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► Child labour in domestic work in Pakistan

A scoping study



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Dr Meesha Iqbal

Disclaimer: The ILO is aware of the names and contact details of the children engaged in child labour in domestic work, their parents and employers interviewed for this scoping study. However, their statements and stories are quoted anonymously to maintain confidentiality.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil society organization
ICT	Islamabad Capital Territory
IDIs	In-depth interviews
ILO	International Labour Organization
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
MoHR	Ministry of Human Rights
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NCCWD	National Commission for Child Welfare and Development
NCRC	National Commission on the Rights of the Child
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PESSI	Punjab Employees' Social Security Institution
SPARC	Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

Child labour in domestic work remains a widespread, but hidden, phenomenon worldwide. It is estimated that 4.4 million girls and 2.8 million boys are involved in domestic work globally.¹ Children may be engaged in child labour in domestic work on a part-time ('day-out') or live-in ('day-in') basis. Those engaged as live-in workers are particularly at risk of exposure to discrimination, isolation, abuse, extensive workloads, long working hours and poor living conditions. Children engaged in child labour in domestic work are frequently deprived of their right to compulsory education and opportunities for vocational training.

Child labour in domestic work is a prominent category of child labour in Pakistan. Pakistan's only published Child Labour Survey (1996) found that 3.3 million children between 5 and 14 years old were engaged in child labour. Of these children, approximately 8 per cent were involved in domestic work. The absolute numbers of children engaged in child labour have increased in the past two decades, with projections in 2016 estimating that there were 12 million children involved in child labour.²

Recent figures on child labour in domestic work are not available at the national or sub-national levels. However, considerable anecdotal evidence suggests that child labour in domestic work is prevalent across Pakistan's provinces, and involves more girls than boys.

Landscape of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan

This scoping study presents a situation analysis of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan, based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of study. Therefore, this study considers:

- (a) the micro system – the environment in which children live, including the social support system;
- (b) the meso system – the working environment; and
- (c) the macro system – the policy environment and economic context at a broader level.



8%

of children engaged in
child labour are involved in
domestic work

– Estimate by Pakistan's only
published Child Labour Survey (1996)

¹ ILO and UNICEF, *Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020. Trends and the Road Forward*, 2021; ILO, *Child Domestic Work: Global Estimates 2012*, 2013.

² Rizwana Naqvi, "The Invisible Workers", in *Dawn*, 12 June 2016.

Micro level

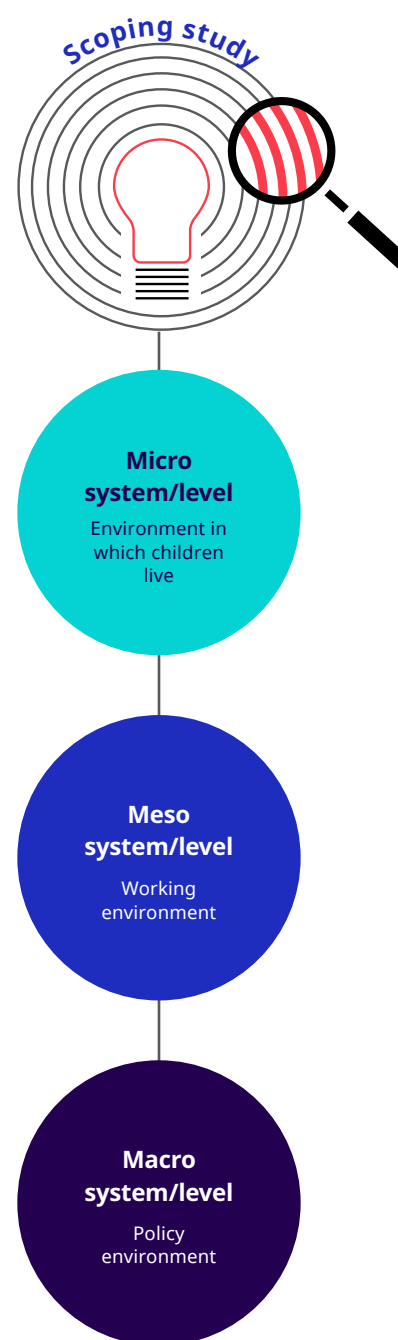
Every fourth household in Pakistan engages a domestic worker.³ In 2004, the ILO estimated that 264,000 children were involved in child labour in domestic work across the country.⁴ A 2003 study conducted in six major cities by the National Commission for Child Welfare and Development (NCCWD) estimated that 8 per cent of all children engaged in child labour were involved in domestic work.⁵

These estimates offer an idea of how serious the situation is. However, they cannot be generalized at the national or sub-national levels due to epidemiological constraints (the lack of a sampling frame).

Child labour in domestic work does not appear to be evenly distributed across Pakistan. It appears more common in urban centres than in rural areas. Pakistan's Child Labour Survey in 1996 estimated that 19.1 per cent of children engaged in child labour in urban settings (17 per cent of boys and 34 per cent of girls) were involved in domestic work, compared to 6.6 per cent of such children in rural areas (6 per cent of boys and 8 per cent of girls).⁶

Based on the interviews conducted for this scoping study, most children engaged in child labour in domestic work are over the age of 10 – i.e. between 10 and 15 years old – and work to support their families. Girls usually begin working with their parents (typically their mothers) when they are 6 or 7 years old, before gradually shifting to independent work around the age of 10.

In almost all instances, parents push their children into child labour in domestic work to cover household expenses. In many cases, children's fathers are not their household's main breadwinner, either because they have died, left the family or suffer from an illness. In some instances, girls are engaged in child labour in domestic work to pay for their brothers' education. Children involved part-time in child labour in domestic work ('day-out' workers) tend to live in urban slums and their employers reside within walking distance of their homes. Children engaged on a live-in ('day-in') basis are usually sent from rural to urban areas.



³ Paycheck.pk, "Domestic Workers in Pakistan".

⁴ Shakeeb Asrar, "Are We Not Humans? Pakistan's Domestic Workers Confront Abuse", in *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 August 2021.

⁵ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

⁶ Pakistan, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, ILO-IPEC, *Summary Results of Child Labour Survey in Pakistan (1996)*, 1996.

There is wide variation in the amounts paid to children engaged in child labour in domestic work. According to the interviews conducted for this scoping study, payments range from 3,000 to 15,000 Pakistani rupees for those engaged on a live-in basis, and an average of 2,500 rupees for those engaged part-time. In Punjab, some young girls are not paid on a monthly basis. Instead, their earnings are provided by their employer to the girl's parents when she marries. In such cases, children are bound to work for employers and cannot leave.

Children work because they have to. A study in 2005 estimated that only 11 per cent of boys and 28 per cent of girls wanted to continue being engaged in child labour in domestic work; the rest had higher aspirations.⁷ The employers interviewed for this scoping study all reported that they are kind and generous to the children they engage, and that child labour in domestic work is beneficial because children have access to better living conditions and better food. Overall, the children interviewed want to be educated and parents tend to consider education desirable. However, they are held back by the need to contribute to household expenses.

The interviews reveal that poverty is the main reason for children's involvement in child labour in work. A study in 2004 estimated that 80 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work worked to support their families, while 14 per cent did so to pay off household debts.⁸ Another study in 2011 found that 82 per cent of children involved in child labour in domestic work were forced into it by poverty, 13 per cent were forced into it by their parents/families, and only 5 per cent had their own interest in this form of child labour.⁹

Meso level

The working environment of child labour in domestic work depends on employers – it ranges from peaceful and friendly to cruel and cumbersome. The interviews held for this scoping study suggest that the working environment is often harsher for children engaged on a live-in ('day-in') basis, compared to those engaged part-time ('day-out') for specific tasks. Children engaged on a live-in basis are likely to face more hazards, be called on at any time, work continually with no fixed hours, rarely have holidays and rarely visit home, sometimes just once a year or once in every two years. They may be confined to certain areas of their employer's house (usually the kitchen) and may be locked in when their employers go out – a practice akin to slavery. Children who migrate from rural to urban areas often live in isolation, completely cut off from familiar surroundings, and are frequently deprived of access to environmental resources, such as space and open air.

Violence and abuse is often a reality for these children. Emotional abuse and scolding is common, while physical abuse is also reported. In recent years, many instances of children being brutally beaten by employers have been reported in the media, including fatal beatings. Research in 2017 found that 80 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work spend Eid with their employers, and that 67 per cent wanted to leave work.¹⁰

⁷ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

⁸ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

⁹ Zahid Naeem, Faiza Shaukat and Zubair Ahmed, "Child Labor in Relation to Poverty", *International Journal of Health Sciences* 5, No. 2 Suppl 1 (2011), 48–49.

¹⁰ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

Available literature, corroborated by the interviews conducted for this study, suggests that children engaged in child labour in domestic work perform a range of basic household chores. These include washing dishes, cleaning floors, sweeping, washing clothes, ironing, dusting and house cleaning.

The interviews reveal that the exact nature of the chores that children are expected to perform is not usually communicated to them before they arrive at employers' homes. Children are often engaged for the purposes of babysitting and are then asked to perform other tasks, such as making *roti* (flat bread), dusting and washing dishes.

Children engaged in child labour in domestic work are exposed to several ergonomic, physical, chemical and psychological hazards. Hazards reported in the literature available include low quality pressure cookers, defective irons, power leakages and sparks. Dusting and cleaning floors exposes children to dust, which can aggravate asthma and allergies. Children working in kitchens often experience cuts or burns.

The most important 'pull' factor for child labour in domestic work is the cheap labour provided by children. Employers also consider children 'flexible' and 'easy to handle'. No formal agreements or contracts appear to define the nature and duration of their work, or payment mechanisms.

Macro level

Gaps and fragmentation exist in the policy environment for the elimination of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan, with variations across provinces. The country has yet to ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). In terms of policy development, Punjab has achieved a milestone with the introduction of the Punjab Domestic Workers Act of 2019. However, evidence of the law's positive impact has yet to become apparent.

Pakistan's frameworks on labour and education are not entirely aligned. Pakistan's second ever Child Labour Survey was launched in 2019 and remains ongoing in 2022. The highlights a number of challenges, including a lack of political will and the limited importance accorded to ending the phenomenon.

While a range of frameworks, programmes and interventions have been designed and implemented to address child labour in Pakistan, their sustainability is unclear. Solutions tend not to focus on building the capacity of families to survive and thrive; thus, responses are often short-sighted. Moreover, policies and programmes are usually developed using a top-down approach that involves limited community engagement and participation. Peoples' voices need to be reflected in policies and programmes to enhance their acceptability.

The general public, and especially disadvantaged families, lack awareness of how harmful child labour is, including child labour in domestic work. They also lack awareness of available social protection measures, limiting their potential to reach those most in need. Weak enforcement mechanisms and accountability are another challenge, linked to a lack of technical capacity in the public sector, a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities, and the need for greater political will. Success stories of reducing child labour exist across the globe – by using 'smart' measures rather than 'expensive' ones. Similar initiatives could be implemented in Pakistan by addressing the phenomenon strategically.

Way forward



- Pakistan requires a **clearly articulated vision** – outlined in a **strategic plan or roadmap** – on eliminating child labour in domestic work. This should be formulated through careful engagement with key stakeholders, with the public sector taking the lead, and the private non-profit sector (including civil society) and UN agencies providing technical support.



- **Laws** on labour and education should be **aligned**, and light work should be regularized by clearly defining what it includes and who can legally perform it.



- The **capacity** of organizations working to end child labour – both in the public sector and among the private non-profit sector, including civil society – should be strengthened.



- There is a need to raise **awareness** among communities of the fact that child labour in domestic work is illegal. The power of social media can be leveraged to support awareness raising, including to sensitize communities about available social protection measures.



- Reliable **data** on the magnitude of child labour – stratified by location, gender and socio-demographic features – needs to be generated, including data on child labour in domestic work.



- **Implementation research** is needed to test the *what, why* and *how* of previously implemented policies, programmes and interventions, in order to learn from past challenges and successes, and pave the way to a brighter future.

Chapter 1

Context

Around the world, children work on the streets, in the fields and manufacturing industries, in homes, brick kilns, carpet and bangle production, hotels and restaurants, and many other hidden sectors. They engage in everything from 'light work' to the worst forms of child labour and hazardous work (see box 1).¹¹ Globally, child labour is most common in agriculture.¹² It is also widespread in manufacturing and cottage industries, mining, domestic work, hotels and restaurants. The worst forms of child labour persist, including, but not limited to, slavery, child trafficking, prostitution, pornography, and the use of children in armed conflict and drug trafficking (see figure 1).¹³

Child labour in domestic work is a significant part of child labour. This is often a 'hidden phenomenon', as the children involved tend not to be regarded as a deprived group due to cultural and social acceptance.¹⁴ According to the latest available estimates, in 2020, 6.9 per cent of girls and 2.9 per cent of boys involved in child labour were engaged in domestic work.¹⁵ The variation of circumstances, risks and hazards does not allow a standard definition of child labour in domestic work. However, it is generally accepted that it involves work performed by children in the home of a third party or employer, when they are below the minimum age permissible for such work, according to contextual guidelines.¹⁶ The International Labour Organization (ILO) considers the phenomenon to involve "*domestic work outside the child's own household for an employer, paid or unpaid.*"¹⁷

The latest estimates of child labour in domestic work suggest that 7.1 million children worldwide were involved in paid or unpaid domestic work that constitutes child labour in 2020.¹⁸ Approximately 4.4 million of these children are girls, while 2.8 million are boys.¹⁹ This scoping study suggests that these numbers underestimate the real magnitude of child labour in domestic work. The true number of children involved is likely to be much higher, albeit difficult to identify due to the hidden nature of the work involved and the absence of a sampling frame to quantify its magnitude.

¹¹ Adrian Cutri et al., "Trabajo infantil: una problemática social que nos compromete", *Archivos Argentinos de Pediatría* 110, No. 4 (2021), 350–358.

¹² ILO and UNICEF, *Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020. Trends and the Road Forward. Executive Summary*, 2021.

¹³ Annie Audsley, Rebecca M. M. Wallace, and Martin F. Price, "Mountain Child: Systematic Literature Review", *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 20, No. 12 (2016), 2415–2423.

¹⁴ Annaclaudia G. Fassa et al., "Child Labor and Health: Problems and Perspectives", *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health* 6, No. 1 (2013), 55–62.

¹⁵ ILO and UNICEF, *Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020. Trends and the Road Forward*, 2021.

¹⁶ Annaclaudia G. Fassa et al., "Child Labor and Health: Problems and Perspectives", *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health* 6, No. 1 (2013), 55–62.

¹⁷ ILO and UNICEF, *Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020. Trends and the Road Forward*, 2021.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ ILO and UNICEF, *Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020. Trends and the Road Forward*, 2021; ILO, *Child Domestic Work: Global Estimates 2012*, 2013.

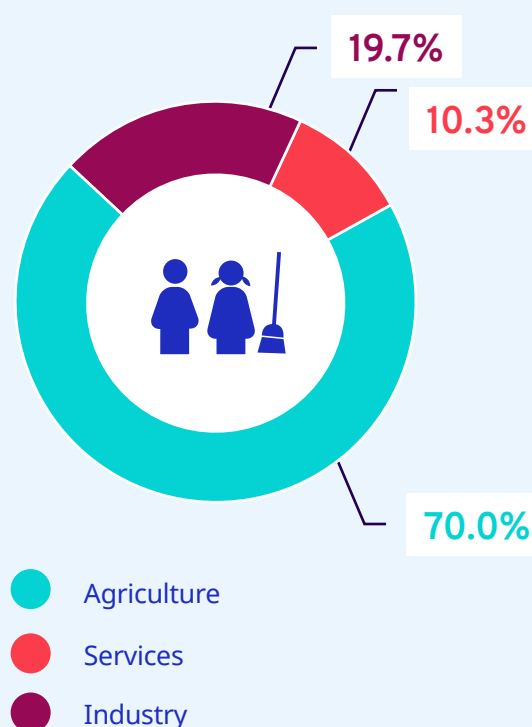
Children engaged in child labour in domestic work perform various tasks, such as cleaning, cooking, ironing, gardening, baby-sitting, washing and other household chores, some of which may be hazardous to their health. Workloads and working hours also tend to interfere with their educational attainment. Many of these children live with their employers and are likely to be exposed to discrimination, isolation and abuse. It is difficult to protect these children as they work behind closed doors in the absence of a parent or guardian. In many countries, child labour in domestic work is regarded in positive terms as a means of sustaining households.

In 2011, the ILO adopted the Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189),²⁰ which sets minimum acceptable standards for domestic work, including the age of workers, hours of work, minimum wages and remuneration, basic rights, occupational safety and health considerations, social security and information concerning the terms and conditions of work.²¹

To date, 35 countries have ratified the Convention; Pakistan is not among them. Box 2 identifies major international Conventions related to child labour, and child labour in domestic work.²²

FIGURE 1.

Percentage distribution of children, aged 5 to 17 years old, engaged in child labour in the world, by sector of economic activity, 2020



Source: Adapted from ILO and UNICEF, *Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020. Trends and the Road Forward. Executive Summary*, 2021.

²⁰ Leonardo Briceño Ayala and Angela M. Pinzon Rondón, "Efectos del trabajo infantil en la salud del menor trabajador", *Revista de Salud Pública Universidad Nacional de Colombia* 6, No. 3 (2004), 270–288.

²¹ Arthur L. Frank, "Child Labor", *Toxicology and Industrial Health* 25, No. 1 (2009), 79.

²² ILO, "Ratifications of C189 – Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)", NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards, accessed 11 September 2021.



Box 1. What is child labour?

According to the ILO, child labour is *“work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and/or interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.”*^(a)

Three main international Conventions set the legal boundaries for child labour and provide the legal grounds for national and international action to curb the phenomenon:

- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1990
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

Light work is defined as work that is not likely to be harmful to a child’s health and development, does not prejudice their school attendance, participation in vocational orientation or training programmes, or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received. This concept of permitted light work is derived from Article 7 of the Minimum Age Convention No. 138, which states that national laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of persons from 13 years of age in light work (or 12 years old in countries *“whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed”*).

The **worst forms of child labour**, as defined by ILO Convention No. 182, include: (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, forced or compulsory labour, including the forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography, or for pornographic performances; (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, particularly for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in relevant international treaties; and (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Hazardous work, according to ILO Convention No. 182, is work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. It includes: (a) working underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces; (b) working with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads; (c) working in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health;

and (d) working under particularly difficult conditions, such as working for long hours or during the night, or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer.

Source: (a) ILO, “[What is Child Labour?](#)”



Box 2. International Conventions on child labour, including in domestic work

The **Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)** establishes that the minimum age for employment should not be less than 15 years old and/or the minimum age for completing compulsory education. A temporary lower age is permitted for developing countries – 14 years old for regular work and 12 years old for light work.^(a) As of June 2022, the Convention had been ratified by 173 countries.^(b)

The **Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)** requires that the minimum age for hazardous work is not less than 18 years; 16 years may be permissible under strict conditions.^(c) As of June 2022, 187 countries have ratified the Convention.^(d)

The **Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)** requires each Member State to set a minimum age for domestic workers consistent with the provisions of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). This age cannot be lower than the age established by national laws and regulations for workers in general. Each Member State must take measures to ensure that work performed by domestic workers who are under the age of 18, but above the minimum age of employment, does not deprive them of compulsory education or interfere with their opportunities to participate in further education or vocational training.^(e)

Sources: (a) ILO, “[C138 – Minimum Age Convention, 1973 \(No. 138\)](#)”, NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards, accessed 9 March 2022.

(b) ILO, “[Ratifications of C138 – Minimum Age Convention, 1973 \(No. 138\)](#)”, NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards, accessed 11 September 2021; ILO, “[Ratifications of C182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 \(No. 182\)](#)”, NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards, accessed 11 September 2021.

(c) ILO, “[Ratifications of C138 – Minimum Age Convention, 1973 \(No. 138\)](#)”, NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards, accessed 11 September 2021.

(d) ILO, “[Ratifications of C182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 \(No. 182\)](#)”, NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards, accessed 11 September 2021.

(e) ILO, “[C189 – Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 \(No. 189\)](#)”, NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards, accessed 9 March 2022.

► 1.1. Child labour in domestic work in Pakistan

Pakistan's last Child Labour Survey was conducted more than two decades ago, in 1996. It estimated that 3.3 million children between 5 and 14 years old were engaged in child labour. Of these children, 73 per cent were boys, 71 per cent of whom engaged in unskilled work, while the remaining 27 per cent were girls.²³ The survey determined that agriculture involved the greatest proportion of children engaged in child labour (66 per cent), followed by manufacturing (11 per cent), hotels and restaurants (9 per cent), domestic work, social and personal services (8 per cent), transport (4 per cent) and construction (2 per cent).²⁴ Projections in 2016 indicated that there were more than 12 million children engaged in child labour in Pakistan.²⁵ In March 2019, Pakistan launched a new Child Labour Survey across the country's four provinces and two administrative areas to provide up-to-date estimates of child labour. Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) published its Child Labour Survey report on 27 October 2021, and Punjab's report is ready to be launched in mid-2022. The survey's implementation in other provinces is at different stages of completion, as depicted in figure 2.

Scientific estimates of the magnitude of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan are not available. Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) conducted in each province and administrative area capture data on children performing household chores, but do not specify whether these are performed in their own homes, or in the homes of a third party or employer.²⁶ However, MICS reports do state that a child who performs household chores for more than the age-specific number of hours per week²⁷ is classified as being engaged in child labour.²⁸ The lack of a comparable operational definition makes quantification difficult. Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence indicates that child labour in domestic work is widespread across the country. What is known represents only the tip of the iceberg – the magnitude and austerity of the situation is likely to be even bleaker. Fragmented information in different pockets of the country reveals that child labour in domestic work remains a hidden population, as these children work behind closed doors rather than in more public settings, such as factories or industries. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation, as the widespread loss of jobs and economic instability has pushed more children into child labour to help sustain their families.²⁹

After the death of an 8-year-old girl, who was brutally beaten by her employer, Pakistan passed a new law in 2020 banning child labour in domestic work under any circumstances.³⁰

²³ Pakistan, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, and ILO-IPEC, *Summary Results of Child Labour Survey in Pakistan (1996)*, 1996.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Rizwana, Naqvi, "The Invisible Workers", in *Dawn*, 12 June 2016.

²⁶ Pakistan, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Department, and UNICEF, *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Key Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016–17*, 2018; Pakistan, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, Planning & Development Department, and UNICEF, *Gilgit-Baltistan Final Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016–17*, 2018; Pakistan, Government of Sindh, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Board, *Sindh Survey Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018–19*, 2020; Philip J. Landrigan et al., "Child Labor", *Pediatric Annals* 24, No. 12 (1995), 657–662.

²⁷ These age-specific number of hours that are permissible for children to engage in household chores are no more than 21 hours for children between 5 and 11 years old, and between 12 and 14 years old.

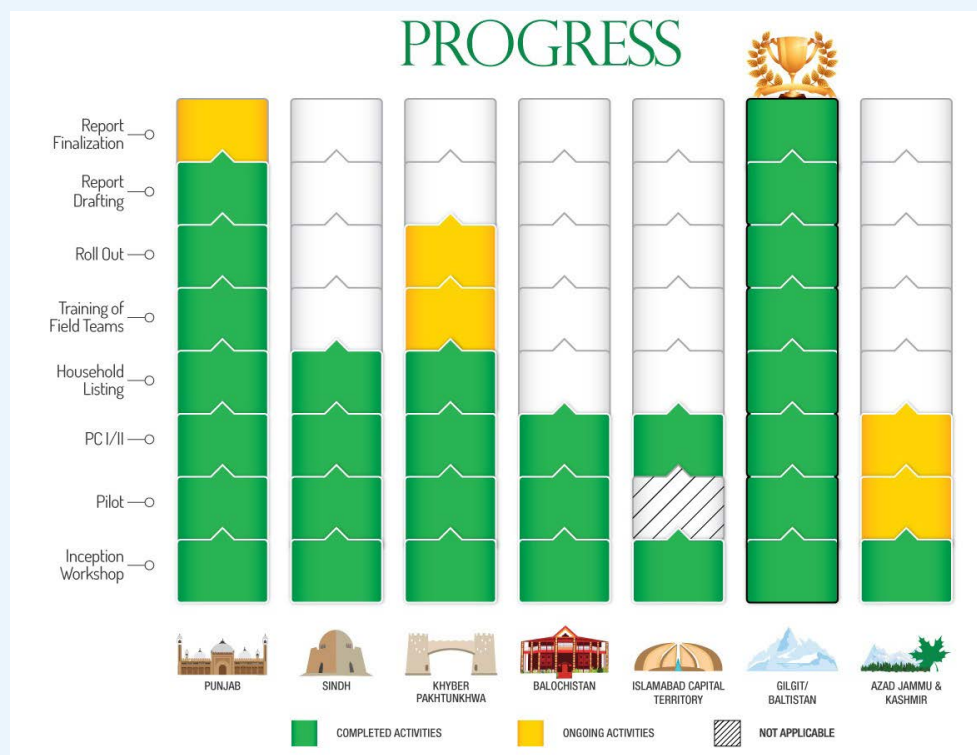
²⁸ Pakistan, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Department, and UNICEF, *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Key Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016–17*, 2018, p. 221.

