposed to hazardous environments including high temperatures where the glass is moulded into rings. They are exposed to harmful equipment such as taar (sharp strings). The moulded glass can easily break and cause skin burn or damage the hands or eyes of children. The harmful gases can cause health diseases such as Tuberculosis (TB) and asthma etc.

Survey Report (2004) on “*Baseline survey report on child labour in glass bangles industry –Hyderabad*” includes a detailed account of children employed in glass bangle industries in Karachi, Hyderabad and how children are forced into such stringent environments by their families. This survey also provides extensive recommendations for improving the lives of children by providing them quality education, alleviating poverty, providing small business start-ups for adults so that they do not have to force their children into working in hazardous industries. Lastly, this survey explains what steps can be taken by governments for fighting this battle for children against exploitative situations which are physically and mentally harmful for them.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This paper will be divided into the following five chapters:

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The first chapter will focus on the meaning of the words “*hazardous work environment*” and “*child*” in terms of national and international law. Secondly, this chapter will discuss the historical era of the development of child labour and how it has paved its way into the contemporary era. Lastly, this chapter will shed light upon the point as to why Pakistan has been chosen as a case study for this research report.

CHAPTER II & III: EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN HAZARDOUS WORK INDUSTRIES

Chapter 2 and 3 encompasses the details on how child rights are being violated in two of the most highly child populated industries in Pakistan including the brick-making industry and glass bangle-making industry. Moreover, this chapter will list down the reasons for the flourishing increase in the rate of child labour.

CHAPTER IV: PAKISTAN EXISTING LEGAL REGIME FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST HAZARDOUS WORK ENVIRONMENT

This chapter will deconstruct the international statutes that aim to protect the rights of children against hazardous work environments and how successful these legislations have been

in Pakistan. Further, this chapter will explain some national laws for child rights protection against harmful work.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will conclude the research report by providing recommendations as to how the flaws can be mitigated in near future to preserve the rights of children.

CHAPTER II:

EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN HAZARDOUS WORK INDUSTRIES

As it has been explained in the previous chapter that hazardous work environment are those environment that have a negative impact on a child's physical and mental well-being this chapter will focus on some of the industries where children are involved in such hazardous work and how they are exposed to hazardous conditions in such industries.

Child labour is a deep-rooted phenomenon in Pakistan's society. Children are exploited in different ways in developing and under-developed countries. According to the ILO 179 million children are exploited in hazardous work environment where they are ill-treated and tortured. Different researches have proved that children are usually forced to work in urban areas where they have to sacrifice their education, health and family just to earn a living. Boys are usually exploited as labour at work shops, factories tea or food stalls while on the other hand female children are forced to work as maids, domestic labour at one's house or baby sitters. The child labour in such sectors are known by a particular word "chotta" (child worker) in the Pakistani society. These children are absorbed in this vicious cycle at a very young age and the government does not even consider it as a violation of their right. While on the other hand the employer considers these children as their commodities and deals with them in ways which can be harmful for their social wellbeing.

2.1. Reasons for flourishing child labour:

There are various reasons as to why children are forced to leave their happy life and end up in a torture cell. (Ahsan Khan, 2018)

2.1.1 Poverty

Poverty is one of the main reasons for the existence of child labour in developing countries such as India and Pakistan because more than half of the population lives below the poverty line. To earn money becomes the need for the survival. Thus, families are forced to give up their child's education at a tender age and engage them into work. They are mostly

given to the thaikedar (employer) in exchange of money and the child has to pay off the debt of his/her parents by working day and night for the employer. Low income of the family, huge family sizes or less education of the parents also plays a role in making poverty a major cause of child labour. The parents being less educated do not recognise the importance of education in their child's life thus do not encourage their children to gain knowledge instead they give them away for work. Moreover, lack of family planning concepts among societies has led to an increase in the size of family leading to less resources eventually increasing poverty. Once poverty is high children can work in any environment no matter if it is dangerous, just to get money into their pockets.

2.1.2 Globalisation of cheap labour

Shopkeepers, factory owners etc. use child labour as a tactic to earn higher levels of profits. They employ children ranging from 8-14 years old who are young, active and are physically stronger than adults. Children are innocent and they are easily manipulated and influenced by their master and thus, are required to do more work in less time. Employers hire labour at a cheaper rate and children accept every rate given to them because at the end of the day it is all about earning money for their families.

2.1.3 Lack of education

Even though after independence, children of Pakistan are deprived of their fundamental right of education. Nearly more than half of the population of Pakistan is illiterate. Children work as labour during the time period when they should be at schools getting education. Lack of knowledge of child's upbringing and the importance of education has been one of the major factors that has increase the statistics of children being employed as forced or bonded labour.

