



International
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► Rapid assessment of child labour in automobile repair workshops in Pakistan



- ▶ **Rapid assessment of child labour in automobile repair workshops in Pakistan**

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Acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|--|
| ARC | Asia Regional Child Labour Project |
| BISP | Benazir Income Support Programme |
| CAPI | computer-assisted personal interviewing |
| DLG | De Lass Gul |
| EFP | Employers' Federation of Pakistan |
| FGD | focus group discussion |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IPEC | International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour |
| KII | key informant interview |
| NGO | non-governmental organization |
| OSH | occupational safety and health |
| PO | participant observation |
| SDC | Skills Development Council |
| TEVTA | Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority |

Executive summary

This assessment examines child labour at automobile repair workshops in Pakistan, with a view to providing updated information on its magnitude, identifying factors that push children into this form of child labour and reviewing national efforts to address the phenomenon. Based on its findings, it offers recommendations for policy design, implementation and action by stakeholders to eliminate and prevent child labour in automobile repair workshops.

The assessment was commissioned by the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Asia Regional Child Labour (ARC) Project in Pakistan after a tripartite consultative process identified automobile workshops as one of eight priority sectors for action to eliminate child labour.

The research, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, was carried out in nine districts¹ across Pakistan's four provinces, engaging 241 children, 24 parents and 22 employers, alongside government officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).



Context

During the past decade, Pakistan's automobile industry has substantially expanded. There were about 26.6 million vehicles (cars and motorcycles) on Pakistani roads in 2022, up from 15.8 million in 2015. Maintenance and repair services for these vehicles are primarily provided by informal automobile repair workshops, which employ both adult male workers and boys – including as *shagird* (apprentices) – often in harsh conditions. Provincial Departments of Labour do not have records of the number of automobile repair workshops or workers within them, whether adults or children. Between 2015 and 2021 all four provincial governments enacted child labour legislation prohibiting the employment of children under 14 years old (or 15 years old in Punjab), replete with penalties for employing children in hazardous occupations. Laws in Punjab and Sindh have particularly stringent fines and terms of imprisonment for engaging children in the worst forms of child labour.

Key findings

Magnitude: Based on estimates calculated with the four provincial labour officials interviewed for this assessment, there are roughly 109,000 automobile repair workshops in Pakistan, most of which are located in the provinces of Punjab (46 per cent) and Sindh (32 per cent). These workshops employ approximately 163,000 adults, 218,000 adolescents (15–17 years old) and 109,000 children under 14 years old, almost all of whom are men and boys.

¹ Lahore and Multan (Punjab), Karachi and Hyderabad (Sindh), Peshawar and Abbottabad (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), and Quetta and Hub (Balochistan).



Family demographics: The majority of the children surveyed have living parents (81 per cent) and are from large households with between four and six siblings (64 per cent). Nearly half (43 per cent) are the eldest child or among the eldest child in their family. Most reported that their parents are illiterate, which tends to be more common among their mothers (71 per cent) than fathers (44 per cent). The majority live with their family in a house (93 per cent) with access to tap water (80 per cent) and a flush toilet (84 per cent).



Parents' occupation and income: The occupations of the parents surveyed reflects a stark gender divide, as 90 per cent of the children surveyed reported that their mothers are housewives. Their fathers tend to work in agriculture (45 per cent) or in small businesses (35 per cent). Most of the children surveyed reported that their parents face financial hardship, with 54 per cent of fathers and 9 per cent of mothers earning a monthly income below the minimum wage of 25,000 Pakistani rupees. Most mothers (91 per cent) and a small proportion of fathers (8 per cent) have no income.



School enrolment and dropout: The vast majority of the children surveyed have been enrolled in school (76 per cent) at some point, before dropping out of education. Key reasons for dropping out include children's desire to learn a skill (46 per cent), alongside poverty and financial hardship. More than half of the parents surveyed (55 per cent) indicated that the key reason for taking their children out of school is wanting them to learn a skill.



Reasons for joining automobile repair workshops: The opportunity to learn skills at automobile repair workshop is the key reason why children join these establishments, according to 25 per cent of the children surveyed, and 67 per cent of their parents. Children identified several advantages of working at automobile workshops, including the chance to earn more money, the possibility of starting their own workshops in the future, and the respect associated with this work.



Profile of employers: The majority of the *ustaaads* (chief automobile technicians) surveyed (88 per cent) began learning skills when they were children under the age of 14. Most (73 per cent) spent between seven and 10 years learning skills, largely from their own employers (84 per cent). Among the workshops sampled, almost all are owned by chief technicians (95 per cent) and just 5 per cent are registered as a business. None of these workshops is registered with a provincial Employees' Social Security Institution.



Compliance with child labour legislation: A considerable proportion of the employers surveyed (45 per cent) reported being aware of provincial labour laws on employing young workers. Despite this, the majority (82 per cent) do not keep records of workers under 18 years old, which is required by provincial labour laws.



Age at which children start work: There is broad consensus among the employers surveyed about the age at which children can start working at automobile repair workshops. The majority (68 per cent) believe children between 10 and 14 years old can begin learning skills, while 27 per cent claim that this is also true for children between 8 and 9 years old.



Recruitment patterns: Across Pakistan, the decision about children starting to work at an automobile repair workshop was taken by parents (71 per cent). More than half of the children surveyed have some sort of family link with their employers. The majority lack a written contract (84 per cent), while the rest claim that they have a verbal contract with their employer.



Working conditions: Severe violations of child labour laws exist at all of the workshops examined for this assessment. These include employing children under 14 years old (or 15 years old in Punjab), assigning them hazardous tasks, and requiring them to work long hours – sometimes seven days per week, and 13 hours per day. Most of the children surveyed (70 per cent) have less than two years of work experience. Children in all of the focus group discussions identified several disadvantages of working at automobile repair workshops, ranging from unhygienic conditions, being disrespected by customers, being scolded by technicians and older workers, low incomes, working in the hot sun, a very lengthy training period, hard work, and late working hours.



Income and spending: All of the children surveyed are paid to work at automobile repair workshops. Most children under 14 years old receive a very small sum of less than 5,000 rupees per month, as do some 15- to 17-year-olds. Older children are paid more, presumably as their skills improve with experience. Most of the children surveyed receive their monthly income themselves and usually give all, or more than half, of their earnings to their parents. This indicates families' reliance on child labour to meet household consumption needs.



Workplace hazards, injuries and health problems: Children between 5 and 9 years old reported carrying heavy loads (37 per cent), being exposed to fire and electricity (16 per cent) and working at night or early in the morning (45 per cent). Similar trends are apparent among older children. The three most common injuries reported are electric shock (31 per cent), deep or long cuts (22 per cent) and bad burns (18 per cent). All of the parents and most of the employers surveyed reported similar hazards. Fewer than half of the employers surveyed (45 per cent) have taken measures to keep children safe in their workshops, and most do not provide their workers with any personal protective gear.



Violence at the workplace: Most of the children surveyed (61 per cent) have not experienced threats from their employers, although many children either refused to answer or responded that they 'did not know' whether they had been threatened. Fewer than half of the children surveyed (40 per cent) reported being punished at work. Of these children, 79 per cent have been physically punished (slapped). Employers confirmed using corporal punishment to discipline children at work. A number of children justified physical punishment, claiming that it is necessary to 'discipline them'.



Emotional health: Several children surveyed reported experiencing poor emotional health, including feeling unhappy, downhearted or tearful (24 per cent), worrying, feeling nervous or being easily scared.



Aspirations: Most of the children surveyed (82 per cent) plan to continue working at automobile workshops as adults. The majority of the children, parents and employers surveyed believe that children engaged at these workshops will earn much more than the minimum wage when they grow up.

Key recommendations



Conduct an occupational safety and health (OSH) study at automobile repair workshops:

An OSH study is important to identify hazardous tasks and suggest how some or all of these tasks could be made non-hazardous for workers between 15 and 17 years old, as well as how to prevent younger children from performing hazardous work.



Revise Schedule II of provincial child labour legislation:

Provincial Departments of Labour should hold tripartite consultations about which hazardous processes at automobile workshops need to be included in lists of hazardous occupations.



Pilot an apprenticeship programme for adolescents:

Provincial Technical Education and Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTA) should develop a proposal (PC-1) to secure provincial government funds and launch a pilot adolescent apprenticeship programme in three cities, in partnership with informal and formal automobile repair workshops, and by leveraging the recognition of prior learning (RPL) initiative.



Develop a Code of Conduct for automobile repair workshops: The Employers' Federation of Pakistan should develop a Code of Conduct in Urdu for automobile repair workshops to support their compliance with provincial child labour legislation and make them aware of the advantages of registering with social security institutions.



Educate automobile repair workshop owners: The Pakistan Workers' Federation should organize an education programme for automobile workshop owners at a selected group of workshop clusters to promote compliance with the Code of Conduct recommended above.



Chapter 1

Introduction

The automobile industry is one of the fastest-growing industries in Pakistan. There were nearly 23 million motorcycles and 4 million cars on roads across the country in 2019–20.² The highly regulated automobile manufacturing, formal sale and service centres associated with automobile brands do not engage underage workers. However, many vehicles undergo maintenance and repairs at informal automobile repair workshops because of the low costs involved. These informal workshops often hire children, including children under 10 years old, to help with vehicle maintenance and repairs. The children involved are primarily boys who have either dropped out of education or have never been to school. They are underpaid, have poor working conditions, often experience harsh punishments, and typically reside with their families in the vicinity of informal automobile repair workshop clusters.³

The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Asia Regional Child Labour (ARC) Project aims to reduce children's vulnerability to child labour and enhance their protection from exploitation. Implemented in six countries in the region, including Pakistan, the project assists constituents and stakeholders to eliminate child labour by pursuing three objectives. Among these objectives is building a credible knowledge base on the causes and drivers of child labour, and devising effective interventions to address these drivers. A tripartite process spearheaded by the ILO has identified eight priority sectors for the elimination of child labour in Pakistan, including the automobile mechanic and repair sector. As such, the ILO's ARC Project commissioned this assessment to strengthen the knowledge base on child labour in automobile repair workshops, with a view to informing the design of policies and interventions to address child labour in this sector.

The objectives of this assessment are to:

1. Provide updated information on children's involvement in automobile mechanic workshops, the existence and possible magnitude of child labour in this sector, its gender-related dimension, the characteristics and conditions of work, recruitment patterns, hazards, exposure to violence, and the socio-economic environment in which child labour occurs.
2. Identify the main factors at the family and community levels that push children into child labour in automobile repair workshops, and the factors that prevent children's engagement in child labour.
3. Review national efforts to address child labour in automobile repair workshops, and identify best practices and gaps.
4. Produce, present and disseminate a report that addresses the knowledge gap, and which provides recommendations and guidance for policy design and implementation, as well as action by stakeholders to eliminate and prevent child labour in automobile repair workshops.

² Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, "Table 9 Transport and Communications", *Social Indicators of Pakistan 2021*, 2021.

³ According to key informant interviews with provincial labour officials, and representatives of employers' and workers' organizations.

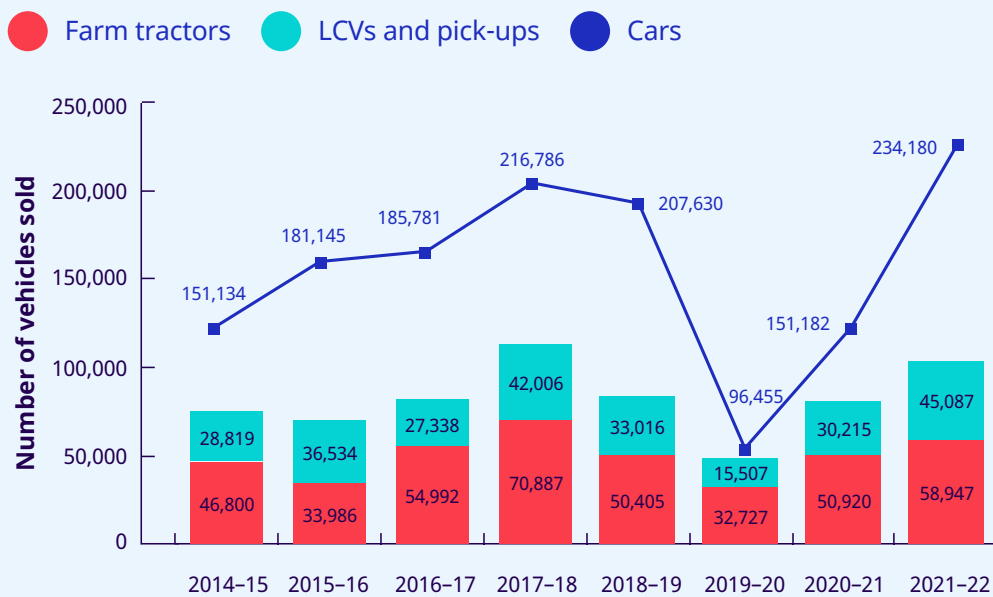
► 1.1. Context

1.1.1. Overview of the automobile sector in Pakistan

The automobile industry accounts for 4 per cent of Pakistan’s national gross domestic product (GDP). In 2021–22, the Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers Association (PAMA) indicated that more than 1.8 million motorcycles and 200,000 cars were sold in Pakistan. The association’s historical sales data between 2014–15 and 2021–22 indicates substantial growth in the sale of locally manufactured vehicles, particularly of two and three wheelers, despite a dip in sales during the COVID-19 pandemic (see figures 1 and 2).⁴ It is estimated that there were 3,200 automotive manufacturing plants in Pakistan in 2022, with an outlay of 92 billion Pakistani rupees (US\$870 million). The automobile sector as a whole employs 3.5 million workers and is a major contributor to the growth of the vendor industry.⁵ Pakistan’s new Auto Industry Development and Export Policy 2021–26 aims to increase annual automobile manufacturing capacity to 650,000 cars, 100,000 tractors, 20,000 heavy commercial vehicles and 7 million two and three wheelers per year.⁶

FIGURE 1

Sale of cars, tractors, light commercial vehicles (LCVs) and pick-ups in Pakistan, 2014–2022



Source: Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers Association, “Production (P) & Sale (S) of Vehicles From 1995 Onwards”, 2022.

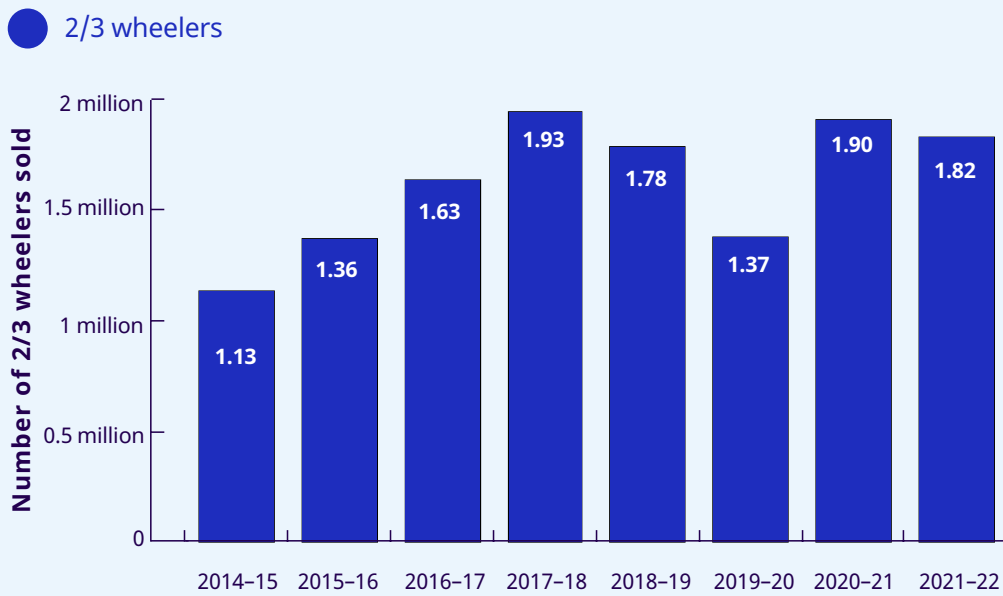
⁴ Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers Association, “Production (P) & Sale (S) of Vehicles From 1995 Onwards”, 2022.

⁵ Abdul Shakoore Shah, “Analyzing Pakistan’s Automobile Industry”, *Global Village Space*, 16 February 2022.

⁶ Pakistan, Engineering Development Board, Ministry of Industries and Production, *Auto Industry Development and Export Policy 2021–26*, 2020.

FIGURE 2

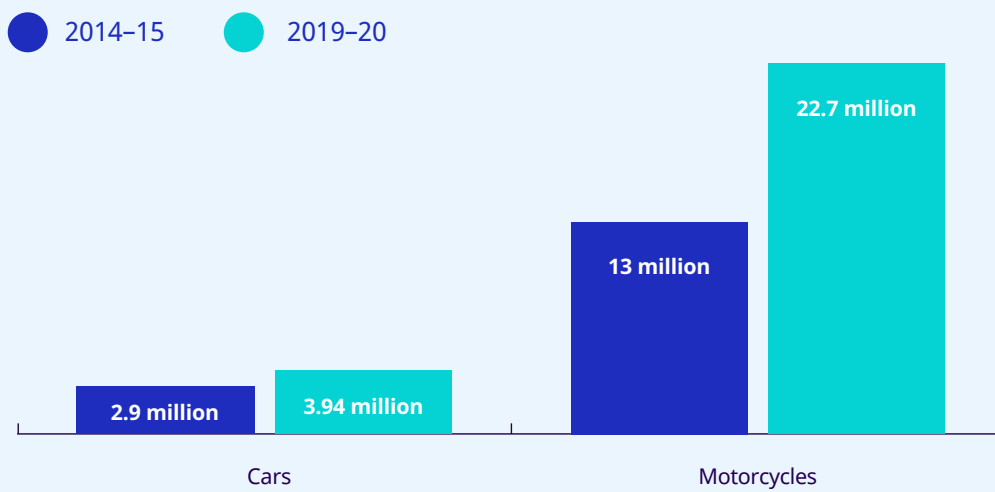
Sale of cars, tractors, light commercial vehicles (LCVs) and pick-ups in Pakistan, 2014–2022



Source: Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers Association, "Production (P) & Sale (S) of Vehicles From 1995 Onwards", 2022.

FIGURE 3

Cars and motorcycles on roads in Pakistan, 2014–2020



Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, "Table 9 Transport and Communications", *Social Indicators of Pakistan 2021*, 2021.

Since 2014–15, the number of vehicles in Pakistan has mushroomed, particularly two and three wheelers. As noted above, in 2019–20 there were 22.7 million motorcycles and 3.94 million cars on Pakistani roads, a sharp increase of 42 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively, compared to 2014–15 (see figure 3).⁷ This has led to increased demand for automobile repair workshops for vehicle maintenance and repairs – a demand largely filled by the informal economy.

Automobile workshops in Pakistan are broadly divided into two categories: authorized workshops that receive technical support from automobile-makers, and independent informal automobile repair workshops that are not associated with manufacturers. Both formal and informal workshops perform vehicle repairs, maintenance, inspections and the replacement of parts. In 2011, there were an estimated 10,000 informal automobile repair workshops in the country.⁸ According to a representative of the Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP) interviewed for this assessment – which includes many leading vehicle-makers among its members – automobile manufacturers have well-established networks of sales, services and spares (3S). They sell vehicles, and provide quality services and maintenance through their networks of 3S dealers across the country, who employ well-trained automobile technicians and do not support child labour. However, private informal automobile repair workshops – which may account for 85 per cent of the market share – often engage children to offer cheaper maintenance and repair services. It is worth noting that the employment share of Pakistan's informal economy among workers who were 15 years and older is 71.4 per cent,⁹ including informal automobile workshop-related employment. Informal workshops are not regulated. They are usually small, dispersed across cities in Pakistan, and rely on manual labour with the limited use of technology.¹⁰

Informal workshops train workers through an informal apprenticeship system, and four provincial labour department officials confirmed that many of these workshops engage children between 10 and 12 years old, and sometimes under 10 years old.¹¹ In the process, children learn automobile repair and maintenance skills over a period of 10 to 15 years.¹² The existence of child labour in automobile repair workshops is not a unique phenomenon. Several other economic sectors in Pakistan also engage children, as discussed in the next section.

► 1.2. Child labour

The ILO defines child labour as *“work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.”* It refers to work that is *“mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children, and/or which interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.”*¹³

As discussed below, Pakistan's provincial labour laws allow children to engage in non-hazardous employment from the age of 14 (or the age of 15 in Punjab), which is in compliance with article 7 of the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).

⁷ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Social Indicators of Pakistan 2021*, 2021.

⁸ Japan International Cooperation Agency and UNICO International Corporation, *Project for Automobile Industry Development Policy in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan: Main Report*, 2011.

⁹ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Pakistan Employment Trends 2018*, 2019.

¹⁰ International Finance Corporation and State Bank of Pakistan, *Sale, Maintenance and Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles*, 2011.

¹¹ According to key informant interviews with provincial labour officials in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, and with representatives of employers' and workers' organizations.

¹² Japan International Cooperation Agency and UNICO International Corporation, *Project for Automobile Industry Development Policy in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan: Main Report*, 2011.

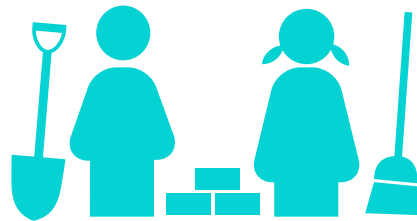
¹³ ILO, “Resource Guide on Child Labour”.

Pakistan’s last national child labour survey in 1996 found that 3.3 million children between 5 and 14 years old were economically active. The country’s Labour Force Survey (LFS) also captures data on children between 10 and 17 years old engaged in different economic sectors. Labour Force Surveys between 2009 and 2018 indicate an overall decline in the number of 10–17-year-olds engaged in work – from 17.4 per cent to 13.08 per cent (3.54 per cent of whom are involved in hazardous work). More boys than girls are engaged in child labour, as are more rural children compared to children in urban areas.¹⁴

According to the Labour Force Survey 2020–21, there are 26.32 million children between 10 and 14 years old in Pakistan, 4.7 per cent of whom are involved in work (1.24 million). Among these children, 0.69 million are engaged in agriculture and 0.55 million in non-agricultural sectors, predominantly in the informal economy. The survey indicates that wholesale and retail trade workers – including those engaged in repairing vehicles – spend an average of 56.2 hours per week working across all age cohorts.¹⁵ It confirms the existence of child labour in automobile repair workshops, involving long working hours.

