

Pakistan

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

The ILO estimated that 14.4 percent of children ages 10 to 14 years in Pakistan were working in 2002.³⁰⁴⁶ Most working children are found in agriculture, followed by informal activities in the non-agricultural sector, such as domestic work, street vending, and work in family businesses. Children are also employed in several hazardous sectors, including leather tanning, surgical instruments manufacturing, coal mining, deep sea fishing, brick-making,³⁰⁴⁷ and glass bangle manufacturing.³⁰⁴⁸ Bonded child labor is still reported in Pakistan, most commonly in agriculture, the brick-making industry, mining, and carpet production.³⁰⁴⁹ Further, the exploitation of children in the sex and drug trades continues to be a problem.³⁰⁵⁰

Pakistan is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking victims.³⁰⁵¹ Girls are trafficked into Pakistan, primarily from Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iran, Burma, Nepal, and Central Asia, for the purposes of sexual exploitation and bonded labor. Girls are also trafficked internally for commercial sexual exploitation and other types of exploitative labor.³⁰⁵² Boys studying at local madrassas (Islamic theological schools) are recruited, often forcibly, as child soldiers to fight with Islamic militants in Afghanistan and Kashmir.³⁰⁵³ Bangladeshi boys trafficked to Pakistan often work in manufacturing and sweatshops.³⁰⁵⁴ Although boys continue to be trafficked from Pakistan to Gulf countries to serve as camel jockeys, more stringent enforcement efforts by authorities in both regions appear to have reduced the numbers.³⁰⁵⁵

³⁰⁴⁶ World Development Indicators 2004, Washington, D.C.

³⁰⁴⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Pakistan," (Washington, D.C.: 2004), Section 6d. See also U.S. Embassy- Islamabad, "Unclassified Telegram No. 6012," (2003), 2.

³⁰⁴⁸ ILO-IPEC, "Supporting the Time-Bound Programme on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Pakistan," (Geneva: 2003), 10.

³⁰⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2003: Pakistan," Section 6c. See also Anti-Slavery International, "The Enslavement of Dalit and Indigenous Communities in India, Nepal and Pakistan through Debt Bondage," (London: 2001), 3. See also Anti-Slavery International, "Contemporary Forms of Slavery Related to and Generated by Discrimination: Forced and Bonded Labour in India, Nepal and Pakistan," (London: 2003). See also Ahmad Saleem, "A Rapid Assessment of Bonded Labour in Pakistan's Mining Sector," (Geneva: ILO, 2004).

³⁰⁵⁰ Afghan refugee children residing in urban Pakistan are among the most vulnerable to hazardous and exploitative labor conditions. See Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, "Fending for Themselves: Afghan Refugee Children and Adolescents Working in Urban Pakistan," (New York: IRC, 2002), 13-15. See also ECPAT International, *Pakistan* [database online] (in ECPAT International, 2004 [cited June 1, 2004]); available from http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/index.asp.

³⁰⁵¹ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Pakistan," (Washington, D.C.: 2004), U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Pakistan," (Washington, D.C.: 2004). See also ECPAT International, *Pakistan* (cited).

³⁰⁵² U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Pakistan." See also IOM, "New Iom Figures on the Global Scale of Trafficking," *Trafficking in Migrants - Quarterly Bulletin* 23, no. April (2001).

³⁰⁵³ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Pakistan." See also Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Child Soldiers 1379 Report," (London: 2002).

³⁰⁵⁴ ILO, "Getting at the Roots: Stopping Exploitation of Migrant Workers by Organized Crime" (paper presented at the The UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime: Requirements for Effective Implementation, Geneva, February 22-23, 2002), 11. See also ECPAT International, *Pakistan* (cited).

