



Annual Report 2020-21



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILD
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

Annual Report 2020-21

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

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Acronyms

ABA ROLI	American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative
Ad.	Additional
ARY	Abdul RazzakYaqoob
BMCG	Beaconhouse Metropolitan Campus for Girls
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CP&WB	Child Protection and Welfare Bureau
CM	Chief Minister
CPLC	Citizen Police Liaison Committee
CPUs	Child Protection Units
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Child
Cr.P.C	Code of Criminal Procedure
CRM	Child Rights Movement
CSR	Composite Schedule of Rates
DDO	Drawing and Disbursing Officers
DG	Director General
DIG	Deputy Inspector General of Police
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
DPO	District Police Officer
DRP	Directorate of Reclamation and Probation
EU	European Union
FIA	Federal Investigation Agency
FIR	First Investigation Report
FM	Frequency Modulation
GSP	Generalized System of Preferences
HQ	Headquarters
HOP	House of Professionals
HR & HA	Human Resources & Health Affairs
HRMA	Human Rights and Minority Affairs
ICT	Islamabad Capital Territory
IG	Inspector General
IGP	Inspector General of Police
ISSI	Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisation
JJSA	Juvenile Justice System Act of 2018
JKSDMI	Jammu and Kashmir Self-Determination Movement
J&K	Jammu and Kashmir
KP	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa
KTN	Kawish Television Network
LUMS	Lahore University of Management Sciences
MNA	Member of National Assembly
MCMC	Mid-Career Management Course
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOHR	Ministry of Human Rights
MOI	Ministry of Interior
NACG	National Action Coordination Group
NCCWD	National Commission for Child Welfare and Development
NCHR	National Commission on Human Rights
NCSW	National Commission on Status of Women

NCRC	National Commission on the Rights of Child
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PANAH	Pakistan National Heart Association
PAWF	Pakistani Athletes Welfare Foundation
PEMRA	Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PM	Prime Minister
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)
PNDCA	Punjab Destitute and Children's Neglected Act
PNN	Pakistan News Network
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf
PTV	Pakistan Television Corporation
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAIEVAC	The South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children
SCPA	Sindh Child Protection Authority
SCMR	Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act
SMC	Senior Management Course
SPARC	Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
Sr.	Senior
SSBs	Sugar Sweetened Beverages
SSP	Senior Superintendent of Police
SWD	Sindh Welfare Department
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
US	United States of America
YOIS	Youth Offenders Industrial School

Message from the Chairperson



Afshan Tehseen

Chairperson

National Commission on the Rights of Child

Pakistan ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on November 12, 1990. Since then, children's rights have been recognised and promoted by the Government of Pakistan at various levels. It has been a long-standing demand of civil society to establish an independent commission for children in Pakistan, which was finally materialised for the first time in 2017 with the enactment of the National Commission on the Rights of Child.

This paved the way for the establishment of the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC), which was appointed by the federal government on February 28, 2020. The Commission has an overarching mandate in line with international obligations and for matters related to the promotion, protection and realization of the rights of the child as enshrined in the NCRC Act, 2017.

The initial task of the NCRC was to develop processes and deal with institution building, as it was a newly established institution. It proved to be a daunting task with many administrative challenges, but by the grace of God, the Commission was able to accomplish its tasks, including law reforms in various provinces of Pakistan, conducting research on emerging child rights issues, promoting child rights through various media and platforms throughout Pakistan, coordinating and collaborating with key stakeholders for the promotion and protection of child rights in Pakistan, and responding to various complaints from children and liaising with relevant agencies for redressal.

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC) for the period July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. It provides an overview of the NCRC's work. I greatly appreciate the tireless work of my members and the Commission's staff, despite facing several challenges, including staff shortages and lack of funding. Our team's passion, diligence, and commitment to children's rights have been evident in all of our work in just one year since the Commission's inception.

The year ahead will be an ambitious one as we seek to advance significant systemic reform in the area of child protection. We will continue to monitor the situation and developments in the field of children's rights in order to propose the necessary measures to protect children from abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect.

Our children are our present and future, and NCRC remains committed to creating an environment that enables children to enjoy their rights with dignity.

Overview

Introduction to the National Human Rights Institutions

National human rights institutions (NHRIs) are state-mandated bodies, independent of the government, with a broad constitutional and/or legal mandate to protect and promote human rights at the national level. NHRIs address the full range of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

NHRIs are unique as they are national institutions with a legal mandate to promote and protect human rights domestically in an independent manner. Unlike other national institutions, NHRIs are accredited with an internationally accepted quality label, on the basis of their compliance with the UN Paris Principles. The Paris Principles are the minimum international standards for effective, credible NHRIs. They require that NHRIs be independent in law, membership, operations, policies, and control of resources. They also require that NHRIs have broad mandates, pluralistic membership, wide-ranging functions, adequate powers, adequate resources, and cooperative methods, and that they work with international bodies.

National human rights institutions (NHRIs) can take various forms. The most common are human rights commissions or ombudsmen, hybrid institutions, advisory and consultative bodies, and other forms of human rights institutes and centres.

Introduction to the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC)

The National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) is a National Human Rights Institution (NHRIs) established by the Federal Government in exercise of the powers conferred on it by Section 3(1) of the National Commission on the Rights of Child Act, 2017 (XXXII of 2017) on February 28, 2020 as an independent statutory body.

The NCRC has an overarching mandate in line with international obligations and for matters related to the promotion, protection and realisation of the rights of children, as enshrined in the NCRC Act, 2017. The NCRC has been established as an oversight body to ensure that all laws, policies, programmes and administrative mechanisms are consistent with the perspective of children's rights as enshrined in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

In 2009, the UN General Assembly Resolution 63/172 recognized that NHRIs “have a crucial role to play in promoting and ensuring the indivisibility and interdependence of human rights...” and encouraged Member States “[t]o consider the creation or the strengthening of independent and autonomous” NHRIs, and “[t]o develop ... mechanisms of cooperation between these institutions ... in order to coordinate their action, strengthen their achievements and enable the exchange of lessons learned.”

In Resolution 65/207 of March 2011, the General Assembly again emphasized NHRIs' role and encouraged governments to conduct “outreach activities at the national level” to raise awareness about their NHRIs. The General Assembly has also called on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to strengthen NHRIs by developing support activities for them.

Similarly in July 2012, the Human Rights Council adopted **Resolution A/HRC/20/L.15**, which specifically recognized NHRIs' role in promoting and protecting human rights and called on UN Member States to create or strengthen existing NHRIs, using the framework that “is best suited to its particular needs at the national level in order to promote human rights in accordance with international human rights standards. To achieve their mission of promoting and protecting human rights, NHRIs typically monitor the status of human rights in their country, hear human rights complaints, and educate the public about human rights.

Functions and Powers of the NCRC

Pursuant to Chapter III of the National Commission on Rights of Child Act, 2017, the Commission is entrusted with the following functions.



a) examine existing or proposed legislations and administrative instruments, and proposals related to child rights and make such recommendations as it deems appropriate;

b) liaise with provincial commissions set up under provincial laws and other concerned provincial organizations;

c) examine and review any law or policy or practice, for the time being in force, for protection of child rights and recommend measures for their effective implementation;

d) Present to the Federal Government and to the provincial governments, as the case may be, reports upon working of such law or policy or practice specified under clause;

e) inquire into violation of child rights and recommend to the relevant agency or department initiation of proceedings in such cases;

f) examine all factors that inhibit enjoyment of rights of child, such as violence, abuse and exploitation, trafficking, torture, pornography and prostitution and recommend appropriate remedial measures;

g) sponsor, steer encourage research and maintain a database relating to children and their issues to provide knowledge and awareness for national policy and strategic action for its remedy;

h) spread awareness and promote dialogue on child rights among various sections of the society and promote awareness of the safeguards available for protection of these rights;

i) examine international instruments and undertake periodical review of existing policies and programmes on child rights and make recommendations for their effective implementation in the best interest of children; Or advise the Federal Government to sign, ratify or accede to any such proposed international treaty, protocol, etc.;

j) advise the Federal Government to sign, ratify, or accede to any such proposed international treaty, protocol, etc.;

k) while inquiring into complaints of violations of child rights, may call for information or report from the Federal Government, civil society organizations and autonomous or concerned bodies and in this regard the Commission shall have the powers vested in a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Act V of 1901) for enforcing of the any person and compelling the production of documents and;

l) undertake such other functions as assigned by the Federal Government and as it may consider necessary for promotion and protection of child rights and any other matter incidental to the above functions.