2.1.4 Failure of implementation of laws

One of the major reasons for the increase in the statistics for child labour is the failure of the government to implement the laws regarding the ban of child labour. The government has failed to provide assurance of basic amenities of life to the citizens which forced the poor families into luring their children to work as forced labour against their will.

2.2 Children working in Brick-making industry (Brick kilns)

According to the global slavery index of 2013 Pakistan is the 3rd largest country that has experienced worst forms of child labour. (Child labour at brick kilns- Punjab 2021). The children are working in miserable conditions and suffering physical and mental abuse. According to the UNICEF almost 2/3rd of Pakistan's working population is involved in brick making industry, most of them who are children. Children are forced to work under inhumane conditions, exposing them to hazardous work environments and chemical toxic substances. Children from the ages 8-12 years are mostly employed in brick kilns because they are young blood with high levels of energy so they are easily manipulated to work for as much time as their employer/master wants them to.

2.3 Processes involved in Brick-making Industry

The labour that works at the brick kilns is very unique. The labour is employed in bulks who are also the resident's at the brick kilns. This means that children have to stay with their families and eventually have to become their helping hand. Most of the brick kilns are situated in the outskirts so children are deprived of basic necessities like health care or education. Due to the growing demand of this industry the employers offer huge advance amount of money to the families in order to keep them to work as labourers. Sometimes the families try to pay off the debt themselves but sometimes this responsibility falls on the shoulders of the children.

The labour used during the process of making bricks includes Pathera (person preparing the clay and stacking the bricks), Bharai wala (the person who is loading and unloading the bricks in the kiln (Bhatta) and stacking them in the Bhatta for baking), Jalai wala (the person firing and baking the bricks in the kilns) and Nikasi wala (the person unloading and stacking the bricks ready to be sold in the urban areas). ("Unfree labour in Pakistan: work, debt and bondage in brick kilns", 2004)

2.3.1 Step 1

The process of making the bricks usually starts on Saturday and goes on till Wednesdays where mud bricks are made and then dried in the sun by the local people working at the kilns also known as the Patheras. The Patheras have a specific routine of digging the clay with shovels from the underground and mix the clay with the sand vigorously a few times to thicken the mixture. Children bring water buckets from the nearby fields to moisten the

mixture. The bricks are made using a sancha (type of shovel) on the bare ground. The bricks are then left to dry for a maximum of one day. The sides are turned on an hourly basis to ensure that the bricks dry completely. On Thursdays the work stops and resumes on Friday after the Friday prayer. Till then the workers act as Jamadar who search for child labour to carry out the arranging and distribution task of the dried bricks.

2.3.2 Step 2

Once the bricks are fully dried, they are loaded and transported to the nearest kiln on donkey carts by the locals. This part of the process is usually played by the children. The children have to load these heavy bricks onto the carts and have to take them to the kilns for baking without breaking them.

2.3.3 Step 3

When the bricks are brought to the kiln they are loaded in the kilns by Bharai walas including children who stack them up in a hot oven under the supervision of the mistri (skilled person). Inside the kilns these bricks are again covered in the mud mixture to make thick layers and then baked at a very high temperature for some days. The kilns are lit with fire by coal which is imported from Baluchistan and Sindh. The baking process is carried out by a team of 4-5 people known as Jalai Walas. This step is the most hazardous step of the entire brick-making process because it includes work with open fires. In summers the doors are opened but in winters due to extreme cold temperature the doors need to be closed thus, making it more difficult for workers to work in a closed heated environment.

2.3.4 Step 4

The baked bricks are removed from the oven by Nikasi Walas. They have an extra job to choose the bricks quality wise and then stack them in order to be delivered in the urban areas. The bricks are again loaded on the tractors by children. Usually the customers send their own labours to get the bricks but sometimes the patheras help in carrying out the task in order to earn extra money.

2.4 Effect on children of such hazardous work environment:

Children working at brick kilns have to perform multiple tasks. The most common work undertaken by children is the loading, unloading and arranging of bricks, preparing the mixture

and firing of the brick kilns. This shows that children are exposed to worst forms of child labour in brick kilns even though they have to operate under the supervision of a skilled person. They have to extract the clay from the soil which is a tiresome task for children aged 14-15 years. After the extraction of clay they have to crush, grind and mix the clay with water and other substances to make the proper mixture. For such processes boys are usually asked to work because of their physical strength. The problems associated with this process includes cuts, wounds and punctures. As most of the children working are immature they do not have the knowledge of handling the hazardous equipment's thus leading to injuries. Heavy bricks fall onto their feet's causing bruises, fractures and sprains. Researchers have stated that the most severe injury suffered by children while working at brick kilns is the high levels of musculoskeletal problems found in the wrists, hands and lower backs of children who are usually dealing with the loading, unloading and packing of the bricks.