In 2022, the Government of Punjab published the results of its first provincial Child Labour Survey 2019–20, indicating that 3.5 million children aged 10–14 and 0.94 million aged 5–9 are engaged in child labour in the province, when counting children who worked in last 12 months.¹⁶

Earlier in October 2021, the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan also published the results of the region’s child labour survey, indicating that more than 27,000 children between 10 and 13 years old, and more than 9,000 children between 5 and 9 years old, are engaged in child labour, including children who worked in last 12 months.¹⁷ However, the national Labour Force Survey, as well as Punjab’s and Gilgit-Baltistan’s child labour surveys do not provide estimates of child labour in automobile repair workshops.



7.64 million

children are engaged in labour in Punjab (0.94 million 5–9-year-olds, 3.5 million 10–13-year-olds and 3.2 million 15–17-year-olds)¹⁶

76,000

children are engaged in labour in Gilgit-Baltistan (9,000 5–9-year-olds, 27,000 10–13-year-olds and 40,000 15–17-year-olds)¹⁷

¹⁴ ILO, *Pakistan Decent Work Country Profile 2019*, 2021.

¹⁵ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force Survey 2020–21*, 2022.

¹⁶ Pakistan, Government of Punjab, Bureau of Statistics, *Punjab Child Labour Survey 2019–20: Key Findings Report*, 2022.

¹⁷ Pakistan, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, Planning and Development Department, *Gilgit-Baltistan Child Labour Survey 2018–19: Key Findings Report*, 2022.

1.2.1. Entry points for child labour in the automobile sector

Key informant interviews with representatives of provincial Departments of Labour and employers' and workers' organizations indicate that, within the automobile industry's value chain (manufacturing, sales and services), workers under 18 years old are primarily concentrated in informal automobile repair workshops. Table 1 indicates the nodes within the value chain, largely in informal workshops, where adolescents (15–17 years old) and children (5–14 years old) are engaged. Most live in urban areas and are boys due to existing gender norms around the division of labour. Officials also note that adolescent boys might be involved in hazardous work¹⁸ at these workshops, as well as at shops that sell spare parts and vehicle lubricants.

► **Table 1. Entry points for children's engagement in the automobile industry's value chain and automobile repair workshops**

● Legal age ● Potentially hazardous for anyone under 18 years old ● Child labour

| | Value chain | Workers (by age groups) | | | |
|------|--|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | | 18+ years old | 15-17 years old | 10-14 years old | 5-9 years old |
| 1 | Vehicle manufacturers | Yes | No | No | No |
| 2 | Vehicle sellers | Yes | No | No | No |
| 3 | Authorized automobile 3S dealers | Yes | No | No | No |
| 4 | Informal automobile repair and maintenance workshops | | | | |
| 4.1 | Car engine repair | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 4.2 | Car electric repair | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 4.3 | Car battery repair | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 4.4 | Brake, shock and <i>kamani</i> (leaf spring) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 4.5 | Car body denting work | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 4.6 | Car body paint work | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 4.7 | Motorcycle engine repair | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 4.8 | Motorcycle electric repair | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 4.9 | Motorcycle brake and shock work | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 4.10 | Motorcycle denting work | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 4.11 | Motorcycle body paint work | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 4.12 | Tire puncture repair | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 5 | Sellers of spare vehicle parts | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| 6 | Seller of vehicle lubricants | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |

Source: Interviews with automobile repair workshop employers, officials of provincial Departments of Labour, and representative of the Employers' Federation of Pakistan.

¹⁸ Such as working with compressed natural gas kits with 3,000 pounds per square inch (PSI) of pressure, working with acids and batteries, radiator work, using welding torches, and working under dangerously raised vehicles, among others.

1.2.2. Child labour in automobile repair workshops

Key informant interviews with officials from all four provincial Departments of Labour indicate that limited administrative records are available on the total number of registered shops and establishments across Pakistan's provinces. Data is collected manually and is not categorized by different types of shops or establishments. Moreover, not all data is collated at the provincial or national levels. Based on estimates calculated with the four provincial labour officials interviewed for this assessment, there are roughly 109,000 automobile repair workshops in Pakistan, which employ approximately 163,000 adults, 218,000 adolescents (15–17 years old) and 109,000 children under 14 years old (see table 2 for the disaggregation of estimates by province). As there were 3.94 million cars and 22.7 million motorcycles on Pakistani roads in 2019–20,¹⁹ as noted above, it may be estimated that each workshop caters to the repair and maintenance needs of 208 motorcycles and 35 cars. The frequency of these needs may vary depending upon vehicles' usage, and wear and tear. These figures are based on careful estimation and may not necessarily reflect the situation on the ground.

► **Table 2. Estimated number of automobile repair workshops and their workforce in Pakistan**

| Categories and assumptions | Punjab | Sindh | Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | Balochistan | Total |
|---|---------|--------|--------------------|-------------|---------|
| Number of automobile repair workshops | 50,000 | 35,000 | 20,000 | 4,000 | 109,000 |
| Number of adult workers (18+ years old) (on average, 1.5 per workshop) | 75,000 | 52,500 | 30,000 | 6,000 | 163,500 |
| Number of adolescents engaged (15–17 years old or 16–17 years old in Punjab) (on average, 2 per workshop) | 100,000 | 70,000 | 40,000 | 8,000 | 218,000 |
| Number of children engaged (14 years old and younger, or 15 years old and younger in Punjab) (on average, 1 per workshop) | 50,000 | 35,000 | 20,000 | 4,000 | 109,000 |

Source: Estimates reported by provincial Departments of Labour.

¹⁹ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Social Indicators of Pakistan 2021*, 2021.

1.2.3. Legislative framework related to child labour

The Constitution of Pakistan contains provisions on labour rights in Part II, 'Fundamental Rights and Principles of Policy'. Article 11(3) prohibits employers from hiring children under 14 years old for work in mines or in other hazardous jobs at industrial facilities. Article 11 also prohibits all forms of slavery, forced labour and child labour.

The Employment of Children Act of 1991 prohibits the employment of children in certain occupations and regulates their conditions of work. In 2010, the 18th Amendment to the Constitution devolved responsibilities for several areas from the federal to the provincial level, including responsibility for labour laws and labour administration. Between 2015 and 2021, all four of Pakistan's provinces developed provincial legislation related to child labour.

Provincial legislation²⁰ in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan prohibit the employment of children under 14 years old, Punjab prohibits the employment of children under 15 years old, and all provincial labour laws prohibit the employment of persons under 18 years old in any hazardous occupations. Establishments may employ adolescents between 15 and 17 years old (or between 16 and 17 years old in Punjab) for between 3 hours and a maximum of 7 hours per day (or 8 hours in Balochistan). They must receive a 1-hour break each day, one day off per week, and must not work between 7 p.m. and 8 a.m. All provincial legislation requires employers to maintain a register of information about their adolescent workers, including their name, age, daily working hours, break times and the nature of work performed. The Acts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh demand that employers pay adolescents the same wages, and ensure the same access to social safety nets, as adult workers. By contrast, Balochistan's Act simply suggests that employers pay the same wages to adults and adolescents, while Punjab's Act does not provide any guidance on wages for adolescents. In early 2022, the Federal Government fixed the minimum wage for employment at 25,000 Pakistani rupees across the country.²¹

The provinces of Punjab and Sindh have more stringent punishments in place for violating restrictions on the employment of children and adolescents in non-hazardous work, hazardous work, or the worst forms of work.²² These are imprisonment for a term of between six months to 7 years (or 10 years in Sindh) and fines of between 50,000 and 1 million rupees. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Act specifies that employing a child in any form of hazardous work is punishable with a fine of between 10,000 and 100,000 rupees and imprisonment for up to 3 years. Balochistan's Act specifies a standard punishment of imprisonment for 1 year, a fine of 100,000 rupees, or both, for engaging children and adolescents in non-hazardous or hazardous employment. .

No specific laws govern informal automobile repair workshops, which are set up by individuals without the permission or authorization of provincial labour authorities. According to one official from a provincial Department of Labour interviewed for this assessment, most automobile repair workshops have fewer than five workers and, as such, are not registered with provincial Employees' Social Security Institutions.

No provincial legislation related to child labour identifies working in automobile repair workshops as hazardous for children. However, Schedule II of all provincial child labour-related Acts identifies at least three processes that are likely to take place in these workshops as hazardous.

²⁰ Punjab Restriction on the Employment of Children Act of 2016; Sindh Prohibition of the Employment of Children Act of 2017; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prohibition of Employment of Children Act of 2015; and Balochistan Payment of Wages Act of 2021 (Act No. XIII of 2021).

²¹ Ali Hussain, "PM raises minimum wage to Rs25,000; pensions hiked by 10pc", *Business Recorder*, 12 April 2022.

²² The worst forms of child labour, as defined by Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182, include all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; and work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children ("hazardous child labour").

These are working at the sites where liquid petroleum gas (LPG) and compressed natural gas (CNG) are filled in cylinders (for example, for vehicles fitted with compressed natural gas cylinders), exposure to toxic, explosive and carcinogenic chemicals (for example, vehicle batteries), and lifting or carrying heavy weights of 15 kilogrammes or more (for example, lifting heavy loads when performing vehicle maintenance and repairs). Balochistan's Department of Labour plans to register all automobile repair workshops in 2022–23, to begin sensitizing automobile repair workshop owners on child labour legislation, and to strengthen the enforcement of this legislation. A comparison of provincial legislation related to child labour in Pakistan is provided in this assessment's Annex.

1.2.4. Literature review

Available literature identifies several determinants of child labour, including in informal automobile workshops. Anthropological research indicates that major factors which push children into child labour include poverty²³ and families' desire for children to learn skills that will secure them gainful employment in the future. Automobile repair workshops want to recruit young, cheap, 'obedient' helpers to perform tedious, repetitive tasks – this acts as a pull factor for children's entry into this form of child labour.²⁴ Other qualitative research reveals the abuse suffered by children working at automobile repair workers, which adversely affects their health.²⁵

Sikandar et al.'s (2022) review of published scholarly work on child labour between 2000 and 2021 identifies broad demographic and economic factors that push children into child labour – namely poverty, low levels of household income, parents' lack of education and family sizes. It also highlights the importance of cultural norms, such as parents' desire for children to work with them instead of going to school, as education may teach them to rebel against family traditions. By applying a step-wise regression model to data collected from 200 households in two districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Mardan and Nowshera), the study identifies five key determinants of child labour within this sample. It considers family size to be the most important determinant of child labour, followed by large households, families with more adult women, the father's occupation (whereby children are more likely start work if their father is a daily wage labourer) and parents' low levels of education. The study identifies household income as another factor, noting that the higher a family's income, the less likely that children will be engaged in child labour.²⁶

Batool and Bilal (2022) employ positivist epistemology as a methodological guide to understand the determinants of child labour and how these affect children's physical and mental health. Using a laminated sampling technique and quantitative content analysis to examine data on 100 children engaged in different occupations, including automobile repair workshops, the study concludes that poverty, parents' unemployment, and children dropping out of school are significant causes of child labour in Pakistan. The study also finds that child labour causes stress, frustration, aggression and depression among children.²⁷

²³ Azhar Sharif, Sana Mehmood and Mujeeb ur Rehman, "Exploring the Socio-economic Causes of Child Labour in Auto Mechanic Workshops in District Multan Punjab", *International Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities and Education* 3, No. 3 (2019): 166–175.

²⁴ Muhammad Saifullah Chaudhry, "Child Labour and Human Development in Pakistan" (PhD thesis, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, 2012).

²⁵ Sarfraz Khan, Sana Mehmood and Syed Imran Haider, "Child Abuse in Automobile Workshops in Islamabad", *Pakistan Journal of Criminology* 12, No. 1(2020): 61–74.

²⁶ Sikandar Sikandar et al., "Factors Determining Child Labor: Empirical Evidence from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan", *Changing Societies & Personalities* 6, No. 1 (2022): 123–143.

²⁷ Syeda Amnah Batool and Muhammad Bilal, "Understanding Child Labour: The Debate of Children's Mental and Physical Health in Pakistan", *Journal of Humanities, Social and Management Sciences* 3, No. 1 (2022): 217–231.

A cross-sectional study by Shahzad et al. (2022) of 155 children between 5 and 15 years old working in the district of Faisalabad, Punjab, finds that poverty pushes children into child labour. Most of the children sampled were boys (92 per cent) between 5 and 9 years old (18.7 per cent), 10 and 13 years old (58.7 per cent) and 14 and 15 years old (22.6 per cent). Almost half were illiterate or had not completed their primary education. Over one-third worked for 14 hours per day (33.5 per cent), while 29.7 per cent worked for 10 hours per day (29.7 per cent) and rested for 8 hours. Most of the children (75.5 per cent) reported that poverty forced them to start working, while the rest were motivated by a desire to earn money.²⁸

Qualitative research by Khan, Mehmood and Haider (2020) on the nature and intensity of child abuse in automobile workshops in Islamabad applies social learning theory to explore how abuse is learned through actions and observations. Its findings, based on qualitative data from 10 workshops, reveal that families push children between 14 and 17 years old into this form of work to acquire skills and earn an income of between 100 to 150 rupees per day, on average, in addition to food provided for lunch. The children studied worked for more than 11 hours a day and experienced physical, sexual and emotional abuse, which they were unable to complain about. Parents encouraged employers to punish their children during training to ensure that children could become skilled and knowledgeable.²⁹

Elghazally et al.'s (2021) study of child labour in 82 Egyptian automobile repair workshops finds physical and chemical hazards to be the most common health hazards for the children involved. It also finds a statistically significant correlation between the occurrence of health hazards and the environment of the workshops.³⁰

Research by Sharif, Mehmood and Rehman (2019) in the district of Multan, Punjab, sheds light on the socio-economic determinants of child labour in automobile workshops. Using a snowball sampling technique for a quantitative survey of 80 respondents, the study identifies poverty as the key factor that pushes children into child labour. Most of the children surveyed were poor and had either no education or little education. Their parents also had low levels of education and were either engaged in poorly paid jobs, were unemployed or were deceased.³¹

A cross-sectional study by Khalil et al. (2019) collected data from 200 randomly selected children engaged at automobile repair workshops in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Most (84 per cent) were between 11 and 15 years old and had not completed their primary education (47 per cent). Nearly half (44 per cent) of their fathers earned an income of between 11,000 and 15,000 rupees, and over half of the children (58 per cent) lived with their families, which had more than 10 members. The study identifies poverty as a significant cause of child labour in automobile repair workshops and confirms the adverse health effects of this work on children.³² Another study by Khan, Hameed and Afridi (2007) in Peshawar finds that most children engaged in automobile workshops had either dropped out of school (41.5 per cent) or had never been to school (34 per cent), and that their key reason for leaving school and starting to work was to help their family financially. Over half of the surveyed children's fathers had not been formally educated or were illiterate. The study notes significant health issues among boys engaged at automobile workshops, including watery eyes (31 per cent), chronic cough (29 per cent), diarrhoea (22 per cent), runny nose (18 per cent), skin lesions and fatigue (17.5 per cent each), and chronic backache (16.5 per cent).

²⁸ Naeem Shahzad et al., "Perception and Socio Economic Conditions of Child Labour in Faisalabad District", *Journal of Xi'an Shiyou University, Natural Sciences Edition* 65, No. 4 (2022): 15–30.

²⁹ Sarfaraz Khan, Sana Mehmood and Syed Imran Haider, "Child Abuse in Automobile Workshops in Islamabad", *Pakistan Journal of Criminology* 12, No. 1 (2020): 61–74.

³⁰ S. A. Elghazally et al., "Child Labour in Car Repair Workshops: Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Health Hazards", *Egyptian Journal of Occupational Medicine* 46, No. 1 (2022): 105–122.

³¹ Azhar Sharif, Sana Mehmood and Mujeeb ur Rehman, "Exploring the Socio-economic Causes of Child Labour in Auto Mechanic Workshops in District Multan Punjab", *International Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities and Education* 3, No. 3 (2019): 166–175.

³² K. Khalil et al., "Causes and Health Effects of Children Working in Auto mechanic Workshops of Peshawar, Pakistan", *Journal of Khyber College of Dentistry* (2019).

More than one-third (38 per cent) had suffered significant accidents at the workplace, the common of which is severe cuts (60 per cent).³³ This indicates possible exposure to polluted, hazardous environments and hard labour.

The relationship between migration, household indebtedness and child labour is an emerging area of research. A study by Shahzad et al. (2022) identifies poverty and poor quality education as important determinants of child labour. It also finds that the incidence of child labour decreases as a context moves from restricted lending, to a situation in which poor households can borrow from the rich, and finally to a situation of perfect international credit markets. Bose, Compton and Basu (2020) note that victims of coercive labour arrangements usually lack asset assets and are unable to secure highly paid jobs or meet their basic (subsistence) consumption needs due to a lack of savings. As a result, they turn to informal lenders that offer credit in exchange for labour. The terms of these agreements sometimes extend beyond the pledge of an individual's labour services to encompass the labour services of their household, including their children, which continue in perpetuity. This can lead to intergenerational cycles of child labour and indebtedness.³⁴ Khan and Lyon's (2015) analysis of children living in debt bondage indicates that the practice of bondage is widespread in South Asia.³⁵ As a result, children may have to work at any place decided by the lender, such as a farm, workshop or any other business.

► 1.3. Research methodology

In line with the ILO manual on child labour rapid assessment methodology, this assessment employed several research strategies simultaneously to develop a comprehensive understanding of child labour in automobile repair workshops in Pakistan. The research used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data was gathered from focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs) and participant observation. To generate comparative results, the research also used a structured survey.

Locations: The research was conducted in Islamabad Capital Territory and all four provinces (two districts per province) – Lahore and Multan in Punjab, Karachi and Hyderabad in Sindh, Peshawar and Abbottabad in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Quetta and Hub in Balochistan.

Sampling: In consultation with officials of each provincial Department of Labour, the districts and automobile repair workshop sites were identified. Within the identified cluster of workshops, efforts were first made to select automobile repair workshops randomly. Subsequently, where employers at workshops allowed children to be interviewed, these workshops were included in the research process. A questionnaire was administered to the children willing to participate, with their employers' consent. Since parents and employers are also relevant to studying child labour, their proportionate sub-set was also included in the sample group for interviews. A subset of children who offered more information during interviews were invited to participate in focus group discussions. Automobile repair workshops that engage children of different age cohorts (5–9 years old, 10–14 years old and 15–17 years old) were selected for observation. Participants for key informant interviews were selected in consultation with the ILO.

³³ Hamza Khan, Aqsa Hameed and A. Kashif Afridi, "Study on Child Labour in Automobile Workshops of Peshawar, Pakistan", *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal* 13, No. 6 (2007): 1497–1501.

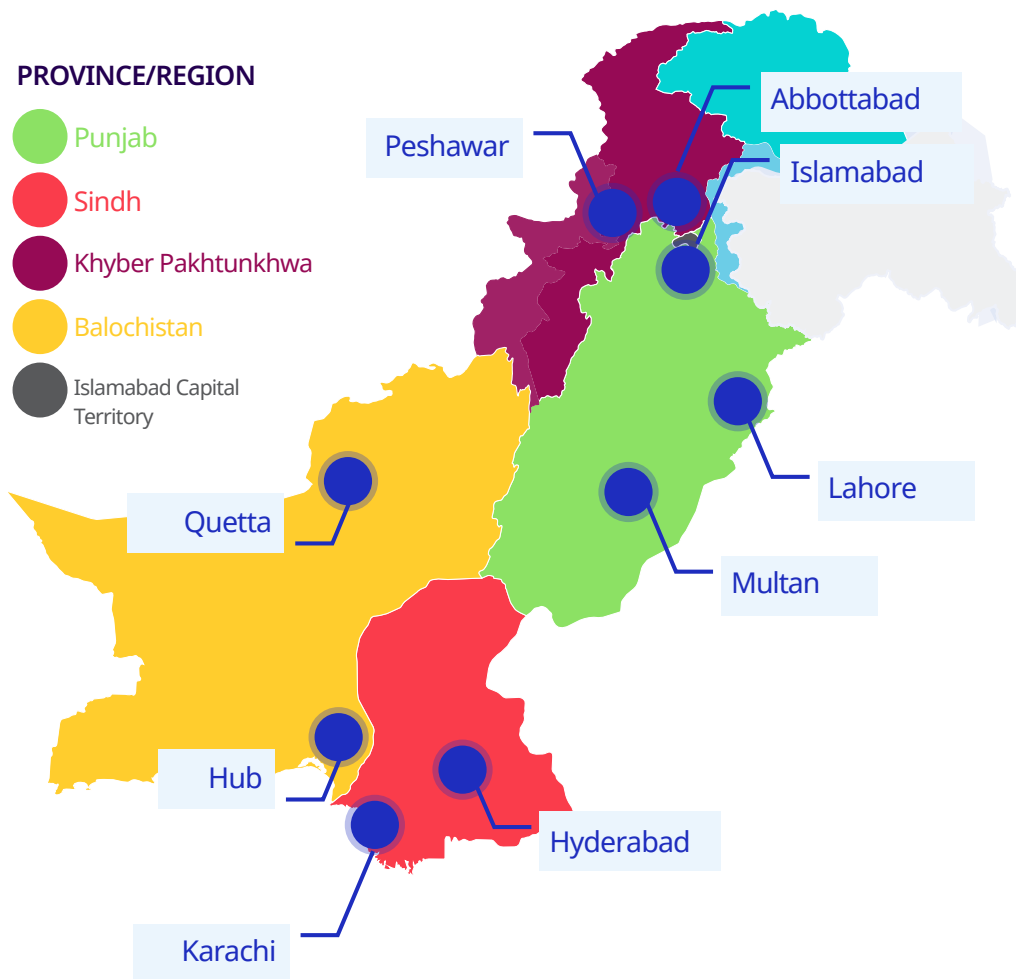
³⁴ Pinaki Bose, Ryan A. Compton and Arnab K. Basu, "Paying for Freedom: Indentured Labour and Strategic Default", *Economic Modelling* 89 (2020): 502–511.

³⁵ Sherin Khan and Scott Lyon, *Measuring Children's Work in South Asia: Perspectives from National Household Surveys* (ILO, 2015).

Research sample: A questionnaire was administered to 241 children engaged at automobile repair workshops, divided into three age groups, 5 to 9-year-olds, 10 to 14-year-olds, and 15 to 17-year-olds.³⁶ The preliminary desk review indicates that boys are primarily engaged in these workshops in Pakistan. While the assessment team actively sought out girls, none were found at any of the sample automobile repair workshops across the country. Five focus group discussions with 50 children were conducted across the research sites. Table 3 outlines the sample distribution.

