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## POST-PARTITION RESETTLEMENT IN SHAUKAT SIDDIQUI'S *GOD'S OWN LAND*: A NEW HISTORICIST ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

The paper examines child labour as a resettlement issue in Shaukat Siddiqui's *God's Own Land (Khuda Ki Basti)*. It examines how, following the 1947 Partition, pervasive poverty and displacement forced families to enlist their children in labour across several sectors, including factories, workshops, and home-based enterprises. The novel depicts child labour as a severe yet essential way of survival for communities endeavouring to rebuild their lives in newly established Pakistan. Considering New Historicism as a theoretical framework to analyze the influence of historical, socio-political, and economic influences on the normalization of child exploitation in the chosen text. The findings suggest that child labour in this environment is not merely a familial choice but a manifestation of wider systemic failure, encompassing inefficient governmental policies, imbalanced distribution of economic resources, and the absence of accessible education. The study also uncovers the enduring repercussions of this exploitation, especially its contribution to driving youngsters into cycles of marginalization and criminality. The study advises state institutions and communities to implement significant measures to eliminate child labour, highlighting education as a crucial instrument for prevention. It concludes by framing child labour not as an isolated social ill, but as a structural problem deeply embedded within the socio-economic dynamics of post-Partition resettlement.

**Keywords:** Child labour, Partition literature, New Historicism, Stephen Greenblatt, Shaukat Siddiqui, Postcolonial studies, Resettlement, Pakistani literature

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## Introduction

This study examines the intricate issue of child labour in Shaukat Siddiqui's *God's Own Land*, specifically highlighting how it evolved within the socio-economic context of post-Partition resettlement. It examines how child labourers in the nascent nation face economic difficulties and progressively assimilate the imperative of participating in labour. The study investigates whether child labour, albeit augmenting household wealth, eventually hampers the advancement of a civilized and progressive society. It analyses the wider consequences of displacement and resettlement, while also highlighting the various manifestations of child labour and its adverse impacts on children's psychological, physical, and moral development. Furthermore, the study contends that the legacy of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, exacerbated by persistent poverty and economic instability in the Subcontinent, facilitated the normalization of child labour, wherein children were engaged in factories, mills, and other industries under exploitative conditions for meagre wages.

This study underscores the harsh realities faced by numerous orphans striving to relocate to the slums of Karachi after the 1947 Partition. Shaukat Siddiqui's novel starkly reveals the ubiquity of child labour in the nascent state of Pakistan. The author merits appreciation for highlighting the distressing plight of youngsters throughout this developmental phase. Due to his authentic depiction of socioeconomic inequities, Siddiqui is frequently dubbed the "Pakistani Charles Dickens." His novels exhibit a captivating amalgamation of realism, humour, romance, and melodrama, providing incisive and intricate portrayals of societal adversities. Siddiqui aims to enlighten readers regarding the severe economic realities endured by the populace, while also highlighting the pervasive entrenchment of child labour inside societal structures.

## Contextualizing Child Labour in Post-Partition Narratives and Discourses

Michele Bedulli authored a poem entitled "I Want to," spoken during the Children's Solidarity

Concert, wherein he articulates his sympathy for children enduring child labour, emphasizing their plight and advocating their rights.

I want to  
cry out to the world  
the rage of  
chained children.  
I want to  
cry out to the world  
the pain of  
abused girls.  
I want to  
cry out to the world  
the unutterable sadness of  
abandoned babes.  
I want to  
cry out to the world  
the fear of  
maltreated kids.  
I want to  
cry out all this to the world.

But who will cry out with me? (p. 5)

Child labour persists as a global issue, manifesting across diverse social strata in varying degrees. Recent estimates indicate that around 152 million children globally are involved in child labour, comprising 88 million boys and 64 million girls. This statistic indicates that almost one in ten children worldwide, with about 73 million engaged in perilous labour that jeopardizes their safety, health, and ethical development. Moreover, it is believed that 4.3 million youngsters are subjected to forced work, encompassing positions such as mechanics and other physically strenuous occupations. From 2012 to 2016, the global child labour rate decreased from 10.6% to 9.6%, a reduction that is less substantial than the 3% decline observed from 2008 to 2012 (Organization, 2013).