Another dangerous work carried out by children is firing the kilns. They have to dig and dump the ashes. This exposes them to burning hands and feet because they are not provided with the proper equipment including proper shoes and gloves. Moreover, working for long hours in the kilns can lead to problems such a heat strokes, fainting, heat rashes or fatigue. Working in unhealthy conditions can lead to health issues including skin diseases, diarrhoea, respiratory issues and haemorrhoids. ("Statistics on Working Children and Hazardous Child Labour in Brief (First edition)", 1997)

2.5 Actions taken by the Government:

The government has been seen taking some progressive steps towards limiting the employment of children in hazardous works at brick kilns. Recently, the government has announced that it will be registering FIR's and seals the brick kilns as per the Prohibition of child labour at brick kilns act 2016 against individuals who will employ children at brick kilns. Moreover, the government has declared to provide stipends to people in order to support them in letting their children get education. (The news international, 2016)

In 2020 the Pakistan judiciary has proved that it has and will cater the problems of child labour and will eradicate such problems in the near future when the Lahore High court in the case of **Muhammad Suleiman v Station house officer** (*Muhammad Suleiman v Station house officer*, 2020) issued a writ of mandamus against the functionaries to properly implement the laws in spirit for the elimination of forced, bonded and child labour from every sector

including brick kilns, mining, tanneries and glass-bangle making industries etc. The actions taken by the government of Pakistan are further catered under chapter 4 of the research report.

CHAPTER III

HAZARDOUS WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN IN GLASS-BANGLE MAKING INDUSTRY

This chapter will be dealing with another money making industry where children are involved in hazardous work environments i.e. the glass-bangle making industry. The main focus of this chapter is on two issues including:

1. the dominance of children in glass-bangle making industry
2. exposure to hazardous work environment

Bangles have been a vital ornament for women of the sub-continent over a span of years. Married women consider it to be an essential part of their everyday wear and take it as a token of joy and happiness since the pre-partition time. Bangles are adorned by women of every age and thus, it has become a permanent part of the tradition and culture.

Since the bangles are designed in every colour and pattern to make them look attractive for women, there is a lot of hard work done by the producers with a very low cost of around rupees two to three per day. Although, they are produced all over the sub-continent but Hyderabad, Sindh in Pakistan is the major hub where bangles of different designs and colours are produced.

However, the bangle industry is one of the underdeveloped industries where thousands of men women and children work at low wages either in the industry or at their homes. Children of all ages ranging from three to five years work in these industries in dark rooms with unhygienic conditions. The soft hands of children get injured due to harsh and hazardous instruments as they have to take out molten pieces of glass out of the fire to make bangles out of them. The burning flames affect their eyes and lungs.

3.1 Steps involved in glass-bangle making industry

The procedure of making bangles is quite a lengthy process where around seventy to eighty percent of the work is done by children and women. ("Baseline survey of homebased workers of bangle industry", 2004)

3.1.1 Step 1 (Bhatti)

The first step of bangle making is where pieces of glass are put into an oven to give the bangles a round shape. Female children are usually opted to carry out this process. Children are exposed to hot fumes which can be dangerous for their bare hands and eyes because the temperature is extremely high and they are not given proper equipment for safety.

3.1.2 Step 2 (Sadai)

In this step the bangle workers have to join the two ends of the glass on an iron plate to give it a shape of the bangle with the heat of the fumes of the iron plate. This step is also mostly done by women and children. They have to use gas pipes to blow the flames. They have to work without a fan in order to give the bangles a proper shape. They have to sit in the same position constantly for hours which can cause different posture problems in the long-run. The children are given 3-5 toras consisting of 300-500 bangles which they have to mould in a day. The problems associated with this procedure include, dehydration, asthma and suffocation, eye damage and hand burning. More fatal diseases include TB and lungs diseases because of the fumes produced by the kerosene oil.

3.1.3 Step 3 (Katai)

In this step the industry employs children from the age group of 10-12 years to work with expensive machines used to carve designs on the bangles. First these machines were only available at the industry but later with the passage of time these machines were domestically available to the children at their homes in order to have a good flow of the work without any interference. The children are paid rupees 8-40 per set of bangles that are designed. The children often suffer cuts and bruises on their hands because the blades used in the machine are very sharp.

