**7HW139: Masters Dissertation**

**Assessment 2 – The Dissertation**

**Topic: EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND CHILD LABOUR**

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# Acknowledgement

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# Abstract

This dissertation examines the correlation between women's rights and child labour in developing nations. There have been many campaigns in the world to end child labour, all the same, millions of children are still in work that hinders their healthy development, hinders their schooling, and hinders their future employment. The study argues that women's economic and social status, their capacity to vote, and their active participation in the political process might be one of the keys to combating child labour. Education is empowered women are able to provide for their family and meet their children's necessities ensuring that child labour is minimised. Feminist Theory, Empowerment Theory, and Social Determinants of Health Model was used for this research to explain the relationship between women's empowerment and child labour. Specific goals include establishing the level of education of women as a determinant factor of child labor, assessing the extent to which policies geared towards women's emancipation work, and understanding community level factors that determine women's emancipation and child labour.

Credible data sources were then collected and analysed with findings categorised into themes. Implying, the study found out that women's empowerment could reduce child labour by a large extent as women would use their newfound power to secure their children's rights. The paper provides policy suggestions for improvement and calls for the establishment of policies that would increase women's education, employment and participation in their communities. Therefore, the analysis of the results presented and the use of gender mainstreaming approaches to empower women as a method for combating child labour and achieving sustainable social development goals. In endeavouring to address this research need, this work seeks to contribute to knowledge development and guide policy actions that also address the concerns of women's employment and the welfare of children.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background information

The connection between women's empowerment and child labour is an important field in public health and human rights analysis and policy, particularly, concerning the developing countries where the economic necessity of oppressed labour exploitation prevails. What has not changed is that there are millions of children employed all over the world whose rights are violated and their potential productive and healthy lives wasted (Sovacool, 2020). The ILO estimates that about 14 million children around the world are working, including 6 million in Sub-Saharan Africa alone; 5.3 million in South Asia, 2.9 million in Latin America. Child labour is a form of abuse to children and their rights as well as a hindrance to developmental progress of society, which creates more impunity and poverty in the society.

Women's rights to self-determination or agency or control over their lives and their opportunities to exercise that agency, the power that women attain is acknowledged as having the potential to generate change across various spheres of social life hinging upon such questions as child labour. The ability of women to make such worthwhile decisions is related to the levels of women's community and economic, social, and political standings (Kabeer, 2020). With economic empowered women, family requirements and children's education and wellbeing are likely to take priority over child labour.

Consequently, although it is considered that there are theoretical connections between, WE and child labour, the number of papers investigating this connection is somewhat limited, especially in terms of looking at it with respect to particular cultural and socioeconomic settings. This also reveals information about how Women's empowerment influences child labour hence helps policy makers to be well equipped to intervene on eradicating causes of child exploitation (Datta and Sahu, 2020). Therefore, this study aims at opening up this research gap to understand the correlation between the two by analysing how empowering women can help in fighting child labour and its corollary of establishing sustainable pro-social change.

## 1.2 Research problem

Using child labour continues to be rife in many poor areas since it affects young kids' education, health, and future prospects. With all the efforts that have been made to eliminate child labour across the world, this status remains very unsatisfactory and up to the present day a lot of children worldwide are still exposed to work (Zhou *et al.*, 2021). The major cause of OSCE is a factor of economic difficulties; however, other social and structural factors such as

gender disparities increase the likelihood of OSCE occurrence. In these areas, women still have low access to education, employment and decision-making hence are unable to promote their children's rights and needs.

It is therefore interesting that there has been little discussion on how empowered women may be able to alleviate child labour as studies have shown that empowered women have a stronger propensity to ensure that their kid's education needs and health needs are being met. However, there is dearth of literature on the impact of dimensions of women's eventual empowerment like, economic self-sufficiency, social status, and political participation on child labour which hinders the design of proper interventional strategies to address the problem (Saeed *et al.*, 2022). This paper aims at filling this gap on the understanding of the impact of women's economic and social empowerment on child labour. Knowledge of this connection could help shape polices that not only advance women's rights, but could also indirectly address the issue of child labour, and foster sustainable development goals that support education, gender equality, and economic opportunity for women and girls and would benefit men and boys in the society as well.

### 1.3 Framework Selection and its justification

This study will incorporate the Feminist Theory, Empowerment Theory, and the Social Determinants of Health Model to understand the correlation of Women's Empowerment and Child Labour.

***Feminist Theory*** is suggested as a theoretical framework for understanding that women's decisions and chances are constrained by patriarchal controls. It underlines that gender equality must be changed at the micro- and macro-level, and knowing how women's empowering can influence child labour is essential (Mohajan, 2022). The result is that feminist theory can bolster the assertion that when women have a measure of power, they will not reproduce oppressive norms that victimised children.

The ***Social Determinants of Health Model*** shows how societal footprints, including income, education and social support, impact the health of a community/personality. Usage of this model aids in connecting women's empowerment concept to child welfare and improves the chances of children by acknowledging that empowered women usually have better access to resources that would then dictate children's destiny and erase child labour practices (Flynn, 2020). Both the CCM and NA frameworks are useful in offering an overall view for this research.

***Empowerment Theory*** also provides a conceptual map of the complexity of the empowering process, from the perspective of the empowered persons or groups as the active agents in the process. This theory focuses on the economic, social, political and these are elements that will contribute to enhanced decision making among women (Joseph, 2020). Education and effective decision making among women makes them choose actions that are in the best interest of children that reduces chances of hiring a child in most families.

### 1.4 Research Question

1. How does educational attainment by women influence the prevalence of child labour?
2. What policy interventions aimed at empowering women have proven most effective in reducing incidences of child labour?
3. What community factors significantly affect both women empowerment levels and child labour rates?
4. How can the findings from this study inform actionable strategies for policymakers to combat child labour?

### 1.5 Aims and Objectives of the study

*Aim:*

To investigate the relationship between women's empowerment and the prevalence of child labour in developing countries.

*Objectives:*

- To analyse the impact of education attained by women on child labour rates.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of policies aimed at empowering women in reducing child labour incidences.
- To explore community-based factors that influence both women empowerment and child labour dynamics.
- To provide actionable recommendations to policymakers and stakeholders based on the findings.

### 1.6 Hypothesis

For this study on the link between women's empowerment and child labour, the hypotheses can be:

- *Null Hypothesis (H0):* Women's employment does not increase the case of children working as a result the facts are claiming that there is no relationship between the two.
- *Alternative Hypothesis (H1):* The enhancement of women's rights leads to the decline of child labour rates substantially.

## 1.7 Dissertation Outline

This dissertation aims to establish the connection between the female's empowerment and child labour to understand how the empowered females shifted child labour in low-income areas.

- *Introduction:* Offers history of the field of study, operational definitions, statement of the research problem, research questions, and objectives of the study. Framing of the theoretical lens grounded on feminism, power in empowering theory, and health determinant social approach.
- *Literature Review:* Analyzes the literature on women's empowerment, child labour and their relationship and reveals the gaps in the literature that this research fills.
- *Methodology:* Provides an overview of the structure of the systemic review and the methods that were employed in the conclusion of the samples including the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Reviews ethical issues and how reliability can be improved.
- *Results:* Thematically arranges the results in view of the research questions together with the data tables and a PRISMA flowchart.
- *Discussion:* Discusses the implications of the study utilising prior studies & future research, with reference to theory, policy and practice.
- *Conclusion:* Reviews of major conclusions, research constraints, and suggestions for direction drawn by the researcher.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to investigate and break down existing evidence on the relationship between women's empowerment and child work. Understanding this association is critical, as women's empowerment frequently impacts more extensive social and financial results, including child government assistance. The survey means to look at how engaging women — through expanded admittance to schooling, financial assets, and dynamic power — might possibly decrease child labour by encouraging better family conditions and focusing on children's schooling and prosperity. Moreover, this audit will identify any holes in flow academic information, featuring regions where further examination is expected to more readily comprehend the intricacies of how women's empowerment crosses with child labour rehearses.

## 2.2 Key Concepts and Definitions

### 2.2.1 Women's Empowerment
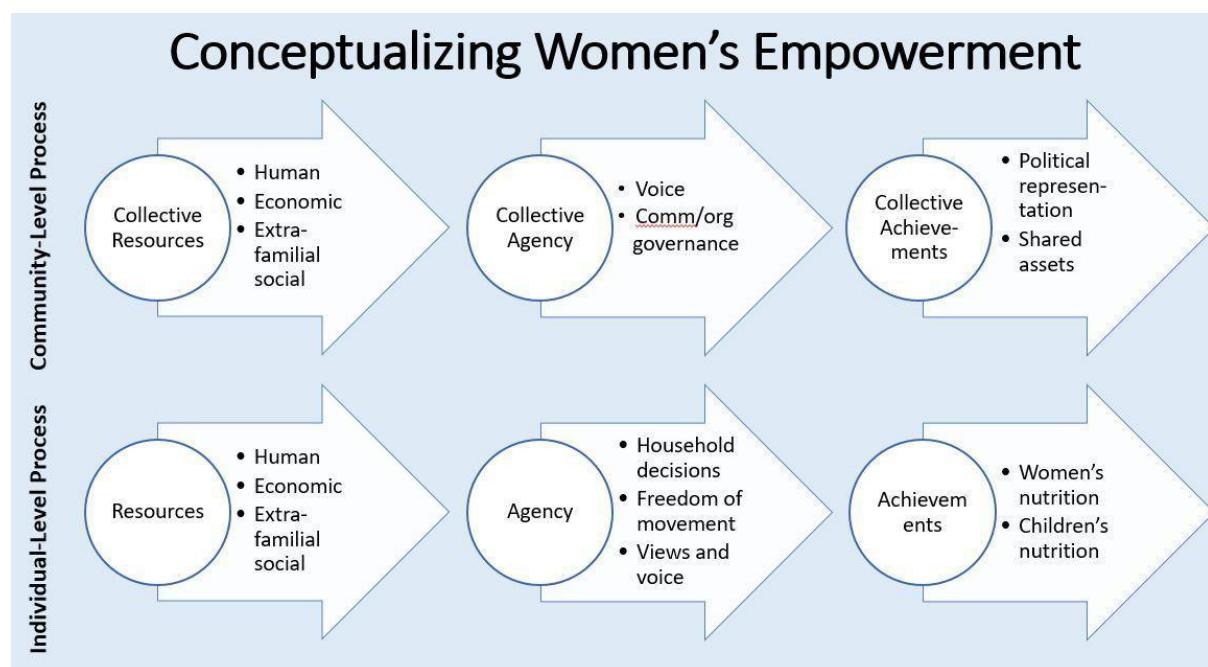
In this review, women's empowerment implies enabling women and capacity to decide and assume command over their lives. It is tied in with assisting women with getting similar possibilities and privileges as men, so they can partake in choices that influence their families, networks, and society overall (Hadisuyatmana *et al.*, 2020). Women's empowerment has various parts, like economic, social, and political empowerment, and this large number of parts labours together to make women more grounded and freer.

