

## Coal Mines in Balochistan



# Introduction

## Background

Child labor has remained an invasive problem for successive governments in Pakistan even though copious amounts of legislation and laws have been passed over several years to stem the growth of this phenomenon. Child labor manifests in different forms in both the formal and informal sector of the economy. They range from rag picking and begging to working in auto workshops, brick kilns and coal mines. The last child labor survey was conducted in 1996 by the government which detailed that 3.3 million out of the total 40 million children in Pakistan are economically active in different sectors of the economy.<sup>1</sup>

In the absence of a national database on child labor, international NGO's and donor organizations provide estimates of underage employment in Pakistan. According to the ILO, the number of child laborers in Pakistan exceeded 12 million in 2012.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the Child Rights Movement (CRM) points out that there were approximately 9.86 million children and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 years in Pakistan who were active in the labor force; 2.58 million of these children were between 10 and 14, while thousands more were even younger than the age of 10.<sup>3</sup> According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics Labor Force Survey 2010-11, around 4.29 % of the children aged 10-14 years are active in the country's labor force.<sup>4</sup> This is a significant percentage considering that the survey does not take into account the

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<sup>1</sup> Child Labor in Pakistan. 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2013.

<http://labourwatchpakistan.com/?p=2106>

<sup>2</sup> Number of child laborers exceeds 12 million in Pakistan. Business Recorder. 10 October, 2012.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/1246427/>

<sup>3</sup> Child Rights Movement (CRM) Pakistan (2012). Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Pakistan (p. 6)

<sup>4</sup> Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

<http://www.pbs.gov.pk/>

employment of children below ten years of age. It is estimated that 35.4% of 190 million Pakistanis are aged between 0-14 years.

## Bonded Child Labor in Pakistan

The UN Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery (1956) defines bonded labor as the: *“status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or those of a person under his control as security for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined”*.

Bonded labor, deeply rooted in the exploitative feudal system has been further exacerbated by the recent debilitating economic situation in Pakistan that has pushed countless people below the poverty line. From taking loans for marriages and medical assistance to simply surviving and feeding oneself, individuals not only pledge themselves but their entire families into bonded labor. Illiteracy has played its part in worsening the situation as poor people are tricked into taking loans which are impossible to pay off in the given time frame therefore are passed on down in the family.

Bonded child labor is also a result of the *peshgi* system where a family member takes advance payment from an employer and in return pledges the child to work until the loan is paid off. Debt bondage, regardless of whether parents have contracted a debt that is to be paid off by their own labor or by pledging the services of their children, places children ultimately at the mercy of the landowner, contractor or money-lender, where they suffer from both economic hardship and educational deprivation. The main difference between adult and child bonded labor is that children have not themselves contracted the debt; it was done on their behalf by adults. The link between child labor and the inter-generational perpetuation of poverty could hardly be clearer.

Poverty and the existence of people prepared to exploit the desperation of others are at the heart of debt bondage. Without land or the benefits of education, the need for money for daily survival forces people to sell their labor in exchange for a lump sum or loan. Parents are driven to accept money in exchange for allowing their children to work outside their village, often in the hope that their child will be better off working for a more affluent family. Caste, discrimination along ethnic, religious, gender lines and continuing feudal agricultural relationships are also key to the existence of bonded labor and what makes it thrive.

Debt bondage is increasingly linked with trafficking of children for labor exploitation. Rural poverty, coupled with population growth and rapid urbanization, leads some parents to place their children with agents, not only in exchange for money but also in the hope that the child will receive education or training at the point of destination. In other cases, children themselves make the decision to leave their home. The child victims, who may end up in commercial sexual exploitation, domestic work or sweatshops, may never know the amount of debt they are working to pay off or the terms of repayment.

