



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
21 March 2025

Original: English  
English, French and Spanish only

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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Seventy-ninth session

Geneva, 9–27 February 2026

Consideration of reports: reports submitted by States Parties  
in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

### Replies of Pakistan to the list of issues in relation to its second periodic report\*

[Date received: 20 December 2024]

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## I. General information

### A. Legal Framework & Training and Strengthening of Judiciary

1. Pakistan has made considerable progress in ensuring that Covenant rights are justiciable in the domestic legal order. The Courts and administrative departments are empowered to take cognizance in case of breach of any rights enshrined in the Covenant. The domestic laws contain provisions in line with the Covenant such as right to social security is protected under the social security laws. The enactment of laws at both the federal and provincial levels has enhanced the rights guaranteed by the Covenant. Notable among these are:

#### *Federal*

- The Maternity and Paternity Leave Act 2023 and Day Care Centres Act 2023 ensure that the day care services are made available and eligible and employees are entitled to paid leaves to provide care for the newborns, thereby, fostering work-life balance and family support.
- The Children (Pledging of labour) (Amendment) Act 2022 enhances punishment awarded to individuals responsible for pledging child labour.
- The Islamabad Capital Territory Domestic Workers Act 2022 (Act No. XXV of 2022) ensures fundamental labour rights to domestic workers in Islamabad.
- The Islamabad Capital Territory Food Safety Act 2021 provides for establishment of the Islamabad Food Authority for the safety and standards of food and to protect public health.

#### *Punjab*

- The Sugar Factories Control (Amendment) Act 2021 ensures payment to sugar cane growers in a timely and transparent manner.
- The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) (Amendment) Act 2018 contains provisions to strengthen and streamline inspection mechanisms for bonded labour.
- The Home-based Workers Act 2023 brings home-based workers into the ambit of the formal economy by giving them rights like decent working hours and employment security.

#### *Sindh*

- The Reproductive Healthcare Rights Act 2019 facilitates reproductive healthcare and promotes reproductive health rights.
- The Metalliferous Mines Act 2021 was enacted to consolidate the laws relating to the regulation and inspection of Metalliferous other than coal mines and matters ancillary thereto.

#### *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*

- Mines Safety Inspection and Regulation Act 2019 consolidates and amends the law relating to the safety of mines and mining operations, inspection and regulation of mines; mining operations and materials used therein; and to promote and improve the safety and health of mine workers.
- Vagrancy Restraint Act 2020 provide for care, rehabilitation and reintegration of vagrants.
- Panahgah Act 2020 stipulates establishment of Panahgah (shelters) for night stay facility to the shelterless people with comfort and dignity.

- Home Based Workers (Welfare and Protection) Act 2021 provides protection and welfare of home-based workers and regulates their working conditions and terms of employment.

*Balochistan*

- Payment of Wages Act 2021 regulates the payment of wages of all factory workers, industrial establishments, commercial establishments and other organizations including domestic industries, home based workplaces and NGOs to whom wages/payment are owed by employers.
- Maternity Benefits Act 2022 provides safeguards to working women during maternity, cash maternity benefits, and employment security in establishment.

2. The jurisdiction of Pakistan's constitutional courts is frequently invoked under Articles 184 (3) and 199 of the Constitution, to enforce fundamental rights. During the reporting period, a total of 389,575 cases, including Constitutional Petitions and *Suo Moto* cases, were instituted before the Supreme Court and the High Courts in Pakistan.

**ICESCR Rights invoked/applied by Constitutional Courts (2023–24)**

Courts	No. of Cases	Disposed	Pendency
Supreme Court of Pakistan	277	168	109
Islamabad High Court	31 181	31 702	6 581
Lahore High Court (2022)	357 481	345 598	68 936
Sindh High Court	110 142	115 251	30 358
Peshawar High Court	20 425	11 200	5 800
Balochistan High Court	11 392	6 440	4 952
<b>Total</b>	<b>530 898</b>	<b>510 359</b>	<b>116 736</b>

3. Some of prominent cases where the Covenant has been invoked by the Superior Courts in Pakistan include as follows.

S.	Case Title	Judgment Summary
1.	<i>Uzma Naveed Chaudhary v. Federation of Pakistan</i> (PLD 2022 SC 783)	This judgment reinforced that the right to work is essential for earning a livelihood and is inherently connected to economic rights. The right to dignity is an absolute, non-negotiable, and inviolable fundamental right, ensuring that individuals are not marginalized. The protection against discrimination is vital for equal opportunities in the workplace and for cultural rights.
2	<i>Muhammad Ahmad Pansota and Others v. Federation of Pakistan and Other</i> (2020 PLD 229 Lahore)	The petitioners sought the Court's directives to direct the government authorities to manage surplus food in Punjab, emphasizing the right to food as a fundamental human right. The Court cited Article 11 of the ICESCR, affirming that the right to life includes adequate food, which is essential for human dignity. It highlighted the state's obligation to ensure food security and proper resource management, noting that violations of the right to food can adversely affect other fundamental rights. Ultimately, the judgment stressed that no citizen should experience hunger and must have access to sufficient, nutritious food.

S.	Case Title	Judgment Summary
3	<i>Getz Pharma (Pvt) Ltd. vs. Federation of Pakistan, through Secretary, Ministry of National Regulation and Services</i> (2017 PLD 157 Khi)	The Sindh High Court noted that, although the Constitution of Pakistan does not explicitly recognize the right to health, it is addressed in the ICESCR. Given Pakistan's status as a signatory, the court found it appropriate to draw upon the ICESCR as a reference point. This occasion arose during a case brought by a drug manufacturer seeking a license for their medication.
4	Human Rights Case No. 17599 of 2018 (2019 SCMR 247)	The Supreme Court noticed the increasing population in the country and stated that the right to life, as outlined in Article 9 of the Constitution, includes the need for a decent standard of living. The Court emphasized that controlling population growth is important to achieve this standard. It also pointed out that Articles 3, 37, and 38 of the Constitution should be prioritized to support social and economic progress.

4. Pakistan's Constitution establishes a comprehensive framework to safeguard judicial independence as committed in the preamble of the Constitution. The Supreme Court and High Courts have original jurisdiction to interpret laws, take cognizance of cases pertaining to violation of fundamental rights and of public importance. Disciplinary oversight for the superior judiciary lies with the Supreme Judicial Council (Article 209), while High Courts supervise the functioning of subordinate courts under Article 203. Additionally, grievances in the lower judiciary are addressed through Provincial Judicial Service Tribunals independent of the Government and processed under respective provincial Government Servants (Efficiency and Discipline) Rules.

5. From 2018 to 2024, Federal & Provincial Judicial Academies have actively provided training on ICESCR to judges, lawyers, prosecutors, and law enforcement officials. These efforts have enhanced the understanding and application of ICESCR provisions, promoting human rights and the rule of law.

#### Details of the trainings conducted are as follows

Judicial Academy	No. of Trainings & Seminars	No. of Training Participants
Federal	78	5 012
Punjab	805	49 168
Sindh	284	11 877
KP	271	6 337
Balochistan	57	1 447

6. Pakistan's National Assembly and Senate have established Parliamentary Committees on Human Rights. The NA Standing Committee on Human Rights is a 20-member committee headed by an opposition member. The committee introduces bills to Parliament, proposes amendments, scrutinizes State compliance with the UN human rights treaties, initiates inquiries on its own motion, compels production of evidence & witnesses before the committee, monitors the adequacy of the existing national system for the protection of human rights, and reviews the allocation & spending of State funds for the promotion and protection of human rights in the country. The Senate Functional Committee is a 10-member committee that reviews human rights situation in the country, overlooks the functioning of state apparatus related to human rights, undertakes review of laws, bills and makes proposals for legislations. These committees convene regular meetings on improving protections and safeguards for labour, minorities, women's rights, rights of PWDs, enhancing environmental protection in the wake of climate change, appointment of members of human rights commissions (NCHR, NCSW, NCRC), and addressing overall human rights concerns.

## B. Strengthening of Provincial and Local Government Institutions

7. Over the past five years, Pakistan has made notable strides in strengthening provincial and local governments' financial and administrative capabilities. The 2009 National Finance Commission (NFC) Award revised funding formulas to address expenditure needs and improve provincial financial autonomy. It factors in human development, not only population or land size, for fairer fund distribution. The 7th NFC Award has progressively increased provincial shares each year, providing resources critical to fostering fiscal independence and reducing regional inequalities.