3.1.4 Step 4 (Murray)

Murray is the process where the designs are carved on the glass bangles to make them look attractive. This work is done manually by home based women and children. They have to work in suffocated environment because of the specific requirements of the murray process. The murray process is a time consuming process which requires 10-12 hours per day. The children sit in front of the flames and use different colour glass to make designs on the bangles. They use iron rods, heat the glass with fire flames and then carve the specific design on the

glass bangle. It is very difficult to sit in the same position for such long hours thus children divide the bangles sets into half and complete this process in 3-4 days and earn only 20 to 40 rupees for such hard work.

3.1.5 Step 5 (Chapai)

This is yet another process which is time consuming and very dangerous. The equipment's use for the chapai process include different colours, white powder, thinner, oil, iron rod, glitters and rubber sheets etc. This process gives an extra element to the bangles to make them look appealing so that the customers can buy more of them and eventually leading to earning more money. The list of equipment's mentioned above clearly shows that these are hazardous equipment's which can have a negative impact on the child's health including skin and eyes allergies along with breathing issues.

3.1.6 Step 6 (Decoration)

As the trend of bangles increased in different areas the workers added a twist to the design by adding beads, pearls, and metallic chains to decorate the bangles to make them look fancy. Once the decoration is completed the bangles are packed around cardboard rolls and wrapped in a white plastic bag. This process is the least dangerous of children and the cheapest process where children earn a maximum of 6 to 10 rupees in total for packaging.

3.1.7 Step 7 (Boond)

Boond is another strenuous step in the manufacturing of glass bangles. Previously, this work was done by men but with the passage of time due to poverty children were also involved in this process. In this step the children use a tool on which the design is carved. They dip that tool in the chemical and then press the design on the bangle to make it permanent. Moreover, to give the design any colour they use artificial powdered colours and then put it in the oven to fix the colour on the design. Similarly, in this process hazardous chemicals are used which can be risky for children working in the industry.

3.1.8 Step 8 (Chaklai)

The process of chaklai involves packaging of the set of bangles with a jute string and arranged into boxes to be sent to the market for sale. This is the lowest earning process of the entire bangle making business.

3.1.9 Step 9 (Chatakh)

This process is called slashing where the workers pick out the broken bangles by separating them from the other bangles. The method of doing this is very unique. The children vibrate the bangles close to their ear to listen which bangles are broken. After this they pack the broken bangles together and earn around 0.5 to 2 rupees for the faulty bangle toras.

3.2.0 Step 11 (Filing of the roll)

The last step of the bangle making is filling up of the rolls. This is a sort of specific packaging in order to prevent the bangles from breaking. The rolls are made from hard paper to keep the bangles in place. The workers fold the hard papers into rolls with their bare hands. The paper used is quite sharp which can cause cuts, bruises or marks on their hands.

3.3 Effect of hazardous environment on Children:

The families who work in the bangle industry belong to a very low socio-economic group of the society. They are forced to live in an unhealthy and congested environment and as a result, they are unable to afford the daily necessities of their lives. The miserable condition involves five to ten members of a family living in a single shared room with no means of proper ventilation. They not only live in that room but are also forced to work in the same environment.

Whenever a child is born, the first thing that he or she learns is how to play with bangles. They also inherit the skill of bangle making from their mothers and they start working from early childhood which contributes to child labour. As a result, the child works all his or her life for the sake of bangle making including the significant matrimonial period of his or her life. Moreover, such people are not provided with proper health facilities and they lack awareness regarding hazardous diseases which can later prove to be fatal.

Most of the children working in bangle-making industry experience frequent backache, knee and joint pains as they have to sit for long hours in front of blazing flames of the fire which in turn causes suffocation at the workplace. The workers are exposed to a number of health hazards like electric shocks, chemical effects on hands like cuts on fingers. TB and asthma like diseases are very prevalent in such working conditions. Their eyes can be affected caused by glass injuries.

3.4 Case Studies

Different aged children across Pakistan have been victims of serious life-threatening hazardous work environments in the glass-bangle making industries. Children have reported their cases with news reporters as to how they are treated at such industries. Hyderabad is considered as the hub of glass bangle manufacturing industry where every year thousands of children are employed to fulfil their basic needs. ("A rapid assessment of bonded labour in hazardous industries in Pakistan: glass bangle-making, tanneries and construction", 2004) Shumaila, a year 15 years old girl in Hyderabad used to sit in a room full of fire with no windows opened for air to pass holds a bangle in one hand and a sharp glass stick in the other hand carving floral patterns on the bangles. Shumaila repeats this routine everyday decorating 60 dozen of bangles and only earns Rs. 30 for doing such hazardous work. She complained that doing this tedious task everyday burns her finger from the tips and her nails bleed by using sharp equipment. ("RIGHTS-PAKISTAN: Glass Bangle Industry Rides On Child Labour", 2003)

