

In 2013, Pakistan made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Provincial governments finalized national plans of action on child labor and bonded labor. In Punjab, District Vigilance Committees were re-established to combat bonded labor, including bonded labor of children. The Federal Investigation Agency also improved coordination among law enforcement groups to better track human traffickers and took action against officials complicit in human trafficking. The Government continues to implement an array of social programs and projects to combat child labor and bonded labor. However, children in Pakistan continue to engage in child labor in agriculture and the worst forms of child labor in bonded labor. While provincial governments drafted legislation to protect children from the worst forms of child labor in response to a Government-wide decentralization effort, only the Punjab Province passed such legislation. The federal law remains in effect in the remaining provinces. The federal and Punjab laws lack a minimum working age and the minimum age for hazardous work falls short of meeting international standards. Working children continue to lack sufficient legal protections. Enforcement efforts remain weak, and labor inspections have become infrequent.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Pakistan are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor in bonded labor. The majority of child labor in Pakistan occurs in agriculture.(1) Data from the Government's 2012–2013 National Labor Force Survey indicate that the majority of child workers reside in rural areas.(2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Pakistan.

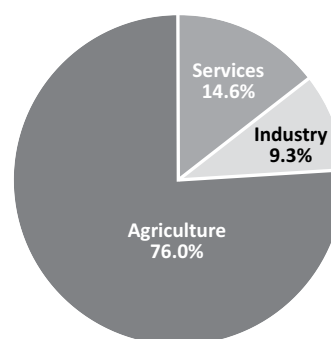
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10-14 yrs.	13.0 (2,449,480)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	72.3
Combining Work and School (%)	10-14 yrs.	1.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		71.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(3)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from LFS Survey, 2010–2011.(1)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

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Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, including harvesting cotton, wheat, and date palms* (4-8)
	Fishing,*† activities unknown (9, 10)
	Manufacturing glass bangle† (8, 11, 12)
	Stitching soccer balls*† (13, 14)
	Shrimp processing* (13, 14)
	Weaving cloth using power looms (15)
Industry	Tanning leather† (8, 16)
	Manufacturing surgical instruments (8)
	Carpet weaving† (6, 8, 15, 17)
	Crushing stones*† (4, 18)
	Brick making (4, 5, 8, 19)
	Making palm leaf mats* (4)
	Mining coal* (5, 8, 20, 21)
Services	Construction, activities unknown† (13, 22-24)
	Domestic service (20, 25, 26)
	Work in hotels (20, 26)
	Serving in restaurants and tea stalls (4, 5, 20)
	Rag-picking (4, 17)
	Automobile repair, welding, and carpentry in small workshops (4, 19, 20)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Work in transport (5, 19)
	Bonded labor in brick making, carpet weaving, agriculture, glass bangle making,* fish raising,* and coal mining (6, 13, 24, 27, 28)
	Farming, domestic service, begging, and commercial sexual exploitation as a result of human trafficking (28, 29)
	Use of underage children in armed conflict (30, 31)
	Use of children in illicit activities, such as smuggling small arms and drugs (32, 33)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a) – (c) of ILO C. 182.

Children, especially girls, are employed as domestic servants and may be subjected to extreme abuse. For example, in 2013, some child domestic servants were killed by their employers.(31, 34)




Some children are used by non-state militant groups in armed conflict. Non-state groups kidnap children or coerce parents into giving away their children to spy, fight, or die in suicide attacks.(28, 30, 31) These children are subjected to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. Children as young as age 12 are recruited by pro-Taliban insurgents, trained as suicide bombers, and trafficked between Afghanistan and Pakistan.(28, 30)

Girls who are sold into forced marriages are sometimes trafficked internationally into commercial sexual exploitation. (28) Disabled children are sold or kidnapped and taken to countries such as Iran, in which they are forced to beg.(28, 32, 35)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Pakistan has ratified most key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

	Convention	Ratification
	ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
	ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	UN CRC	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	

The Government has established relevant laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No		
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	14	1991 Employment of Children Act (13, 23, 33)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	Yes		1991 Employment of Children Act (22, 23)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Bonded Labor System Abolition Act (BLSA), Constitution of Pakistan (11, 36)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance 2002; Penal Code; Emigration Ordinance (27, 37, 38)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Penal Code (39, 40)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	National Service Ordinance of 1970 (27, 41)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (42)
Free Public Education	Yes	16	Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (42)

*No conscription or no standing military.

