

# Mapping of research on child labour in South Asia

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## Question

*Who is carrying out or commissioning research on child labour in South Asia (both South Asian and International players) and what research are they doing?*

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## 1. Overview

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), 'Child labour is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development'.<sup>1</sup> It involves the participation in work that affects their health and personal development or interferes with their schooling, rather than assisting around the house, helping in the family business after school, or earning pocket money.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ilo.org/ipec/facts/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://ilo.org/ipec/facts/lang--en/index.htm>

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Child labour is an issue of immense concern in South Asia with conservative estimates suggesting that (excluding Afghanistan) there are 17 million children in child labour and 50 million children out of school. Although India and Bangladesh have the most children in child labour, Nepal has the highest percentage of children in child labour in South Asia. There are also significant levels of children undertaking hazardous forms of labour in South Asia.<sup>3</sup>

This Help Desk Report aims to map out research on child labour in South Asia, specifically: **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, as well as Myanmar (Burma)**. The report focuses on major projects being carried out by international organisations with an examination of their expenditure on research, as well as local partners. The report also highlights the research being carried out by local organisations and what their areas of focus and capacity are. Finally the report examines the key academics working on child labour and what their main focus is. The aim of the report is to create an understanding of who is conducting and funding research in South Asia and what their main focus is in order to highlight potential partners for future research projects.

## 2. International Organisations

### Business for Social Responsibility (BSR)

Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) is a global non-profit organisation that works with its network of more than 250 member companies and other partners with the aim to develop sustainable business strategies and solutions through consulting, research, and cross-sector collaboration. As part of their work, BSR conducts research on ending child labour in the supply chain.<sup>4</sup> BSR has conducted research on child labour in Myanmar and has produced an informational brief for business stakeholders interested in how best to understand and engage with child labour issues in Myanmar's garment manufacturing sector. The project was funded by the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC) and was completed in 2016 (Ediger et al, 2016).

### International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) devotes significant attention to combatting child labour globally and as part of this they do release a number of sizeable reports on the topic, including with a focus on South Asia. It is difficult to estimate how much funds ILO spends on research alone, as their activities are broad and involve (but are not limited to) networking, coordination, lobbying, project implementation. However, the two images below demonstrate the total funds spent since 1994, as well as their key donors.<sup>5</sup>

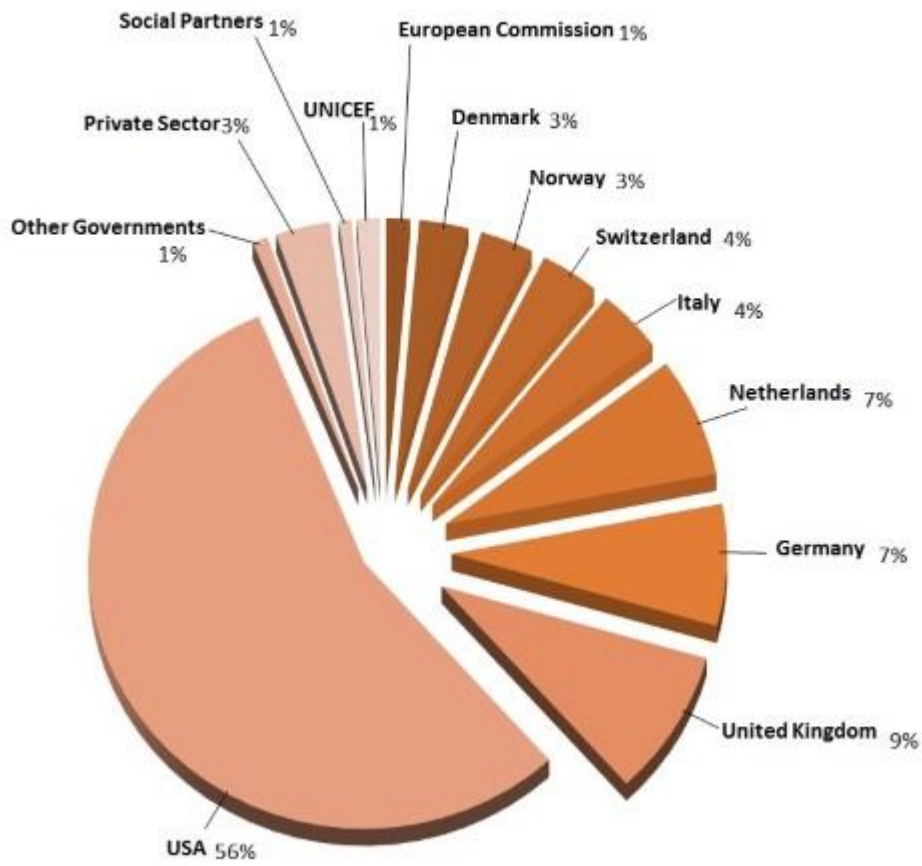
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<sup>3</sup> [http://ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/WCMS\\_300805/lang--en/index.htm](http://ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/WCMS_300805/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bsr.org/en/about>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/action/WCMS\\_387362/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/action/WCMS_387362/lang--en/index.htm)