Saima, a 22 year old girl started working at the Hyderabad glass-bangle making industry when she was 7 years old. Moreover, a 13 year old boy Munir in Karachi, works for hours and hours in the industry to get a bicycle for himself that too from his own hard-earned money. He sits in an unventilated room cutting the long bars of glass using a cutting file into different batches. This causes eye-problems, wounds cuts and pains in the lower back area and joints by sitting in the same crouching position for a long time. Yet, these children do not complain because they have become experienced and skilled in what they are doing and no longer consider such work as hazardous. They have no dreams to achieve something big in life. They prefer to stick to their jobs because they have gotten immune to such environments and they need this money to run their families. ("A rapid assessment of bonded labour in hazardous industries in Pakistan: glass bangle-making, tanneries and construction", 2004)

Amanullah, a 13-years old boy started working at the glass bangle manufacturing industry in Hyderabad when he was 7 years old in order to run his household. Amanullah's older and younger sisters also work at the industry for 8 to 9 hours per day. Even though they work at the industry but are not able to earn a lot of money to meet both ends. The entire family of the boy earns only Rs. 4000 in a month which make them fall below the poverty line. Amanullah and his family have to face sever conditions including sickness, headache, skin

diseases, injuries, bruises etc. every day just to get some money in order to get the basic necessities.

Most of the above mentioned case studies are only brought forward by new reporters and are not argued before the courts because child labour in hazardous industries in Pakistan is not considered to be an issue which should be brought under limelight.

CHAPTER IV

PAKISTAN EXISTING LEGAL REGIME FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST HAZARDOUS WORK ENVIRONMENT

As it has been discussed in the previous chapters how children are exposed to hazardous work environment in two major industries of Pakistan i.e. Brick Kiln industry and glass-bangle making industry and how these industries play a major role in exploiting children from a very young age. Therefore, this chapter will be focusing on the international regimes which can help children from being exploited in hazardous industries and will explain whether Pakistan, a state that is signatory to most of the international regimes has been able to curtail this unfair utilization of children in these risky industries. This chapter will further shed light on the national legislations introduced by the Pakistani Government in order to stabilise the situation.

4.1 Development of International regimes with regards to child rights protection in hazardous work environments:

The problem of exploitation of children can be resolved through productive economic legislations because of which children can get their basic rights as well as their leisure activities. The recognition of child rights can be dated back to the times of World War I when an international peace-making organization was established known as the League of Nations. The League of Nations included various treaties and international declarations such as the 1924 Geneva Declaration which stated that, “*Children must be protected from all kinds of exploitation.*” (Legislative History of the Convention on the rights of the child Volume I, 2007). UN with time evolved the rights of children by introducing the Universal Declaration of Human rights 1948 (Nations, 1948) focusing on the social rights of children which was to be used by states as a basis to form their own set of rights and duties for humans including children. After the World War II the General assembly adopted new declaration in 1959 called the Declaration on the rights of children (Assembly, 1959) which acknowledged all the needs of children and states had an obligation to fulfil those needs. The declaration of legal rights of children had moral obligations on states to protect children but looking at the vulnerable conditions of the children it felt that there was a need for a separate treaty to provide legal obligations on states for child protection because children are an equally important part of the society.

4.1.1 Convention on the Rights of children (CRC):

The CRC is the first legally binding international convention that solely focuses on children and includes a full range of child rights including social, economic, political and civil rights. The convention was adopted on 20th November 1989 with four basic principles:

1. Working for the best interest of children
2. Non-discrimination among children
3. Right to life and survival
4. The views of children should be respected

The convention was ratified by all the states including Pakistan except USA. Ratification of the convention means that states must by all means ensure these rights are to be recognized and implemented. ("Convention on the Rights of the Child", 1990) The CRC has realized the importance of rights of children as it enforces the states to safeguard the rights of children by allowing them freedom of speech. Over the years, children have been a victim of oppression and exploitation at the hands of their owners. The convention has developed the concept of protection of the rights of the children and in this regard article 32 states that the "*children should be protected from economic exploitation.*" ("Convention on the Rights of the Child", 1990). In addition to this, children should be protected by developing legislature, social and educational means. Certain laws should be devised as to under which age a child must be employed and to what extent he or she can be burdened with labour.