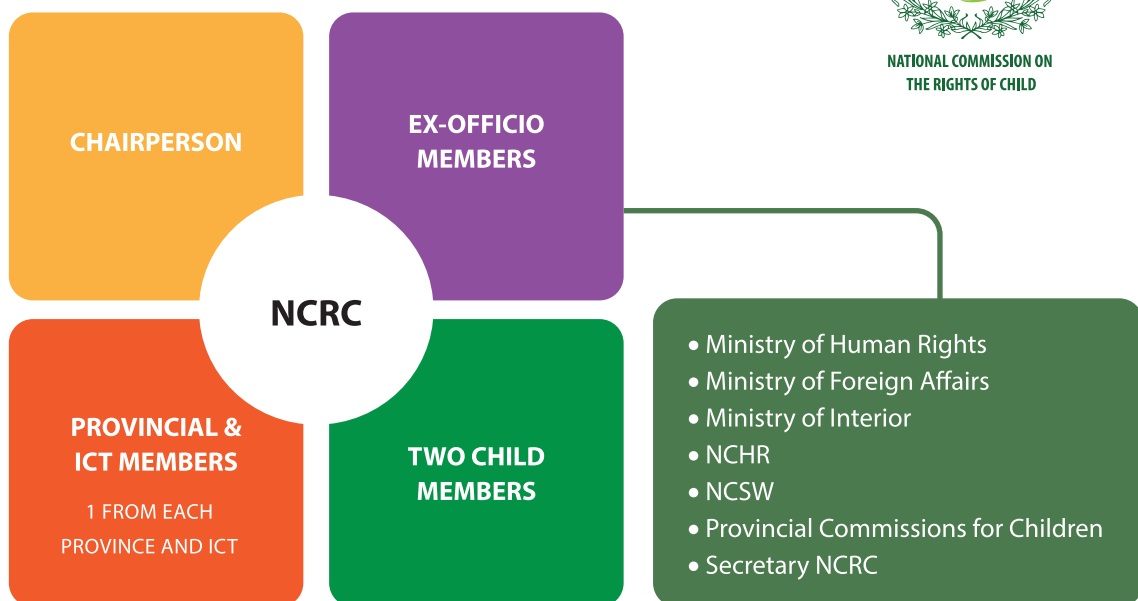
What does NCRC do?

The National Commission on the Rights of Child protects and promotes the rights of all children in Pakistan by ensuring that all laws, policies, programmes and administrative mechanisms are consistent with the articles of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Composition of the NCRC Commission

The Commission consists of a Chairperson and seven members (one from each of the 4 provinces, one from ICT, and two child members). It also includes ex-officio members - i.e., civil servants of grade 20 and above - from the Ministries of Human Rights, Interior, and Foreign Affairs, the Chairs of the provincial children's commissions, and the Chairs of the NCHR and NCSW.

The Commission constitutes of following officials:



NCRC Core Team

The core team is chaired by the Chairperson, one commissioner from each province, and two child members.



Ms. Afshan Tehseen – Chairperson

Ms. Afshan Tehseen has been working for the protection and promotion of human rights for over 25 years. She has held key positions at various national and international organisations, including the United Nations (UN). Her work has focused primarily on children’s rights and protection, mentoring youth, women’s empowerment, and advocating for legal and policy reform. Ms. Tehseen has been an active member of key networks and forums at the national and international levels, as well as a “Master Trainer,” “Goodwill Ambassador,” and “Regional Gender Champion.”



Mr. Iqbal Detho – Member Sindh

Iqbal Detho received a Master of Science in Human Rights from the London School of Economics as a Chevening Scholar, United Kingdom. He was also a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow (Law and Human Rights) at the University of Minnesota, United States. Mr. Detho has been a trainer and educator on human and children’s rights for over 15 years. He is also a member of the Provincial Monitoring Committee on Prevention of Child Marriages, Women Development Department, Government of Sindh and a member of the Curriculum Development Programme, Sindh.



M. Hashim Kakar – Member Balochistan

Muhammad Hashim Kakar has served as the Director General (B-20) of Social Welfare and Special Education, Government of Balochistan. Mr. Kakar was also Deputy Director of Provincial Commission for Child Welfare and Development Balochistan, Quetta. His areas of expertise include public administration, child protection and children with special needs. During his career, he contributed significantly to the abolition of child labour.



Dr. Rubina Feroze Bhatti – Member Punjab

Dr. Rubina Feroze Bhatti holds a doctorate in Leadership Studies from the University of San Diego, California. She has decades of experience in the field of human rights and has served in various leadership positions, including as a member of the Advisory Council for Minorities Affairs, Punjab. She has been nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize, the 2011 Woman of Courage Award, and the 2015 UNDP N-Peace Award, among others. She has been awarded the ‘Human Rights Award’ by the Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Affairs, Punjab for four consecutive years (2016-19).



Dr. Rubina Farid – Member ICT

Dr. Rubina Farid has been a practicing obstetrician gynaecologist and nutritionist for the past 30 years. She is a well-known advocate for the rights of women and children and is committed to making Pakistan a safer place for them. Her work for human rights over the years has been recognised with the Fatima Jinnah Gold Medal in 2006, the National Human Rights Award in 2016, and the Human Rights Achievement Award in 2018. She is also the Chairperson of the Shelter Home Care Committee and the National Cell for the Protection of Children.



Dr. Jahanzeb Khan – Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Dr. Jahanzeb Khan is a native of Swabi district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Dr. Khan holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Peshawar. Dr. Khan has authored and published more than 10 research papers on child protection issues in Pakistan. He has been working in the field of child protection for 20 years. He has served as the Regional Head of SPARC and consultant to Oxford Policy Management on 'Child Protection Case Management and Referral Mechanism' in KP.



Ms. Faryal Javed – Child Member

Faryal Javed is a pre-medical student at Islamabad Model Girls College, working to integrate children's rights into the socio-economic paradigm of social institutions. She is inspired by her mother, who holds a master's degree in gender studies from the College of Punjab, and her father, who teaches political science at Islamia Degree College.



Mr. Tajdar Hashmi – Child Member

Tajdar Ali Hashmi is a promising student who joined Jamia Lateefiya Nazeeriya for Hifz-e-Quran after completing his primary education on scholarship from Islamabad Model School for Boys AraaKirpa. Tajdar continues to study on scholarships and recently completed his Matriculation from Islamabad Model College for Boys Hummak.

**Institutional
Strengthening and
Operationalisation of
the Commission**

As a newly notified Commission, the first major task of the Commission was to engage in institution building and develop processes to enable the Commission to carry out its functions under the NCRC Act, 2017. The major tasks undertaken by the NCRC during the year were:

Acquisition of office space

The Commission acquired its office space in October 2020 at Evacuee Trust, Islamabad. Office furniture and supplies were procured and staff moved into the office in November 2020. The office was renovated in phases.



Staff Hiring

The NCRC has been active in seeking to create positions. Initially, the Establishment Division (MS Wing) recommended 45 posts for the Commission in various cadre positions.

The case was presented to the Austerity Committee of the Ministry of Finance, which approved the creation of 27 posts in the first phase.

The Ministry of Human Rights was also requested for posting a secretary to the Commission. All of these posts were created subject to the availability of budgetary resources and the approval of recruitment rules, which still need to be approved by the relevant authorities. No appointments have yet been made.

NCRC Rules of Implementation

Drafts of Financial Rules, Rules of Recruitment and Conditions of Service of Employees, Medical Rules, Powers and Functions of Commissions, necessary for the functioning of the Commission, were prepared by the NCRC and submitted to the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) for further approval by government departments. The Commission regularly liaised with the MoHR and other ministries to obtain approval of Rules of Implementations.

Meeting of the Commission

During the year, the second Commission meeting was held on January 27, 2021, with a quorum of all members present. The Commission provided an overview of the Commission's activities, progress made, challenges, and the way forward. Members endorsed the major decisions made by the NCRC during the quarter and the minutes of the last Board meeting held in June 2020 were unanimously approved. Commission members commended NCRC's efforts and progress in the area of children's rights and supported the Commission's key decisions.



NCRC Commission Meeting held on 27 January 2021

NCRC Website Development

During this period, the Commission contracted with a web agency to design and develop its website. The website was developed, launched, and is accessible at

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

The website provides detailed information about the Commission, key programme areas and activities, publications, the complaint system, suggestions, etc.



Strategic Framework and Strategic Planning

In 2020, the Commission developed a Strategic Framework to elaborate vision, mission, and strategic priorities, with the goal of aligning interventions and activities with this framework to fulfil its mandate. In June 2021, NCRC launched its national strategic planning process at the national level to develop a three-year Commission roadmap and identify key priorities (including short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals) in accordance with the mandate defined in the NCRC Act of 2017. A consultant was brought on board to support the development of the NCRC strategic plan in consultation with key stakeholders at the national and provincial levels.

NCRC Partnerships

NCRC has partnered with UNICEF and signed a “Rolling Plan 2021-22” to strengthen the Commission’s capacity to protect and promote the rights of the child. Areas of mutual collaboration include institutional strengthening, legislative review and reform, research on important emerging issues, development of a strategic plan, and a complaint handling mechanism.

In addition, young experts have been placed at the NCRC to learn about Pakistan’s international human rights obligations and share their insights. The Young Experts Programme is designed to provide opportunities for dedicated young professionals to gain specific human rights knowledge while working with government institutions and independent commissions in Pakistan. It was launched as part of the European Union’s Huqooq-e-Pakistan programme to promote human rights in Pakistan.

Challenges

As an institution in its infancy, the NCRC has had to overcome myriad challenges. It took several months for the NCRC to acquire and renovate an office. The Commission lacks operational and programme staff (secretary, HR, finance, administration, and support staff). Delays in the adoption of the NCRC’s Rules of Implementation directly impacted the NCRC’s work, leaving the Commission dependent on donor support to carry out its activities. The NCRC Chairperson and Commissioners worked without salary during the year, as their salaries had yet to be approved by the relevant ministries. The DDO placement at the NCRC was not regular and affected in utilization of allocated budget as well. The lack of financial and human resources prevented the NCRC from effectively enforcing its mandate.