Pakistan's laws are not completely consistent with international standards regarding child labor. The lack of a national minimum age for employment may increase the likelihood that very young children engage in activities that jeopardize their health and safety. The minimum age for hazardous work is also not consistent with international standards and may jeopardize the health and safety of young people ages 14 through 17.(13, 43) Additionally, domestic service, a sector in which many child laborers work, is not covered by the list of prohibited hazardous occupations or processes.(22, 33) The law also excludes workplaces with less than 10 persons employed. As a result, children in the informal sector do not benefit from the same protections as those working in larger establishments.(6, 44, 45)

The 18th Amendment to the Constitution, passed in 2010, devolved all child welfare and labor issues from the national level to the provincial government units. Until each province repeals or adopts a replacement law, federal laws on child protection and bonded labor are in force.(13, 31) Punjab is the only province to have passed a law on the employment of children and on bonded labor that mirrors existing national laws.(13, 28) Each of Pakistan's four provinces has draft legislation that prohibits work for children under age 14 and hazardous work for children under age 18.(31, 33) Each province's legislation has been pending since 2012; therefore, these provinces continue to use the previous national law as their standard.(31) Under the current laws, children remain vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.

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Pakistan's laws do not specifically prohibit child pornography, the use of children in illicit activities, or internal trafficking. However, the Penal Code outlaws the circulation or production of any obscene books, drawings, representations, or other objects.(40, 46) The Government also uses the Penal Code and Sections 17 through 23 of the Emigration Ordinance, which address fraudulent immigration, to prosecute internal trafficking cases.(37, 38)

While education is free and compulsory through age 16, access to education is still limited. Over 6.5 million children are not in primary school.(47) In conflict zones, schools and infrastructure are often damaged.(32, 48) In some areas, schools are attacked and sometimes destroyed by militant groups opposed to secular education and the education of girls.(32)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Provincial Labor Inspectors	Inspect industrial areas and markets to identify child labor violations, enforce both national and provincial labor laws, and pursue legal action against employers.(11)
District Vigilance Committees	Implement the BLSA, assist in rehabilitating bonded laborers, and help laborers achieve the objectives of the law.(49)
Anti-trafficking Unit of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA)	Enforce transnational trafficking-related laws.(50) Cooperate with other governments on trafficking cases, operate a hotline for victims, and publish information on anti-trafficking efforts on its website.(51)
Police	Investigate cases of bonded labor and enforce the BLSA.(52)

Law enforcement agencies in Pakistan took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

Research has not revealed the number of labor inspectors or inspections conducted throughout Pakistan.(13) The Government of Pakistan does not collect data on the number of violations, children assisted, or penalties imposed for those found to commit child labor violations.(13) Each province has a training center for labor inspectors, in which training on child labor is provided to labor inspectors.(53) Despite these training centers, provincial labor inspectors had little training and insufficient resources to adequately inspect workplaces.

Provincial labor inspectors lack authority to enforce child labor laws in agricultural settings.(54)

In Punjab, routine factory labor inspections have been replaced by a self-declaration system, whereby factory owners post declarations regarding workplace safety, health, and wage issues in their factories. Some of those factories are then chosen at random for inspection.(50) Because declarations are not mandatory and the review of declarations is the only method used to select companies for inspection, many factories go uninspected and there are no penalties for not complying with the self-declaration policy.(13, 50) In Punjab and Sindh, inspectors are instructed not to inspect a business for one year following its establishment. In addition, inspectors must seek permission from employers before labor inspections can be conducted.(27) Since devolution, labor inspections have become more infrequent. To address this issue, NGOs often perform labor inspections.(6)

During the reporting period, District Vigilance Committees were re-established in Punjab and 370 cases of bonded labor have been reported by the local police.(53) However, in other provinces, District Vigilance Committees may be nonfunctioning.(53, 55, 56)