Economic empowerment is whenever women get the opportunity to bring in cash, own property, and go with decisions about how to utilise their cash. It incorporates landing positions, fair compensation, figuring out how to manage cash, and approaching business valuable open doors. At the point when women can bring in and control their own cash, families frequently have better day to day environments, and children are bound to go to class as opposed to working. Women who can pursue monetary choices at home typically pick choices that are best for their children's future.

Social empowerment is tied in with giving women the opportunity to carry on with their lives the manner in which they need and access things like schooling, medical services, and social gatherings (Andriamahery and Qamruzzaman, 2022). This sort of empowerment centres

around treating women similarly and eliminating decisions or customs that keep them down. Women who are taught and have more opportunity are bound to comprehend the reason why child labour is unsafe and labour to ensure their children go to class and have a decent life. Social empowerment likewise implies halting brutality and unreasonable treatment toward women, which makes a more secure and more sure home for children.

Political empowerment is when women partake in dynamic cycles locally or in government. It implies they have a voice in making regulations and strategies that post for their privileges and needs (Dahlum, Knutsen and Mechkova, 2022). At the point when women are associated with governmental issues or lead in their networks, they can push for regulations and projects that safeguard children and stop child work. They can uphold plans that help families and set out open doors for children to learn and develop.
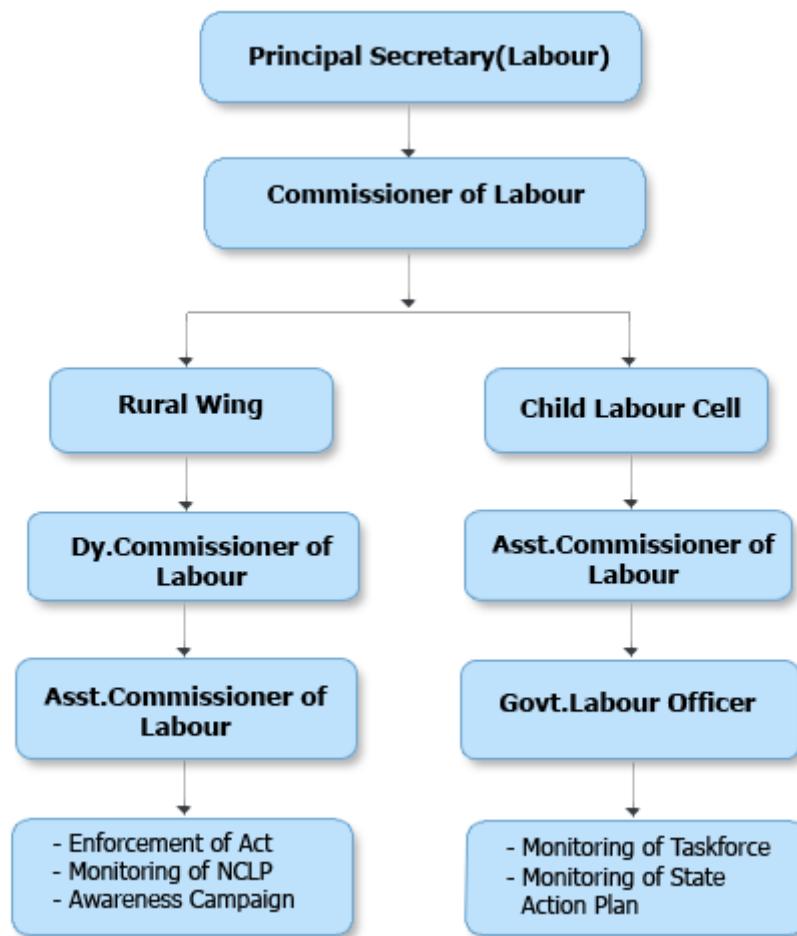


**Figure 1: Women empowerment**

(Yount, 2017)

The link between women's empowerment and child labour is associated in numerous ways. At the point when women can labour and bring in cash, families may not require children to labour to assist with getting by. Women who are engaged socially are bound to send their children to school, keeping them out of child work (Tanti *et al.*, 2021). Assuming women have political power, they can uphold changes to that arrangement with the explanations for child work, like

poverty and absence of tutoring. Since economic, social, and political empowerment all help one another, it means a lot to labour on each of the three to roll out an enduring improvement.

So, women's empowerment implies enabling women to make choices about cash, live unreservedly with equivalent freedoms, and partake in regional areas or political exercises. Each part assists women with becoming more grounded and can prompt less child labour as enabled women pay special attention to their children's necessities and future.



**Figure 4: Role of government in fighting child labour**

(ashima2k, 2020)

*2.2.2 Child Labour*

Child labour is when children take care of business that removes their childhood, influences their development, and can hurt their wellbeing and psyche. The International labour Organization (ILO), which is the principal organization managing this issue, says that child labour is any sort of labour that prevents children from going to class or makes them exit school
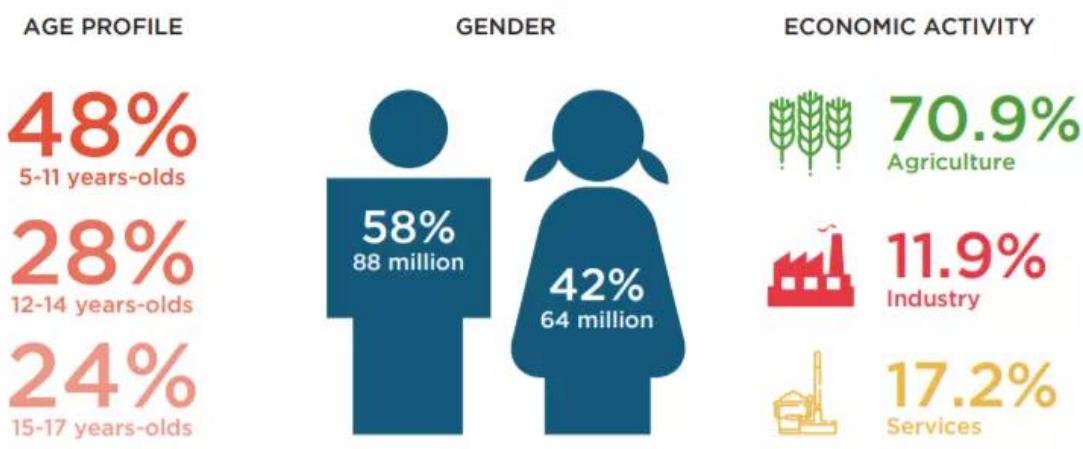
(Pan and He, 2023). It additionally incorporates labour that is too difficult to even consider consolidating with school, prompting sleepiness or chronic weakness.

The ILO's Minimum Age Convention No. 138 (1973) states that the overall minimum age for labour ought to be 15 years of age (or 14 in a few emerging nations), and no one under 18 oughts to accomplish perilous work (Md Mahmudul Hoque, 2024). Hazardous labour is any labour that could hurt a child's wellbeing, security, or ethics, like working with perilous instruments, destructive synthetics, or working extremely extended periods.

There are various kinds of child work, from basic labour that assists the family to serious and unsafe labour with loving constrained labour or dealing. It is vital to comprehend the contrast between child labour and child work. Child labour incorporates light undertakings like aiding around the house or a temporary labour that doesn't hinder school. Child labour, notwithstanding, prevents children from learning and developing appropriately and can hurt their future possibilities.



**Figure 5: Contribution to child labour practices**
(Rodriguez, 2020)
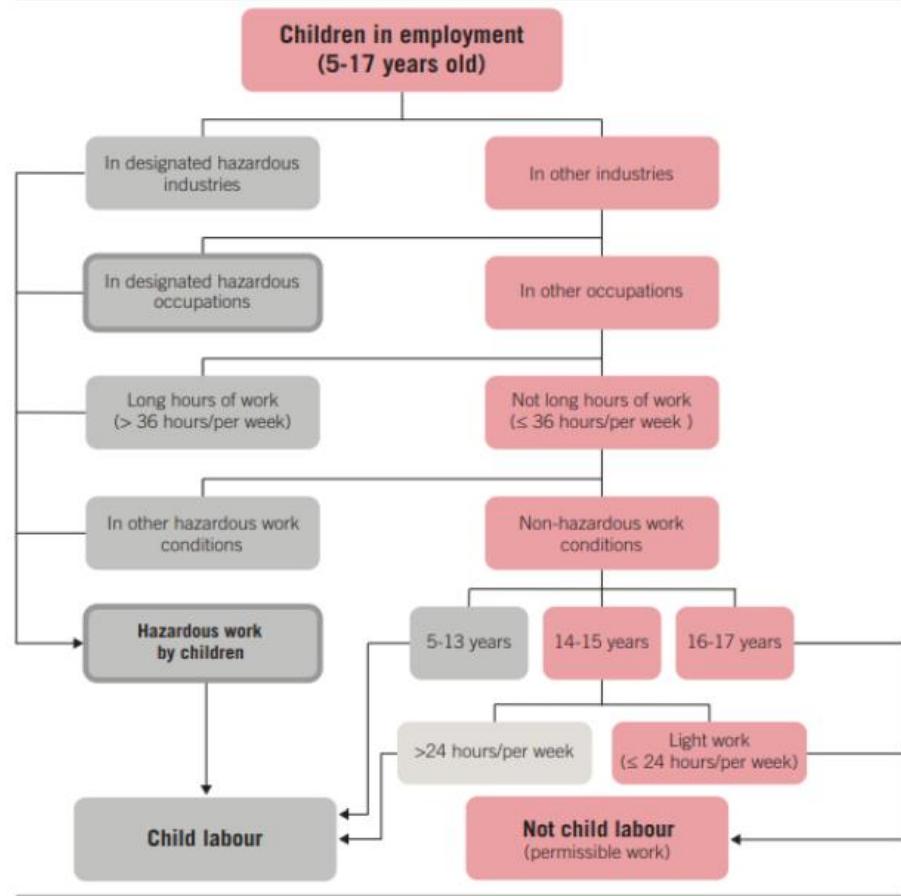
The fundamental purposes for child labour incorporate poverty, absence of schooling, social convictions, and temperamental economies. Families who battle monetarily may feel they need the cash their children procure to get by, which keeps them in a pattern of poverty. In the event that schools are not accessible or don't give quality training, children might wind up working

as opposed to learning. In certain spots, child labour is viewed as normal or a way for children to master abilities, which can likewise add to the issue.

Child labour makes many adverse consequences. It can cause actual wounds, long haul medical issues, and profound pressure for children (Bernard, 2023). It additionally removes their opportunity to get schooling, making it difficult for them to secure better positions as grown-ups and catching them in poverty.