### NFC Award (in billion rupees)

Year	Punjab	Sindh	KP	Balochistan	Total
2018	1 205	616	404	238	2 463
2019	1 135	592	379	295	2 402
2020	1 439	742	478	265	2 924
2021	1 691	848	559	313	3 412
2022	2 042	1 019	679	389	4 129
2023	2 676	1 362	894	494	5 426
2024	3 695	1 854	1 222	668	7 438

8. Provincial development funding in Pakistan has significantly increased, from Rs. 674 billion in 2020–2021 to Rs. 2,095 billion in 2024–2025, reflecting a strong commitment to infrastructure and service improvements. Punjab launched the Punjab Cities Program in 16 cities with a total budget of Rs. 39,483 million, allocated to projects like wastewater treatment, roads, water supply, streetlights, parks, and solid waste management. Further projects focus on IT-based monitoring, sustainable waste management, and comprehensive land use plans for urban areas. The overall landscape of development budget allocations is as under:

### PSDP Allocation (in billion rupees)

Year	Federal PSDP Budget	Provincial Development Budget	National Development Budget
2017	1 001	1 112	2 113
2018	1 030	1 013	2 043
2019	951	912	1 863
2020	650	674	1 324
2021	900	1 235	2 135
2022	800	1 463	2 263
2023	1 150	1 559	2 709
2024	1 400	2 095	3 495

9. During 2018–2024, the Provincial Governments have cumulatively provided employment to 684,099 against newly sanctioned posts. In Punjab, 541,638 posts were created for initial recruitment followed by 111,188 posts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 30,777 posts in Sindh and 496 posts sanctioned in Balochistan.

10. During the reporting period, significant efforts have been made to improve coordination among federal, provincial, and territorial governments to ensure that all individuals can equally enjoy their economic, social, and cultural rights. At the federal level, the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination has been established to advance effective coordination among provinces. For implementation of human rights conventions including the Covenant, Treaty Implementation Cells have been established at the federal and provincial levels. A national mechanism for implementation and reporting on the Covenant (NMRF) has also been established at the Ministry of Human Rights.

### C. National Human Rights Institutions

11. The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) in Pakistan operates autonomously and has received 'A' status accreditation from GANHRI, affirming its alignment with the Paris Principles. A transparent selection process for NCHR members and more than 200% budget increase from Rs. 70.8 million in FY 2021–22 to Rs. 183 million in FY 2024–25 further supports its independence and operational capacity. The Chairperson's role as Principal Accounting Officer enhances the NCHR's financial autonomy. Since its inception, the NCHR has managed 7,080 complaints, initiated 1,271 suo moto cases, and completed 173 jail visits, 28 fact-finding missions, and published 50 reports on human rights issues, including child and bonded labor, the 2022 floods impact, and economic rights for persons belonging to minorities.

### D. Human Rights Defenders

12. Pakistan has enacted key protections for human rights defenders (HRDs), including the federal Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act 2021, and similar laws in Sindh, which address issues like enforced disappearances and foster safer environments for advocacy and media. Punjab supports HRDs protection by addressing missing persons cases through the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances and a Provincial Task Force. Sindh has established specialized police units and Human Rights Cells across districts, focusing on abuses affecting ethnic and religious minorities, while also enhancing police capacity through human rights training and public awareness campaigns. Balochistan has strengthened HRDs protections via initiatives such as the Gender Protection Unit and collaboration with UN Women, which assists with gender sensitivity training and monitoring.

13. The figures below highlight the number of cases of enforced disappearances received, disposed of, and still under investigation.

Areas	Receipt of Cases	Disposal of Cases	Under Investigation
Punjab	1 688	1 426	262
Sindh	1 827	1 647	180
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	3 555	2 240	1 315
Balochistan	2 820	2 374	446
ICT	384	326	58
Gilgit-Baltistan	19	8	2
Azad Jammu & Kashmir	70	56	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>10 363</b>	<b>8 077</b>	<b>2 277</b>

14. Legislative reviews and amendments have been made to prevent the misuse of cyber security and anti-terrorism laws against HRDs, with strengthened judicial oversight and continuous training for law enforcement and legal.

### E. Registration of Civil Society Organizations

15. Pakistan promotes the role of CSOs and provides mechanism of registration at the national, provincial and district levels under various legal frameworks such as the Societies Registration Act, Trusts Act, or as Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs), each offering distinct regulatory benefits. At the Federal level, the Islamabad Charities Registration and Waqf Properties Acts were passed in 2020 and 2021, respectively. Punjab introduced an online charity registration portal with low fees, registering 4,351 organizations by 2023. Sindh's Charities Registration & Regulation Commission also launched an online portal, promoting transparency without restrictive measures. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa passed the Charities Act in 2019, adhering to FATF guidelines and enabling simplified online registration. Balochistan

established the Charities Registration & Regulation Authority, overseeing 1,370 NGOs and partnering with police for awareness initiatives.

## F. Business & Human Rights

16. Pakistan's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (2021–2026) has shown promising results. The Inter-Ministerial and Inter Provincial Steering Committees have been established, a dedicated NAP-BHR website, voluntary guidelines on human rights due diligence for businesses, and a Human Rights Due Diligence Framework is also being considered. Judicial initiatives have enhanced access to justice through the Alternative Dispute Resolution (Accreditation) Rules 2023, specialized courts for sexual and gender-based violence, and additional labor courts. Additionally, the processing of over 70 Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter Terrorism Financing (CTF) cases demonstrates strengthened judicial efficiency in handling financial crimes.

### Summary of cases brought by persons or groups affected by business operations and the remedies provided from 2018 to 2024

Sr.	Case Title	Case description
1.	<i>Public Interest Law Association of Pakistan v. The Province of Punjab</i> (2023 SCMR 969):	The Supreme Court ruled that environmental impact assessments must be conducted before issuing small-scale mining licenses, emphasizing sustainable economic growth.
2.	<i>D.G. Khan Cement Company LTD v. Federation of Pakistan</i> (2021 SCMR 834):	The Supreme Court upheld government restrictions on industrial activities in environmentally sensitive areas, preventing the expansion of a cement plant to protect the environment.
3.	<i>Human Rights Case No. 318 of 1993</i> (2021 SCMR 512):	The Supreme Court halted stone crushing in the Margalla Hills to preserve environmental integrity, directing an end to commercial activities harmful to the area.
4.	<i>Abdul Jabbar Khan Bangash v. Federation of Pakistan</i> (PLD 2023 Islamabad 209):	The Supreme Court highlighted the need for legislation on daycare centers to support working parents, particularly women, in accordance with international human rights conventions.

## G. Climate Change

17. Pakistan's commitments under its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement include ambitious climate mitigation targets such as achieving 60% renewable energy consumption, a moratorium on new coal plants, promotion of electric vehicles, and an extensive afforestation plan. Key initiatives like the Upscaling Green Pakistan Initiative launched by the Ministry of Climate Change focus on greenhouse gas reduction through green projects, while the Sindh Government's mangrove restoration supports carbon sequestration and coastal ecosystem protection.

18. Pakistan also aims for a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, 35% of which is contingent on international support. The Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination has established the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to address climate impacts on vulnerable populations, identifying adaptation measures across key sectors and coordinating local adaptation plans. Provincial efforts include Punjab's ban on stubble burning and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's support of NDC objectives with 195 projects worth PKR 401 billion for mitigation and adaptation.

19. In response to the 2022 floods, Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) distributed around 10 billion rupees in compensation to over 50,000 affected people. New

Humanitarian Response Facilities and Flospans have improved relief delivery, with lessons from this experience informing adaptive policies that focus on proactive disaster mitigation. The Punjab Environment Protection Department's hazard mapping in vulnerable districts supports early warning systems and enhances community preparedness. Balochistan has similarly bolstered its disaster response through simulation exercises, emergency operation centers, and stockpiling relief supplies.

20. Nationally, the Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination and Ministry of Water Resources coordinate adaptation plans, with the National Flood Protection Plan providing flood response strategies. Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMA) manage localized disaster response and preparation, while Environmental Protection Departments oversee climate adaptation.

## **II. Issues relating to the general provisions of the Covenant (arts. 1–5)**

### **A. Right to freely dispose of natural wealth and resources**

21. Pakistan's land acquisition laws are primarily governed by the Land Acquisition Act of 1894, which outlines the process for acquiring land for public purpose, which is in line with the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and fair compensation based on market value of the land and any structures or improvements on the property. The law also allows for compensation for any losses incurred due to the acquisition, such as loss of income or livelihood. No process has been initiated for acquisition of 45000 acres for commercial purposes in Gadap Town, District Malir. The compensation grant will be awarded to the affectees to Malir Expressway accordingly to protect the local communities.

22. The principle of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is upheld in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines and Mineral Act 2017, which prioritizes mineral titles for local communities via public meetings (Jalsa-e-Aam). Amendments to land revenue laws are also being considered to align with local customs. In Balochistan, the BMR Rule 2002 prohibits mining without the consent of local communities.

23. The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) complies with FPIC in its operations, ensuring community involvement in hydrocarbon projects while safeguarding their rights. OGDCL engages with local tribal communities on land and resource issues, resolving disputes through negotiations and provincial government interventions.

### **B. Maximum available resources**

24. According to the World Bank, the poverty rate in Pakistan for 2024 is 40% while in 2023 it stood at 37.2% as compared to 39.8% in 2018, with 22% of the population living below the national poverty line. Furthermore, 'Household Integrated Income & Expenditure Survey' is scheduled for 2024–25 which will be utilized to draft National Poverty and Inequality Report and chart the future course of action.