### SOUTH ASIA: Partner Funding for Projects (1990s-Present)



Source: ILO ([http://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/action/WCMS\\_387362/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/action/WCMS_387362/lang-en/index.htm))

<b>USA: \$61,274,903</b>	<b>UNICEF: \$1,500,000</b>
<b>UK: \$9,789,957</b>	<b>Social Partners: \$837,448.00</b>
<b>Germany: \$3,815,939</b>	All Pakistan Federation of Trade Unions (\$2,029.00)
<b>Netherlands: \$7,970,625</b>	Italian Social Partner's Initiative (\$835,419.00)
<b>Italy: \$4,240,403</b>	<b>Private Sector: \$3,534,850.00</b>
<b>Switzerland: \$3,757,025</b>	Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (\$172,743.00)
<b>Norway: \$3,443,178</b>	FIFA Solidarity (\$1,060,000.00)
<b>Denmark: \$3,174,277</b>	Carpet Manufacturers Association of Pakistan (\$1,800,000.00)
<b>Others: \$994,913</b>	Surgical Instrument Manufacturers Association of Pakistan (\$240,932.00)
Finland (\$417,170.00)	American Center for International Labour Solidarity (Solidarity Center) (\$194,299)
Australia (\$211,980.00)	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (\$66876)
Japan (\$149,974.00)	
Sweden (\$145,845.00)	
Ireland (\$69,944)	
<b>European Commission: \$1,549,019</b>	

Source: ILO ([http://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/action/WCMS\\_387362/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/action/WCMS_387362/lang-en/index.htm))

ILO's most recent research project conducted on child labour in South Asia is called 'Measuring Children's Work in South Asia: Perspectives from National Household Surveys' (Khan & Lyon, 2015). The report's aim is to give a statistical overview of child labour in South Asia. However, rather than being based on research carried out by ILO or their local partners, it utilises government household surveys and thus does not include Afghanistan. ILO receives significant funding to carry out research and projects on child labour in South Asia from the US Department for Labor.

## Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) has conducted one of the largest surveys on child labour in Bangladesh in a study funded by DFID. For this study ODI surveyed 2700 working children in the slums of Dhaka. On the ground, the survey was led by their local partner, BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University.<sup>6</sup> BRAC's team consisted of Md. Altaf Hossain, Md. Abul Kalam and Sheikh Shahana Shimu. The research project culminated in a report, 'Child labour and education: A survey of slum settlements in Dhaka', published in December 2016. The report explores the relationship between child labour and education in slum settlements located across eight administrative units in Dhaka. The report concludes that Bangladesh will not achieve the 2030 development goals on education and gives a number of recommendations to the government in order to achieve these goals (Quattri & Watkins, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bracu.ac.bd/academics/institutes-and-schools/ied>