Participant observation was carried out at four automobile repair workshops, one in each province, and 24 parents/guardians and 22 employers/intermediaries were interviewed. This sample allowed the research to reach saturation point, where new data tended to repeat the findings of the data already collected.³⁷

Key informants interviewed for this assessment include 22 government officials from provincial Departments of Labour (including men and women labour inspectors), Education and Social Welfare, eight representatives of employers’ and workers’ organizations, and four representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are implementing or have recently completed programmes on child labour at automobile repair workshops. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were carried out across Pakistan’s four provinces, as well as in Islamabad Capital Territory.



³⁶ The geographical breakdown of the sample respondents is, approximately, 44 per cent in Punjab, 24 per cent in Sindh, 16 per cent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 10 per cent in Balochistan, and 6 per cent in Islamabad Capital Territory.

³⁷ Michael P. Grady, *Qualitative and Action Research: A Practitioner Handbook* (Arlington, VA: Phi Delta Kappa, 1998).

▶ **Table 3. Distribution of data collection tools by provinces**

| No. | Research tools | Islamabad Capital Territory | Punjab | Sindh | Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | Balochistan | Total |
|----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|-------|--------------------|-------------|-------|
| 1 | Questionnaires | | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Children | 14 | 110 | 55 | 39 | 23 | 241 |
| 1.2 | Parents | 1 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 23 |
| 1.3 | Employers | 2 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 22 |
| 2 | Focus group discussions | | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Children | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| 3 | Participants' observation | | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Automobile repair workshops | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 |

Research tools: In addition to a research questionnaire for children, interview guides were developed for parents/guardians and employers/intermediaries, as were guides for focus group discussions with two age groups (10 to 14-year-olds and 15 to 17-year olds), guides for participant observation at the selected automobile repair workshops, and for key informant interviews. Each research tool was assigned a unique code based on its type, the category of respondents and geographic location.

Data collection application (app): Computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) survey methodology was used to collect data through in-person (face-to-face) interviews. Interviewers used smartphones to administer the questionnaire and capture responses. CAPI methodology suits complex investigations involving long, detailed questionnaires. It has several advantages compared to traditional paper surveys, including enhanced efficiency and data quality, supporting logic checks, skip patterns and validations, minimizing human error during data entry, and facilitating data cleaning and processing.

Ethical considerations and COVID-19 protocols: This assessment follows the ILO's ethical considerations on researching children involved in the worst forms of child labour. Every effort was made to ensure that respondents were not harmed in any way due to their participation in the research process. Participants' consent was obtained before each interviews and individual data was kept strictly confidential. All local guidelines related to public health and COVID-19 were observed, including the use of hand sanitizer, face masks and safe physical distancing during interviews and focus group discussions. The research team ensured that enumerators were vaccinated against COVID-19.

Training enumerators: A two-day training course was delivered for enumerators. While enumerators from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa participated in person, those from Sindh and Balochistan participated online. The training provided an orientation on ILO research on child labour, relevant ILO Conventions, sampling and the selection of research participants, ethical considerations, informed consent for voluntary participation, and the importance of doing no harm. The questionnaire was explained in detail and enumerators learned how to use the data collection application. All enumerators had at least a Master's or Bachelor's degree, years of experience in data collection, and expertise in using computer-assisted personal interviewing survey methodology.

Chapter 2

Research findings

► 2.1. Characteristics of children surveyed at automobile repair workshops

2.1.1. Age, geographic location and ethnicity of the children surveyed for this assessment

Since automobile repair workshops operate in public places, their clients are predominantly men. All of the workshops studied only engage men and boys as workers (100 per cent). Of the 241 children surveyed by this assessment, 46 per cent work in Punjab, 23 per cent in Sindh, 16 per cent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 10 per cent in Balochistan, and 6 per cent in Islamabad Capital Territory.

Over half of these children are between 10 and 14 years old (61 per cent), or between 10 and 15 years old in Punjab, followed by children between 15 and 17 years old (23 per cent), and 5 and 9 years old (16 per cent).

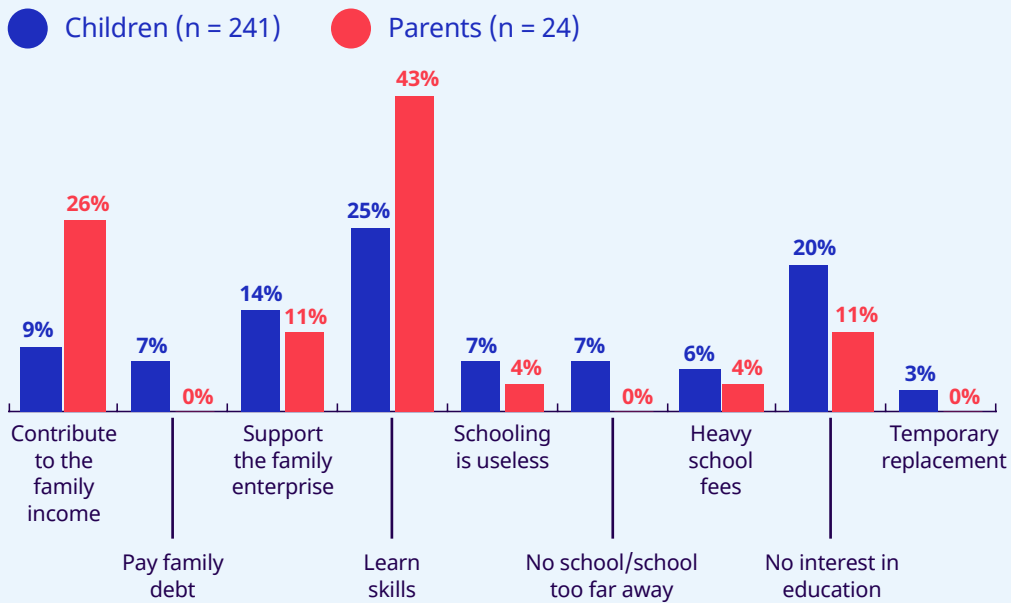
The ethnic profile of these children labour is fairly diverse, including Punjabi speakers (30 per cent), Pashto speakers (22 per cent), Urdu speakers (19 per cent), Saraiki speakers (13 per cent) and Sindhi speakers (10 per cent). Moreover, 3 per cent and 2 per cent of the children are of Hindko and Baloch ethnic origin, respectively.

2.1.2. Reasons for children joining automobile repair workshops

When asked why they had joined an automobile repair workshop, the three major reasons cited by the children surveyed are the opportunity to learn skills (25 per cent), a lack of interest in school (20 per cent) and having to contribute to a family enterprise (14 per cent), as shown in figure 4. These responses are consistent across provinces. Most of the parents surveyed stated that their children are engaged at automobile repair workshops to learn skills (60 per cent), to add to the family income (33 per cent) and because their child is not interested in school (11 per cent).

FIGURE 4

Major reasons for joining automobile repair workshops, according to the children and parents surveyed (%)



During the focus group discussions, children cited several reasons why they began working at automobile repair workshops, ranging from earning the respect of their family, to opportunities to learn skills, the potential for a considerable future income, and securing employment.



This is profitable work, and although children do not earn a lot in the beginning, later they earn about 200–300 rupees daily.”

– Child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



After 12 or even 9 years of age, children cannot go to school. So, they start working at the workshop to become productive.”

– Child focus group participant, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



At the start, we get little pay, but after learning skills, we can earn good money.”

– Child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



There are more learning opportunities in automobile repair work.”

– Child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



After I started work here, I now get the respect of my parents and other people.”

– 14-year-old child focus group participant, Multan, Punjab



This automobile repair work gives us more respect compared to being jobless.”

– 15-year-old child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



We do not need to beg in front of anyone.”

– 12-year-old child focus group participant, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



People will later also call us ‘ustaad’ [chief technician] once we master this skill [...] and people respect ustad.”

– Child focus group participant, Quetta, Balochistan

2.1.3. Children’s perceptions of work at automobile repair workshops

Children who participated in the focus group discussions highlighted several advantages of working at automobile repair workshops, including the workshops’ proximity to their homes, the chance to earn more money and respect than in other forms of work, and the possibility of starting their own workshops in the future. Children in Quetta and Peshawar also identified readily available work, tips from customers, and being paid daily as advantages.



We do not have to go far away from home because these workshops are nearby, and that is good.”

– 14-year-old child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



Automobile repair work is a valuable skill, and in the future, I can start my own business once I master the skill.”

– 17-year-old child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



Here we get better wages than in other work.”

– 15-year-old child focus group participant, Quetta, Balochistan



Customers give us tips for the work we do.”

– 15-year-old child focus group participant, Multan, Punjab



[In] automobile repair work, we get customers' respect too, and it is better than other types of work that children do.”

– 16-year-old child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



Automobile repair work is better than other work, such as work in the construction industry.”

– Child focus group participant, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



It's easy to start this work after learning and [then] setting up your [own] shop.”

– 16-year-old child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



We earn 25,000–30,000 rupees in a month if we know the skill[s] of automobile repair.”

– 17-year-old child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



Some customers disrespect children, and co-workers and ustaad [chief technicians] also scold us.”

– Child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



There is no cleanliness here, the workshop is unhygienic.

– Child focus group participant, Multan, Punjab

Children in all of the focus group discussions also identified several disadvantages of working at automobile repair workshops, ranging from unhygienic working conditions, being disrespected by customers, being scolded by technicians and older workers, low incomes, working in the hot sun, a very lengthy training period, hard work, and late working hours.



It takes so many years to become an ustaad.”

– Child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



People can disrespect children here as [our] parents are not around.”

– Child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



Sometimes [the] money is not sufficient, as we get 100 rupees a day.”

– Child focus group participant, Quetta, Balochistan



Customers get angry, and ustaad [technicians] and older boys scold me.”

– Child focus group participant, Quetta, Balochistan



There is no special benefit from working in a workshop, as it takes at least 5 years to learn to work in a workshop.”

– 15-year-old child focus group participant, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Working in an automobile repair workshop is very laborious work.”

– Child focus group participant, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



The behaviour of adults here [at the workshop] is bad.”

– Child focus group participant, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Children have to work even late at night.”

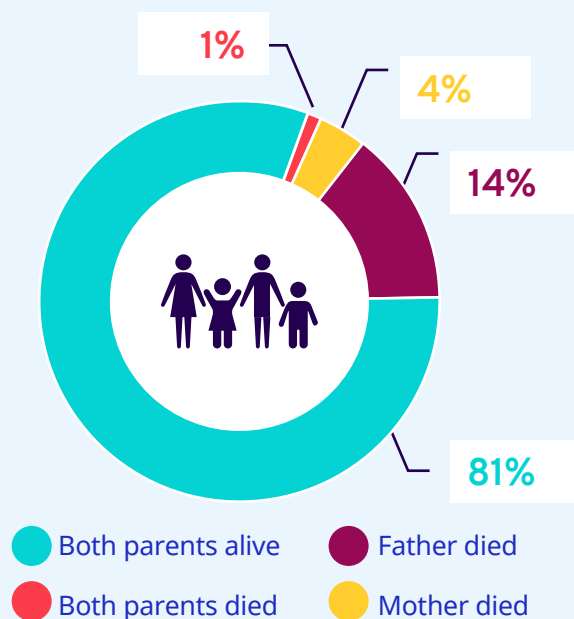
– Child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh

2.1.4. Families of the children surveyed

The parents of most of the children surveyed (81 per cent) are alive. The remaining children have either lost their father (14 per cent), mother (4 per cent) or both parents (1 per cent) (see figure 5). These trends are similar across the country, although 27 per cent of children in Sindh and 21 per cent in Balochistan have at least one deceased parent, usually their father. Most of the children live in large households. Across the country, on average, 64 per cent have between four and six siblings, while 12 per cent have between seven and 10 siblings. Nearly half (43 per cent) of the children surveyed are either the eldest sibling, or one of the eldest.

FIGURE 5

Children surveyed with and without parents (%)



2.1.5. Where the children surveyed live

Across Pakistan, the vast majority of the children surveyed (93 per cent) live in a house, while the rest live in a flat (6 per cent) or at their workplace (2 per cent). However, 26 per cent of the children surveyed in Balochistan live in flats. Nationwide, 20 per cent of the children surveyed have no access to tap water at their residence, while 16 per cent lack a flush toilet at home. This proportion is far higher in Balochistan, where 70 per cent of the children surveyed have no access to tap water at their residence.

2.1.6. Education of the children surveyed

Most of the children surveyed (76 per cent) have attended school, with the majority dropping out to work at automobile repair workshops. The highest share of children who have never attended school live in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (51 per cent) and Balochistan (57 per cent) (see figure 6).

The top three reasons for dropping out of education are a desire to learn a skill (46 per cent), not being interested in school (29 per cent) and wanting to earn an income (26 per cent). The parents surveyed identified similar reasons for their children dropping out of education. Most want their child to learn a skill (55 per cent), cannot afford the costs of schooling (25 per cent), or want their child to earn an income (25 per cent) (see figure 7).

Of the 184 children who dropped out education, 48 per cent left school before Class 5, while 39 per cent only completed up to Class 5. Among these children, 82 per cent never repeated a class. Only 18 per cent of the children surveyed were enrolled when this assessment was conducted. Among the 151 children who had dropped out of education entirely, the majority (80 per cent) are not interested in re-enrolling in school. Of the 33 children enrolled in school at the time of this assessment, 85 per cent reported that working at an automobile repair workshop does not negatively affect their school attendance, and 73 per cent do not miss homework due to work.

FIGURE 6

Surveyed children who have ever attended school, by province (%)

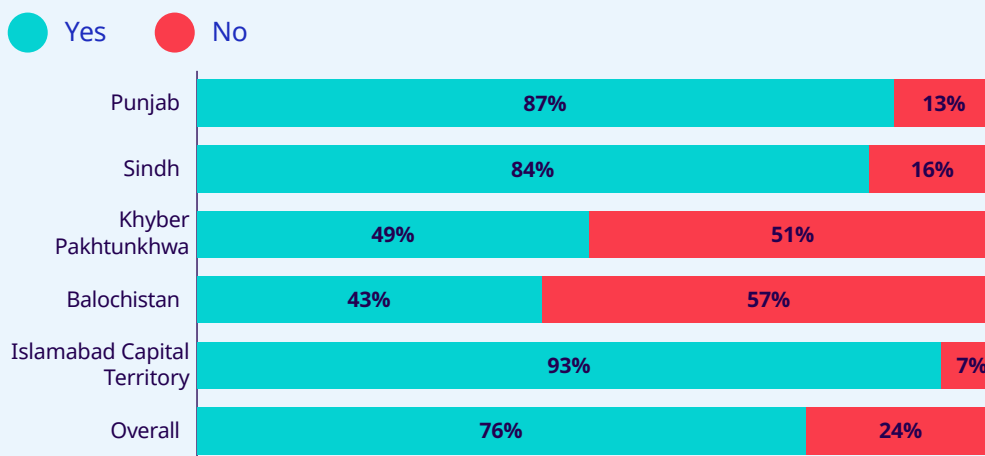
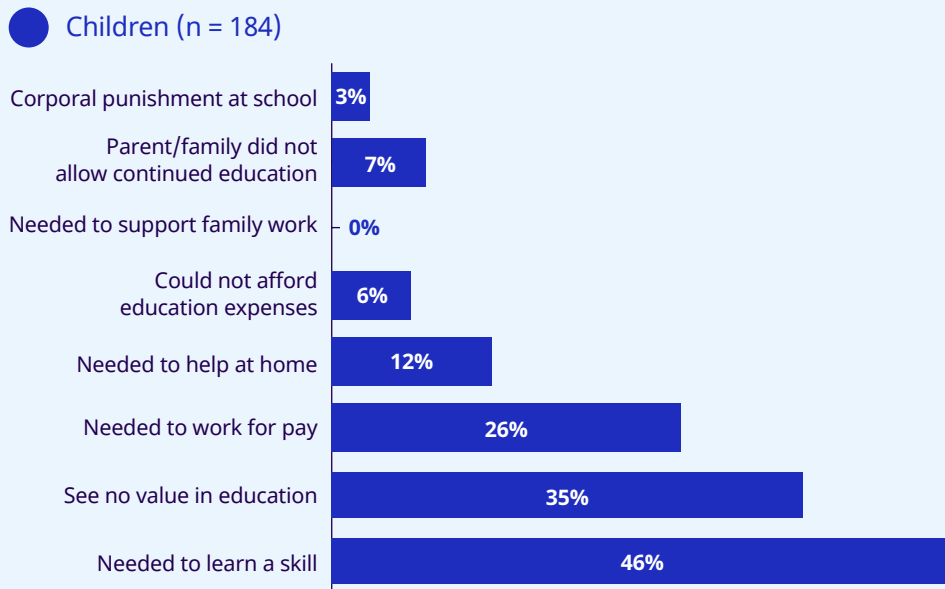


FIGURE 7

Major reasons for leaving school, according to surveyed children who have ever attended school (%)



The focus groups discussions shed further light on why children engaged in automobile repair workshops drop out of school. These include financial constraints at the household level, pressure to earn an income and support their families, the difficulty of finding work even with an education, the prospect of learning useful skills for future employment at workshops, and the difficulty of balancing school and work. Several children spoke of economic hardship, which prompted their families to take them out of school. Children across all focus group discussions indicated that poverty, financial hardship and the need to learn skills caused them to drop out of education.



When there are financial constraints in the family, parents take children out of school.”

– 16-year-old child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



After working at the workshop, my body was so tired that I could not do school homework, so I left school.”

– 14-year-old child focus group participant, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



[I left school] because I need to earn money for my family.”

– 14-year-old child focus group participant, Multan, Punjab



I never attended a school, and my father brought me to the workshop.”

– 12-year child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



Even if we get an education, it is difficult to get work, so we come to the automobile repair workshop to learn skills for our future jobs.”

– 15-year-old child focus group participant, Multan, Punjab

► 2.2. Migration patterns

Relatively few children (10 per cent) and parents (25 per cent) surveyed reported migrating from their place of origin. However, automobile repair workshop owners reported a significant incidence of migration among the children engaged at their workshops (45 per cent), primarily within their province of origin (see figure 8). According to the 27 children who reported migrating, the two main reasons for migration were to take up a job (44 per cent) or to look for paid work (26 per cent). Of the six parents who reported migrating, natural disasters were the primary reason cited for migration (see figure 9).

FIGURE 8

Incidence of migration among the children surveyed, according to children, parents and employers (%)

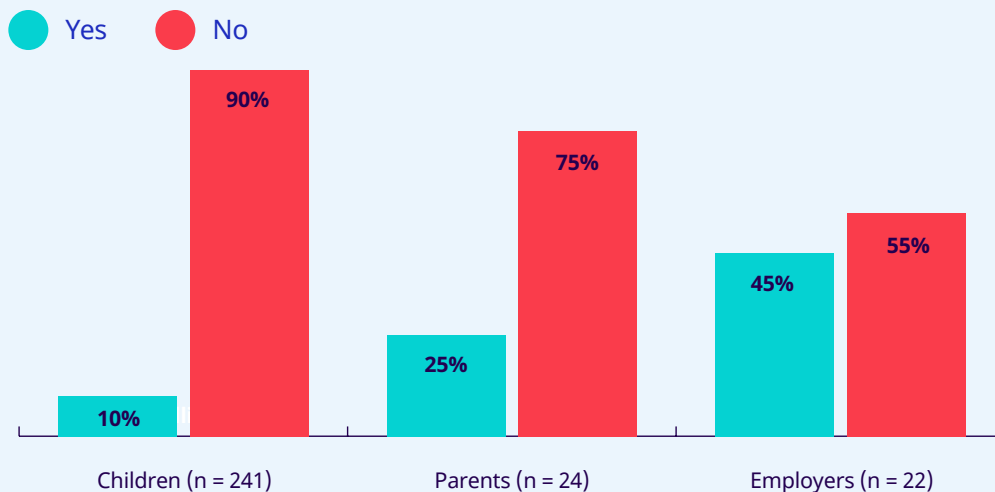
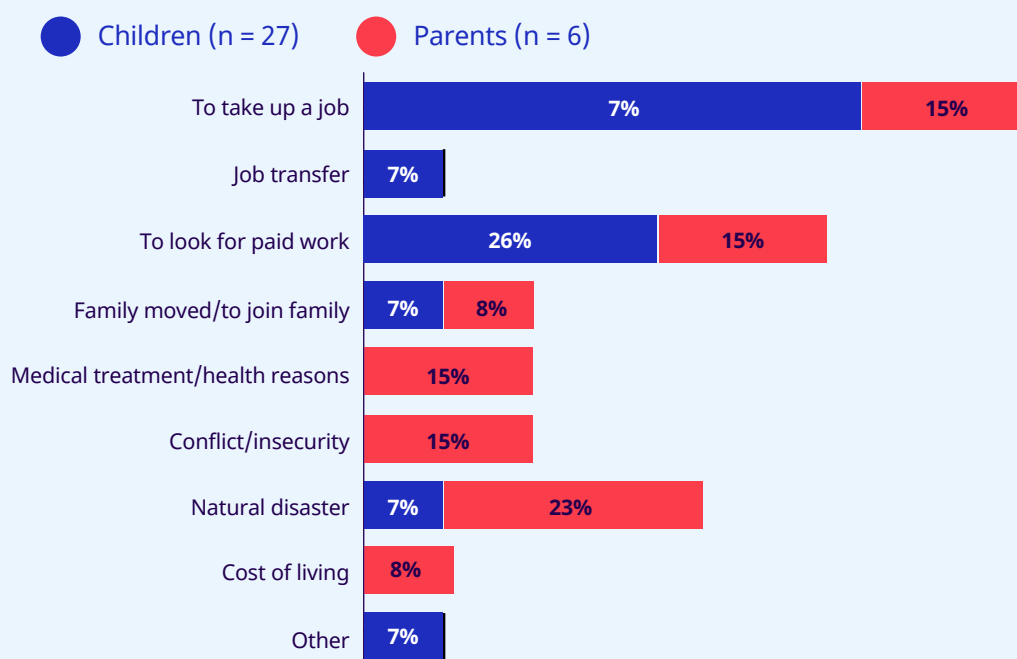


FIGURE 9

Reasons for migration, according to the children and parents surveyed (%)