²⁹ Iffat Idris, "Impact of COVID-19 on Child Labour in South Asia", Institute of Development Studies K4D Helpdesk Report 819, 2020.

³⁰ Juliet Quintero, "Ending Child Labour in Pakistan", *Borgen Project Blog*.

FIGURE 2.

Progress of the Child Labour Survey in Pakistan to date



Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, "Child Labour Survey Graph".

The decision was accepted in federally administered territory. However, Pakistan has a decentralized system of governance, and provincial governments have yet to adopt the resolution.³¹ The minimum age for domestic work in Punjab remains 15 years old.³² Child labour in domestic work in Pakistan covers a wide spectrum, ranging from light to hazardous work, to the worst forms of child labour, including physical and sexual abuse, and debt bondage.³³ Hazardous work prohibitions in Pakistan, except for in Punjab, do not cover domestic work, despite substantial evidence of physical abuse.³⁴

Child labour in domestic work is internationally considered a hazardous form of labour.³⁵ As noted above, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182) considers "work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer" to be hazardous. Thus, **child labour in domestic work should be considered and addressed as a form of hazardous work.**

³¹ Myra Imran, "Child Domestic Labour Prohibited under Child Employment Act 1991", in *The News*, 6 August 2020.

³² See: <http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/2724.html>

³³ Saba Karim Khan, "Outrage in Pakistan over abuse of child domestic workers", in *The Guardian*, 13 August 2019.

³⁴ SPARC, *SPARC Annual Report 2016*, 2017.

³⁵ ILO-IPEC, *Hazardous Child Domestic Work: A Briefing Sheet*, 2007.

Chapter 2

Scoping study

► 2.1. Aims and objectives

This scoping study was designed to fill an important knowledge gap by providing a situation analysis of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan. Its specific objectives are to determine:

- the possible magnitude of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan;
- its geographical distribution and socio-demographic features;
- the push (family and community level) and pull factors (employers) that drive the phenomenon;
- national and sub-national efforts to address the phenomenon, as well as gaps in these efforts; and
- recommended measures to eliminate child labour in domestic work in the country.

► 2.2. Analytical approach

For the purposes of this scoping study, a child engaged in child labour in domestic work is defined as a child between the ages of 5 and 15 years old who has worked for a third party employer for at least six months in the past year, or a child over the age of 15 but under 17 years old who is involved in hazardous domestic work (see box 1). The age of 15 was chosen as the upper age bracket in line with the Punjab Domestic Workers Act of 2019.

An analytical framework, based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of study, was created to guide the study process (see table 1).³⁶

³⁶ Edward Nicholas Clopper, "Child Labor and Public Health", *Journal American Public Health Association* 1, No. 5 (1911), 322–328.

Table 1. Analytical framework of this scoping study

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of study		
Micro system	Meso system	Macro system
<p>The magnitude of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan, in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► geographical distribution (characteristics of the communities most affected); ► socio-demographic variations (gender, age, income, ethnicity); and ► migration dynamics.^(a) 	<p>Structural components of child labour in domestic work, in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► working environment; ► activities performed by the child labour (gender, age appropriateness); ► exposure to hazards (occupational injuries and illnesses, surveillance by employers); ► exposure to violence (emotional, physical, sexual); ► payment patterns;^(c) and ► time intensity. 	<p>Policy environment, in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► national and international laws and policies to eliminate child labour; ► institutional frameworks, programmes and interventions at the national, provincial and district levels; ► enforcement and monitoring mechanisms; and ► accountability mechanisms (grievance arrangements).
<p>Push factors for child labour in domestic work (social context), in terms of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► family level (parents, guardians, siblings);^(b) and ► community level. 	<p>Functional components of work, in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► relationship with employers; ► impact on school attendance, education and learning skills;^(d) ► health impact; ► impact on future prospects; and ► grievance mechanisms. 	<p>Social context, in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► social protection measures (availability, accessibility, effectiveness).
Children's perspectives about work	<p>Pull factors, in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► employers' standpoint;^(e) ► the role of private recruitment agencies and online recruitment platforms; and ► recruitment practices.^(f) 	Role of social media
	<p>Social development of child labour in domestic work, in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► socially valuable activities; and ► positive peer relations. 	
Children's perspectives about education	Educational arrangements (availability, accessibility, quality) ^(g)	

Notes: (a) Do children migrate to perform work (accompanied, unaccompanied)?

(b) Family attitudes and household dynamics towards child labour in domestic work, and its relationship with indebtedness.

(c) Modes of payment (in kind, cash, as part of a parent's salary) and amount (below or above the minimum wage).

(d) School attendance, highest level of education attained, drop out, repetition, barriers/challenges (from the demand and supply sides) to accessing education.

(e) Characteristics and attitudes of employers (f) How are children recruited?

(g) Educational interventions (early education, interventions to increase school access and quality, remedial education and vocational training, provisions for migrant children).

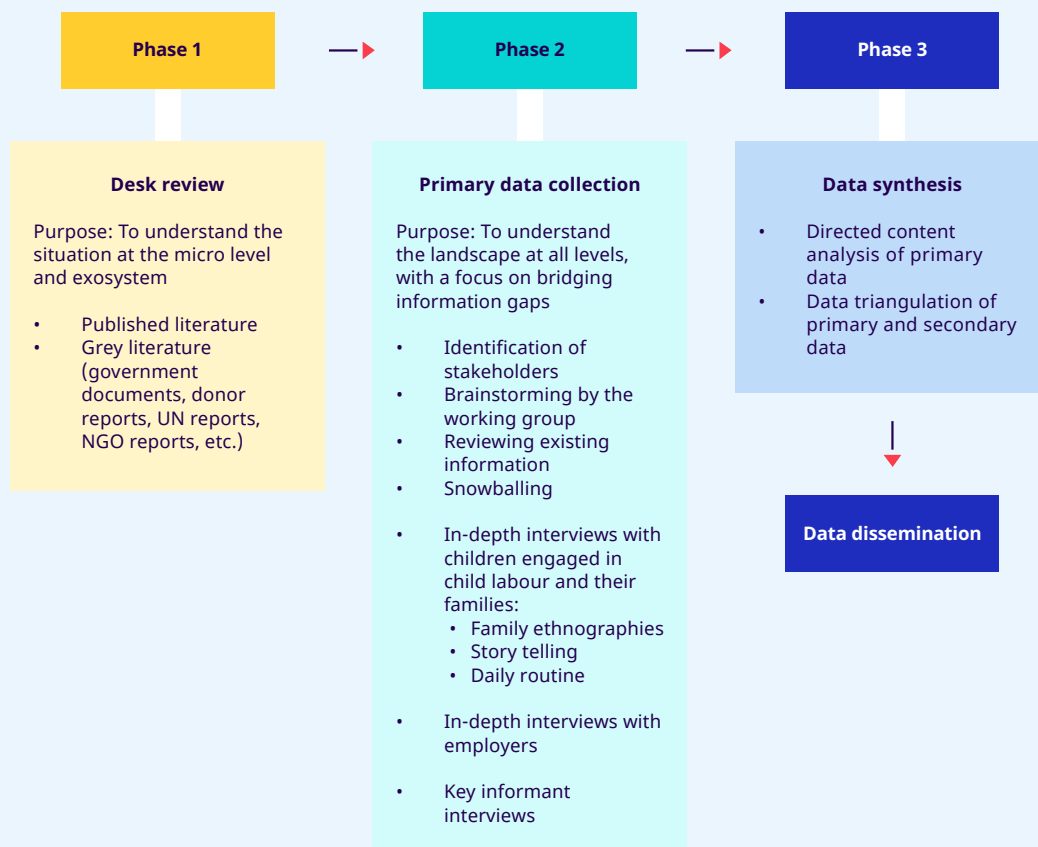
This model considers that the life and health of an individual is affected by the environment in which she/he lives, including the social support system (micro system), working environment (meso system) and government policies and the economic context at a broader level (macro system).

This scoping study assesses the lives of children engaged in child labour in domestic work at the micro level, exploring the ‘push’ factors for this form of child labour – social support, home environment, and the attitudes of children and parents. It also addresses the meso level/system by looking at ‘pull’ factors, including working conditions, exposure to hazards, violence and abuse, remuneration and payment methods, school attendance, and the support of extended family and communities. In terms of the macro level, the study critically assesses policies and programmes in Pakistan that seek to address child labour in domestic work.

► 2.3. Methodology

FIGURE 3.

Step-by-step approach of this scoping study on child labour in domestic work in Pakistan



Based on the analytical framework described above, this study was carried out in sequential phases. First, a literature review was conducted, followed by primary data collection to bridge information gaps. Primary data collection involved in-depth interviews (IDIs) with children engaged in child labour in domestic work and their parents and employers, as well as key stakeholders in Pakistan. All of this information was triangulated to generate meaningful analysis (see figure 3).

2.3.1 Phase I: Literature review (micro, meso and macro systems)

The aim of the literature review was to understand the available body of evidence on child labour in domestic work in Pakistan (see table 2). This involved a three-pronged approach to ensure comprehensive results, including (a) a systematic search using the PubMed database, (b) a request for documents from ILO Pakistan, and (c) the inclusion of grey literature through a manual search.

Systematic search

PubMed was chosen as the primary database for performing a systematic search, as it includes peer-reviewed articles and records that offer robust evidence. The search terms used were **'Pakistan' and 'child labour', or 'child labour', or 'child domestic work', or 'domestic child labour', or 'domestic child labour'**. The term 'child labour/labour' was included alongside 'domestic work' to ensure a comprehensive approach, as reports and articles tend to mention domestic labour in addition to other forms of work. No further filters were applied, in order to make the search elaborate and comprehensive.

The systematic search through PubMed returned 489 records. The titles of these articles and reports (n = 489) were screened to determine their eligibility, with 69 selected for a review of their abstracts.³⁷ All the documents, articles, and records that did not meet the eligibility criteria³⁸ were excluded from the review. This approach identified 20 records for the full-text review, which further narrowed down the number of relevant records to be included in the desk review to 11.³⁹

³⁷ Articles were selected if they addressed child labour in domestic work in Pakistan, were in English, concerned human subjects and the full-text was available.

³⁸ Eligibility criteria: (i) The study design, methods and procedures are sufficiently transparent and an independent, balanced and objective approach to the research was ensured; (ii) necessary information to reproduce or replicate the study is provided; (iii) a sufficient description of the sample, the intervention and any comparison groups is given; (iv) appropriate and reliable measurement of variables is used; (v) the research was submitted to a peer review process; and (vi) the research adheres to quality standards for reporting, for example, it is clear, cogent, complete and credible.

³⁹ Abdalla Ibrahim et al., "Child Labor and Health: A Systematic Literature Review of the Impacts of Child Labor on Child's Health in Low- and Middle-income Countries", *Journal of Public Health* 41, No. 1 (2019), 18–26; Zahid Naeem, Faiza Shaukat and Zubair Ahmed, "Child Labor in Relation to Poverty", *International Journal of Health Sciences* 5, No. 2 Suppl 1 (2011), 48–49; S. A. Gulzar, Samina Vertejee and Laila Pirani, "Child Labour: A Public Health Issue", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 59, No. 11 (2009), 778–781; Kaushik Basu, "The Economics of Child Labor", *Scientific American* 289, No. 4 (2003), 84–91; Meesha Iqbal et al., "Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Child Labourers in Sindh, Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Study", *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 26, No. 9 (2020), 1087–1096; Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, "Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248; Muhammad Abdul Ahad, Yvonne K. Parry and Eileen Willis, "The Prevalence and Impact of Maltreatment of Child Laborers in the Context of Four South Asian Countries: A Scoping Review", *Child Abuse & Neglect* 117 (2021), 105052; Meesha Iqbal et al., "Recommendations: Putting an End to Child Labour in Pakistan!", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 70, No. 7 (2020), 1256–1258; Asaad Ahmed Nafees et al., "Situation Analysis of Child Labour in Karachi, Pakistan: A Qualitative Study", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 62, No. 10 (2012), 1075–1082; Pureza P. Budd and Donna McIvor Joss, "Social Origins and Implications of Child Labor", *Work* 10, No. 3 (1998), 279–291; Meesha Iqbal et al., "Violence and Abuse among Working Children in Urban and Suburban Areas of Lower Sindh, Pakistan", *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 27, No. 5 (2021), 501–508.

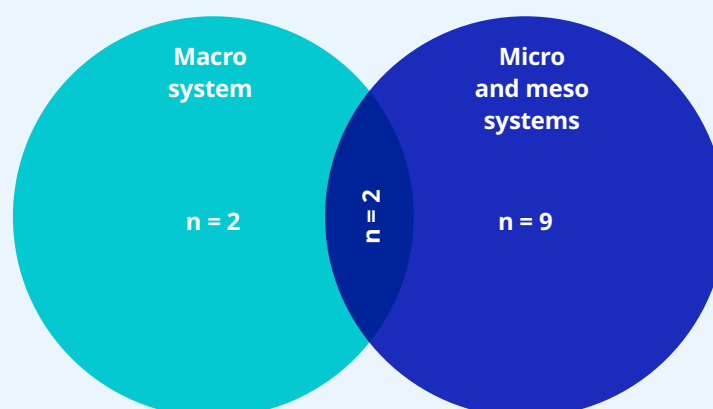
The reference lists of these 11 documents were screened to identify other pertinent records. As such, two more documents – an article and a discussion paper – were included (see table 2).⁴⁰ Thus, 13 documents were selected for the desk review after the systematic search – 10 articles, one report, one policy brief and one discussion paper.⁴¹ Most of these address the micro and meso levels,⁴² while four concern the macro (policy) level⁴³ of child labour in domestic work (see figure 4).

Table 2. Records identified by the systematic search

Database	Number of records identified (number of hits)	Number selected for abstract review	Number selected for full-text review	Number of records selected to be included in the final review			Additional records included (identified through the selected documents' reference lists)	
PubMed	489	69	20	11			2	
				Article	Report	Policy brief	Discussion paper	Article
				9	1	1	1	1
Total number of records = 13								

FIGURE 4.

Venn diagram demonstrating the spread of information according to the macro, meso and micro levels



⁴⁰ Salman Bandeali et al., "Prevalence of Behavioural and Psychological Problems in Working Children", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 58, No. 6 (2008), 345–349; Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

⁴¹ See all of the sources in the preceding footnote, as well as: Salman Bandeali et al., "Prevalence of Behavioural and Psychological Problems in Working Children", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 58, No. 6 (2008), 345–349.

⁴² See all of the sources in the two preceding footnotes.

⁴³ S. A. Gulzar, Samina Vertejee and Laila Pirani, "Child Labour: A Public Health Issue", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 59, No. 11 (2009), 778–781; Meesha Iqbal et al., "Recommendations: Putting an End to Child Labour in Pakistan!", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 70, No. 7 (2020), 1256–1258; Asaad Ahmed Nafees et al., "Situation Analysis of Child Labour in Karachi, Pakistan: A Qualitative Study", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 62, No. 10 (2012), 1075–1082; Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

Requesting documents from ILO Pakistan

ILO Pakistan shared relevant material to enrich the literature review (**n = 8**), including reports (n = 3), news articles (n = 2), legal documents (n = 1), policy briefs (n = 1) and web pages (n = 1).⁴⁴

Manual search

A manual search for pertinent records was carried out to enrich the desk review. This identified 11 reports, three web pages and two newspaper articles (n = 16).⁴⁵

Thus, the total number of records included in the desk review was n = 37, including n = 13 from the systematic search, n = 8 from ILO Pakistan and n = 16 from the manual search (see figure 5).

Data extraction

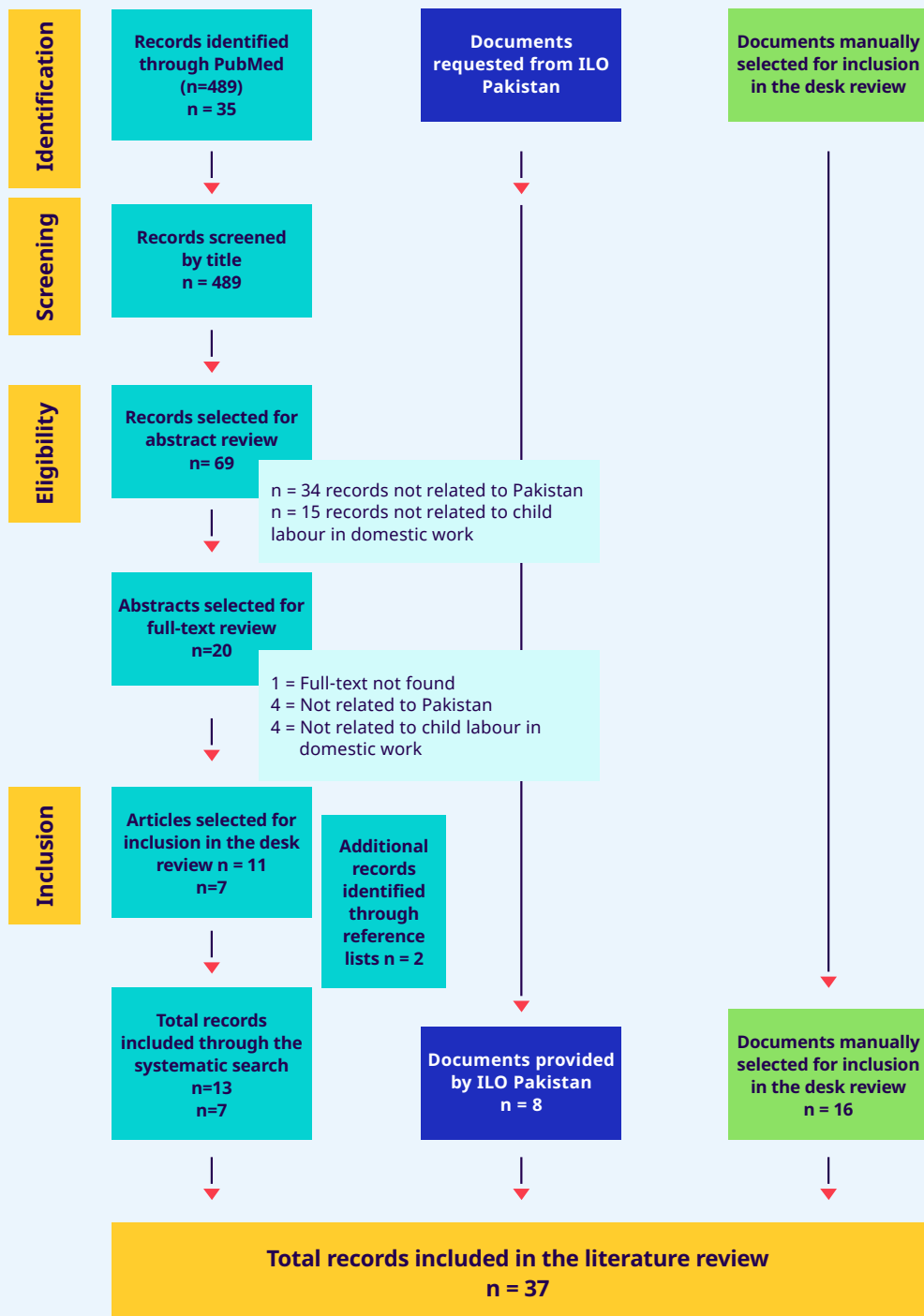
Data was extracted from all of the sources documents, articles, reports, and policy briefs using a data extraction form. The PRISMA diagram below details the selection of documents for the literature review (see figure 5).

⁴⁴ Paycheck.pk, “[Domestic Workers in Pakistan](#)”; Verso Consulting, *Extending Social Security Coverage to Domestic Workers in the Province of Punjab – Implementation Framework*, 2021; Sahar Zareen Bandial, “[New Protections for Domestic Workers in Pakistan](#)”, in *Arab News*, 23 January 2020; Zofeen T. Ebrahim, “[Saving the Children](#)”, in *Dawn*, 29 July 2020; Search for Justice, *Policy Brief: The Abuse and Exploitation of Children as Modern-day Slaves Cannot Continue to be Tolerated*, 2020; ILO and NCCWD, *Legal Options and Policy Provisions for Child Domestic Workers*, 2004; ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004; Pakistan, Government of Punjab, *The Punjab Domestic Workers Act 2019*, 2019.

⁴⁵ Pakistan, Government of Punjab, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Board, and UNICEF, *Punjab Survey Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017–18*, 2018; Pakistan, Government of Sindh, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Board, *Sindh Survey Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018–19*, 2020; Pakistan, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Department, and UNICEF, *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Key Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016–17*, 2018; Pakistan, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, Planning & Development Department, and UNICEF, *Gilgit-Baltistan Final Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016–17*, 2018; Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force Survey 2017–18*, 2019; Pakistan, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, and ILO-IPEC, *Summary Results of Child Labour Survey in Pakistan (1996)*, 1996; SPARC, *The State of Pakistan's Children 2020: Child Labour*, 2020; SPARC, “[News and Events: Online Session on Demand for New Legislation against Child Domestic Labour](#)”, 20 June 2020; National Commission for Human Rights, *Pakistan Annual Report 2017*, 2017; ILO, “[Giving Rights to Millions of Domestic Workers in Pakistan](#)”, 26 February 2015; Shakeeb Asrar, “[Are We Not Humans? Pakistan's Domestic Workers Confront Abuse](#)”, in *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 August 2021; Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017; Paycheck.pk, “[Domestic Workers in Pakistan](#)”; United States Department of Labor, *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Pakistan*, 2019; Kishwar Enam, “[Working Children](#)”, in *Dawn*, 23 February 2021; Aga Khan University and WHO-EMRO, *Health and Social Assessment of Child Labourers in and around Karachi: An Area of Urgent Unmet Need for Action. The Child Labour Project 2017* (unpublished).

FIGURE 5.

PRISMA diagram depicting the selection of documents for inclusion in the literature review



2.3.2. Phase II: Primary data collection (micro, meso and macro system)

Primary data collection was conducted to fill in knowledge gaps identified by the literature review. Qualitative interviews were carried out with (a) children engaged in child labour in domestic work, (b) the families of these children, (c) their employers and (d) key stakeholders working to end child labour in domestic work in Pakistan. Primary data was collected between November 2021 and January 2022.

Interviews with children engaged in child labour in domestic work and their families (micro system)

The data collection process used a snowball technique to sample children engaged in child labour in domestic work and their parents/guardians from all of Pakistan's provinces. Focus group discussions with between six and 10 children were initially planned. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the Omicron variant, individual interviews with children and their parents/guardians were deemed more appropriate. Each interview was conducted online through Zoom, or by telephone, by the principal investigator. These interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes each. With the verbal consent of the children and their parents/guardians, the interviews were recorded. The audio/video recordings were stored in the study's archives for reference purposes.