## Save the Children

Save the Children conducts a number of research projects that address child labour in South Asia to some extent, but does not have research projects that solely focus on the issue. For example, their research on the impact of the 2010 floods in Pakistan, where they conducted 2800 household surveys, highlighted the increase in child labour as a result of the floods, but this was not the focus of the report.<sup>7</sup>

## Terre des Hommes Netherlands

Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH) has a significant focus on methods for combatting child labour in Asia and concentrates on India, Bangladesh and Nepal in South Asia. However, rather than focusing purely on research or interventions, they aim to bring both together in their programmes. TdH began a three-year programme against child labour in Asia, which started in January 2016 with a total budget of EUR 8.603.239,00.<sup>8</sup> As part of this programme TdH launched a call for funding in late 2015 in both India<sup>9</sup> and Nepal<sup>10</sup> with a budget of EUR 500,000 to EUR 750,000 and EUR 350,000 to EUR 500,000 respectively. TdH's aim with their funding is to partner with a consortium of local NGOs and at least one local research institute with the aim of connecting research and intervention, as well as empowering local organisations.

The following points are the expected outcomes of their programmes:<sup>11</sup>

- Children at risk of child labour and children exploited through labour claim their rights.
- Families and communities protect children from (the worst forms of) child labour.
- Governments protect children by making and adequately implementing laws and policies to protect children from (the worst forms of) child labour.
- Law enforcement agencies convict employers of children.
- Civil society organisations protect the rights and best interests of children (and children vulnerable to) (the worst forms of) child labour.
- Private sector contributions towards the wellbeing of children vulnerable to or victims of (the worst forms of) child labour.

TdH partners with the United Development Initiatives for Programmed Actions (UDDIPAN)<sup>12</sup> and Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA)<sup>13</sup> in country. Most of TdH's work in South Asia is still ongoing and has not led to publically available research as yet. However, they have published a report on

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/2011-07/child-labour-increased-third-one-year-after-pakistan-floods-says-save-children>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.terredeshommes.nl/en/programmes/child-labour-asia>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.terredeshommes.nl/en/call-proposals-combating-worst-forms-child-labour-wfcl-india>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.terredeshommes.nl/en/call-proposals-combating-worst-forms-childlabour-wfcl-nepal>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.terredeshommes.nl/en/call-proposals-combating-worst-forms-child-labour-wfcl-india>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.uddipan.org/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.bba.org.in/>

child domestic labour in Bangladesh based on 1200 respondents, which aims to give a better understanding of the situation of child domestic workers in the country. For the report, they partnered with Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF)<sup>14</sup> and the research was conducted by Prof. Ahmadullah Mia and Prof. Rezaul Karim.

## Understanding Children's Work (UCW)

Understanding Children's Work (UCW) is a consortium of the **World Bank**, **UNICEF**, and **ILO** and is considered in some sectors to provide some of the most insightful analyses on child labour (Quattri & Watkins, 2016). UCW's focus is on policy-oriented research with the aim of using the research to promote informed responses to child labour. UCW usually works through analysing government surveys and has limited partnership with local organisations.<sup>15</sup> For instance, in their 2011 report 'Understanding children's work in Bangladesh' they relied heavily on government surveys and interaction with government organisations and did not partner with any local NGOs or civil society organisations. Instead, they partnered their consortium's local offices, the World Bank, UNICEF and ILO (UCW, 2011). Whereas, UCW's 2003 report on 'Understanding Children's Work in Nepal' did use local partners in a limited capacity, they do not identify them (UCW, 2003). Although UCW's expertise on child labour is valued, they do not seem to have, based on their publication history, a strong capacity to carry out or coordinate research on the ground in South Asia.

## US Department of Labor

The Department of Labor's annual Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor give an overview of child labour across the globe and have country specific sections, which includes the countries for this study. The report has been published annually since 2002 and the last report was published in 2015. The aim of the report is to eliminate the worst forms of child labour through legislation, enforcement mechanisms, policies and social programs and thus gives country-specific recommendations. The report serves as a resource to foreign governments, NGOs, academics and policymakers working on labour and human rights issues. It also helps to inform the US Congress and Executive Branch agencies that formulate policy.