The International Labour Organization (2013) indicates that 78% of working children in Asia are impacted by child labour (Hussain & Maskus, 2003). In developing nations like Pakistan, children are frequently forced to labour under abysmal conditions to aid their families, owing to pervasive poverty and fragile economic structures. The circumstances are

especially critical in rural regions, where families rely significantly on their children for fundamental sustenance. A survey by the Federal Bureau of Statistics indicates that over 3.3 million children aged five to fourteen are involved in child labour in Pakistan ([Shrestha, 2011](#)).

Shaukat Siddiqui, a distinguished Urdu novelist, was born in Lucknow in 1923 and died in Karachi, Pakistan, in 2006. He was profoundly affected by the old Dastaan narrative style and commenced writing fiction in this genre in the early 1940s. His literary compositions, including Dastaans from *Alif Laila* to *Fasana-e-Azad*, attained considerable acclaim and were extensively read. Siddiqui also served in the military and participated in World War II. After the Partition in 1947, he relocated to Pakistan and established himself in Karachi, where he faced the arduous task of reconstructing his life. In Pakistan, he encountered significant economic difficulties, lacking a reliable source of income or sufficient shelter. His personal experiences of lack and struggle profoundly shaped his literary vision and thematic preoccupations ([Ashraf, 2016, p. 1](#)).

The chosen text can be examined using a dual discourse paradigm, where the prevailing historical narrative is both contested through subversion and concurrently acts as a platform for the creation of alternative perspectives. Critics have analyzed the work from multiple discursive viewpoints that highlight history as a human fabrication, prioritizing the frequently overlooked tales of marginalized communities. This study examines features of suppressed histories in post-Partition (Pak-Indo) fiction, where untold narratives are reclaimed and expressed via the lived experiences of individuals directly impacted by historical events.

Shaukat Siddiqui, while authoring numerous works in Urdu literature, gained popularity with his inaugural novel, *God's Own Land* (*Khuda Ki Basti*), published in 1957. The story explores themes of deprivation, class conflict, exploitation, and the anguish of marginalized populations, especially children compelled into servitude. Siddiqui illustrates a pronounced moral dichotomy between good and evil, with

characters being ensnared in cycles of frustration and impotence. The title, influenced by Allama Iqbal's poetry, functions as a metaphor for Pakistan—a nation established in the name of faith. The novel, composed in accessible language, received critical praise, was translated into 26 languages, and made into a popular television series in the 1970s. A genuine village called *Khuda Ki Basti* exists in Punjab, underscoring the novel's basis in socioeconomic reality ([Ashraf, 2016, p. 1](#)).

This study analyses the representation of child labour within the socio-historical framework of a nascent state. The study considers New Historicism to analyze child labour as a significant element of post-Partition relocation in the chosen text. This research utilizes Stephen Greenblatt's theoretical framework to apply New Historicism's premise of conducting parallel readings of literary and non-literary materials, thereby enhancing the comprehension of literature. The study enhances literary scholarship by illustrating how child labour profoundly influences the lives of marginalized groups in postcolonial contexts ([Greenblatt, 2012, p. 13](#)).

Williams contends that New Historicism provides significant insights for English literature by facilitating the analysis of literature from diverse perspectives. In his book *New Historicism and Literary Studies*, he asserts that "the political and cultural perspective this method provided for literary interpretation revitalized English departments and prompted literary studies to reconnect with the political and social context from which it originated." This viewpoint emphasizes how New Historicism rejuvenates literary criticism by re-establishing the connection between writings and their historical and cultural settings ([1989, p. 1](#)).