Children and their parents/guardians were advised to be in separate places during the interview in order to ensure their privacy. The interviews used the qualitative techniques of 'story telling' and 'daily routine' to probe the details of children's lives. They were asked to recount the best and worst memory of their lives, and to provide a detailed account of their daily routines to identify potential time frames of increased vulnerability. Family ethnographies were also carried out, with children asked whom they considered the persons closest and farthest from them, as a starting point for discussing their relationships with their families, peers, friends and employers. The interview guides used for these interviews are presented in Annexes I and II. Table 3 presents the number of in-depth interviews conducted, disaggregated by province. Interviews were carried out until they reached the point of saturation – that is, until the same information started to be repeated and no new data was provided.

Interviews with employers (meso system)

To understand the 'pull' factors of child labour in domestic work, in-depth interviews were conducted with employers. They were identified through personal links, using a snowball sampling technique. All of these interviews were conducted online through Zoom or through telephone calls. Verbal consent was obtained from the employers before the interviews, which were held until they provided no new information. The semi-structured interview guide for employers is included in Annex III.

Key informant interviews (macro system)

Key informants were identified through consultations with ILO Pakistan. Every effort was made to interview stakeholders from the public sector and from the private non-profit sector, including civil society, to capture a range of data.

Once the stakeholders had been contacted by email, they were interviewed through Zoom video calls. Their verbal consent was obtained before each interview. Table 4 presents a detailed breakdown of the affiliations of the stakeholders interviewed, while Annex IV presents the semi-structured interview guide used. All of these interviews were translated and transcribed. The data obtained was analysed using MAXQDA and triangulated with the findings of the desk review.

Table 3. Number of in-depth interviews with children, their parents and employers (n = 35)

Province	Children	Parents/guardians	Employers
Punjab	5	3	2
Sindh	4	5	2
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	8	2	2
Balochistan	4	3	2
Total	18	11	6

Table 4. List of organizations of the key informants interviewed (n = 10)

Stakeholder (representatives of institutions/organizations)
Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR), Government of Pakistan
Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PASS) Division, Government of Pakistan
National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC), Government of Pakistan
Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC)
<i>Sahil</i>
<i>Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi</i> (ITA)
<i>Aawaz II</i> Project of the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
Group Development Pakistan (GDP)
International Labour Organization (ILO)
All Pakistan Women Association (APWA)

2.3.3. Phase III: Data synthesis

The literature review (Phase I) and interviews (Phase II) were triangulated based on the levels and themes of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of study (micro, meso and macro levels), using the technique of directed content analysis. A priori themes were utilized, and emerging themes were allowed to flow freely. The policy environment surrounding child labour in domestic work was also assessed and word clouds were created. All of this data was analysed using MAXQDA.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval from Pakistan's National Bioethics Committee was sought and obtained for this scoping study (Ref: No.4-87/NBC-691/21/593).

Chapter 3

Results: Micro level

There is no recent statistically representative data on child labour in domestic work in Pakistan, as noted above. Qualitative research undertaken for this scoping study provides insights on the magnitude and characteristics of child labour in the sector; however, this data must be interpreted with caution.

► 3.1. Magnitude of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan

3.1.1. Geographical distribution of the most affected communities

As discussed above, the Pakistan's last Child Labour Survey conducted in 1996 estimated that 8.2 per cent of children between 5 and 14 years old (3.3 million) were engaged in child labour, 73 per cent of whom were boys and 27 per cent were girls. It also estimated that 8 per cent of all children involved in child labour (7.4 per cent of boys and 9.8 per cent of girls) were involved in community, social and personal services, including domestic work.⁴⁶ More recent projections suggested that 12 million children were engaged in child labour in 2012, and 14 million in 2014.⁴⁷ Despite the lack of data to comprehensively quantify the magnitude of child labour, research suggests that child labour is more pronounced in the informal economy than in the formal economy, and that child labour in domestic work is a major part of the informal economy.⁴⁸ It is anticipated that 8.5 million people, predominantly women and children, were involved in domestic work in Pakistan in 2021.⁴⁹ In 2004, the ILO estimated that 264,000 children were engaged in child labour in domestic work across the country.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Pakistan, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, and ILO-IPEC, *Summary Results of Child Labour Survey in Pakistan (1996)*, 1996.

⁴⁷ Meesha Iqbal et al., "Recommendations: Putting an End to Child Labour in Pakistan!", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 70, No. 7 (2020), 1256–1258; S. A. Gulzar, Samina Vertejee and Laila Pirani, "Child Labour: A Public Health Issue", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 59, No. 11 (2009), 778–781.

⁴⁸ Asaad Ahmed Nafees et al., "Situation Analysis of Child Labour in Karachi, Pakistan: A Qualitative Study", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 62, No. 10 (2012), 1075–1082.

⁴⁹ Verso Consulting, *Extending Social Security Coverage to Domestic Workers in the Province of Punjab – Implementation Framework*, 2021; ILO, "Giving Rights to Millions of Domestic Workers in Pakistan", 26 February 2015.

⁵⁰ Shakeeb Asrar, "'Are We Not Humans?' Pakistan's Domestic Workers Confront Abuse", in *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 August 2021.

Every fourth household in Pakistan engages a domestic worker.⁵¹ According to a 2003 study conducted in six major cities by the National Commission for Child Welfare and Development (NCCWD), 8 per cent of all children engaged in child labour were involved in domestic work in Pakistan.⁵² These estimates provide an idea of how serious the situation is. However, they cannot be generalized at the national or sub-national level due to epidemiological constraints (the lack of a sampling frame).

Child labour in domestic work is not evenly distributed across the country. It appears to be more common in urban centres than in rural areas.⁵³ Pakistan's Child Labour Survey in 1996 estimated that 19.1 per cent of children engaged in child labour in urban areas (17 per cent of boys and 34 per cent of girls) were involved in domestic work, compared to 6.6 per cent of children involved in child labour in rural areas (6 per cent of boys and 8 per cent of girls).⁵⁴ The 1996 survey also found that 10 per cent of children engaged in child labour in Punjab and the same percentage in Sindh were involved in domestic work, compared to 7 per cent in Balochistan and 3.8 per cent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.⁵⁵ Data collected between 2016 and 2019 also indicates a higher incidence of child labour in domestic work in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh, compared to Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.⁵⁶ A rapid household survey of six cities in 2017 found children engaged in child labour in domestic work in 31 per cent of households in Karachi, Sindh, 28 per cent of those in Lahore, Punjab, 26 per cent of those in Rawalpindi, Punjab, and Islamabad Capital Territory, and 22 per cent each in households in Quetta, Balochistan, and Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.⁵⁷

Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) collect data on child labour in each province as well as on household chores that children perform. However, the surveys do not specify whether these chores are performed in their own homes – in which case they are not be considered to be child labour, provided they do not exceed 21 hours per week for children between 5 and 14 years old – or the home of a third party. Based on MICS data, it can be tentatively inferred that child labour in domestic work is more prevalent in Punjab and Sindh. MICS data indicates that an estimated 3.7 per cent of children between 12 and 14 years old in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2016–2017, 9.5 per cent of children of this age in Sindh in 2018–2019 and 4.7 per cent in Punjab in 2017–2018 were involved in household chores greater than the specified duration for their age groups.⁵⁸

⁵¹ Paycheck.pk, “Domestic Workers in Pakistan”.

⁵² Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

⁵³ Pakistan, Government of Punjab, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Board, and UNICEF, *Punjab Survey Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017–18*, 2018; Pakistan, Government of Sindh, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Board, *Sindh Survey Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018–19*, 2020; Pakistan, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Department, and UNICEF, *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Key Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016–17*, 2018.

⁵⁴ Pakistan, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, and ILO-IPEC, *Summary Results of Child Labour Survey in Pakistan (1996)*, 1996.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Pakistan, Government of Punjab, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Board, and UNICEF, *Punjab Survey Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017–18*, 2018; Pakistan, Government of Sindh, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Board, *Sindh Survey Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018–19*, 2020; Pakistan, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Department, and UNICEF, *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Key Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016–17*, 2018.

⁵⁷ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

⁵⁸ Pakistan, Government of Punjab, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Board, and UNICEF, *Punjab Survey Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017–18*, 2018; Pakistan, Government of Sindh, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Board, *Sindh Survey Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018–19*, 2020; Pakistan, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Bureau of Statistics Planning & Development Department, and UNICEF, *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Key Findings Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016–17*, 2018.

According a key informant interviewed for this scoping study, there were 7 million children (10 years old and older) engaged in child labour in Pakistan, as estimated by the latest Labour Force Survey 2018–2019. Due to the hidden nature of child labour in domestic work, this study considers that these figures should not be generalized and that they underestimate the real scope of this form of child labour.

3.1.2. Socio-demographic variations (gender, age, income, ethnicity)

Children engaged in child labour in domestic work generally belong to the poorest segments of society. Most are between 10 and 14 years old.⁵⁹ While some of these children start working as early as 5 years old, girls appear to become engaged in child labour in domestic work around the age of 7, on average.⁶⁰ A study carried out in Sindh and the province's suburbs determined the mean age of children engaged in child labour in domestic to be 11.1 years old in 2020 (standard deviation: 1.9).⁶¹ In 2004, research estimated that the median age for children engaged in child labour in domestic work in Islamabad Capital Territory and Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was 12 years old.⁶²

Small-scale studies offer considerable evidence that more girls than boys are involved in child labour in domestic work. MICS data indicate that more girls perform household chores than boys, which may be an indirect clue about girls' higher levels of involvement in child labour in domestic work. Specifically, MICS data for Punjab in 2017 estimated that 7.8 per cent of girls performed household chores, as did 1.8 per cent of boys. In 2018, MICS data for Sindh estimated the rate as 14.7 per cent for girls and 4.4 per cent for boys. MICS data for Gilgit-Baltistan in 2017 indicated that 2.4 per cent of children between 5 and 11 years old (1 per cent of boys and 3.9 per cent of girls), 6.3 per cent of children between 12 and 14 years old (2 per cent of boys and 10.7 per cent girls) and 2.5 per cent of children between 15 and 17 years old (0.1 per cent of boys and 4.4 per cent of girls) performed chores for longer than the permissible duration for their age groups.⁶³



The biggest problem for children [engaged] in child labour in domestic work is that there is no survey so far designed by the Government [...] or any administrative survey [...so that] we would know how much child domestic labour is. The Government doesn't know the quantity. The only thing the Government knows is that [roughly] 25 million children are out of school.”

– Key informant, private non-profit sector

⁵⁹ Verso Consulting, *Extending Social Security Coverage to Domestic Workers in the Province of Punjab – Implementation Framework*, 2021.

⁶⁰ Ibid; Search for Justice, *Policy Brief: The Abuse and Exploitation of Children as Modern-day Slaves Cannot Continue to be Tolerated*, 2020.

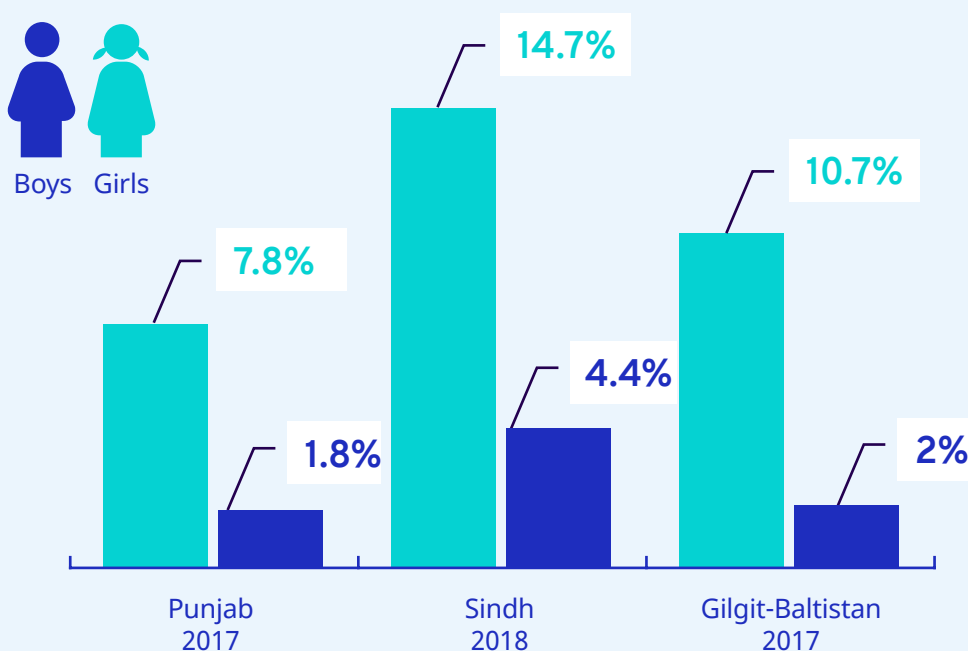
⁶¹ Meesha Iqbal et al., “Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Child Labourers in Sindh, Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Study”, *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 26, No. 9 (2020), 1087–1096.

⁶² ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

⁶³ Pakistan, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, Planning & Development Department, and UNICEF, *Gilgit-Baltistan Final Report: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016–17, 2018*.

FIGURE 6.

Proportion of girls and boys involved in household chores in Punjab, Sindh and Gilgit-Baltistan, 2017–2018



Source: MICS data for Punjab (2017), Sindh (2018) and Gilgit-Baltistan (2017).

Estimates from Sindh in 2018 indicated that 87 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work were girls.⁶⁴ In 2017, estimates for Pakistan as a whole suggested that 85 per cent of such children were girls.⁶⁵

The interviews conducted with children for this study ($n = 18$) reveal that the children involved were over 10 years old – i.e. between 10 and 15 years old – when they first became engaged in child labour in domestic work to support their families. Girls usually engaged in such work with their parents – typically their mothers – from the age of 6 or 7, before starting to work independently around the age of 10. Boys are generally engaged in child labour in automobile workshops or garages, while girls are put into domestic work. In some instances, girls are forced into child labour in domestic work by their parents and families in order to support their brothers' education.

Wide variations exist in available evidence on the earnings of children engaged in child labour in domestic work. This may be due to inflation and consequent variations in payment.

⁶⁴ Meesha Iqbal et al., "Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Child Labourers in Sindh, Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Study", *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 26, No. 9 (2020), 1087–1096.

⁶⁵ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

In Karachi, Sindh, the average monthly earnings of such children was found to be 3,338 rupees (standard deviation: 2,051 rupees) in 2017.⁶⁶ Older estimates found that salaries ranged from 300 rupees in 2004, and between 500 to 1,500 rupees per month in 2005.⁶⁷ A study in 2004 determined that in Islamabad Capital Territory, 57 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work earned less than 500 rupees, while 40 per cent earned between 500 and 1,500 rupees. It found that 14 per cent of such children lived in households with no income, 57 per cent in households with an income of less than 20,000 rupees, and 43 per cent in households with an income greater than 20,000 rupees.⁶⁸ In Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 83 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work earned less than 500 rupees in 2004, while 17 per cent earned between 500 and 1,500 rupees. Some 38 per cent of these children lived in households with no family income, 91 per cent in households with an income of less than 20,000 rupees, and 9 per cent in households with an income greater than 20,000 rupees.⁶⁹ Evidence from 2017 suggests that 29 per cent of children involved in child labour in domestic work earned up to 1,000 rupees, 57 per cent between 1,000 and 2,000 rupees, and 14 per cent earned more than 2,000 to 3,000 rupees per month.⁷⁰

The interviews conducted for this scoping study also reflect variations in earnings. Children who are engaged part-time (known as 'day-out' workers) are paid according to the chores they perform and their hours of work, usually receiving between 500 and 3,500 rupees. Children engaged on a full-time live-in basis in child labour in domestic work ('day-in' workers) earn between 3,000 and 15,000 rupees.

Payments are particularly low in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and in rural areas. They are comparatively higher in urban areas, Punjab and Sindh. Some of the children interviewed do not know how much they are paid; these earnings are generally given directly to their parents/guardians. Some employers give children a small amount of 'pocket money' (around 50 to 100 rupees) to buy snacks. Most of the children interviewed only appear interested in this money. According to an in-depth interview with one employer, the Naval Colony in Karachi has regularized payment for domestic work according to each chore performed. Children are allowed to work for a third party employer as long as they go to school, which is a mandatory requirement.

In Punjab, the interviews shed light on another trend – young girls are hired to work in employers' homes and are not paid on a monthly basis. Instead, the employer provides the total amount earned to the girls' parents when she marries, which is usually used as a dowry.



The admin [in Karachi's Naval Colony] has regularized fixed payments [...] Cleaning is 3,000 [rupees], dishes are 2,000 [...] so that anyone here won't have a problem; neither the receiver would have a problem, nor the giver."

– In-depth interview with an employer in Sindh

⁶⁶ Meesha Iqbal et al., "Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Child Labourers in Sindh, Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Study", *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 26, No. 9 (2020), 1087–1096.

⁶⁷ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005); ILO and NCCWD, *Legal Options and Policy Provisions for Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

⁶⁸ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

Such children are bound to work for their employers and cannot leave until and unless they marry. The trend is common among landlords in rural Punjab.

According to available literature, most children engaged in child labour in domestic work have living parents. A study in 2016 in Karachi, Sindh, found that both parents were alive for 92 per cent of the children surveyed, aged 10 to 14. Their parents usually worked as labourers (85.5 per cent of fathers and 77.7 per cent of mothers). Most were not educated (87.5 per cent of fathers and 96.4 per cent of mothers).⁷¹ Another study in Karachi found that 60 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work lived in a *pakka* house – that is, a dwelling designed to be solid and permanent – 30 per cent in *semi-pakka* houses and 9.5 per cent in *kaccha* houses – that is, dwellings that are not permanent structures and whose walls are made of materials like bamboo or unburned bricks. The average number of people living in these houses was 7.6 (standard deviation: 3.1) (n = 63).⁷² The same research found that the most common ethnicities of children engaged in child labour in domestic work in Karachi were Punjabi (49 per cent) and Sindhi (29 per cent), indicating that this form of child labour is widespread in both provinces.⁷³ A study in 2004 found that 92 per cent of children involved in child labour in domestic work in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, were Muslims, compared to only 21 per cent in Islamabad Capital Territory, where most children involved were part of minority groups.⁷⁴

The interviews conducted for this scoping study shed light on children's household dynamics. While most of these children have living fathers, they are not usually the household's main breadwinner. In many cases, the father has re-married and left the family, pushing children into child labour to make ends meet. As one child interviewed in Balochistan recalled, *"the worst day of my life was when my father got a second wife [and I started working]"*. In other cases, illness prevents fathers from supporting their families.

Most of the children interviewed live in urban slums in large cities. For children engaged part-time in domestic work, employers' homes are usually within walking distance of the family home. Others live in *kachhi abadis* (slums) and *jhonparis* (squatter settlements), which abound in rural and urban areas. Among interviewees, a family's eldest child was usually pushed into child labour to support the household and the education of younger siblings, especially in Punjab and Sindh. While this suggests that people are increasingly attuned to the importance of education and want their children to study, it is problematic that the education of some children comes at the expense of their siblings engaging in child labour.

⁷¹ Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, "Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

⁷² Meesha Iqbal et al., "Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Child Labourers in Sindh, Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Study", *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 26, No. 9 (2020), 1087–1096.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

3.1.3. Migration dynamics

Migration plays an important role in the dynamics of domestic work. A study in 2004 determined that 29 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work in Pakistan were Afghan refugees.⁷⁵ In 2016, research found that many children migrate from rural to urban areas to engage in child labour in domestic work, sending the money they earn back home.⁷⁶ Migrant children are among the most vulnerable groups in the country, as they depend on employers for accommodation and meagre earnings.⁷⁷

The interviews conducted for this scoping study reinforce the finding that the children of many Afghans living in Pakistan, especially in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, are engaged in child labour. The Afghan participants interviewed for this study rarely visit Afghanistan. As one parent interviewed in Balochistan remarked, *“we once went back to Afghanistan to stay, but then fighting started over there, and we came back [to Pakistan].”* The Afghan participants interviewed do not consider education particularly important for children.

Many families have migrated from rural to urban areas in search of better earnings, and put their children to work. In-country migration plays a significant role in child labour in domestic work.



Pakistan has one of the highest urbanization rates in South Asia and we are saying there will be 50 per cent urban population in Pakistan by 2025, which is the UNDP estimate [...] which means there is rural-to-urban migration. The kids are most vulnerable in this situation, as they are placed in child domestic labour.”

– Key informant, private non-profit sector



In the village [...] there was not much work. There used to be zamindars [landowners], and you know as how much wages they give.”

– In-depth interview with a parent in Punjab

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, “Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey”, *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

⁷⁷ Verso Consulting, *Extending Social Security Coverage to Domestic Workers in the Province of Punjab – Implementation Framework*, 2021.

► 3.2. Children's and parents' perspectives about child labour in domestic work

Limited data is available on children's perspectives about domestic work. A study in 2005 estimated that only 11 per cent of boys and 28 per cent of girls wanted to continue being engaged in child labour in domestic work; the rest had higher aspirations.⁷⁸ Dissatisfaction with wages is also reported. As one of the children quoted in research published in 2021 put it, *"They can afford to pay us more, they just don't want to."*⁷⁹

The interviews held for this scoping study confirm that most children do not want to be engaged in child labour in domestic work.

It appears that children believe it is their responsibility to perform child labour in domestic work to contribute to their household's income. This belief has been engrained in many children's minds by their parents. Some of the parents interviewed claim that their children had to be sent, or taken to work forcibly, as they did not want to work. The parents interviewed repeatedly stated that they do not like their children working in others' homes. However, the children interviewed claim that their parents are happy that they are engaged in child labour in domestic work and, therefore, earning money for their household.

This study concludes that there is an element of '**wish bias**' in statements given by parents; they have adapted to the fact that their children are engaged in child labour in domestic work to the extent that this has ceased to be a painful realization. Many of the parents interviewed appear to in denial of the risks associated with child labour in domestic work, and have accepted it as a normal part of life.



My life's greatest happiness is when I reach home for vacations."

– In-depth interview with a boy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



I don't like it, I am helpless."

– In-depth interview with a girl in Balochistan



I do not feel like working, I want that we have some money, and we can also rest for some days so our backache gets healed, leg pain gets healed, but this doesn't happen."

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh

⁷⁸ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

⁷⁹ Shakeeb Asrar, "'Are We Not Humans?' Pakistan's Domestic Workers Confront Abuse", in *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 August 2021.



The best day of my life will be when I get freedom, and relax.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab



I don’t like to work, but what can we do, [it] is a compulsion.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



I sometimes wish to leave the work [...] But then I think, no, this is my responsibility.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh



What would I do by sitting uselessly at my home?”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab



Work is good for them [...] it is better than becoming drug addicts on the street.”

– In-depth interview with a parent in Sindh

► 3.3. Children’s and parents’ perspectives about education

The children interviewed for this scoping study expressed their fondness of school and books. Many children had to drop out of education due to increasing household expenses, and wish they could return to school one day. The parents interviewed – with the exception of the Afghan participants – also expressed their inclination towards education. However, they added that it is important for “*children to work*” as household expenses cannot be met by parents alone.

The parents interviewed also expressed mixed views about child labour in domestic work. Some consider it healthier than “*becoming drug addicts on the street*.” Others view it as a compromise to support household expenses. Some parents put their daughters to work in order to support the financial expenses of their sons’ schooling.

This indicates that parents are, by and large, aware of the importance of education to improve their children's future prospects. However, immediate household expenses tend to take precedence over future benefits. The parents interviewed did not express concerns about the quality of education or the accessibility of schools; their children's education is prevented purely by monetary requirements.