25. On the fiscal side, efforts under the Finance Act 2024 have led to significant improvements in tax collection, with a 40.7 percent increase in FBR net provisional collection, totaling Rs. 10,085.2 billion compared to Rs 7,164.14 billion in the preceding year. However, economic contractions have impacted revenues, with the FBR tax-to-GDP ratio averaging 9.5 percent.

Years	Expenditure	Expenditure GDP (%)	Safety Nets	Water & Sanitation	Housing	Health	Education	Defence
2013–14	5 026	20.0	603	34	0.6	161	480	630
2014–15	5 388	19.6	503	32	0.7	202	538	720
2015–16	5 796	19.6	460	54.1	0.6	231	599	776

Years	Expenditure	Expenditure GDP (%)	Safety Nets	Water & Sanitation	Housing	Health	Education	Defence
2016–17	6 801	21.3	438	63.6	0.5	268	663	860
2017–18	7 488	21.6	404	72	0.4	329	699	999
2018–19	8 346	19.1	328	77.9	0.4	416	829	1 100
2019–20	9 649	20.3	388	45.2	0.7	422	868	1 153
2020–21	10 307	18.5	638	70.3	1.8	505	901	1 289
2021–22	13 295	20.0	1 186	64.8	2.2	586	802	1 373
2022–23	16 155	19.1	1 255	119	1.8	919	1 102	1 567
2023–24	20 476	19.4	1 113	124.4	2	843	1 251	1 859

26. COVID-19 restrictions that began in late March 2020 severely impacted Pakistan's economy, eroded significant developmental gains due to decreased economic activity and increased pandemic-related expenditures. In response, the government introduced several initiatives, including a Rs. 1.2 trillion COVID-19 Stimulus Package for medical supplies, financial support for vulnerable families, and various relief measures for farmers and businesses. The Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program aimed to assist the most affected, disbursing Rs. 178.9 billion to 14.8 million beneficiaries through the Benazir Income Support Program. Additionally, the State Bank of Pakistan implemented non-fiscal measures, such as the Temporary Economic Refinance Facility, Rozgar Scheme, Loan Restructuring Scheme, and Debt Servicing Relief to support the economy during the pandemic.

Measures	Size (Billion Rs)	% of GDP
TERF (Time bound refinance facility for hospitals and new investments)	548	1.3
Rozgar scheme (To prevent layoffs by financing wages and salaries of employees)	238	0.6
Loan Restructuring Scheme (To provide relief for borrowers affected by economic disruptions)	246	0.6
Loan Deferment Policy (To ease cash constraints of borrowers)	657	1.6
Debt Servicing Relief (SBP reduced the policy rate by 625 basis points in a short span of time)	470	1.1
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>2 159</b>	<b>5.2</b>

## C. Corruption

27. Various measures have been implemented across Pakistan to create a safe environment for reporting alleged corruption, protecting individuals from retaliation. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) addresses public complaints of corruption confidentially, ensuring the safety of informants. Additionally, the Prime Minister Citizen's Portal allows complainants to remain anonymous. In Balochistan, the Anti-Corruption Establishment Bureau (ACEB) is enhancing transparency in government operations and establishing mechanisms to protect whistleblowers. Public awareness campaigns highlight the negative impacts of corruption, and the ACEB has developed technological systems, including a hotline and Complaint Management Information System (CMIS), to track corruption trends. Proposed amendments to the Powers and Procedure Rules 2011 aim to introduce dedicated hotlines and financial incentives for whistleblowers while maintaining their confidentiality.

28. Over the past several years, anti-corruption efforts in Pakistan have intensified, with a mix of fines and imprisonment serving as deterrents. Prosecution cases typically resulted in fines and imprisonment terms of 1 to 3 years. The Anti-Corruption Establishment Sindh has implemented significant reforms, including restructuring and automation, while the

Sindh Witness Protection Act, 2013, ensures the protection of witnesses and whistleblowers through various safety measures.

**Statistical Data**  
**Corruption Complaint Disposal 2018–2022**

Province	Complaints	Convictions
Balochistan	71	11
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	12 591	10 753
Punjab	120 669	8 336
Sindh	25 139	15 166
<b>Total</b>	<b>158 470</b>	<b>34 266</b>

**Corruption Complaint Disposal 2022–2024 – Report Corruption App**

Year	Complaints	Disposed	Inquiries	Disposed	Cases Reg.	Disposed
2022–23	28 402	24 155	5 657	3 680	1 239	939
2023–24	23 814	23 174	6 160	5 238	1 291	1 048
<b>Total</b>	<b>52 216</b>	<b>47 329</b>	<b>11 817</b>	<b>8 918</b>	<b>2 530</b>	<b>1 987</b>

**D. Non-discrimination**

29. Pakistan's legal and institutional frameworks are grounded in principles of equality and non-discrimination through existing constitutional and legislative frameworks. For example, the Constitution's preamble and multiple articles (such as Articles 3, 4, 25, and 36) promote equality, prohibit discrimination, and safeguard minority rights. However, Article 227(1) of Pakistan's Constitution prohibits laws that are repugnant to Islamic injunctions, preventing the State from decriminalizing same-sex relations.

**Measures to Combat Violence against Minority Communities**

30. In response to the growing concerns about violence and hatred targeting minority communities, the government has implemented a multi-faceted strategy. This includes the additional deployment of police forces to ensure protection, as seen during the Jaranwala incident where 3,000 personnel were dispatched to check further instigation of violence. Administrative measures have also been established, such as the formation of a Task Force on Developing Strategy for Religious Tolerance in 2022 and the creation of Interfaith Harmony Committees at the district level. The Sindh Police has set up dedicated Minority Desks in all its 30 districts, staffed by police officers from minority groups, to facilitate better communication and support.

**Use of Blasphemy Laws in Pakistan**

31. To combat mob violence and protect victims of blasphemy, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been established across all provinces, ensuring thorough investigations and safeguarding accused individuals from mob justice. Legislative amendments aim to reduce false accusations by mandating that higher-level police officers handle complaints related to blasphemy laws and restricting cognizance of certain offences without government approval. Following recent violence against Christians in Jaranwala, the Punjab government provided Rs. 2 million in compensation to about 80 affected families.

32. Blasphemy laws in Pakistan are applied uniformly to all citizens, regardless of religion, with over 95% of accused individuals being Muslims. This indicates that the laws are not specifically targeted against any religious group but are intended to maintain societal peace. The government has taken steps to prevent the misuse of these laws, including amending legal procedures and requiring preliminary inquiries to be conducted by District Police Officers. The legal system continuously monitors statistics on blasphemy cases, including

the number of FIRs, convictions, and acquittals, reflecting ongoing efforts to adjudicate such cases fairly.

33. The Government has made amendments in the FIA Schedule wherein any complaint under section 295-A, 295-C, 298 and 298-A of PPC would fall within the purview of the FIA and would have the powers to check misuse of blasphemy cases, in parallel to the provincial police departments.

#### **Complaint status on cases of blasphemy 2018–2023**

Year	FIRs	Convictions	Acquittals	Accused Arrested
2018	16	0	0	16
2019	40	2	3	9
2020	65	2	3	40
2021	70	8	2	43
2022	117	6	15	83
2023	184	5	23	217
2024	35	2	7	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>454</b>

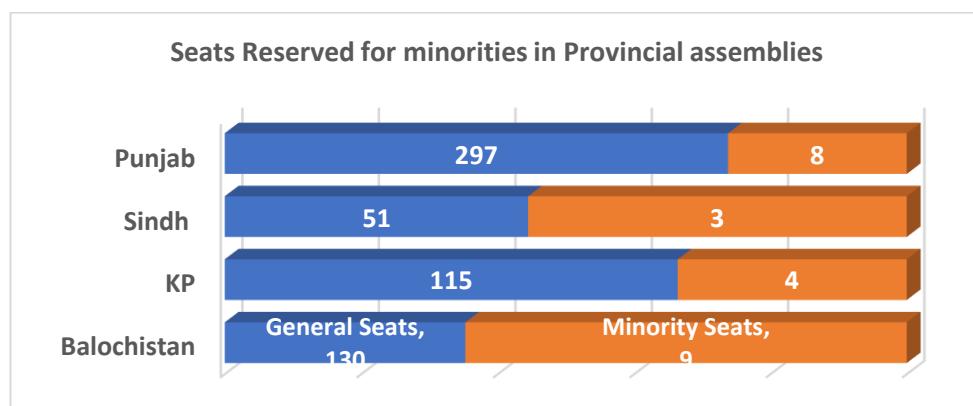
#### **Economic Participation**

34. In 2009, the Government introduced a 5% reservation of positions from BPS-01 to BPS-22 for religious minority groups which is being implemented by Federal as well as Provincial Governments. This policy aims to enhance the representation and increased participation of minorities in the public sector. The Supreme Court's landmark judgment in *Mubarak Ali Babar v. Punjab Public Service Commission* upheld the constitutional protection of these quotas. Measures have also been taken to combat discrimination in job recruitment, such as banning "Christian only" conditions for sanitation workers.