Pakistan has been facing a backlash from the UNGA for not implementing these human rights at national level even though Pakistan is a signatory to this convention from 1990. By ratifying this treaty Pakistan is under an obligation to legislate policies and measures for child protection but till date the situation remains the same. The UN provided recommendations to Pakistan to introduce Child protection Advisory boards and CPIs which will assess the needs of children and in turn develop childcare plans for the future but it has been over a span of 8 years that the government has failed to introduce any such organizations. According to a report of UNICEF 2017, more than 16% of Pakistan's children between the ages of 5-17 years are facing issues of child labour. (*The news international, 2019*)

4.1.2 International labour Organization Conventions with regards to child security:

According to the ILO labour peace is the key to a prospering society and state. The main aim of the ILO is to promote social justice and protect the rights of labourers of every age. The ILO is based on two comprehensive conventions against total abolition of child labour. *The Convention No. 138* is based on the notion that the very presence of a child at the workplace is the major reason for promotion of child labour. Under this convention children below a certain age are not allowed to work in any hazardous labour. In fact a minimum age of 15 was set for child labour. However, those under the age of 18 shall not be involved in life-threatening laborious activities. In addition to this *Recommendation No. 146* ("Recommendation R146 - Minimum Age Recommendation, 1973 (No. 146)", 1973) states that proper safety precautions should be taken for those working below the age of 18.

The *Convention No. 182* addresses to the worst form of child labour and advises its members to take immediate and effective measures to reduce all forms of child labour. Therefore, due to the implementation of the above conventions and recommendations children have been refrained from working in any kind of illegal activity including child prostitution, working at brick kilns or hazardous industries etc. Moreover, children are encouraged to get education as its one of the powerful means of eradication of child labour.

4.2 National Laws on children working in harmful environment and their weaknesses:

Working in severe harmful conditions is a harsh reality faced by Pakistani children. Although Pakistan has ratified the international conventions for the prevention of child labour in the country but the Government of Pakistan has taken some necessary steps at national level as well to curb this issue.

4.2.1 Constitution of Pakistan 1973

The basic law which acts as a shield for children is the *1973 constitution- the supreme law of the land itself*. *Article 11(3)* of the constitution categorically obliges the state, not to employ any child below the age of 14 in any hazardous work, mine or factory ("the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan", 1973). *Article 25A* provides a basic right to children to get free education from the age of five-sixteen ("the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan",

1973). Moreover, *article 37(e)* elaborates on the fact that safe and healthy working environment must be provided to all individuals (including women and children) for work. Women and children shall not be exploited in working conditions which are not suitable to their sex and age ("the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan", 1973)

4.2.2 Pakistan Employment of children Act 1991

The Pakistan employment of children act (*referred to as The Act*) is a law that was adopted at the federal level and all the provinces of Pakistan were to follow the provisions of the said law. The law defines “child” as “*a person below the age of 14*” which is similar to the age mentioned in the constitution of Pakistan. However, after the 18th amendment to the 1973 constitution the age was increased to 16 years without changing the age number in all the available child labour laws thus, creating a confusion in the age bracket as to who is to be considered as a child ("Constitution (Eighteenth Amendment) Act, 2010", 2010). With time the provinces enacted their own provincial legislation regarding child labour and changed the age number of child according to their own needs and requirements. Therefore, this contradiction remains there and implementation of a uniform law becomes difficult in the country.

Section 4 of the act provides an extensive list by the federal government which includes all the hazardous employment occupations where children can be abused at the stake of employers. The far-reaching negative consequence of this list is that it does not include occupations which are seriously hazardous for children such as children working at brick kilns or doing domestic labour at households. While the province of Punjab and Sindh have a major concentration of brick kilns where children are seen at the site most of the time doing hazardous works.

Lastly this law has given sanctions for employing children in the hazardous occupations mentioned in the list as per section 4 of The Act. Under section 14 the government can punish with imprisonment for term that can be extended up to one year or PKRS 20,000 fine or both ("Pakistan. Employment of Children Act, 1991", 1993)

4.2.3 Punjab Prohibition of child labour at Brick Kilns act 2016

Children working at brick kilns was not included in the list provided by the Employment of children act 1991 therefore, the Government of Punjab introduced a separate legislation at the provincial level to deal with the issue of children working at brick kilns known as the Punjab

Prohibition of child labour at Brick Kilns act of 2016 which consists of 19 sections ("The Punjab Prohibition of Child Labour at Brick Kilns Act 2016", 2016). Under this act, children are refrained from working at brick kilns factories as it poses a hazard to their overall health including growth and education.

Every child who is willing and wants to engage him or herself shall be enforced to a written contract between the employee and the owner based on specific terms and conditions. On the other hand, if any brick kilns factory fails to meet the set criteria for the child and does not provide appropriate working conditions, then the authority might seal the factory for not more than seven days.