► 3.4. Push factors for child labour in domestic work (social context)

3.4.1. Family level (parents, guardians, siblings)

Several studies identify **poverty** as the root cause of child labour in domestic work.⁸⁰ Children are generally put to work by their parents to supplement family income and make ends meet. Available literature suggests that 93 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work in 2021 – 90 per cent of boys and 96 per cent of girls⁸¹ – and 82 per cent of such children in 2011,⁸² were involved due to poverty. A study in 2005 found that most children engaged in child labour were from rural backgrounds, had between 8 to 12 household members, their parents were uneducated, and children were forced into child labour to support their households.⁸³ A study in 1998 estimated that 62 per cent of all children engaged in child labour were brought to work by their parents.⁸⁴

Another commonly cited reason for child labour is to pay off **family debts**. Many children are engaged in bonded or forced labour as part of debt bondage. They are forced into child labour to pay off debts incurred by their parents or other family members. In many instances, children are engaged in child labour to pay off family debts to landlords (*chaudries*), and their earnings are deducted from the overall loan. If they damage anything, the amount is added to the loan. A case study recorded in 2004 found that a family loan increased from an initial 60,000 rupees to 300,000 rupees.⁸⁵ In extreme cases, rural families sell their children into domestic servitude.⁸⁶ The same 2004 study estimated that 80 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work were involved to support their families, and 14 per cent to pay off debts.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ Zahid Naeem, Faiza Shaukat and Zubair Ahmed, "Child Labor in Relation to Poverty", *International Journal of Health Sciences* 5, No. 2 Suppl 1 (2011), 48–49; Asaad Ahmed Nafees et al., "Situation Analysis of Child Labour in Karachi, Pakistan: A Qualitative Study", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 62, No. 10 (2012), 1075–1082; Pureza P. Budd and Donna McIvor Joss, "Social Origins and Implications of Child Labor", *Work* 10, No. 3 (1998), 279–291; Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005); Verso Consulting, *Extending Social Security Coverage to Domestic Workers in the Province of Punjab – Implementation Framework*, 2021; ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

⁸¹ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

⁸² Zahid Naeem, Faiza Shaukat and Zubair Ahmed, "Child Labor in Relation to Poverty", *International Journal of Health Sciences* 5, No. 2 Suppl 1 (2011), 48–49.

⁸³ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

⁸⁴ Pureza P. Budd and Donna McIvor Joss, "Social Origins and Implications of Child Labor", *Work* 10, No. 3 (1998), 279–291.

⁸⁵ ILO and NCCWD, *Legal Options and Policy Provisions for Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

⁸⁶ United States Department of Labor, *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Pakistan*, 2019.

⁸⁷ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

Another study in 2011 found that 82 per cent of the children involved were forced into child labour in domestic work due to poverty, 13 per cent were forced into it by their parents/families, and only 5 per cent had their own interest in this form of child labour.⁸⁸

The interviews held for this scoping study reveal that most children were pushed into child labour in domestic work by their parents to cover household expenses, usually rent and groceries. Just one of the children interviewed reported worked out of interest; the rest are all involved in child labour due to poverty. Some of the children interviewed report being pushed into child labour as a form of discipline for their 'impertinence'.

The interviews also highlight a vicious cycle of disease and poverty. Many families have a family member with an illness. This leads to high health-related expenditure and increased poverty which, in turn, further exacerbate illness due to a lack of long-term affordable treatment (the '**disease poverty trap**').

3.4.2. Community level

Social acceptance of child labour in domestic work poses a major barrier to eliminating the phenomenon.⁸⁹ Child labour is considered a 'normal' feature of Pakistani society;⁹⁰ people are often indifferent towards it. In terms of the 'supply side', poor families may consider child labour as the best utilization of their children's time to support their households. In terms of demand, privileged families exploit their situation by hiring children at a lower cost.⁹¹ Educational opportunities for children in Pakistan are limited, which may be a factor in aggravating the incidence of child labour in domestic work.⁹² Gender discrimination also plays a role, as boys' education is given preference over girls' education, causing girls to either remain at home or become engaged in child labour to contribute to the family income.⁹³



If we do not work, from where shall we eat? We will die of hunger."

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab



We work to bear the expenses of home, daily meals and utility bills, etc."

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh



I was stubborn and did not listen to my parents, thus they left me in this house to work."

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab

⁸⁸ Zahid Naeem, Faiza Shaukat and Zubair Ahmed, "Child Labor in Relation to Poverty", *International Journal of Health Sciences* 5, No. 2 Suppl 1 (2011), 48–49.

⁸⁹ Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, "Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

⁹⁰ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

⁹¹ Kishwar Enam, "Working Children", in *Dawn*, 23 February 2021.

⁹² Pureza P. Budd and Donna McIvor Joss, "Social Origins and Implications of Child Labor", *Work* 10, No. 3 (1998), 279–291.

⁹³ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.



If there is no supply then the demand would stop too.”

– Key informant, National Commission on the Rights of the Child



If we do not work, from where shall we eat? We will die of hunger.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab

Prejudice and discrimination have also been identified as factors that contribute to child labour in domestic work,⁹⁴ including ethnic or racial prejudice, and prejudice against religious minorities.

The interviews conducted for this scoping study complement the findings of the literature review. They point to gender discrimination, as many girls interviewed are engaged in child labour in domestic work to support their brothers’ education. A key informant from the National Commission on the Rights of the Child highlighted the issue of trafficking and bonded labour, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, explaining that the purposes of child labour “*can be exploitation, prostitution, forced labour.*” When children are engaged on a live-in basis in child labour in domestic work (‘day-in’), this is considered criminal because “*it involves element of force, element of transportation, and the consent of children does not matter.*” Stakeholders also note that the acceptance of child labour by the community is a major factor driving the phenomenon. People are willing for their children to be involved in child labour in domestic work, and others are willing to engage them, enabling the practice to continue.

► 3.5. Summary of micro level findings

Table 5. Summary of findings at the micro level

	Desk review	Stakeholder interviews
Magnitude of child labour in domestic work	Every fourth household in Pakistan engages a domestic worker (either an adult or a child). In 1996, Pakistan’s last Child Labour Survey estimated that 8 per cent of all children engaged in child labour were involved in domestic work.	Child labour in domestic work is widespread across Pakistan’s provinces. Earnings vary depending on whether a child is engaged in child labour in domestic work on a live-in (‘day-in’) or part-time (‘day-out’) basis, as well as their geographical location.

⁹⁴ Pureza P. Budd and Donna McIvor Joss, “Social Origins and Implications of Child Labor”, *Work* 10, No. 3 (1998), 279–291.

	Desk review	Stakeholder interviews
Magnitude of child labour in domestic work (continued)	Child labour in domestic work appears to be more common in Punjab and Sindh than in other provinces. Most of the children involved are girls between the ages of 10 and 14. Estimates of their earnings are out-dated. The most recent data available is from Karachi in 2017, where children engaged in child labour in domestic work were paid an average of 3,338 rupees per month. In terms of ethnicity, the same research found that most children involved in child labour in domestic work in Karachi were Punjabi or Sindhi.	The sums received are particularly low in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Most of the children interviewed have living fathers who are not the main breadwinners of their households. The children of Afghan refugees are heavily involved in child labour in domestic work.
Push factors and the social context	Individual level: Children are pushed into child labour in domestic work by their parents to pay off family debts and due to poverty (90 per cent). Community level: Social acceptance of child labour, gender discrimination, prejudice against minorities and a lack of educational opportunities push children into child labour in domestic work.	Children are usually pushed into child labour in domestic work to meet household expenses (rent, utility bills and groceries). Many households claim that they would not be able to survive without these contributions. Acceptance of child labour in domestic work is widespread, both in terms of supply and demand.
Children's/ parents' perspectives about work	Children and their parents are generally dissatisfied with meagre earnings. There is a general lack of data on their perspectives about child labour in domestic work.	The children interviewed do not want to be engaged in child labour in domestic work. However, most consider it a requirement or responsibility. While parents claimed to be unhappy with their children engaging in child labour, they appear to have adjusted to this reality.
Children's/ parents' perspectives about education		(Emerging theme) Most children involved in child labour in domestic work want to pursue their education, but do not have the opportunity to do so. Parents also want their children to be in school but feel helpless due to household expenses.

Chapter 4

Results: Meso level

► 4.1. Structural components of child labour in domestic work

4.1.1. Working environment

The working environment for children engaged in child labour in domestic work depends on their employers – it may range from peaceful and friendly to cruel and cumbersome. The environment tends to be harsher for children engaged on a live-in ('day-in') basis, compared to those engaged part-time ('day-out'). Research published in 2005 found that children engaged on a live-in basis were likely to face more hazards, be called on at any time with no fixed hours, and were rarely given holidays or allowed to visit home; sometimes only visiting their families once a year or once every two years.⁹⁵ Research in 2017 found that 80 per cent of children spent Eid with their employers, and that 67 per cent wanted to leave work.⁹⁶

Children may be confined to certain areas of the house, usually the kitchen, and may be locked in when their employers are not at home – a practice that echoes slavery. A 2005 study found that children who migrated from rural to urban areas often lived in isolation, completely cut off from familiar surroundings, and frequently deprived of access to environmental resources, such as space and open air.⁹⁷ In 2017, research found that children engaged in child labour in domestic work were not considered the equals of their employers' children, and may not be allowed to play with them.⁹⁸ Evidence from 2020 found that children engaged in child labour in domestic work were usually fed leftover food, given old clothes and allowed little rest.⁹⁹ A study in Karachi in 2016 determined that only 49 per cent of employers allowed children to rest. Common places for rest included the bedroom floor (43 per cent), a lounge (26 per cent), kitchen (23 per cent) or a drawing room, parking space or lawn (5 per cent).¹⁰⁰ Research published in 2017 found that children's basic needs were often neglected and they were not allowed timely access to food, rest or appropriate medication when required.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

⁹⁶ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

⁹⁷ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

⁹⁸ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

⁹⁹ Zofeen T. Ebrahim, "Saving the Children", in *Dawn*, 29 July 2020.

¹⁰⁰ Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, "Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

¹⁰¹ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

These children may live in shared quarters with others, or have to sleep on a floor or terrace.¹⁰² A 2005 study estimated that 20 per cent of girls and 50 per cent of boys were provided with a small space to sleep in, often shared with an adult domestic worker, which increased children's vulnerability to sexual abuse.¹⁰³ Violence and abuse are a reality for many children engaged in child labour in domestic work. Many instances of children being brutally beaten by their employers have been recorded, including fatal beatings.

Evidence also exists of children engaged in child labour in domestic work living happily with their employers. A study carried out in 2004 determined that more than 98 per cent of such children considered lighting and ventilation to be appropriate, 84 per cent had fans in the summer and heating in the winter, and a clean living space and hygienic rest room year-round.¹⁰⁴

These findings highlight the diversity of working environments in Pakistan. The interviews conducted for this scoping study reported 'appropriate' working conditions, in general. The children interviewed eat the same food as their employers, although some are given leftovers or insufficient quantities of food. None of the children reported having a separate room; instead, they sleep on the floor in their employer's drawing room or lounge. This is not a cause for complaint among the children interviewed, as they reported the same arrangements in their own homes. Children engaged on a live-in ('day-in') basis are usually allowed to go anywhere in their employer's house. Some have cordial relations with their employer's children and many watch television with their employers.

Children involved on a part-time ('day-out') basis tend to have better conditions as they do not spend all of their time with employers. A study in 2005 found that 49 per cent of children involved in child labour in domestic work were engaged in more than one household; 30 per cent used public transport, while the rest walked to their employers' homes.¹⁰⁶



I want to have more food, but I don't have the habit of asking, so I do not ask [...] They give me less food."

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab



I play Ludo with their daughter [...] she is 5 years old."

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh



I sleep on the floor [...] it is comfortable [...] Bajji¹⁰⁵ [employer] has given me blanket too."

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab

¹⁰² Verso Consulting, *Extending Social Security Coverage to Domestic Workers in the Province of Punjab – Implementation Framework*, 2021.

¹⁰³ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

¹⁰⁴ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹⁰⁵ The Urdu word 'baji' means elder sister; however, it is commonly used as a term to address any older woman, including by children engaged in child labour in domestic work, who use it as the term for their (female) employers.

¹⁰⁶ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

In 2016, children engaged part-time were found to be generally satisfied with their working environment.¹⁰⁷

The interviews conducted for this study also indicate that working environments are not as challenging for children involved on a part-time basis in child labour in domestic work. On average, they are engaged at five or six houses per day, although one boy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reported being engaged at 10 houses per day. These children leave their employers' homes as soon as they finish their chores, moving onto the next house. Most of these children live in urban slums and walk to their employers' homes. Some live in *kaccha abadis/jhonparis* (slums/squatter settlements), especially Afghan refugees, who appear less concerned about their working environment.



I eat whatever is left over.”

– In-depth interview with a boy in
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

4.1.2. Activities performed (gender specialization)

Research from 2004 found that children engaged in child labour in domestic performed household chores such as washing dishes, cleaning floors, sweeping, washing clothes, ironing, dusting and house cleaning.¹⁰⁸ A 2004 study in Islamabad and Peshawar (n = 150) found that dish washing was the most common task, which 80 per cent of children found 'manageable' in terms of the number of dishes, 50 per cent of these children washed clothes, 47 per cent ironed an average of 10 items per day, and 63 per cent spent more than an hour every day ironing.¹⁰⁹ A study in 2017 reported that all children engaged in child labour in domestic work were involved in washing clothes/doing laundry, while 93 per cent cleaned or dusted.¹¹⁰ Evidence from 2016 and 2017 points to babysitting as a common task, with between 4 per cent and 57 per cent of children involved in child labour in domestic work caring for infants.¹¹¹

The interviews conducted for this scoping study corroborate the findings of available literature. Dish-washing, sweeping, cleaning floors and wash rooms, dusting, washing and ironing clothes are common chores for the children interviewed. While boys are also made to wash cars, girls tend to be confined to indoor chores, including babysitting. When they are required to care for infants, the exact nature of their tasks is not usually specified by employers. They are expected to look after employers' babies constantly – changing diapers, preparing food, feeding them, washing clothes and utensils (such as feeders), and cleaning and dressing them. Another important task is to play with employers' children. The children interviewed rarely find this enjoyable, as employers' children tend to be much younger, turning 'play' into a demanding job.

Even when children are engaged in child labour in domestic work for the purposes of babysitting, they are expected to perform other tasks, such as making *roti* (flat bread), dusting and washing dishes. Some are engaged to look after employers' elderly or ill family members.

¹⁰⁷ Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, "Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

¹⁰⁸ ILO and NCCWD, *Legal Options and Policy Provisions for Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹⁰⁹ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹¹⁰ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

¹¹¹ Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, "Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248; Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

One girl interviewed in Karachi reported caring for two paralysed women – changing their clothes, taking them to the wash room, feeding and cleaning them. As they weigh far more than she does, these tasks are especially difficult. For many children engaged on a part-time basis, the exact nature of their tasks is not specified; they are expected to do whatever they are asked.

4.1.3. Exposure to hazards (occupational injuries, illnesses and surveillance)

Children engaged in child labour in domestic work may be exposed to several hazards. They face ergonomic hazards when they are required to move, lift or handle heavy loads. Maintaining the same posture for hours on end – for example, standing for long periods while cooking, washing dishes or cleaning – can cause pain and discomfort. They also face physical hazards, such as working on uneven surfaces or at heights. Noise and pollution may also pose hazards for children. In addition to ergonomic, chemical and physical hazards, children are often exposed to psychological hazards.¹¹²

Available literature highlights the hazards of low quality pressure cookers, defective irons, power leakages and sparks. Dusting and cleaning floors leads to exposure to dust, which can aggravate asthma and allergies.¹¹³ Children in kitchens may be cut or burned.¹¹⁴ In 2004, among a sample of children engaged in child labour in domestic work in Islamabad, 20 per cent had burns on their hands and irritation caused by low-quality detergents. In Peshawar, 10 per cent had burned hands.¹¹⁵ Pakistan's last Child Labour Survey in 1996 estimated that 8 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work suffered from occupational injuries or illnesses (6 per cent in rural areas and 20 per cent in urban areas).



I do any work which baji [employer] asks me to do.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh



Washing clothes is hard, and then I have to iron them too.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab



I iron five suits daily at night.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh



I make parathas, noodles and sandwiches for the kids [...] I also cut potatoes to make French fries.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab

¹¹² ILO, *Making Decent Work a Reality for Domestic Workers*, 2021.

¹¹³ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹¹⁴ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

¹¹⁵ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

The provincial distribution of occupational injuries and illnesses recorded by the Child Labour Survey in 1996 ranged from 15 per cent in Balochistan to 10 per cent in Punjab, 8 per cent in Sindh and 3.5 per cent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.¹¹⁶

The interviews conducted for this scoping study suggest that minor injuries, such as cuts and burns, are common. Many interviewees reported burning their fingers or hands when making *roti* or tea, touching a hot pan, coming into contact with steam, or ironing clothes. The children reported treating their burns with ointment; most burns healed in 10 to 15 days. Cuts appear frequent among children engaged in kitchens, as well as those tasked with throwing away garbage or washing dishes. The interviews also reveal instances of serious hazards, such as electrocution.

The parents interviewed appear aware that their children are exposed to hazards due to child labour in domestic work. However, most do not appear worried by these hazards, and tend to blame their children for getting hurt. The employers interviewed refuse to admit that children engaged in child labour in domestic work ever get hurt.



My daughter has suffered many injuries at work [...] She once got shocked/electrocuted while cleaning [the] wash room. Something was wrong with the electric board [...] she was cleaning wash room and her feet were wet.”

– In-depth interview with a parent in Sindh



Once the iron fell on my feet [...] they] got burned and I got a bruise too.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh



While I was making chips, my thumb got cut.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



I have never hurt myself too much, but just sometimes I hurt my foot while walking or just slightly cut my finger while cutting vegetables.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab



I injured myself while putting scrap in a waste bag.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Balochistan

¹¹⁶ Pakistan, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, and ILO-IPEC, *Summary Results of Child Labour Survey in Pakistan (1996)*, 1996.



She gets small kinds of injuries, as she does not take care. So that is why these kinds of injuries happen.”

– In-depth interview with a parent in Punjab



When she makes the roti, then she sometimes burns her hand, or if she is doing some work and her hand gets cut with a knife, as she is a bit careless too. And I then explain to her that one should not work like that. I tell her to take care.”

– In-depth interview with a parent in Sindh



Working with me, she has never hurt herself. No never.”

– In-depth interview with an employer in Balochistan

4.1.4. Exposure to violence and harassment (emotional, physical, sexual)

Children engaged in child labour in domestic work may be exposed to different forms of violence.¹¹⁷ Long working hours and vulnerability to harassment and violence are among the reasons that child labour in domestic work is considered a hazardous form of work, and among the worst forms of child labour, by ILO Conventions. Children engaged on a live-in ('day-in') basis are especially vulnerable. A study in 2004 reported rampant verbal abuse,¹¹⁸ such as shouting, scolding and using abusive language, which negatively affects children's psychological health and emotional well-being. Research in 2005 highlighted that children engaged in child labour in domestic work may be subject to abuse both from adults as well as employers' children, who may seek to assert their position in the household hierarchy through abusive treatment.¹¹⁹ A study in Sindh estimated that 22 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work were exposed to emotional abuse (95 per cent confidence interval: 13.5–34.2).¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ ILO, *Making Decent Work a Reality for Domestic Workers*, 2021.

¹¹⁸ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹¹⁹ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

¹²⁰ Meesha Iqbal et al., "Violence and Abuse among Working Children in Urban and Suburban Areas of Lower Sindh, Pakistan", *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 27, No. 5 (2021), 501–508.

A study in Karachi in 2008 estimated that 67 per cent of such children were 'borderline' or 'abnormal' in terms of emotional problems, and exhibited more emotional disturbance than children engaged in child labour in shops or factories.¹²¹ A systematic review of low and middle-income countries in 2019 reported a 10 per cent rate of behavioural problems (peer problems and problems of conduct) among children engaged in child labour in domestic work.¹²²

The interviews held for this scoping study indicate that emotional abuse exists across provinces. It varies in severity, from mild scolding to severe humiliation, but is never absent. Some of the children interviewed reported experiencing frequent crying spells, reflecting the effects of emotional abuse. The employers interviewed claim that children are 'good workers', 'obedient' and that their behaviour 'can be moulded' according to the employer's wishes. Such statements raise questions about the well-being of these children.

Children engaged in child labour in domestic work are often subjected to physical abuse. According to research published in 2021, the prevalence rate and ranges from an estimated 8.3 per cent to 60 per cent.¹²³ A study in Sindh in 2016 estimated that the rate was 13 per cent (95 per cent confidence interval: 6.4–23.5) (n=63),¹²⁴ higher than the prevalence estimated for child labour in other sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing, hotels and restaurants (with a 23 per cent rate for boys and a 15 per cent rate for girls; $p < 0.001$). Physical abuse was inflicted to punish children for not 'working properly'; they were slapped on the face (60 per cent), hit with a hard object (6 per cent), had a body part twisted (3 per cent), were violently pushed (6 per cent), had their hair pulled (3 per cent), were kicked (3 per cent) and 13 per cent suffered more than one form of physical abuse.¹²⁵



Sometimes they [employers] behave well, but mostly they are angry with us."

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab



The [employer] complains a lot and keeps on scolding."

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh



These bungalow people and their children often blame [us, saying] that she stole this thing of the house or that."

– In-depth interview with a girl in Balochistan

¹²¹ Salman Bandiali et al., "Prevalence of Behavioural and Psychological Problems in Working Children", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 58, No. 6 (2008), 345–349.

¹²² Abdalla Ibrahim et al., "Child Labor and Health: A Systematic Literature Review of the Impacts of Child Labor on Child's Health in Low- and Middle-income Countries", *Journal of Public Health* 41, No. 1 (2019), 18–26.

¹²³ Muhammad Abdul Ahad, Yvonne K. Parry and Eileen Willis, "The Prevalence and Impact of Maltreatment of Child Laborers in the Context of Four South Asian Countries: A Scoping Review", *Child Abuse & Neglect* 117 (2021), 105052.

¹²⁴ Meesha Iqbal et al., "Violence and Abuse among Working Children in Urban and Suburban Areas of Lower Sindh, Pakistan", *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 27, No. 5 (2021), 501–508.

¹²⁵ Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, "Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.



She cries a lot. Even if I talk to her about it, she still cries for no reason.”

– In-depth interview with a parent in Sindh



I miss home. I miss my parents. I miss my siblings. My father is disabled [and I have to work].”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Once she [employer] hit me [...] Do proper work, do proper work [...] she keeps on saying this.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh



She [my daughter] gets spanked a lot by the baji [employer]. She does not work properly and makes them angry [...] they have to tell her everything.”

– In-depth interview with a parent in Punjab

The same research estimated that 8 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work experienced physical abuse in the preceding six months, with abuse positively correlated with gender for boys, as well as with low levels of education and the child’s father being unemployed.¹²⁶ Anecdotal evidence from Lahore in 2004 indicated that children have been beaten with shoes.¹²⁷ The gruesome torture of 10-year old girl in Islamabad in 2016 was widely reported, highlighting the exploitation, asymmetrical power structure and vulnerability of children involved in child labour in domestic work in Pakistan.¹²⁸

Children interviewed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh reported being slapped, while one child in Karachi reported being hit on the head by her employer with a large pan for not washing the dishes ‘properly’. The children who experience abuse remained with their employers due to their helplessness and need to earn and support their families.

Children engaged in child labour in domestic work, especially on a live-in basis (‘day-in’), are at high risk of sexual abuse by the members of employer’s household, as well as visitors. Shared sleeping spaces with adult domestic workers also increase the risks of sexual abuse.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ ILO and NCCWD, *Legal Options and Policy Provisions for Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹²⁸ Sahar Zareen Bandial, “[New Protections for Domestic Workers in Pakistan](#)”, in *Arab News*, 23 January 2020.

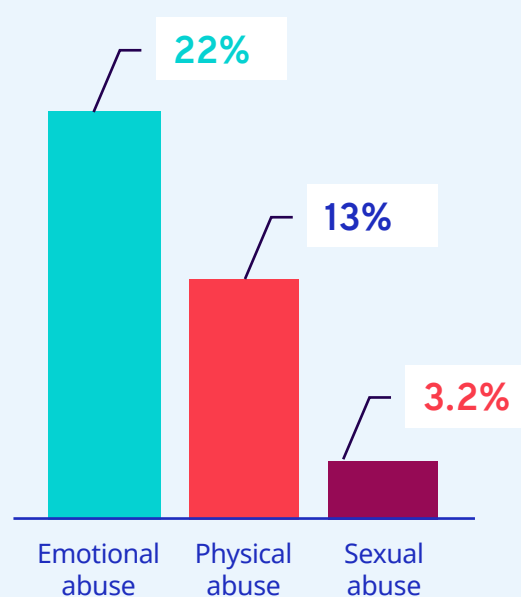
A study published in 2021 estimated that the rate of sexual violence against such children is 60 per cent.¹²⁹ An earlier study published in 1998 reported that 3.2 per cent (95 per cent confidence interval: 0.7–11.9) of children engaged in child labour in domestic work suffered sexual abuse at least once in their lifetime. A girl from Lahore reported that her friend became very sick after being raped by their employer.¹³⁰

Sexual abuse was not explicitly reported by the children or parents interviewed for this scoping study. This may be due to a **‘healthy worker effect’** in the selection of study participants.¹³¹ Nevertheless, interviewees did provide indirect clues about sexual violence. One parent in Sindh reported, *“I have heard about a 6-year-old girl. I don’t know where she worked. They did injustice with her, they deflowered her.”*

Parents frequently described working conditions as *“not good for children, especially girls”* or remarked that *“the world is cruel”* without giving specific examples. The key informants interviewed suggest that while extreme cases of rape and sodomy are reported, less violent crimes – such as touching or kissing – are largely unreported and ignored.