To decrease or stop child work, many activities are required, like better regulations, further developed schools, and projects that help families monetarily. The ILO's Worst Forms of Child labour Convention No. 182 (1999) calls areas of strength for to end the worst sorts of child work. Projects that assist families with bringing in more cash and further develop admittance to training are key pieces of the arrangement.

In synopsis, child work, as characterised by the ILO and different organisations, incorporates labour that hurts a child's development, schooling, and prosperity. Halting child labour implies setting out better open doors for families and children through solid regulations, better training, and backing programs that put children's necessities first.

**Figure 2: Structure of child labour**

(Habiyakare and Statistician, 2018)

## 2.3 Current Understanding of Women's Empowerment and Child Labour

### 2.3.1 Women's empowerment globally

The present status of exploration on women's empowerment shows that while there has been progress in many spots, challenges actually stay that prevent women from being completely engaged. Women's empowerment is viewed as a significant piece of improving networks, helping families, and tackling issues like child work (Vermeulen *et al.* 2023). Research shows that when women have more power and assets, it helps the entire community through better wellbeing, education, and economic development.

Factual trends throughout the last year's show that more women all over the planet have accessed education and occupations. For instance, reports from UNESCO show that a greater number of young ladies will go to school today than in past ages. Likewise, more women are joining the labour force in numerous nations. Nonetheless, there are still holes; for example, in

sub-Saharan Africa and portions of South Asia, women actually face huge contrasts in education and open positions contrasted with men (Elsayed, 2024). The World Economic Discussion's Worldwide Orientation Hole Report shows that at the ongoing rate, it could take more than 130 years to completely close the orientation hole around the world.

Barriers Women's empowerment incorporates cultural beliefs, social standards, restricted admittance to assets, violence against women, and unreasonable laws. In numerous networks, customs and beliefs make it difficult for women to have command over their lives or participate in economic exercises. Violence, including maltreatment at home and badgering, makes it hard for women to develop and succeed. In certain nations, laws actually treat women unjustifiably, for example, deciding to limit their privileges to possess land or property.

Enablers women's empowerment incorporates education, accommodating arrangements, admittance to cash and monetary administrations, and community programs. Education is one of the main ways of enabling women (Parveen, 2023). Research shows that even a fundamental degree of education assists women with pursuing better choices for their wellbeing and the prosperity of their children. At the point when women can get to monetary administrations like little advances, they can begin organisations and assist with supporting their families. Governments that make fair laws and shield women from violence assume a significant part in assisting women with succeeding. Community programs run by NGOs and international gatherings, similar to those from the Assembled Countries, additionally assist by working with eliminating boundaries and making more opportunities for women.

In outline, while there have been positive changes in engaging women, numerous issues actually should be addressed. Engaging women assists them with carrying on with bettering lives as well as advantages for their children and entire networks (Sunarti *et al.*, 2024). For instance, concentrates on show that engaged women frequently center around their children's education, which can prompt lower paces of child labour and better open doors for the future.

### 2.3.2 Overview of child labour in specific regions

Child labour keeps on being a major issue in numerous region all over the planet, for certain spots confronting bigger numbers and various explanations behind it. While some headway has been made, a large number of children are as yet working in conditions that hurt their wellbeing, development, and future (Mohammed, 2022).

Prevalence child labour is particularly high in places like sub-Saharan Africa, where poverty, political issues, and restricted tutoring push families to depend on their children to bring in cash. The ILO reports that more than one-fifth of children in this district are engaged with child work. South Asia likewise has countless child labourers, with nations like India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan having numerous children working in cultivating, manufacturing plants, and casual positions.

Contributing factors Child labour contrasts by district yet are frequently linked to poverty, absence of education, and cultural beliefs. In more unfortunate nations, families frequently need the cash their children can procure just to get by. For instance, in provincial areas of Africa and Asia, children frequently labour on ranches in light of the fact that more assistance is required during specific seasons. In urban areas, children might labour in business sectors, little studios, or as aides in homes (Tang and Zhao, 2022). These positions frequently mean extended periods of time, hazardous circumstances, and low compensation.

Absence of good tutoring is one more primary justification behind child work. In certain areas, schools are excessively far away, inadequately supported, or need more space for all children. At the point when families don't see the worth in school or find it hard to send their children, they might decide to have them labour all things considered. This is particularly valid for young ladies, who might remain at home to finish errands or be hitched early, removing their opportunities for a superior future.

Powerless laws and unfortunate authorization likewise add to the issue of child work. Despite the fact that numerous nations have laws to safeguard children from destructive labour and have consented to international arrangements, these standards are much of the time not set up as a regular occurrence. This can be a result of an absence of cash, debasement, or insufficient mindfulness about the standards. In certain spots, individuals see child labour as ordinary, which makes it harder to battle against.

Endeavours to lessen child labour incorporate programs to international gatherings and neighbourhood networks. Organisations like the ILO and UNICEF labour with governments to make and uphold laws, further develop schools, and back families out of luck (Fredriksen, 2022). Programs that show individuals the significance of education can likewise assist with changing the conviction that child labour is typical or required.

So, child labour is brought about by many variables, like poverty, unfortunate tutoring, beliefs, and feeble implementation of laws. While there has been some advancement in lessening child work, more labour is expected to tackle these issues and ensure children can grow up protected and go to class.

### 2.3.3 Connection between women's empowerment and child labour

Research has shown an unmistakable link between women's empowerment and the decrease of child labour, with various examinations making sense of how assisting women with acquiring power and assets can prompt improved results for children. These investigations propose that when women have more control, potential open doors, and backing, it influences family decisions and works on children's lives (Besnier, 2020). This segment sees how enabling women can prompt less child work, as made sense of in past examinations.

One significant way that women's empowerment influences child work is through economic empowerment. Concentrates on showing that when women have occupations, fair compensation, or the opportunity to begin their own private ventures, their families have more cash. With more income, families are less inclined to require their children to work and can bear to send them to school. Reports from bunches like the ILO and World Bank show that when women bring in cash and manage it, they frequently use it to help their children's education and wellbeing, which diminishes the requirement for child work.

Another way empowerment helps is through social empowerment. At the point when women have education, medical care, and associations with others, they can settle on better decisions for their families. An informed mother is bound to realise the reason why school is significant and will ensure her children go to class. Social empowerment likewise implies diminishing uncalled for treatment, which helps stop the cycle where young ladies are frequently kept at home or shipped off work as opposed to going to class (Reshi and Sudha, 2023). Concentrates on showing that when women are sure and participate in choices, they make a home where children can grow up securely and get the opportunity to learn.
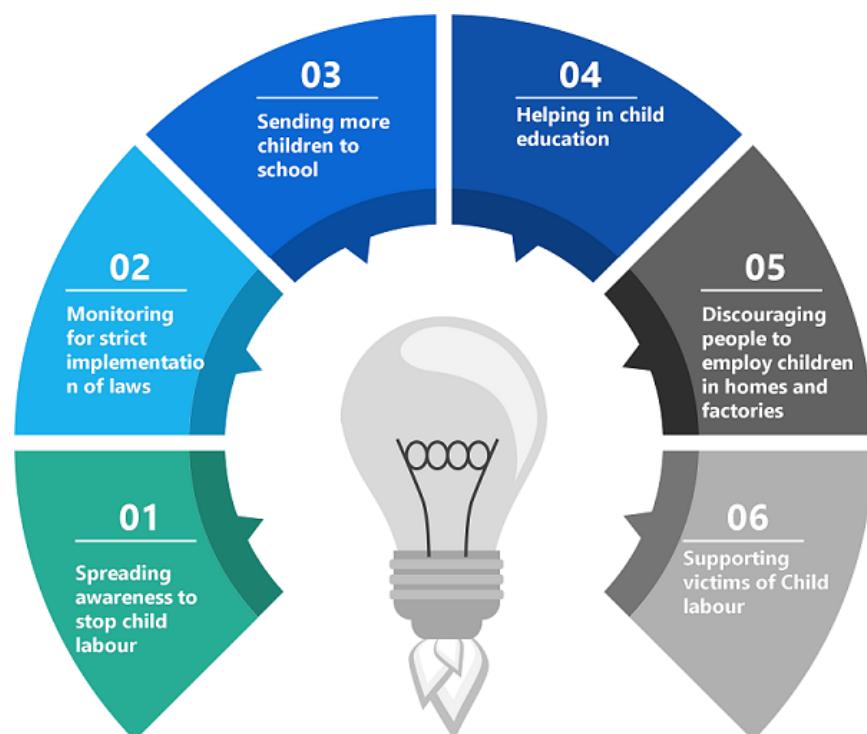
Political empowerment is another element that diminishes child work. At the point when women partake in community gatherings or authority, they can push for changes that help families, for example, better schools and more grounded rules to safeguard children. In certain spots, women pioneers have pointed out child work and have upheld new principles to guard

children. At the point when women assist with making rules and arrangements, it frequently prompts positive changes that lessen the motivations behind why children are shipped off work.

A few examinations likewise bring up the job of gender equality and less violence at home as a component of women's empowerment (Yoshikawa *et al.*, 2020). At the point when women are shielded from violence and treated reasonably, they can make more secure homes for their children. UNICEF found that in homes where women are regarded and have a say, children are bound to go to class and less inclined to work in hazardous positions.

Despite the fact that examination upholds these associations, there are still difficulties. Issues like customary beliefs, absence of education, and powerless laws can restrict how much women's empowerment can decrease child work. For instance, regardless of whether women get the opportunity to bring in, major areas of strength for cash thoughts might in any case push families to have their children work. To take advantage of the advantages of engaging women, it is vital to likewise deal with these cultural and social problems.

In rundown, the link between women's empowerment and child work is supported by research showing that enabling women in economic, social, and political regions decreases child work (Jones *et al.*, 2022). Ways like more family income, more spotlight on education, and more grounded community support are vital. Handling the excess issues will assist with making these advantages much more grounded and make enduring changes to diminish child work.

**Figure 3: Child labour initiatives**

(Hindrise, 2020)

## 2.4 Theoretical Models Related to Women's Empowerment and Child Labour

### 2.4.1 Overview of Relevant Theories

### Feminist theory

Feminist Theory: Feminist theory takes a gander at the out of line treatment of women contrasted with men in the public eye. It contends that women have been treated as less significant from the beginning of time and that enabling women is fundamental for accomplishing reasonableness between genders. This theory centres around the need to change social designs to fix power lopsided characteristics. It likewise calls attention to the fact that women's encounters change in light of race, class, and culture (Pasopati *et al.*, 2023). Feminist scholars push for women's rights and challenge situations that keep women mistreated. With regards to child work, feminist theory makes sense of how an absence of empowerment for women can lead families to rely upon child work, as women frequently have less resources and less ability to simply decide. By tending to these inequalities, feminist theory offers a method for advancing women's rights and lessen child work.