The US Department of Labor is also a significant funding body for research and interventions on child labour. For instance, they granted Winrock International<sup>16</sup> \$7,000,000 for a project entitled 'Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor', which includes Nepal (along with seven other countries) and involves research as well as policy activities.<sup>17</sup> ILO-IPEC received \$7,950,000 to implement the same project in 11 countries, including Afghanistan and Bangladesh.<sup>18</sup> They also funded ILO-IPEC with \$5,028,453 for a global project entitled

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<sup>14</sup> <http://bsafchild.net/>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.ucw-project.org/Pages/about\\_us.aspx](http://www.ucw-project.org/Pages/about_us.aspx)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.winrock.org/>

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/GlobalCLEARII\\_FY14.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/GlobalCLEARII_FY14.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/GlobalCLEAR\\_FY13.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/GlobalCLEAR_FY13.pdf)

'Strengthening the Evidence Base on Child Labor Through Expanded Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Research-Based Global Reports'.<sup>19</sup> \$4,869,000 was granted to ILO-IPEC for the project 'Expanding the Evidence Base and Reinforcing Policy Research for Scaling-Up and Accelerating Action Against Child Labour', which includes Bangladesh in its remit.<sup>20</sup> They also funded \$ 6,850,000 to ILO-IPEC for the project 'Converging Against Child Labor: Support for India's Model'.<sup>21</sup> The US Department of Labor granted Macro International \$3,850,000 to conduct a research-focused project on Children Working in the Carpet Industry of India, Nepal and Pakistan, which was completed in 2013. The aim of the project was to research the incidence, prevalence and conditions of work among children in the carpet industry; the demand for child labour in the carpet industry; and to measure the effect of program interventions on the reduction and prevention of child labour in the carpet industry.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. Civil Society Organisations

#### Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)

The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) is an independent research organisation based in Kabul. It carries out policy-orientated research on issues of importance to Afghanistan using in-house researchers and experts on the region. AREU has written a number of policy papers focusing on child labour.<sup>23</sup> AREU ran a research project on child labour between 2007 and 2009 funded by UNICEF and the Child Rights Consortium. The main aim of this project was to understand why children work in Afghanistan and to develop policy recommendations to address the factors.<sup>24</sup>

#### Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA)

Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) is a grassroots movement for the protection of children in India. Its mission is to liberate, rehabilitate and educate children in servitude through direct intervention, child and community participation, coalition building, consumer action, promoting ethical trade practices and mass mobilisation.<sup>25</sup> BBA's research focuses on short policy-orientated reports that use their expertise in the field to give recommendations on policy issues relating to child labour and trafficking.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> [https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/SIMPOC\\_StrengtheningEvidenceBase\\_FY08.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/SIMPOC_StrengtheningEvidenceBase_FY08.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/ExpandingEvidenceBase\\_FY10.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/ExpandingEvidenceBase_FY10.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/India\\_ConvergenceModel.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/India_ConvergenceModel.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/SouthAsia\\_CarpetsResearch\\_CLOSED.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/summaries/SouthAsia_CarpetsResearch_CLOSED.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> See: [http://areu.org.af/archives/research\\_proj/child-labour-2](http://areu.org.af/archives/research_proj/child-labour-2)

<sup>24</sup> [http://areu.org.af/archives/research\\_proj/child-labour-2](http://areu.org.af/archives/research_proj/child-labour-2)

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.bba.org.in/?q=content/about-us>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.bba.org.in/?q=resources/publications>

## **Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)**

Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) is an advocacy and campaign network operating in Bangladesh. It has a membership of more than 1300 NGOs, researchers, educators and other civil society organisations and individuals. Its core partners are the Swiss Agency for Development (SDC), Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) (formerly RNE) and Oxfam-Novib. Although CAMPE's primary focus is education for all children, this is closely linked to taking children out of child labour and they have thus conducted research on both topics.<sup>27</sup> For example, CAMPE has undertaken a situation analysis of child labour in Bangladesh analysing the correlation between the issue and education in Bangladesh and giving policy recommendations on addressing the issue of child labour through the availability of education (Ahsan, 2011).