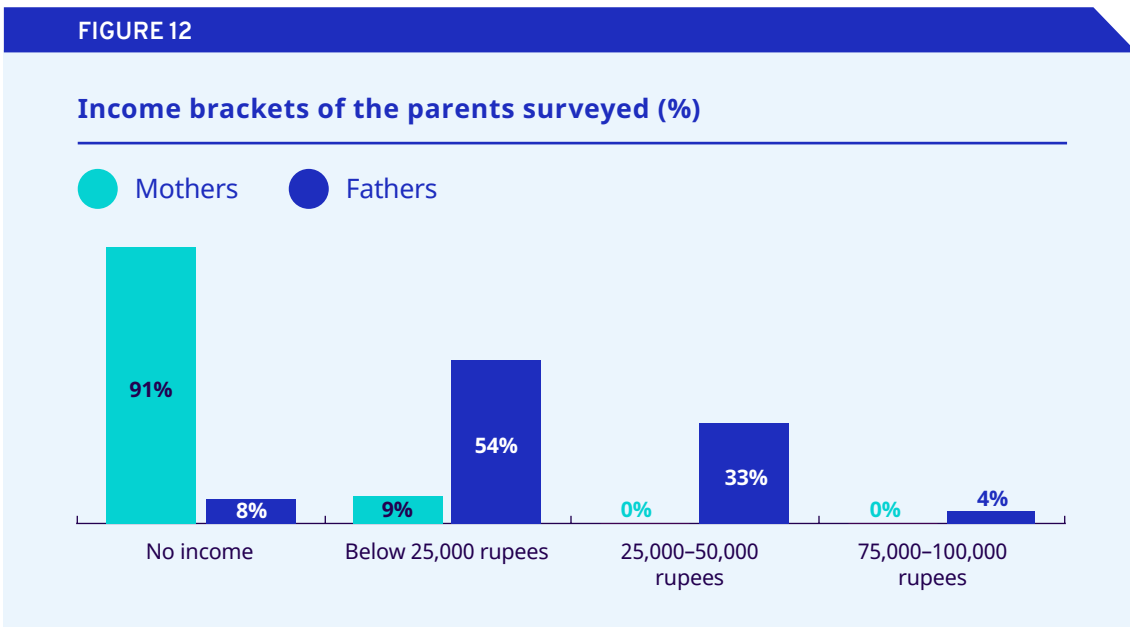
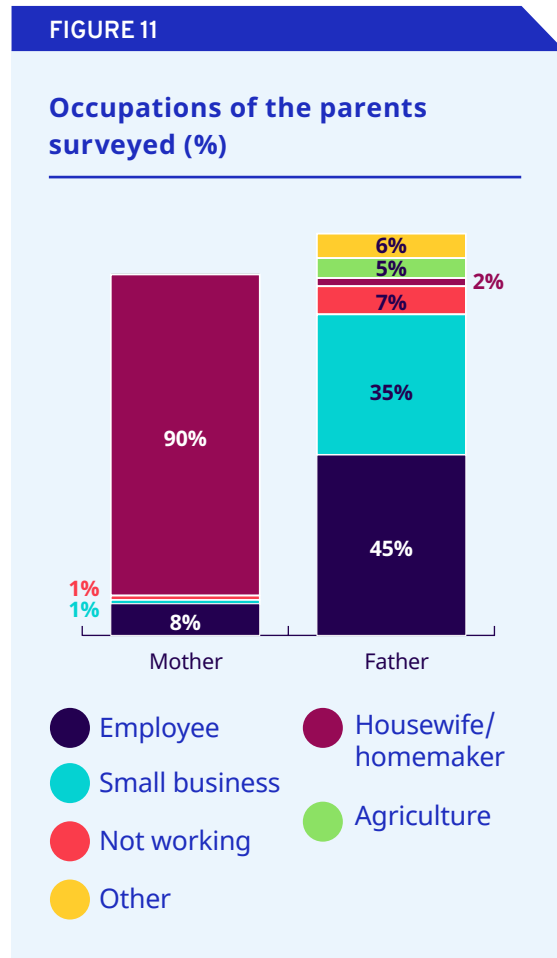
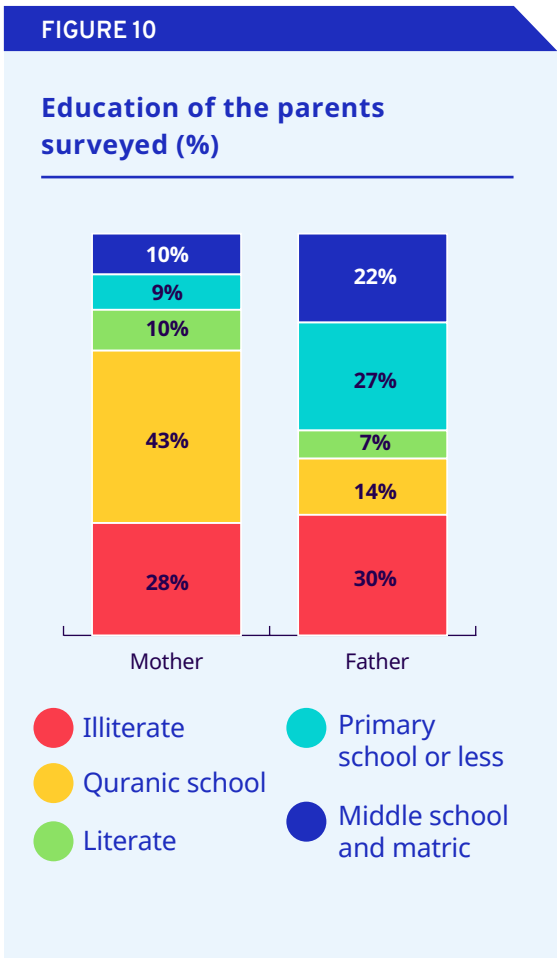
► **2.3. Profile of the parents surveyed**

The parents of the children surveyed for this assessment have low levels of education. Across Pakistan, many children reported that their father (44 per cent) and mother (71 per cent) are illiterate or have only attended a *madrassa* (religious school). More than one-quarter of the children reported that their father is literate (27 per cent), but very few reported a literate mother (9 per cent) (see figure 10).

Across provinces, the children surveyed reported varying degrees of parental literacy. Children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reported pronounced levels of illiteracy among their parents (50 per cent of fathers and 42 per cent of mothers). Children in Sindh reported higher levels of illiteracy among their mothers (40 per cent) than fathers (31 per cent). On the other hand, more children in Punjab reported illiterate fathers (27 per cent) than mothers (19 per cent).

There is a marked gender divide in parents’ occupations, as 90 per cent of the children surveyed reported that their mothers are housewives. Their fathers tend to work in agriculture (45 per cent) or in small businesses (35 per cent) (see figure 11).

Most of the parents of the children surveyed face financial hardship, as 54 per cent of fathers and 9 per cent of mothers earn a monthly income below the minimum wage of 25,000 rupees. Most mothers (91 per cent) and a small proportion of fathers (8 per cent) have no income, with most mothers occupied by unpaid care work at home. Only 33 per cent of the fathers surveyed earn an income of 25,000–50,000 rupees (see figure 12).

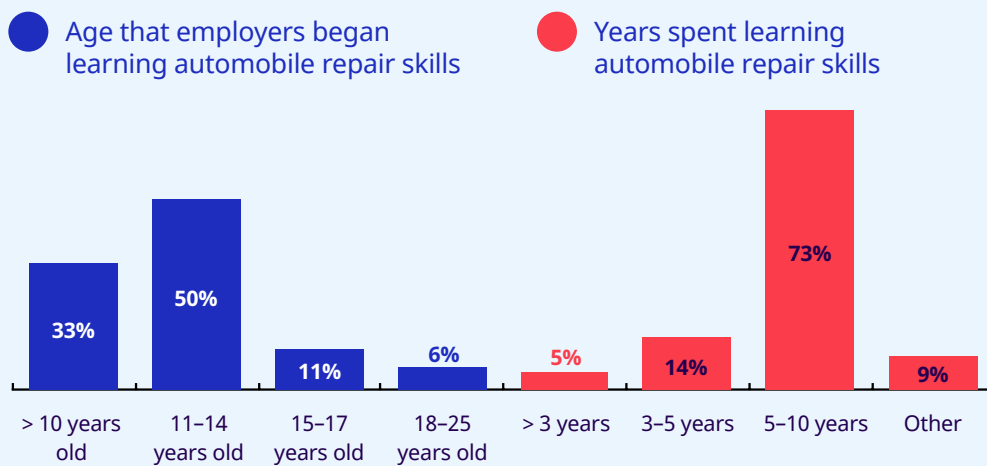


► 2.4. Profile of employers

Across the country, the employers surveyed have a dual role – they own the automobile workshops examined for this assessment, and they are the chief technicians at these workshops. Most (68 per cent) are between 31 and 50 years old and have at least a primary level of education, while 33 per cent have completed their secondary education (matriculation).

FIGURE 13

When and for how long the employers surveyed learned automobile repair skills (%)

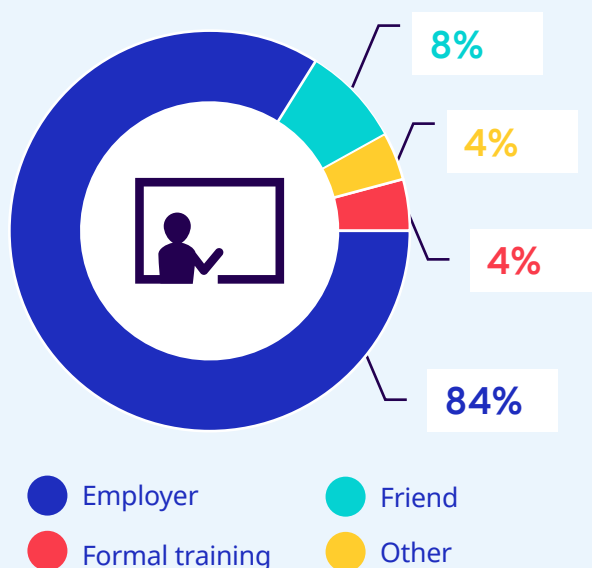


One-fifth (21 per cent) of the employers surveyed are illiterate and just 8 per cent have received formal automobile repair skills training.

Most of these chief automobile technicians (88 per cent) began learning skills as children under the age of 14. The majority (73 per cent) spent between seven and 10 years learning skills (see figure 13), largely from their own employer/*ustaaads*/chief technicians (84 per cent). Only 5 per cent possess a skills' certification.

FIGURE 14

Who trained the employers surveyed (%)

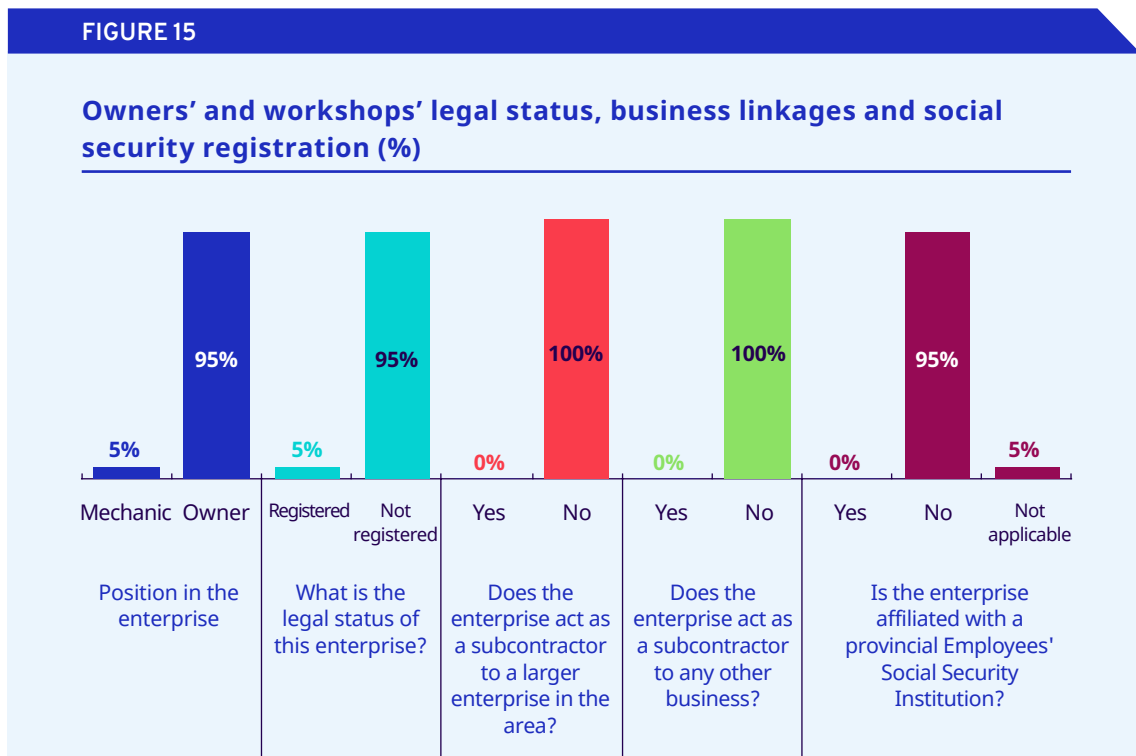


2.4.1. Types of automobile repair workshops

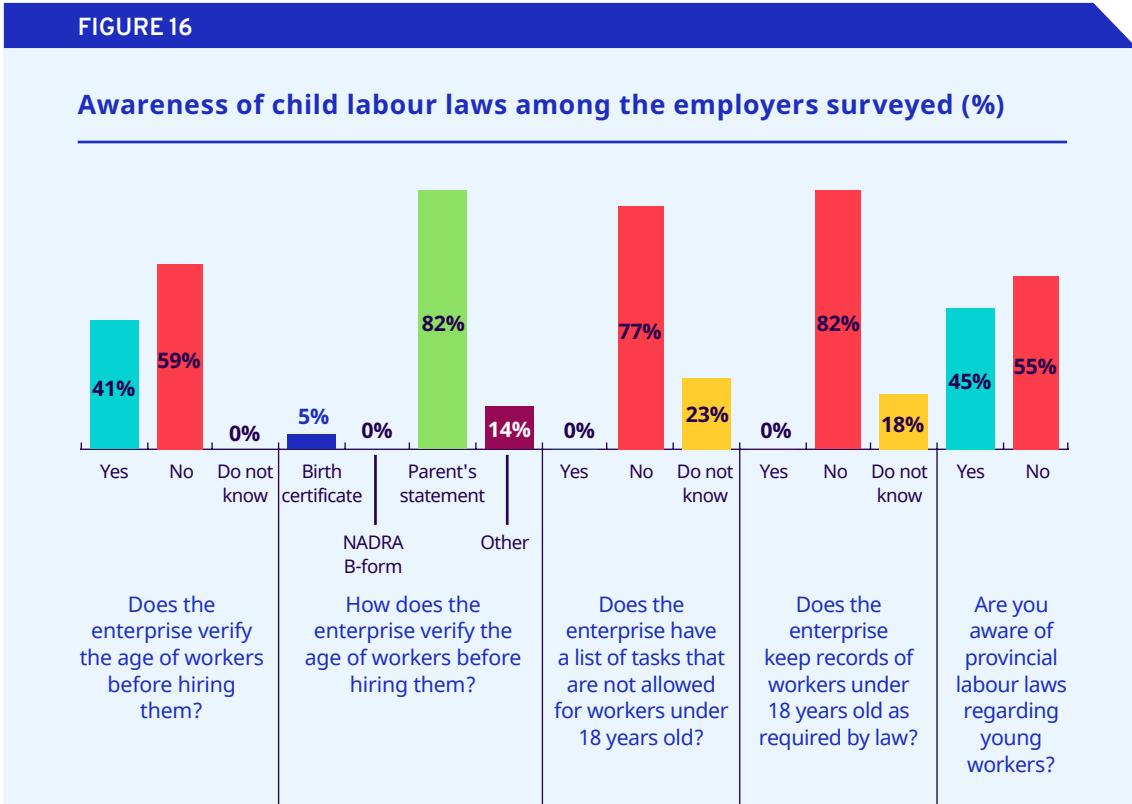
Most of the 22 automobile workshop owners surveyed are car mechanics (82 per cent), while a minority (4 per cent) are motorcycle mechanics. The workshops examined offer several services, including vehicle engine repair, vehicle body denting and painting, electrical repair, vehicle suspension and the repair of vehicle batteries, among others.

2.4.2. Workshops' legal compliance and business linkages

Most of the automobile repair workshops examined were set up before 2010, and most of their owners are automobile mechanics (95 per cent). Only 5 per cent are registered as businesses and none are sub-contractors for larger enterprises or other businesses. None of the automobile repair workshop owners surveyed have registered their establishment with a provincial Employees' Social Security Institution (ESSI), and 5 per cent claim that registration is not applicable to their establishment (see figure 15).

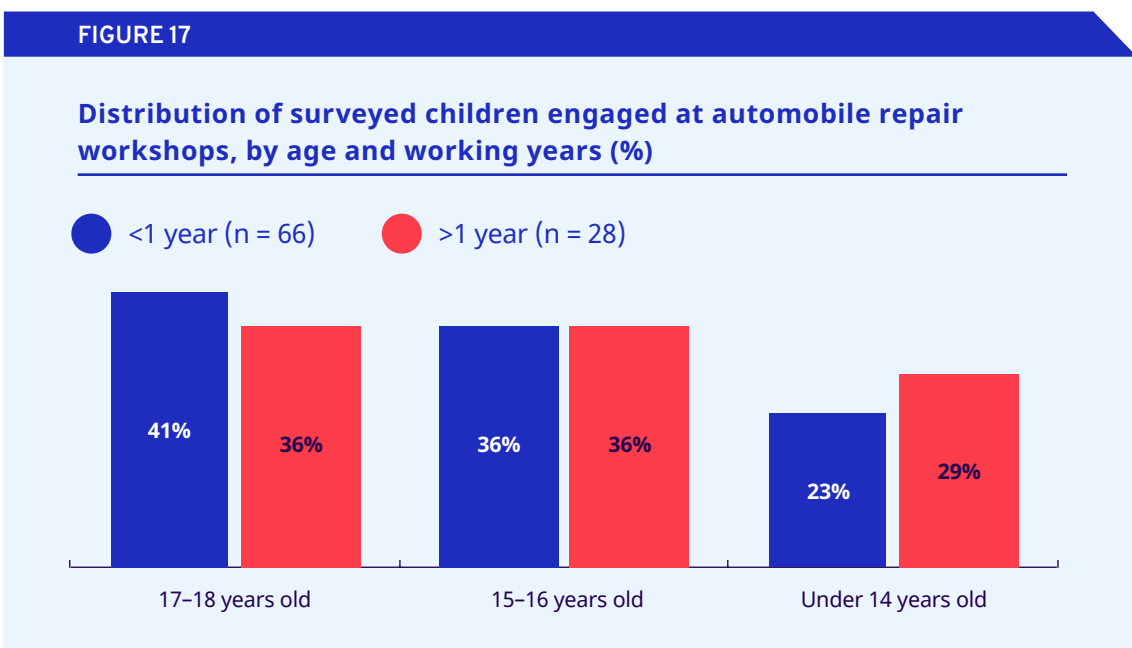


In terms of compliance with child labour-related legislation, only 41 per cent of the workshop owners surveyed verify the age of children who seek employment at their establishment. Most are satisfied with parents' statements of their child's age. The majority of owners (77 per cent) do not have a list of hazardous tasks that are prohibited for workers under 18 years old, or are unaware of any such list (23 per cent). Most (82 per cent) do not keep any records of workers under 18 years old, and very few (18 per cent) are aware that provincial legislation on child labour requires that all establishments to keep a register of workers between 14 and 17 years old (or between 15 and 17 years old in Punjab). Nevertheless, 45 per cent of the employers surveyed reported being aware of provincial labour laws on the employment of young workers (see figure 16).



2.4.3. Workers at automobile repair workshops

Among the 22 automobile repair workshops surveyed across Pakistan, 64 per cent have four or fewer workers, and 27 per cent have five or more workers. These workers include children, all of whom are boys. Although establishments with five or more workers are legally required to register with provincial Employees' Social Security Institutions, none of the workshops surveyed is registered, as noted above. The owners engaged for this assessment reported employing workers who are under 18 years old, including children under 14 years old (see figure 17).



2.4.4. Age at which children begin working and avenues of recruitment

There is broad consensus among the employers surveyed about the age at which a child can start working at an automobile repair workshop. The majority (68 per cent) feel that children can start learning skills between 10 and 14 years of age, while 27 per cent believe that children between 8 and 9 years old age can start working at automobile workshops. None of the employers surveyed feel that children between 5 and 7 years old can do so.

They identified multiple avenues by which children are recruited, usually through friends (38 per cent) or other employers (29 per cent). Formal recruiters appear to play a limited role in hiring children (see figure 18).

2.4.5. Work assigned to children and the time required to master skills

According to the employers surveyed, children engaged at automobile repair workshops are usually involved in learning or helping with a range of tasks. These include engine repair (29 per cent), vehicle denting and painting (21 per cent), or acting as helpers in general (16 per cent). Most workshop owners refer to children as ‘informal learners’, ‘formal apprentices’ or ‘semi-skilled workers’.

Nearly half of the workshop owners (46 per cent) reported that children are responsible for certain assigned tasks, while over one-quarter (27 per cent) consider that children are learning a skill. Employers have diverse views on how long it takes children to master automobile repair skills, ranging from one year to more than seven years.