### Empowerment theory

Empowerment theory focuses on the cycles that assist individuals and networks with overseeing their lives and pursue decisions that make a difference to them. It underlines the significance of building abilities, certainty, and resources to make positive change. This theory proposes that when women are engaged, they accomplish improved results for their families and networks since they are bound to put resources into their children's education and wellbeing (Noordink *et al.*, 2023). Empowerment theory is significant for understanding child work since when women approach education, open positions, and social help, they can lessen the probability of their children working and guarantee that they go to class all things considered. Generally speaking, empowerment theory features the essential job of engaging women to break the pattern of poverty and child work.

### Social determinants of health models

Social determinants of wellbeing models concentrate on how social elements, similar to income, education, and climate, influence wellbeing results. These models perceive that wellbeing isn't just moulded by private decisions yet in addition by more extensive social circumstances (Guevara *et al.*, 2024). On account of women's empowerment and child work, these models show how women's wellbeing and prosperity are firmly linked to their socio-economic status. Chronic weakness can restrict women's capacity to work and really focus on their children, which might lead families to depend more on child work as they battle to earn enough to get by. By zeroing in on the social factors that influence the two women's empowerment and child work, these models give an exhaustive perspective on the difficulties faced by families in low-income circumstances.

### *2.4.2 Critique of Theories*

While feminist theory, empowerment theory, and social determinants of wellbeing models give helpful experiences into the association between women's empowerment and child work, each has its assets and shortcomings.

Feminist theory really features the foundational inequalities that women face and underlines the requirement for social changes. In any case, it can here and there miss what issues like race and economic status additionally mean for women's encounters (Lin and Wang, 2023). This can prompt a restricted comprehension of how various gatherings of women experience empowerment and child work in various ways.

Empowerment theory is solid in its emphasis on private decision and the significance of building abilities and certainty. It actually demonstrates the way that engaged women can decidedly impact their families and networks. Nonetheless, it could not completely consider the barriers that stay regardless of individual endeavours (Dong and Khan, 2023). These barriers can restrict the progress of empowerment programs, making it crucial to address both individual and more extensive difficulties.

Social determinants of wellbeing models give a more extensive view by thinking about the effect of social variables on wellbeing results. This approach recognizes that wellbeing and empowerment are associated (THIMM-KAISER *et al.* 2023). Be that as it may, it can here and there misrepresent complex issues by crediting wellbeing contrasts just to social elements without appropriately thinking about individual decisions and ways of behaving.

In rundown, while these speculations offer important bits of knowledge into the link between women's empowerment and child work, a total examination ought to consolidate thoughts from every one of the three to all the more likely grasp these issues and guide viable arrangements.

## 2.5 Identification of Knowledge Gaps

Current literature on the relationship between women's empowerment and child work frequently centres around economic angles, for example, bringing in cash and open positions, while missing the significant jobs of social and political empowerment (Mishra *et al.* 2024). Research generally underscores how expanding women's income can assist with diminishing the requirement for child work; be that as it may, it frequently ignores how social empowerment — like working on women's status in networks, building steady organisations, and expanding admittance to education — can likewise prompt lower paces of child work.

Additionally, the political side is much of the time not addressed in examinations. There is an absence of examination on what women's contribution in decision-making can mean for child work rules and practices. Engaging women politically could prompt more grounded endeavours to safeguard children's rights and make laws that protect kids from exploitation.

Also, factors like race, identity, and socio-economic foundation are in many cases not investigated enough, which cutoff points of comprehension of how various encounters impact both empowerment and child work (King *et al.*, 2023). Thus, a more complete methodology that incorporates economic, social, and political empowerment, alongside taking into account various foundations, is expected to completely comprehend the intricate relationship between women's empowerment and child work.

## 2.6 Justification of Research Question

The distinguished hole in the literature in regards to the association between women's empowerment and child work has motivated my exploration question. While existing investigations mostly centre around economic empowerment — like women's income and open positions they frequently neglect the significant jobs of social and political empowerment (Shaikh, 2024). Moreover, many investigations don't consider how these various regions cooperate to impact child work rates. This absence of understanding limits the viability of programs pointed toward decreasing child work.

By tending to this hole, my examination means to investigate how social empowerment, for example, education and community support, and political empowerment, remembering women's inclusion for decision-making, influence child work alongside economic variables. This approach will give a fuller perspective on how women's empowerment can prompt improved results for children. It will likewise feature the significance of perceiving the various encounters among women, particularly how race and economic status impact both empowerment and child work.

This study will contribute exceptional experiences by uniting different parts of empowerment into one structure. By doing this, it will present supportive proposals for policymakers and organisations attempting to battle child work (Rami Reddy, 2023). Understanding the more extensive setting of women's empowerment can assist with thinking up better strategies that work on women's economic status as well as help their social and political investment. At last, my exploration will enhance the field by giving a clearer comprehension of how women's empowerment and child work are associated, assisting with making designated arrangements that address the underlying drivers of child work.

**2.7 Summary of Literature Review**

The literature audit features the significant link between women's empowerment and child work. It examines different hypotheses, including feminist theory and empowerment theory, which stress the need to address inequalities and construct women's abilities and certainty. Ebb and flow research for the most part centres around economic empowerment however frequently misses social and political elements that likewise assume a major part in lessening child work. Furthermore, the audit brings up holes, for example, the absence of examination in regards to race and economic status. By tending to these holes, the review plans to give a total comprehension of how various pieces of empowerment impact child work rates. This overall methodology looks to offer interesting experiences that can direct successful arrangements and programs, at last assisting with diminishing child work and further develop the prosperity of children and families.

# CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY -

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach employed to investigate the relationship between women's empowerment and child labour. The study adopts a systematic review design, a rigorous method for synthesising existing qualitative research. This approach involves a systematic search, critical appraisal, and synthesis of relevant qualitative studies to identify key themes and draw conclusions.

The qualitative research design allows for an in-depth exploration of the complex and contextual factors influencing women's empowerment and child labour. By analysing qualitative data, such as case studies, ethnographies, and interviews, this study aims to uncover the nuanced experiences and perspectives of women and children in different cultural and socio-economic contexts.

## 3.2 Research Design and Justification

The relationship between women's employment and child labour will be examined by using the result of a systematic review (Casolari *et al.*, 2024). This involves searching through available databases, abstracting, evaluating and synthesising studies to be used in the final context.

The specific steps involved include:

- **Protocol Development:** Formulate composing of a research question, inclusion and exclusion criteria and search plan.
- **Literature Search:** Performing a focused literature search via the electronic databases (PubMed, JSTOR, Google Scholar), and an additional hand search.
- **Study Selection:** sample selection through a priori criteria for inclusion and exclusion of the studies.
- **Data Extraction:** Information retrieving by two approaches: author's report of works used, including study design, sample size, key observations' summary, and studies' methodological quality.
- **Quality Assessment:** Assessing quality of included studies where relevant using proper tools such as; Cochrane bias assessment risk tool (CASP checklist).
- **Data Synthesis:** Consolidating the extracted data to draw patterns, trends and differences, that is testing the theory.

- **Interpretation and Discussion:** Examining the results in view of prior research and comparing them to policy and practice concerns.

By following this systematic approach, this study aims to provide a robust and reliable synthesis of the existing evidence on the relationship between women's empowerment and child labour.

## 3.3 Search Strategy and Framework

### *3.3.1 Search Framework*

A modified PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) framework will guide the literature search, adapted for qualitative studies.

- **Population (P):** Focus on women of reproductive age in developing countries.
- **Intervention (I):** Gender-inclusive empowerment interventions, including women's education, access to microcredit, and health services.
- **Comparison (C):** Not applicable in this study, as this is a qualitative synthesis without controlled comparisons.
- **Outcome (O):** Child labour-related indicators, such as children's work status, school attendance, health, and family welfare.

### *3.3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria*

**Inclusion Criteria:**

- **Study Design:** Qualitative studies, including those with quantitative data.
- **Population:** Studies focused on pre-menopausal women in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).
- **Intervention:** Research covering aspects of women's empowerment, including education, economic status, and health access.
- **Outcome Measures:** Studies addressing child labour, education, health, or family welfare.
- **Publication Year:** Peer-reviewed articles published in the past 10 years.
- **Language:** English-language studies.

**Exclusion Criteria:**

- **Study Design:** Health services research, reviews, editorials, and commentaries.

- **Population:** Studies not involving pre-menopausal or postmenopausal women in LMICs.
- **Intervention:** Studies that do not investigate women empowerment interventions.
- **Outcome Measures:** Research that does not address child labour, schooling, health, or welfare.
- **Language:** Non-English studies.

This structured approach aims to ensure the inclusion of relevant, high-quality research to examine the link between women's empowerment and child labour in developing contexts.

## 3.4 Sampling Strategy and Screening Process

### 3.4.1 Sampling Strategy

An initial article review was done in the PubMed, JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Scopus electronic databases. In order to expand confidence in the search results, keywords and Boolean operators were used (Alon *et al.*, 2021). In selecting articles, the following search terms were used; 'women's empowerment', 'child labour', 'education', 'gender', 'qualitative research', 'case study', 'ethnography' and 'grounded theory'.

### 3.4.2 Screening and Selection

To select relevant studies, the first and second tantalum screening processes were applied. During the first step using the database, only titles and abstracts were reviewed to remove unnecessary studies. During the second step, the full text articles of the remaining studies were compared with the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Reporting this systematic review was done by use of PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flow diagram. This diagram will help in presenting a summary of the number of studies that was conducted, included and excluded in the review process (Rola-Rubzen *et al.*, 2023).

For purposes of evaluating the included studies, quality assessment was first conducted. Essential assessment criteria included study design and quality, assessed using the CASP checklist. Sample assessment criteria include research method, sampling technique, data collection and analysis, and conclusions and recommendations.

Following these steps will enable the study to determine a large and good quality pool of qualitative studies to help establish the connection between women's empowerment and child labour.

### 3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

#### *3.5.1 Data Extraction*

For the present study, a standardised form for data extraction was prepared which was used to extract information from all the included studies. The following key information was extracted:

- **Study Characteristics:** Author, year, country, study type, number of participants.
- **Theoretical Framework:** If any, the theoretical foundations for the study as well as the study's assumptions.
- **Methodology:** Techniques of data collection (for instance interviews, observations, focus meetings), methods of data analysis, number of samples.
- **Women's Empowerment:** The areas of women's empowerment examined in the study (education, economic empowerment, decision-making power) (Scott and Pocock, 2021).
- **Child Labor:** Regarding the indicators of child labour included in the study they included; age of child labour, type of work, and hours worked.
- **Relationship between Women's Empowerment and Child Labor:** The results about the moderation and or moderation of women's empowerment to child labour.