As the only institution dealing with children’s rights at the national level, the Commission faces significant challenges in the face of increasing violence against children. Moreover, despite being a government-supported body, the NCRC must maintain its independence in addressing gaps in the implementation and fulfilment of children’s rights in Pakistan.

**Review of Law, Policy
and Practice for
Children's Rights**



The mandate of the Commission is to ensure that all policies, laws, programmes and administrative mechanisms are consistent with the perspective of children’s rights as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan and the **UN Convention for Child Rights (UNCRC)**. To this end, the Commission actively reviews existing or proposed laws and administrative instruments to make positive recommendations for amendments. It works with the commissions established under provincial laws and other concerned provincial departments to advocate for the introduction of new laws and policies to protect and promote children’s rights in Pakistan.

As a result of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, the responsibility for legislation and administration of children as well as financial powers has been transferred to the provinces. Therefore, the federal government can now legislate on children’s issues only in relation to the federal territories and areas that are not part of a province. However, under Article 142 of the Constitution, legislative authority with respect to criminal law, criminal procedure, and evidence remains with the federal Parliament and provincial assemblies. Legislation affecting the child and the rights of the child in these areas can therefore still be made through federal laws.

Because of this significant legislative apportionment, the NCRC has been mandated not only to examine legislation and administrative instruments at the federal level, but also to work with provincial governments to make such recommendations as it deems appropriate for the protection and promotion of children’s rights.

Activities and Interventions

Sindh

Law Reforms

Successful amendments to the Sindh Child Protection Authority Act, 2011 (SCPA 2011)

NCRC provided technical input to the Sindh Child Protection Authority Act 2011 (SCPA 2011) after careful analysis and close consultation with relevant organisations and departments. The amendments proposed by NCRC in consultation with stakeholders were approved by the Law Department, Sindh. After approval by the Governor of the province, the Sindh Child Protection Authority Act-2011 was incorporated into the parent law.

Considering the active role of the Commission, NCRC member Sindh was invited as a special participant to the meetings of the Standing Committee on Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights, where the content of the draft law was discussed. During the presentation of the report in the Sindh Assembly on April 23, 2021, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee duly acknowledged the technical assistance provided by NCRC. In addition, the Law Department-Govt. of Sindh mentioned NCRC's invaluable contribution to the reform process when submitting a summary to the Chief Minister for approval. NCRC will continue to work with the Sindh Welfare Department (SWD) and the SCPA to put in place the rules, regulations, and administrative infrastructure necessary to implement the law.



Highlights of Major Amendments in the Sindh Child Protection Authority Act, 2011

The Sindh Child Protection Authority Act was originally passed in 2011, but did not include preventive or curative measures. Subsequently, amendments and improvements were made in April 2021 to make the competent authority more effective in protecting Sindh's children.

The new amendments expanded the definition of 'child sexual abuse' to include child marriage and empowered the Sindh Child Protection Authority to take suo motu action in cases of abduction, rape, murder or any other type of assault against children.

After the recent amendments, the police will no longer have any excuse not to report the cases of child victims of various types of violence. The police or other law enforcement agency will be required to file a FIR as soon as a person or a representative of the child protection agency files a complaint. Failure or non-registration of a FIR by the police will result in punishment against the police officers.

Under the previous law, the Minister of the Ministry of Social Affairs was the Chairperson of the Authority. In the future, the Sindh Chief Minister will appoint any member of the Authority as its Chairperson. Activists who have made contributions to social welfare and human and children's rights can also become members.

The amendments also authorise the child protection officer to inspect or visit any facility that provides child care services and review related records when reports of wrongdoing surface. The offences could include child abuse, illegal adoption, or other illegal activities. The child protection officer must notify the Director General of the Authority about the incident within 24 hours of such incident.

All offences covered by this law are cognizable and not bailable. The government, in consultation with the Sindh High Court, will notify special courts for the protection of children and speedy justice. In addition, the name of the victim will not be disclosed to the newspapers.

Proposed Amendments to the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2013

The NCRC provided technical input to the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013 after careful deliberation and coordination with relevant organisations and departments. The key amendments proposed by NCRC were incorporated in the draft are:

Proposed amendments to the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2013.

NCRC has provided technical inputs to the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013 after careful deliberations and in consultation with relevant organisations and departments. The main amendments proposed by NCRC have been incorporated in the draft:

- The format of the Nikkah Nama should be consistent with Rule 3 of the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act and include a section requiring the CNIC number to be indicated.
- The implementation strategy of Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2013 should be formulated and activated in the district and provincial monitoring committees.
- Health and Population Departments should be tasked to prevent and address the phenomena of early child marriage, high infant mortality and poor maternal health.

In addition, the NCRC called for the inclusion of representatives of the Department of Local Government and Minority Affairs on the provincial committee to ensure that sensitive cases such as forced conversions of minorities and early marriages in Hindu-inhabited areas are considered.

NCRC Recommendations to the Sindh Provincial Human Rights Vigilance Committee

The Commission was co-opted in November 2020 as a member of the Provincial Human Rights Vigilance Committee of the Human Rights Department, Govt. of Sindh. In its first meeting, the NCRC submitted a series of recommendations to the Sindh Provincial Human Rights Committee in three priority areas: (1) Legal Framework, (2) Institutional Framework, and (3) Awareness and Education.

Under the legal framework, NCRC proposed the development of a provincial child rights and child protection policy aimed at implementing the existing legal framework, including (i) amendments to the Sindh Protection Authority Act, 2011 (ii) implementation of the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018, (iii) Implementation of Sindh Prohibition of Employment of Child Labour Act, 2017, (iv) Implementation of Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2013, (v) Implementation of Sindh Free and Compulsory Right to Education Act, 2013, (vi) Implementation of Sindh Promotion of Breastfeeding and Protection of Nutrition Act, 2013, etc.

Under the institutional framework, NCRC proposed to (i) activate the Provincial Treaty Implementation Cell (TIC), (ii) improve the child protection system in the province by enhancing technical and financial capacity to the Sindh Child Protection Authority, (iii) establish an inter-agency coordination committee at TIC or in the office of the Chief Secretary, (iv) develop uniform help lines/hotlines for reporting human rights/child rights/women's rights violations, (v) develop a database of human rights violations,

including children's rights, and align with the ZARRA authority at the federal level, (vi) develop effective referral mechanisms and case management of child rights cases, and (vii) increase the posts of forensic experts to assist in child abuse cases and develop standard operating procedures.

As part of the awareness and education work, NCRC proposed to the Provincial Human Rights Committee to develop an action plan to raise awareness and educate government officials, especially the Social Welfare Department and the police, on the recently enacted special and general laws for children, i.e., the provisions of the Pakistan Penal Code and the special laws.

Recommendations/Advisory Correspondence with key Stakeholders

As a law and policy review body, the NCRC has a national mandate to write letters to federal and provincial governments and state agencies to implement the law. The NCRC has issued guidelines to the government of Sindh:

- Formulate and introduce the rules of implementation of the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018 and establish the institutional framework as stipulated in the Act. In pursuance of this mandate, the NCRC wrote letters to the Provincial Home Secretary, IG Police, IG Prisons, and other relevant stakeholders to introduce the rules necessary for the implementation of the JJSA.
- Formation and activation of District Vigilance Committees (DVCs) under Section 15 of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 and constitution of Provincial Coordination Committee on Child Labour under Section 5 of the Sindh Prohibition of Employment Children Act, 2017 in accordance with the principles of the UNCRC and ILO Convention 138 (minimum age for admission to employment) and ILO Convention 182 (worst forms of child labour); and
- Child abuse, child labour, and illegal wages of children employed by the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board as janitors to sweep the streets of Karachi.

Visits/Meetings with Stakeholders

The Commission was mandated by the NCRC Act of 2017 to “promote dialogue among the various segments of society”. To this end, the NCRC has met with representatives of various provinces, ministries, departments and agencies to coordinate and resolve issues related to children's rights.

Chairman Standing Committee for Law & Parliamentary Affairs

Chairman of the Standing Committee on Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights, Barrister Pir Mujeebul Haq, met with NCRC Chairperson, NCRC Member Sindh and NCRC Legal Advisor on January 21, 2021. Pir Mujeebul Haq briefed the Commission on the history of Sindh Assembly and Chief Ministers of the province. He thanked the NCRC Chairperson and her team for their enthusiasm and commitment to upholding children's rights in Pakistan and discussed ways to collaborate on law reforms in Sindh.



Sindh Police

The Chairperson of NCRC, Member of NCRC Sindh and Legal Advisor of NCRC met with IGP for Sindh Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Mahar and DIG HQ, Mr. Saqib Ismail Memon on January 21, 2021. NCRC Chairman appreciated the quick response and role of Sindh Police in handling child abuse cases in the province. NCRC and Sindh Police agreed to work closely in this matter.



Social Welfare Department, Govt. of Sindh

Chairperson of NCRC and Member of NCRC of Sindh met with Secretary of Ministry of Social Welfare Mr. Roshan Ali Shaikh on January 21, 2021. During the meeting, mechanisms to strengthen coordination in the field of child rights abuse and other child welfare issues were discussed.



Sindh Child Protection Authority

NCRC Chairperson along with NCRC member Sindh visited Sindh Child Protection Authority (SCPA) on January 22, 2021. They met with the DG of Sindh Child Protection Authority, Dr. Azeemur Rehman Meo, and the Director of Operations for SCPA, Ms. Fauzia Masum.