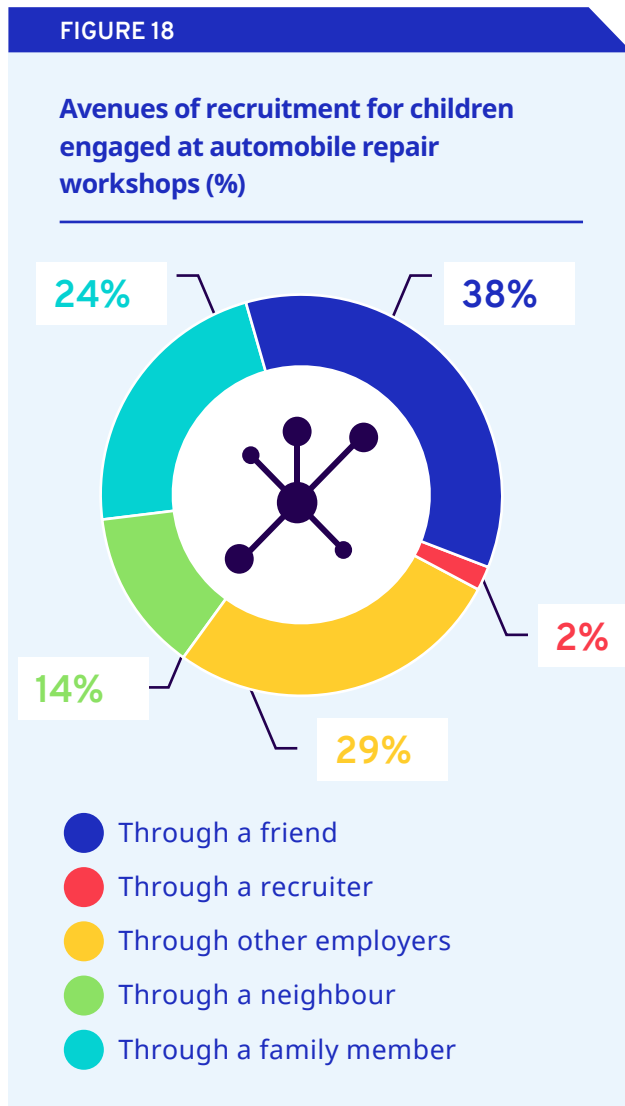
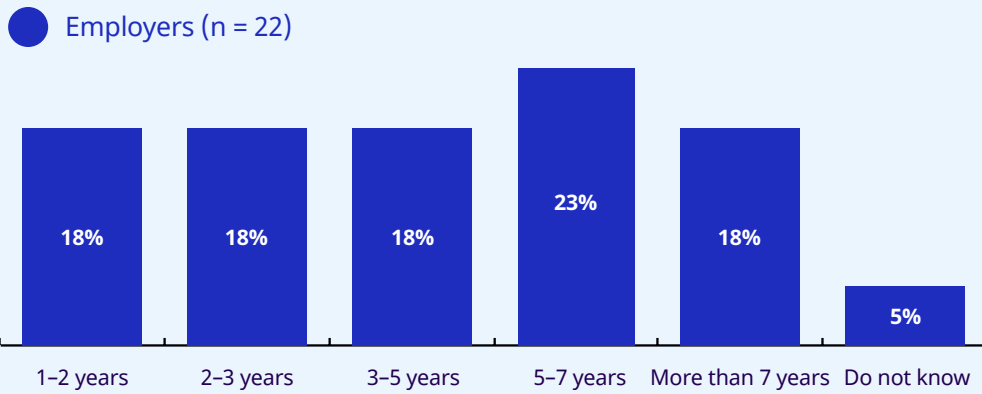


FIGURE 19

Perceptions of how long it takes children to learn automobile repair skills, according to the employers surveyed (%)



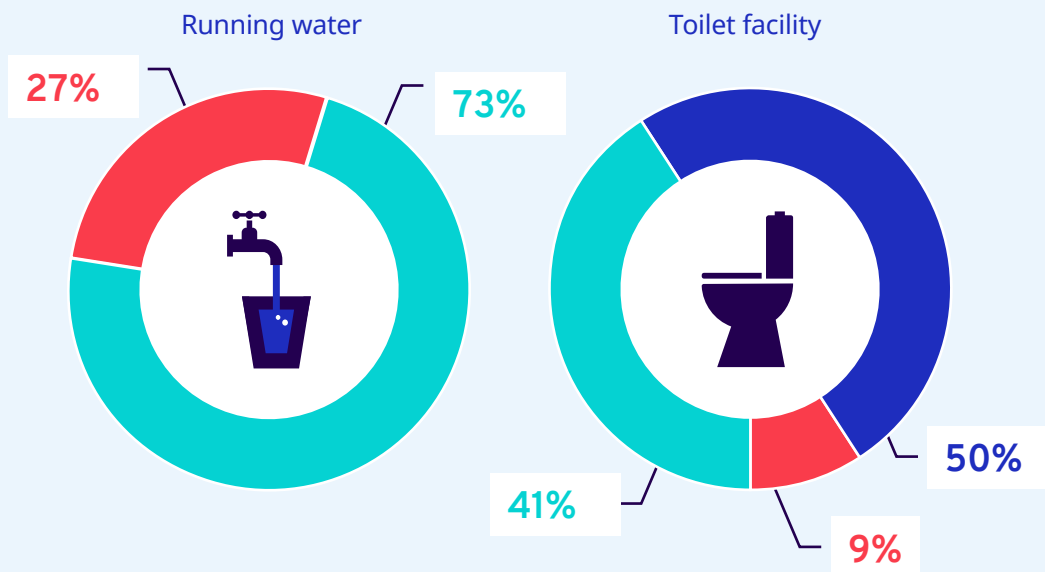
► **2.5. Working conditions at automobile repair workshops**

2.5.1. Amenities and services provided

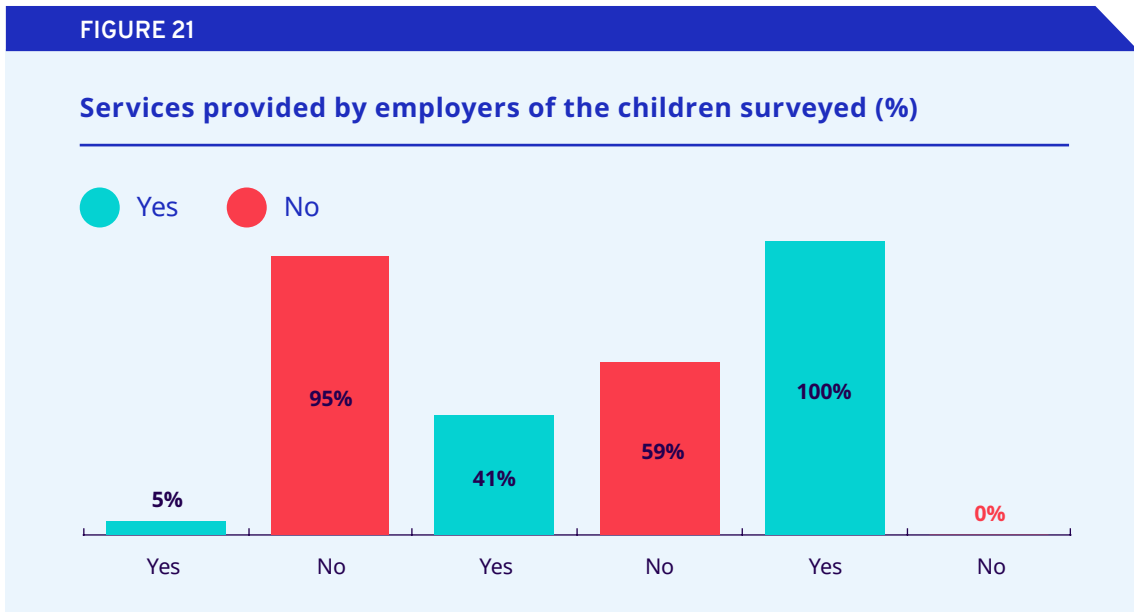
Running water is available at most of the workshops surveyed (73 per cent), although fewer than half have toilet facilities at (41 per cent) or near their premises (50 per cent).

FIGURE 20

Availability of amenities at the automobile workshops surveyed (%)



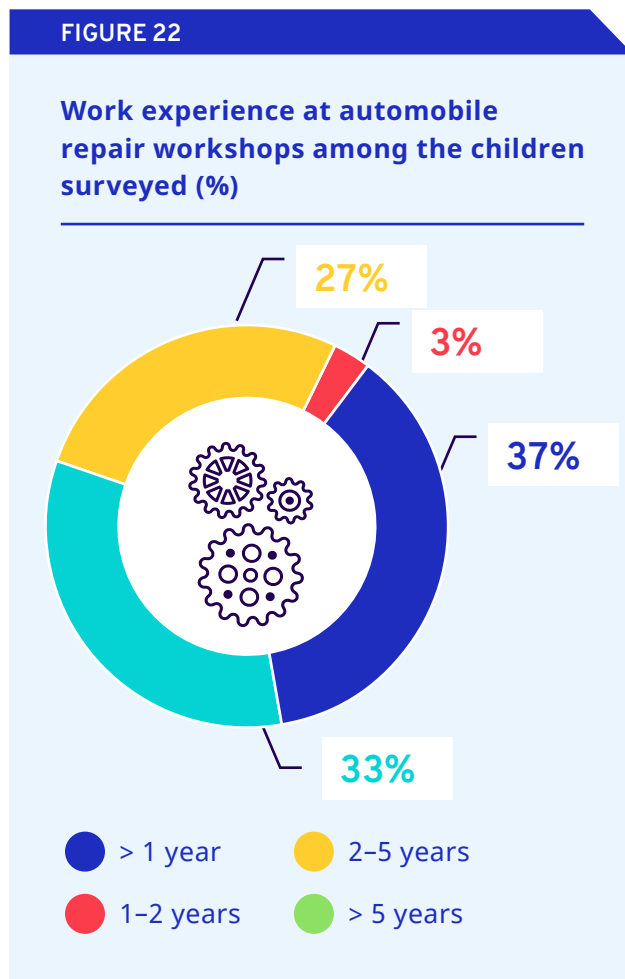
All of the employers surveyed reported providing meals for children at work, 41 per cent cover commuting expenses, and fewer than 5 per cent offer accommodation for the children engaged in their workshops (see figure 21).



2.5.2. Children’s work experience and tasks

Across Pakistan, most of the children surveyed have less than two years of work experience – 37 per cent have worked for less than one year, and 33 per cent for between one and two years (see figure 22).

After the first year of employment, children divide their time roughly equally between tasks that they are primarily responsible for, and tasks that involve helping other workers (see figure 23).



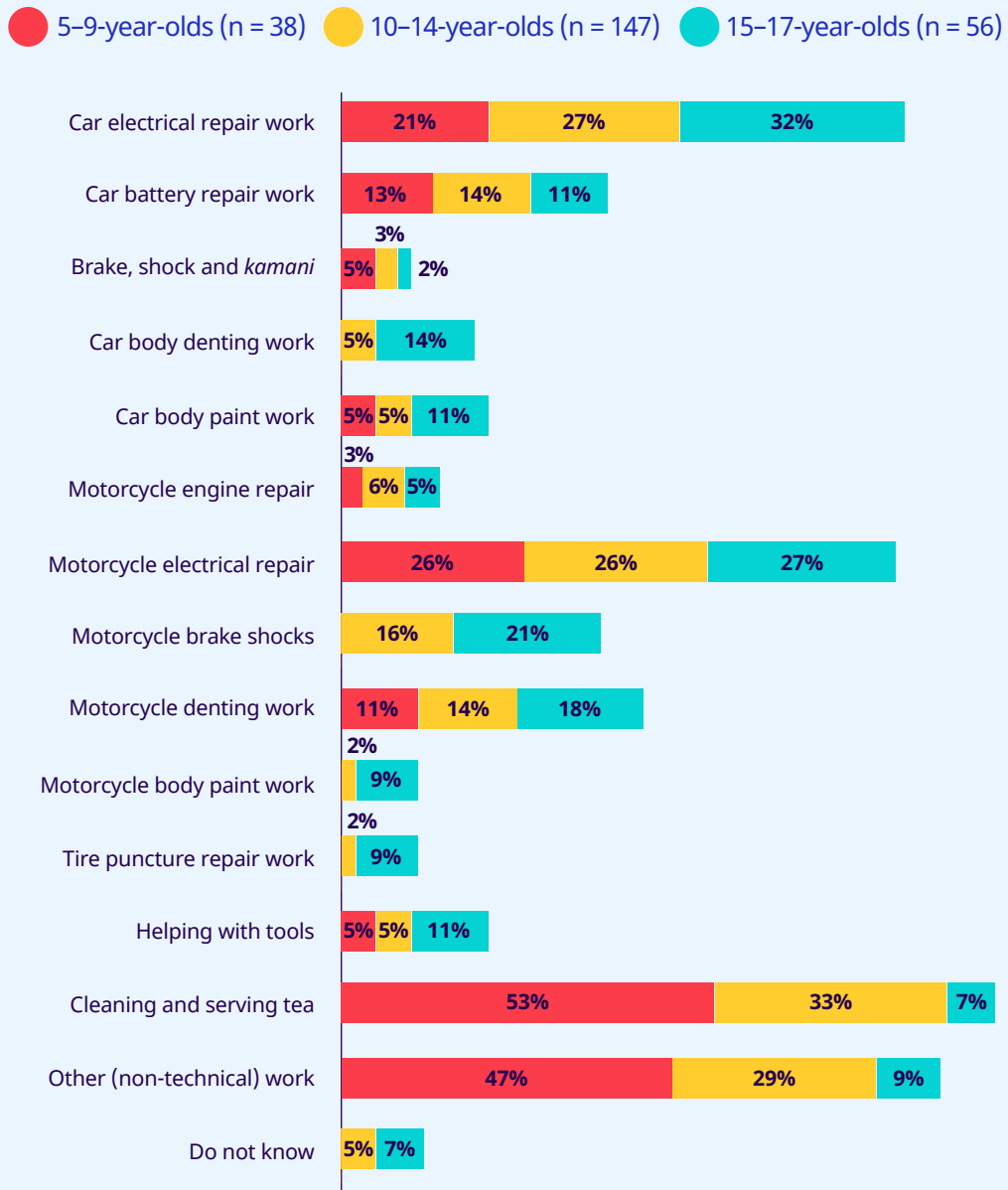


The children surveyed across all three age groups (5–9 years old, 10–14 years old and 15–17 years old) reported performing hazardous tasks at automobile repair workshops. These include electrical vehicle work, vehicle body painting, vehicle body denting and engine repair work, among others. Younger children between 5 and 9 years old tend to concentrate on non-technical tasks – such as cleaning and serving tea (53 per cent), and other non-technical work (47 per cent) – while children over 10 years old are assigned more technical tasks.

According to the labour officials interviewed from all four provinces, several automobile repair tasks are hazardous children under 18 years old due to the involvement of acids in battery repair work, the dangers of electrical work, the use of chemicals in vehicle body painting, performing welding with a torch, and working underneath vehicles by precariously lifting them. Even very young children between 5 and 9 years old are involved in hazardous tasks, with the exception of car body denting, motorcycle body painting and repairing tire punctures. For instance, they are often involved in motorcycle electrical repair (26 per cent), car electrical repair (21 per cent), car battery repair (13 per cent) and motorcycle denting work (11 per cent) (see figure 24).

FIGURE 24

Tasks performed by children at automobile repair workshops, by age group (multiple responses) (%)



2.5.2. Children’s work days, working time and commutes

Given that legislation in all four provinces prohibits the employment of children under 14 years old (or 15 years old in Punjab), and forbids the involvement of anyone under 18 years old in hazardous work, severe violations of child labour laws exist at all of the workshops examined for this assessment. Not only are children between 5 and 17 years old engaged by these establishments, but many are involved in hazardous tasks and long working hours – sometimes up to 7 seven days per week and 13 hours per day. More than 75 per cent of the children surveyed across the three age groups (5–9 years old, 10–14 years old and 15–17 years old) work for five or six days per week, while more than 10 per cent of older children reported working for seven days per week (see figure 25).

Across all age groups, children reported working between 8 and 13 hours per day (see figure 26). Of the children surveyed, 98 per cent commute to work from their homes, while 2 per cent live at the workshop where they are engaged. Most children take 30 minutes or less to reach their workplace (88 per cent), usually on foot (38 per cent), by motorcycle (29 per cent) or by bicycle (10 per cent).

FIGURE 25

Working days per week among the children surveyed, by age group (%)

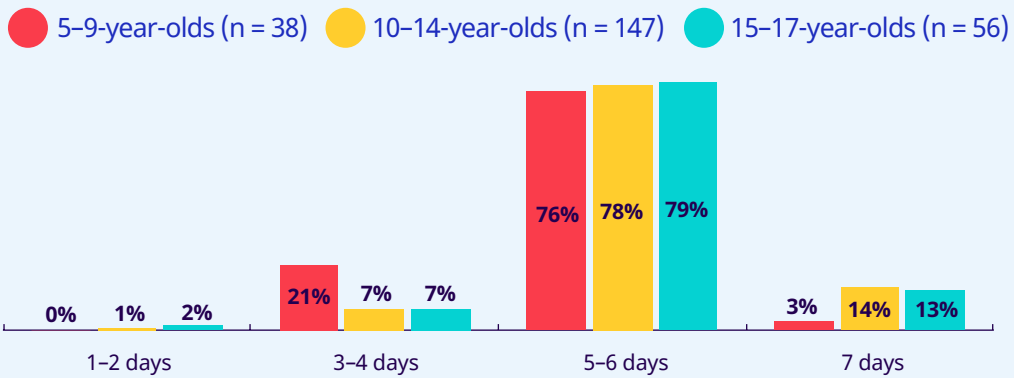
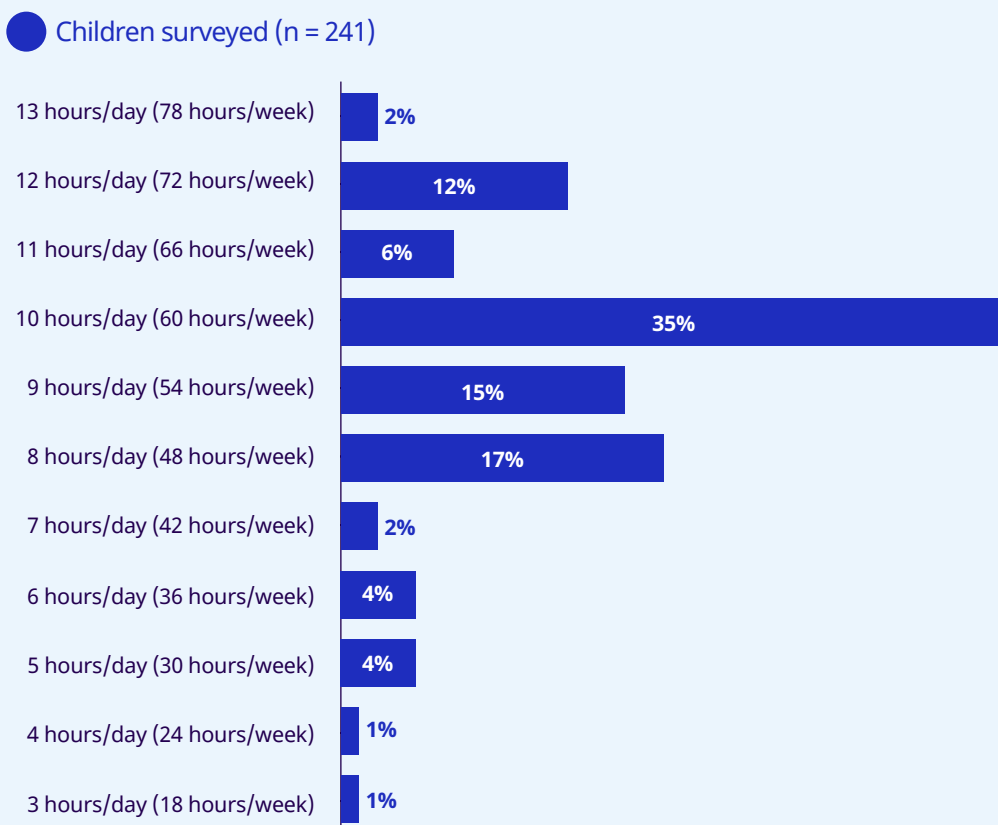


FIGURE 26

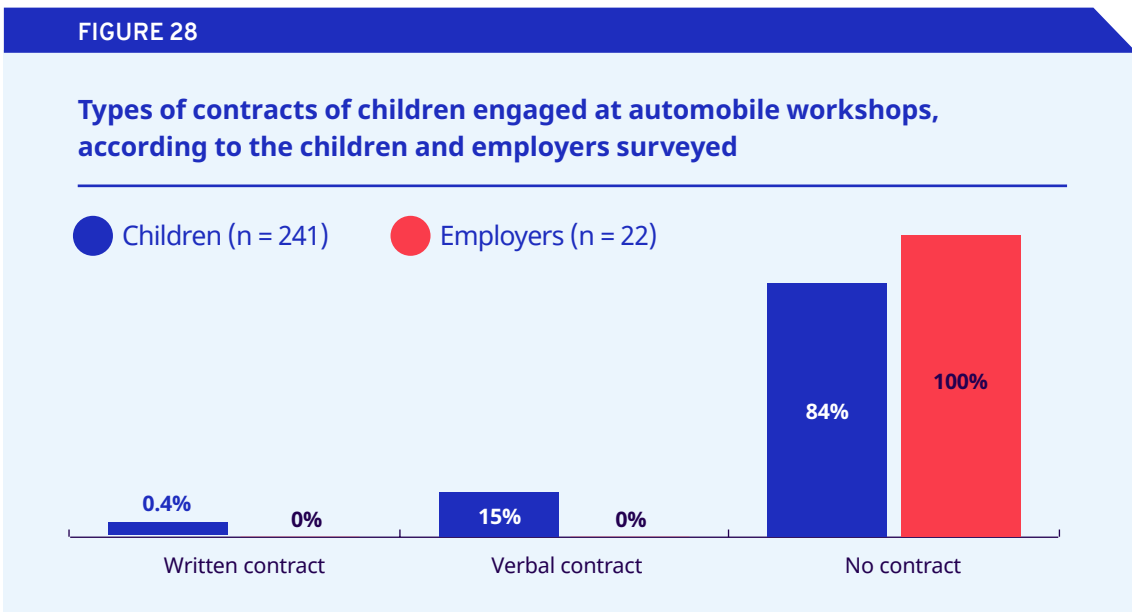
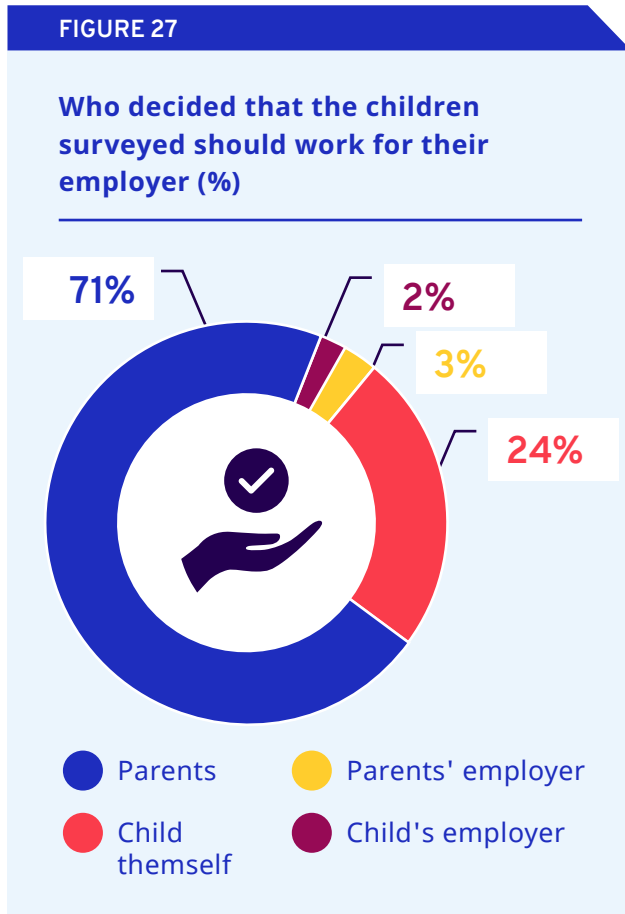
Working hours per day and week reported by the children surveyed (%)



2.5.4. Recruitment patterns, relationships and contracts

According to most of the children surveyed, their parents decided that they should begin working at an automobile workshop (71 per cent), while just 24 per cent took this decision themselves (see figure 27). When asked about the facilitators of their employment, almost half of the children (49 per cent) identified workshop owners, followed by relatives (46 per cent) and recruiters (4 per cent).