Criminal Law Enforcement

The Government of Pakistan does not collect data on the number of criminal investigations, prosecutions, children assisted, or convictions of child traffickers and those using children in other exploitative forms of labor.(13, 50)

During the reporting period, the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Interagency Task Force held several meetings to improve coordination among different law enforcement groups in order to improve the tracking of human traffickers.(57) Additionally, FIA took action against FIA officials who were complicit in human trafficking and smuggling. During the reporting period, FIA arrested and filed eight criminal cases against its own staff, and it demoted or dismissed senior officers involved in human trafficking.(57) In 2013, UNODC and the Government of Pakistan launched a pilot training course of a human trafficking training curriculum for all law enforcement agencies.(57)

Police lack the necessary personnel, training, and equipment to confront the armed guards who often oversee bonded laborers.(27) These circumstances hamper the effectiveness of Bonded Labor System Abolition Act (BLSA) enforcement, and since the law's passage in 1992, there have been no convictions under the act.(28) In 2013, police officers in Sindh Province were provided training on how to prevent and prosecute cases of bonded labor.(52)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Provincial Child Labor Units	Conduct research, build capacity, and coordinate child labor activities at the provincial level.(33, 50) Established by each provincial government.
National Commission of Human Rights Act	Coordinate Pakistan's compliance with international treaty obligations, including those related to child labor.(33, 58)
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission	Coordinate efforts to enhance the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of children, including the prevention of exploitative child labor practices and running prevention programs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.(59)
Sindh Child Protection Authority	Coordinate efforts to ensure the rights of the children in need of special protection measures in Sindh Province, including child laborers.(60)

There are no national-level coordinating committees on child labor in Pakistan.(33) Additionally, there is a lack of sharing and coordination nationally amongst provinces.(33)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Pakistan has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Sindh and Punjab Provincial Plans of Action to Combat Bonded Labor†	Details how Sindh and Punjab Provinces will revise bonded labor legislation. Includes plans to strengthen the capacity of labor inspectors, generate awareness on bonded labor, improve reporting, and computerize labor inspection data.(53, 61)
Provincial Plans of Action to Combat Child Labor†	Details how each province will revise child labor legislation. Includes plans to strengthen the capacity of labor inspectors, generate awareness on child labor, improve reporting, and computerize labor inspection data.(53, 61)
National Action Plan for Children	Aims to prohibit, restrict, and regulate child labor with an eventual goal of its ultimate elimination.(62) Lays out 14 key strategies and actions, including harmonizing work between government agencies, NGOs, and donors; promoting research on child labor issues; developing non-formal education for child laborers; providing microcredit for families of child laborers; and conducting national surveys on child labor. Also addresses child trafficking and outlines key objectives for its elimination.(62)
National Education Policy	Focuses on increasing the literacy rate and providing livelihood skills to children, including those engaged in child labor. Aims to expand non-formal and vocational education programs to children, including child laborers.(63)

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
Poverty Alleviation Strategy	Describes the strategy for alleviating poverty in Pakistan, which includes priority access to microfinance for families of working children.(13)
National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking	Describes the prevention, prosecution, and protection strategies for ending human trafficking, including child trafficking.(64)
Child Protection Policy (FATA)	Describes how the FATA will promote and create a protective environment for all children. Includes actions to be taken towards the prevention and elimination of child labor.(65)

†Policy was launched during the reporting period.

The National Action Plan for Children mandates child labor surveys; however, such surveys have not been conducted since 1996.(31, 33) The lack of recent data hampers the Government’s ability to assess the scope and prevalence of child labor and to develop policies or plans for future child labor initiatives.(31)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