4.2.4 Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, Punjab 2004:

The Pakistani Government in 2004 initiated a project called the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) in every province in order to provide shelter, rehabilitation and protection to the neglected children across Pakistan. The Bureau works under the supervision of the chief minister of each province consisting of board of governors which includes nine members of the government and six from the private sector. The main aim of this bureau is to rehabilitate them, educate them, make them responsible citizens and reunify these vulnerable children to their families. The CPWB has helped bring this issue in eyes of public and provided ways for combatting this menace. The Bureau has setup a help-line number i.e. 1121 which is used to report cases of children being abused, working in hazardous environment or maltreatment cases.

Recently, on 23rd February 2020 the Chairperson of the CPWB Punjab, Miss Sara Ahmad gave an interview to *The News* where she mentioned the reforms that were to be introduced to tackle this situation (the news international, 2020). She further mentioned that the bureau is expanding its ambit and is taking measures to bring all the child protection institutions under its control. Moreover, the bureau is extending its jurisdiction to provide shelter to children working under hazardous work environments. The positive work done by the bureau is to lodge FIR's against the culprits and rescuing children from violent situations. Lastly, she mentioned that the *Punjab Destitute and Neglected children act of 2004* must be amended as it does not cover major issues that children are facing in Punjab.

The major flaws of the bureau includes the lack of infrastructure, lack of resources to rescue the children and last but not the least financial issues which have led to a decrease in the percentage of children safely residing at the bureau.

4.2.5 Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act 2016

The Punjab Restriction on employment of children act was introduced by looking at the situation of children in Punjab. The schedule of the Act provides an extensive list of 38 occupations that are considered hazardous for children under law including working at cement industries, toxic chemicals, carpet weaving, bangle manufacturing, underground mines and quarries etc. (the express tribune, 2016). Section 4 of the Act advises the provincial government to constitute a Provincial committee on child labour to recommend administrative and legislative actions and amendments against child labour. The Act introduced penalties and sanctions including jail for a minimum of 6 months and fine up to RS 50, 000.

4.3 Major limitation of all the national legislations in Pakistan:

The major drawback for the national legislations available for protection and safeguard of children is lack of implementation. The laws are extremely effective on paper but the practical implementation of law is least seen. For example in 2010 the express tribune reported 250,000 children in Pakistan are forced to work at brick kilns. The *Pakistan Institute of Labour education and research (PILER)* conducted a survey which states that children suffer at the risk of owners. Women and children are paid extremely low for the difficult work they do. Most of the times the judges of the court directed the government of Punjab to get all the brick kilns in Punjab registered but authorities have shown extreme laxity in implementing all the laws (The express tribune, 2010). All the efforts made by the social activists in freeing the children from this chain of bonded child labour have rendered futile because the situation remains the same. Children till today are suffering and are not able to get justice.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In Pakistan, basic rights of children have been violated over the span of years. We as a nation have not been able to fulfil the obligatory rights of children which have lead them to being victimized in all sorts. With every passing year, thousands of children are inducted for all types of dreadful child labour thus violating their needs. In order to prevail justice, the parliament of Pakistan should devise policies and should ensure their implementation. It is time to realise the fact that no labour or job is completely safe for children and policies should be designed to ensure the proper overall wellbeing of a child. Safe and hazardous labour should be well distinguished and children should be allowed to choose the labour wisely.

The vulnerability of children has increased the need of devising prompt policies to protect such generation from abuse and exploitation. The main reason behind such policies should be to ensure that children do not work in environments which are not suitable for them but also that they cannot work before attaining the age of majority which should be the same at international and national level.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The previous chapter provided a detailed review of the international and national regime along with its weaknesses present in Pakistan for child rights protection against hazardous work environments. The focal point of this chapter will include recommendations to the existing legislation as to what changes can be introduced and how these laws can be made more effective for child rights protection. Lastly, this chapter will focus on how implementation of these laws along with the recommendations be ensured in third world countries like Pakistan where vast percentage of the population includes children working in hazardous work environment.

The following points provide some recommendations to the Government of Pakistan and stakeholder to guarantee full implementation of policies for the betterment of children.

5.1 Incorporate international rules and regulations of the conventions into the national laws

It is said that a law cannot operate in a vacuum and is always backed up by a policy which is initiated through dialogues and consultations of relevant stakeholders. Ideally a law has its roots in a sound policy and likelihood of success of such law is more than a hasty law which is not supported by a policy. Therefore, in the present case the child labour concerns must be included in the national laws, policies and strategies. The national laws must provide a dynamic approach including the informal sector where children are involved in harmful work. The first and the foremost point that the national laws must include is that the government of Pakistan should ratify the landmark ILO convention No. 138 for setting the minimum age of working children. The national laws should include detailed and comprehensive lists of industries as provided by most international conventions which carry out hazardous work so that it is made easier for states to comply with such lists and stop from exploiting children in such industries. The national laws can add provisions regarding *light work* as per article 7 of the ILO convention 138 where it explains that states can allow children from the ages of 13-15 years to carry out like work meaning any work which is not likely to cause harm to their health and does not prejudice their attendance to school and getting education.