## Mining Sector of Pakistan

Pakistan is home to a plethora of natural resources, spanning over an area of 600,000 sq kms. The country has the world's second largest reservoir of salt in Khewra (Punjab) along with significant deposits of coal and other industrial and construction minerals. Moreover, over 50 minerals which include marble, chromites, magnetite, fluorite, sulphur and bauxite, are under exploitation. The current contribution of the

mineral sector to the GDP is approximately 0.5%, although this share has the potential to increase considerably in the light of recent discoveries of copper, zinc, gold ( Reko Diq, Balochistan) lead and most notably coal (over 175 billion tonnes of reserves in the deserts of Tharparkar in Sindh). The table below shows a breakdown of some of the major minerals mined across Pakistan.

Category	Mineral	Annual Production
Energy Producing (2011-2012)	Coal	3.45 million tonnes
	Natural Gas	4,031.76 Mmcf
	Crude Oil	65,866.18 BOPD
Metallic Minerals (2005-2006)	Copper Ore	5.1 million tonnes
	Iron	131,259 metric tonnes
	Fluorite	1,966 metric tonnes
	Bauxite	7,831 metric tonnes
	Chromite	64,572 metric tonnes
Non-metallic minerals (2005-2006)	Rock Salt	1.85 million tonnes
	Gypsum	601,027 metric tonnes
	Silica Sand	411,047 metric tonnes
	Limestone	18.42 million tonnes
Building stones	Marble	1.83 million tonnes
	Granite	8,657 metric tonnes

Table 1: Mineral Production in Pakistan<sup>5</sup>

Given the abundance of mineral resources at Pakistan's disposal, there has been very little investment or any technological development to bolster this sector. The failure to promote the mining sector in any structured manner led to the government leasing out sites to petty contractors, usually on a short-term basis. The short duration of the lease also gave little incentive for long-term development of the mines and focused on short-term profit maximization. Mines were operated by hundreds of small and medium-scale mining groups. As a result, little investment in modern equipment and machinery was made and methods remained primitive. Furthermore, this myriad of small mining and processing units had no proper legal, financial, commercial, technological and social support from the government. In fact, recommendations made by a nine member panel on Mines and Oil Fields in 1948 stated strongly that the policy of leasing small areas of coal-bearing land to petty contractors should be discontinued and the industry be nationalized. The report also noted the continued use of primitive methods and the need to enforce the use of modern machinery and equipment. Today, almost 90% of mines are in the hands of private owners.<sup>6</sup>

## Legislation and implementing agencies

Under the Constitution of Pakistan, minerals, except uranium, oil, and natural gas, falls under the ambit of the provincial governments. Uranium, oil, and natural gas come under the jurisdiction of the federal government. The Central Inspectorate of Mines, a subordinate office of the Ministry of Labor, Manpower

<sup>5</sup> Census of Mining and Quarrying industries (2005-2006). Federal Bureau of Statistics.

<sup>6</sup> Saleem, Ahmad. A Rapid Assessment of Bonded Labour in Pakistan's Mining Sector. ILO. March 2004.

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_082032.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_082032.pdf)

and Overseas Pakistanis, was created in 1966 to look after matters relating to the safety, health and welfare of workers engaged in federally-controlled mines.

The first Indian Mines Act, passed in 1901, contained provisions on safety and health, but it was not until the Mines Act of 1923 that any restrictions were imposed on the employment of labor. The 1923 Act, contains inter alia provision for the exclusion of children under 13-years, the grant of a weekly holiday and the limitation of weekly hours to 60 above ground and 54 below ground. The Act was supplemented by two elaborate series of regulations; one relating to coal mines and one to other mines. In addition, rules were framed by provincial governments. After 1923, two important changes were made in the law. The amending Act of 1928 provided that no mine shall be open more than 12 hours in 24, unless on a system of shifts and that shifts must not exceed 12 hours and must not overlap. The regulations of March 1929 prohibited the employment of women underground. The different legislation relating to mines empowers the federal and provincial governments to make regulations for providing for the safety of persons employed in mines, their means of entrance and exit, the number of shaft out-lets to be furnished, the fencing of shafts, pits, outlets and pathways, safety of roads and work place; the ventilation of mines and the action to be taken in respect of dust and gases; and the regulation of the use of all machinery.<sup>7</sup>