FIGURE 7.

Proportion of different types of abuse suffered by children engaged in child labour in domestic work in Sindh, 2017 (n = 63)



Source: Meesha Iqbal et al., “Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Child Labourers in Sindh, Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Study”, *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 26, No. 9 (2020), 1087–1096.

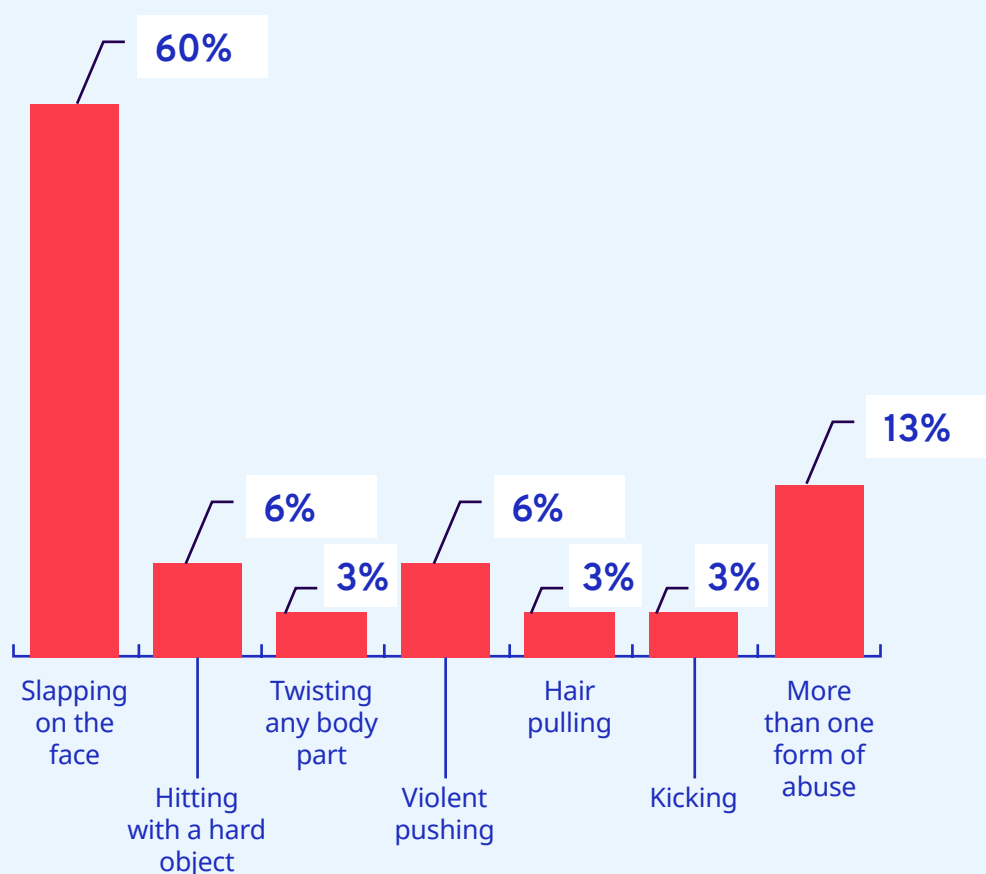
¹²⁹ Muhammad Abdul Ahad, Yvonne K. Parry and Eileen Willis, “The Prevalence and Impact of Maltreatment of Child Laborers in the Context of Four South Asian Countries: A Scoping Review”, *Child Abuse & Neglect* 117 (2021), 105052.

¹³⁰ Pureza P. Budd and Donna McIvor Joss, “Social Origins and Implications of Child Labor”, *Work* 10, No. 3 (1998), 279–291.

¹³¹ The ‘healthy worker effect’ is a type of selection bias or sampling bias. It typically occurs in occupational epidemiology studies when less healthy workers are more likely to reduce their workplace exposure. Thus, the kind of subjects that participate in a study, including by enrolling in a clinical trial, are not representative of the general population. Their inclusion in occupational epidemiology studies potentially masks an increased risk of the disease under study.

FIGURE 8.

Types of physical abuse among children engaged in child labour in domestic work in Sindh, 2016 (n = 212)



Source: Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, "Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

There have been many instances reported of the fatal abuse of children engaged in child labour in domestic work. Between January 2010 and June 2013, 41 cases of death among such children were reported in the media and by civil society organizations (CSOs). Nineteen of these children died due to torture.¹³² From January 2019 to May 2020, 51 incidents of violence against children engaged in child labour in domestic work were reported. Punjab's Child Protection and Welfare Bureau rescued 300 children engaged in this form of child labour in 2019–2020 after they suffered brutal violence perpetrated by their employers.¹³³

¹³² Verso Consulting, *Extending Social Security Coverage to Domestic Workers in the Province of Punjab – Implementation Framework*, 2021.

¹³³ Search for Justice, *Policy Brief: The Abuse and Exploitation of Children as Modern-day Slaves Cannot Continue to be Tolerated*, 2020.

In May 2020, an 8-year-old girl engaged in child labour in domestic work was so badly beaten for releasing the household's prized parrots from a cage that she died of her injuries.¹³⁴

4.1.5. Payment patterns

There are no formal payment mechanisms for children engaged in child labour in domestic work. This scoping study found a complete lack of contractual agreements between children and employers. It appears common for parents/guardians to receive their children's earnings, rather than the children themselves. The lack of written contracts means that these children depend entirely on the honesty and goodwill of employers regarding payment and conditions.¹³⁵ Research published in 2005 found that many children were not informed about the terms and conditions of their labour.¹³⁶ Research in 2016 found that parents received children's salaries in 64 per cent of cases,¹³⁷ while research in 2017 found that mothers received payments in 100 per cent of cases.¹³⁸ Delayed payment was found to be common, binding children further to their employers.¹³⁹

The interviews conducted for this study indicate that no formal job contracts exist for children engaged in child labour in domestic work. The employers, parents and children interviewed are not aware of contractual arrangements and appeared amazed by the notion. Job descriptions and salaries are promised verbally, and payments made in cash on a monthly basis, usually to the children's mothers. Many of the children interviewed are unaware of how much they are paid. Payments for the children interviewed range from 2,000 rupees for those engaged on a live-in basis in Multan, Punjab, to a maximum of 15,000 rupees per month in Jacobabad, Punjab.

Children who are involved part-time ('day-out') tend to be paid based on the number of chores they perform – ranging from 1,000 rupees to 3,500 rupees per month. Some are paid daily – between 50 and 100 rupees – however, this trend is not common among the interviewed sample. Children are rarely permitted to keep a portion of this money for themselves. Instead, parents use the money to pay rent, buy groceries and pay utility bills. Some employers give children a small amount of 'pocket money' to buy snacks and juice, as noted above, usually not more than 100 rupees.

There appears to be no trend of an annual increase in payments. One key informant highlighted the particular case of children engaged in child bonded labour in domestic work, who are never paid due to the vicious cycle of debt bondage.



If there is an overlap of bonded labour and domestic work, then obviously the children are offered as substitutes and therefore there's nothing paid to them, they are just paying off their debts forever.”

– Key informant, private non-profit sector

¹³⁴ Zofeen T. Ebrahim, “Saving the Children”, in *Dawn*, 29 July 2020.

¹³⁵ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, “Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey”, *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248; Verso Consulting, *Extending Social Security Coverage to Domestic Workers in the Province of Punjab – Implementation Framework*, 2021.

¹³⁸ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

¹³⁹ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

4.1.6. Time intensity

Working hours vary greatly among children engaged in child labour in domestic work, depending on whether they are engaged on a live-in ('day-in') or part-time ('day-out') basis. A 2004 study estimated that children engaged in child labour in domestic work had relatively short working hours, with 60 per cent working between two and four hours per day, and 8 per cent working for more than eight hours per day.¹⁴⁰ Other sources in 2008 and 2016 estimated that such children worked, on an average, between 7 and 10 hours per day.¹⁴¹ There is also evidence of children working long continuous shifts of up to 15 hours per day without rest – from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. – and having a day off only once a fortnight or once a month.¹⁴² A study in Karachi in 2016 found 95 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work worked overtime, 80 per cent had one day off per week, very few had two days off per week, and 18 per cent did not have any days off.¹⁴³ A 2005 study found that 60 per cent of boys and 40 per cent of girls engaged in child labour in domestic work on a live-in ('day-in') basis were granted a holiday once or twice a month, while 63 per cent of children had a holiday on special days, such as Eid.¹⁴⁴

The interviews held for this scoping study confirm the wide variation in working hours. Children engaged part-time ('day-out') report working for an average of 4 to 5 hours in each house. They generally live near their employers and may come to their homes twice a day to perform chores. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the average number of working hours for children engaged part-time is up to 9 to 10 hours per day. Children who go to school, on average, work for 2 to 3 hours per day. Children engaged on a live-in ('day-in') basis usually have one day off per week, although some have no days off each week. These children have no specified working hours, as noted above. They are on their toes day and night, required to be available for any emerging chores. Some of the employers interviewed claim children themselves do not want to visit their homes. However, this does not appear believable.



I work for 10 hours a day [...] play for 30 minutes, and after [that] I am back at work.”

– In-depth interview with a boy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Sometimes, it is on Sunday when baji gives [me time] off. Or sometimes it is given on a Saturday. And sometimes she gives [me the day] off on Monday.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh

¹⁴⁰ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹⁴¹ Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, “Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey”, *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248; Salman Bandeali et al., “Prevalence of Behavioural and Psychological Problems in Working Children”, *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 58, No. 6 (2008), 345–349.

¹⁴² Verso Consulting, *Extending Social Security Coverage to Domestic Workers in the Province of Punjab – Implementation Framework*, 2021.

¹⁴³ Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, “Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey”, *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

¹⁴⁴ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).



I do not get any [time] off at all.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Balochistan



In case of extreme sickness, I get leave, otherwise I perform my job regularly.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Balochistan



I go home after three or four months, for two days.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab



No matter how sick I am, they come and take us. They say even if you die, first wash our dishes then die. [...] This is what she [employer] says [...] no weekend, no Eid.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab



I come back [home] after one month for a single night.”

– In-depth interview with a boy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

► 4.2. Functional components of child labour in domestic work

4.2.1. Relationship with employers

There is limited information on the relationship between children engaged in child labour in domestic work, and their employers. Research published in 2005 records 46 per cent of children complaining about their employers’ strict behaviour.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

Research from 2004 presents evidence that the opposite may also occur – some children reported ‘healthy’ relationships with their employers (*bajis*), watching television shows with them, receiving good food and clothes, being sent home every two months, enjoying the city atmosphere and having their medical bills paid.¹⁴⁶ A 2016 study in Karachi found that most employers appreciated children’s ‘good performance’ (99 per cent), offered them good meals (88 per cent) and allowed them to use the toilet (90 per cent).¹⁴⁷ However, these cases may indicate a ‘healthy worker effect’, which hides the true nature of the relationship.

Most of the children interviewed for this scoping study reported cordial relations with *bajis* (employers). Some claimed to have stopped working for overly strict employers. However, these children generally appear to be scared of their employers; they worry about displeasing them by not performing chores ‘appropriately’.

4.2.2. Impact on school attendance, education, learning and skills

Child labour negatively affects school attendance. Research published between 2004 and 2017 gives different estimates of the proportion of children engaged in child labour in domestic work who were also enrolled in education – ranging from 6 to 33 per cent.¹⁴⁸ A study in 2005 only found evidence of 6 per cent of such children attending a formal or informal school, or *madrassa* (religious seminary).¹⁴⁹ In 2004, research found that 16 per cent of such children in Peshawar and 33 per cent in Islamabad had ever attended school.¹⁵⁰ A 2017 study in Karachi reported that 30 per cent attended school and 51 per cent had attended school at some point (n = 63).¹⁵¹

A study in 2016 reported that 21 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work were allowed to study at work.¹⁵² A child from Lahore in 2004 was quoted as saying that she had started studying Urdu with her employer.¹⁵³ Different studies present different estimates of children engaged in child labour in domestic work who were able to read and write, ranging from 50 per cent¹⁵⁴ to 27.5 per cent.¹⁵⁵ Reasons cited in 2017 for leaving school included child labour (22 per cent) or being forcibly withdrawn by parents (21 per cent), while 57 per cent gave no reason.¹⁵⁶ A lack of interest has also been identified as a reason for dropping out of education.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁶ ILO and NCCWD, *Legal Options and Policy Provisions for Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹⁴⁷ Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, “Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey”, *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

¹⁴⁸ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017; Meesha Iqbal et al., “Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Child Labourers in Sindh, Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Study”, *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 26, No. 9 (2020), 1087–1096; Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005); ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹⁴⁹ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

¹⁵⁰ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹⁵¹ Meesha Iqbal et al., “Violence and Abuse among Working Children in Urban and Suburban Areas of Lower Sindh, Pakistan”, *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 27, No. 5 (2021), 501–508.

¹⁵² Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, “Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey”, *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

¹⁵³ ILO and NCCWD, *Legal Options and Policy Provisions for Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹⁵⁴ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

¹⁵⁵ Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, “Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey”, *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

¹⁵⁶ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

¹⁵⁷ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

Research in 2021 quoted a girl saying that she dropped out because her school was not 'safe'.¹⁵⁸

The parents and employers interviewed for this scoping study reported the existence of free or inexpensive government schools within easy reach. However, some families cannot afford to pay any amount for their children's education, however small. Among the children interviewed, one group of children have never attended school and do not appear to understand its importance. A second group of children dropped out of public schools, usually due to poverty, and then became engaged in child labour in domestic work. These children miss their schools and want to pursue an education. They remain optimistic that they will resume their studies one day.

A third category of children continue to study while being engaged in child labour in domestic work. Most attend school in the morning, and work part-time in one or two houses in the evening. Their earnings are used to support their education, or to meet household expenses. Another group of children do not study, but their earnings are used to support the education of their siblings, usually their brothers. Thus, child labour in domestic work can enable education in some instances. The Naval Colony of Malir, Karachi, has made it compulsory for all children engaged in child labour to attend school, as noted above.

The employers interviewed support education in theory, but not necessarily in practice. Almost all of these employers believe that they are benefitting the children engaged in child labour in their homes by teaching them the alphabet and how to count. Some also teach them the Quran. However, employers are not prepared to support children's formal education. They appear to placate their guilt by teaching the children some basic numeracy and literacy skills. According to one key informant, employers in some parts of Punjab have children enrolled in schools with which they have good connections. Despite being enrolled, the children do not attend school; instead, they continue engaging in child labour in domestic work full-time.

4.2.3. Health impact

Child labour in domestic work can impact children's health, including their physical, mental and social well-being, as well as their nutritional status. Research in 2005 found that 20 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work were below the 20th percentile in terms of overall health.¹⁵⁹



I like to study. I am helpless. There was nothing to eat, I have to work.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab



I miss my school, I read my previous books sometimes.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh

¹⁵⁸ Meesha Iqbal et al., “Violence and Abuse among Working Children in Urban and Suburban Areas of Lower Sindh, Pakistan”, *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 27, No. 5 (2021), 501–508.

¹⁵⁹ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

Studies in 2016 and 2020 identified varying rates of stunting¹⁶⁰ among children engaged in child labour in domestic work – between 13 and 31 per cent – while 29 per cent of such children (95 per cent confidence interval: 18.7–41) were wasted, indicating high rates of acute malnutrition.¹⁶¹ Stunting appears positively associated with children’s age, as older children were found to be more chronically malnourished in 2016.¹⁶² In 2020, research estimated that 60 per cent of children involved in child labour in domestic work in Karachi (n = 63) were food-insecure despite eating 2.9 meals per day (standard deviation = 0.33).¹⁶³ Another study in 2017 found that 78 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work in Karachi ate less than their appetite demanded, 16 per cent had not eaten for a whole day in the past month, and 16 per cent had lost weight.¹⁶⁴



She is getting [a] good education with me [...] she has learned the names of all the body parts in English, as I teach my [2-year-old] son.”

– In-depth interview with an employer in Punjab

Research in 2004 found that children engaged on a part-time (‘day-out’) basis usually ate at home (67 per cent), while those who ate at an employer’s house (33 per cent) received the same food as the rest of the household, and were satisfied with the quality and quantity of food.¹⁶⁵ The same study reported that most children engaged in child labour in domestic work had clean nails, teeth and feet, healthy eyes, and good physical and mental health; moreover, 90 per cent had no history of disease.¹⁶⁶ In 2020, tap water or piped water was the source of drinking water for 62 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work in Karachi.¹⁶⁷

Child labour in domestic work’s impact on mental health has not been widely studied. Research in 2017 found that 11 per cent of children involved in Karachi suffered from depression.¹⁶⁸ The psychological impact of not living with their families, experiencing the class divide first-hand, and being overburdened with responsibilities must be immense for impressionable children.

¹⁶⁰ Stunting is a form of malnutrition used to refer to a child who is too short for his or her age. These children can suffer severe irreversible physical and cognitive damage that accompanies stunted growth. Stunting is the result of chronic or recurrent undernutrition, usually associated with poor socioeconomic conditions, poor maternal health and nutrition, frequent illness, and/or inappropriate infant and young child feeding and care in early life. A child is considered stunted when their z-score (also called a standard score) below -2 standard deviations from the median height-for-age determined by the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Child Growth Standards. See: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition> and <https://www.who.int/health-topics/malnutrition>

¹⁶¹ Meesha Iqbal et al., “Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Child Labourers in Sindh, Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Study”, *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 26, No. 9 (2020), 1087–1096; Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, “Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey”, *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

¹⁶² Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, “Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey”, *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

¹⁶³ Meesha Iqbal et al., “Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Child Labourers in Sindh, Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Study”, *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 26, No. 9 (2020), 1087–1096.

¹⁶⁴ Aga Khan University and WHO-EMRO, *Health and Social Assessment of Child Labourers in and around Karachi: An Area of Urgent Unmet Need for Action. The Child Labour Project 2017* (unpublished).

¹⁶⁵ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Meesha Iqbal et al., “Malnutrition and Food Insecurity in Child Labourers in Sindh, Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Study”, *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 26, No. 9 (2020), 1087–1096.

¹⁶⁸ Aga Khan University and WHO-EMRO, *Health and Social Assessment of Child Labourers in and around Karachi: An Area of Urgent Unmet Need for Action. The Child Labour Project 2017* (unpublished).

It is likely to cause a loss of confidence, feelings of low self-esteem, hopelessness, guilt, anxiety, depression, and/or aggression, which may provoke anti-social behaviour.¹⁶⁹

Most of the children interviewed for this scoping study feel that their health has been negatively affected by child labour in domestic work. Common problems include body aches, especially pain in their knees or legs, which appears to be associated with sweeping and mopping floors. They also frequently report tiredness and headaches, as well as sore throats and irritated eyes due to dusting. One boy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reported that his hands were excoriated by the low-quality cleaning powder he uses to wash cars.

The employers interviewed did not mention any negative health impacts. Some claim that children's health has improved at their homes. For instance, one employer in Punjab reported paying for medical treatment when a girl she engaged in child labour had scabies, ostensibly so that the infestation did not spread in her household.

The children interviewed live in poor conditions in their own homes. Food insecurity appears common across all provinces, and tea and *roti* (flat bread) are staple foods for the families interviewed.

4.2.4. Impact on future prospects

There is limited evidence of how child labour in domestic work affects children's future prospects. Girls involved appear to continue working for their employers until they marry. Research in 2004 found that 28 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work in Islamabad wanted to continue working, whereas 49 per cent wanted to work as well as study. Similarly, 16 per cent of such children in Peshawar wanted to continue being involved domestic work, while 59 per cent wanted to work and study.¹⁷⁰ The children interviewed for this scoping study have high aspirations. Some want to become doctors, pilots or be employed in government jobs. However, they are not optimistic about achieving these goals.



She feels pain in her knees [...she] cries and she asks her legs to be pressed all the time at night.”

– In-depth interview with a parent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



We wrap a bandage and make a tight knot around the knee, or [my] mother gives [me] a massage and wraps a dupatta [scarf] around it.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Balochistan



I feel very tense and not at ease because of too many tasks.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Balochistan

¹⁶⁹ Kishwar Enam, “Working Children”, in *Dawn*, 23 February 2021.

¹⁷⁰ ILO and NCCWD, *Study Report on Occupational Safety and Health of Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

4.2.5. Grievance mechanisms

The children and parents interviewed for this study feel helpless when children are mistreated by employers. None of them is aware of any mechanism, programme or organization they can turn to, nor are they aware that child labour in domestic work is illegal. Key informants noted that Child Protection Bureaux exist in each province, and the National Commission on the Rights of the Child has a dedicated complaint cell. This indicates the urgent need to raise awareness of these mechanisms among the general public, particularly among impoverished households and communities.

► 4.3. Pull factors for child labour in domestic work

4.3.1. Employers' perspectives

There is considerable demand for child labour in domestic work, sustained by the fact that children are considered obedient and submissive, particularly to threats, and can be paid very little.¹⁷¹ According to research in 2016, girls are preferred as they are regarded as more 'flexible' and 'easier to handle'.¹⁷² Many employers appear to believe that they are doing a 'favour' to the children they engage, and their families, by providing free food and accommodation.¹⁷³ In extreme cases, child labour in domestic work may take the form of bonded labour; children are only released from debt bondage when their parents or guardians pay off their debt.¹⁷⁴



When I bring fruit for my kids, then her share is included too. She is fit and healthy. There is no bad effect on her, it is for the best.”

– In-depth interview with an employer in Sindh



We cook food on alternate days [...] For 10 days a month, we have only roti and tea [...] for eight to 10 days a month, we do not get any food.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab



We do not get any lunch for 15 days in a month.”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh

¹⁷¹ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005); Pureza P. Budd and Donna McIvor Joss, “Social Origins and Implications of Child Labor”, *Work* 10, No. 3 (1998), 279–291; Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

¹⁷² Saima Zainab and Masood Kadir, “Nutritional Status and Physical Abuse among the Children Involved in Domestic Labour in Karachi Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Survey”, *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 66, No. 10 (2016), 1243–1248.

¹⁷³ Shakeeb Asrar, “‘Are We Not Humans?’ Pakistan’s Domestic Workers Confront Abuse”, in *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 August 2021.

¹⁷⁴ S. A. Gulzar, Samina Vertejee and Laila Pirani, “Child Labour: A Public Health Issue”, *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 59, No. 11 (2009), 778–781.



This [domestic work] is what I am going to do. None of our desires get fulfilled.

– In-depth interview with a girl in Sindh



Except for household chores, nothing will happen [in the future].”

– In-depth interview with a girl in Punjab

The interviews conducted for this study provide useful information on employers’ perspectives about child labour in domestic work, and affirm the huge demand for this form of child labour. The employers interviewed prefer to engage children, rather than adults, especially for babysitting their own children. They consider children to be more disciplined and obedient than adult domestic workers. They regard child labour in domestic work as the ‘ultimate consequence’ of poverty. Most believe it is ‘healthy’ for children to live in an environment that is ‘comfortable’, as the children’s own homes tend to lack electricity and other utilities. Employers claim that it is beneficial for these children to earn money and support their families. All of the employers interviewed reported that they are kind and generous to the children they engage. They spoke of giving the children fruit to eat, which their own parents cannot afford. As discussed above, employers also report teaching children about the Quran, as well as elementary English, Urdu or counting. However, these children remain deprived of formal education that could improve their prospects for decent work as adults.