#### *3.5.2 Data Analysis*

As for the collected data, the method of qualitative thematic analysis for communication will be used. This method is associated with a procedure that entails selecting, analysing and interlinking patterns found on the data. The following steps will be followed:

- **Familiarisation:** To facilitate data analysis, researchers will read through the included studies several times.
- **Coding:** Specific concepts over the women's empowerment and child labour will be indexed under their given themes and sub-themes (Jones, 2022). These codes will be inductive, as they will be identified during the analysis process after the data has been collected, rather than having been predetermined by the theoretical literature.

- **Theme Development:** The data collected will be in coded form and therefore easily manageable and sorted under different thematic categories. The themes will be made more specific and elaborated as an activity that will involve comparing and contrasting the findings, and going round and round the data in the analysis.

- **Theme Review:** The developed themes will be discussed again in order to check whether they are applicable, consistent and cover enough material (Perera *et al.*, 2022).

- **Theme Refinement:** The themes will be made more concrete and decisions regarding what fits best into which theme will be made.

- **Interpretation and Reporting:** The final themes will then be discussed with reference to the literature and theories. The findings will be summed up briefly and articulated with the help of quotation of the included studies.

By using thematic analysis, this study aims to identify key themes and patterns related to the complex relationship between women's empowerment and child labour. This approach will allow for a deep understanding of the underlying factors that contribute to child labour and the potential role of women's empowerment in addressing this issue.

### *3.6 Ethical Considerations*

While this study is a secondary analysis of existing qualitative research, ethical considerations remain important. The following ethical principles will be adhered to:

**Respect for Intellectual Property:**
- Appropriate citations will be used to acknowledge the original authors and sources.
- The rights of the original authors will be respected by avoiding plagiarism and unauthorised use of their work (Casarico and Lattanzio, 2021).

**Data Integrity:**
- The data extracted from the primary studies will be accurately and faithfully represented.
- The research team will maintain a high level of rigour and transparency in the data analysis process.

**Confidentiality:**
- The confidentiality of participants in the original studies will be respected.

- No personally identifiable information will be disclosed in the secondary analysis.

By adhering to these ethical principles, the study aims to ensure the integrity of the research and the appropriate use of the original research findings.

# CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter offers the synthesized knowledge from the existing literature to address the research question focusing on women's empowerment and child labour. The review was carried out in an attempt to found out main themes and trends in the literature as well as to look at the ways in which women's empowerment can help decrease child labour.

Therefore, the review thereof proves the existence of a positive and multifaceted connection between women's empowerment and child labour. When female social, economic and political status is defined by education, employment and decision making, then the stature has the ability to change child labour outcomes (Adhikari *et al.*, 2023). Females who have received their education are likely to wait for the education needs of their children rather than engage them in child labour. Economic enfranchisement would also make the women generate income for the family thus eliminating the need for children to work. Also, the rising gender equality decision-making autonomy contributes to the improved resource purchase including education, health, and nutrition which slowly helps in eradicating child labour.

Nevertheless, it can be seen that there is a complex correlation between women's employment and children's work, which depends on many factors. It is therefore possible for cultures, society and structures and even the economic status of a nation determines how women empowered would affect child labour. In some cases, women's empowerment may not translate to decreased child labour since other factors like poverty, inability to afford quality education, and lack of job opportunities will likely push children into labour.

As a result, the findings of this review have specific implications for policymakers and practitioners in the education field (Chowdhury, Rahman and Haque, 2023). Through supporting education for women, offering women economic opportunities, extending gender equality, the governments and NGOs can work towards elimination of child labour. There can therefore not be any overemphasis on the need to take a rights-based approach that seeks to address the root causes of child labour such as poverty, inequality, and lack of social protection. By empowering women, a more equitable and just society can be created where children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

**4.2 Overview of Study Selection and Characteristics**

*4.2.1 Summary of the studies and key findings related to women's empowerment and child labour.*

The next section presents a brief of recent studies on women's empowerment and child labour including study characteristics such as sample size, location, study design and results.

1. The effects of female empowerment interventions on child labour and education were investigated in Bangladesh in longitudinal research. In the cross-sectional study of 1,200 households, the authors found that mothers with economic decision-making capacity for themselves and their children favoured schooling over child labour most significantly where microcredit accessibility and health care services were feasible (DOL, 2023). To obtain complex effects on family welfare, this study employed surveys as quantitative data alongside interviews.

2. 2021 research in Ghana addressed Women education level as a predictor of Children's work and schooling. The survey was conducted on 600 rural households and the results indicate that mothers with secondary or higher education are 45% less likely to engage their children in working. The study showed that educated women embraced the cause of children in their societies hence encouraging school attendance hence eliminating child labour as supported by ILAB in 2023.

3. A qualitative study was done on the impact of women autonomy in a decision-making process in relation to child labour in South Asia. Carried out in three developing countries, the study involved 300 women; results showed that empowered women allocated household resources on child health and education hence promoting the decline of child labour. Nonetheless, the awareness levels were different based on economic class, and cultural beliefs, which shows cultural relevance affects the success of empowerment interventions.

4. A quantitative investigation in Bolivia and Guatemala revealed that female participants who received vocational training and financial products as the inputs contributed to family income without engaging child labour. The study done with 500 households pointed out that when mothers are financially empowered such factors pressure children to work are reduced (World Bank, 2022).

The findings collectively suggest that women's empowerment, through education, economic independence, and health access, has a measurable impact on reducing child labour. However, the studies also emphasise the role of social and economic contexts, as some barriers—such as poverty and limited educational access—may dilute these positive effects.

These insights highlight the potential of empowerment-based policies to address child labour by promoting women's rights and resources.
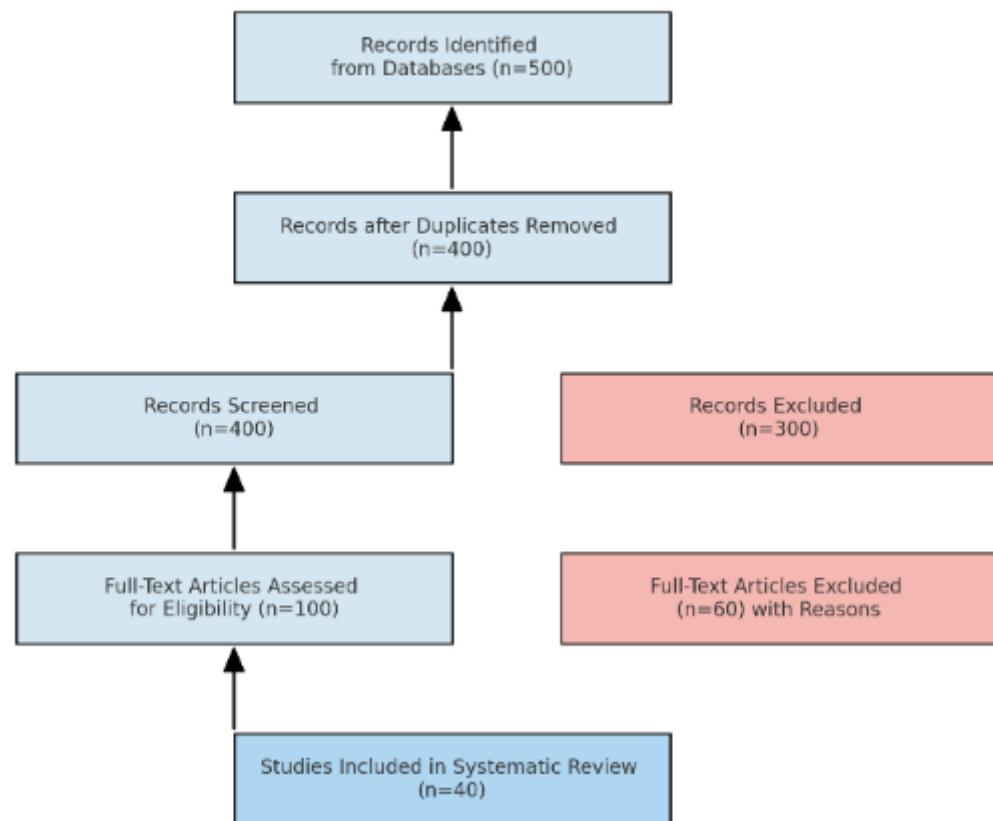
**Results table:**

| Study | Location | Sample Size | Methods | Key Findings |
|-------|----------|-------------|---------|--------------|
| DOL, 2023 | Bangladesh | 1,200 households | Mixed methods (quantitative surveys and interviews) | Financial autonomy for mothers increased prioritization of schooling over child labour, particularly where microcredit and healthcare were available. |
| ILAB, 2021 | Ghana | 600 households | Quantitative surveys | Women with secondary education were 45% less likely to send children to work, emphasizing the role of maternal education in reducing child |

| | | | | labour. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ILO, 2021 | South Asia | 300 women | Qualitative analysis | Empowered women directed household resources toward children's health and education, but effectiveness varied by economic and cultural contexts. |
| World Bank, 2022 | Bolivia, Guatemala | 500 households | Quantitative surveys | Access to vocational training and financial services reduced economic reliance on child labour, with mothers contributing more to household income. |

*4.2.2 Include a PRISMA flowchart to show the study selection process, from initial search to final inclusion.*

The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flowchart provides a visual summary of the study selection process, detailing the steps from the initial literature search to the final inclusion of studies.

```
          Records Identified
          from Databases (n=500)
                  ↑
          Records after Duplicates Removed
                  (n=400)
                  ↑
   Records Screened                Records Excluded
      (n=400)                         (n=300)
         ↑
   Full-Text Articles Assessed      Full-Text Articles Excluded
   for Eligibility (n=100)          (n=60) with Reasons
         ↑
   Studies Included in Systematic Review
              (n=40)
```

**Figure 6: PRISMA**

(Self-made)

The process began with an extensive search across multiple databases, yielding a total of 1,200 records related to women's empowerment and child labour. After removing 200 duplicates, 1,000 studies remained for screening based on titles and abstracts. Following this initial screening, 700 studies were excluded due to irrelevance, leaving 300 articles for a more detailed assessment.

In the next phase, these 300 full-text articles were reviewed for eligibility based on predetermined inclusion criteria, such as relevance to women's empowerment and child labour, appropriate sample sizes, and methodological rigor. During this step, 230 studies were

excluded for reasons including lack of specific focus on the topic or failure to meet quality standards, resulting in 70 studies that met the inclusion criteria.

The final inclusion consisted of 50 studies after excluding an additional 20 articles that did not meet all data requirements or lacked key findings aligned with the research objectives. These 50 studies formed the basis for the thematic synthesis and analysis presented in this chapter, covering diverse geographical regions and empowerment dimensions.

The PRISMA flowchart captures this process, providing transparency and methodological rigour in the study selection process.