DIG Prisons Sindh and Visit to YOIS

NCRC Chairperson and NCRC member Sindh met with DIG of Prisons, Mr. Nasir Khan in Karachi on January 23, 2021. They visited the Youthful Offenders Industrial School for juvenile offenders and children housed with their mothers in the women's section of one of the prisons in Karachi. Recommendations were made to improve various areas such as sports, library, socio-psychological support, legal aid and repairs in the juvenile sections.



Sindh Judicial Academy

The NCRC Chairperson met with a senior faculty member of the Sindh Judicial Academy, Mr. Shahid Shadiq, on January 24, 2021, and discussed areas of collaboration on research to implement laws related to juvenile justice, child marriage, and the inclusion of laws related to children in the curriculum and syllabi of the Judicial Academy and law enforcement agencies.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Law Reforms

Proposed Amendments to the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act, 2010

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act (KPCPWA) was promulgated in 2010. The objective of the Act was to provide care, protection, maintenance, welfare, training, education, rehabilitation and reintegration of children at risk in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The NCRC reviewed the law and proposed amendments to the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The amendments focused on systemic reforms to make the KP Child Protection and Welfare Commission an oversight, advisory, and monitoring body by demarcating its functions from the Department of Social Welfare, while transferring the service delivery and programme implementation functions to the Department of Social Welfare.

Consultations on KP Legislative Reforms

The National Commission on the Rights of the Child held two consultations on law reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The first consultation was held on February 18, 2021 with the participation of NCRC Chairperson, NCRC Member KP, Secretary Social Welfare KP, UNICEF Pakistan and KP Commission on Law Reforms and Referral Mechanism for Child Protection in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



NCRC conducted a second one-day consultation with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa legislators on April 5, 2021 to discuss KP Child Protection and Welfare (Amendment) Bill, 2020. The overall objective of the consultation was to strengthen coordination between NCRC and key stakeholders, including policy makers, to effectively work on child-related laws for the promotion and protection of children in the country.

The consultation discussed the proposed amendments to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act, 2010 with the Special Committee on Child Sexual Abuse and discussed the systemic reforms in detail, particularly the regulatory and service delivery functions of the KP Child Protection Commission. The proposed amendments related to the sale of children's organs, the punishment of child pornography, the punishment of seduction, child trafficking, child sexual abuse, and the maintenance of a registry for such sex offenders were also discussed, taking into account their compatibility with the constitutional and national legal frameworks on the subject.

The consultative meeting was attended by Honourable Speaker of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani, Chairman of NCRC, members of NCRC, members of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly Ms. Ayesha Bano, Ms. Sajida Hanif, Dr. Sumaira Shams, Ms. Ayesha Naeem, Ms. Rehana Ismail and UNICEF.

Honourable Speaker of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly, Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani lauded the efforts of the NCRC and its progress in promoting and protecting children's rights in the country.

Recommendations/Advisory Correspondence with Key Stakeholders

NCRC has issued guidelines to the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the following issues related to children:

- The Juvenile Justice Act, 2018 (JJSA) is a key piece of legislation to address the issues of children in conflict with the law. The Commission made recommendations to the provincial government for the implementation of the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018, including the establishment of juvenile courts, panel of free legal aid, the promulgation of juvenile justice committees, the strengthening of the probation and parole system for diversion, the establishment of observation homes and juvenile rehabilitation centres. The Commission emphasised that drafting rules for JJSA is an important step in implementing the JJSA Act, 2018.
- Formulate rules and activate of District Vigilance Committees (DVCs) under Section 5, 19 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 2015 and establishing Child Labour Coordination Committee and making rules under Section 5 and 19 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2015 in accordance with the principles of UNCRC and ILO Convention 138 (minimum age for admission to employment) and ILO Convention 182 (worst forms of child labour).

Visits/Meetings with Stakeholders

NCRC held meetings with key departments of the provincial government of KP that deal with children's rights.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police

A delegation consisting of NCRC members from KP and Sindh met with IGP KP, Dr. Sanullah Abbasi, and Additional IG Investigation, Captain (Retired) Feroz Shah, in Peshawar on December 14, 2020. The meeting included a discussion on key areas such as the mandate of the NCRC, child rights issues in KP, and the role of police officers in implementing existing laws to protect children. The IGP assured the Commission that its correspondence would be properly responded to in order to address the complaints of child victims.



NCRC met with the Police Department on March 19, 2021 to develop and strengthen the coordination mechanism for child abuse cases. The outcomes included: (i) the appointment of a member of the Police Department to coordinate with the Commission; (ii) the Police Department directing all DPOs to report child abuse cases to the NCRC; (iii) the provision of a report on the recent suicide of a school child who was in police custody; and (iv) the sharing of reports on child abuse cases with the NCRC on a monthly basis.

Social Welfare Department, Government of KP

Chairperson NCRC and Member KP met with the Secretary Social Welfare Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on March 18, 2021 to address and discuss child protection issues in the province. Discussions were held on improving cooperation between NCRC and the Social Welfare Department and on the draft law to amend the KP Child Protection and Welfare Act, 2010.



Prisons Department

Chairperson NCRC and Member NCRC KP met with IG Prisons Mr. Masood ur Rehman and Additional IG Prisons, Col Rtd. Taj Sultan on March 16, 2021 to discuss the reforms and implementation process of the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018 and strengthening the existing coordination mechanisms.



Speaker and Members Provincial Assembly, KP Assembly

Chairperson NCRC and KP Member NCRC met with KP Speaker Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani and members of the Provincial Assembly on March 17, 2021 to discuss children's issues and legal reforms in the province. The honorable speaker directed the relevant departments to speed up the process of law reforms.



Punjab

Law Reforms

Need for a Comprehensive Law to protect Children in Punjab

The Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act (PNDCA) was enacted by the Punjab government in 2004. Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CP&WB) was established under this Act. Despite periodic amendments (2007 and 2017), the scope of the Act remains limited and primarily addresses only the issue of destitute and neglected children.

CP &WB is under the administrative control of the Home Department. The division of roles between CP&WB and Social Welfare is not entirely clear. Law reform efforts in Punjab have been without much success in recent years. In this context, NCRC team visited Punjab in June 2021 to highlight the need for a comprehensive law and an efficient system for the protection of children in Punjab and to establish harmony among different departments to solve the problems of children in Punjab.

The NCRC Chairperson, NCRC Punjab Member and Head of Programme met with the Minister Social Welfare and the Director General of Social Welfare, the Chairperson of Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, the Inspector General of Police and DIGs, and the Additional Secretary of Home Department Govt. of Punjab.

During the meetings, NCRC emphasized that both SWD and CP&WB need to work closely together to ensure that legislative reforms are initiated to protect the interests of all children. It was recommended that officials have absolute clarity about their roles, responsibilities, and referral mechanisms. The NCRC also noted that the role of regulation and supervision should be separated from child protection services. Organizations that provide child protection services cannot effectively monitor themselves, and government-funded child protection institutes should ideally be placed under the Department of Social Welfare.

This was a successful intervention, as all stakeholders agreed to expand the scope of the law, either through amendments to the existing law or by introducing a new law to provide for all vulnerable children and make child protection services effectively available in all districts of Punjab.

Recommendation/Advisory Correspondence with Key Stakeholders

NCRC, as part of its mandate, has issued letters and guidelines to the Government of Punjab to implement the laws for children on the following issues:

- Rules for the implementation of the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018 and the establishment of the institutional framework and services provided by the Act. NCRC wrote letters to the Home Secretary, IG Police, IG Prisons, and other stakeholders to enforce legal protections for juvenile offenders and establish the rules necessary to implement the JJSA.

- Activation and formation of District Vigilance Committees (DVCs) under Section 15 of the Punjab Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 and constitution of Provincial Coordination Committee on Child Labour under Section 4 of the Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act, 2016 in accordance with the principles of the UNCRC and ILO Conventions 138 (minimum age for admission to employment) and 182 (worst forms of child labour).

Visits/Meetings with Stakeholders

NCRC held important meetings with key stakeholders and discussed ways to improve the situation in Punjab.

Minister of Social Welfare, Govt. of Punjab

NCRC Chairperson, NCRC Member Punjab, and Head of Programme met with Punjab Social Welfare Minister Yawar Bukhari and other officials from the Department of Social Welfare on June 15, 2021 on the topic of children's rights and legislative reforms in Punjab. NCRC emphasised the need for a comprehensive child protection system and child protection law in Punjab to ensure the welfare of children holistically.



Child Protection & Welfare Bureau and Visit to Child Protection Institute

Chairperson NCRC, NCRC Punjab Member and Head of Programmes visited Child Protection & Welfare Bureau (CP&WB) Lahore on June 15, 2021 and met with Ms. Sarah Ahmed, Chairperson CP &WB and her team. Discussions were held on the problems faced by children and the child protection services offered by the Bureau. Detailed discussions were held on legislative reforms that require a comprehensive and inclusive child protection law and response system in Punjab. Both NCRC and CP&WB agreed to work together in protecting and promoting child rights. After the meeting, the NCRC team visited the Child Protection Institute and observed the various services provided to children.