4.3.2. Role of private recruitment agencies, online recruitment platforms and recruitment practices

There are no formal agreements/contracts for children engaged in child labour in domestic work in Pakistan, as discussed above. Arrangements are made informally by children’s parents or an intermediary – usually a family acquaintance – and the employer. Their work is not recorded in official job registers, leading to an underestimation of its magnitude and a lack of accountability with respect to employers.¹⁷⁵ There are no fixed payment structures for children engaged on a live-in basis.¹⁷⁶ Children engaged part-time (‘day-out’) are usually recruited by word-of-mouth and personal contacts. However, the stakeholders interviewed use the term ‘supply chains’ to describe the predicament of children engaged on a live-in basis, whereby they are recruited and ‘supplied’ to employers. The literature review offered no information on recruitment patterns. Key informants note that there are agencies which link adult domestic workers with employers in major cities. As workers are required to have an identity card, this prevents the recruitment of children. According to the key informants, these agencies do not play a significant role in the recruitment of children for child labour in domestic work.

¹⁷⁵ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

¹⁷⁶ Verso Consulting, *Extending Social Security Coverage to Domestic Workers in the Province of Punjab – Implementation Framework*, 2021.

Such children tend to be recruited more by word-of-mouth and informal supply chains, as noted above. This study reached out to recruitment agencies for their comments – such as Mauqa, Medifield, Doorstep and Khurram Agency in Karachi – but received no response.

► 4.4. Social development of children engaged in child labour in domestic work

4.4.1. Socially valuable activities

Play is a vital component of children's development and upbringing. A study in 2017 found that 36 per cent of children engaged in child labour in domestic work were allowed to play for 1 to 3 hours with their employers' children (not as part of their work), 35 per cent were not given any time to play and 29 per cent did not respond to the question.¹⁷⁷ The children interviewed for this scoping study report very little play time. One boy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa explained, *"I work for 10 hours in a day and play for 30 minutes."* Some children engaged on a live-in basis ('day-in') are expected to play with infants. However, this is part of babysitting, rather than a form of recreation.

4.4.2. Positive peer relations

Forming positive peer relations poses a challenge for children engaged in child labour in domestic work, especially those engaged on a live-in basis. A study in 2004 found that such children were not allowed to play with their employers' children,¹⁷⁸ although as noted above, a study in 2017 reported considerable instances of these children playing together. Research in 2019 highlights peer problems and problems of conduct as common behavioural issues among children engaged in child labour in domestic work.¹⁷⁹



They learn work quicker and they work quickly, compared to adults, because those who are older, they do not come under your influence. They don't listen to you as much. You can't say much to them."

– In-depth interview with an employer in Balochistan



No, never, she has never answered back [to me]."

– In-depth interview with an employer in Sindh



There are supply chains from rural to urban areas, and urban to urban supply chains."

– Key informant, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi

¹⁷⁷ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

¹⁷⁸ ILO and NCCWD, *Legal Options and Policy Provisions for Child Domestic Workers*, 2004.

¹⁷⁹ Abdalla Ibrahim et al., "Child Labor and Health: A Systematic Literature Review of the Impacts of Child Labor on Child's Health in Low- and Middle-income Countries", *Journal of Public Health* 41, No. 1 (2019), 18–26.

The interviews held for this study reveal that children engaged part-time ('day-out') have healthy peer relations with their neighbours, friends and families. However, this may indicate an inherent 'healthy worker effect' in the study sample. Thus, the real state of peer relations remains unclear.

► 4.5. Summary of meso level findings

Table 6. Summary of findings at the meso level

	Desk review	Stakeholder interviews
Structural components of work	<p>The working environment varies for children who are engaged in child labour in domestic work on a live-in ('day-in') or part-time ('day-out') basis. Research findings suggest that the former often endure harsh conditions – sleeping on floors, eating leftovers, wearing old clothes, living in isolation, rarely visiting home, and working for an average of 7 to 8 hours per day. However, there are also reports of happy children engaged in child labour in domestic work.</p> <p>Children engaged part-time ('day-out') tend to spend less time and have less contact with their employers, and usually have better living conditions.</p> <p>Common tasks they perform include dusting, cleaning, washing, ironing, washing dishes, sweeping and babysitting. They are often exposed to dust, defective irons, low quality detergents, etc. This aggravates health problems like asthma, as well as injuries like cuts, burns and bruises.</p>	<p>Children involved part-time ('day-out') tend not to be as concerned with their working environment as those engaged on a live-in basis. The latter often report sleeping on floors, eat the same food as their employers, and are generally happy with their conditions of work. This may be due to the 'healthy worker effect'.</p> <p>The tasks they perform include cleaning floors, washing dishes, ironing, dusting and babysitting. Injuries such as burns and cuts are common; less common serious injuries include electrocution/shocks. The parents interviewed blame children's carelessness for these injuries. The employers interviewed deny that injuries ever occur. All of the children interviewed have experienced some form of emotional abuse, such as scolding, shouting, punishment and humiliation. Slapping is also common.</p> <p>Payments are low, ranging from 2,000 to 15,000 rupees per month for children engaged on a live-in basis. Those engaged part-time are paid for the number of chores they perform, usually between 1,000 and 3,500 rupees per month. Working hours vary depending on whether children are engaged on a live-in or part-time basis, as well as their location. The former have no set hours; they are expected to be available 24/7.</p>

	Desk review	Stakeholder interviews
Structural components of work (continued)	Research indicates that verbal abuse is rampant, which may lead to behavioural problems, misconduct and psychological issues. Physical and sexual abuse has also been reported.	Children who are engaged part-time and attend school usually perform domestic work for 2 to 3 hours per day, while others do so for an average of 4 to 5 hours per day. However, some children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa report working for an average of 9 to 10 hours per day.
Functional components of work	<p>Relations between children engaged in child labour in domestic work and employers range from cordial to cruel. This form of child labour impacts children's education. Different sources offer different estimates of how many children are involved in some form of education, varying between 6 and 33 per cent.</p> <p>In terms of their health, research records rates of stunting of between 13 and 31 per cent among children engaged in child labour in domestic work. One study indicates found that 11 per cent suffered from depression.</p>	<p>The children interviewed worry about displeasing their employers. However, many also report cordial relations, for instance, watching television together. Most of the children interviewed have been forced to leave school to contribute to their household's income. Some work to support their own, or their siblings', education.</p> <p>Children's health appears to be negatively affected by child labour in domestic work. Common complaints include body aches, pain, sore throats, and in one instance, skin excoriation. Food insecurity is common among the households interviewed. Some children report that their families only cook food on alternate days, and that tea and <i>roti</i> (flat bread) are their staple diet.</p>
Pull factors	Children are often considered to be a 'cheap' and 'flexible' source of labour, who are 'easy to handle'. Formal agreements or contracts do not exist to define the nature and duration of work, or payment mechanisms.	The employers interviewed prefer to engage children, rather than adult domestic workers, as they are cheaper labour and easier to control. They are specifically preferred for babysitting.
Social development of children in child labour in domestic work	A 2004 study found that children engaged in child labour in domestic work were seldom allowed to play with their employers' children. However, another study in 2017 found that 36 per cent of children were allowed to play with their employers' children.	The children interviewed are allowed relatively little time to play or participate in socially healthy activities.

Chapter 5

Results: Macro level

► 5.1. Policy environment

5.1.1. International conventions, and national policy and legislative frameworks

Pakistan has signed eight international treaties directly related to labour rights, including the rights of children. It has also ratified 36 ILO Conventions, 30 of which are in force. Table 7 summarizes international agreements that are directly or indirectly related to child labour in domestic work.

Table 7. International conventions related to domestic child labour

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989
Article 32 of the Convention requires state parties to protect children from economic exploitation and from performing work which is detrimental to their physical and mental development. Any work which interferes with a child's education of the child should not be allowed. The minimum age for admission to employment should be established by state parties, with working hours and conditions of employment regulated by the state, and appropriate penalties and other sanctions in place for effective enforcement. Pakistan is a signatory of the Convention.
ILO Conventions and ratifications by Pakistan
Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
The Convention specifies that the minimum permissible age for work should not be less than 15 years old (Article 2(3)). A temporary lower minimum age of 14 years is permitted for developing countries (Article 2(4)). It explicitly prohibits hazardous work for children that may impact their health, safety or morals, and specifies that the minimum age for any form of hazardous work is 18 years old (Article 3). While the Convention does not explicitly discuss child labour in domestic work, it does not prohibit children from performing household chores as long as these do not interfere with their education and are not hazardous – including working hours that are too long for their age. Pakistan ratified the Convention in 2006.

Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

This Convention does not directly mention 'domestic labour'. It defines the worst forms of child labour as including slavery and practices similar to slavery – such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, and forced or compulsory labour, including the recruitment of children for use in armed conflict – as well as the commercial sexual exploitation of children. These also include “work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer”. Child labour in domestic work meets this conditions. Pakistan ratified the Convention in 2001.

Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)

This Convention addresses the effective abolition of child labour in domestic work (Article 3(2) (c)) and ensures the protection and promotion of the human rights of all domestic workers (Article 3(1)). It emphasizes that the minimum age for entering domestic work should not be less than the age specified by national laws (Article 4). Pakistan has not ratified yet ratified the Convention.

Pakistan's national legislative framework indirectly addresses child labour in domestic work, as highlighted in table 8.

Table 8. National legislative framework related to child labour

Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973

The Constitution prohibits children younger than 14 years old from being involved in work (Article 11).

It affirms that the state must provide free and compulsory education to all children aged 5 to 16 (Article 25-A), implying that the minimum age for employment should be 16 years old. Furthermore, the state is required to protect families and children (Article 35).

Pakistan Penal Code (Section 509)

Section 509 addresses sexual harassment, but does not address hidden forms of sexual violence, such as touching, kissing, oral sex, exhibitionism, voyeurism, etc.

The 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan, passed in 2010, devolved significant governance responsibility to the country's provincial governments. Table 9 lists the legislative frameworks in place to address child labour in Pakistan's provinces and in the federal capital. The boxes highlighted in green indicate frameworks that are closely related to child labour in domestic work.

Table 9. Sub-national policy framework related to child labour in Pakistan

Punjab	Sindh	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Balochistan	Islamabad Capital Territory
Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act, 2016	Sindh Prohibition of the Employment of Children Act, 2017	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prohibition of the Employment of Children Act, 2015	Balochistan Employment of Children (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2021	Employment of Children Act, 1991 <i>(The Act prohibits the employment of children under 14 years old in certain occupations, including child labour in domestic work)</i>
Punjab Domestic Workers Act, 2019	Sindh Children Act, 1955	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act, 2010	Factories Act, 1934	Factories Act, 1934
Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 Punjab Prohibition of Child Labour at Brick Kilns Act, 2016 Punjab Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Amendment Act, 2018	Sindh Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 2015	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bonded Labour System Abolition Act, 2015	Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992	Bonded Labour System (Abolition Act), 1992

Punjab	Sindh	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Balochistan	Islamabad Capital Territory
Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2014	Sindh Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2013	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act, 2017	Balochistan Compulsory Education Act, 2014	Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2012
Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act, 2004 Punjab Prohibition of Child Labour at Brick Kilns Act, 2016	Sindh Child Protection Authority Act, 2011	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Labour Policy, 2018	Balochistan Child Protection Act, 2016 West Pakistan Shops and Establishments Ordinance, 1969	West Pakistan Shops and Establishments Ordinance, 1969
Minimum Wages Ordinance, 1961*	Sindh Minimum Wages Act, 2015	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minimum Wages, Act 2013	Minimum Wages Ordinance, 1961*	Minimum Wages Ordinance, 1961(*)
Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act, 2020	Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act, 2020	Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act, 2020	Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act, 2020	Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act, 2020
Provincial Employees Social Security Ordinance (Section 55-A), 1965 <i>(The Ordinance requires an employer to provide health care, including maternity care, to full-time domestic workers)</i>	Sindh Employees' Social Security Act, 2016 (Section 59)	Provincial Employees Social Security Ordinance (Section 55-A), 1965	Provincial Employees Social Security Ordinance (Section 55-A), 1965	Provincial Employees Social Security Ordinance (Section 55-A), 1965

Note: The green boxes refer to specific laws that address child labour in domestic work.

(*) The Minimum Wages Ordinance of 1961 (applicable in Punjab, Balochistan and Islamabad Capital Territory) includes domestic workers in its definition of workers. However, the Government has not notified the minimum wages that apply to domestic workers under this law.

Overall, Pakistan's legal framework does not contain separate laws for regulating and discouraging child labour in domestic work. Punjab is the only province that prohibits child labour in domestic work, through the Punjab Domestic Workers Act of 2019. The phenomenon can thrive in an environment that does not recognize domestic work as 'real work', and lacks effectively implemented laws to curb child labour in domestic work.

Punjab Domestic Workers Act, 2019

The Punjab Domestic Workers Act of 2019 establishes 15 as the minimum age for employment in the province. A child over the age of 15, but under 18 years old, may only be employed for 'light work'. Light work is defined as activities which do not negatively impact a child's health, security and education. This also means that children who are over the age of 15 may be engaged in part-time work until they complete their compulsory education.¹⁸⁰ The Punjab Domestic Workers Act requires domestic workers to have an employment contract. A copy of the contract must be forwarded to the labour inspector of the area in which the worker is employed. It also mandates the registration of domestic workers with the Punjab Employees' Social Security Institution (PESSI). A worker cannot be required to perform work which is not specified in their contract. The termination of employment is subject to one month's prior notice in writing by either party, or payment in lieu of a notice.¹⁸¹

The Act imposes an obligation on the employer to provide dignified and safe working conditions and decent accommodation for domestic workers. However, it does not specify what standards employers must meet to fulfil these obligations. Domestic workers must be provided with medical care, compensation for accidents, disability payments and survivor pensions in line with the provisions of the Punjab Social Security Ordinance of 1965. Domestic workers are entitled to a weekly rest day, in addition to 8 days of sick leave, 6 weeks of maternity leave, and 10 public holidays per year. Sick leave, if not taken during a year, can be carried forward to the next year. However, total accumulated sick leave cannot exceed 16 days. Domestic workers are eligible for their full wages during all these leave days/holidays. As of early 2021, only 14,717 domestic workers were registered with the Punjab Employees' Social Security Institution.¹⁸²

Employment of Children Act, 1991

On 30 July 2020, Pakistan outlawed 'child domestic labour' (CDL) by proscribing it under the Child Employment Act of 1991 through a Gazette notification. The notification only applies to Islamabad Capital Territory. However, Pakistan's provinces have yet to adopt the amendment through a simple Provincial Assembly resolution.¹⁸³ The interviews conducted for this study also highlight the lack of alignment in Pakistan's legislation on child labour. While the Constitution sets the age for the completion of compulsory education at 16, other laws prohibit child labour performed by anyone under the age of 14. The interviews emphasize the need to streamline laws in Pakistan. They note that, despite gaps, legislation does exist; the challenge lies in the adoption and enforcement of laws, to translate them into practice. Despite the existing legal framework, government budgets do not reflect a drive to eliminate of child labour in domestic work.

¹⁸⁰ Paycheck.pk, "Domestic Workers in Pakistan".

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² ILO, *Achieving the SDGs and ending poverty through universal social protection in Pakistan*, 2021.

¹⁸³ SPARC, *The State of Pakistan's Children 2020: Child Labour*, 2020.

5.1.2. Frameworks, programmes and interventions

Several programmes, policy frameworks and interventions have been implemented to address child labour in Pakistan, including in domestic work. As discussed above, the country's only Child Labour Survey was conducted in 1996. Pakistan's second Child Labour Survey, launched in 2019, is still underway in most of the country in 2022. The survey was completed, and a report launched, in Gilgit-Baltistan in October 2021, and Punjab's report will be launched in late June 2022. The lack of data on child labour suggests a lack of political will in recent decades to address the phenomenon.

Pakistan established a Task Force in 1998 to combat child labour, and formulated a National Action Plan and Policy on Child Labour in 2000. The National Action Plan aims to prohibit, restrict and regulate child labour with the eventual goal of eliminating the phenomenon. It lays out 14 key strategies and actions, including:

- harmonizing efforts between government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors;
- promoting research on child labour issues;
- developing non-formal education for children engaged in child labour;
- providing microcredit for these children's families; and
- conducting national surveys on child labour.

The National Action Plan also addresses child trafficking and outlines key objectives for its elimination. In 2002, the Government, in collaboration with the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC), launched a time-bound programme for the elimination of hazardous forms of child labour.¹⁸⁴ The first phase of the programme was launched in 2002 and lasted for a year, followed by a full-fledged programme implemented from 2004 to 2008. In 2004, under the *Tawana* Pakistan Project (TPP), the Government of Punjab initiated education sector reforms. Girls who attended school regularly received free textbooks and scholarships of 200 rupees.¹⁸⁵ Since 1995, Pakistan *Bait-ul-Mal* has been implementing a programme to address the exploitation and abuse of children involved in child labour by establishing protection and rehabilitation centres, paired with financial support to enable disadvantaged families to send their children to school.¹⁸⁶ Helplines and *Khidmat* ATM Cards provide financial assistance for children's education to discourage child labour.¹⁸⁷ It is important to note that, to date, the Supreme Court of Pakistan has taken suo motu notice of only one case of maltreatment related to child labour, in 2017.¹⁸⁸

The interviews conducted for this scoping study reveal that the non-profit private sector (including civil society) is actively pushing for the elimination of child labour. However, their efforts are usually donor-driven, involve limited funds and their reach is restricted to a few pockets of society. Efforts to end child labour in general, and child labour in domestic work specifically, focus on implementing the age for the completion of compulsory education – 16 years of old, as specified by the Constitution.

¹⁸⁴ Asaad Ahmed Nafees et al., "Situation Analysis of Child Labour in Karachi, Pakistan: A Qualitative Study", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 62, No. 10 (2012), 1075–1082.

¹⁸⁵ Sajjad Akhtar and Saadiya Razzaq, *Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan: Overview, Issues and Testable Hypothesis* (CRPRID, 2005).

¹⁸⁶ SPARC, *The State of Pakistan's Children 2020: Child Labour*, 2020.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ National Commission for Human Rights, *Pakistan Annual Report 2017*, 2017.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works with a number of NGOs – such as *Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi*, SPARC, PILER and Champions, among others – to promote girls' education and, indirectly, reduce child labour. However, such initiatives tend to be fairly short-term. Working with UNICEF, *Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi* has provided education to 70,000 girls nationwide in the past decade. They believe that many of these girls would have become engaged in child labour, including in domestic work, had it not been for this support. While these efforts are commendable, they involves a relatively small number of children compared to the 12 million engaged in child labour nationwide (according to estimates from 2016).¹⁸⁹ The *Aawaz II* project has also run successful campaigns to raise public awareness of child labour in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Public sector efforts have been important, but fragmented. Key government institutions include the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR), the National Commission of Rights of Child, the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, and provincial Child Protection Bureaux. The Ministry of Human Rights is mandated to protect and promote human rights across Pakistan; therefore, child labour in domestic work falls within its mandate. The Ministry has banned domestic child labour in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). According to one key informant, steps taken to implement the ban include the sensitization of the police, efforts by the Department of Labour, communication materials and awareness raising campaigns, among other measures. Pakistan *Bait-ul-Mal*, as discussed above, has established 159 centres for the rehabilitation of children engaged in child labour, which provide free education and stipends. More than 17,000 children are enrolled in these centres as of 2022.¹⁹⁰



The Inspectors-General [of the] Police have been requested to sensitize their officers at different tiers [...] The Directorate of Labour, [the] ICT administration being the focal department at the ICT level, has been requested [...] to lead] its implementation. [...] Information, education and communication material has been developed and disseminated among the ICT police stations [...] Various awareness sessions with community workers have been conducted at the ICT level on the issue of child abuse, including child domestic labour and these are ongoing [...] MoHR in collaboration with UNICEF launched the National Child Labour Survey in 2019, which will be completed in 2022. The survey includes information about child domestic labour.”

– Key informant, Ministry of Human Rights

¹⁸⁹ Rizwana, Naqvi, “[The Invisible Workers](#)”, in *Dawn*, 12 June 2016.

¹⁹⁰ According to Pakistan *Bait-ul-Mal*'s website: <http://www.pbm.gov.pk/ncrcl.html?ldnhojjsrzfkeplw?skbjzfbjzpoarpv>

According to a key informant interviewed for this study, more than 5,000 children have passed their examinations, 4,500 of whom have been admitted to government schools to pursue higher education.

Another key informant noted that approximately 30 per cent of poor people in Pakistan are covered by social protection. The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) provides unconditional transfers to women in the country's poorest households. Budgetary allocations for the BISP increased from 102 billion rupees in FY2016 to 180 billion rupees in FY2020. Children from the country's poorest families are benefitting from these allocations, which contribute to reducing child labour. Pakistan's flagship national social protection programme, *Ehsaas*, includes a component specifically targeting workers, known as *Mazdoor ka Ehsaas*. As part of this initiative, a Labour Expert Group is identifying ways to formalize Pakistan's informal workers.

Punjab has launched a door-to-door campaign in selected districts to identify and register domestic workers, with a view to enabling their access to social protection. The stakeholders interviewed for this study also highlighted promising efforts by provincial Child Protection and Welfare Bureaux. Overall, the stakeholders consider that public sector efforts are *"not ideal, but desirable."* However, they consider that the lack of multi-sectoral collaboration among actors is a major challenge. Another concern raised by the stakeholders is a lack of political will to end child labour. Key informants note that the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic was remarkable, proving that Pakistan has the capacity to deal with complex challenges as long as political will exists. However, child labour appears to be low down on the Government's agenda, enabling it to continue nationwide. Key informants also regard the lack of sustainability of existing programmes as a challenge. While NGOs have been proactive in their initiatives to address child labour, as noted above, these initiatives are not government-owned, and as a result, they are often not sustainable.

One key informant, representing Sahil – an NGO that combats physical and sexual violence against children – pointed out that child labour is not a high priority because Pakistan faces so many urgent challenges, running the gamut from national debt to ensuring that people have enough to eat. In general, key informants do not believe that conditions will change substantively, at least in the next decade, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn.



They [Child Protection and Welfare Bureaux] do a good job [...] They take the children and rehabilitate them [...] put them through education, [...]and develop] skills [...] and they try and do some rehabilitation and repatriation."

– Key informant, private non-profit sector



There are capacity issues and there are priority issues in it [the Government] too [...] and all organizations are working in silos."

– Key informant, National Commission on the Rights of the Child

Their effects are likely to make it harder to enrol all of Pakistan's children in compulsory education and eliminate child labour, including in domestic work.

5.1.3. Enforcement and monitoring mechanisms

Pakistan lacks strong, integrated enforcement mechanisms for legislative and policy frameworks on child labour. The Government has authorized several federal, provincial and district level bodies to take action against child labour. These include the police, provincial labour inspectors, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the Inter-Agency Task Force, labour courts, District Vigilance Committees, Child Protection Units in the provinces, the Balochistan Child Protection Commission, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission, the Punjab Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, and the Sindh Child Protection Authority.¹⁹¹ Although actors are specified for the implementation of frameworks, enforcement mechanisms remain fragile.

Punjab is the only province that has banned child labour in domestic work for anyone under the age of 15. As of early 2021, the Government of Punjab had registered 14,717 domestic workers,¹⁹² far behind their target of 50,000. This indicates the difficulties involved in implementation. Most workers are still hired informally with no limits on their working hours.¹⁹³ It is worth noting that many workers do not want to register with the Punjab Employees Social Security Institution and become part of the formal workforce, as they do not wish to be 'restricted' by being under contract to one household, and often do not understand the benefits of formal work.¹⁹⁴ These findings need to be interpreted with caution, as they may not be representative of domestic workers in general. Punjab also lacks a system to monitor the minimum wage rate of domestic workers.¹⁹⁵ Available literature suggests that there is no enforcement or monitoring data available on child labour.¹⁹⁶

According to one stakeholder interviewed for this study, it is difficult to implement laws and policies because they are not formulated using a bottom-up approach. Laws are developed through a top-down approach; as such, they do not benefit from community engagement and participation. This is also the case for policies related to child labour in domestic work. Policy implementation remains challenging partly due to a lack of political will, as well as communities' widespread acceptance of domestic work, including child labour in domestic work. A lack of technical capacity is another reason for the limited enforcement of laws and programmes. While different sectors, organizations and government ministries are involved in combatting child labour, they lack a coherent vision or roadmap. Roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined, making it difficult for stakeholders to understand what they are meant to do. Short-term projects are undertaken to 'show' that child labour is being addressed, but without a long-term, sustainable impact.