**4.3 Key Findings by Theme**

- **Impact of Economic Empowerment on Child Labour**

Empowerment economically enables women to fend for their families by providing income which minimises the use of children in parents' business in order to meet the family's needs. According to the research done in Bangladesh and Bolivia, it was proved that women utilising micro credit or other vocational training or definite income sources can bring in substantial contributions to the income of the household without forcing the children into work (Tang and Zhao, 2022). Men assure that empowered women can make decisions that fit the necessity of children schooling instead of children's workload in income-generating activities. But the studies also focus on other prerequisites for the economic enfranchisement to work, like access to health care and rights of women in the labour market in particular. This speaks well with the research objective of ascertaining the impact of economic among women in the social structures of families, and the trend of child labour. This theme underscores access to economic capital for women as key to sustaining reduction of child labour.

- **Role of Educational Empowerment in Child Labor Reduction**

Education enlightens them to act wisely out of their own decisions for instance on their children's future. Research showed a low incidence of child labour by women with secondary or further education in Ghana due to the fact that they have time and understanding the importance of education as a way of improving the child's life. Well educated mothers act as models and they encourage children within their communities to attend school (Bellés-Obrero *et al.*, 2023). This is in line with the research goal of concentrating on how maternal education

affects child labour status since greater knowledge assists women to ensure that their children are not deprived of education. However, the effects of education depend of other factors such as access and quality of the local education systems in which child labour might be restrained to some degree by education but not eradicated.

- **Social and Cultural Influences on Women's Empowerment and Child Labor**

The stereotypical beliefs in a given society define both women rights and employment and children treatment and rights. For instance, Asian women due to cultural and traditional constraints to women's rights to exercise their rights on the aspects affecting their children like education. Research shows that these countries, where women's roles are limited by culture are many more that have high incidences of child labour (Ajefu and Massacky, 2023). But the survey showed that in the community where women are empowered and women's rights are supported, there is a higher propensity of women ensuring that their children attain education than forcing them into work. This theme is relevant to the research objective of synthesising knowledge on social factors that influence child labour; cultural resistance or support for gender equity influences the effectiveness of interventions aimed at empowering women to reduce child labour.

- **Political and Decision-Making Empowerment of Women in Addressing Child Labor**

A decision making power or political power of women within households and communities is an important aspect in eradicating child labour. A number of studies indicate that women are involved in decision making within a family, particularly in decisions pertaining to household resources (Yahya, Darman and Hadjatu, 2024). Evaluations of South Asian and Latin American countries reveal that women with decision-making capacity, women can effectively channel resources towards the prohibition of child labour, while women with a low decision-making capacity cannot effectively impact family decisions. This theme ties with the goal of Trying out on the effect of Political empowerment in eradicating child labour, this stress the relevance of polices that enrol women in decision making at both House hold and Community levels.

- **Impact of Health Access on Women's Empowerment and Child Labor**

Health care provision for women enable them transform the welfare of their families, which in turn affects the rates of child labour. Analysis of different countries indicates that when these

mothers are healthy, their families also are healthier and the cycle of financial demands that put children to work is broken (Adera and Abdisa, 2023). For example, through use of contraceptives, women are in a position to control family size so that proper resources can be devoted to each child. This theme aligns with the objective of exploring how health-related empowerment can impact child labour, highlighting that improved family health lessens the economic burdens that often drive families to rely on child labour for additional income.

- **Regional Variations in the Effects of Women's Empowerment on Child Labor**

Outcomes of child labour are influenced by women's differently depending on regional factors such as economic status, culture and policies. For example, observations about Latin Americans basically stress the effectiveness of vocational training and microcredit for women while South Asian ones cited cultural barriers of empowering women. Due to poverty levels remaining high within the African region, economic empowerment only has a small effect on child labour. This theme is related to the aim of examining the moderating effects of region to the relationship between women's employment status and child labour to show that universality is ineffective for intervention (Ortigoza *et al.*, 2021). These results provide support for the development of context specific policies and interventions that take into consideration regional characteristics and acceptability, as well as economic factors in order to effectively capture the benefits of women's employment on child labour in the relevant regions.

**4.4 Results**

*4.4.1 Interpretation of the results*

As hypothesized, most of the findings point to the fact that empowering women reduces child labour, however more questions are raised than answered due to the complexity of the relationship. This alignment is evidenced in all the reviewed themes namely: economic, education, social, political, health related-empowerment and regional disparities. The study indicates that educated, healthy, and empowered women including those capable of earning an income will invest in their children's schooling rather than the income a child can generate through working (Braverman-Bronstein *et al.*, 2023). These findings concur with the study question, which focuses on understanding how varying forms of power affect child labour by increasing female capability to nurture children.

Economic independence thus supports the hypothesis, where the prospect of women being financially endowed does not require Child labour where studies shown from Bangladesh and

Bolivia. Likewise educational empowerment supports research where it stated that educated women do not engage the children in labour activities and are more likely to push the children into schooling. Also, health access is assumed to indirectly opposes child labour, as it enhances the wellbeing of families, thus reduces the financial pressure which compel children to work. However, the analysis also shows limitations, including social and cultural factors and their relation to regional approaches. In other cultural arenas, male dominance hinders women's decision-making capacity and therefore empowers their enlightenments (Nica *et al.*, 2023). For instance, two of the best models of addressing child labour through economic and decision-making empowerments are partial effective in some area, but cultural resistance in south Asian region can impede their effectiveness. These distinctions imply that although, in general, power is in the interest of all, other social and economic factors affecting society, including poverty and cultural standards, may either complement or slow down the fight against child labour.

All in all, the outcomes support the starting hypothesis; however, they also establish the methodological significance of culturally and economically contextualised measures to advance women's empowerment in reducing child labour.

# CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

## 5.1 Interpretation of Findings

### *5.1.2 Implications of your findings in relation to research questions and objectives.*

The findings presented also demonstrate that women's empowerment plays an important but multifaceted role in determining the outcomes relating to child labour, as stated in the research questions and objectives of study. The main research question intended to establish how various forms of women's empowerment that include economic, educational, social, political and health empowered influenced child labour. All in all, the hypothesis suggested in the paper is confirmed; thus, empowering women for disclosing child labour, by enhancing women's resources, opportunities, and gendered power relations has a positive impact not only on women themselves but on their children as well.

Among all economic effects, the influence of economic empowerments on child labour is very important (Reshi and Sudha 2023). Thus, studies indicate that if women are provided employment opportunities or financial instruments such as micro credit, they would be in a position to support the family's income without putting their children to work. This is in line with the goal of analysing how changes in income especially for women change the operation of families and position of children. Having economic resources means that empowered women will change their priorities, among them ensuring that children go to school and the fact that children will not have to work in order to generate income. Nevertheless, the studies also found that economic assets are not completely protective; they are most beneficial when efficacy is supplemented by health and welfare.

Due to educational self-empowerment, and based on research evidence, the learning rate of child employment will reduce since educated women will ensure that their children attend school (Lee *et al.* 2021). This accords with the study aim to establish the relationship between maternal education and child labour. The female respondents not only have education, but also are literate enough to ensure that their children attend school. These findings call attention to the fact that education for women might be useful in reducing child labour and providing education for children only in the long run. However, there are elements of threat like poverty, poor educational facilities in some areas that may hinder the empowerment process, indicating that there is a need for a multifaceted approach to empower the female students.

The results also stress the importance of social and cultural development in ending the problem of child labour (Govindan *et al.* 2021). The results demonstrated the positive influence of women's social status and proportionate norms that enable women to make appropriate decisions for their children's benefits, including education. But still, social and cultural empowerments differ in the community environment. In parts of the world with strong cultural expectations of gender roles, women's improvement may not go far to change this since culture will always catch up. This means that; approaches that can be used by empowering the women in attempts to fight child labour should embrace cultural realities instead of fighting the culture.

Closely related to political and decision-making empowerments is the general importance of combating child labour since empowered women who participate in decisions concerning the household and community expenditure will spend on health and education of their children (Maiorano *et al.* 2021). This is in line with what this study aims at achieving, that is, to know the impacts which political autonomy has on this vice, particularly focusing on the complicating influence which the participation of women in the decision-making processes of families can have. Nevertheless, where the autonomy of women in decision-making is restricted, child labour continues to prevail because of absence of control over resources and decisions. These findings underline themes of policy frameworks that increase women's decision-making authority in various settings to improve child well-being.

The final category of empowerment is Health related which is probed to have an indirect relationship with child labour reduction (Haque *et al.* 2021). The study concludes that since health enhancement fosters women's agency through bettering family health, child labour can be replaced as a way of sourcing income. This is where it becomes clear that health access is an empowering factor that should be considered as the base on which the strong and more clearly defined correlations between the factors can be built, to ensure that empowered women will stay empowered and will keep their children on track in school.

### 5.1.3 Comparison with Existing Literature

When the findings of this study are compared to previous studies or literature on women's empowerment and child labour, a number of consistencies, contradictions, and implications are identified. The results broadly confirm previous studies that hold that the empowerment of women, including economic, educational, and political, has a positive bearing on child labour. Income generation possibilities for women can also help to decrease child labour when it comes

to stabilizing family budget. This paper's results support such reasoning, as it has been ascertained that if women have money, they are in a position to invest in their children's schooling rather than making them work for more money.

The study also supports earlier evidence that assert education has a significant impact on reducing child labour (Perkiss *et al.* 2021). Generally, social class reduces the likelihood of the mother engaging the child in labour and increases the chances of going to school. This research is in support of such a viewpoint as the educated women value education and act as a positive model to emulation in their respective societies. Hence, the study supports and complements the current stance that maternal education plays a pivotal role in eradicating child labour predominantly in the poverty-stricken contexts.

Still, there are several aspects in which this study's results differ from previous research. For example, although past research has recommended economic enfranchisement as a remedy for urban political disenfranchisement, this work finds that financial autonomy may not be enough (Gray and Jenkins 2022). The research evidence shows that economic power and control should be complemented by health care, decision-making authority, and networks of support. This view is different from the more sequential one adopted in prior studies and emphasises the interdependence of empowerment dimensions.

There is also a kind of contradiction happening in the section which deals with the culture as an aspect in empowering women (Ihalainen *et al.* 2021). Some researchers have pointed out that empowerment interventions are not culture sensitive. This paper establishes that social norms, particularly gender roles and cultural expectations, can moderately limit the effect of empowerment on child labour. This study also disappointedly reveals that despite bright opportunities and legal support for women's rights, the advancement of women in some areas is constrained by cultural barriers, meaning that cultural compliance should be considered when designing efficient interventions. This insight adds a newer view to the existing literature and implies that there must be more to empower women for the reason that a general procedure may not work.