The law does not make basic education free or compulsory.³⁰⁵⁶ In 1998, the Ministry of Education set a goal for universal basic education as part of the National Education Policy.³⁰⁵⁷ In 2001-2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 72 percent (61 percent for girls and 83 percent for boys), and the net primary enrollment rate was 42 percent (38 percent for girls and 46 percent for boys).³⁰⁵⁸ Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. Recent primary school attendance statistics are not available for Pakistan. Even those children who attend school often fail to learn to read and write.³⁰⁵⁹

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Employment of Children Act of 1991 prohibits the employment of children in specified occupations and processes deemed dangerous or hazardous to their health but not from working in family-run enterprises or government schools. The law limits the workday of a child to 7 hours, all of which must be between the hours of 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., and it provides for a 1-hour break after 3 hours of labor. A working child must be given at least one day off per week, and it is illegal to require or allow a child to work overtime. Employers must maintain an employment register of working children.³⁰⁶⁰ The 1995 Employment of Children Rules details employers' requirements for maintaining minimum standards of health and safety in a child's working environment.³⁰⁶¹ Violations of these provisions can result in a maximum 1-year prison term and/or a fine of 20,000 rupees (approximately USD 352).³⁰⁶²

Forced labor is prohibited by the Constitution and by the Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act of 1992, which was designed to abolish the bonded labor system, emancipate bonded laborers, and cancel remaining debts.³⁰⁶³ Those found in violation of these provisions can face 2 to 5 years imprisonment and

³⁰⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Pakistan." See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2003: Pakistan," Section 6f.

³⁰⁵⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2003: Pakistan," Section 5. See also World Education Services- Canada, *Pakistan* [database online] ([cited]; available from <http://www.wes.org/ca/wedb/pakistan/pkfacts.htm>). While education is not compulsory, the Constitution, which was fully restored following the 2002 election of President Pervez Musharraf, stipulates that the government "shall remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within a minimum possible period." See *The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan*, Part II, Chapter 2, 37b.

³⁰⁵⁷ Government of Pakistan, "National Education Policy (1998-2010)," (Islamabad: Ministry of Education, 1998).

³⁰⁵⁸ These figures refer to enrollment in grades 1 through 5. See Federal Bureau of Statistics, "Pakistan Integrated Household Survey," (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 2002), 23 and 29.

³⁰⁵⁹ In 2001, UNICEF reported that 33 percent of a nationwide sample of fifth graders could read with comprehension, while 17 percent were able to write a simple letter. See U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2003: Pakistan," Section 5.

³⁰⁶⁰ The Act defines "child" as anyone below the age of 14 years and "adolescent" as anyone who has reached 14 but not 18 years of age. The list of hazardous occupations includes work on trains, in the construction of railways, explosives, carpet weaving and manufacturing where toxic chemicals are used. See *Employment of Children Act*, (June 4, 1991), Parts II and III.

³⁰⁶¹ *Employment of Children Rules*, (1995). This law was written in exercise of the authority conferred by sections 13 and 18 of the Employment of Children Act, 1991.

³⁰⁶² *Employment of Children Act, Section 14*. For currency conversion see FXConverter, [database online] ([cited June 3, 2004]); available from <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>.

³⁰⁶³ *Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act*, (1992). See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2003: Pakistan," Section 6c.

finer of 50,000 rupees (approximately USD 881).³⁰⁶⁴ In August 2002, the Government of Pakistan passed the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking and Smuggling Ordinance, which prohibits trafficking in persons and assigns strict penalties for individuals or groups found guilty of engaging in or profiting from such activities.³⁰⁶⁵

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Pakistan is implementing a National Policy and Action Plan to Combat Child Labor that calls for immediate eradication of the worst forms of child labor and the progressive elimination of child labor from all sectors of employment. It further seeks to prevent children from entering the work force by offering education as an alternative.³⁰⁶⁶

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138		
Ratified Convention 182	10/11/2001	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		✓
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		✓
Sector Action Plan (bonded labor)		✓