5.1.4. Accountability mechanisms

There is a lack of accountability for combatting child labour in Pakistan. Violence comes to light only in extreme cases, when a child is killed or subjected to gruesome torture, leading to media reporting.

¹⁹¹ SPARC, *The State of Pakistan's Children 2020: Child Labour*, 2020.

¹⁹² ILO, *Achieving the SDGs and ending poverty through universal social protection in Pakistan*, 2021.

¹⁹³ Shakeeb Asrar, "'Are We Not Humans?' Pakistan's Domestic Workers Confront Abuse", in *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 August 2021.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Commonwealth Foundation, *Need Gap Analysis of Child Domestic Labour in Pakistan*, 2017.

¹⁹⁶ S. A. Gulzar, Samina Vertejee and Laila Pirani, "Child Labour: A Public Health Issue", *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association* 59, No. 11 (2009), 778-781.

The Punjab Domestic Workers Act of 2019 stipulates that failure to abide by the law will lead, upon conviction, to a fine or imprisonment, which can be of up to one month if the employer has engaged a child under the age of 12. Engaging a child under the age of 15 involves a minimum fine of 10,000 rupees, and up to 50,000 rupees. As complaints are not usually filed, except in cases of extreme abuse, many cases go unnoticed and unpunished.¹⁹⁷ Nonetheless, reporting has increased in recent years. In 2003 and 2004, only two or three cases of sexual abuse were reported; as of 2021, over 100 cases are reported annually.¹⁹⁸

As a stakeholder interviewed for this study notes, a complaint cell exists in each province for the protection of child rights. The mechanism allows people to register complaints of injustice, which legal advisors are required to follow up. The NCRC representative indicated that around 100 complaints were received in the past six months. However, no specific complaints about child labour in domestic work were mentioned.

► 5.2. Social context: Availability, accessibility and effectiveness of social protection measures

As discussed above, Punjab is the only province that has banned child labour in domestic work through the Punjab Domestic Workers Act of 2019. Nevertheless, the Act does not provide adequate social protection measures for children. While it prohibits child labour in domestic work, it does not but specify rehabilitation measures. The Act seeks to expand social security protection coverage for domestic workers by establishing a Domestic Workers Welfare Fund to finance, among other expenditures, the payment of sickness benefits, medical care during illness, injury benefits, disablement pensions and maternity benefits for domestic workers.

¹⁹⁷ Verso Consulting, *Extending Social Security Coverage to Domestic Workers in the Province of Punjab – Implementation Framework*, 2021.

¹⁹⁸ Meesha Iqbal et al., “Violence and Abuse among Working Children in Urban and Suburban Areas of Lower Sindh, Pakistan”, *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal – La revue de santé de la Méditerranée orientale – al-Majallah al-sihhiyah li-sharq al-mutawassit* 27, No. 5 (2021), 501–508.



Implementation of Employment of Children Act, or any relevant laws would be done through the labour inspectors [...] All the labour inspectors are there [...]but] they do not have any powers [...] They cannot go into peoples’ houses to monitor child labour in domestic work. So this is a very big gap and then there are issues of capacity.”

– Key informant, National Commission on the Rights of the Child



Awareness about domestic child labour, after Taiba and some other cases, is now increasing.”

– Key informant, SPARC

It is unclear whether the fund – largely financed through government grants and loans – will be sustainable without the contributions of employers and workers. Moreover, a Dispute Resolution Committee responsible for addressing domestic workers' grievances has not yet been notified. It is also important to ask whether workers will file cases against their employers, upon whom they may be heavily dependent, financially or otherwise, due to the asymmetrical power structures involved in domestic work.¹⁹⁹

The stakeholders interviewed note that Pakistan has a range of social protection measures which provide essential, but fragmented, support to communities in need. These include, but are not limited to, *Zakat*, *Ushr*, the *Ehsaas* programme, Pakistan *Bait-ul-Mal*, the *Waseela-e-Taleem* programme for primary education, the Benazir Income Support Programme, the Child Protection and Welfare Fund, Departments of Education, *Auqaf*, the Domestic Workers' Welfare Fund, and the Destitute and Neglected Children's Welfare Fund. These have components that directly or indirectly work towards the elimination of child labour in domestic work by providing some components of social protection. However, none of them addresses child labour in domestic work holistically. The stakeholders interviewed note that communities and the general public are often not aware of these programmes. As such, they are under-utilized by those most in need.

► 5.3. Role of social media

Social media has played an integral role in raising awareness of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan. It has brought to light specific extreme cases of violence, grabbing the attention of communities and stakeholders, and underscoring how dangerous the phenomenon is. The media can and must continue to play a central role in sensitizing stakeholders, communities and the general public on the need to end child labour in domestic work.

¹⁹⁹ Sahar Zareen Bandial, "New Protections for Domestic Workers in Pakistan", in *Arab News*, 23 January 2020.



In rural areas, it ends up [that] those children are put in agriculture, or girls are put in domestic child labour, especially if they are somewhere near to urban settlements [...] from where they are trafficked [...] There are no instruments for protecting kids. They are always, always at risk. And sadly, [they are] often placed by their parents or their aunts and uncles or somebody they know [in child labour]."

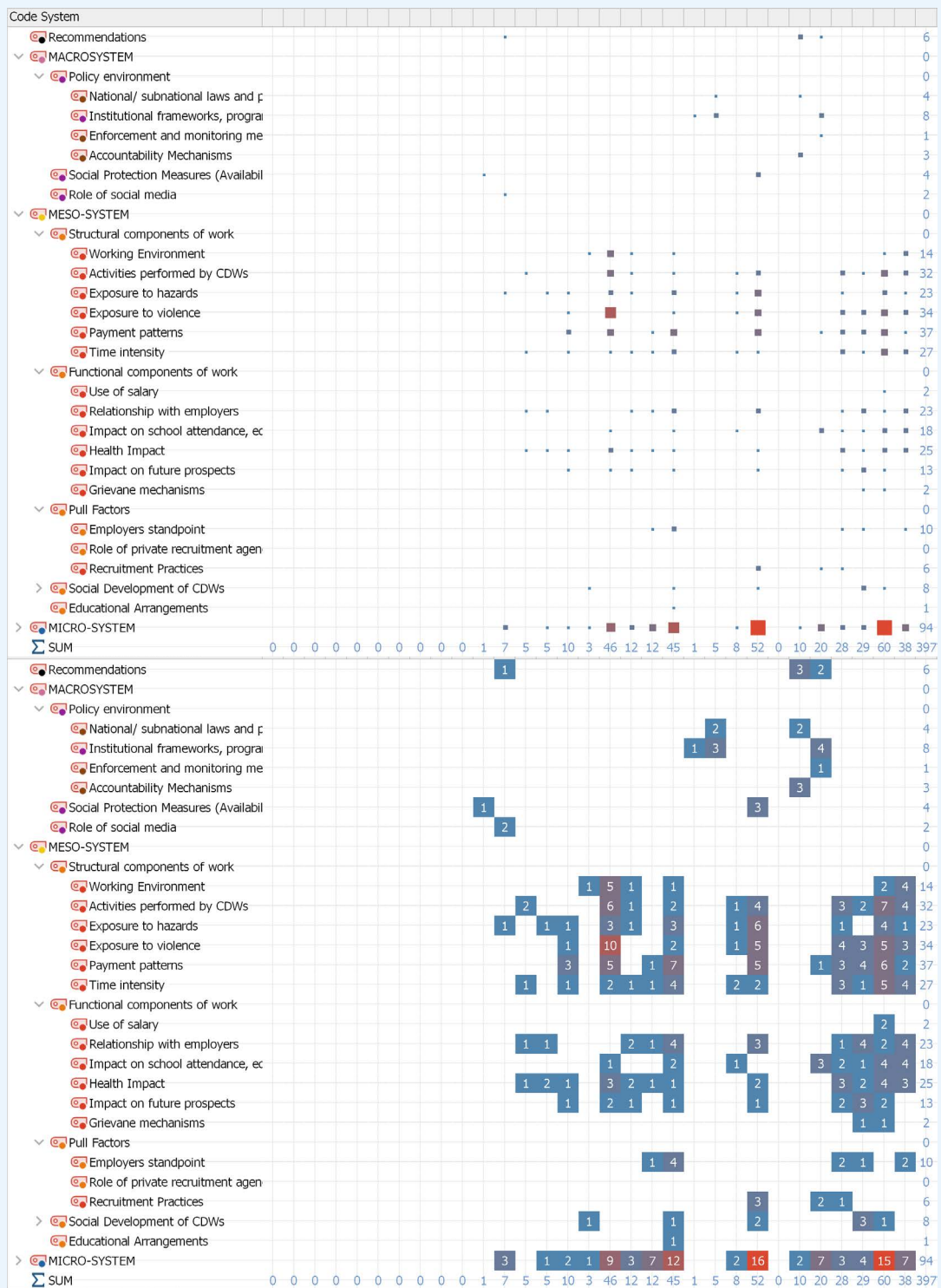
– Key informant, private non-profit sector



[The] media is a powerful tool of the time to create awareness among [the] masses and influence them in [terms of] combatting social problems/evils including child domestic labour."

– Key informant, Ministry of Human Rights

Themes, sub-themes and codes



Chapter 6

Data synthesis and discussion

► 6.1. Micro system

No recent estimates exist on child labour in domestic work in Pakistan. In 2004, the ILO estimated that 264,000 children in the country were engaged in child labour in domestic work.²⁰⁰ The 1996 Child Labour Survey found that around 8 per cent of all children engaged in child labour were involved in domestic work, with significant variations across provinces – from an estimated 10 per cent each in Punjab and Sindh, to 7 per cent in Balochistan and under 3.8 per cent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.²⁰¹ However, this present scoping study suggests that existing data under-estimates the true magnitude of the phenomenon due to its hidden nature. An estimated 22.8 million children in Pakistan were out of school before the COVID-19 pandemic,²⁰² which gives an indirect clue to the magnitude of child labour in domestic work. Girls are more likely to be involved in this form of child labour, while boys tend to be engaged in automobile workshops, garages and manufacturing industries. Gender discrimination is a factor in child labour in domestic work; this study finds evidence of girls being engaged in this form of child labour to support their brothers' education.

Parents usually push children into child labour in domestic work in order to support household expenses. In many cases, the fathers of these children are not households' primary breadwinner; either because they have died, left their family, or suffer from illness. Some cases of a '**poverty disease trap**' are reported, whereby children are engaged in child labour in domestic work to bear the medical expenses of a chronically ill family member. Payments for this form of child labour tend to be very low. In some parts of Punjab, girls engaged in child labour in domestic work are not paid on a monthly basis; instead, their parents receive these earnings as a lump sum when their daughter marries. As a result, children and their families are bound to employers for years.

Poverty does not appear to be the only factor pushing children into child labour in domestic work. A lack of awareness among families, and widespread social acceptability, also play key roles in the phenomenon. Many parents have adjusted to child labour as a reality of life, considering it the only available option for survival.

²⁰⁰ Shakeeb Asrar, "'Are We Not Humans?' Pakistan's Domestic Workers Confront Abuse", in *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 August 2021.

²⁰¹ Pakistan, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, and ILO-IPEC, *Summary Results of Child Labour Survey in Pakistan (1996)*, 1996.

²⁰² UNICEF, *UNICEF Pakistan Annual Report 2020*, 2020.

While parents tend to consider education important in theory, most do not act on this belief in practice. Children are made to believe that it is their responsibility to be 'useful' by contributing to household earnings. As many are engaged in child labour from a very early age, it is difficult for them to imagine a life without it.

The employers interviewed regard child labour in domestic work in a very positive light. This may be due to the 'Hawthorne effect' – whereby individuals modify their behaviour in response to their awareness of being observed. They report that the children involved live in more 'comfortable' surroundings, eat better food, learn new skills and earn money to support their families. As discussed above, the Naval Colony in Karachi has regularized work and earnings – albeit without specifically excluding children under 15 years old, or defining the number of working hours – and made school attendance mandatory for children engaged in child labour.

► 6.2. Meso system

The working environment for children engaged in child labour in domestic work ranges from cordial to oppressive. Living arrangements may be more comfortable than in children's own homes. However, the pressure of performing several chores and long working hours are detrimental, and not in line with the minimum standards set by ILO Conventions.

The employers interviewed express a preference for children rather than adult domestic workers, due to their 'obedience' and the fact that their behaviour can be more easily moulded to the employer's wishes. This raises questions about how children are being trained and treated. While injuries are frequently reported by children, they are denied entirely by the employers interviewed. This suggests the existence of an '**information bias**'.²⁰³ Parents tend to blame children's 'carelessness' for their injuries. This may be due to a hidden element of guilt and '**wish bias**'.²⁰⁴ among parents, leading them to blame their children, rather than themselves, for the harmful consequences of child labour in domestic work.

Many of the children interviewed have never been to school. Their parents believe that it is preferable for them to be engaged in child labour, rather than remaining 'idly' at home. This reflects problematic mindsets, social norms, illiteracy and a lack of awareness among communities, all of which warrant urgent attention. There is a need to reach out to disadvantaged families and offer them counselling on the importance of education and the harmful effects of child labour in domestic work. Many other children interviewed have attended school in the past, but dropped out due to poverty. These families require financial support from the Government until they can lift themselves out of poverty. Some of the children interviewed attend school and engage in child labour in domestic work simultaneously. They tend to have a more positive outlook on life and their future. However, these children also need encouragement, motivation and support to continue their education.

²⁰³ Information bias means a systematic error in the information gathered in a study.

²⁰⁴ Wish bias means a systematic error introduced into the study by the tendency of the participants to fit data or other information into a personal scheme of how they believe things ought to be.

Light work, as defined by ILO Conventions, needs to be clarified in the context of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan. It is vital to define what chores may be involved in light work, the duration of such work, and age-appropriate tasks and their durations. Defining these parameters at the sub-national level will help to identify children involved in permissible light work, and those engaged in child labour beyond these prescribed limits.

► 6.3. Macro system

There are gaps and fragmentation in the policy environment for the elimination of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan, with variations across provinces. The country has yet to ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). Among the provinces, Punjab has achieved a milestone with the Punjab Domestic Workers Act of 2019. However, the positive impact of this law has yet to be seen.

Pakistan's policies on compulsory education and child labour are not entirely aligned. While the age of 16 is the age established by the Constitution for the completion of compulsory education, engaging children as young as 14 years old in work is permitted. Pakistan's second ever Child Labour Survey was launched in 2019 and remains ongoing in much of the country in 2022. This highlights a number of challenges, including a lack of political will and the limited importance accorded to ending the phenomenon. While a range of frameworks, programmes and interventions have been designed and implemented in Pakistan, their sustainability is unclear. Solutions to child labour tend not focus on building the capacity of families to survive and thrive; thus, responses are often short-sighted. Moreover, policies and programmes are usually developed using a top-down approach that involves limited community engagement and participation. Peoples' voices need to be reflected in policies and programmes to enhance their acceptability.

The general public, and especially disadvantaged families, lack awareness of how harmful child labour is. They also lack awareness of available social protection measures, limiting their potential to reach those most in need. Weak enforcement mechanisms and accountability are another challenge, linked to a lack of technical capacity in the public sector, a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities, and the need for greater political will. Success stories of reducing child labour exist across the globe – by using 'smart' measures rather than 'expensive' ones. Similar initiatives could be implemented in Pakistan by addressing the phenomenon strategically.

The table below presents a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the situation of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan.

Table 10. SWOT analysis of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>More attention is being paid to child labour in domestic work due to recent media/social media reports highlighting extreme cases of abuse.</p> <p>The Punjab Domestic Workers Act of 2019 has been embraced, at least on paper.</p>	<p>There is a lack of alignment between legal frameworks on child labour and frameworks on compulsory education.</p> <p>Pakistan lacks monitoring and accountability mechanisms to end child labour, including in domestic work. Labour inspectors lack the authority and capacity to address the phenomenon effectively.</p> <p>There is a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of different departments that are directly or indirectly involved in ending child labour in domestic work.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Advocacy on the elimination of sexual violence is ongoing at the federal and provincial levels. Child labour in domestic work should be tied to such advocacy in order to capitalize on this window of opportunity.</p> <p>If Pakistan were to ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), this would offer tangible opportunities for ending child labour in domestic work.</p> <p>The Punjab Domestic Workers Act of 2019 mandates the registration of domestic workers with the Punjab Employees' Social Security Institution. This model should be followed by Pakistan's other provinces.</p>	<p>Anecdotal evidence suggests that child labour in domestic work may increase due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including a deteriorating financial and economic situation.</p> <p>There is a lack of political will to immediately end child labour in domestic work.</p> <p>Pakistan lacks multi-sectoral collaboration and a 'whole-of-government' approach to implementing policies and programmes on compulsory education and ending child labour.</p>

Chapter 7

Conclusions and recommendations

Child labour in domestic work is widespread across Pakistan. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the crisis in Afghanistan are likely to increase the incidence of child labour in Pakistan. Intergenerational cycles of poverty make it especially difficult to end the phenomenon. Affected families require assistance to lift themselves out of poverty and educate their children. This chapter provides context-specific recommendations to end child labour in domestic work in the country.

► 7.1. Reliable data

If you can't measure it, you can't improve it. As Pakistan's last Child Labour Survey was conducted more than two decades ago, the country lacks up-to-date, statistically representative data on child labour nationwide. The ongoing Child Labour Survey, launched in 2019, will shed light on the prevalence and characteristics of the phenomenon. However, child labour in domestic work needs to be looked at as a specific form of child labour by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The **Child Labour Survey** needs to be completed and its data stratified by dimensions including age, gender, ethnicity, residence, income and migration status, among others.

Moreover, labour surveys in Pakistan in general should **disaggregate data** on children under 10-years-old and those between 10 and 15-years-old to provide reliable estimates at the national and sub-national levels.

Data should also be collected on children's working and living conditions, including working time, rest periods, night work, occupational safety and health considerations. The ILO could collaborate with the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics as a technical partner to support data collection and analysis. Reliable data is vital to design and implement targeted, evidence-based interventions.

In addition to generating data, **implementation research** should be carried out to study, understand and address bottlenecks in the implementation of existing policies, programmes and interventions.

► 7.2. Policy direction

Pakistan requires a **clearly articulated vision laid out in a strategic plan or roadmap**, with national and sub-national targets and objectives, to eliminate child labour in domestic work.

A **stakeholder analysis** should be conducted to determine and understand the roles, power, authority and interests of different actors involved in eliminating or sustaining child labour. This should be followed by a **stakeholder engagement exercise**, bringing together all relevant actors at the national and sub-national levels. Potential actors include, but are not limited, to the Ministry of Human Rights, the National Commission on the Rights of the Child, the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division, the ILO, the media, and federal and provincial police departments.

The stakeholder engagement workshop should devise a **strategic plan or roadmap** for the elimination of child labour in domestic work:

- This strategic plan/roadmap should clearly and explicitly outline the roles, positions and responsibilities of each stakeholder – from the public sector and the private non-profit sector, including civil society – reflected in actionable objectives, and include well-defined accountability mechanisms.
- The strategic plan/roadmap must include the engagement of the private non-profit sector, including civil society, particularly given CSOs' role in advocating for the elimination of child labour, as well as their capacity to reach out to marginalized groups. Their technical expertise should be leveraged.
- The strategic plan/roadmap should be translated into **operational plans** for each province and administrative area.

► 7.3. Regularizing work

Light work needs to be defined in the context of child labour in domestic work. The details of the chores that are included/not included in light work should be explicitly stated and included in the strategic plan/roadmap mentioned above. Additionally, the strategic plan/roadmap should clearly state that:

- No child under the age of 15 should be involved in domestic work, including light work.
- No children, irrespective of their age, should be involved in child labour in domestic work which is likely to jeopardize their education, health, safety or morals.
- No children, irrespective of their age, should be in a situation similar to slavery in domestic work – such as forced labour, trafficking or debt bondage, etc.
- The rights of children between 15 and 17 years old who are involved in light work in domestic settings should be protected.

► 7.4. Building an effective monitoring system

An effective **monitoring system** needs to be created at the provincial level to identify children under the age of 15 who are engaged in child labour in domestic work. The system should involve labour inspectors, the police, social workers, educators and local NGOs.

The **technical capacity of labour inspectors** must be enhanced. At present, the authority of labour inspectors is limited, hampering the effectiveness of monitoring and accountability mechanisms to address child labour, including in domestic work.

The **private non-profit sector, including civil society**, should also be specifically engaged to build their capacity. Greater power and authority should be transferred to these frontline stakeholders – both labour inspectors and civil society representatives – to identify children engaged in child labour in domestic work, and to impose appropriate penalties on employers.

► 7.5. Compulsory education: A whole-of-government approach and multi-sectoral collaboration

Article 25-A of Pakistan's Constitution – which requires the state to provide compulsory education for all children between 5 and 16 years old – should be implemented across the country. A **whole-of-government approach** and **multi-sectoral collaboration** are required to develop a strategic roadmap for compulsory education. Evening schools and classes should be rolled out for children involved in light work. Fees should be minimal and flexible enough to be waived on an individual needs-based basis. Parents/guardians should be sanctioned with fines or punishment in case of non-compliance. There should be a focus on enrolling girls as they are more vulnerable to becoming engaged in child labour in domestic work.

► 7.6. Alignment of laws

The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as anyone under the age of 18. However, child labour laws in Pakistan only treat persons under 14 years old (or 15 years old in Punjab) as children. In sex-related crimes, girls are treated as adults as soon as they reach puberty. As noted above, the age for the completion of compulsory education is 16 years old. These different definitions of childhood, adulthood and school-age make it especially difficult to identify and eliminate child labour.

Pakistan's **labour laws and legal framework on education need to be aligned**. This can be achieved through stakeholder engagement. The Government of Pakistan should also consider amending relevant sections of the Penal Code to prohibit all types of practices similar to slavery that involve children, including child labour in domestic work.

► 7.7 Neighbourhood watch system

A **neighbourhood watch system** could be introduced so that individuals can report cases of children being engaged in child labour in domestic work (and cases of abuse) not to the police, but to a social welfare officer at the appropriate tier of local government. The officer would send a formal communication to the head of the concerned household, requesting a meeting to discuss the issue and suggest ways to resolve it. If no response is received, the issue would be brought to the notice of the elected head of the relevant local government tier, and another resolution meeting would be requested. If a response is still not received, the head of the local government would bring the matter to the notice of the local administration and law enforcement agencies. At each stage, concerned households would be informed of the consequences of their actions. A neighbourhood watch system should complement, rather than replace, the Government's monitoring system.

► 7.8. Complaint mechanisms and helplines

Federal and Provincial Governments should establish **telephone helplines** to report cases of children being engaged in child labour in domestic work. **Complaint registration mechanisms** for these children should also be formalized and adequately publicized through the media, including radio and television.

► 7.9. Using the power of social media and working on the 'supply side'

Social media is a powerful tool with wide reach across society. It has played a pivotal role in reporting cases of sexual violence and raising public awareness of child labour. Social media should be used to raise awareness of child labour in domestic work specifically, as should radio programmes, talk shows and television. Related laws and available social protection measures should also be publicized through the mass media and social media to make the public aware of the policy environment, existing challenges, and their rights.

Targeted **community-based awareness raising campaigns** should be organized in rural areas where trafficking and bonded labour exist. Sensitizing the public is vital to overcome child labour in domestic work; people need to be made aware that it is illegal and familiarized with the risks and consequences involved.

Existing social protection measures – such as interventions by provincial Child Protection Bureaux and schemes that are part of the *Ehsaas* programme, including cash transfers, education grants, health cards and micro credit – should be explicitly offered to the families and communities most in need.