## **Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN)**

Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN) works for the rights of children and against child labour exploitation in Nepal. CWIN is an advocacy organisation with a focus on children living and working under the most difficult circumstances. CWIN's main areas of concern are child labour, street children, child marriage, bonded labour, trafficking of children, children in conflict with laws, and commercial-sexual exploitation of children. CWIN's aim is to act as a voice for children through lobbying, campaigning and pressuring the government to protect and promote children's rights in the country and to end all kinds of exploitation, abuse, and discrimination against children. CWIN's publications focus on documenting cases of child exploitation in Nepal and mapping the responses in the country. They often partner with other organisations or researchers for their projects.<sup>28</sup>

## **CUTS International**

Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) is an India-based NGO working on consumer protection and welfare. CUTS has undertaken research, funded by the Ford Foundation, on child labour in South Asia from the perspective of whether trade sanctions can help to reduce the issue, of which they highlight its limited impact (Srivastava, 2003).

## **Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC)**

The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) is one of Pakistan's leading child rights organisations and has received funding for its work from a host of international organisations and governments, including: UNICEF, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD), NOVIB, and ILO.<sup>29</sup> From a research perspective SPARC's main area of focus is their core publication 'The State of Pakistan's Children', which was last published in 2015 and was

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.campebd.org/page/Generic/0/3/1>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.cwin.org.np/index.php/who-we-are/cwin-in-brief.html>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.sparcpk.org/2015/History.html#history>



originally funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD). 'The State of Pakistan's Children' includes a chapter on child labour in Pakistan and examines: the core labour issues; gives a country, as well as regional outlook; examines case studies, laws, and organisations working on child labour; and gives recommendations for both the provincial governments and the state.<sup>30</sup>

## 4. Individual Researchers

The table below maps out the researchers by subject grouping in a navigable index, before their research is divided and discussed based the countries of specialisation.

Child Wellbeing	Finance	Education	Socioeconomic	Causes and Responses
Catani, C.	Islam, A.	Khanam, R.	Aktar, S.	Trani, J.
Akhtar, A.	Bharadwaj, P.	Ray, R.	Jayaraj, D.	Barman & Barman
Ashfaq, A.	Bhaskaran, R.	Mukherjee, D.		Nepal, C.
Giri, B.	Nathan, D.			
Ray, R.	Phillips, N.			
	Chakrabarty, S.			

Table 1. Researcher's Area of Expertise

### Afghanistan

**Catani, Claudia:** specialises in the psychological impact and adverse effects that issues such as war, child labour etc. have on children. Catani has carried out fieldwork in Afghanistan with a sample of 287 children taken from schools. The research was funded by the Vivo Foundation, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, and the German Technical Cooperation (Catani et al., 2009).

**Trani, Jean-Francois:** examines the multidimensional level of child poverty in Afghanistan using quantitative methods. Trani's studies have analysed Handicap International surveys to further understand the level of poverty of children in Afghanistan and as part of this work in the home,

<sup>30</sup> <http://sparcpk.org/2015/SOPC2015/Child%20Labor.pdf>

fields and outside of the family is examined. There is also a rural and urban differentiation in his 2013 study (Trani et al., 2013).

## Bangladesh

**Aktar, Sharmin:** examines ways to gradually decrease child labour in Bangladesh without having a negative impact on the children or their family's wellbeing. Aktar's work is written from a socioeconomic perspective with the aim of developing policy recommendations to slowly decrease child labour in Bangladesh (Aktar & Abdullah, 2013).

**Islam, Asadul:** examines the impact of microfinance programmes on child employment and school enrolment in Bangladesh. Using a large dataset he finds that although microfinance decreases poverty it increases the likelihood of child labour (Islam et al., 2011).

**Khanam, Rasheda:** assesses the determinants of child labour and schooling in rural Bangladesh using data from a survey with a sample size of 1,628 children. Khanam's study indicates that the education of parents significantly increases the probability that a school-age child will study, the presence of very young children (aged 0-4) in the household increases the likelihood that a school-age child will combine study with work, and that girls are more likely than boys to combine schooling with work (Khanam, 2008).