In 2013, the Government of Pakistan participated in and funded programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Child Camel Jockey Rehabilitation Assistance†	Child Protection and Rehabilitation Bureau program that provides housing for trafficked children, including children returned from working as camel jockeys in the United Arab Emirates. Reintegrates child victims of trafficking into their families and home communities.(27)
National Centers for Rehabilitation of Child Laborers‡	Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education program that aims to remove children ages 5 to 14 from hazardous labor and provide them with education, clothing, and a stipend. As of 2012, there were 151 centers.(13)
Combating Abusive Child Labor II Project†‡	EU-funded project implemented by the ILO to assist provincial governments with the drafting of new child labor legislation, create Provincial Child Labor Units that monitor the implementation of a provincial child labor program, expand the knowledgebase on child labor, and increase awareness to promote child labor-friendly policies. Concluded in 2013.(66)
Project to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor#	Punjab Provincial Child Labor Unit program that provides non-formal education and literacy services to children in the worst forms of child labor in four of Punjab’s districts. Provides livelihood services to target families and improves working conditions.(67)
Project to Eliminate Bonded Labor in Brick Kilns#*	Punjab Provincial Government project that provides interest-free loans, national identity cards, and health services to assist bonded laborers.(50, 53)
Strengthening Law Enforcement Responses and Action Against Internal Trafficking and Bonded Labor	ILO-funded program that engages brick kiln owners in Sindh and Punjab to establish new practices to help eradicate bonded labor, including child bonded labor. Links brick kiln workers to social safety nets.(53)
Benazir Income Support Program‡	Government scheme that provides financial assistance to underprivileged families and offers incentives for parents to keep their children in school and out of work.(31) In 2013, provided \$175 million to implement the Benazir Bhutto Income Support Program.(31)
Education Voucher Scheme#*	Punjab Educational Foundation provides stipends to private schools for students enrolled from low-income areas of Lahore.(13, 68)

* The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Pakistan.

Program is funded by the Provincial Government of Punjab.

During the reporting period, district officials in Sahiwal, Punjab, Sukkur, and Sindh began running a pilot program to track child labor patterns by collecting information on how many children are absent from school.(31) While the Government of Pakistan has a number of initiatives to address the worst forms of child labor, their limited reach is insufficient to address the scope of the child labor problem. In addition, there is no evidence of programs specifically targeting child domestics, or to raise awareness of and provide assistance to children being used in armed conflict.(27)

The Education Voucher Scheme only reaches a small portion of students and the other three provinces of Pakistan lack the resources to ensure that all children receive a free and compulsory education as assured in the Constitution and to address the magnitude of the bonded labor situation.(13)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Pakistan (Table 9).

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict and the Palermo Protocol.	2013
	Provinces should establish a minimum age for employment that, at minimum, is harmonized with the compulsory education age.	2009 – 2013
	Create comprehensive prohibitions against additional specific hazardous activities and clearly establish a minimum age for hazardous work at 18.	2009 – 2013
	Ensure that relevant child labor laws and regulations apply equally to children working in the formal and informal sectors regardless of the size of the establishment.	2011 – 2013
	Amend the law to clearly criminalize child pornography, internal child trafficking, and to prohibit the use of children in illicit activities.	2011 – 2013
Enforcement	Collect and publish enforcement data for child labor violations and criminal violation of child trafficking laws.	2010 – 2013
	Allow labor inspectors to conduct inspections at any time, without notice, including within the first year of an enterprise's establishment and within agricultural settings.	2011 – 2013
	Revise the self-declaration labor monitoring system in Punjab to require employers to post reports on workplace safety, health, and wages and thereby be subject to inspection.	2010 – 2013
	Ensure vigilance committees are established and active throughout Pakistan.	2013
	Provide adequate funding for training to enable inspectors and investigators to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2013
Coordination	Ensure that the response to the worst forms of child labor can be coordinated at both the provincial and national levels.	2011 – 2013
Government Policies	Conduct sectoral surveys on areas with a high incidence of child labor to increase the knowledgebase in these areas and inform policy and program planning.	2009 – 2013
Social Programs	Increase the size and scope of Government programs to reach children working in the worst forms of child labor, including work in domestic service and bonded child laborers.	2009 – 2013
	Implement programs to raise awareness and provide assistance to children used by non-state militant groups to engage in armed conflict.	2011 – 2013
	Expand education programs to provide free and compulsory education as required in the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act.	2011 – 2013
	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor.	2013

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