## SPARC against Child Labor

Child labor has continued to remain a crucial issue in Pakistan as millions of children are employed in work activities which infringe upon their basic rights to health and education. Furthermore, underage employment, especially in the unmonitored informal sector, exposes children to violence and abuse, which undermines a healthy physical and psychological development. These issues make child labor a major child rights and child protection issue in Pakistan.

SPARC is Pakistan's leading child rights organization. It works in a number of areas pertaining to child rights and child protection. Since its inception in 1992, SPARC has remained consistently engaged with relevant stakeholders to address child labor in Pakistan. SPARC has lobbied with government functionaries and elected representatives to enact and implement legislation on underage employment. In this regard, SPARC has consistently called for a comprehensive child labor legislation which is in line with Article 25-A (free and compulsory education for all citizens up till the age of 16 years) of the Constitution of Pakistan. SPARC's relentless demand for expansive and effective child labor legislation has gained strength after the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment whereby the provinces have been empowered to legislate on underage employment. Furthermore, SPARC has also remained at the forefront of advocacy for effective bonded labor legislation.

SPARC recognizes the need to increase awareness and sensitivity on child labor. For this purpose, the organization has followed a multi-pronged strategy of sensitization through awareness campaigns, distribution of IEC materials and supporting or undertaking research studies. In this regard, research studies on underage employment are especially effective in understanding the root causes of the problem along with its effects on children.

The following study has been undertaken as part of SPARC's 'Developing Linkages with Universities' project. The project aims to promote research on children and their issues by encouraging university

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

students to undertake research on child rights and child protection as part of their Masters dissertation. This research was undertaken by a student of the Department of Anthropology, Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad. The student spent considerable time in the field (3 months), living with and observing coal mine workers in Shahrig, a union council in Sibi district of Balochistan. The result is an in depth qualitative analysis of child labor in coal mines which sheds light on the underlying factors behind the employment of children in bonded labor, the types of exploitation and violence that they have to contend with, and the ineffectiveness of government laws and policies in addressing this crucial issue. The next chapter will present a detailed account of the methodology employed in the study along with a brief profile of the study locale.

## Research Methodology

### **Rapport Building**

Rapport building is an essential tool for the researcher to connect with the local populace and develop friendly relations so as to maintain a certain level of trust and understanding with them. In Balochistan, the locals are wary of outsiders given the law and order situation prevalent. The researcher initially felt unwelcomed in the small town of Shahrig but being a Baloch national himself; blended effortlessly in the population. It was important to develop linkages with adults as well as the children who worked in coal mines so as to ascertain the root causes of child bonded labor in coal mines. The researcher frequently visited a restaurant where coal mine workers would congregate after a day's work or would take part in outdoor activities with the children. This made the respondents more comfortable, relaxed and open to suggestions. The observations made during the course of research contributes to richness of data in this study; a feature which would have remained missing if the research was conducted in a short time period.

### **Sampling**

Sampling played a key role as pinpointing relevant segments within Tehsil Shahrig and extrapolating the data was instrumental in making this research authentic. The town was populated by coal mine workers and their families with the exception of a few traders, shopkeepers etc. Keeping this in mind, the researcher opted to use stratified random sampling to collect data. This sampling method involved the division of the population into smaller groups known as strata. This type of sampling can only be used when the population is heterogeneous i.e. with varying attributes and then creating homogenous sub-groups from within the target population. This type of sampling improves the representativeness of the sample taken. The researcher took a sample of 100 respondents from the town, barring those taken for case studies.

### **Primary Data Collection**

Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires, informal interviews conducted through unstructured or open ended questionnaires, focus group discussions and case studies. The use of both qualitative and quantitative research tools allowed for a holistic research in which detailed statistical information was derived to determine the underlying factors of child bonded labor.