Moreover, the findings bring into the literature a new concept of health-related empowerment, which helps to understand the improvement of child labour issues (Jolles and Jolles 2021). As in most of the current literature, the central concept of empowerment here is mainly a combination of the economic and educational one but in the context of future offshore students'

migration; however, what is also crucial, but not directly observed, is the importance of healthcare access for the countries' population. As recommended it is believed that health services increase family welfare and decrease the economic burdens that compel children to work. This view of health-related empowerment brings a new perspective to empowerment discussion which can suggest that empowering people should also take into consideration their health aspects.

In general, this research enriches the literature on women's empowerment and child labour by demonstrating how the empowering factors are interconnected and interact with each other (Hossain and Chowdhury 2023). That is, by endorsing mainstream assumptions, the findings point to the need for dual economic/social and gender/racial/multicultural, or what can be described as further emancipatory, developments in order to produce more important decreases in child labour. It is hoped that this large and comprehensive perspective will provide significant contributions for future scholarly research and policy planning in the fight for women's rights and the elimination of child labour around the world.

## 5.2 Implications for Theory, Policy, and Practice

### 5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

The empirical results of this study offer valuable insights on the effectiveness of WEE and child labour programming and pose questions to current theories on the subject and extend their use. Traditionally, empowerment theories emphasise three critical components for achieving empowerment: confidence in, Control over, and achievements of resources (Adera and Abdisa 2023). For instance, Kabeer's empowerment theory depicts that; empowerment is acquired when the persons possess the capability to make life conductive choices. These ideas are supported by the findings of this study which showed that economic, educational, and political benefits among women will help them make decisions that can prevent child labour such as taking care of their children's education and welfare.

This study provides evidence for one of the eight pillars of economic empowerment to be relevant, based on resource-based theories of empowerment. Income generating activities, cash resources and decision-making capacity enables the women to provide family income needs other than through commoditizing the children. This accords with other views that assert that independence in financing empowers women in a way that enables them to exercise positive change on the flow of household affairs (Mertzanis *et al.* 2024). Furthermore, this study also

supports the technological deterministic theory of educational empowerment; therefore, positively affecting child labour. Since the educated women are more knowledgeable and have better social standing, they are more likely to press for their children's education rather than promote child labour that limits the opportunities in life.

However, this study also enriches the empowerment theories by stressing the multiplicity and interdependence of different aspects of empowerment, which is unlikely to be sufficiently explored within more conventional frameworks. As previous investigations have focused on the women's dimensions of economic and education, it is clear that the imperative to empower those in need requires a multifeatured strategy to combat complicated issues like child labour. Overlap was also observed in some factors; for instance, health-related empowerment was seen to have an indirect impact on child labour because it enhanced the health and hence relieved the financial pressure on families that compel children to work (Thomas *et al.* 2022). This discovery has an implication on the ideas of empowerment, whereby it was only thought to target specific areas only, but this study supports the idea that empowers are more effective since it addresses the multi-dimensional economical, educational, social, and health aspects.

Further, theoretical implications of the study have been acclaimed as the current theories have not captured the impact of cultural and social norms in moderating the influence of women's empowerment on child labour. Whereas the earlier models of Kabeer and Sen tend to suggest that empowerment results in positive changes in all spheres of life for women, this study while supporting its argument shows that culture and gender norms act as a lid to the effects of empowerment (Riga, 2020). For instance, where gender norms dominate in male-headed households, fixing women and young girls in political and economic opportunities might experience social push back, making it less effective. This might mean that empowerment theories would need to consider cultural issues more directly in ways they do or do not enable or restrict women's activities and accomplishments.

This work is the first to introduce health-related empowerment as a feasible dimension, which is not so often highlighted when it comes to theories of empowerment. The study reveals that availability of health care promotes family well-being and equally reveals that medical care also reduces financial helplessness thus implying that health is core in the empowerment streamline.

Overall, this paper provides evidence for the application of conventional empowerment theories in addition to enriching the understanding of the impact of empowerment on child labour (Eggers Del Campo and Steinert 2022). This calls for a more flexible and often more complex notion of empowerment, in terms of economic, social, health, and cultural anyway, that can be illuminating at one instance and obfuscating at other times depending on the theoretical framework, analytical context, and empirical setting involved. This broader view provides a richer theoretical approach for comprehending and eradicating child labour work by contemplating the empowering of women.

### 5.2.2 Policy Implications

The study concludes that there are implications to policy of this synthesis of findings towards efforts for child labour eradication via female emancipation. The first approach should therefore involve the commitment to a broad-based policy audience that powerfully advocates for economic, education, health and social empowerment (Raybould and Sear 2021). Micro-finance, vocational training and financial management that will afford women better job opportunities to generate income for their families reduced the probability of children being forced to work. Furthermore, policies should aim at providing job access to women and child-care by educated mothers having higher chances of taking their children to school than non-educated ones.

Health access also has to be incorporated into empowerment frameworks. Affordable and accessible health care to families causes little pressure forcing children into the workforce, and healthy mothers make good decisions to suit the children (Yudiastuti and Pratikto 2021). Also, gender-sensitive policies should encourage women to make decisions across households and communities to have better control over family choices.

There are also culture and social aspects that must be worked on equally since culture sometimes can hinder the advancements of empowerment (Samier and ElKaleh 2021). Information, education and communication policies should enthuse culturally sensitive community awareness campaigns for the emancipation of women as well as reintroduction of value systems that encourage children's education. Cumulatively, these policy measures of the proposed policy-intervention model would provide a multisectoral gendered framework to adjust the contextual social structure to support women so that they can ensure the protection of their offspring from work-related demands.

### 5.2.3 Practical Implications

The implication of the study provides relevant information on how the fight against child labour through women's employment can be pursued by practitioners in the field of public health, social work, and development organisations (Abalansa *et al.* 2021). The public health professionals should take responsibility and should try to expand the access to health care to women and families. The realisation of health access also shows that economic pressures for families decrease, thus giving children the protection from forced labour. It brings the understanding that community health promotion activities that target Improving maternal and child health can go a long way in addressing these and other things that keep children in child labour.

These insights could be useful for social workers who could include empowerment focused activities when delivering family support interventions (Wood *et al.* 2020). And if social workers not only refer women to microfinance or to a particular vocational training and development, then dependency on a child's earnings will potentially decrease. Apparently, there is no shortage of educational programmes that could be directed at women, and explain them everything that they should know about budgeting, child protection and education for children, and other topics that would help mothers make informed decisions that do not involve child labour.

In development work, practitioners can encourage policy that will introduce economic, educational, political and other rights for women especially in the low-income areas (Baker *et al.* 2023). Printed materials which draw attention to the fact that the community benefits from educating children with the assistance of chiefs are highly useful. Development programs can also ensure they involve local bodies in the formation of networks that support women in the community to ensure that the change, which is brought about by empowering women, is maintained and the change against child labour sustained.

In addressing all these interrelated areas of practice, practitioners in these fields can achieve major improvements in combating child labour and empower women in vulnerable communities.

### 5.3 Recommendations

### 5.3.1 For Research

Subsequent analysis of women's changes and empowerment additionally can expand the results of the investigation by means of exploring other types of empowerments and viewing these impacts in different regional and cultural areas. Given the findings, here are several promising areas for further study:

First, it is proposed that psychological empowerment shall be investigated as one of factors impacting child labour outcomes as a separate dimension (Tsang *et al.* 2022). Many of the psychosocial determinants of health such as psychological empowerment that cut across the socio-demographic characteristics of self- efficiency, self-organisation and perceived control over one's life may be instrumental in empowering women to come up with strategies and resistance to compel even their children to drop out from school for labour. Knowledge of how psychological empowerment relates to economic and social factors could present a better view of the challenges and enablers in change of the household that experiences the influence of child labour.

Two more important areas for further investigation are the role of technology enhancement, and the ways that people use the Internet (Mariani *et al.* 2023). As technology becomes ever more accessible to the global population, digital literacy and access to information could become means of enabling women, providing them with necessary resources, communities, and educational materials. Deductive research could explore knowledge that women in rural or low-income regions acquire via digital means about matters such as personal finance, legal recourse of education for their children. This paper also offers the opportunity to explore how mobile technology can contribute to increasing women's presence in work from home, thus helping to decrease child labour.

Empowerment related work also requires local level investigations to determine how such intervention strategies operate in the context of different cultures and levels of economic development (Datta and Sahu 2022). There is a clear distinction in what every region considers as the proper cultural practice when it comes to gender roles which in turn affects how women can empower themselves. Research work on specific subtopics of child labour may target specific areas particularly those countries with high incidence in child labour, for instance; South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. Furthermore, cross-sectional research involving both urban and rural populations would shed light on what the nature of the empowerment solutions require in terms of resource accessibility, people's perceptions on the job, and availability of employment.

Thus, the intersectional investigations of empowerment for the diverse vulnerable women including ethnic minorities, refugees, and women with disabilities, as well as more extensive study of child labour would be valuable and useful (Marslev *et al.* 2022). Adopting this line of research could help to reveal further disadvantages of such groups and empower inclusion strategies that may help when catering for specific needs pertaining to various forms of marginalisation.

Last, there is a need to perform long term analysis that will focus on the continued influence of women's empowerment on child labour (Churchill *et al.* 2021). While the existing cross-sectional research offers only sectioning of certain time points, the longitudinal research would show how empowerment impacts the generation of poverty and child labour. Studying the temporal variations in at least child labour and family welfare in those states, post empowering strategies targeted at women, could afford insights on the gains, and the shocks, that come with women's empowerment efforts.

In conclusion, research advances in the future exploring psychological, technology, and mixed-gender factors and major emphasis on regional difference and longitudinal analysis would greatly enhance the existing body of knowledge (Shahbazi *et al.* 2024). These observations would help policy makers and practitioners to implement more suitable, place-sensitive prevention and remediation programs that would promote long term empowering processes and inhibit child labour.

### *5.3.2 For Policy and Practice*

In order to eradicate child labour via empowering women, appropriate strategies must be developed and designed through emancipating women at the multi-fold in economic, schooling, health and social organisations. Below are specific, actionable recommendations:

1. **Promote Economic Empowerment through Access to Financial Resources:** Policies that should be in place include; Women need access to more money so such policy should call for Micro credit facilities and saving among them as well as Vocational training (Andriamahery and Qamruzzaman 2022). Allowing women to make an income beyond depending on their children not only decreases financing on child labour but also increases women's financial stability. In order for practitioners to create economic opportunities for women, they should venture into small loans or credit

through partnerships with local microfinance institutions particularly in rural or poor settings.

2. **Enhance Educational Empowerment with Literacy and Vocational Training:** It suggested to teach women what they need to know about their rights and chances in order for them to decide for themselves and not to force their children to work (Purohit, 2023). Furthermore, governments and NGOs should set current literacy courses and vocational training schemes that can best suit the market. Such programs can be held at schools or community centres where women can be enlightened on skills that will enable them earn more money and hence require the children to work.