Stephen Greenblatt professed the vital tenets of new historicism in the following: Many of the present essays give voice [...] to what we may call the new historicism, set apart from both the dominant historical scholarship of the past and the formalist criticism that [...] the New Historicism erodes the firm ground of both

criticism and literature. It tends to ask questions about its own methodological assumptions and those of others [...] the critical practice represented in this volume challenges the assumptions that guarantee a secure distinction between artistic production and another kind of social production. (Myers, 1989, p. 5)

Moreover, Stephen Greenblatt gives stress on context and it gives more value over text can be observed in the power of forms in the English Renaissance: Recent criticism has been less concerned to establish the organic unity of literary works and more open to such work as a field of force, places of dissension and shifting interest, an occasion for the jostling of orthodox and subversive impulses [...]. Renaissance literary works are no longer regarded either as a fixed set of texts containing their determinate meanings or as a stable set of reflections of historical facts that lie beyond them. The critical practice [...] challenges the assumption that guarantees a secure distinction between "literary foreground" and political background "or, more generally, between artistic production (Moretti, 1982, p. 2254).

In *God's Own Land*, the protagonists endure child labour due to severe poverty, displacement, and the socio-economic chaos resulting from the Partition of the Indian subcontinent. In the slums of newly established Pakistan, families face survival challenges, compelling youngsters to engage in diverse forms of labour – employed in factories, stores, and on the streets – to sustain their houses. The novel depicts child employment not as a voluntary option but as a need for survival in a world whose fundamental necessities are unfulfilled. The impact of child employment on children in the text is significant and profoundly concerning. It steals their youth, denies them access to school, and exposes them to physical, emotional, and psychological trauma. The novel's realistic depiction underscores how child labour perpetuates cycles of poverty and marginalization, inflicting enduring wounds on the lives of those subjected to such circumstances.

This study, therefore, argues that through a

New Historicist analysis, *God's Own Land* reveals child labour to be a direct and inevitable consequence of the systemic failures that characterized the post-Partition state, a structural issue that perpetuates cycles of poverty and criminality.

### Critical Review of Literature and Historical Discourse

The literature review acts as a vehicle and carries the argument under discussion. An avid reader can assess it and build up an argument, and visualize the gap in previous research. This article intends to discuss child labour as a resettlement issue in Shoukat Siddiqui's *God's Own Land*. Child labour is a global phenomenon; mostly, developing societies are the victims of it. A considerable number of children are involved directly to support their families across the world. Unfortunately, Pakistan has also been suffering from it for a long time. Especially, after getting independence in 1947, a large number of children went out to earn bread & butter for their families. There was an acute shortage of economic resources in the country and people, particularly children who had to work in factories, motor workshops, etc., on meagre wages. The first portion describes the history of child labour in the world, particularly in Pakistan. Thereafter, it will draw out the gap of current research by incorporating previous works on *God's Own Land*.

Greeks used to abandon their children on the hillside, where animals could easily kill them and satiate their hunger. This exercise had been practised in Rome until Christianity came into practice. *The History of Childhood* paints a gloomy picture of childhood. He argues that "the further back in history one goes, the lower the level of child care and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized and sexually abused" (DeMause, 1995, pp. 1-2).

Similarly, child labour became prominent in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century after the Industrial Revolution in Britain. Forced child labour came to the surface in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when a considerable number of children had to work in factories and

mines. They were deputed to different assignments in factories and given a meagre amount. Social reforms like Karl Marx raised a voice in favour of daily wagers. Besides, Charles Dickens is one of them who not only raised a voice against this social curse but also wrote novels on child labour (Rai, 2014, p. 5).

Child labour is practised in India, where children are engaged in different work on a part-time or full-time basis. Due to this, children are deprived of their basic needs, i.e. childhood, education, freedom and sports, and in this way, they suffer a lot and are physically and mentally affected. 12.6 million children are involved in child labour according to an estimate in the national census of India 2001. To combat this evil, several legislative developments are there. Needless to say, child labour continues directly or indirectly in different forms due to the poor economic status of society (Rai, 2014, p. 7).