► 7.10. Changing social norms

Child labour in domestic work is widely socially accepted in Pakistan; many people regard it in a positive light. Continuous efforts are needed to achieve a paradigm shift in social norms. **Advocacy with employers** is important to discourage demand for child labour in domestic work, as well as the belief – among parents and employers – that this form of child labour is somehow ‘healthy’ or ‘beneficial’ for children.

Awareness raising campaigns should be developed to educate the public about their rights, and their children’s rights, including the right to education. Campaigns should be organized with local NGOs to strengthen communication efforts and avoid duplication. The geographical focus of these campaigns should be carefully delineated through stakeholder meetings with experts.

Advocacy and awareness raising is also needed among influential groups, including opinion leaders, politicians, civil servants, community leaders, religious leaders, social partners and civil society organizations to comprehensively address child labour in domestic work.

► 7.11. Rehabilitation services

Children engaged in child labour in domestic work – especially those subject to abuse – should be provided with **medical and social services**, as well as food, clothing and shelter. They should be enrolled in education and reunited with their families. If these children cannot be reunited with their families, they require long-term shelter and educational arrangements.

Chapter 8

Stakeholders' validation workshop and way forward

When this scoping study was completed, the ILO organized an online workshop on 5 April 2022 for stakeholders involved in addressing child labour in domestic work in Pakistan. The study's results were disseminated and validated by participants, who identified priority areas for action to end child labour in domestic work.

The workshop's 53 participants, including 17 women (32 per cent), represented a range of stakeholders. These included employers' and workers' organizations, provincial Departments of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Human Rights, the National Commission on the Rights of Child, SPARC, the National Action and Coordinating Group against Violence against Women and Children (NACG), *Sahil, Sudhaar*, Group Development Pakistan, the Child Rights Movement Pakistan, Search for Justice, the Pakistan Girl Guides Association (PGGA), the Sustainable Development and Policy Institute (SDPI), *Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi*, Pakistan *Bait-ul-Mal*, Islamic Relief Pakistan, Save the Children, the media, academia, the United Kingdom's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, and the ILO.

The workshop's participants identified six priority areas for a two-year strategic plan/roadmap to end child labour in domestic work in Pakistan (2022–2024):

- **Priority area 1:** Improving the frequency and quality of data on child labour in general, and child labour in domestic work specifically.
- **Priority area 2:** Aligning relevant laws and clarifying definitions related to child labour in domestic work.
- **Priority area 3:** Building monitoring and accountability mechanisms for children engaged in child labour in domestic work.
- **Priority area 4:** Raising awareness about child labour in domestic work (e.g. its impact on children, violations of child rights and laws, loss of employment for adult workers, and prevention through social support services).
- **Priority area 5:** Ensuring that rehabilitation services are available for children withdrawn from child labour in domestic work.
- **Priority Area 6:** Identifying bottlenecks in law enforcement mechanisms.

The participants discussed the first four priority areas at length, and agreed on key activities to be included in a two-year strategic plan/roadmap. These activities are presented in the tables below.

► 8.1. Priority areas

8.1.1. Data on child labour, including in domestic work

Table 11. Priority area 1: Improving the frequency and quality of data on child labour in general, and child labour in domestic work specifically

Sr. no.	Key activity	Roles/responsibilities	Timeline
1.	Analyse the micro data of the Pakistan Labour Force Survey to stratify its results on children between the ages of 10 and 14.	Public sector (can take the lead and delegate responsibilities to NGOs)	June 2022–June 2023
2.	Conduct a rapid assessment, combined with quantitative data collection, on child labour in domestic work at the provincial level.	Academia (can play a role by encouraging post-graduate and PhD students to take these assessments as the subject of their theses) NGOs and think tanks (to provide technical assistance)	June 2022–June 2024

8.1.2. Legislation and definitions

Table 12. Priority area 2. Aligning relevant laws and clarifying definitions related to child labour in domestic work

Sr. no.	Key activity	Roles/responsibilities	Timeline
1.	Organize consultations with the public sector, the private non-profit sector (including civil society), academia, the ILO, UNICEF and parliamentarians to outline the operational definitions of 'child', 'child labour', 'child labour in domestic work', and 'light work'.	National Commission on the Rights of the Child (can take the lead in the consultations)	June 2022–December 2022

Sr. no.	Key activity	Roles/responsibilities	Timeline
2.	<p>Raise awareness of existing laws among employers, children engaged in child labour in domestic work, and their parents.</p> <p>Build the technical capacity of organizations which are directly and indirectly involved in the implementation of laws on child labour – such as provincial Departments of Labour and Social Welfare, the private non-profit sector (including civil society), the Pakistan Workers' Federation and employers' organizations.</p>	<p>NGOs</p> <p>Child labour experts</p> <p>Legal experts</p>	June 2022–December 2022
3.	Strengthen inter-provincial and intra-provincial coordination/consultation to develop laws and avoid discrepancies between laws.	Provincial Departments of Labour	June 2022–June 2024
4.	Develop a standard definition of the 'child', in consultation with all relevant departments. The National Assembly's and Provincial Assemblies' research desks should also check other relevant laws to avoid conflicting definitions and discrepancies between different laws.	Provincial Departments of Labour	June 2022–June 2024
5.	<p>Remove the discrepancy between the age for the completion of compulsory education and the minimum age for work.</p> <p>Improve the enforcement of existing laws.</p>	<p>Provincial Departments of Education</p> <p>Schools</p>	June 2022–June 2023
6.	Define 'light work' in a clear, simple manner in relevant laws.	Provincial Departments of Labour	June 2022–June 2023
7.	Define 'hazardous work' for children by sector/sub-sector, and periodically revise relevant labour laws accordingly.	Provincial Departments of Labour	June 2022–June 2024
8.	Clarify the definition of 'child work'/'child labour'.	<p>Provincial Departments of Labour</p> <p>Provincial Departments of Education</p> <p>Provincial Departments of Social Welfare</p> <p>Provincial Departments of Law</p>	June 2022–June 2023

Sr. no.	Key activity	Roles/responsibilities	Timeline
9.	Establish a ministry or department for children to ensure well-coordinated efforts to end child labour.	Government of Pakistan	June 2022–June 2023
10.	Engage with relevant stakeholders and lobby for the alignment of existing laws with the international frameworks ratified by Pakistan.	Public sector Private non-profit sector, including civil society (for advocacy and lobbying)	June 2022–June 2024

8.1.3. Monitoring and accountability mechanisms

Table 13. Priority area 3: Building monitoring and accountability mechanisms for children engaged in child labour in domestic work

Sr. no.	Key activity	Roles/responsibilities	Timeline
1.	Engage with communities – including influential religious and local leaders, and local committees – and mobilize them to play an active role in monitoring and reporting cases of child labour to the Child Protection Institute (CPI) in Humak, Islamabad. Engage with existing Education Committees for community mobilization, child labour monitoring and reporting.	Child Protection Institute Education Committees	June 2022–June 2024
2.	Use Reconciliation Committees – made up of labour councillors and union councillors – to monitor child labour in domestic work at the local level.	Local Government (through union councillors) District Vigilance Committees (to monitor the performance of union councils)	June 2022–June 2024
3.	Strengthen existing Child Protection Committees – comprised of nominated members – to help monitor the incidence of child labour at the community level.	Child Protection Bureaux/authorities	June 2022–June 2024

Sr. no.	Key activity	Roles/responsibilities	Timeline
4.	Educate employers about existing laws and penalization at the grassroots level by engaging with the media and workers' organizations.	Media Pakistan Workers' Federation	June 2022– June 2024
5.	Engage <i>Nikah Khawan</i> (marriage registrars) to raise awareness of child rights among newly married couples.	Local Government	June 2022– June 2024

8.1.3. Awareness raising

Table 14. Priority area 4: Raising awareness about child labour in domestic work (e.g. its impact on children, violations of child rights and laws, loss of employment for adult workers, and prevention through social support services)

Sr. no.	Key activity	Roles/responsibilities	Timeline
1.	Involve and work with the mainstream media, as well as social media, to raise awareness of child labour in domestic work, including the hazards and impact involved.	Media outlets	June 2022– June 2023
2.	Advocate with Departments of Education to include the subject of child rights in curricula at the school, college and university levels.	Provincial Departments of Education Directorate of Curricula	
3.	Build the capacity of religious leaders to connect children engaged in child labour in domestic work with social protection services.	Mosques, <i>madrassas</i> Television and radio channels	June 2022– June 2024
4.	Set up or strengthen child helplines for the registration of complaints.	Child Protection and Welfare Authorities/ Commissions/Bureaux	June 2022– June 2024
5.	Identify ambassadors in schools and communities, and build their capacities to raise awareness of child labour in domestic work.	Universities Schools Community clubs	Continuous activity

Sr. no.	Key activity	Roles/responsibilities	Timeline
6.	Advocate for child protection as the state's responsibility at various levels.	Parents Government of Pakistan (at all levels)	June 2022–June 2024
7.	Engage Departments of Social Welfare to extend social services to the families of children at risk of becoming engaged in child labour in domestic work by assessing the situation of the household/family.	Provincial Departments of Social Welfare	June 2022–June 2024
8.	Establish community centres at the union council level to engage in awareness raising on child labour in domestic work, as well as to connect affected families with social services.	Local Governments Union councils	June 2022–June 2024
9.	Promote the media's role in raising awareness of child rights and the need to eliminate child labour, including in domestic work.	Media (can air public service messages as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives) Journalists at the local level (to advocate for child rights)	June 2022–June 2024
10.	Empower children to question parents and employers if they try to engage them in child labour, including in domestic work.	Child/youth organizations, such as the Boy Scouts or Girl Guides	June 2022–June 2024

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Annexes

► Annex I. Interview guide for children

Study title: Child labour in domestic work in Pakistan: A scoping study

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Total number of participants	
Number of boys	Number of girls

Participants	Age in years	Number of months/ years engaged in child labour in domestic work	Origin	Migration status

Question 1: Tell me something about yourself. Elaborate on your working experiences.

Probes:

- What is your daily routine? *[Ask the children in detail about what they did today or yesterday (if it is early morning) to get an idea of their lives]*
 - What did you eat today?
 - How many times do you eat?
 - Did you fight with anyone today?
 - Did you play today, and with whom did you play? How long did you play for?
 - Did you go to school today? If not, do you usually go to school? Did you do your homework?

- How much time do you spend at home?
- Which activities do you do as part of your work?
 - Have you ever hurt yourself performing these activities?
 - Does anyone oversee you when you work? *[Try to gauge if surveillance is constant and strict]*
 - For how many hours do you work?
 - Do you enjoy your work?
 - How much do you earn per month? What are the payment mechanisms? Who collects your pay? Do you think the pay is sufficient?
 - Do you have a written contract of work? How did you get this work?
- Where do you live? How are your living conditions?
 - Where do you sleep? Tell me about your room/sleeping area.
 - Which rest rooms do you use?
 - Are you allowed to go everywhere in the house? If not, which areas are you confined to and why?
 - Are you allowed to go anywhere you want when you are not working? For example, to meet friends, etc. If not, why?
- Have you ever thought about leaving this work? If you decide to leave, could you? If not, why?
- Why do you work? [Poverty, to repay a family debt, own interest, etc.]
 - Do other members of your family *[siblings]* also work?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years and 10 years?

Question 2: What is your understanding of health?

Probes:

- What are the signs of good health?
 - Do you think you are healthy? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- How does your work affect your health?
 - Do you feel tired?
 - Does your back or body ache? Do you get headaches?
 - Do your hands feel irritated by using soap, detergents, etc.?

- When was the last time you got sick at work? *[details of the injury or sickness]*
 - What other illnesses or injuries *[cuts, burns etc.]* have you suffered from due to working?
- What do you eat? *[At own home or at the employer's house]*
 - What is the quality and quantity of this food?
 - Do you feel satisfied after your meals, or you feel you want to eat more?
- Do you think you have lost weight since you started working?
 - Do you feel your clothes have become loose?
- Do you miss your home and family? *[for live-in workers]*
 - Can you contact (call/see) them if you want to?
 - Do you sometimes feel like crying for no reason?
 - Whom do you go to for comfort when you are upset?

Question 3: What are your relationships with other people?

Probes:

- With whom do you interact at your workplace? *[Ask about the employers, as well as their children, other visitors and relatives who come to visit]*
- With whom do you interact at home or in your neighbourhood? *[Use the technique of family ethnography: draw the child in the centre and ask her/him to represent all people she/he knows according to the level of closeness on the paper. Proceed with detailed information about relationships from there]*
- How is your relationship with this family member? *[ask for each family member]*
- Who do you enjoy spending time with? What things do you enjoy most?
 - What are your leisure activities? How much time do you get to rest? Do you play with the children of the employers?
- Who are you afraid of?
 - Does anyone scream at you, insult or offend you, or make you feel ashamed?
 - Does anyone hit you?
 - Does anyone threaten you? *[Try to gauge how she/he is threatened, for example, the threat of not being paid or receiving other benefits, or threats of harm to the child or her/his family, etc.]*

- If any of these situations happens, what would you do? Who would you call for help?

Question 4: Tell me about the best incident you have experienced in your life.

[Try to gauge the level of happiness, commodities and leisure that the child has been offered throughout her/his life]

Question 5: Tell me about the worst incident you have experienced in your life.

[Try to probe into occupational violence: emotional, physical and sexual]

- What scares you?

Question 6: How do you feel about education and school?

Probes:

- Have you ever been to school? [Drop-outs, repetition, barriers/challenges, evening schools]
- What are some of the educational opportunities available to you?
- Do you want to go to school?
 - If not, why?
 - If yes, what barriers and challenges are in your way? What are some educational options [*schools, madrassas, evening schools*] that you could potentially use?

Question 7: What do you want to do in the future?

Question 8: Do you want to share anything else?

► Annex II. Interview guide for parents/guardians

Study title: Child labour in domestic work in Pakistan: A scoping study

Socio-demographic characteristics of the parents/ guardian	
Age of the participant	
Sex	Male Female
Highest level of education attained	
Occupation	

Question 1: Tell me about your child/children being engaged in child labour in domestic work.

Probes:

- Since when has your child been engaged in child labour?
- Is she/he working in the same village/city as you?
- Why is the child working? [*Push factors: poverty, debt payment, etc.*]
- How does child labour in domestic work affect your child's health?
 - Do you see a difference in your child's physical health since she/he started working? [*Do you feel her/his clothes have become loose?*]
 - Do you feel that your child is exposed to any hazards to while at work? [*Probe about dust, heat, defective irons, etc.*]
 - Do you witness your child getting emotionally upset frequently, with crying episodes? If yes, what are the reasons for this and what have you done to address them?
- How did you find work for your child?
 - What was the recruitment mechanism? [*Ask about recruitment agencies and intermediaries involved in recruitment*]
 - Is there a written contract? If not, why? If yes, what are the details of the contract?
 - Is there a verbal agreement? What are the conditions of the agreement?

- How do you feel about your child working? [*Safety, hazards, duration*]
 - Do you think it is positive for your child to work, learn some skills and earn money? [*Ask for gender bias*]
 - Do you think working has a negative impact on your child? If yes, what adverse effects have you witnessed in your child?
 - How is your child's relationship with her/his employers? Do they treat her/him kindly, or are they harsh?
- Do other children in your neighbourhood, and among your friends and family, also work?
 - If yes, why do they work? How much do they earn, on average? What is the average duration of work?

Question 2: How is your economic situation associated with your child being engaged in child labour?

Probes:

- How is the salary of your child utilized?
 - Does your child contribute money for household expenses?
 - What is the relation between child labour in domestic work your household's indebtedness?
 - Is your child working under the threat or menace of penalty?
- Who collects your child's pay?
 - Is this pay sufficient?
 - Is there an annual increase in pay? If yes, is it sufficient?

Question 3: How will your lives change if your child stops working?

Probes:

- What will the economic impact be?
- How will you manage monthly expenses?
- What will your child do if she/he does not work? [*Attend school/madrassa, remain at home, etc.*]

Question 4: How do you feel about your child's educational attainment?**Probes:**

- Does your child go to school?
 - Do you want your child to go to school?
- Do you think it is important to educate children?
 - Is it important to educate girls?
 - Is it important to educate boys?
- Has your child ever been to school?
 - If yes, why did she/he drop out?

Question 5: What future prospects do you see for your child?

- Where do you see your child in the next 5 years and in the next 10 years?
 - Generally, what is the future of children involved in child labour in domestic work? *[Probe their occupations later in life and marriage prospects]*
- Did you also work in your childhood?

Question 6: What social services are available to your child?

- What will you do if you find out that your child is not treated well at work? *[Also mention all forms of abuse, ranging from mild to severe]*
 - Are there any agencies/organizations available that could help you in such a scenario?
 - Would you prosecute the employer or agree on some mutual 'settlement'?
 - Are there any rehabilitation services available to help your child and your family to break the shackles of child labour?

Question 7: Do you want to share anything else?

► Annex III. Interview guide for employers

Study title: Child labour in domestic work in Pakistan: A scoping study

Socio-demographic characteristics of the employer	
Age of the participant	
Sex	Male Female
Highest level of education attained	
Occupation	

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

Probes:

- How is your experience of interacting with children engaged in child labour in domestic work in your home?
 - Are the children obedient and respectful? Or are they difficult? What do you do when they are difficult?
- Why do you feel the need to have children working for you and your home? *[Pull factors]*
 - How much do you pay them per month?
 - What is the payment mechanism? Who collects the pay?
 - Is there a written contract for these children?
 - Do you know that there is a law requiring the registration of domestic workers *[Only for interviewees from Punjab; ask if they know of the Punjab Domestic Workers Act of 2019. If they do, ask them for details of what know about it]*

Question 2: How do you see the lives of these children?

Probes:

- How healthy is it for children to work?
- What are some of the reasons, in your opinion, that lead them to work?
- How do the children take their work emotionally?
 - How happy are the children working at your home?

- What is the average duration of work for these children? *[Timings]*
 - How often are they given holidays to go home *[For children engaged on a live-in basis; probe about sick leave, public holidays, Eid holidays, etc.]*
 - What do the children do in their leisure time? Do they play with other children in the family or visitors? *[Which type of play]* How much time do they have to play per day?
- Apart from payment, what are some of the other benefits these children get by working at your home? *[Free accommodation, food, clothes, etc.]*

Question 3: What is your opinion regarding the safety of children at work?

Probes:

- Do they face any hazards? *[Heat, dust, electricity, etc.]*
- Has the child harmed or injured herself/himself while working? If so, how?
- Where does the child stay when the whole family goes out?
 - Does she/he stay at home alone? If not, with whom does she/he stay?

Question 4: How do you feel about the educational attainment of these children?

- Does the child engaged in your household study in a school or madrassa?
- Was she/he previously studying?
- If yes, why did she/he drop out of education?

Question 5: What is your role in the lives of these children?

- How is your relationship with these children?
 - Do you talk to the child, apart from about work-related matters?
 - Do you or your children play with the child?
 - Do you ever buy the child gifts/treats/sweets?

Question 6: Do you feel it is healthy for children to work?

Probes:

- What are the issues these children face in their daily lives?
- How can the lives of these children be improved?

Question 7: Do you want to share anything else?

► Annex IV. Interview guide for policy makers/key informants

Study title: Child labour in domestic work in Pakistan: A scoping study

Socio-demographic characteristics of the key informant	
Age of the participant	
Gender	Man Woman
Highest educational level attained	
Occupation	
Agency/department/organization	

Question 1: Tell me about your organization/department/agency.

- How does it relate to addressing child labour in domestic work?
- What work has your agency done in the past to combat child labour in domestic work?

Question 2: What is your role in the organization/department/agency?

- How long have you been working for?
- What is your experience of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan?

Question 3: Although definitive estimates are not available, what, in your opinion, is the magnitude of domestic child labour in Pakistan?

- Is the trend increasing or decreasing?
- What is the geographic variation in the distribution of child labour in domestic work?
[Provincial distribution, rural-urban divide]
 - What are the characteristics of these regions? [Poverty, inequality, access to basic service, access to social services, etc.]
 - Which communities are most affected by child labour? What are their characteristics?
- Does migration play a role in domestic child labour? If yes, how? [Ask about in-country and cross-border migration separately]

- Are children engaged in child labour in domestic work in the regions where they normally live?
- Have children travelled/migrated from other regions or other countries?
- Do children travel with their families? Are they unaccompanied?
- How has the change of regime in Afghanistan affected child labour in domestic work in Pakistan?

► How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected child labour in domestic work in Pakistan?

Question 4: What are the characteristics of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan? *[Age and gender distribution, income, ethnicity, etc.]*

Question 5: Why is child labour in domestic work common in Pakistan? *[Push and pull factors, probe the parents' and employers' perspectives]*

- What are the characteristics and attitudes of employers who engage children in child labour in domestic work? How do you see the cultural acceptance of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan?
- What other opportunities are offered to children if they were to stop working? *[Probe about educational and vocational training opportunities]*
- How do you think children regard child labour in domestic work?
- What are the factors (social, economic, cultural and industry-related) that push/prevent children from being engaged in child labour in domestic work?

Question 6: What are the payment mechanisms for children engaged in child labour in domestic work?

- What is the payment scheme?
- Are children paid for their work? How? *[In cash, in kind, as part of the parent's salary]*
- How much are children paid?
- Is it below the minimum wage?

Question 7: What is the interplay between child labour in domestic work and education?

- What is the school attendance and school performance of children engaged in child labour in domestic work? *[Attendance, highest level of education attained, dropout rates, repetition]*

- What are the barriers and challenges (from the demand and supply sides) that children face in accessing education?

Question 8: What is the interplay between child labour in domestic work and children's social development?

- Do children engaged in child labour in domestic work participate in socially valuable activities?
- Are they stigmatized or socially excluded?
- Do they establish positive peer relations?
- Are the children engaged in child labour in domestic work isolated or separated from their families?

Question 9: What attitudes exist towards child labour in domestic work?

- What is the level of awareness about child labour in domestic work?
- What is the attitude towards child labour in domestic work of parents, employers, recruiters, communities, local and national governments, and civil society organizations?
 - Is child labour in domestic work a traditional practice?
- Does awareness of child labour in domestic work influence supply (parents) and demand (employers)?

Question 10: Does media influence attitudes towards child labour in domestic work?

- What role has social media played in highlighting child labour in domestic work?

Question 11: What is the level of awareness of policies with a bearing on child labour in domestic work, and of operational grievance mechanisms, among parents and children?

Question 12: What government efforts may affect child labour in domestic work?

- What is the legal framework (national and sub-national) on child labour?
- Does national/sub-national legislation contain provisions relevant for addressing child labour in domestic work? *[Ask for details]*
- What are the challenges and barriers responsible for the weak policy environment related to child labour in domestic work?

Question 13: What enforcement and monitoring mechanisms exist to ensure that children are not engaged in child labour in domestic work?

- How effective is labour inspection in enforcing child labour laws?
 - Do labour inspectors come to these areas? [*Target? Routine? Unannounced?*]
Protocols of action in case they find children?]

Question 14: Do grievance mechanisms exist for children engaged in child labour in domestic work?

- What are the details of these mechanisms?
- How effective are they with respect to addressing child labour in domestic work?

Question 15: Are there social services for children engaged in child labour in domestic work?

- How effective are these services in addressing the root causes of child labour, withdrawing children from child labour (including moving to safe work for children above the minimum age), reintegrating them into education and mediating the effects of child labour?
- Do migrant households/children access social protection interventions?

Question 16: What are the community/societal level mechanisms available (if any) to bring the issue to light?

Question 17: Are there mechanisms in place to ensure the availability of accurate data on child labour?

Question 18: What are your recommendations (at the policy and programme level) to improve the overall scenario of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan?

Question 19: Would you like to share anything else?

Child labour in domestic work in Pakistan: A scoping study

This scoping study provides a situation analysis of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan. It seeks to determine the possible magnitude of child labour in domestic work in Pakistan, its geographical distribution and socio-demographic features, and the push (family and community level) and pull factors (employers) that drive the phenomenon. It also examines national and sub-national efforts to address this form of child labour, gaps in these efforts, and highlights recommended measures to eliminate child labour in domestic work nationwide.

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