More than half of the children surveyed have some sort of family link with their employers – with 37 per cent stating that their employer is a member of their family or extended family, and 16 per cent identifying their employer as a family friend. Most children lack a written contract, including those between 14 and 17 years old, according to 84 per cent of the children and 100 per cent of the employers surveyed. Nevertheless, 15 per cent of the children surveyed claimed they have a verbal contract with their employer (see figure 28).



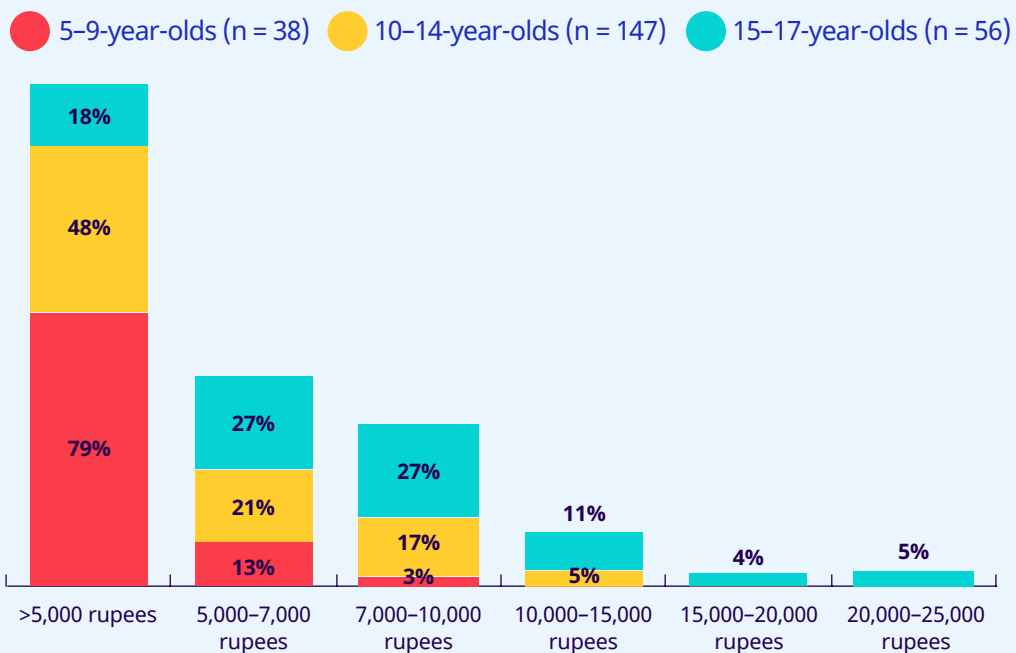
2.5.5. Income and spending

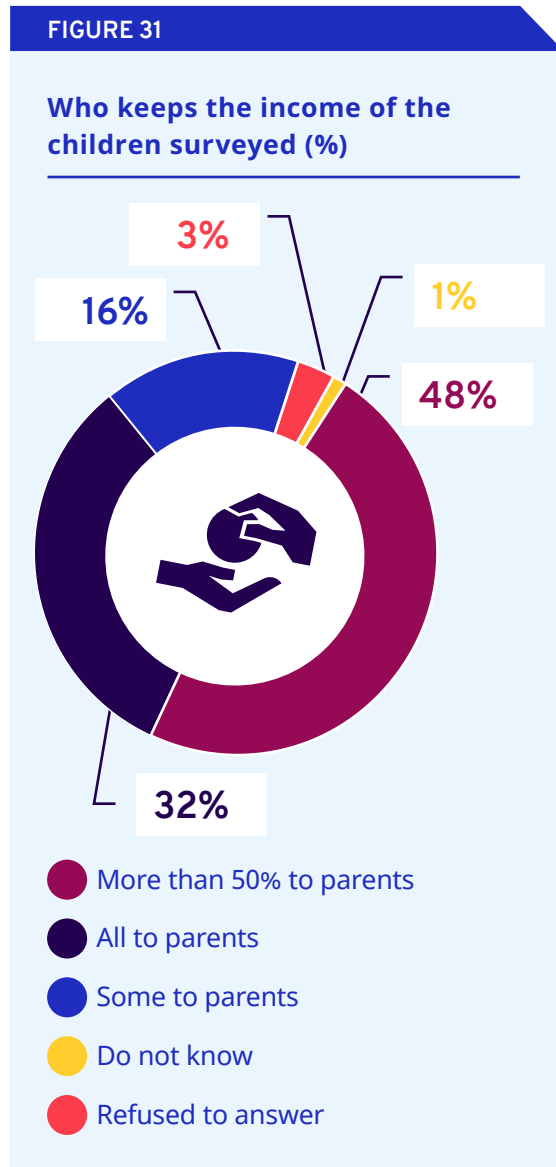
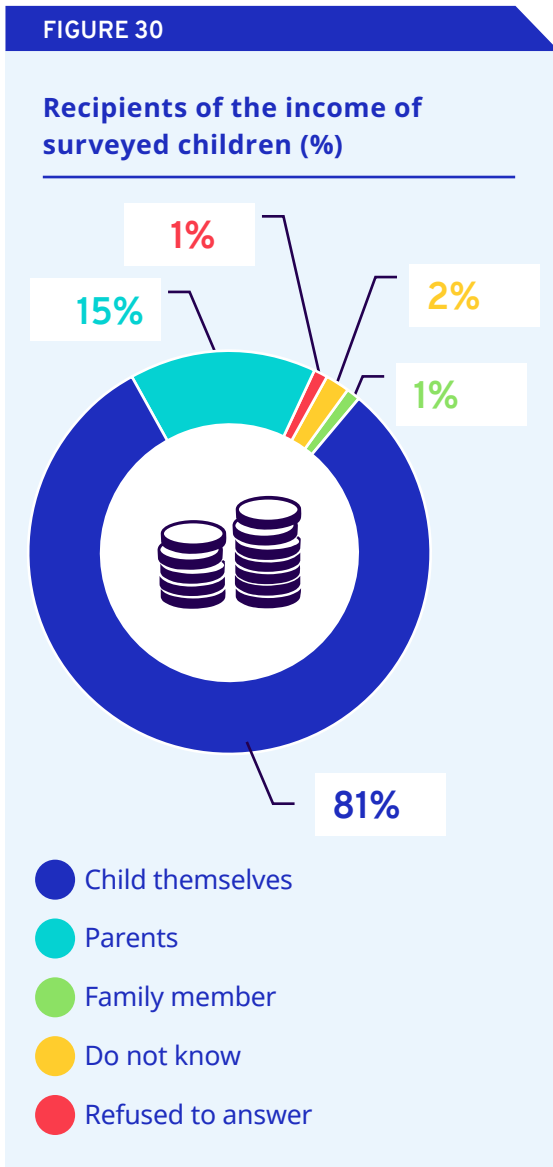
All of the children surveyed are paid for working at automobile repair workshops. Most children under 14 years old receive a very small sum of less than 5,000 rupees per month, as do some 15- to 17-year-olds. Older children are paid more, presumably as their skills improve with experience. Thus, the share of children earning between 5,000–7,000 rupees and 10,000–15,000 rupees per month is higher among 15- to 17-year-olds, and no children under 14 earn more than 15,000 rupees per month (see figure 29). The parents and employers surveyed confirmed these trends in children’s monthly income, although no parent indicated that their child receives less than 5,000 rupees per month.

Most of the children surveyed receive their monthly income themselves, and usually give all or more than half of their earnings to their parents. This indicates families’ reliance on child labour to meet household consumption needs. The parents surveyed also reported that children receive their income before handing their earnings over to their parents. One parent indicated that their child’s income is used to pay off debt.

FIGURE 29

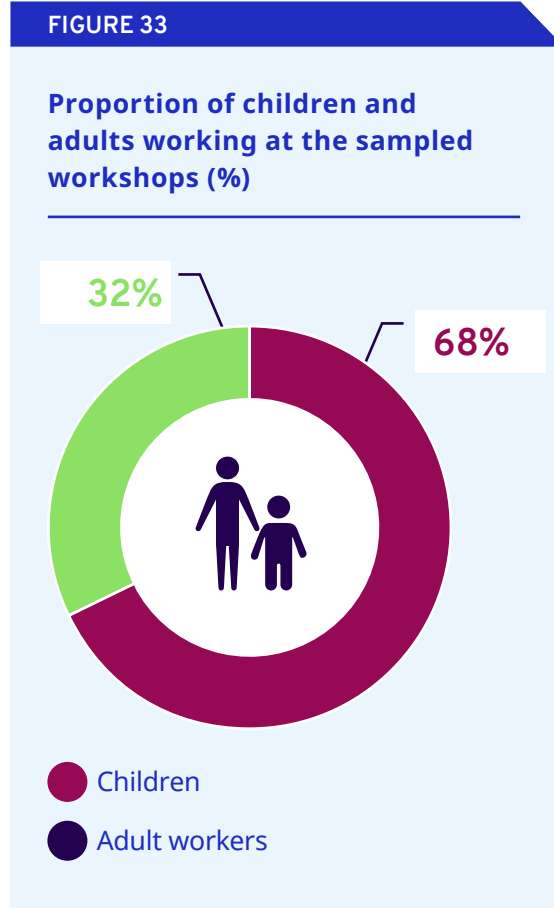
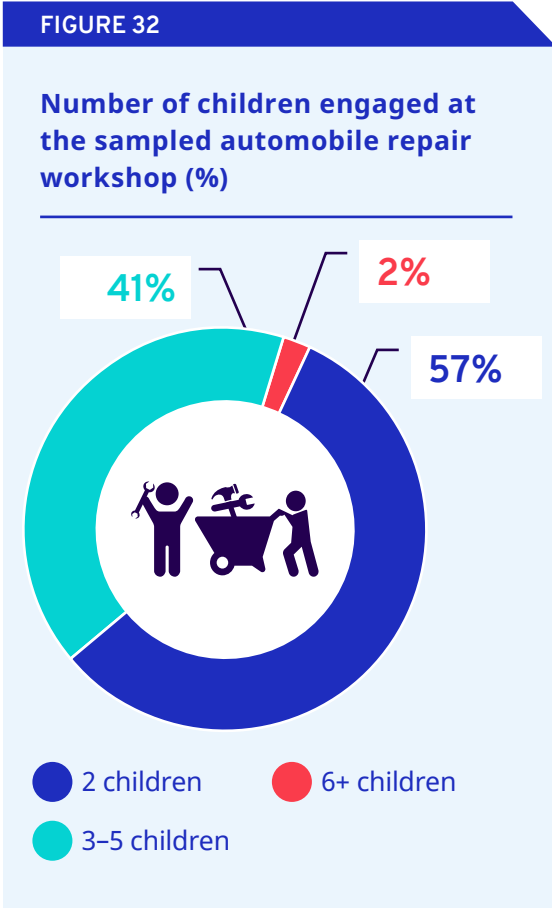
Monthly income of the children surveyed, by age group (%)





2.5.6. Child co-workers

Although labour officials suggest that automobile repair workshops usually engage one child each, 57 per cent of the children surveyed reported that at least two children are engaged at their workplaces, while 41 per cent indicated that between three and five children are engaged at their workshops (see figure 32). In total across the country, the children surveyed reported having 1,020 co-workers, 698 of whom are children (68 per cent) (see figure 33).



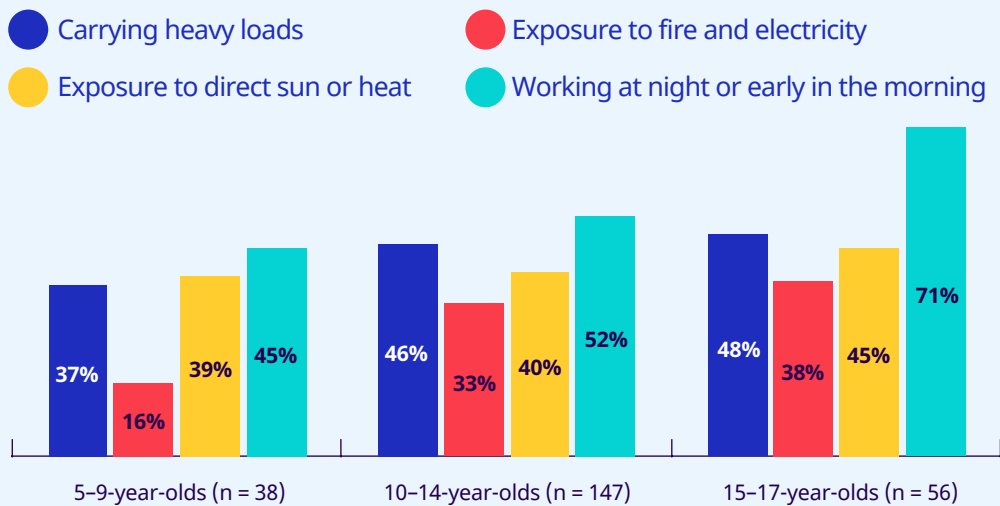
► **2.6. Workplace hazards, injuries and health problems**

2.6.1. Hazardous work

As noted above, the labour officials interviewed and children surveyed across Pakistan, in all three age groups, confirm that children perform hazardous work at automobile repair workshops. Children between 5 and 9 years old reported carrying heavy loads (37 per cent), being exposed to fire and electricity (16 per cent), being exposed to direct sunlight or heat (39 per cent) and working at night or early in the morning (45 per cent). Similar trends are apparent among older children, with 71 per cent of 15- to 17-year-olds working late at night or early in the morning (see figure 34), in violation of provincial labour laws. However, the provincial labour officials interviewed indicated that automobile repair workshops as a whole cannot be regarded as hazardous, although they may be on the ‘borderline’ in terms of hazards and involve some hazardous processes.

FIGURE 34

Types of workplace hazards at automobile repair workshops reported by children surveyed (%)



2.6.2. Workplace injuries

There is a high incidence of workplace injuries among the children surveyed. The three most common injuries reported are electric shock (31 per cent), deep or long cuts (22 per cent) and bad burns (18 per cent) (see figure 35). A large proportion of 5- to 9-year-olds reported suffering electric shocks (21 per cent), bad burns (11 per cent) and injuries to their head, back or neck (11 per cent). During the focus group discussions, children reported injuries to their fingers, hands, eyes and heads, as well as injuries caused by engines exploding, and being burned by acid or hot oil. Surveyed parents reported similar trends. While most employers surveyed (73 per cent) acknowledged that children have been injured at their workshop, a significant proportion (27 per cent) denied that children are ever injured.



Physical injuries occur during work, especially [our] fingers get injured.”

– 14-year-old child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



At work, children experience burn injuries, and acid injuries are common too.”

– 15-year-old child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



Work tools often slip and injure our face, particularly the eyes.”

–12-year-old child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



Engines can also explode while we are working on them.”

– 16-year-old child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



During work, a nut can slip and hit [us in] the eye or the head.”

– 13-year-old child focus group participant, Quetta, Balochistan



Our hands [are] also burned from handling hot oil.”

– 15-year-old child focus group participant, Quetta, Balochistan



Batteries and engines sometimes explode and can injure us, but it is part of our work.”

–15-year-old child focus group participant, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

FIGURE 35

Injuries reported by the children surveyed (%)

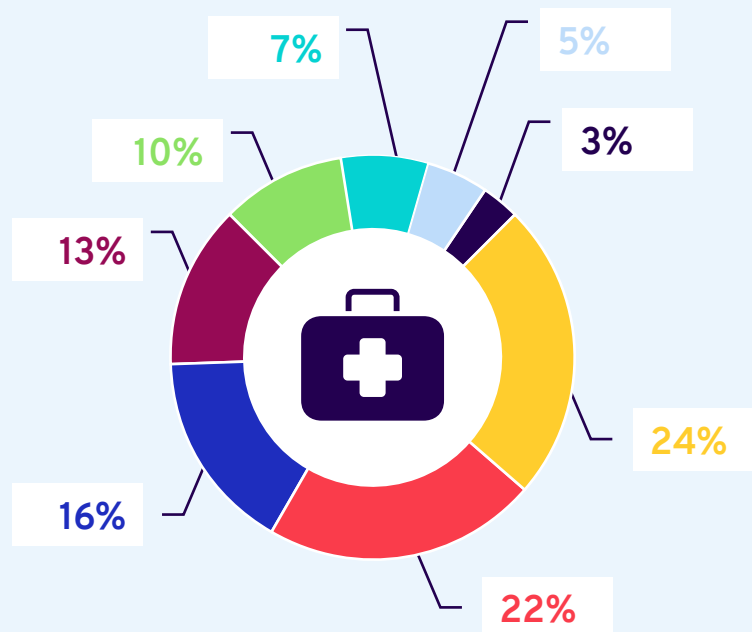
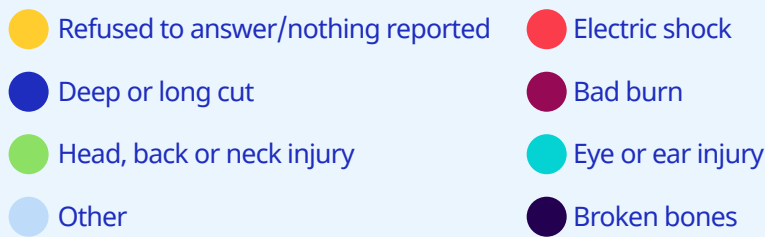
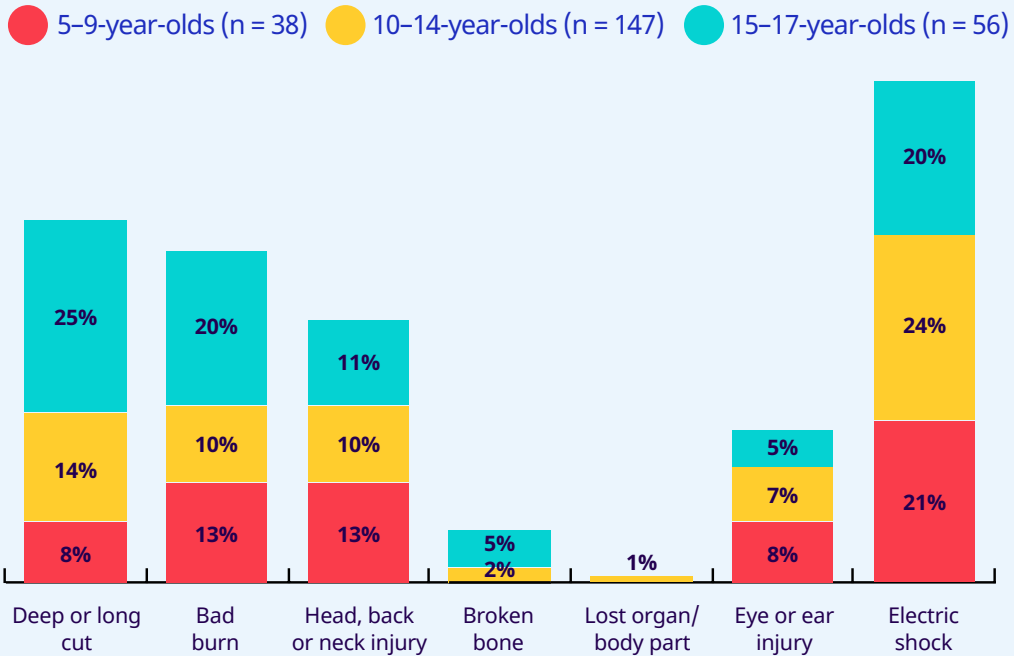


FIGURE 36

Injuries reported by the children surveyed, by age group (%)



Fewer than half of the employers surveyed (45 per cent) have taken measures to keep children safe in their workshops, and most do not provide their workers with any personal protective equipment (77 per cent), safety boots (86 per cent), protective glasses (82 per cent) or gloves (82 per cent). Very few owners shared information on what actions are taken if a child is injured at work, such as applying brake oil to the wound (5 per cent), taking the injured child to a doctor (15 per cent) or taking the child to a hospital (6 per cent).



[For minor injuries] we apply brake oil on the wound.”