Shoukat Siddiqui portrayed the realistic picture of the social life of people because he migrated to Karachi, settled there, and observed life as below: "You search for life sitting in closed rooms and reading books, and I have seen life in the brothel. I have seen life in small huts and narrow, dark alleyways... Look at life with the naked eye, and see the extent to which it has become a victim" (p.1).

Nazir Ali (2014) unveils in *Famous Novelists – Shoukat Siddiqui*, the seminal fictions and short stories of Pakistani Charles Dickens Shoukat Siddique. He talked about his personal life, his belongings, and his achievements in the field of Urdu literature. Shaukat Siddiqui got the *Adam Ji Award* for the publication of *Khuda Ki Basti (God's Own Land)*. Besides this, he wrote *Teesra Admi* (1952), "Jangloos", "Raton ka Shahar", and "Andhere Dur Andhere" (1955), in which he portrayed the social evils of a newborn society in a detailed way (p. 1).

In addition, people have queer nature; one moment they act gently and their attitude is good, and at the very next moment, they behave strangely and cunningly. Their ill-nature and hypocritical approach show their malicious designs. This abruptness remains within the

characters all the time. For example, the author introduces the mild, educated, and well-disciplined character, Salman and later on, he comes to the surface as a rascal character. Likewise, all other characters follow the same pattern, such as Nausha, Razia, and Shami. Every character, whether a woman or a man, is lecherous, unfaithful, and wretched in the selected novel. This novel encapsulates all the evils of the newly born Pakistani society, such as corruption, theft, rape, unemployment, fake proclamation, and illegal allotment of lands. It's good literature that exposes bad, rascal people, and notorious things so that one can examine the true spirit of life (Saif, 2018).

Verkaaik (2009) speaks about the ecology of Karachi in "At Home in Karachi: Quasi-domesticity as a Way to Know the City". Speaking about the socio-political scenario, he unearths the lower strata of newly migrated people who try their best to settle down here. He presents a gloomy picture of the people's lifestyle, occupations, and social and economic conditions in "Khuda Ki Basti" (1991). He argues that one can easily get familiar with the environment of a newly born city, Karachi, after reading Shaukat Siddiqui's *God's Own Land*. On one side, it encapsulates the story of poverty, hunger, corruption, rape and exploitation, and on the other hand, it displays the image of optimism. Niyaz, Nausha, Raja and Doctor Motto are the ugly faces of society, whereas the Skylark community produces a ray of hope among people by supporting the lower strata of society. The author also explores a deep attachment of people to the native land on which they settled for a long time (pp. 70-71).

Moreover, Zuberi endeavours to portray the socio-economic evils of the lower class in "Development and Anti-Development Messages in Pakistan TV, Entertainment, Advertising and Films". It highlights the exploitation of the lower classes in the hands of the elite class, even though they commit crimes to collect money. The author teaches people to educate their children against illiteracy and for a better life that is free from evils. The story takes



steps forward in building a healthy impact against economic inequality, poverty and exploitation of the poor (1991, pp. 4-7).

While mentioning the issues regarding the socio-economic conditions of migrant people, exploitation of the poor by the rich, greedy intention, poverty, and inequality in a newly born country, the previous studies show a lack in exploring child labour as a resettlement issue in the selected text. In this regard, this article intends to investigate and remap child labour as a resettlement issue in *God's Own Land* from the perspective of New Historicism. This approach enables a contextualized reading that situates the text within its historical, cultural, and socio-economic frameworks, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon.

### Methodology

This paper investigates post-partition resettlement in Shaukat Siddique's *God's Own Land*, focusing on socioeconomic issues, including child labour and corruption. The analysis utilizes a qualitative methodology, focusing on detailed textual reading and interpretation of chosen excerpts from the work. This work is the principal source for examining the religio-cultural aspects of Pakistani society in the immediate post-partition period. Secondary materials such as historical records, literary journals, scholarly articles, periodicals, brochures, financial reports, conference proceedings, and theses produced from 1947 to the 1960s are utilized to contextualize and enhance the analysis. The study, grounded in the socioeconomic aspects of resettlement, systematically arranges selected textual excerpts to enhance comprehension of the key subject.