### **Structured Questionnaires**

Structured questionnaires were used for undertaking socio economic census surveys in target brick kilns whereby one survey form was used to collect information from a single household. The structured questionnaire employed in conducting the socio-economic survey dealt with specific information pertaining to the age, gender, religion, caste, marital status, family structure, education, income, availability of health facilities, settlement pattern and so on. At the end of the survey, quantifiable information on the socio-economic profile of the target population was obtained which set the context for the study and provided a detailed socio economic profile of the target population.

### **Open Ended Questionnaires/ Interview Guidelines**

Open ended questionnaires were used to conduct in-depth interviews with parents of child bonded laborers, child bonded laborers, state officials and NGO officials. This allowed the researcher to accrue detailed information on the issues faced by bonded laborers in general and child bonded laborers in particular. Furthermore, an open ended format allowed state officials and NGO representatives- who were at the forefront of interventions to abolish bonded labor- to give their opinion on the effectiveness of various laws and policies.

Qualitative questionnaires were useful in obtaining information which would have remained unexplored if a structured and highly formal questionnaire was used. The breakdown of the types and number of respondents interviewed during the course of research is given below.

### **Focus Group Discussions**

Informal group discussions were conducted with families trapped in debt bondage to get a deeper understanding of issues afflicting families in debt bondage. In order to maintain an informal and comfortable environment to elicit maximum responses from the participants, the focus groups were undertaken in an informal setting where people were willing to sit and answer the queries put forward by the researcher.

A friendly group environment allowed participants to express their opinions freely. Moreover, presence of multiple respondents resulted in a rich variety of responses based on personal life experiences. While undertaking focus group discussions, the facilitator/researcher took special care to allow for maximum participation.

### **Informal Data Collection**

The research relied on field notes to record ‘contemporaneous notes of observations or conversations taken during the course of qualitative research’<sup>8</sup>. Depending on the situation, the field notes taken during the course of research varied from verbatim record of conversations taken by hand to brief salient points or features that could be elaborated later on. The researcher also relied on jottings or scratch notes to note down major or important observations during the course of research.

### **Photography**

Photographic evidence was collected to lend credibility to research activities by collecting visual images of important personalities, work activities the coal mines and children working inside/outside of the mines. These images lend reliability and credibility to the data collected during the course of fieldwork.

## **Locale**

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<sup>8</sup> <http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/the-sage-dictionary-of-qualitative-management-research/n45.xml>

Till 2007, Shahrig was listed as a Union Council of Sibi district in Balochistan. Later in the year, Harnai was given the stature of District and Shahrig was termed a Tehsil of the newly formed Harnai District. Like many other districts of Balochistan, societal matters are based on tribal cultures where households are largely patriarchal. Close kinship woven among a number of tribes and sub-tribes define the fabric of Harnai society. The dominating tribe in district Harnai is Tareen with a large number of Pathans and Afghans in their ranks. Baloch tribes living in the area are either Marri or Sailachi. The major language spoken in the district is the Tareeno dialect of Pashto language. There are a large number of heterogeneous groups the Abdullanis, Khadranis, Aspanis, Manis, Sheikhs and Wanaichi, Maraizai, and Bazani etc include the minor tribes. There are other ethnic groups including Sindhis and Swati Patans.

## Ethnicity and Religion

Shahrig is a city scattered with people from different castes and tribes from across Pakistan. The dominant caste present is Tareen of Pathan origin and holds a ratio of 53.75% of the total population present. Other groups include Sindhi with a ratio of 23.03%, Balochi at 21.86% and Punjabi with 1.3%. The Balochi's of Marri tribe shifted to Shahrig from Kholu District after clashes erupted between rebels and security forces.

