

Pakistan: Child labour in GB

Friday 5 November 2021, by [Dawn \(Pakistan\)](#) (Date first published: 29 October 2021).

THE results of a recent survey conducted in Gilgit-Baltistan on the extent of child labour there has put the number of child workers at 50,000. According to the Gilgit Baltistan Child Labour Survey 2018-2019, most of these children work in hazardous conditions and are doubly vulnerable to mental health issues. The survey stated that one in seven children in the region is trapped in labour. The larger number of young workers belong to the rural parts, while 10pc work in the urban areas. Though the figures appear alarming, they are not surprising. Unfortunately, the sight of children performing domestic work, working as porters, mechanics, waiters, etc is ubiquitous across Pakistan. This is so despite the fact that Pakistan is a signatory to the ILO's core conventions on child labour. The latter is also something which goes against the country's own laws. The Constitution prohibits hiring children younger than 14 for any kind of hazardous work. The Gilgit-Baltistan Child Labour Survey 2018-2019, the first such survey conducted after 1996, is a significant document as it provides an insight into the scale of this damaging phenomenon in GB where many socioeconomic issues are underreported because of logistical constraints.

Though the survey sheds light on the extent of child labour in GB, its findings are relevant for other parts as well where the prevalence of child labour may be even higher. According to an ILO survey of 2012, there were at least 12.5m children younger than 14 years who are part of the labour force in Pakistan. The ILO predicted an increase in this number, greater in comparison to other countries with similar socioeconomic conditions. The 2012 survey also revealed that half the 12.5m working children were younger than 10 while 264,000 worked as domestic help. Similar surveys are needed so that a true and current picture emerges of the circumstances of child labour in the country. The government can develop measures to combat this scourge only when it has the hard facts before it.

Dawn

[Click here](#) to subscribe to ESSF newsletters in English and/or French.

P.S.

Dawn

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1654697>