#### **Political representation**

35. In Pakistan, the representation of minority groups in all legislative bodies is ensured through a system of reserved seats. The Minorities are adequately represented with allocation of 10 seats in the National Assembly and 4 seats in the Senate.

36. Total number of seats in each Provincial Assembly of Pakistan including those reserved minorities are as follows:



#### **Status of Transgender Act**

37. The Government of Pakistan has filed an appeal against the Federal Shariat Court (FSC)'s ruling in the Supreme Court, highlighting its commitment to upholding the rights of transgender persons while seeking legal clarity. The Supreme Court will interpret the legality of these provisions, considering the broader implications of the FSC's ruling in relation to

the Constitution and Islamic law. Despite the FSC's ruling, the government continues to implement the 2018 Transgender Protection Act, exemplified by the establishment of a Transgender Protection Center in Islamabad, which provides temporary shelter, rehabilitation, and medical and psychological care for the transgender community.

### Services Provided to Transgenders 2021–2023

<i>Shelter</i>	<i>Legal Aid</i>	<i>Medical Assistance</i>	<i>Psychological Counselling</i>	<i>Complaints Redressal</i>
142	200	192	155	50

38. Moreover, the Government of Pakistan has conducted sensitization sessions and consultative meetings for hundreds of law enforcement officials on the Transgender Persons Act and Rules, providing police guidelines for effective implementation. The fundamental rights of transgender persons are protected under the Constitution and related laws, including their right to inheritance, with financial support offered through the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). Health Cards for transgender individuals have also been launched with assistance from relevant ministries. To facilitate their registration in the national database, workshops with National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) officials and consultative meetings with grassroots transgender leaders were held. Additionally, Helpline 1099 addresses grievances and connect transgender individuals with authorities in cases of violence.

### Constitutional Petitions on Discrimination against Minorities, their nature and their outcomes

<i>Sr.</i>	<i>Case Title</i>	<i>Case Description</i>
1.	<i>Human Rights Commission of Pakistan v. Federation of Pakistan</i> (2022 SCMR 643)	The Supreme Court addressed the demolition of a Dharamshala in Karachi, directing the FIA to protect it and report on its status. The Court also ordered the rehabilitation of several temples in Lahore and Nagar parkar.
2.	<i>Human Rights Commission of Pakistan v. Federation of Pakistan</i> (PLD 2021 SC 925):	The Court responded to an attack on the Teri Mandar, a Hindu temple, issuing strict orders against the perpetrators and mandating that recovered funds from those responsible be used for the temple's maintenance.
3.	Suo Motu Case No.1 of 2014 (PLD 2014 SC 699):	The Supreme Court issued guidelines to the Federal Government for the protection of minority rights, including establishing a task force for religious tolerance, developing an educational curriculum to promote social harmony, and creating a National Council for minority rights. It also called for a Special Police Force to protect minority worship sites and for prompt action against violations of minority rights.

### Persons with Disability

39. Pakistan is actively supporting persons with disabilities (PWDs) through the ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act 2020, which aims to foster an inclusive society by facilitating PWDs' full participation in health, education, and employment. The Council for Rights of Disabled Persons (CRPD) oversees the law's implementation, including the Medical Assessment Board, which has issued 3,322 disability certificates to date.

40. The Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE) and Provincial Departments for Social Welfare provide education and rehabilitation services, with DGSE serving 1,446 individuals in Islamabad through special centers that offer accessible education, training, therapy, and assistive aids. The DGSE also promotes self-employment through

toolkit distribution, operates a Hi-Tech Orthopaedic Workshop for artificial limbs, and conducts community awareness programs, medical camps, and seminars to further support PWDs and their families.

#### **Status of Afghans and Non-refoulement**

41. Pakistan is actively working to respond to reports of violations of the economic, social, and cultural rights of Afghan nationals, especially women and children, in light of deportations by implementing the Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan (IFRP), which was approved by the Cabinet and initiated in November 2023.

42. This plan focuses on identifying and repatriating illegal, unregistered, and visa-overstaying foreigners through a phased approach, ensuring that the deportation process is orderly and humane. Currently, Pakistan hosts 1.42 million registered Afghan refugees, 0.85 million Afghan Citizenship Card holders, 1.5 million unregistered Afghans, and 0.29 million cases of overstaying.

43. To further protect Afghan nationals, the IFRP also scrutinizes individuals with fraudulent identification documents and holds regular review meetings to ensure compliance with legal standards while addressing national security concerns. Additionally, Pakistan has established Humanitarian Safe Passage (HSP) exit permits to facilitate the relocation of Afghan nationals to third countries, preventing forced returns to potentially harmful environments.

#### **Relief in flood affected areas**

44. In response to the 2022 floods, Pakistan's Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Policy prioritized initiatives in flood prediction, early warning systems, and disaster management. Notable projects include "Transforming the Indus Basin with Climate Resilient Agriculture". In Punjab, the government managed the aftermath of the 2023 Sutlej River floods, which displaced over 825,000 residents, providing temporary shelters with food and essential supplies, including community-based shelters for displaced women to ensure their safety.

45. Sindh contributed to interprovincial collaboration by supplying relief items to 500 households in Balochistan. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa implemented protective measures for displaced women, establishing specialized Investigation Units and Gender-Based Violence Courts under the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021, leading to a decrease in gender-based violence complaints. KP also sheltered approximately 18,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) during the flood crisis and coordinated with relevant authorities for future emergency preparedness.

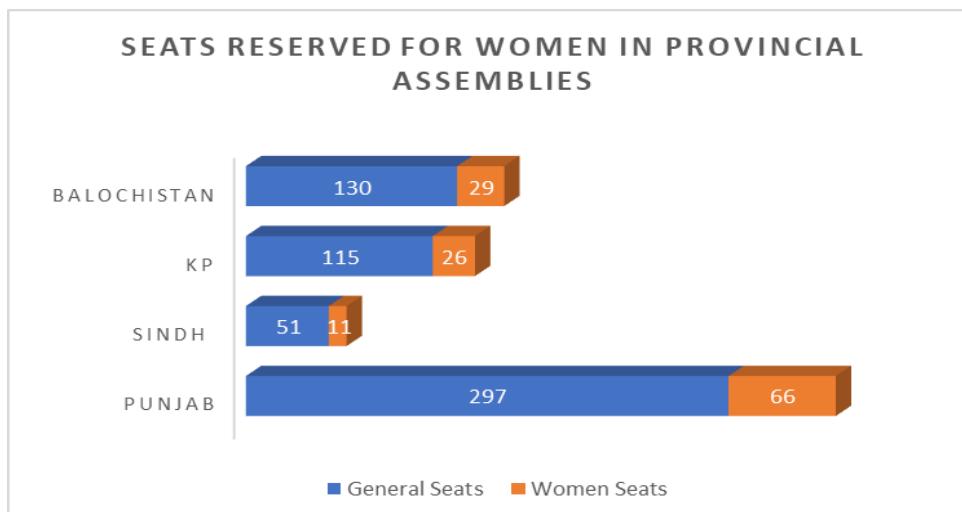
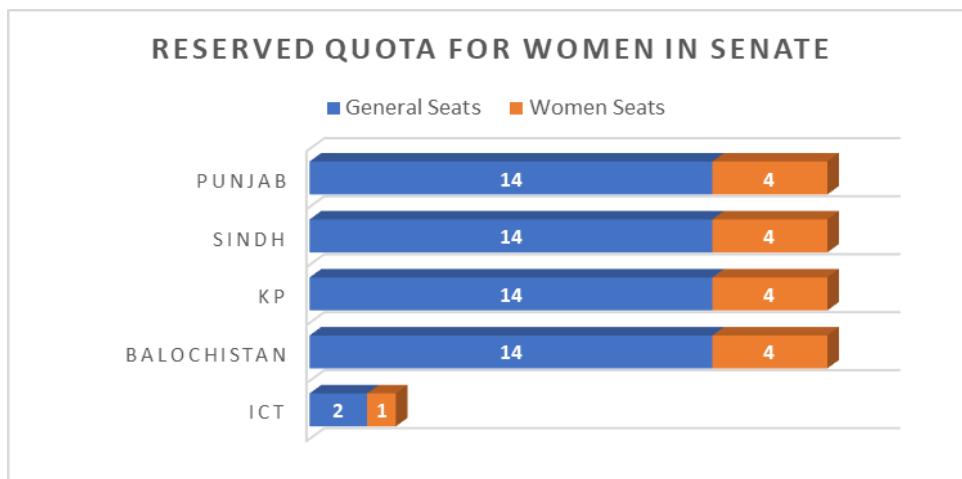
46. In Balochistan, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) rescued over 30,460 individuals and distributed supplies to more than 44,000 households, despite logistical challenges. PDMA established disaster preparedness measures, including disaster villages with essential supplies and pre-positioned relief items for up to 50,000 households, enhancing the province's capacity to respond to future flooding events and delivering 11,500 relief packages with additional support from NGOs and international organizations.