Ethnicity	Total Number as per Data	%age of the total population as per Data
Baloch	131	21.86%
Pathan	322	53.75%
Punjabi	8	1.33%
Sindhi	138	23.03%
Total	599	100%

Table 2: Ethnic Groups as per Data

People working in the mines have migrated over time from different parts of Pakistan; mostly those displaced from Malakand Division and FATA. The majority people who work in mines are from Swat valley in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with a ratio of 27.71%. The second highest ratio is of people who are already settled in Shahrig for the past one or two generations (24.37%) followed by migrants from Sibi (12.68%), Dir (9.18%), Afghanistan (7.17%), Jaffarabad (4.67%), Kohlu (4.17%), Chitral (3.67%) and Hyderabad (3.67%). Tehsil Shahrig is dominantly Muslim and almost 88% of the population is classified as Wahabi with a small minority (roughly 12 %) is Shia Muslim.

## Settlement patterns

Settlement patterns are primarily based upon the dwellings of the population i.e. different types of housing structures they reside in. A survey was conducted among laborers to ascertain differences in their living conditions. It was noted that, 27.37% of the respondents lived in houses they completely owned and had constructed from the income received from mining over a period of time. A majority (38.56%) resided in either a rented house or double occupancy rooms constructed by members of the *Tareen* tribe in the area. Approximately 7.84% of the people resided in houses owned by coal mine owners provided they were loyal employees. Majority of the house structures (78.63%) are *Kacha*

i.e. clay houses while 8.01% are *Pakka* i.e. cemented houses. The number of rooms the families resided is based on either single room (28.54%) or double rooms (61.93%).

Personal House	164	27.37%
Rented House	231	38.56%
Kacha	471	78.63%
Pakka	48	8.01%
Single Room	171	28.54%
Double Room	371	61.93%
Coal Mine Owner	47	7.84%

Table 3: Settlement pattern as per Data

## Health Facilities

Diseases like malaria, typhoid and diarrhea are common in Shahrig given the sanitary conditions in and around the mines. There is no proper sewage disposal system in the settlements of laborers and no proper health facilities. Accidents and injuries during mining are so severe that victims are forced to travel miles to the nearest hospital located in Quetta. There are officially two Basic Health Units in the area but without a doctor. The only doctor at the facility was murdered and since then no doctor has replaced him in fear of meeting the same fate. In rare cases, people travel to the District Headquarter Hospital (DHQ) but a majority resort to getting treated by unlicensed practitioners (Quacks).

Health Centre	No. of Health Centers	Visitors
BHU	2	0
RHC	2	0
THQ	1	0
DHQ	1	8
Unlicensed Practitioner	10	466

Table 4: Health Facilities

## Education

The status of education in Balochistan has been in a dismal state for many years owing to militancy and instability in the region coupled with low budgetary allocations, teacher absenteeism, lack of school infrastructure and facilities and so on. Tehsils like Shahrig receive very little in education funding and solely rely on private institutions, Non-Governmental initiatives and madrassahs. Currently, Shahrig tehsil has a total of 25 primary schools, 6 middle schools for both boys and girls whilst only one high school for boys. Beside governmental schools, UNICEF has set up 3 Community Schools for children that run in the evening as children

work in coal mines during the day. Moreover, one private school has also been established by a Punjabi settler; uncommon in areas like Shahrig. Beside government and private schools, there is also one Madrassah that provides religious education to children and boasts the largest enrolment rate in the area as evident from Table 6.

<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>
Primary School (Boys)	16
Middle School( Boys)	3
High School (Boys)	1
Primary School (Girls)	9
Middle School (Girls)	2
Community School	3
Private School	1
Madrassah	1

Table 5: Number of Schools

<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Primary	45
Middle	23
Metric	29
Intermediate	12
Undergraduate	2
Graduate	1
Madrassah	117

Table 6: Level of Education

When it was asked to respondents with different age including children about the level of their education, the answers varied. The level of education is poor in the area. 7.51% respondents have attended primary schools, 3.83% have attended middle school, 4.84% have passed Metric, 2.0% have done intermediate, 0.33% has done graduation and 0.16% (one person) possesses Master's degree. However, the religious level of education was higher in comparison than academic education. The level of religious education in Shahrig is 19.53%.