Punjab Police

NCRC Chairperson, NCRC Member Punjab and the Head of Programme met with IGP Punjab, Mr. Inam Ghani and his senior officials including DG Crime, DG IT and DG Investigation on June 16, 2021 to discuss the problem of child abuse and the role of police in responding effectively and efficiently. The IGP provided detailed information on the system through which Punjab Police responds to cases of child abuse and violence. The IGP assured its full support and appointed a member to coordinate with the NCRC and handle relevant complaints.



Home Department

NCRC Chairperson, NCRC Member Punjab, and Head of Programme met with Muhammad Asim Javaid, Additional Secretary Home Department, and Madiha Tahir Shah, Deputy Secretary Development, on child rights and child protection. NCRC emphasised the need to introduce institutional reforms in Punjab to provide for all children and to clearly define the functions and roles of child protection agencies in Punjab.



Balochistan

Law Reforms

Consultation and Meetings on Child Labour Laws in Balochistan

NCRC Member Balochistan held a consultation and two meetings with key stakeholders in Balochistan on child labour laws and the status of their implementation in the province.

The consultation was held on September 15, 2020 in the presence of the Secretary of Labour and Manpower, Deputy Director of NAVTTC, Director of Manpower Training, Director of Labour and Manpower, Deputy Chief of T.T.B and Assistant Director. On September 16, 2020, a meeting was held with the Labour Department, UNICEF and the Social Welfare Department to discuss the gaps in child labour laws in Balochistan and the way forward. A follow-up meeting was held with the Secretary and the Director of Law and Parliamentary Affairs on September 17, 2020.

Progress of the Provincial Government of Balochistan

In May 2021, two important laws on child labour and bonded labour were promulgated in Balochistan, namely the Balochistan Employment of Children (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2021 and the Balochistan Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 2021.

Visits/Meetings with Stakeholders

NCRC met with various government agencies in Balochistan to discuss institutional reforms for child rights in Balochistan.

Secretary Social Welfare Department, Government of Balochistan

An NCRC member from Balochistan met with Abdul Rauf Baloch, Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare, at the Divisional Headquarters in November 2020 to discuss the functioning of the Child Protection Unit (CPU). The Secretary shared details on (i) the functioning of the newly established CPUs, (ii) the management of child protection cases and the referral system, and (iii) the statistics on the cases. The NCRC member and the Secretary agreed to continue working together on child rights violation issues.





NCHR Balochistan

NCRC member Balochistan held a meeting with the NCHR Acting Director and Deputy Director on August 9, 2020. The purpose of the meeting was to improve coordination between NCHR and NCRC, particularly in relation to cases reported on children.

Department of Local Government- Govt. of Balochistan

NCRC member for Balochistan met with Secretary Local Government Department and UNICEF, on November 24, 2020 in Quetta to discuss birth registration. The birth registration rate in Balochistan is the lowest in all provinces of the country. The meeting noted the low level of birth registration in Balochistan and discussed joint measures and efforts to address the gaps in the system to improve birth registration.

Department of Mines and Minerals- Govt. of Balochistan

The NCRC member for Balochistan met with the Secretary of Mines and Minerals Department at the office of the Chief Inspector of Mines Balochistan, Quetta, on April 23, 2021. The NCRC member discussed the problem of child labour in mines and the status of implementation of the Mines Act 1923.

Recommendations/Advisory Correspondence with Key Stakeholders

The NCRC has given guidelines to the provincial government of Balochistan on the following issues related to children:

- Despite the passage of Juvenile Justice System Act 2018, young offenders in Balochistan are waiting for proper implementation. The Commission has made recommendations to the Government of Balochistan for the implementation of Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018 including establishment of juvenile courts, free legal aid panels, notification of juvenile justice committees, strengthening of probation and parole system for diversion, establishment of observation homes and centers for rehabilitation of juveniles. The Commission emphasized that the development of rules for JJSA is an important step in the implementation of the JJSA Act 2018.
- Status of formation and activation of District Vigilance Committees (DVCs) under Section 15 of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 and in accordance with the principles of the UNCRC and ILO Conventions 138 (minimum age for admission to employment) and 182 (worst forms of child labour).

Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT)

Law Reforms

NCRC Proposes High Levy on Sugary Drinks

NCRC, in collaboration with Pakistan National Heart Association (PANA), held a consultation with parliamentarians on April 6, 2021, on the increasing harmful effects of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) on youth and children in the country. Excessive consumption of added empty sugar, particularly from sugar-sweetened beverages, contributes to the high prevalence of obesity among children and adolescents.

The Commission called on all stakeholders, especially legislators, to support the inclusion of the health levy in the 2021-22 Finance Bill and to raise their voices in Parliament to advocate for the introduction of the amendment.

On April 22, 2021, a follow-up meeting on the harmful effects of sugar was held in Islamabad in collaboration with PANNAH and Child Rights Movement (CRM). It was attended by civil society representatives, health professionals, media representatives, students, parents, and organisations working to protect children. The focus was on educating children to lead a healthy lifestyle and minimising the consumption of sugary drinks.



One-Day Consultation with Minority Leadership

NCRC held a consultation with minority leadership on August 27, 2020, in response to correspondence from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to submit child-specific input regarding the OHCHR publication “Protecting Minority Rights: A Practical Guide on Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation.” The purpose of the consultation was to identify best practices and collect child-specific positive examples from Pakistan for possible inclusion in the guide. The consultation was attended by NCRC Chairperson, Ijaz Alam Augustine - Minister for Human Rights and Minority Affairs (Government of Punjab), Qazi Saleem Ahmed Khan - Director of HR & HA, Mohammad Hassan Mangi - DG Human Rights, Barrister Saeed Nasir - Director of Punjab Treaty Implementation Cell and members of the National Assembly. All the participants provided valuable inputs. The NCRC Chair emphasized the need to address child rights violations in light of Pakistan’s national and international obligations and concluded the discussion by stating that relevant inputs and feedback would be incorporated in the future initiatives of the Commission.



Visits/Meetings with Stakeholders

During the reporting period, the Commission held several meetings with stakeholders for child rights reforms in the Islamabad Capital Territory.

Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training

NCRC met with the Joint Educational Advisor, Mr. Rafique Tahir and his team at the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training on March 10, 2021. During the meeting, the key components of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) were discussed. The SNC is seen by the Pakistani government as an important step towards a uniform and inclusive education system for all.



Federal Minister for Human Rights

NCRC appreciated and valued the support of MoHR in a meeting with the Federal Minister for Human Rights, Dr. Shireen Mazari, on July 22, 2020, to discuss methods to strengthen the child protection system in Pakistan, the establishment of the NCRC Secretariat, and issues related to its constitution. NCRC Chairperson and other members of the Commission, Secretary Ministry of Human Rights Rabia Javeria Agha and Director General Ministry of Human Rights Muhammad Hassan Mangi were also present.



District Commissioner Islamabad

NCRC Chairperson and Member ICT met with Islamabad Deputy District Commissioner Hamza Shafqat and Additional Deputy District Commissioner Dr. Mohummad Asif on August 18, 2020 to discuss the problem of increasing number of begging children, especially at intersections and traffic signals. Begging has become an organised business in the city, with the mafia controlling the key spots where they employ these individuals or rent the area to others on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. At the same time, there is a burgeoning “begging industry” that increasingly employs trafficked children; there are not yet adequate laws to address this. The preliminary meeting discussed various options to address the growing problem of begging children in the capital. The NCRC Chair urged the district administration and law enforcement to take the necessary measures to stop this growing epidemic.



Chairperson, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA)

The NCRC Chairperson, along with various NCRC members, met with the Chairperson of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), Mr. Muhammad Saleem Baig, on October 5, 2020. The meeting was held to discuss the role of media regulation in raising public awareness about children's rights through media. The NCRC emphasised that PEMRA, as the national media regulator, should ensure child-friendly reporting. A code of conduct should be adopted by print and electronic media. NCRC urged that PEMRA ensure regular transmission of public service messages about missing and abducted children.



Senators

NCRC Chairperson and NCRC Member KP met with Climate Change Chairperson Ms. Saitara Ayaz and Social Cohesion Chairman Mr. Mohammad Ali Saif at the Senate on December 2, 2020. They were briefed on NCRC's mandate and informed about ICT child protection facilities and their status. The two distinguished senators showed keen interest in establishing a centre for destitute children in Islamabad. The Senators agreed to provide full support to the Commission in fulfilling its mandate.



Parliamentary Secretary for Human Rights

The NCRC Chairperson met with the Parliamentary Secretary for Human Rights, Mr. Lal Chand Malhi, on April 1, 2021, to discuss the progress of the Commission and its role in addressing child rights issues in Pakistan. Given the increasing violence against children in Pakistan, the NCRC is tasked with protecting vulnerable children from harm and exploitation. The Secretary expressed his keen interest in this area and spoke specifically about the importance of the Commission in legislating in the area of child protection. The Parliamentary Secretary agreed to fully support the Commission in fulfilling its mandate.



Inauguration of the Gender Protection Unit

The NCRC Chairperson attended the inauguration ceremony of the Gender Protection Unit, which includes a 24/7 helpline (8090) of the ICT Police, on May 21, 2021. This initiative was led by the IG of the Police, Mr. Qazi Jamil Ur Rehman. NCRC fully supported the initiative and welcomed access to justice for victims of violence and abuse.



Non-governmental organisations play an important role in promoting and protecting the rights of children. NCRC remains in contact with organisations and coalitions that advocate for children and are key stakeholders.