### Theoretical Foundations of New Historicism: Text, Context, and Power

The year 1980s is considered and celebrated as the birth of New Historicism (Bertens, 2017; Leach, 2008). New historicism is defined as a "parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts" to comprehend the literature in a better way (Greenblatt, 1985). Importantly, Williams (2010) expresses that new historicism provides new 'energy' to the English department and

contributes to devising new methods to open new corridors. *New Historicism and Literary Studies* start a debate regarding this recent critical approach as, "The political and cultural slant that this method gave to the interpretation of literature once again energized departments of English and encouraged literary studies to re-establish a link with the political and social world that gave rise to it" (p.1).

Stephen Greenblatt brings into light key tenets of New Historicism in "Renaissance Self – Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare", and assumes an isolated place in journal Genre (1980): Many of the present essays give voice [...] to what we may call the new historicism, set apart from both the dominant historical scholarship of the past and the formalist criticism that [...] the New Historicism erodes the firm ground of both criticism and literature. It tends to ask questions about its methodological assumptions and those of others [...] the critical practice represented in this volume challenges the assumptions that guarantee a secure distinction between artistic production and other kinds of social production (p. 5).

*Introduction to the Handbook* describes Greenblatt's new approach of how text is interpreted in the light of its context, and through this way it gives a complete meaning: Greenblatt's approach questions the familiar distinction between the text and the context--- social, political, religious, intellectual, economic and so forth...that has shaped it. The text is conceived not as a mere reflector of, but rather as an active contributor to, the historical processes they illuminate. The implicit model for such a discussion is cultural anthropology. What we call 'Elizabethan literature is conceived as simply one of several cultural practices of the age. (Eliot & Owens, 1998, p. 153).

This approach is based on assumptions and claims that literary criticism is influenced by a cultural historian. Greenblatt (2012) claims this supposition in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, "We must --- incorporate the work of art into the texture of a particular pattern of life, a

collective experience that transcends it and completes its meaning" (p. 179).

Literary texts work as a vehicle and carry the same potential as possessed by a society. In this way, it becomes a useful and healthy weapon for contemporary critics to produce resistance. Thus, the followers of new historicism seize an opportunity and take help from the past by utilizing it as "an impetus for political struggle in the present and make it clear the discipline of literary studies is not removed from the sphere of politics" (Brannigan, 2016).

Montrose (1989), in his book *Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture*, defines the key concepts of New Historicism, "historicity of text and textuality of history". To recognize the first part, he specifies the role of interpreting the historical and cultural differences between the relationship of the text and its context. Similarly, to allocate the role of "textuality of history," he assumes everything is in language, nothing happened outside language: By the historicity of text, I mean to suggest the cultural specificity, the social embedment, of all modes of writing – not only the text that critics study but also the context in which we study them. By the textuality of history, I mean to suggest, firstly, that we can have no access to a full and authentic past, a lived and material existence, unmediated by the surviving textual traces of the society in question---traces whose survival we cannot assume to be contingent but must rather presume to be at least partially consequent upon complex and subtle social processes of preservation and effacement; and secondly, that those textual traces are themselves subject to subsequent textual mediations when they are construed as 'documents' upon which historians ground their texts, called 'histories'. (p. 20).