The National Commission for Child Welfare and Development is coordinating the National Project on the Rehabilitation Child Labour to withdraw children from hazardous employment and promote education.³⁰⁶⁷ Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, a government welfare agency, operates 87 non-formal education centers, providing education to working children in all four provinces.³⁰⁶⁸ Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal also is providing free school uniforms, books, nutritious meals, de-worming tablets, and a stipend to 500,000 girls in 26 of the poorest districts in Pakistan. The centers assist in withdrawing children from hazardous work environments and providing them with informal and primary education, vocational training, medical care and stipends for income generation activities. Approximately 120 children are enrolled in each center.³⁰⁶⁹

The government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper incorporates the reduction of child labor into its target-setting process. The National Committee on Abolition of Bonded Labour and Rehabilitation of

³⁰⁶⁴ *Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act*. For currency conversion, see FXConverter, ([cited]).

³⁰⁶⁵ The law specifically makes the smuggling of children for the purposes of unlawful entertainment and sexual abuse a criminal offence. See Staff Reporter, "Law to Check Trafficking in Human Beings Approved," *Dawn*, August 29, 2002. See *Saarc Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution*, (January 5, 2002).

³⁰⁶⁶ Child Labour Unit, "National Policy and Action Plan to Combat Child Labour," (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, 2000), 7 and 11.

³⁰⁶⁷ The National Commission for Child Welfare and Development was established in 1980 to promote child welfare, formulate policies to support children, and propose legislation to deter child abuse in all of its forms. See Government of Pakistan, "National Commission for Child Welfare and Development: Introduction and Objectives," (Islamabad: National Commission for Child Welfare and Development).

³⁰⁶⁸ Of the total number of centers, 74 are for boys, 2 for girls, and 11 are co-educational. See ILO-IPEC, "Combating Child Labour in the Carpet Industry in Pakistan--Phase II: Technical Progress Report--September 2004," (2004), 3. Under the program, children receive a stipend of Rs. 1,200 (USD 20) per year and a Rs. 500 (USD 8) per year for textbooks and educational supplies. Parents receive a stipend of Rs. 2,400 (USD 40) per year if they maintain their children in school. See Government of Pakistan, "Pakistan Bait-Ul-Mal: Projects," (Islamabad: Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare, and Special Education). See U.S. Embassy-Islamabad, electronic communication, March 16, 2004. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2003: Pakistan," Section 6d.

³⁰⁶⁹ ILO-IPEC, "Timebound Program Technical Progress Report," (Geneva: 2004), 3.

Freed Bonded Laborers oversees the implementation of the National Policy and Plan of Action for the Abolition of Bonded Labour. Major accomplishments include establishing a bonded labor unit, registering brick kilns under the Factory Act, and creating Legal Aid Cells for workers trapped in bonded labor.³⁰⁷⁰

The government is participating in an ILO-IPEC Timebound Program designed to remove and rehabilitate child workers in six identified sectors over the next 5 to 10 years. The activities are glass bangle making, surgical instruments manufacturing, tanneries, coal mining, scavenging, and deep-sea fishing/seafood-processing.³⁰⁷¹ In addition, as of May 2004, ILO-IPEC was supporting over 17 active projects in Pakistan to prevent, withdraw, and rehabilitate child laborers.³⁰⁷² The two largest of these programs focused on the elimination of child labor in the carpet weaving and soccer ball stitching industries.³⁰⁷³ In addition, a number of ILO-IPEC Action Plans have further formalized activities to combat child labor and helped to coordinate the efforts to eliminate child labor on the part of government organizations, NGOs, trade unions, employers' bodies, and other interested parties.³⁰⁷⁴ In cooperation with the Government of Pakistan, USDOL is funding a USD 5 million Save the Children-UK project designed to withdraw children in Punjab from hazardous labor and to provide them with educational and training services.³⁰⁷⁵