Secondly, the enforcement measures should be strong meaning that the officials or employers causing malpractice must be punished and penalised. They should ensure strict conformity with child labour laws. Moreover, steps must be taken to improve the working conditions for children and not criminalize it.

- Surveys should be conducted in industries and occupations where most of the child population is employed to ascertain the demand, the profitability and the social economic impact of child labour laws implementation.
- Surveys can be conducted amongst households whose livelihood is dependent on child labour and effect of minimum age laws.
- In-depth studies must be carried out to see which industries are not covered in the list of occupations which are considered harmful and hazardous for children and are left unattended by the legislature and policy makers.
- Surveys should be conducted to gather reasons for the failure of implementation of labour laws in terms of attitude and resources.

5.2 Alleviation of Poverty

Federal, provincial and district governments should formulate policies with the help of international and non-governmental agencies to help in elimination of poverty by providing jobs to the family members as a source of income. In this way the rate of child labour will be reduced as a result of introduction of number of programmes like zakat funds, bait-ul-maal etc.

5.3 Improve educational quality standards

Child labour and poverty has been linked to each other. However, education has somewhat not played a role in reducing poverty or child labour as there are a number of other factors. Gender, religion and culture all these effect poverty adversely. Thus, multipurpose strategies should be employed to combat poverty and help the families raise their income.

Education should be made easily available to all types of families. For those children who still want to do child labour their study hours should be reduced. Not only quantity, but also quality of education should not be compromised instead it should be more attractive to lure the children into going to school. Along with this, children should be constantly reminded of the threatening nature of any kind of labour.

5.4 Improvement in the occupational health hazardous and safety measures

In order to put a halt to the child labour culture, seminars should be held all over the country, which should help in raising awareness. In these seminars children should be educated about how hazardous labour has an ill-effect on the overall mental and physical well-being. Based on these reasons, the OHS study by the ILO has provided a detailed review on this issue. A number of workshops and group meetings must be arranged on how to use protective equipment like gloves, face masks, glasses, head covers and shoes.

Awareness seminars should be conducted by adults on learning methodologies in which it should be shown on how to reduce working hazards.

5.5 Support from Media

Another means of raising awareness is the role of the media. Different types of media ways can be involved. Effective means of communication and information material should be arranged. Electronic media, workshops, newspaper, television and pamphlets should be

circulated around in order to motivate the parents of the children not indulge their children in dangerous labours.

5.6 Increase partnership, foreign alliances and capacity building

The government of Pakistan should work in accordance with NGO'S and agencies which look for the betterment of such children. These NGO's should help the government in every possible way to reduce the rate of child labour. International agencies like UNICEF and UNDAF (United Nations department of assistance framework) should be approached in terms of cross-agency partnerships. These should continue to work until the policies are fully working as front liners. Apart from these, non-governmental organizations, labour unions and employers should also be encouraged to join this cause.

Various departments like district labour departments, district governments, provincial planning and development departments and NGO's should devise innovative, informative and cost effective ways to battle this very common culture.

5.7 Improve the attitudes of stakeholders

While formulating seminars, workshops and counselling sessions for children, parents should be involved in order to make them aware about the mental health of their child being affected. In these seminars, decent forms of labour should be highlighted. Parents should be made realise how important the school education is and how it helps in upbringing of the child.

Innovative learning techniques should be introduced like visual images of different yet safe labours so that both children and parents are encouraged. In addition to this, employers should also work for the elimination of child labour and the concept that cheap labour should be shunned. In a nutshell, every department should play its due role with zeal and zest to help eliminate the concepts of child labour and to introduce the education seminars to enlighten parents and children.

LIMITATION:

The only limitation to this research report is that there are not many reported cases with the Pakistani courts which could be listed down in this report to provide evidence as to what type of situations the children of Pakistan are going though in hazardous industries. This is because this issue was never an issue of concern amongst the government of Pakistan. No

leader of the country tried to resolve issues related to children. They were always considered to be the neglected part of the population. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to bring this issue in front of the society. Open public debates should be carried out to resolve this issue. The cases regarding child labour must be reported with the judiciary and the judiciary should play its role in trying to give fair and honest decisions within time. If such positive work is done people will feel encouraged to bring issues like these to the courts for conclusive results.

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