The paper focuses on the fundamental assumptions presented in *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (1998), which are the basis of its analytical framework. It underscores the historicity of texts and the textuality of history, claiming that all literary works are situated within their distinct cultural and historical contexts,

while historical narratives are formed through language. Secondly, it contests the concept of objectivity in history, asserting that historical narratives are influenced by ideological influences and cannot be regarded as impartial depictions of the past. Third, it asserts that history is not linear nor progressive, but instead a fragmented and contested sequence of events subject to reinterpretation. Fourth, power dynamics are regarded as fundamental to textual interpretation; literary works are analyzed as arenas where prevailing ideologies are generated, challenged, or undermined. Fifth, New Historicism amplifies the voices of the oppressed, emphasizing overlooked or suppressed narratives in literature and history. Finally, it emphasizes the interdependence of text and context, promoting a simultaneous analysis of literary and non-literary texts to reveal the cultural influences affecting both. These concepts inform the current study's methodology for investigating child labour and post-Partition relocation in *God's Own Land* (pp. 55-119).

### **A New Historicist Perspective on Child Labour in *God's Own Land***

The paper examines child labour as a resettlement issue in Shoukat Siddiqui's *God's Own Land*. Along with this, it also explores the impact of child labour on children and discusses three forms of child labour in detail. Besides, a detailed discussion has been conducted on the social environment and economic conditions of Karachi in the current study. To interpret the selected samples of text, this study opts for key assumptions from New Historicism (mentioned in the portion of the theoretical framework). The author tries to expose Pakistani society to highlight several issues such as child labour, exploitation of the poor, poverty, illiteracy and inequality. Moreover, the writer examines these problems with a naked eye because he is a keen observer of society.

Greenblatt argues that New Historicism is a parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, with the same period (p. 8). To interpret this contour, this article places samples of the

selected text and non-literary texts together to analyze them meticulously. To emphasize this, Talbot in *Pakistan: A New History*, argues that children participate in labour at different workshops, factories and somehow house-made handicrafts to run their economic affairs (p.12). This shows that children earn earned livelihood for their families in Karachi because this writer tries to explore the social life of people after independence in 1947. Similarly, Pakistani short-story writer Sadat Hasan Manto presents the bitter reality of life after partition in 1947.

Moreover, it is the beauty of the artistic skills of the author that, when he mentions an evil side of society, along with, presents the brighter side as well. However, *God's Own Land* is a story of newly-migrant people who endure many problems, such as child labour, lack of socio-economic resources, atrocities of the elite class, poverty, and inequality. Particularly, the author deals with various kinds of child labour rather than bonded labour in the selected fiction.

Similarly, Shaukat Siddiqui disclosed in an interview, he migrated to Karachi and had no source of income, so he worked all day on meagre wages in Karachi (Pakistan) (1991, p. 1). Along with this, the author portrays the picture of innocent children who looked pale and strolled with faint faces and had no means of income. Shami, Nausha and Raja are examples of such children who do child labour in the streets of Karachi. Likewise, the selected text also narrates the social life of people, which is evident in the hopeless and dilapidated situations of people in Karachi. The story begins with three teenage boys who spend their time in useless activities. Three boys stand for three kinds of child labour in the slums of Karachi. The author describes these kinds of child labour to illustrate what kind of circumstances there are and why the children engage in hard labour instead of getting enrolled themselves in educational institutions, or discusses the effects of child labour on the youngers. Raja's father had died, and consequently, his mother became a prostitute. He lives with an old beggar in a tent and spends his life begging.

Additionally, Nausha is the representation of the second kind of child labour in the selected text. He belongs to a poor family, lives in the company of her mother, younger brother and a sister in a rented house. He has no source of income except to work in a workshop all day to meet the expenses of his family. Though his income is meagre, he works hard all day in a factory. Similarly, his mother also works at home along with her daughter Sultana to run the vehicle of her family. Last but not least, a kind of child labour can be seen in the character of Shami. Though he attends school regularly yet he works with his father at a shop. Thus, Raja, Nausha, and Shami present the ugly face of capitalist society where the practice of child labour is its full swing.

New Historicists intend to highlight the marginalized voices and texts, and the article considers *God's Own Land* as a marginalized text to give the worth of its rich culture. Along with, New Historicists raise voices in favour of marginalized people who do not even have basic rights of life, i.e. food, education, freedom, etc. Shaukat Siddiqui portrays marginalized voices and text in the following lines: The Next day, he arrived late at the factory. The watchman, Gul Khan, was sitting at the gate filling his nostrils with snuff, and when he saw Nausha, he said: You always come late. Seth gets into a terrible temper. You'd better get going, otherwise. Nausha rushed into the compound. Abdullah was the boss of the car repair shop and had the reputation of being very hard on his workers. (1991, pp. 13-14).