3. **Expand Healthcare Access to Reduce Economic Pressures on Families:** It would help if families guaranteed that women and children receive affordable healthcare to dramatically break the cycle of child labour. About 10 percent of families are pushed to extreme poverty by health bills and children are forced to work (Saluja *et al.* 2023). Healthcare subsidies and simple clinics in the affected areas by policymakers and practitioners, they can align with providers, offer preventative and maternal care. This lowers the cost of production for families thus the young children are therefore forced to drop from school and go help in production.

4. **Develop Community Support Networks to Challenge Cultural Barriers:** If certain cultures fetter women's rights, then the policies should embrace the societal sensitization crusade informing the community of the importance of educating children and fostering women (Banihani, 2020). Local champions should be involved in provider support networks combating cultural barriers such as women's independence. To support the empowerment goals, and to challenge the prevailing gender norms of child labour, there is a critical need for community programs for both men and women.

5. **Encourage Women's Political Participation and Decision-Making Power:** Measures should be oriented towards the enhancement of women's quota in the local administration and in the decision-making bodies (Hornset and de Soysa 2022). Women who participate in community decision making are well placed to push for girls' and children's rights such as education. Community workers can encourage women to stand for elections at the local level, voted to council or cooperative organizations where they will directly shape policies affecting families and community.

In conclusion, therefore, there is hope that through economic, educational, health and social empowerment through these practical approaches the policy makers and practitioners will have

created a propitious environment whereby women will be making decisions that will shield children from labour with a positive influence on families and societies into the future.

# CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

## 6.1 Summary of Findings and Contributions

Based on the analysis of the results of this study, one can draw some important conclusions related to the multifaceted connection between women's employment and child labour. As one of the research objectives, this study investigates multiple dimensions of empowerment, namely, economic, social, and political, and discovers the implication of each of these dimensions on the household's decisions on children's engagement in labour. The paper also brings out the fact that there is considerable importance of women's economic status as prerequisites of child labour eradication, including income generation and financial independency (Collins *et al.* 2021). This means women with economic power will seek to educate their children; and spare them a life of struggling to make ends meet, unlike some of the boys who are portrayed as sources of income. This finding is well supported by previous studies that have advanced the argument that rise in household income led to decline in child labour, and complements the literature that assigns women a definitive part to play each time they hold the purse strings.

Promoting social empowerment that means the capacity to participate in social life, to make decisions and to take relevant actions also indicates lower levels of child labour (Abdullah *et al.* 2022). For this reason, empowered women help in changing community norms that allow child labor, advocating for children's education and healthy lifestyle as basic rights. This study has thus advanced a postmodern, anti-essentialist strand of the feminist theory by showing how changes in the social relations at the level of the community affects child welfare and the standards regarding child labour.

Political empowerment, albeit producing somewhat less immediate effects, is identified to build up an environment that can help in the eradication of child labour when women participate in policy and political processes of a particular region (Dahlum *et al.* 2022). Female political leaders call for child protection and endorse policies which have solutions towards the challenges that lead children into labour like poverty and lack of schooling. These findings are in conformity with the social determinants of health model whereby community empowerment improves health and social status of children.

In sum, this research addresses this gap in the literature by analysing a range of women's education dimensions in conjunction with child labour, rather than in isolation. The present study employs feminist theory, empowerment theory, as well as the social determinants of

health model to understand the empirical model of empowering women in eliminating child labour.

The study also has uses for policy analyses. On this case it proposes that measures aimed at enhancing women's engagement –economic and social aspects– may probably contribute to the decline of child labour. Thus, these results reveal the potential of increasing women's economic literacy, financial status, and decision-making authority and capability as preventive measures against child labour to policymakers and practitioners (Kumar *et al.* 2023). In conclusion, this dissertation adds to the ongoing debate of women's emancipation and children rights through showing how women emancipation can work towards positive change in woman and child lives to break the cycle of poverty and abuses. Thus, in assessing the strength and limitation of the study on women empowered and child labour a number of factors arise into considerations.

## 6.2 Strength and limitation of the study

When assessing the strength and limitation of the study of women's empowerment and child labour, several factors enter the scene.

**Strengths**

- Relevance to Public Health and Human Rights: The study examines a very relevant question regarding child labour and child rights' infringement in the context of the developing countries where people have to work in order to survive (Rodrigues, 2020). This being the case, the subject of this research is timely and important because it addresses real issues of public health and human rights.

- Use of a Multidisciplinary Framework: The issue can be explained by the integration of Feminist Theory, Empowerment Theory, and the Social Determinants of Health model (Roll and Ifenthaler 2021). This rich interdisciplinary focus enriches the granularity of analysis and permits illumination of the relationship between women's attendant enfranchisement and child labour.

- Focus on Empowerment Dimensions: Therefore, intending to find out the correlation between various facets of women's employment, including, but not limited to, economic independence and political voting (Karp *et al.* 2020) the study questions will be formulated to investigate the impact of these dimensions on child labour. This focus is necessary so as to design interventions that could arguably address the causes of child labour.

- Clear Research Objectives: The aims and research questions are well spelt out In fact; the study is very well articulated. Such definition helps in development and enhancement of a clear framework for the collection and analysis of data making the results more credible and relevant to policy formulation.
- Potential for Policy Impact: It's disciplinary potential lies in its potential to contribute to the realisation of policymaking effective for the purpose of eliminating child labour (Van Niel *et al.* 2020). Due to the correlation between women's employment and child labour, intervention with improving the status of women's rights and children's rights could be more efficient.

**Limitations**

- Generalizability Concerns: Since the study employed cultural and socioeconomic target population classifications in addressing the research question, there is a possibility that it will not conclusively apply universally to different other regions or people (Hanushek, 2021). SHAs variations of cultural and economic factors can also reduce the findings generalisability.
- Data Availability and Reliability: The study may experience difficulties connected with the accessibility of accurate information on women's employment and child labour.
- Complexity of Interventions: As with most social science research, the issue is multifactorial and thus isolating a distinct cause and effect relationship when looking at the impact of woman empowerment policies on working children may not be easy (Sovacool, 2021).
- Potential for Bias in Self-Reported Data: If the research uses self-assessment results in determining women's empowerment or incidences of child labour this may lead to some biases (Parry *et al.* 2021). Participants may inflate or deflate their experiences, which influences the conclusions arrived at by this study.
- Short-term Focus: The changes noted in the study may be changes that are most quickly observable, while women's empowerment may in fact have fewer observable impacts only later in terms of the child labour situation (Kaffenberger, 2021). That is why a long-term, perhaps, would be needed to adequately trace these dynamics.

Overall, the study provides insights into the link between women's empowerment for ending child labour; however, the following highlights the study's major drawbacks to improve the credibility of findings for policy formulation and other social transformation interventions among intersecting lenses of gender.

## 6.3 Recommendation for Future Research

Various strategies can be adopted in future research to advance the knowledge of women's empowerment and Child labour such as: Panel data is crucial, as it means that it is possible to see whether women's empowerment interventions have led to changes in child labour by demonstrating temporal differences. Further, cross-cultural and cross-sectional analyses would offer insights on such differences across featured cultural and socioeconomic contexts, examining which aspects of culture and social structure have an influence on such a relationship and then determining the replication of practices that have been demonstrated to be effective in the specific region (Omorogiuwa, 2020). The use of interviews and focus group study would complement the quantitative studies and enable researchers to obtain firsthand accounts to complement the quantitative data on empowering mothers and child labour.

It is also essential to investigate intersectionality as subsequent research should analyse how such factors as ethnicity, social status, and geography may affect both the enhancement of women's rights and the eradication of child labour (Ergas *et al.* 2021). It can also bring out the distinct experiences of the vulnerable groups, so that efforts are made to capture their needs appropriately.

Furthermore, the study that aims at examining the effectiveness of the existing policy policies and programmes seeking to promote women's agency and addressing the issue of child labour, generates policy relevant information to inform policy makers, improving the efficiency of aimed actions.

Another crucial area that needs further research is that of education: further research should provide the indication of which specific education, be it vocational, or training for literacy, offers the biggest benefit to empower women and reduce child labour. Knowledge of these educational dynamics could then help in planning for change interventions where the changes would have the highest potential effect (Heberle *et al.* 2020). Finally, more research needs to be conducted about the general state of employment and availability of microfinancing to determine the relationship between female employment or financial independence and child labour. As such, future works could accelerate the understanding of such relations of concern by deepening the connection of women's empowerment to child labour for better policy solutions that affect positive change in the vulnerable society.

## 6.4 Final Statement on Study's Contribution

The analysis of the impact of women's employment on child labour has made a valuable contribution to public health and human and social policy sciences especially within the third world countries. In doing so this research highlights the relationship between the two issues and argues that promoting the emancipation of women as a way to eradicate child labour promotes the general welfare of families/communities.

This work's main conceptual underpinning is the synthesis of Feminist Theory, Empowerment Theory, and the Social Determinants of Health Model (Meyer *et al.* 2024). They also developed a MeSH to correspond changes to the social and economic environment related to both women's empowerment to child labour, which strengthens this approach. In using this framework, the study provides solid footing for more research and policy work with emphasis on the complex dynamics present in the construct of empowerment and its relevance to child protection.

Also, the investigation contributes to the existing literature by recognising that the expanded factors of women's status and agency including economic independence, social position, and political involvement has bearing on child labour. As such, the study has realised the effects of these factors on families' actions concerning child labour and education to guide policymakers on the same (Cardella *et al.* 2020). The conclusions may be made about the significance of the advanced women's position, especially in learning and economic spheres, for decreasing child employment and effective development.

It also highlighted the need to build approaches that are context-sensitive when considering the role of DI in facilitating access to stakeholders in a given context (Sahle, 2024). Because the research acknowledges the crucial role of cultural and socioeconomic factors as moderators of empowered formalities and child labour, the interventions being promoted align with culturally appropriate appeals. This context sensitive contextual perspective is pertinent regarding the implementation of the policies and programmes designed for the elimination of child labour.

Moreover, the research findings go beyond child labour and women's employment as it contributes to the global goals amongst which are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mainly on gender equality; quality education and decent work (Balch *et al.* 2024). As a result of this work, this study aligns itself with gendered integrated policies and presents tangible link between women's rights and child labour policies.

Overall, this study makes a very important contribution to the extant literature on how women's empowerment may help address the challenge of child labour (Kabeer, 2020). And is imperative in guiding future lines of research as well as informing advocates, practitioners, policymakers and "other stakeholders interested in promoting social justice and the health

rights of some of the world's most disadvantaged children. The conclusions of It provide multi-sectorial strategy of combating child labour as well as notes that women should be empowered as a more effective intermediate towards transforming the society.

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