**Ray, Ranjan:** has written extensively on child labour in South Asia, particularly on Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. His work focuses on the developing policy with regards to decreasing child labour and increasing school participation (Ray, 2001a, 2001b). He has also examined the negative impact that child labour has on the health of children in Bangladesh (Ray, 2014).

## Myanmar (Burma)

There is a dearth of scholars who have expertise in child labour in Burma specifically and most academic studies rather use it as a minor case study, but carry out no research in the field.

## India

**Barman, Bhupen and Barman, Nirmalendu:** map out child labour in India. Their research analyses the causes, effect, distribution, and present conditions of child labourers in India. They also suggest remedial measures to solve the problem of child labour in India (Barman & Barman, 2014).

**Bharadwaj, Prashant:** examines the impact of bans on child labour, specifically in India. Using data from employment surveys conducted before and after the ban on child labour in India, the research argues that child wages decreased and child labour increased after the ban (Bharadwaj et al., 2013).

**Bhaskaran, Resmi; Nathan, Dev and Phillips, Nicola:** work on the political economy of child labour. They were part of the project 'Vulnerable Workers in Global Production Networks: Case Studies of Trafficked and Forced Labour in Brazil and India', which was funded by a research grant from the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC). Their work assesses the nature of

child labour in segments of global garment production in Delhi. They argue that child labour exists almost entirely in the embroidery and embellishment tasks of garment production, either as part of home work or in household-based enterprises. The authors conceptualise child labour and put forward methods to eliminate it (Bhaskaran et al., 2014; Phillips, 2013).

**Jayaraj, D.:** focuses on the labour market in India. Jayaraj explores the link between child labour and poverty in the Indian context and argues that children who are conventionally categorised as 'non-workers not attending school' should be classified as child labourers, as poverty is the overriding factor in both cases (Jayaraj & Subramanian, 2007).

**Mukherjee, Diganta:** examines the links between parental education and child labour/schooling in urban India. Mukherjee uses household surveys over a ten year span and the findings are that despite the urban setting, child labour is prevalent and the mother's education is an important factor in curbing manual work incidences; thus women's empowerment is instrumental in increasing parental awareness and decreasing child labour (Mukherjee & Das, 2008).

## Nepal

**Chakrabarty, Sayan:** examines the impact that social labelling has on child labour. Chakrabarty argues that probability of child schooling increases as well as child labour decreases if a carpet firm has adopted a labelling scheme and that labelling NGOs have a significant positive influence on sending the ex-child labourers to school (Chakrabarty et al., 2011).

**Giri, Birendra:** works on bonded child labour in Nepal. Giri has carried out an in-depth study of haliya and kamaiya child workers from Morang and Bardiya districts, respectively. The children (from ethnic Musahar and Tharu backgrounds) become bonded labourers to earn household income and are unable to attend full-time schooling (Giri, 2009).

**Nepal, Chiranjibi:** gives an overview of child labour in Nepal. Nepal's work examines the causes, the magnitude of the issue, before going on to analyse the effectiveness of the multitude of programmes in place to tackle the issue (Nepal, 2007).

**Ray, Ranjan:** (see Bangladesh)

## Pakistan

**Akhtar, Ali:** examines the impact on health of children working in the tobacco industry in Pakistan, as well as their socioeconomic profile. In Akhtar's study, 96 percent of the respondents' income level was below the poverty line. Throat, respiratory, skin and cancer diseases were found more severe than the other diseases in the study area (Akhtar et al., 2014).

**Ashfaq, Asia:** focuses on how child labour affects the physical and psychological health of the children. Ashfaq's work in the district of Gujrat used a dataset of 150 children and the findings highlight that children were forced to earn to contribute to the family income and that the environment at the workplace had adverse effects on the children's health (Ashfaq et al., 2017).

**Ray, Ranjan:** (see Bangladesh)

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