The provincial government of the Punjab is making efforts to improve education and stem the flow of yearly dropouts, estimated at four million. Programs include free textbooks through grade 5, hiring 16,000 additional teachers, stipends to support literacy projects for girls, and the establishment of a new district-level monitoring team. The Northwest Frontier Province also provides free textbooks through grade five.³⁰⁷⁶ The Central Zakat Council administers 56 vocational training centers in the Punjab. Students receive a monthly stipend for attending and a tool allowance of Rs. 5,000 (USD 87) upon completion of the course.³⁰⁷⁷

³⁰⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁰⁷¹ In September 2002, as part of its obligations under ILO Convention 182, a tripartite committee formed by the Ministry of Labor identified 29 occupations as hazardous for workers under 18 years. Activities banned for workers under 18 years of age include working in mines, stone crushing, carpet weaving, ship breaking, deep-sea fishing; producing glass bangles, fireworks, and tobacco; and work with heavy machinery, live electrical wires, and between the hours of 10 p.m. and 8 a.m. See Government of Pakistan, "Related Definitions," (Islamabad: Ministry of Labour, Manpower, and Overseas Pakistanis). Six of these activities were chosen by the government and ILO-IPEC for prioritized action under a Timebound Program to assist the Government of Pakistan in its efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. See ILO-IPEC, "March 2004 Timebound Technical Progress Report," 2. See also ILO-IPEC, "Time-Bound Program in Pakistan, Project Document," 32 and 48.

³⁰⁷² ILO-IPEC Official, August 16, 2003.

³⁰⁷³ In September 2002, ILO-IPEC initiated the second phase of a program to remove children from the carpet sector. ILO-IPEC, "Combating Child Labour in the Carpet Industry in Pakistan (Phase II)," (Geneva: 2002). From August 1997 to June 2004, a USDOL-funded project worked to remove and rehabilitate child workers from the soccer ball stitching industry in the Sialkot district. Since the project began, the incidence of child labor in the soccer ball stitching industry in Sialkot has been significantly reduced, and the ILO-IPEC monitoring system established has been replicated in other industries that rely heavily on labor from child workers, including carpet-weaving and surgical instruments manufacturing. See Sarah Javeed, F.S. Lavador, and Mohammad Saifullah, "Midterm Self Evaluation of Elimination of Child Labour in the Soccer Ball Industry in Sialkot, Pakistan, Phase II," (Islamabad: ILO, 2002), 6.

³⁰⁷⁴ Government of Pakistan, "Child Labour Programmes: Ipec," (Islamabad). See also ILO, "The Effective Abolition of Child Labour: Review of Annual Reports under the Follow-up to the Ilo Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work," (Geneva: 2002), 447-48. See also Child Labour Unit, "National Policy and Action Plan," 44.

³⁰⁷⁵ Save the Children - UK, "Addressing Child Labour through Quality Education for All Technical Progress Report," (London: 2004).

³⁰⁷⁶ ILO-IPEC, "Tpr-Sept. 2004," 3.

³⁰⁷⁷ Ibid.

Due to critical needs in its education system, the Government of Pakistan is receiving intensified support from the World Bank in order to expedite its eligibility for fast track financing for the Education for All program. The Education for All Fast Track Initiative, which is funded by the World Bank and other donors, aims to provide all children with a primary school education by the year 2015.³⁰⁷⁸ In addition, the ADB has supported multiple education projects in the Southern Punjab and the Sindh Province to provide incentives for girls to attend school and to promote the attendance, access, and quality of educational programs in general.³⁰⁷⁹

³⁰⁷⁸ World Bank, "World Bank Announces First Group of Countries for 'Education for All' Fast Track," (Washington, D.C.: 2002).

³⁰⁷⁹ ADB, *Primary School Quality Improvement* [online] (2001 [cited June 3, 2004]); available from <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Profiles/PPTA/30208012.ASP>. See also ADB, *Decentralized Elementary Education Project (Sindh)* [online] (2002 [cited June 3, 2004]); available from <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Profiles/LOAN/30208013.ASP>.