National Action and Coordination (NACG) Pakistan

NACG Pakistan visited the NCRC Secretariat on February 17, 2021 to discuss future efforts and explore possible areas of collaboration to promote and protect children's rights in the country. The National Action and Coordination Group (NACG) is a Pakistani civil society working to eradicate violence against children. NACG discussed new approaches and ways to ensure the well-being of future generations.

Child Rights Movement (CRM)

The NCRC Chair, along with other NCRC members, engaged in an extensive dialogue with members of the Pakistan Child Rights Movement (CRM). CRM is a network of more than 450 organisations working on policy, advocacy, and monitoring of children's rights in the country. The Child Rights Movement monitors the overall situation of children in Pakistan and makes comprehensive policy recommendations to the Government of Pakistan to improve the situation.



Recommendations/Advisory Correspondence with Key Stakeholders

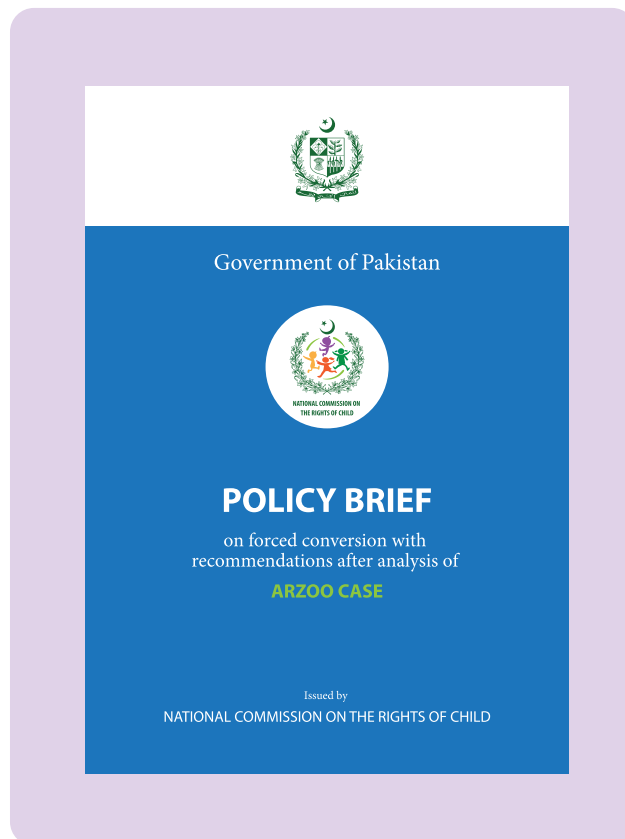
The NCRC has a mandate to write letters and issue guidelines for state agencies to implement the law. In carrying out this mandate, the NCRC has corresponded with the government and issued guidelines on specific issues.

- NCRC wrote a letter to PEMRA about care facilities, child abuse issues and child friendly reporting and the matter was immediately taken up by PEMRA.
- NCRC wrote to the Federal Government to formulate and introduce the rules for the implementation of the Juvenile Justice System Act 2018 and to establish the institutional framework as stipulated in the Act.
- Formation and activation of District Vigilance Committees (DVCs) under Section 15 of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 and constitution of a National Committee on the Rights of the Child under Section 5 of the Employment of Children Act, 1991 in accordance with the principles of the UNCRC and ILO Convention 138 (minimum age for admission to employment) and ILO Convention 182 (worst forms of child labour).

Policy Briefs

Policy Brief on Forced Conversions

The case of Arzoo Raja prompted the NCRC to conduct a thorough analysis of the problem of forced conversion of minority women and girls throughout Pakistan. The Commission prepared and issued a detailed policy brief on the issue. A copy of the brief was distributed to key stakeholders.



Policy Brief on Child Marriages

Pakistan is committed to preventing child marriages by 2030 in line with Sustainable Development Target 5.3. This requires the development and implementation of laws to end child marriages without legal loopholes. The Commission is currently conducting a national study on child marriages. The goal of this commission is to produce a policy paper that identifies the gaps in existing legislation at the federal and provincial levels. NCRC will then propose appropriate amendments and advocate for their introduction by the respective governments.

Policy Brief on Child Domestic Labour

Working children employed in households are part of an invisible labour force. They lack recognition and thus protection. They lack recognition and thus protection. The Commission is currently conducting a study on child domestic labour at the national level. The objective of this assignment is to prepare a policy paper and advocate for policy, legal and institutional reforms in the area of child domestic labour.

Awareness Raising

Section 15 of the NCRC Act of 2017 mandates the Commission to “spread awareness and promote dialogue on child rights among various sections of the society and promote awareness of the safeguards available for protection of these rights” as well as “sponsor, steer encourage research and maintain a database relating to children and their issues to provide knowledge and awareness for national policy and strategic action for its remedy.”

To fulfil its mandate, NCRC has participated in several seminars, webinars, radio programs, and television talk shows on topics relevant to children’s rights, such as. positive parenting, strengthening coordination/response mechanisms, legal reforms, child sexual abuse, impact of Covid-19 on children, child domestic labour, child trafficking, anti-rape ordinance, tobacco tax to control tobacco exposure to children, child marriages, education, juvenile justice, street children, child begging, legislative and institutional reforms on child rights, sensitization of senior government officials. Moreover, NCRC’s engagement on social media and platforms like Twitter and Facebook is increasing day by day.

HIGHLIGHTS



20+

Seminars, workshops and conferences on the protection and promotion of children’s rights



40+

Television talk shows



Press coverage of NCRC statements and events in **100+** newspapers

20+

Orientation sessions with parliamentarians, media representatives, academics and child rights NGOs on child protection legislation



Lectures on children’s rights for 180 civil servants at NIM

50+

Webinars on the protection and promotion of children’s rights



Reached 85,000 people during a campaign for World Children’s Day 2020

Multiple press releases and official statements from NCRC on special occasions/days



Activities and Interventions

NCRC as Guest Speaker at Leading Media Channels

NCRC's Chairperson and members regularly appear on TV to highlight children's issues. They have participated in numerous talk shows and radio programs on leading channels such as PTV, Dawn, GTV, GNN, Roz, ATV, KTN, Hum TV, Capital TV, Express, Radio Pakistan, Radio FM Suno and various youtube digital channels etc.

The topics discussed and highlighted were:

- Effects of abuse on children
- Positive mental and physical development of children
- Negative impact of social media apps on children
- Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2020
- Adolescent drug use and the role of anti-drug interventions
- Corporal punishment
- Forced conversion
- The importance of a healthy and nutritious diet during COVID -19
- Violence against women and girls
- The role of the NCRC and the rise in child abuse cases
- Child abuse and the need for institutional reforms
- The importance of parenting
- National and international day's commemorating children's rights, etc.



PEMRA takes notice of NCRC Letter

The NCRC wrote to PEMRA in March 2021, highlighting incidents of child abuse and corporal punishment in formal and informal settings. In response, PEMRA instructed all TV channels to allocate sufficient time to address this issue and to invite religious leaders and other concerned stakeholders to raise awareness on this issue.

NCRC partners with PEMRA on Children's Rights

Due to the increasingly rampant violence against children in Pakistan, NCRC has a responsibility to highlight the need to provide children with safe spaces and facilities that help them reach their full potential. As an important element of corporate social responsibility, PEMRA was asked to provide time for high-profile messages and programs to raise awareness about child protection issues. PEMRA was also approached in the case of ARY's Morning Show with Ms. Nida Yasir, in which the parents of a child abuse victim were relentlessly and insensitively questioned, exacerbating their mental pain and suffering. The Commission also wrote a letter to PEMRA to take appropriate action on matters of public importance.

Capacity Building Sessions for Judges and Prosecutors

NCRC member Sindh has conducted three training programmes organised by the Sindh Judicial Academy for judges and prosecutors on the following topics:

- (i) Introduction to International Human Rights on April 5, 2021 and April 8, 2021; and
- (ii) Child Rights Law in Sindh on April 9, 2021

A total of 60 judges and prosecutors participated these programmes.

Lectures at the National Institute of Management- Sindh and KP

Chairperson NCRC and Sindh Member delivered lectures on 'Issues and Welfare of children in Pakistan' to Civil Servants Senior Management Course, ranging between grade BPS 19 to BPS 20 at the National Institute of Management. Approximately 150 civil servants attended the course. NCRC member Sindh also delivered lectures on 'Human Rights Situation in Pakistan' and 'Child Rights and Welfare Issues in Pakistan' to the participants of 30 Mid-career management course (MCMC) on October 16, 2020.

NCRC Events/Seminars

Webinar on "the Impact of Covid-19 on Children"

NCRC organized an informative webinar on "Impacts of Covid-19 on Children" on July 20, 2020. The webinar was moderated by an NCRC member from Punjab and focused on the issues facing children during the pandemic, particularly in relation to education, mental health, and social disconnection. It also highlighted the key role that parents, educational institutions, society, government, and policy makers can play in providing coping mechanisms during this difficult time.



Webinar on "Child Participation"

NCRC organised a webinar on "Child Participation" on November 24, 2020. More than 30 years have passed since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child gave governments an international mandate to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to promote their participation in decisions that affect their lives. Article 12 of the Convention strongly



calls for children’s participation. In addition to the NCRC Chairperson and an NCRC member from Punjab, three distinguished child rights activists (one NCRC child member and two other children from Punjab) interacted with policy makers, including the Punjab Minister of Human Rights and Minority Affairs and the Chairperson of the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau of Punjab, and discussed the extent to which children are involved in the development of policies, programmes, and actions.