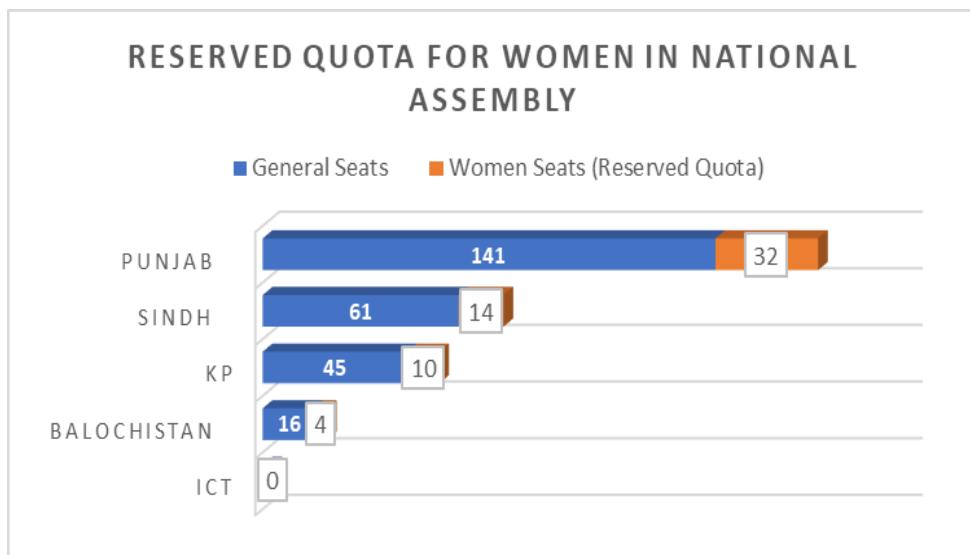
### **E. Equal rights of men and women**

47. Pakistan's Constitution establishes a robust legal framework for promoting gender equality and empowering women, emphasizing human rights and fundamental freedoms. Article 25 guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination based on sex, while Article 34 mandates measures to ensure women's full participation in all areas of national life. To support this, various national policies and strategic frameworks have been implemented, including the National Gender Policy Framework (2022), which focuses on enhancing women's roles in governance, education, economic empowerment, health, and safety. Additionally, each province has developed policies to monitor progress and provide legal, financial, and institutional support for women's empowerment.

48. Federal initiatives further bolster women's empowerment, such as the Prime Minister's Initiative for Women Empowerment, a Rs. 5,777 million project offering interest-free loans, skills training, and support for widows. The Companies Act 2017 and the Code of Corporate Governance Regulation 2019 require female representation on corporate boards, while the Women Pink Bus Service and Women on Wheels Project enhance mobility and safety for women. Economic empowerment remains a government priority, with programs like the Banking on Equality Policy and the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), which provides cash transfers to 9.1 million women, fostering financial independence and participation in decision-making.

49. Article 51 of the Constitution of Pakistan reserves seats for women in Parliament and Provincial Assemblies: 17 in the Senate, 60 in the National Assembly, and 132 in Provincial Assemblies. The Elections Act of 2017 promotes women's electoral engagement by invalidating results in constituencies with low female turnout and requiring political parties to nominate female candidates for 5% of non-reserved seats. In the 2018 elections, the Election Commission implemented initiatives to track female voter turnout and establish women-only polling stations, leading to a 17% increase in registered female voters, reaching 54.9 million by 2022.





### Access to Ownership of Property

50. The Government of Pakistan enacted the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020, to protect women's property rights and provide legal mechanisms for asserting claims without discrimination. Significant progress has been made since its implementation, including the establishment of legal aid centers and training programs for practitioners on gender-specific property issues. Preliminary results show increased awareness, with 745 cases filed—604 disposed of and 141 ongoing. A year wise progress of these cases, is as under.

Year	No. of cases
2020	44
2021	139
2022	270
2023	148
2024	136
<b>Total</b>	<b>737</b>

51. The Punjab Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act 2021, has also been effective, receiving over 5,000 complaints. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women has received about 105 cases under the 2019 Act, while the Provincial Ombudsperson reported 1,772 complaints, resolving 565 and referring 140 to court. Additionally, initiatives like *E-Khuli Kacheri* and the KP *Bolo Helpline*, which has received over 11,500 calls since 2017, have improved access to information and redressal. To strengthen protections further, Balochistan's Women Development Department has initiated a draft bill for the "Balochistan Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Bill," to enhance their rights to property ownership and inheritance.

## III. Issues relating to the specific provisions of the Covenant (arts. 6–15)

### A. Right to Work

52. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics is currently compiling information on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2024–25. However, according to the latest available LFS 2020–21, the total labour force stands at 71.76 million (48.5 million rural and 23.2 million urban). The

employed labour force stands at 67.25 million (45.7 million rural and 21.5 million urban), and 4.51 million are unemployed, with an unemployment rate of 6.3 percent.

53. The data on employment, unemployment and disaggregated by age, and urban/rural area of residence, as well as by the sectors of the economy is provided below.

#### Labour Force 2020–21 (in Millions)

Area/Sex	Total	Male	Female
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>67.25</b>	<b>51.91</b>	<b>15.34</b>
Rural	45.7	32.79	12.9
Urban	21.55	19.12	2.44
<b>Punjab</b>	<b>39.07</b>	<b>28.41</b>	<b>10.66</b>
Rural	26.84	17.91	8.93
Urban	12.23	10.5	1.74
<b>Sindh</b>	<b>15.31</b>	<b>12.83</b>	<b>2.48</b>
Rural	8.26	6.29	1.97
Urban	7.05	6.54	0.51
<b>Balochistan</b>	<b>3.46</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.46</b>
Rural	2.63	2.2	0.43
Urban	0.83	0.8	0.03
<b>KP</b>	<b>9.41</b>	<b>6.68</b>	<b>1.73</b>
Rural	7.98	6.4	1.58
Urban	1.43	1.28	0.15

#### Employment by Sector 2020–21 (in millions)

Sector/Sex	Total	Male	Female
Agriculture	37.4	28.4	67.9
Industry	25.4	28.5	14.7
Services	37.2	43	17.4

#### Unemployment Rate 2020–21 (%age)

Area/Sex	Total	Male	Female
Pakistan	6.3	5.5	8.9
Rural	5.8	5.1	7.4
Urban	7.3	6	16.4

#### Under Employment (Time related) Rate 2020–21 (%age)

Area/Sex	Total	Male	Female
Pakistan	1.5	1.4	1.9
Rural	1.6	1.6	1.7
Urban	1.4	1.1	3.2

#### Labour Force Survey 2020–21

Age Group	Labour Force Participation Rate (%age)			Unemployment Rate (%age)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
15–24	43.8	64.7	21.9	11.1	10	14.4

Age Group	Labour Force Participation Rate (%age)			Unemployment Rate (%age)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
25–34	60.9	97.6	28.5	7.3	5.4	13.3
35–44	64	98.5	29.8	2.9	2.9	2.9
45–54	63	96.2	28.9	3.9	4.1	3.3
55–64	45.1	72.4	15.3	2.8	2.6	3.7
65 & above	20.7	32.8	4.5	0.9	0.9	0.1

## B. Decent Employment Opportunities and Vocational Training

54. At the national level, the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) has significantly expanded vocational training and increased female participation, training over 16,800 individuals in advanced courses from 2022 to 2023. Since 2018, NAVTTC's initiatives under the Prime Minister's Youth Development programs have led to the training of 264,459 young people. In Sindh, laws like the Home-Based Workers Act, 2018, and the Sindh Women Agricultural Workers Act, 2018, have empowered home-based and agricultural workers.

55. Punjab's Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) has made strides in vocational training, enrolling 177,915 students, including 92,579 women, from 2018 to 2023. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Labour Policy, 2018, supports vocational training for rural youth, addressing workplace rights and local economic development. In Balochistan, innovative initiatives like women's entrepreneurship programs, business incubation centers, and Women Bazaars are designed to enhance women's economic participation and provide practical skills training for young people in rural areas.

## IV. Right to Just and Favourable Conditions of Work

### A. Strengthening labour inspection systems

56. The Government of Pakistan has strengthened labor inspection mechanisms by enacting relevant legislation, expanding inspection capacities, and providing targeted training for labor inspectors across provinces. In Punjab, the Labour Department aims for zero health and safety complaints, requiring inspectors to conduct thorough inspections of at least 10% of factories monthly and ensuring annual inspections for all industrial units. Over 500 labor inspectors received specialized training focusing on occupational safety and health during the reporting period. In Sindh, several initiatives have been approved to enhance the labor inspection system, including digitization projects and transport provisions for inspectors.

57. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has passed the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act and established an OSH center, leading to 75,219 inspections in 2023, with a focus on gender parity through the recruitment of female inspectors. The province also trained 82 inspectors in 2023. In Balochistan, the Balochistan Occupational Safety & Health Act, 2022, has been enacted, along with targeted training for inspectors on home-based worker issues and child labor laws, enhancing the capacity to enforce compliance in these areas.

58. Statistical Overview of Inspections shows a significant increase in inspection activities across provinces in 2023.

Provinces	Number of inspections
Punjab	50 000
Sindh	1 667
KP	75 219
Balochistan	11 213

59. Findings indicate that these inspections revealed various violations, such as unsafe working conditions and non-compliance with labor laws. Authorities responded with improvement notices, fines, and follow-up inspections to enforce compliance. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone, 15,880 violations were reported in 2023, leading to significant fines for repeat offenses.

## **B. Minimum wages**

60. In Pakistan, minimum wage levels are established by provincial governments through legislation and there are dedicated minimum wage boards that include representatives from labor groups, employers, and government authorities. Wage floors reflect the cost of living and economic conditions. Each province enforces compliance with minimum wage laws through labor departments, which conduct routine inspections and impose fines for non-compliance. For instance, Punjab has set its minimum wage at PKR 32,000 per month, while Sindh has established a minimum wage of PKR 37,000 for 2024.

61. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has a minimum wage of PKR 32,000. Balochistan has introduced the Balochistan Minimum Wages Act of 2021, supported by labor inspections that have resulted in 319 inspections and 15 prosecutions in 2023.

## **C. Just and favourable conditions of work and access to social protection for workers in the informal economy**

62. One of the primary concerns identified in the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP BHR) is that workers operating in the informal economy are not covered by existing social security and protection programs. This exclusion leaves a significant portion of the workforce vulnerable and without access to essential benefits. To address this gap, the NAP BHR has established an action point focused on integrating informal workers into social security frameworks.

63. In addition to the planned integration of informal workers, there are existing non-contributory programs such as BISP to provide direct assistance to those threatened by poverty, especially to women and persons in vulnerable situations.

## **D. Gender pay gap**

64. To enhance transparency and ensure compliance with minimum wage regulations, employers are required to pay salaries through banks. The provincial government supports women's participation in the workforce, with no restrictions on their entry into any profession. A 10% quota for women in the public sector further encourages their involvement, alongside merit-based opportunities.

## **E. Elimination of Discriminatory practices**

65. The Recruitment Policy of the Government of Pakistan mandates all government offices, both federal and provincial, to strictly observe regional/provincial quota, 10% quota for women, 5% quota for minorities (non-Muslim) and 2% Disabled Persons quota against all recruitment conducted for the federal government positions from BPS-01 to BPS-22. The reservation of quota for women, minorities, and persons with disabilities aims to protect their constitutional right to work and eliminates discriminatory practices in employment. Judgments of the superior courts have also protected the job quota reserved for women, minorities and persons with disabilities as a constitutional right under Article 38(b).

# **V. Trade Union Rights**

66. The Industrial Relations Act (IRA) 2012 establishes the legal framework for the formation of trade unions for all workers, except for police and the armed forces. In 2023,

the government provided technical guidance to provinces for aligning their domestic labor standards and held workshops through the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD) to facilitate labor reforms. Provincial initiatives have included streamlining the registration process for trade unions. In Punjab, over 369 unions have been formed. The proposed Punjab Labour Code 2024 aims to further enhance protective mechanisms related to trade union rights. Sindh is also advancing union rights through a new Labour Code and increasing the number of Registrar offices, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has established resources to assist workers with registration.

67. Pakistan is actively removing legal barriers to collective bargaining across all provinces. In Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there are no restrictions on freedom of association within Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Balochistan's Industrial Relations Act 2022 incorporates provisions developed through tripartite consensus to discourage pocket unions. These efforts reflect Pakistan's commitment to enhancing workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively.

## VI. Right to Social Security

68. Pakistan has a range of social security programs encompassing both contributory and non-contributory schemes. Key contributory programs include those administered under the country's social security laws, such as the Provincial Employees Social Security Ordinance and the Workers Welfare Fund, which provide various benefits for registered employees. Additionally, the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) scheme offers pensions and other long-term benefits for eligible workers. Among the non-contributory programs, the BISP is a prominent initiative, providing direct financial assistance to low-income families across the country.

69. Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) has initiated various programs to support unemployed individuals, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and children, focusing on self-sufficiency and social protection. One of the key initiatives is the operation of 165 Women Empowerment Centers (WECs), backed by an annual budget of Rs. 4.7 million, which provide skills training in tailoring, IT, and cooking to combat female unemployment, benefiting around 72,600 women annually. PBM operates 160 Rehabilitation Schools for Child Labour (SRCLs) supporting 19,232 children in transitioning from labour to education while providing stipends for educational expenses.

70. PBM has also established an "Old Home" in Punjab for senior citizens and one in Balochistan. Additionally, the organization offers essential assistive devices through the Special Friends Projects and financial assistance of up to Rs. 60,000 for individuals facing economic hardship. Furthermore, PBM operates Shelter Homes and the "Khana Sab Key Liye" ("Meals for everyone") program, which has served over 14 million meals.

71. The Social Security Ordinance of 1965 and the Benefit Regulation of 1967 in Punjab provide a comprehensive range of benefits for workers. Key provisions include sickness benefits covering 75% of wages for up to 121 days, injury benefits at 100% of wages for up to 180 days, and maternity benefits for 12 weeks at full wages. Workers may receive a lump sum disablement gratuity based on the degree of disability and lifelong partial or total disablement pensions. Survivor's pensions grant 100% of wages to dependents upon a worker's death, along with iddat benefits for widows, death and funeral grants, diet charges for indoor patients, and survivor medical care for one year after a natural death. Additional benefits include conveyance charges, Hajj facilities for selected workers, and free medical education for eligible workers' children in affiliated medical colleges.

## VII. Protection of the family and children

### A. Preventing and Addressing Harmful Practices

72. The Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act 2021, provides a structured approach to the investigation and trial of rape and sexual abuse cases involving women and children,

deploying special investigation teams and dedicated courts to ensure speedy trials and reliable evidence handling. Across Pakistan, 95 specialized Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Courts with 116 judicial officers expedite gender-sensitive cases, enhancing access to justice for victims. The Gender Protection Unit (GPU) at Islamabad's Police Facilitation Centre, established in May 2021, addresses sexual harassment, rape, and bonded labor with a specialized team of female police officers, legal experts, psychologists, and medical professionals.

73. In Punjab, the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Human Rights Centers saw an 81% increase in the number of women assisted from 2020 to 2021, providing temporary shelter, legal assistance, and counseling services. The Violence Against Women Center (VAWC) in Multan serves as a comprehensive support facility for survivors. Punjab's Women Safety Mobile Application reported a 73% rise in active users in 2021, while the 24/7 Punjab Women's Helpline (1043) saw a 53% increase in complaints, many related to violence. Women Help Desks, staffed by female officers, have been established in police stations across Punjab to provide immediate support and protection.

74. In Sindh, Women Complaint Centers (WCC) and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centers, along with district-level protection centers, supported over 500 victims of domestic violence and honour-related crimes over the past two years. The Sindh Domestic Violence (Protection and Prevention) Act 2013 provides protection orders, shelters, counseling services, and law enforcement involvement for physical, emotional, and economic abuse, ensuring comprehensive safeguards for women.

75. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa enacted the Prevention and Rehabilitation Act 2021, to combat domestic violence through District Protection Committees, offering reintegration support for victims. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elimination of Custom of Ghag Act, 2013, criminalizes Ghag, addressing forced marriage and associated violence. The province also operates 10 Dar-ul-Amans, which assisted 4,719 women between 2020 and 2023, providing shelter, medical care, psychological rehabilitation, and legal support.

76. In Balochistan, the Women and Juvenile Facilitation Centre (WJFC) in Quetta, established in 2023, is a critical advancement for addressing violence against women, children, and juveniles. Additionally, a One-Stop Complex offers 24/7 helplines, medical exams, legal consultations, psychosocial support, and referral services, representing an integrated approach to victim support and protection. These initiatives reflect Balochistan's commitment to fostering a secure environment for women and children.

### Statistical Data

<i>Provincial Helplines</i>	<i>No. of Complaints received</i>
Helpline 1099	1 540 288
Punjab	2 900
Sindh	35 000
KP	416
Balochistan	1 495

77. The complaints received by these helplines relate to offenses of domestic violence, family disputes, harassments and threats, sexual, physical and mental abuse, fraud, robbery, and property disputes.