### Water sources

Water is abundant in Shahrig because it frequently rains and makes the streams and rivers flow. 20.70% people of Shahrig use stream water for household consumption and other usage. 56.92% people use well water. 5.50% of Shahrig people use stream water. And only some people with ratio of 1.01% use governmental water resources and with the same ratio of 1.01% people use personal pump to get water.

### Electricity

The ongoing power crisis in the country has seriously hampered availability of electricity to most parts of the country; especially in Balochistan. Power outages in Shahrig span from 12 hours to 18 hours a day yet the people in the locality are given high electricity bills by the provincial power supply companies. Most have resorted to using illegal means of obtaining electricity by siphoning power from another transmission line without any charge or otherwise known as *Kundi*. Almost 87.97% of the people have used a *Kundi*, while 3.67% paid regular bills.

## Children in Coal Mines

Given the socio-economic conditions of the country coupled with increasing violence and threat of war in FATA, many families have been forced to flee to surrounding areas in search of sustenance. To make ends meet, children are forced to work regardless of occupational hazards. Such is the case of children interviewed during the course of this research in Shahrig, Balochistan. Though many yearn to be enrolled in schools, they have no choice but work in the coal mines to earn a stable income for the family.

### Working environment

Children are divided into two groups by age to ascertain the amount of work they can do. Those aged 7 to 12 years of age work on the surface and carry out tasks such as cleaning of the coal from impurities and loading them on the trucks for transportation. Secondly, those aged 13 to 18 years of age are made to work inside the mine and are involved in excavating, loading and transporting the coal from the inside to the outside. An average work shift lasts 8 hours in the summers and 10-12 hours in the winters; subject to weather forecasts. The mine shafts are decrepit with little or no safety mechanisms. The constant threat of a methane gas explosion, collapse of the mining structure and unstable transporting route looms around the head of the children working in the mine. The children are provided with sub-standard helmets and footwear that barely protect them from these hazardous conditions.

### Wages and expenditure

Wages are set depending on the number of hours worked and the type of job performed for that day. Those who work inside the mine earn an average of Rs. 15,000 to RS. 25,000 while those who work on the surface earn an average of Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 15,000. There is no overtime pay or compensation for working in hazardous conditions. Additionally, it was revealed that up to 40% children did not know their monthly income and accepted anything the *Munshi* (In-charge coal mine).

Type of Labor	Income	Income Ratio
Working in the mine	Rs. 15,000- 25,000	27%
Working outside the mine	Rs. 6,000-15,000	32%
Normal Labor	Unaware of amount of income	41%

The income generated by children is usually taken by the head of the household and are given a meager amount in return for anything they would want to purchase on their own. Around 60% children stated that they would receive small amounts of money from their parents every month while 30% had to work extra shifts to earn money to spend on themselves. The remaining 10% were given money almost every day with a handsome amount on Fridays.

<b>Type of recreation</b>	<b>%age money spent</b>
<b>Purchasing cigarettes/ chewing tobacco</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Purchasing Alcohol</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Spent in the market</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>None</b>	<b>50%</b>

## Risks and challenges faced by children

### Physical violence

The children working around the coal mines are subjected to frequent physical and psychological abuse by either their employer or peers. During the course of this research, the children interviewed were hesitant in narrating incidents of physical punishment faced by them but stated those suffered by their friends. Interviews have shown that around 18% of children have endured physical abuse in form or the other. Around 30% have been inflicted by an infectious disease whilst working in the mine and some have died owing to lack of treatment of the disease. Apart from these, constant hazardous working environments have severely affected the psycho-social machinations of children.