NCRC Participation in Event/Meetings

Discussion with Policy Makers on Child Rights

NCRC participated in a two-day roundtable conference with policy makers on children’s rights organised by SPARC. During the conference, NCRC’s Chairperson highlighted the importance of the Commission and its mandate, and especially emphasised the role that parliamentarians have to play.



Inter-Provincial dialogue on Democratic and Human Rights Policy Reforms in Pakistan

The NCRC Chairperson participated as a panellist during an interprovincial dialogue on democratic and human rights policy reforms in Pakistan on March 11, 2021. Deputy Speakers and Members of Provincial Assemblies were also part of the interprovincial dialogue.



Workshop on “Promoting and Strengthening the Rights of the Child in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities”

NCRC Chairperson, NCRC Member Punjab and NCRC Member Sindh spoke on provincial protection measures and international obligations during a five-day virtual workshop titled “Promoting and Strengthening the Rights of the Child in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities: Challenges and Opportunities” on April 12, 2021, hosted by LUMS in collaboration with the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI). This international workshop aimed to improve government and civil society stakeholders’ understanding of Pakistan’s international child protection system and related obligations. The workshop served as a forum for stakeholders to share their recommendations for closing the gaps between international treaties and national laws. The Chairperson of NCRC was invited as the chief guest.

Cooperation with the Pakistan Girl Guides Association

NCRC actively participated in an event on February 6, 2021 where the Honourable First Lady of Pakistan, Ms. Samina Arif Alvi, took oath as Chief Girl Guide in an event organised by Pakistan Girls Guide Association in Islamabad. NCRC is working closely with Pakistan Girl Guides Association to empower young girls in the country.



The Role of Women Parliamentarians in Legislation

The Chairperson of the NCRC represented the NCRC at a dialogue on the role of women parliamentarians in strengthening legislation and oversight to end gender-based violence and promote child protection on December 31, 2020, organised by the 'Search for Justice and Women's Parliamentary Caucus' with support from the Australian High Commission. The Chairperson spoke about the role of the Commission in strengthening legislation and monitoring mechanisms to prevent and address violence against children in the country. The women parliamentarians expressed their full commitment to play their key role as policy makers in promoting the rights of children.



Seminar on the introduction of a Health Levy as an Effective Weapon for combating Tobacco Consumption among Children

NCRC participated in a seminar on the introduction of a health levy as an effective weapon for tobacco control in Islamabad on June 14, 2021. The commissioners urged the government to take effective policy measures to control the use of tobacco and sugary products, which are the main cause of deterioration in children's health. They stressed the need to enforce the health levy to control children's exposure to tobacco.



International Parliamentary Conference on Kashmir

NCRC participated in the International Parliamentary Conference on Kashmir on February 19, 2021 organized by JKSDMI in Islamabad. NCRC Chairperson expressed grave concern over rampant violation of child rights in Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir.



An Extinguished Candle Rekindled: Documentary on Child Labour

The NCRC chair interacted with students from the Beaconhouse School (Metropolitan Campus-Girls Section) on February 26, 2021 for their global project on "A candle extinguished rekindled: documentary on child labour." Various problems related to child labour and their solutions were discussed.



30 Years of Advocacy on UNCRC

The Chairperson of NCRC participated in a consultation on "30 Years of Advocacy on United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)" organised by the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) in Islamabad on April 11, 2021. The Chair shared that the NCRC was established to bridge the gaps between international and domestic legislation



related to the rights of the child, make recommendations for effective implementation of policies related to children, and advise the federal government to sign, ratify, and accede to all international treaties and protocols to protect the best interests of children.

Special Days

Special days are days designed to educate the masses on important issues, mobilise political will, and marshal resources to address pertinent problems. NCRC has worked with representatives of national and international organisations to raise awareness and educate the public/politicians on issues related to children on certain “special days.”

International Day of the Girl Child - October 11, 2020

Girls can be powerful agents of change. Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls is not only a fundamental human right, but also has a multiplier effect on all other areas of development. NCRC member ICT interacted with children in the SOS village to mark the International Day of the Girl Child, a day dedicated to empowering girls, realising their rights, and addressing the challenges they face. Empowering girls and promoting gender equality are critical to accelerating sustainable development.



Universal Children's Day- November 20, 2020

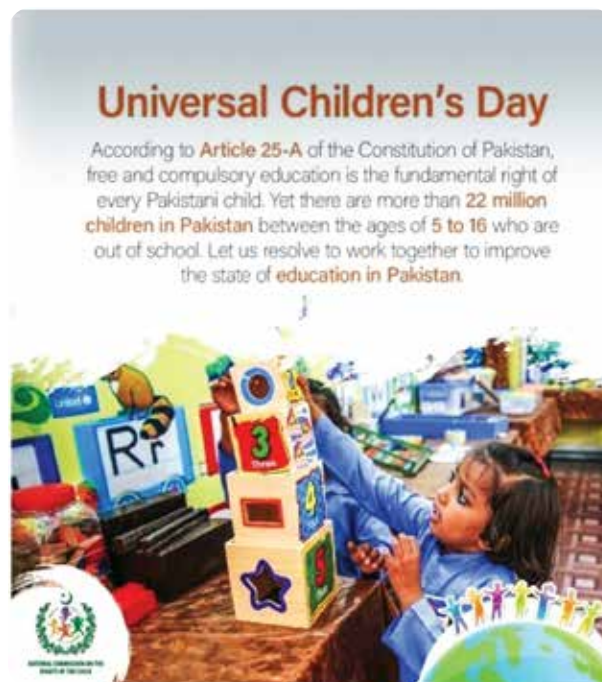
NCRC ran a week-long social media campaign to celebrate World Children's Day 2020. The campaign featured messages and visuals on key focus areas such as education, health, positive parenting, child labour, nutrition, and early marriage. The messages were disseminated by influencers such as the Honourable Minister for Human Rights, Shireen Mazari, Senator Faisal Javed and the Child Rights Movement. 85,000 people were reached on social media.

NCRC organised a webinar series on "Investing in Our Future Means, Investing in Our Children" for Universal Children's Day 2020, with the overall goal of raising awareness and promoting dialogue about children's rights among different segments of society, as well as raising awareness about the safeguards available to protect those rights. In addition to the NCRC Chairperson, two NCRC child members and 4 other children (one from each province) shared their views on children's rights and child protection.

Various stakeholders including Member of Provincial Assembly, Sidrah Imran, Special Assistant to Chief Minister - Sindh Human Rights Department - Veerji Kolhi - and NCRC Member, Sindh signed a petition titled "Every Child Matters" during the Universal Children's Day celebrations in Karachi.

International Human Rights Day- December 10, 2020

On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, the NCRC joined representatives of law enforcement agencies, human rights organisations, non-governmental organisations and trade unions to emphasize the importance of human rights. The NCRC Chairperson urged all stakeholders to work together for the rights of children. The NCRC member from Sindh pointed out the problems of children, especially child abuse and forced conversion, in various forums.



Kashmir Solidarity Day - February 5, 2021

NCRC reiterated its firm support to the people of Kashmir and appreciated their valiant struggle. The NCRC Chairperson expressed solidarity with the people of Kashmir and urged the international community to take action against the violation of children's rights in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir by India.

NCRC Child Member hosted a webinar on the impact of violence on students and education in Kashmir.

Zero Discrimination Day- March 1, 2021

NCRC reaffirmed its commitment to advocate for the rights of the child in its Zero Discrimination Day message. Everyone has the right to live without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, colour, creed, ethnicity, social status or any other ground.

International Women's Day – March 8, 2021

On International Women's Day, NCRC recognises the extraordinary role that Pakistani women and girls have played and continue to play in the country's progress. This special day highlights the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women and girls. The theme of 2021 was "Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a COVID -19 World." The NCRC Chairperson and members attended an event organised by the Ministry of Women for International Women's Day at the President's House, and the NCRC Chairperson spoke in an interview series on "Women Empowerment." She shared her views and recommendations on the kind of policies needed to support, promote and empower women in our society. NCRC Chairperson received an award from Commissioner Rawalpindi, Capt. (R) Muhammad Mehmood on International Women's Day during a special event organised by PAWF in collaboration with Punjab Council of Arts, Rawalpindi.

International Day for Street Children- April 12, 2021

International Day for Street Children is a day to honour the humanity, dignity and defiance of street children in the face of unimaginable hardships, and to give these children a voice to raise their issues and concerns. The NCRC Chairperson called on all stakeholders, especially legislators, relevant government agencies and civil society actors to work together to ensure that every child enjoys their rights and has equal opportunities for education, protection, recreation, play, health and dignity.

International Day to end Corporal Punishment- April 30, 2021

The Chairperson of the NCRC, on the occasion of the "International Day to End Corporal Punishment," called for the introduction of effective laws and the strengthening of institutional mechanisms to ensure that children are protected from corporal punishment at home, at school, in care institutions,



and in the workplace. The NCRC Chairperson stressed that the Government of Pakistan must take strong measures to prohibit corporal punishment as it destroys a child's physical, mental and social well-being for a lifetime.