<i>Province</i>	<i>Number of Women Receiving Shelter Home Services during 2018–2024</i>
Punjab	7 635
Sindh	2 266
KP	15 721
Balochistan	420

## B. Child Labour

78. Pakistan has implemented significant measures to combat child labor, including rigorous inspection systems and legislative frameworks across its provinces. In Punjab, the Labour Department enforced the Punjab Prohibition of Child Labour at Brick Kiln Act and the Punjab Restriction of Employment of Children Act, conducting 51,678 inspections from January 2019 to April 2020. This led to the identification of 3,600 child labor incidents and the filing of 2,828 FIRs, with targeted campaigns further uncovering 896 child labor cases through nearly 4,000 inspections in August 2020. The Sindh Child Protection Authority has focused on preventing child labor since 2018, combining enforcement with awareness programs.

79. The KP Prohibition of Employment of Children Act resulted in 56,949 inspections between 2018 and 2024, leading to 1,371 prosecutions and fines totaling approximately 2.2 million PKR. The province prohibits hazardous work for children under 18 while allowing limited supervised work for those aged 12. Balochistan has also made strides by enforcing the Balochistan Employment of Children (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, revealing 221 violations since 2018 and imposing fines of around 78,500 PKR. The province has initiated a Child Labour Survey in collaboration with UNICEF to gather updated statistics, which will support evidence-based policymaking.

## C. Birth Registration

80. Implementing the birth certificate requirement has significantly increased child registration with union councils, cantonment boards, and Local Government and Community Development Departments. The decrease in processing fees for registration has resulted in a higher number of registrations. NADRA has issued 65 million children Child Registration Certificates till January 2024. The Ministry of Interior has also established a committee to facilitate child registration at birth to ease the registration process. NADRA now provides 24/7 services for birth registration. NADRA also has digitized the birth registration process to ease the registration process.

## D. Right to an adequate standard of living

81. Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), established in 1992, and the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), established in 2008, are key government institutions focused on assisting persons in vulnerable situations and alleviating poverty. PBM has introduced several national initiatives, including Pakistan Sweet Homes (PSHs), which currently house 4,300 orphan children across 46 locations, providing lodging, food, education, and medical care. The Orphans & Widows Support Program (OWSP) offers conditional cash transfers to over 1,000 families for the education of approximately 1,700 orphan children. Other programs include Individual Financial Assistance for sick or unemployed citizens and the Special Friends Project, which supplies financial support and assistive devices to individuals with disabilities.

82. BISP serves as the primary social safety net institution, providing unconditional cash assistance of Rs. 10,500 per quarter to 9.3 million vulnerable families (FY 2023–24) through its core program, 'BISP Kafaalat.' The program also includes 'BISP Taleemi Wazaif,' which offers quarterly stipends between Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 4,500 for the education of children of beneficiary families. 'BISP Nashonuma' focuses on health and nutrition services, providing Specialized Nutrition Food and additional cash support for pregnant and lactating women. The 'Benazir Undergraduate Scholarship Project' has awarded merit and need-based scholarships amounting to Rs. 38.015 billion to 102,003 students for higher education.

83. Provincial governments are also implementing various socio-economic empowerment initiatives, such as Punjab's Khidmat Card Program, the Peoples' Poverty Reduction Programme (PPRP) in Sindh the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Investment & Institutional Support Project with a budget of Rs. 410 billion, and Balochistan's BRACE Programme focusing on skills training, community investment, and improved governance.

84. The BISP utilizes the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER). First developed through a nationwide door-to-door survey in 2010–11 and updated in 2022, the NSER now includes data on over 35 million households, covering 87 percent of the population. BISP has recently implemented a Dynamic Registry to keep this database regularly updated, while minimizing errors.

<i>Area/ Region-wise poverty rate (%)</i>		<i>2018–19</i>	<i>2015–16</i>	<i>% Change</i>
Pakistan	<b>Total</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>-3.4</b>
	Urban	32.1	31.9	0.6
	Rural	39.3	41.2	-4.6
Punjab	<b>Total</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>34.8</b>	<b>-9.3</b>
	Urban	27.4	28.8	-4.8
	Rural	34.0	37.7	-10.0
Sindh	<b>Total</b>	<b>43.7</b>	<b>47.9</b>	<b>-8.7</b>
	Urban	34.2	34.9	-2.0
	Rural	54.0	60.9	-11.4
KPK	<b>Total</b>	<b>36.1</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>32.7</b>
	Urban	40.1	29.0	38.2
	Rural	35.3	26.8	31.7
Balochistan	<b>Total</b>	<b>56.8</b>	<b>53.1</b>	<b>7.1</b>
	Urban	58.5	50.5	15.7
	Rural	56.2	54.0	4.1

85. Nutrition is addressed by the Benazir Nashonuma Programme (BNP), aimed at preventing stunting and promoting healthy diets. The program includes antenatal and postnatal services, routine immunization, nutrition counseling, and preventive supplementary feeding with Specialized Nutritious Food (SNF) products, along with conditional cash transfers to enhance nutritional diversity. Currently operating in 153 districts, including Islamabad, the BNP has benefited 2,047,807 individuals, including 995,429 pregnant women, 536,499 breastfeeding women, and 515,879 children, through a network of 548 Facilitation Centers (FCs).

<i>Malnutrition by locality 2018 (%)</i>		<i>Stunted</i>	<i>Wasted</i>	<i>Underweight</i>	<i>Overweight</i>
Pakistan	<b>Total</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>28.9</b>	<b>9.5</b>
	Urban	34.8	16.2	24	9.6
	Rural	43.2	18.6	31.6	9.4
	Male	40.9	18.4	29.3	9.7
	Female	39.4	17	28.4	9.2
Punjab		36.4	15.3	23.5	9.9
Sindh		45.5	23.2	41.3	5.2
KPK		48.3	23.1	33.7	18.6
Balochistan		46.6	18.9	31	16.7

86. In response to the 2022 floods, the number of Facilitation Centers under Benazir Nashonuma Programme (BNP) were doubled to provide full covering to the affected areas. Beneficiaries from 81 flood affected districts of Sindh and Balochistan were provided with universal coverage and increased cash amount.

## Sanitation and Water

87. In Punjab, key water conservation measures include the reuse of ablution water and rainwater harvesting projects. Since 2017, the total lengths of water supply and sewerage systems have increased, with 193 schemes completed. Ongoing projects aim to enhance drinking water provision and sanitation in Lahore by 2040, supported by a comprehensive master plan for the water supply and drainage system.

88. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) ensures safe drinking water supply in disaster relief camps, and provides essential services to affected populations.

89. In Balochistan, the Public Health Engineering Department, in partnership with local municipalities, is focused on improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. Municipal bodies are actively working to ensure safe water provision, and initiatives are in place to protect the rights of sanitary workers, which is vital for the effective operation of sanitation services.

## VIII. Right to physical and mental health

### A. Availability of basic physical and mental healthcare

90. The Ministry of National Health Services and Coordination (MoNHS&C), along with provincial health departments, is implementing various initiatives to enhance health services across Pakistan. Currently, 31 Public Sector Development Programmes are operational at the federal level, focusing on establishing Basic Health Units, Community Health Centres, and upgrading Medical Institutes. In the 2023–2024 period, five new projects worth Rs. 1,346.64 million were approved.

91. Punjab has established Provincial and District Rapid Response Teams and Disease Surveillance Units in all 36 districts, developed guidelines for managing infectious diseases, and implemented digital platforms for outbreak detection.

92. In Sindh, efforts include expanding the telemedicine network connecting district hospitals and establishing 380 vaccination centers, along with 250 mobile units to ensure vaccination coverage, particularly for industrial workers and the elderly. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has introduced a dedicated Health Policy since 2018 to strengthen its healthcare system.

93. Government of Pakistan is implementing Mental Health Ordinance 2001, while Provinces including Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have their exclusive laws on mental health care promulgated in 2013 and 2017 respectively. A government-run Institute of Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences which is first of its kind in KP was inaugurated in November, 2023. Apart from providing quality treatment, the institute offers relevant professional development and academic programs to health care providers.

94. In 2021, the Supreme Court in a landmark judgment prohibited execution of convicts with mental health problems.

95. The increasing budgetary allocations for the health sector are tabulated below:

Region	Budgetary Allocations for Health Sector made during 2024–2025 (Rs. in billion)	Increase in Percentage of budget from FY 2023–2024
Federal	27	100%
Punjab	539.1	24%
Sindh	300	32%
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	228.8	14%
Balochistan	87.3	30%

96. Following measures were taken under Expanded Immunization Programme (EPI) in flood affected districts of Balochistan and Sindh in 2022:

- Conducted Enhanced Outreach Activities EOAs in 35 districts of Balochistan providing 128,351 Routine Immunization (RI) doses to the affected population;
- Conducted damage assessment across provinces and repaired 12 Ice Lined Refrigerators (ILRs) and 1 cold room in Balochistan during the first phase. Further, 146 ILRs/SDDs and 7 cold rooms are being repaired. Moreover, an emergency response application is developed to replace 300 ILRs/SDDs;
- Established health camps in Sindh to provide 521,096 doses of child and adult vaccination;
- Conducted Measles-Rubella MR catch-up campaign from October–November 2022 targeting 2.1 million from 6 months to 5 years children.