Data collected from Shahrigh showed that around 3% of children suffered from night terrors while another 14% were victims of severe inferiority complex and were on the verge of a mental breakdown. Children working in mines experience an array of physical threats due to hazardous conditions and long working hours. After a long days work, many are bleeding from their hands and feet owing to lack of safety equipment. Many have developed dangerous respiratory problems due to constant exposure to dangerous gases. Apart from these, there is the constant threat of sexual exploitation at the hands of elder children or their employers. During individual interviews, nearly 26% of children stated that they had been touched inappropriately by people working around the mines. Shockingly, almost 17% of the respondents narrated that they were sodomized but had not approached their parents or any law enforcement officer to apprehend the culprits.

### Case Study 1

Name: Nasir

Raped and killed by miners.

Nasir was 12 year old Afghani boy who sold various goods on lease in and around the mine. He had traveled from after the war Afghanistan and migrated to Balochistan along with his parents. To make

a living he used to buy things from Harnai city and sell them to the people working in the mines. Interviews indicate that several attempts had been made sodomize him but somehow he evaded the perpetrators. One day he strolled to Mine no 108 to sell things he had purchased from the city. In the mine, he was approached by two Afghan miners who sodomized him and then ran away.

Nasir did not speak of this incident to anyone and continued with his business as usual. A few days later, when he was walking towards the mines, the two Afghanis cornered him and raped him. Fearing retribution by the locals they killed the boy and buried him alongside an abandoned mine. The police did not conduct a thorough investigation and the culprits ran across the border to Afghanistan. After an extensive search, the locals found Nasir's body which was handed over to his parents. They have now moved backed to Afghanistan and laid to rest their son in their native village.

## Psychological problems

Data collected from Shahrigh showed that around 3% of children suffered from night terrors while another 14% were victims of severe inferiority complex and were on the verge of a mental breakdown. The strenuous conditions they are forced to work in coupled with family problems and social pressures exacerbates their debilitating mental health to a point where some have even committed suicide to seek relief from their life. Having to face hazardous conditions, sexual exploitation and peer pressure; the children are run away from home or take their own life.

### Case study 2

Name: Nusrat  
Committed suicide.

Nusrat started working in the mine at the age of nine and was always deemed as reclusive by his friends. His father forced him to join the mine so as to generate additional income for the family and support his younger siblings. Nusrat used to earn Rs. 100 and was very happy with the work he was employed to do. But as time passed by, he yearned for an education but his father refused. He started smoking cigarettes as a release from his daily mundane life. When his father caught him one day smoking, he beat him up repeatedly that night after which Nusrat fled home. After a couple of days, he returned but had completely changed, He remained aloof and did not talk to his family or friends nor did he go to the market or out to play. One Friday night, when Nusrat did not return home his father went out to find him only to be told my members of the community that his son had committed suicide. Upon further inquiry, it was revealed that Nusrat had started smoking hashish and was regularly belittled by his peers for being poorer than him. When he could not take the bullying anymore he decided to take his own life and spare him the torture he endured every day.

## Conclusion

Bonded labor and the involvement of children in bonded labor is one the major human rights abuses taking place in Pakistan. The BLSAA abolishes bonded labor in the country but the authorities are yet to

record a single prosecution under the Act. Furthermore, provincial governments are yet to pass an amended version of the BLSAA to give additional rights and protection to freed bonded laborers. As of 2012, the relief camps for Bonded Laborers in various districts of Balochistan remained devoid of basic facilities like clean drinking water, durable shelter, sanitation along with health and education infrastructure.

As of 2012, the government has failed to undertake a National Child Labor Survey to assess the magnitude of underage employment in the formal and informal economic sectors. This has hampered government policy making as stakeholders do not have accurate and updated information on the extent of the problem. For instance, natural disasters and military conflicts in FATA and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have caused massive internal migrations in the country which has contributed to increasing underage employment, especially in the unmonitored informal economic sector.