– Child focus group participant, Quetta, Balochistan



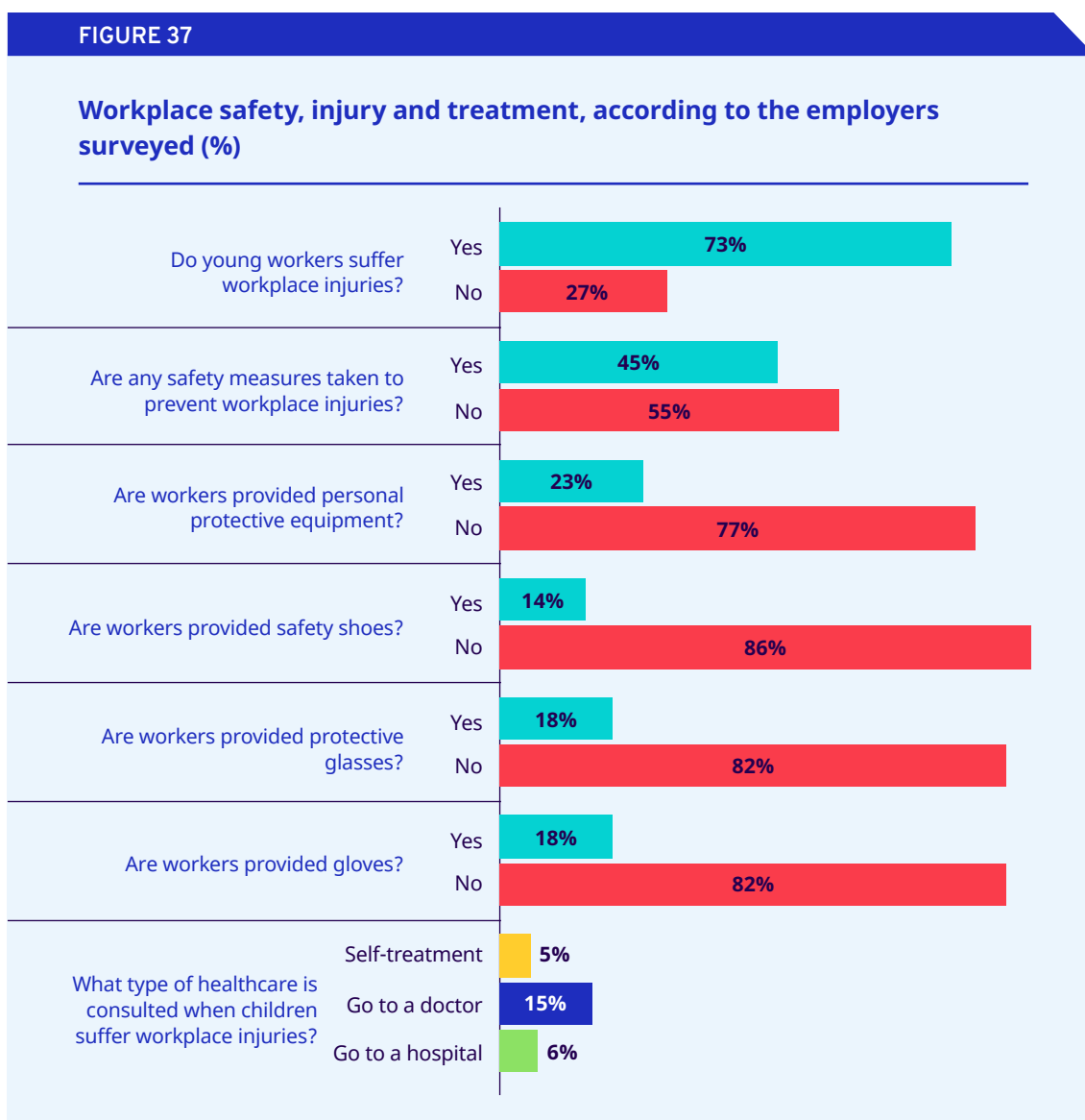
We get free treatment for injuries at hospitals, but there is no compensation from the workshop.”

– Child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



The ustaad [chief technician] takes a child to a doctor if the injury is severe, but no money is given to the injured child.”

–Child focus group participant, Multan, Punjab



2.6.3. Disabilities among the children surveyed

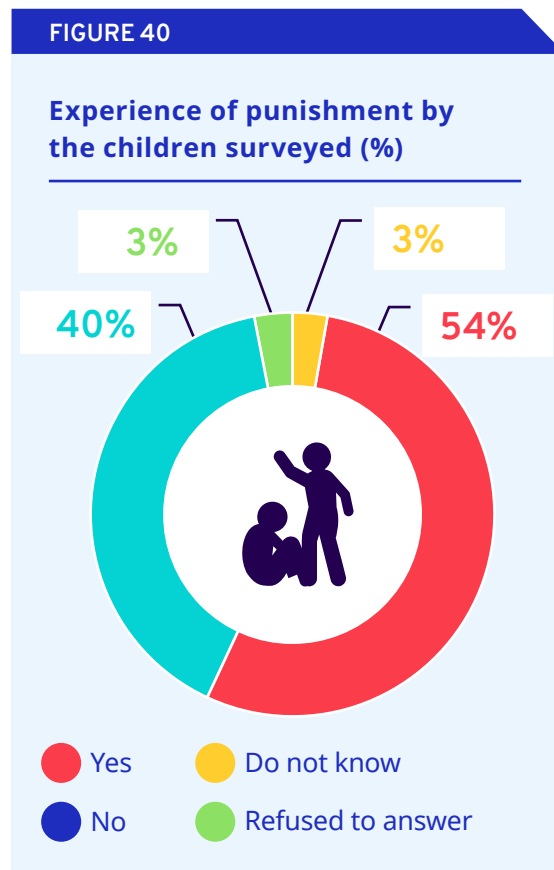
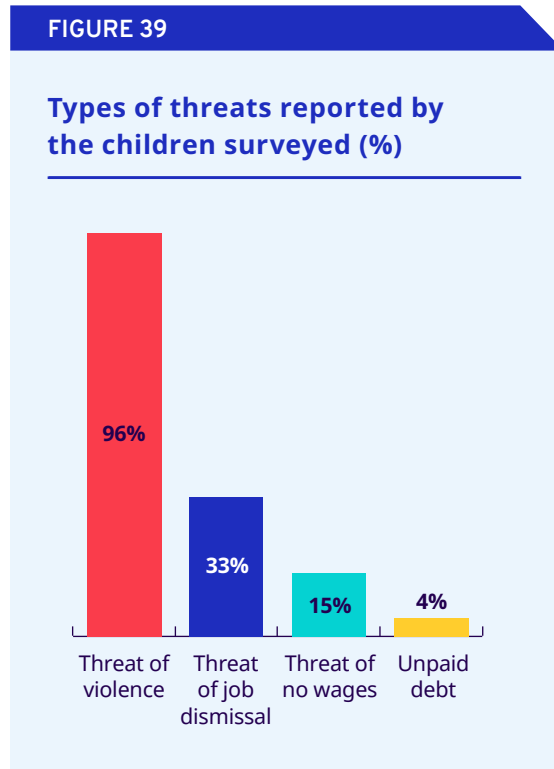
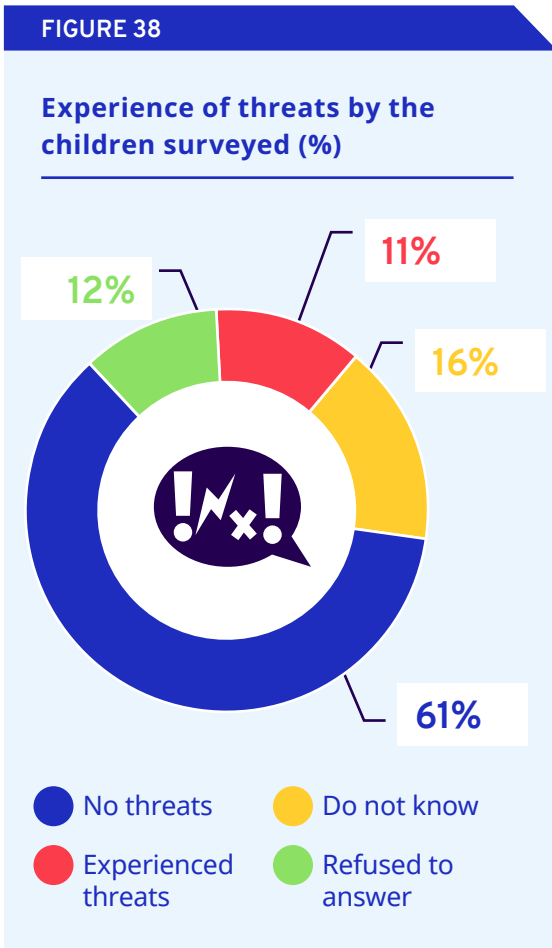
Very few children surveyed reported having any type of disability, although some experience difficulties walking or seeing (6 per cent each), difficulty hearing (4 per cent), or severe difficulties walking and hearing (under 1 per cent). It appears that children with disabilities may not be hired by automobile repair workshops as employers may not consider them ‘productive’.

► 2.7. Violence at the workplace and mental health

2.7.1. Threats and punishments

Most of the children surveyed (61 per cent) have not experienced threats from their employers, although many children either refused to answer or responded that they ‘did not know’ whether they had ever been threatened (see figure 38).

Of the 11 per cent who have experienced threats, most reported the threat of violence at work (96 per cent) (see figure 39). Whether or not they have experienced threats, most children claimed that they cannot leave their job (66 per cent), largely because they need the money (48 per cent) and because of the difficulties involved in finding other work (33 per cent).

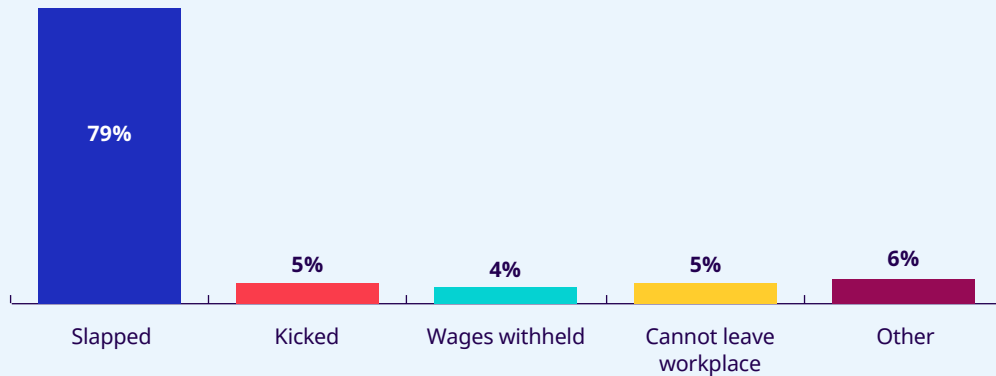


Fewer than half of the children surveyed (40 per cent) reported being punished at work (see figure 40). Of these children, 79 per cent have been slapped (see figure 41). The fact that children were interviewed at their workplaces for this assessment may have made them reluctant to report punishments.

Some 64 per cent of the employers surveyed reported punishing children engaged at their workshops - with all of the employers reporting verbal abuse, and 21 per cent reporting physical and verbal abuse.

FIGURE 41

Types of punishment reported by the children surveyed (%)



During the focus group discussions, children explicitly reported widespread verbal and physical punishment by their employers, including being slapped, kicked or hit with blunt work tools like wrenches. A number of children justified physical abuse as a means of disciplining them and teaching them skills, while some indicated that their employers teach them ‘with kindness’.



The ustaad [chief technician] often scolds children and gets angry.”

– 12-year-old child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



The ustaad even hits children with a wrench on the head.”

– 11-year-old child focus group participant, Multan, Punjab



If a child makes a mistake, he will be punished.”

– 14-year-old child focus group participant, Multan, Punjab



The ustaad hits children with work tools.”

– 14-year-old child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



The ustaad often scolds [us] and gets angry, and sometimes hits [us] physically, and [...] even hits children with tools.”

– 15-year-old child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



The ustaad sometimes punishes children to avoid giving them money at the end of the day.”

– 17-year-old child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



The ustaad only scolds [us] to make our future safe, and he wants us to follow the rules and be punctual.”

– 17-year-old child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



[Punishment is] for our better future, as punishment is important to learn skills.”

– Child focus group participant, Quetta, Balochistan



We get these punishments only to improve our future.”

– 15-year-old child focus group participant, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



The ustaad’s punishment is important for our betterment.”

– 17-year-old child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh



The ustaad is also kind and teaches us with love and respect. Still, he beats us only to make us learn the skill.”

– 16-year-old child focus group participant, Quetta, Balochistan



At times, the ustaad is kind and teaches children with love and respect.”

– 15-year-old child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab

2.7.2. Workplace violence

Although the children surveyed were asked about experiences of workplace violence, posing these questions proved difficult in the presence of employers and other workers. Therefore, responses on violence-related questions are inconsistent. Nonetheless, 20 per cent of the children surveyed reported experiencing physical violence, including being slapped, punched, kicked, or being otherwise physically hurt at the workplace. Of these children, 88 per cent identified an adult as the perpetrator. About 10 per cent of the children surveyed have been threatened at work, almost always by an adult, and 7 per cent have been ridiculed, insulted or shamed (67 per cent by an adult and 17 per cent by an adolescent).

While 42 per cent of the children surveyed felt that they can complain to prevent violence, 37 per cent did not. Only 102 children responded to the question on whether they have reported abuse, 23 per cent of whom have done so, while 52 per cent have not officially complained. Among those who have reported instances of abuse, 83 per cent complained to their father or mother, and 87 per cent claimed that the violence ended after their complaint.

In the focus group discussions, several children spoke of their experiences of harassment and ridicule at automobile repair workshops. They reported bullying, the use of abusive language, threats, and their fear of using toilet facilities in the presence of older workers, which suggests the possibility of sexual abuse.



Sometimes co-workers use abusive language in front of others to humiliate younger children.”

– 12-year-old child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



Young men from the workshop go to the nearby toilet, and the young boys are afraid to go there.”

– 14-year-old child focus group participant, Lahore, Punjab



Older co-workers threaten to complain to the ustad [against us] if we do not comply with their wishes.

– 14-year-old child focus group participant, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Older boys here bully younger boys and often make fun of them.”

– Child focus group participant, Quetta, Balochistan



Older boys humiliate younger children by giving them bad names.”

– Child focus group participant, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



[Older boys] torture us and threaten us.”

– Child focus group participant, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



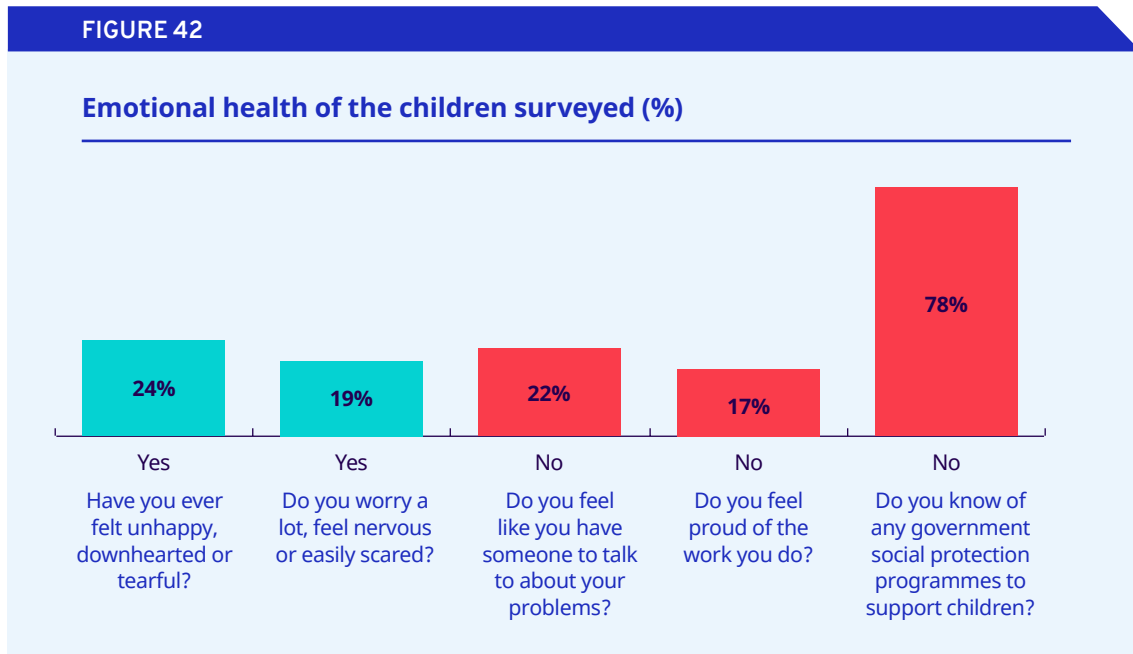
Older workers use abusive language [...] and threaten to complain to the ustad or our parents if we [do not] comply with their dictates.”

– 15-year-old child focus group participant, Karachi, Sindh

Key informant interviews with representatives of civil society and workers’ organizations affirm that violence against children occurs at automobile repair workshops. According to key informants, children routinely experience psychological and physical abuse, including corporal punishment. Chief technicians exert such control that children are often unable to complain about physical punishment. One representative of a workers’ organization noted that children struggle to adapt to the workshop environment, where they are surrounded by adult strangers and immersed in a very different routine. They may want to run away but cannot do so, because of family pressure to continue earning. Children are often given demeaning nicknames, in addition to being physically and verbally abused. Punishments for minor mistakes may include being beaten with belts, punched and kicked. While key informants indicate that chief technicians do not sexually abuse children at their workshops, older boys or young men may do so unbeknown to their employer.

2.7.3. Emotional health

Several children surveyed reported experiencing poor emotional health, including feeling unhappy, downhearted or tearful (24 per cent), and worrying, feeling nervous or being easily scared (19 per cent). A similar proportion do not have anyone to talk to about their problems (22 per cent) and are not proud of their work (17 per cent). Most of the children surveyed (78 per cent) are not aware of any government social protection programme which supports children (see figure 42).



► 2.8. Time required to master skills and future aspirations

Most of the children surveyed (82 per cent) plan to continue working at automobile workshops as adults (see figure 43). Since children are recruited as helpers, rather than for formal skills training, the children, the parents and employers surveyed gave vague answers about how long it takes children to master automobile repair skills. Most children indicated that three to five years are required to master skills, employers consider that three to four years are needed, while most partners felt that four to five years are needed (see figure 44).

Most of the children, parents and employers surveyed believe that children engaged at automobile workshops will earn much more than the minimum wage as adults – estimating a future monthly income of over 25,000 rupees. However, 32 per cent of employers, 30 per cent of parents and 17 per cent of children are unsure of the future income of children engaged at automobile workshops (see figure 45).

FIGURE 43

Plans to continue working at automobile repair workshops among the children surveyed (%)

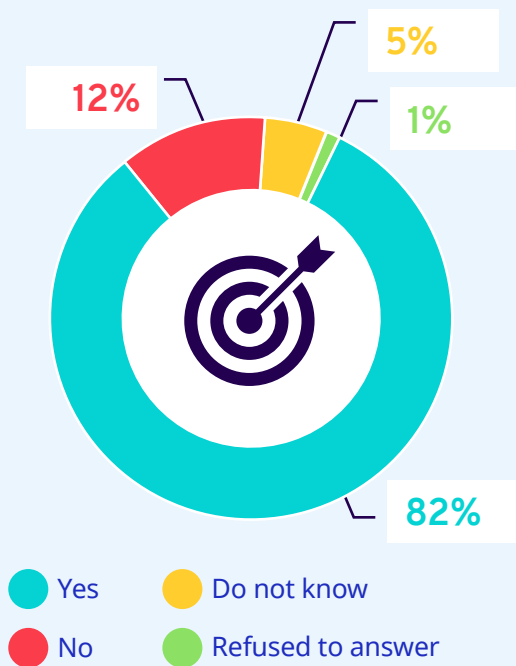


FIGURE 44

Perceptions of the time children require to master automobile repair skills, according to the children, parents and employers surveyed (%)

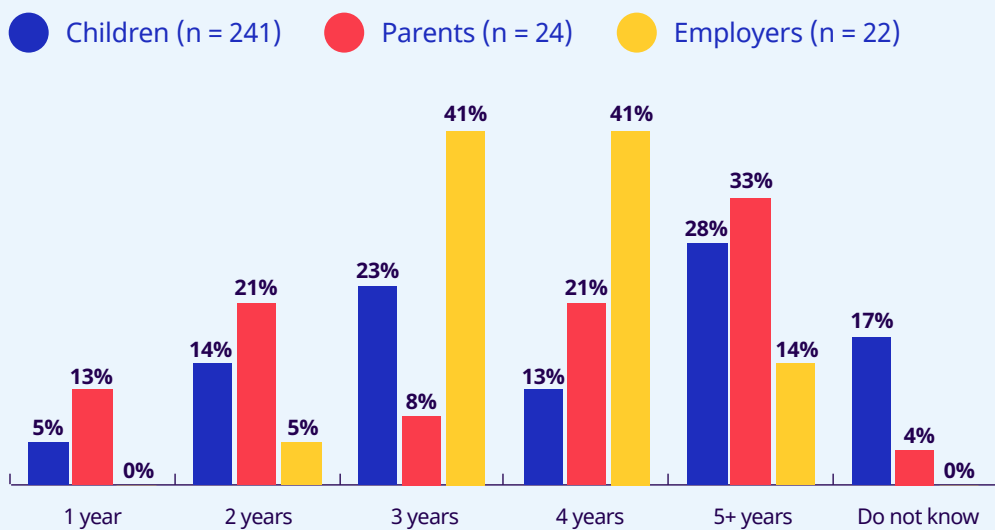
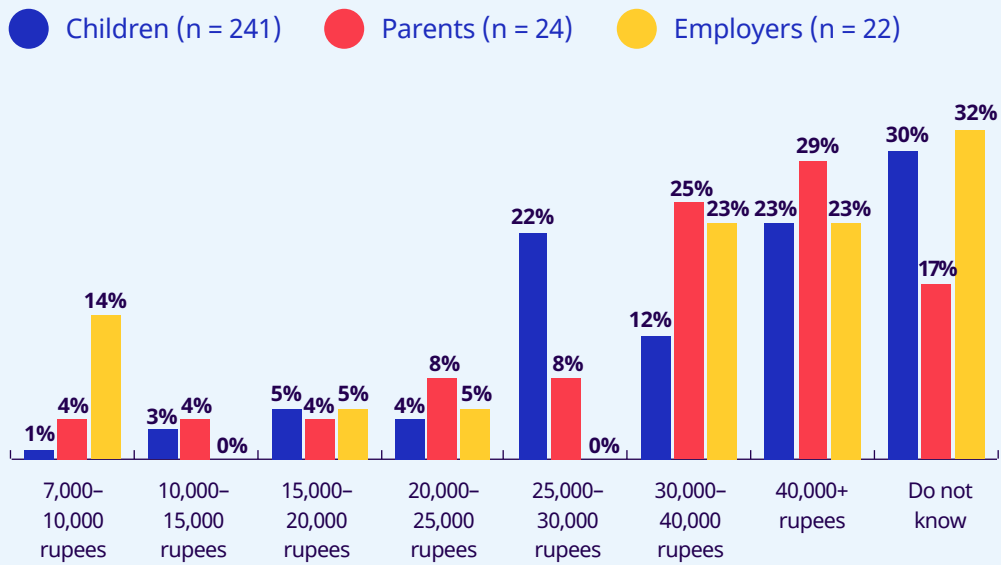


FIGURE 45

Perceptions of how much children will earn per month as adults, according to the children, parents and employers surveyed (%)



Chapter 3

Analysis

▶ 3.1. Supply of child labour for automobile repair workshops

The data indicates that children engaged at automobile repair workshops are from low-income families. The children and parents surveyed for this assessment identify poverty as a fundamental driving force that pushes children into automobile repair workshops, in addition to the desire for children to learn practical skills. As noted above, both the children and parents surveyed report that children's income is largely handed over to their parents, indicating that their earnings are used to meet household consumption needs.