## B. Reproductive rights

97. The Government of Pakistan has significantly enhanced reproductive health and access to contraceptive methods through comprehensive policies and legislative frameworks, such as the Sindh Reproductive Healthcare Rights Act (2019) and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Reproductive Healthcare Rights Act (2020). The Punjab Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, and Child Health Authority Act (2014) oversees maternal and child health services. Guided by the National Health Vision (2016–2025), these initiatives aim to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality, supported by the National Service Delivery Standards and Guidelines for Safe Uterine Evacuation/Post-Abortion Care (2018).

98. As a result of these efforts, maternal and child health metrics have improved, with the maternal mortality ratio decreasing to 137 per 100,000 live births in 2022 and the infant mortality rate falling to 50.9 per 1,000 live births. Access to contraceptives has expanded, with the modern contraceptive prevalence rate rising from 18.3% in 2019 to 20.7% in 2023, preventing 4.57 million unintended pregnancies and 2.4 million unsafe abortions in 2023. Training and awareness initiatives, including the registration of Misoprostol and healthcare provider training in safe abortion procedures, further support safe reproductive practices.

## C. Drug policies & HIV Prevention

99. Pakistan's HIV/AIDS prevention strategy is coordinated by the National AIDS Control Program (NACP) in collaboration with provincial health departments. Each province implements targeted programs to reduce transmission, provide treatment, and support affected persons. For prisoners, initiatives to improve access to HIV care include UNODC's pilot project in Sindh with an HIV Testing and Counseling Center, 36 treatment centers in Punjab prisons, and regular screenings in KP prisons to support inmate health management.

100. In addition to addressing HIV/AIDS, the Government of Pakistan has made significant changes in its drug policy. The Control of Narcotics Substance (Amendment) Act 2023 abolished the death penalty for drug-related crimes. The 2019 Anti-Narcotics Policy emphasizes demand reduction and drug-use prevention, and includes measures like addiction screening for new inmates.

# IX. Right to Education

## A. Increasing School enrollment

101. The Government of Pakistan, through the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFE&PT), is implementing initiatives to boost school enrollment and improve educational quality. Efforts include recruiting qualified teachers, deploying Teach for Pakistan fellows to rural areas, and launching financial aid programs like the Girls'

Stipend and Conditional Cash Transfer initiatives, which have collectively resulted in a 24% increase in girls' enrollment.

102. In Punjab, the Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2014 ensures educational access for all children, with monthly stipends to incentivize enrollment and projects promoting the integration of children with special needs. Sindh's School Education & Literacy Department has implemented enrollment drives and a Rs 1,500 million Girls Stipend program, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has opened 636 new schools and established 3,582 girls' community schools. Balochistan's School Education Department is combatting student dropouts with a new mechanism, increasing development funding by 123%, and planning to recruit 9,396 teachers and construct 700 new classrooms to facilitate early childhood education.

#### **Enrolment (values in thousands)**

<i>Level/Years</i>	<i>2017–18</i>	<i>2018–19</i>	<i>2019–20</i>	<i>2020–21</i>	<i>2021–22</i>	<i>2022–23</i>
Pre-Primary	12 574	12 707	12 039	11 367	12 166	12 087
Primary	22 931	23 588	23 758	24 352	23 849	24 040
Middle	7 362	7 634	7 870	8 415	8 767	9 102
High	3 861	3 969	4 015	4 360	4 490	4 636
Higher Sec./Inter	1 688	2 140	2 227	2 320	2 146	2 262
Degree Colleges	605	726	772	758	623	627
Technical & Vocational Institutes	433	433	433	433	438	439
Universities	1 576	1 859	2 002	2 226	2 226	2 410
<b>Total</b>	<b>51 030</b>	<b>53 056</b>	<b>53 114</b>	<b>54 230</b>	<b>54 705</b>	<b>55 603</b>

#### **B. Improving quality of education**

103. To improve quality of education, the federal government is conducting teachers' training through the Quaid-e-Azam Academy and Punjab Education Foundation, emphasizing curricula enhancements, social issues and interfaith harmony.

104. Teacher training initiatives in Punjab are supported by substantial monitoring efforts and training in modern pedagogical methods. Whereas Sindh's initiatives include developing a Non-Formal Education Policy and a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework to enhance the learning outcomes of all students, particularly those in vulnerable situations. The emphasis on WASH strategies in schools aims to reduce dropout rates among girls.

105. KP has modernized its teacher recruitment and provided professional development to improve teaching skills, significantly impacting educational quality. Balochistan is enhancing its educational quality through the Continuous Professional Development program, supported by GPE and UNICEF, and conducting large-scale assessments to identify improvement areas.

#### **C. Preventing harassment of minorities**

106. Pakistan is taking significant steps to reduce harassment in schools and educational institutions nationwide. In Punjab, the School Education Department has implemented a strict anti-bullying policy. Sindh has established Gender Units within its Education and Literacy Department to address harassment cases and adopted educational materials like "Zor Se Kehna, Nahi" ("Firmly say 'no'") to teach children about preventing sexual abuse. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has enacted comprehensive anti-discrimination policies and monitoring rules, complemented by training programs and community engagement to foster a positive school climate. Balochistan has formed committees to prevent harassment and developed standard

operating procedures for curriculum design to eliminate gender biases, supported by capacity-building workshops from UNESCO.

#### **D. Regulation of Madrassas**

107. Provincial governments in Pakistan are implementing initiatives to address potential radicalization in madrassas and improve educational outcomes.

108. In Punjab, the education department has taken control of 208 madrassas formerly associated with banned organizations. The province is enforcing the Single National Curriculum, which emphasizes lessons on humanity and child rights. The Zevar-e-Talem Program has successfully increased girls' enrollment in educational institutions.

109. In Sindh, there are over 40,000 educational institutions serving more than 5.2 million students, with efforts underway to develop new textbooks to enhance educational quality.

110. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has adopted the Single National Curriculum and established monitoring systems for madrassas, resulting in a significant increase in student attendance, with over 5.6 million students enrolled.

111. Balochistan is gradually implementing the National Curriculum with support from the Balochistan Education Endowment Fund, contributing to an increase in school enrollment from 937,905 in 2018 to 1,073,089 in 2023.

### **X. Cultural Rights**

#### **A. Protection of Cultural and Religious Diversity**

112. To protect religious minorities and promote religious tolerance, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has prepared a draft Interfaith Harmony Policy that will soon be placed before the Cabinet for approval. A Federal Task Force has also been established to develop strategies for fostering religious tolerance. Additionally, the Government in 2020 established the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) comprising of 12 members including two Muslims, three Hindus, three Christians, two Sikh and one Parsi and Kalash. The NCM provides support for maintenance of places of worship of religious minorities and awards scholarships to minority students. Furthermore, establishment of a statutory and independent National Commission for Minorities is under process.

113. In 2024, Pakistan extended the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Agreement with India for another five years, ensuring that Sikh pilgrims could continue visiting the revered Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur. This agreement, originally signed in 2019 for a five-year term, allows up to 5,000 pilgrims daily to travel visa-free from India to the gurdwara in Pakistan.

114. All provinces actively celebrate important festivals of religious minorities, including Christmas and Easter for Christians, Holi and Diwali for Hindus, Baisakhi and Birthday of Guru Nanak for Sikhs, Nauroze for Zoroastrian, Eid-e-Ridvan for Baha'i, Festival of Lights for Buddhist community and Chelum Jusht for Kalash. The provinces have also established help desks and Interfaith Harmony Committees to support minority rights. In addition, CCTV cameras have been installed at places of worship for minority communities to enhance security; including 253 worship sites in Sindh and 162 in Balochistan.

#### **B. Digital Technology and Connectivity**

115. The Ministry of IT & Telecom (MoIT) launched the Digital Pakistan Policy in 2021 to create a comprehensive digital ecosystem aimed at transforming the IT sector and empowering women and girls through ICT initiatives. This includes establishing computer labs in underserved areas, providing training in computing skills, and incentivizing digital service adoption among girls.

116. Provincially, the School Education Department of Punjab has focused on recruiting female IT teachers and the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women has developed a Gender Information Portal to address gender disparities. The Women Development Department (WDD) has also released a digital magazine, “*Aurat-Ba-Ikhtiar*,” (empowered woman) to educate women about their rights.

117. Sindh has implemented capacity-building programs like the “IT Industry Academia Bridge Program,” training around 4,000 individuals, with a notable 34% female participation. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Youth Employment Program has trained over 11,872 youth in digital skills, with a female participation rate exceeding 15%. Balochistan’s initiatives, such as the Digibizz project and Google Career Program Scholarships, have seen significant female graduate representation, while the “Virtual Education System” and digital libraries enhance educational access. Additionally, a Women Safety App has been introduced to improve safety for women, allowing them to alert authorities in emergencies, thereby fostering a safer digital environment.

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