Marginalized voices and text can be seen in the above lines, where Nausha (a boy) spends his life under the line of poverty and has no basic rights of life, such as education, freedom; rather, he has to work all day in a factory to meet the expenditures. On the other hand, he also endures slavery in the name of child labour. On his entrance into the factory, the watchman warns him to go back because Abdullah Mastri (owner of the factory) is furious and he may be the victim of his torture. This gloomy picture



depicts the life of marginalized people in the selected text.

Talbot (2012) highlights the issue of child labour along with poverty, illiteracy and considers them to be the main causes of child labour as below: More recently, attention has been turned to the land between poverty and Islamic militancy. Attention has been drawn to the fact that FATA, which is the most backward region of Pakistan with 60 per cent of the population living below the poverty line, a literacy rate of only 17 per cent and per capita public expenditure of a third of the national average, have been the focus of insurgencies. (p. 30)

Moreover, Abdullah Mastri is the depiction of a feudal lord who wants to seize all the capital of the society in Karachi. The ill attitude of Abdullah Mastri (capitalist society) can be seen when a boy enters the factory late. He becomes furious to see him and asks the reason why he came late to the factory. The boy becomes confused and cannot utter anything. Upon it, he picks up a tool, thrusts it in his nose and tortures him severely. In this way, the boy endures the misbehaviour of the owner of the factory. It is pertinent to note that due to child labour, the ratio of illiteracy is increasing day by day.

To find out the reason for child labour and the possible consequences of it, this article gets insight from the book "Professing the Renaissance," wherein the first key assumption is "historicity of text and textuality of history" (Montrose, 1989). This key assumption becomes significant because it advocates the basic tenet of New Historicism on which most of the new historicists' arguments are based. The first part, 'historicity of text', means the text is the product of the socio-economic, political and religious factors of the time in which it was produced. Thus, *God's Own Land* is also the product of the early post-partition 1947 scenario, where people have to endure child labour, poverty, lack of economic resources, inequality, and exploitation of the lower strata of Karachi, as it is a witness to its context. The study examines the same plight of resettlement issues-particularly child labour in the newly born country, Pakistan, as Talbot is

experienced in the history of Pakistan.

Moreover, 'textuality of history' highlights another contour for discussion, over here, means history is a narrative or history is a text, whatever historians choose to write is a story that he chooses to tell according to his surroundings in the form of a narrative through the medium of language. As Foucault (1990) says in "The History of Sexuality," language itself is a power structure. The language we use is already affected by the power structure that we live in in a capitalist society. This article provides an understanding of dominant discourse, i.e. capitalism. It erases the boundary between history and literature, which the previous disciplines and approaches had erected. By breaking the binary opposition, New Historicists open a new space of dialogue between history and literature, and new findings are possible.

To analyze the harmful effects of Child labour, the article endeavours to revisit the daily routine of three boys, Raja, Nausha, and Shami. Child labour is considered the root of all crimes in the lives of these boys. Raja, Nausha, Shami, and his sister Sultana commit heinous crimes such as theft, murder, prostitution, etc. in the selected text due to child labour and lack of economic resources. Including other resettlement issues like fake claims, unfair attachment of property, poverty, illiteracy, inequality, etc, are still not resolved. A vivid example can be seen during the conversation between Niyaz Khan and Nausha in the following lines: Niyaz whispered in a conspiratorial tone: Listen, if you get a chance the whip up a few spare parts and a tool or two. My boy, knocking off threat scrounger's stuff will bring you to reward in heaven! And remember, you don't have to go any farther than here. It'll make a bit of pocket money for you. I know you like to go to the pictures now and then. Come on. What do you say?