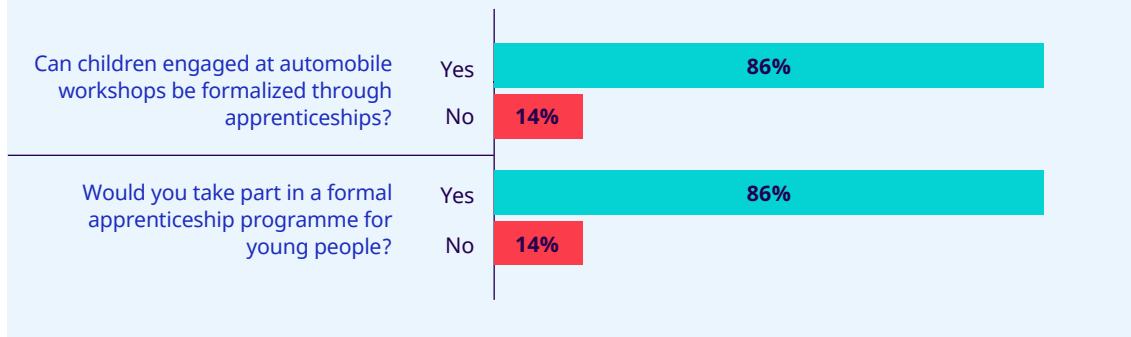
Key informants from Punjab's Department of Labour also highlight poverty as a major reason why families send their children to work at automobile repair workshops, where they receive a small income and free meals. Labour officials in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa note that large family size also puts economic pressure on poor parents, prompting them to rely on child labour to supplement the household income instead of sending their children to school. Automobile repair workshops offer an opportunity for poor boys to earn money, learn skills and become productive. Labour officials from Balochistan and Sindh similarly identify poverty as a driving force underlying children's work at automobile repair workshops, where they learn skills instead of falling into 'bad habits' by 'being idle'. Low-income families tend to believe that formal education is not particularly relevant for children, as it does not endow them with the skills they need to earn an income. Automobile workshops are considered a promising avenue to equip children with skills and, despite the years required to master these skills, lay the groundwork for a 'bright' future.

Civil society representatives similarly pinpoint poverty as the main reason for child labour. When a father's income is low, and since cultural gender norms limit opportunities for women's employment, boys are sent out to work to add to the family income. Parents or male members of a child's extended family may place them at automobile repair workshops to earn a small income, receive free food, and learn valuable skills for the future, which families do not believe formal education offers. Some families send their sons to *madrassas* (religious schools) for shelter, food and a religious education. The absence of sufficient government skills training centres and the lack of apprenticeship programmes at automobile workshops disadvantage low-income families and their children.

Most of the employers surveyed (86 per cent) believe that a formal apprenticeship programme for youth could be created for automobile repair workshops, and the same proportion are willing to participate in such a programme.

FIGURE 46

Views on formal apprenticeships among the employers surveyed (%)



► 3.2. Demand for child labour at automobile repair workshops

Informal automobile workshops are usually low-resource enterprises run by an *ustaad* (chief technician) that offer inexpensive vehicle maintenance and repair services by keeping their operating costs low. A key informant from the Employers’ Federation of Pakistan indicated that workshop owners often hire children as helpers because they are cheaper than adults, and can be paid less than the minimum wage. Thus, workshop owners are motivated by the cheap labour that children provide, rather than a desire to train children as workers. Many technicians do not teach children comprehensive skills for at least one year, apparently to avoid future competition. Some children grow up to start their own small workshops, and may attract clients away from their *ustaad*. Thus, the system of informal apprenticeship appears inherently flawed and disadvantageous for children.

Key informants from provincial Departments of Labour confirmed that automobile workshop owners use children as a source of cheap labour, taking little interest in their future or well-being. Employers are motivated by a desire to make a profit and keep costs down, even if this involves exploiting children. According to a labour official from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there are five key reasons why automobile repair workshops engage children. These are (i) because children are a cheap source of labour, (ii) they are paid less than the minimum wage, (iii) they can become affordable workers for the workshop owner in the future, (iv) families want children to learn skills, and (v) children perform tasks energetically and cannot say no to their employer.

Representatives of NGOs and workers’ organizations interviewed for this assessment affirm that workshop owners hire children to reduce labour costs. Adult workers may demand more than 1,000 rupees per day, whereas children can be paid 200 rupees for similar work. Children are considered ‘willing workers’ who do not argue or refuse to perform the tasks assigned to them. They can be easily frightened into being obedient. According to key informants, parents often give employers a free hand to punish their children in the course of teaching them automobile repair skills. When boys start working, they are usually made to clean the workplace, act as runners or serve tea, before gradually helping with technical tasks. Children save time – and therefore money – for chief technicians by performing non-technical work.

► 3.3. Previous projects addressing child labour in automobile repair workshops

Under the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), the Employers' Federation of Pakistan implemented a successful programme in 2001–2003 to rehabilitate children engaged in child labour at automobile repair workshops and other technical occupations through the Skills Development Council (SDC) in Karachi. The initiative offered skills training for 14–17-year-olds at designated participating informal automobile workshops, alongside non-formal education. Participants received uniforms and protective gear, and their training followed a curriculum jointly developed by the Skills Development Council and the chief technicians of participating workshops. Children who successfully completed the non-formal education and skills training course received a certificate and job placement in the private sector.

The NGO De Lass Gul (DLG) implemented a project with the British Council between 2014 and 2020 to connect out-of-school children between 5 and 9 years old with schools. The project trained a group of volunteers to form a *mohallah* (neighbourhood) committee. These volunteers identified households that were not sending their children to school, motivated parents to enrol their children, found schools near children's homes and helped them enrol in these institutions. Between 2001 and 2008, DLG implemented a project with the support of ILO-IPEC to offer free non-formal education to children engaged at automobile repair workshops.

According to a representative of the Association of Networks for Community Empowerment (ANCE), the NGO implemented projects between 1996 and 2007 to address child labour at automobile repair workshops with the support of Save the Children and the ILO. These offered free non-formal education to children, provided safety gear to prevent injuries at the workplace, placed first aid boxes at workshops, and trained one adult worker in each workshop on first aid. A school savings bank was set up at each non-formal education centre to teach children about saving schemes. Children engaged in child labour were asked to voluntarily deposit 1 rupee in the savings box. After three months, the NGO doubled each child's savings and took children to the market to buy whatever they wanted. Their purchases were later evaluated to see whether they bought anything for their family members. These efforts sought to help children learn about savings, build their confidence, negotiation and bargaining skills with shopkeepers, and foster their decision-making capacities. The projects also organized several indoor sports activities for children.

Chapter 4

Stakeholders’ validation workshop

The research findings and draft recommendations of this assessment were presented for validation at a stakeholders’ workshop in Lahore, Punjab on 29 November 2022. The workshop drew together 42 participants from provincial Departments of Labour, Human Resources, and Social Welfare, Child Protection Units, Members of Provincial Assemblies, representatives of employers’ organizations and trade unions, automobile workshop owners, the Punjab Vocational Training Council, the media, civil society, academia and the ILO’s Country Office in Pakistan. In groups, participants deliberated on the assessment’s findings and made suggestions, as presented below.

► **Table 4. Priority area A: Legislative and non-legislative measures for the alignment of laws with international commitments and improved law enforcement**

Question: *What measures could be taken to secure political will and bring about necessary legislative reforms and polices related to child labour?*

| Suggested actions | Partners |
|---|--|
| Formulate a subsidy programme and laws for poor families with children engaged in child labour | ILO (technical assistance for the formulation and revision of laws) |
| Develop evidence-based child labour policies | Departments of Law, Justice and Human Resources with the ILO’s technical support |
| Ensure the effective enforcement of laws related to child labour by building of the capacity of relevant law enforcement agencies | Government with the support of development partners |
| Engage and advocate with policymakers/legislators, orienting them on child labour and pushing for necessary action, including increased budgets for the implementation of proposed programmes | NGOs, the media and academia |

► **Table 5. Priority area B: Social acceptability of child labour at automobile workshops as an opportunity for skills’ learning/informal apprenticeships**

Questions:

- *Which measures/actions could be taken to challenge the socio-cultural acceptability of engaging young children as informal apprentices?*
- *Who needs to be mobilized/educated on the impact and hazards of child labour in automobile repair workshops (for example, owners, parents and community influencers) and how?*
- *How can children/youth groups be mobilized to raise awareness at the grassroots level?*
- *Which mediums can be used to raise awareness (for example, the media, billboards, posters, banners, flyers, etc.)?*

| Suggested actions | Partners |
|--|--|
| Initiate a programme for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) | Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA), employers/workshop owners, the Government of Punjab, Human Resource Departments |
| Design and pilot training at the workplace (on-the-job training) | TEVTA, employers/workshop owners, the Government of Punjab, Human Resource Department |
| Raise awareness through animated videos in local language targeting elders, children and community influences | Departments of Labour and Human Resources with the technical of assistance the ILO, the Government of Punjab, youth groups, and volunteers |
| Raise awareness by engaging with the electronic media through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, and use social media for awareness raising and mobilization | Pakistan Broadcasting Authority, Pakistan Radio, FM radio channels, Pakistan Television (PTV), media groups, YouTubers, mass communication students, civil society organizations |
| Develop the curriculum for a 6-12-month apprenticeship programme in Urdu and in local languages | Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTTC) |
| Revise the admission age for TVET | TEVTA |
| Offer 25 per cent of the wages to children (working and earning at automobile repair workshop) when they gain admission to formal training institutes, and provide them with food and transport facilities | Government and development partners |
| Define working hours for children | Departments of Labour and Human Resources |

► **Table 6. Improving the frequency and quality of data on child labour (in general) and in automobile repair workshops (specifically)**

Question: *How can data on child labour be regularly gathered, analysed and reported?*

| Suggested actions | Partners |
|---|--|
| Conduct a separate survey on child labour in automobile repair workshops | Pakistan Bureau of Statistics |
| Register all automobile repair workshops through technology-based registration | Departments of Labour and Industries with the support of Bureaus of Statistics |
| Allocate resources for the survey and registration of automobile repair workshops | Planning and Development Departments |

► **Table 7. Health hazards affecting children's and adolescents' mental, physical and emotional well-being at automobile repair workshops**

Question: *How can health hazards be reduced to improve the working environment at automobile repair workshops and enhance the protection of children?*

| Suggested actions | Partners |
|--|--|
| Organize training workshops on occupational safety and health for automobile workshop owners | Departments of Labour, NGOs, Rescue 1122 |
| Provide a subsidy for workshop owners to purchase personal protection equipment | Departments of Commerce and Industries (support for arranging the availability of equipment at subsidized costs for workshop owners) |
| Establish, pilot and replicate model automobile repair workshops | ILO, Departments of Labour and Industries (in collaboration) |
| Provide hygiene kits at workplaces | Departments of Labour, Health, and Industries |
| Ensure the availability of first aid kits at workplaces | Automobile repair workshop owners |
| Arrange regular visits by health workers to automobile repair workshops to monitor occupational safety and health conditions | Departments of Labour, Human Resource Development, and Health |
| Display pictorial information, education and communication (IEC) material on occupational safety and health, including relevant emergency numbers, at prominent locations within workshops | Automobile repair workshop owners |
| Ban all types of abuse (physical, mental, psychological and sexual) | Not mentioned |
| Display signs on workplace hazards in prominent positions at workshops | Not mentioned |

► **Table 8. Priority area E: Inter-departmental coordination for the implementation of child protection and child labour laws**

Question: *What measures can be taken to improve coordination and how?*

| Suggested actions | Partners |
|--|--|
| Establish an inter-departmental coordination and collaboration forum to share information and expand cooperation | Departments of Labour, police, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Ministry of Law and justice |
| Register automobile repair workshops under the law on shops and establishments | Departments of Labour and Human Resource Development (with the support of labour inspectors) |
| Develop coordination between automobile repair workshops and relevant labour law enforcement departments, and ensure the implementation of existing laws | Workers' and employers' organizations |
| Introduce, implement and monitor the Code of Conduct for automobile repair workshops | Departments of Labour and Human Resource Development |
| Formulate rules of business under the Child Labour Law of 2016 and implement the law through coordination between relevant departments | Departments of Labour, Law, and Social Welfare |

► **Table 9. Priority area F: Engaging workers' organizations/unions**

Question: *How can workers' organizations and unions be engaged for outreach, awareness raising, community mobilization and as a monitoring group for child labour reporting?*

| Suggested actions | Partners |
|---|---|
| Develop a formal system for coordination and collaboration | Multiple stakeholders |
| Raise awareness through the mainstream media and generate discussions at the local level by engaging community influencers, trade unions meetings/forums and young volunteers | ILO in collaboration with media organizations |
| Develop a system to facilitate public reporting of child labour-related cases/incidents | Provincial Departments of Labour |

Chapter 5

Recommendations

Based on the findings outlined above, this assessment puts forth the following recommendations, which were validated by participants at the stakeholders' validation workshop.

▶ 5.1. Macro level recommendations

▶ **Conduct a study on occupational safety and health (OSH) study at automobile repair workshops.**

Although labour officials and the children surveyed by this assessment identify several hazardous tasks performed by children at automobile workshops, no specific research exists on this issue. A study should be conducted on occupational safety and health at automobile repair workshops to identify hazardous tasks and suggest how some, or all, of these tasks could be made non-hazardous for workers between 15 and 17 years old. The ILO's ARC Project could engage the Centre for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (CIWC&E) to conduct this study.

▶ **Revise Schedule II of provincial child labour legislation.**

Lists of hazardous occupations in child labour legislation do not explicitly include dangerous tasks related to automobile repair workshops. With the ILO ARC Project's technical support, provincial Departments of Labour should hold tripartite consultations on which hazardous processes at automobile workshops should be included in lists of hazardous occupations, and notify these for inclusion in Schedule II of each province's child labour legislation.

▶ **Set wages for adolescent workers.**

Provincial Departments of Labour should determine wages lower than the minimum wage for adolescent trainees/workers between 15 and 17 years old who are engaged in non-hazardous work at automobile repair workshops.

▶ **Advocate with provincial legislatures for budgetary allocations for skills training.**

Given the huge demand among poor families for their children to learn automobile repair skills, the ILO's ARC Project should advocate for budgetary allocations by provincial governments to this end. The ILO should support Departments of Labour and the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) to hold orientation seminars with provincial legislatures to advocate for dedicated budgetary allocations for pilot apprenticeship programmes, in partnership with informal and formal automobile repair workshops.

▶ 5.2. Meso level recommendations

▶ Pilot an apprenticeship programme for adolescents.

As the owners of workshops surveyed for this assessment expressed their willingness to participate in a formal apprenticeship programme for adolescents, the ILO's ARC Project should support one provincial TEVTA to develop a proposal (PC-1) to secure provincial government funds and launch a pilot adolescent apprenticeship programme in three cities, in partnership with informal and formal automobile repair workshops, and by leveraging the recognition of prior learning (RPL) initiative.

▶ Raise awareness through a mass SMS campaign.

Considering the widespread acceptance of child labour in automobile repair workshops, the ILO's ARC Project should collaborate with mobile telecommunication companies and the Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers' Association to disseminate periodic mass SMS and voice messages to raise public awareness about the adverse effects of child labour at automobile workshops, on child labour laws, and on punishments for violating these laws.

▶ Organize an award for a television drama to raise awareness of child labour.

The ILO should organize an award, inviting media production houses to produce and air a television drama to raise awareness among parents and the general public on the negative consequences of child labour in automobile repair workshops, and the importance of education and formal skills training.

▶ Engage religious leaders to raise awareness of and advocate against child labour.

NGOs, with the support of the ILO's ARC project, should engage senior religious scholars to develop messages and Friday sermons on preventing and ending child labour at automobile repair workshops. Mosques and Imams should be engaged through seminars led by well-respected religious leaders.

▶ Link children engaged at automobile repair workshops with the *Ehsaas Waseela Taleem* Programme.

The ILO should support provincial Departments of Labour to advocate with the provincial Education Foundation on cash grants for the education of children from low-income families, covering tuition fees, books and other education-related expenses. The ILO should also advocate with the *Ehsaas*/ Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) to include families whose children are engaged in child labour among the beneficiaries of its grants.

▶ 5.3. Micro level recommendations

▶ Engage youth to raise awareness on child labour at automobile repair workshops.

The ILO's ARC project should support the Boys Scouts to undertake supervised awareness raising campaigns on child labour at a cluster of automobile repair workshops, and engage adolescent workers/trainees on the importance of safe work, health and hygiene, child labour laws and punishments for violations.

▶ **Develop a Code of Conduct for automobile repair workshops.**

Most of the automobile repair workshop owners surveyed lack knowledge of child labour legislation or the benefits of registering their workers with social security institutions. The ILO's ARC Project should work with the Employers' Federation of Pakistan to develop a Code of Conduct in Urdu for automobile repair workshops to support their compliance with provincial child labour legislation and make them aware of the advantages of registering with social security institutions. Since several children surveyed raised concerns about abuse in and around toilets at their workplaces, the Code of Conduct should include requirements on the construction of well-lit, regulated flush toilets, paired with education for workshop owners on ensuring the safety of adolescents and preventing abuse at the workplace. The ILO's ARC project should also support the Employers' Federation of Pakistan and the Pakistan Workers' Federation to disseminate the Code of Conduct among owners of automobile repair workshops.

▶ **Raise awareness of automobile workshop clusters with Directorates of Labour Inspection.**

The ILO should support provincial Directorates of Labour Inspection to provide training and tools to educate automobile workshop owners and raise their awareness of the negative consequences of child labour, the importance of compliance with child labour laws, and punishments for violations.

▶ **Launch a proof-of-concept apprenticeship pilot.**

The ILO's ARC Project should initiate a proof-of-concept pilot apprenticeship project by engaging with a cluster of automobile repair workshops.

▶ **Educate automobile repair workshop owners.**

The ILO's ARC Project should support the Pakistan Workers' Federation to organize an education programme for automobile workshop owners at a selected group of workshop clusters to promote compliance with the Code of Conduct recommended above.

▶ **Educate the parents of children engaged at automobile workshops.**

The ILO should support the Pakistan Workers' Federation to educate the parents of children engaged at automobile repair workshops and encourage them to apply online for the *Ehsaas Waseela Taleem* Programme to secure a grant for their children's education.

Annex

► Annex Table 1. Comparison of provincial legislation related to child labour in Pakistan

| Categories | Punjab | Sindh | Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | Balochistan |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Minimum age for work | 15 years old | 14 years old | 14 years old | 14 years old |
| Prohibited working hours | Between 7 p.m. and 8 a.m. | Between 7 p.m. and 8 a.m. | Between 7 p.m. and 8 a.m. | Between 7 p.m. and 8 a.m. |
| Over time for adolescents | - | Not allowed | Not allowed | Maximum of 8 hours per week |
| Adolescent work record register | The register must contain information about the adolescent's name, age, daily working hours and break time, and the nature of work performed | The register must contain information about the adolescent's name, age, daily working hours and break time, and the nature of work performed | The register must contain information about the adolescent's name, age, daily working hours and break time, and the nature of work performed | The register must contain information about the adolescent's name, age, daily working hours and break time, and the nature of work performed |
| Wages and benefits for adolescents | - | Adolescents must have the same wages and social security benefits as adult workers | Adolescents must have the same wages and social security benefits as adult workers | Adolescents/ young workers' wages must be equal to those of adult workers |
| Punishment for not notifying a labour inspector or not maintaining a record of adolescents' work | Maximum 1 month imprisonment, or a fine of 10,000 rupees, or both | Maximum 1 month imprisonment, or a fine of 20,000 rupees, or both | Maximum 1 month imprisonment, or a fine of 20,000 rupees, or both | Maximum 1 month imprisonment, or a fine of 20,000 rupees, or both |
| Punishment for employing children | Maximum 6 months imprisonment (not less than 7 days), and a fine of up to 50,000 rupees (and no less than 10,000 rupees) | Maximum 6 months imprisonment, or a fine of 50,000 rupees, or both | Maximum 6 months imprisonment, or a fine of 50,000 rupees, or both | Maximum 1 year imprisonment, or a fine of 100,000 rupees, or both |

| Categories | Punjab | Sindh | Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | Balochistan |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| Punishment for employing children in hazardous occupations | Maximum 6 months imprisonment (not less than 7 days), and a fine of up to 50,000 rupees (and no less than 10,000 rupees) | Maximum 3 years imprisonment and a fine of up to 100,000 rupees (and no less than 10,000 rupees) | Maximum 3 years imprisonment and a fine of up to 100,000 rupees (and no less than 10,000 rupees) | Maximum 1 year imprisonment, or a fine of 100,000 rupees, or both |
| Punishment for employing adolescents in hazardous occupations | Maximum 6 months imprisonment (not less than 7 days), and a fine of up to 50,000 rupees (and no less than 10,000 rupees) | Maximum 1 year imprisonment, or a fine of 75,000 rupees, or both | Maximum 1-year imprisonment, or a fine of 75,000 rupees, or both | Maximum 1 year imprisonment, or a fine of 100,000 rupees, or both |
| Punishment for engaging children or adolescents in the worst forms of child labour | Maximum 7 years imprisonment (not less than 3 years) and a fine of up to 1 million rupees (and no less than 200,000 rupees) | Maximum 10 years imprisonment (not less than 5 years) and a fine of up to 1 million (and no less than 200,000 rupees) | - | - |
| Punishment for a second offense violating the law on employing children and adolescents | Maximum 5 years imprisonment (not less than 3 months) and a fine applicable for the nature of the offense | - | Maximum 5 years imprisonment (not less than 6 months) and a fine of up to 200,00 rupees (and no less than 25,000 rupees) | Maximum 2 years imprisonment (not less than 6 months) |
| Schedule II (hazardous processes) applicable to automobile repair workshops | Working at the sites where liquid petroleum gas or compressed natural gas are in cylinders Work that involves exposure to any toxic, explosive or carcinogenic chemicals Lifting and carrying heavy weights (of 15 kilogrammes or more), especially in the transport industry | | | |

Source: Based on Punjab Restriction on the Employment of Children Act of 2016; Sindh Prohibition of the Employment of Children Act of 2017; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prohibition of the Employment of Children Act of 2015; and Balochistan Payment of Wages Act of 2021 (Act No. XIII of 2021).

Rapid assessment of child labour in automobile repair workshops in Pakistan

This assessment, commissioned by the International Labour Organization's Asia Regional Child Labour (ARC) Project, examines child labour at automobile repair workshops in Pakistan, with a view to providing updated information on its magnitude, identifying factors that push children into this form of child labour and reviewing national efforts to address the phenomenon. Based on its findings, it offers recommendations for policy design, implementation and action by stakeholders to eliminate and prevent child labour in automobile repair workshops nationwide.

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