Natasha's father had died in his childhood, and his mother had no means of earning. So, he goes out for hard labour to support his family. These reasons produce the root of evil in the minds of Nausha, and he starts stealing the

valuable articles from the factory and sells them to Niyaz. Thereafter, he kills Niyaz Khan on the pretext that he enjoyed the company of her sister without marriage and later on, he is sentenced to death.

Similarly, Raja also belongs to a poor family, and his parents died a long time ago; nobody is there to take care of him. So, he spends his life with a beggar on the pretext that he will drive his cart, assist him in begging and in return, the old beggar (leper) will provide shelter and one Anna a day. Shaukat Siddiqui paints the picture of beggary in this way: Raja slowed down, and the beggar called out his blessings to Allah Diya: 'May God bless your business, my son! But Allah Diya, who needed custom at this time, turned his back on him and shouted: Baba! Go somewhere else! Raja gave the cart a rough jerk and pulled it forward. Allah Diya continued muttering, bloody beggars. (1991, p. 19)

Raja spends his life with a beggar to meet the expenses of his daily life. Thereafter, he is arrested in a theft case. Child labour can be observed through this act of the Raja. On the other hand, Talbot (2001) directs the reader's attention towards resettlement issues such as poverty, inequality, and child labour in Karachi, "despite the existence of much poverty and inequality, it would nevertheless be wrong to portray Pakistan as an unchanging society. Despite major failings of governance, economic growth during the past decade" (p. 30).

To conclude, there is a dire need to take prompt action for the welfare of people and resolve all the aforementioned resettlement issues on an urgent basis. Thus, the society in the selected text may be purified from all crimes (socially or morally), in particular, child labour, theft, murder, etc. This article not only draws the attention of the Government institutions but also informs the reader about the harmful effects of child labour. Since the birth of Pakistan, the Government has not taken child labour seriously like the other issues of the early post-partition 1947. Consequently, the ratio of child labour in Pakistan has increased over time. Broadly speaking, child labour damages life in every

department in Pakistan. Nowadays, it has become a part of our culture and millions of children work in workshops, factories or any other places.

In addition, Shaukat Siddiqui has observed the various types of child labour in the selected text. Along with this, it presents a picture of the socio-economic condition of newly-migrant people. Like the realist artists, he examines the social evils of society with naked eyes so that people develop a comprehensive understanding of the circumstances. The above discussion has investigated the various key assumptions of New Historicism in the selected text.

### Conclusion

The paper has portrayed child labour as a resettlement issue in *God's Own Land*, a practice that continues to persist in Pakistan. The novel serves as a powerful critique of the harsh realities of child labour and its entanglement with inequality, poverty, social evils, and weak administrative systems in early post-partition Karachi. Through the lives of Raja, Shami, and Nausha, Siddiqui vividly depicts the socio-economic conditions that foster such injustices and result in an imbalanced social structure alongside the psychological and physical exploitation of children. Using New Historicism as a framework, the study reflects on how history and literature intersect to amplify marginalized voices and expose the oppressive structures of early capitalist society in Pakistan. By negotiating fictional and non-fictional narratives, the paper underscores the persistence of child labour as a deeply rooted socio-political, historical, and economic problem in Pakistani society.

The novel, therefore, acts as a mirror to society, foregrounding social ills, amplifying marginalized voices, and urging immediate reform to ensure protection and guarantee a secure future for the younger generation. In this context, government institutions have failed to devise effective mechanisms for the elimination of child labour in the country. The study also sheds light on the causes of child labour, particularly why parents, driven by poverty,

deprivation, and lack of socio-economic resources, push their children into exploitative labour instead of providing educational opportunities. Siddiqui illustrates three major forms of child labour in the text, each reflecting the grim reality of children forced to work on paltry wages to sustain their families. This systemic exploitation not only robs them of childhood and education but also pushes many into criminal activities such as theft, begging, and even violence, revealing the devastating social consequences of child labour.

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