International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression – June 4, 2021

June 4 is observed annually by the United Nations (UN) as International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression to commemorate and recognise the violence inflicted on children worldwide through war, terrorism, kidnapping, sexual abuse, killings, attacks on schools, and denial of humanitarian assistance. The NCRC Chairperson spoke on PTV World and reminded UN to use its mandate to protect children suffering from war crimes in Kashmir and Palestine.

World Day against Child Labour – June 12, 2021

The World Day against Child Labour aims to spread awareness on the prevalence of the illegal practice of child labour. The Chairperson in her message stated that child labour is a pandemic and should be dealt with similarly; practical actions are required by the Federal and Provincial Governments - without any further delay - to protect children from wasting their childhood employed in child labour.

NCRC on the Social Media

NCRC maintains social media accounts on Facebook (#NCRC) and Twitter (@NCRC_Pakistan). NCRC launched its Twitter account in June 2020 and Facebook page in October 2020, which provides timely and reliable information on NCRC activities, statements, and official positions on various issues. It also provides a direct interface with the public, who share, like, and comment on NCRC posts. NCRC's public engagement has increased through social media.



FACEBOOK ANALYTICS

(Oct 2020 - July 2021)



12,453
Engaged
users

On average, NCRC followers engaged (liked, commented and re-posted) **1,132** times per month

1,716 Post likes

On average, NCRC's Facebook posts, stories, pictures, and posters were liked **156** times per month

137,199
Page
reach

12,472 per month views and interaction with NCRC's Facebook account content including posts, stories, ads, and social information



TWITTER ANALYTICS

(July 2020 – June 2021)



277
Tweets

On average **25** tweets were updated per month

1,822
Mentions

NCRC was mentioned **166** times in tweets per month

183.6K
Tweet Impressions

NCRC tweets appeared **16,690** times on the followers' timelines each month

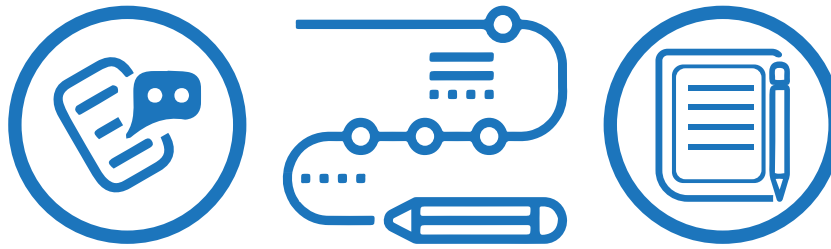
15,985
Profile Visits

On average there were **1,453** profile visits per month

880
New followers

NCRC Twitter account gained **80** new followers per month

Monitoring Child Rights Violations and Complaint Handling



Section 15 of the NCRC Act of 2017 requires the Commission to investigate complaints of violations of the rights of the child and to seek information in this regard from the federal government, civil society organizations, and autonomous or concerned agencies.

The NCRC's mandate to handle complaints enables it to develop in a citizen-centered manner that ensures participatory governance.

Complaints Handling Procedures

The Commission receives complaints and grievances nationwide. Its primary goal is to make the voices of the most marginalized citizens heard by all government agencies and structures and to ensure that they are heard. The NCRC seeks to resolve citizens' problems as a matter of priority and obtain any possible redress from the government organizations/institutions with which it deals.

Complaints are first handled by an NCRC member from the province concerned, who then consults with legal experts. Upon receipt of a complaint, the NCRC issues letters to the concerned agencies and departments for further action.

NCRC also monitors violations of children's rights and obtains reports from government agencies to provide information for appropriate action.

Responses to Ministries and Governmental Departments

The Commission has been asked by various ministries, including Human Rights, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Commerce, and various other departments, for legal opinions and updated information on various cases of child rights violations. The relevant cases were reviewed at the appropriate level in the Commission and the opinions and inputs were provided.

NCRC Notice Of Child Rights Violation

The National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC) took notice of a child rights violation by a sitting legislator, Maulana Salahuddin Ayubi of NA -263 Qilla Abdullah.

The Commission issued a letter to the Chief Secretary, IGP of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Home Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, DIG Malakand, and DPO of Lower Chitral asking them to provide a regular update on the case.

The commission directed the police to investigate whether the girl had reached marriageable age and if not, to take action against all those responsible under the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929. The case was reportedly closed on the grounds that the girl was not a child.

NCRC has written to the provincial Department of Home and Social Welfare, as well as provincial IGPs, to raise police awareness of such cases and to implement the Child Marriage Prevention Act 1929 and related child rights laws in the provinces dealing with the issue.

In response to the NCRC Chairperson's letter, the KP Child Protection & Welfare Commission directed Child Protection Officer Chitral to investigate the matter and submit the report along with relevant documents for further action.

Total Complaints Handled

The Commission has handled **102 complaints** in total of which 52% hailed from Punjab. Among these 102 cases, 26 cases are disposed-off while 76 cases are pending before various law enforcement and judicial authorities. Nevertheless, the NCRC is following up on all cases to the best of their capacity.

The Commission handled a total of 102 complaints, of which 52% were from Punjab. Out of these 102 cases, 26 cases have been disposed of while 76 cases are pending with various law enforcement and judicial agencies. Nevertheless, the NCRC is pursuing all cases to the best of its ability.

Province/Region	No. of cases	Processed/ action taken	Disposed off
Balochistan	20	20	7
Islamabad Capital Territory	10	9	6
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	9	7	1
Punjab	54	48	11
Sindh	9	9	1
Total Cases	102	93	26

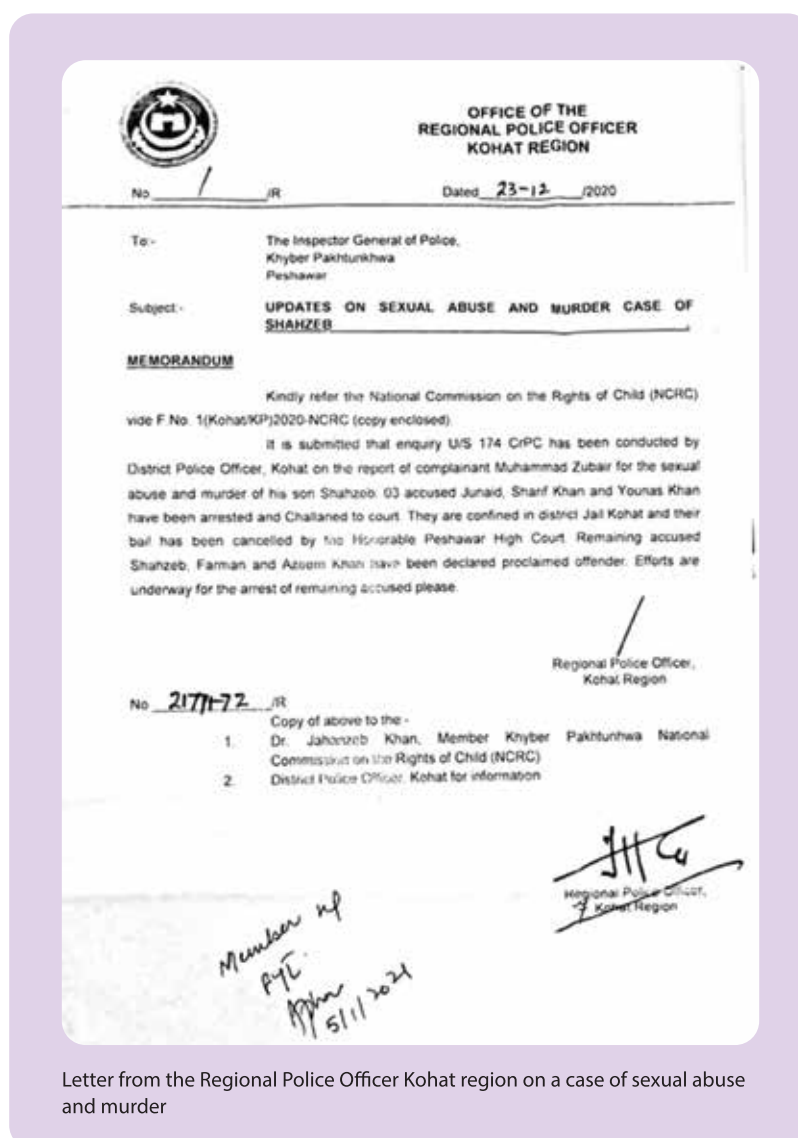
Nature of the Cases

The data show that the proportion of sexual abuse cases is the highest with a total of 24 cases, followed by murder with 15 cases and sexual assault/rape and murder with 9 cases. Some of the most common complaints are listed below:

Nature of case	No. of cases
Sexual Abuse	24
Forced Conversion	6
Child Labour	2
Murder	15
Abduction	3
Physical Abuse/violence	8
Child Marriage	3
Kidnapping, Kidnapping & Murder	2
Missing	8
Sexual Assault and/or Rape & Murder	9

Field Investigations

In addition to handling these complaints, the Punjab member conducted an on-site investigation to monitor three complaints filed with the NCRC: a) the case of abduction and rape of the daughters of a loom worker, b) the case of acid throwing at two minors, c) the case of forced conversion and forced marriage of minors. The NCRC Punjab Member also held separate meetings with the victims and their families and police officials.



Letter from the Regional Police Officer Kohat region on a case of sexual abuse and murder

Case Studies

ARZOO RAJA

On October 27, 2020, Arzoo Raja's case surfaced before the NCRC. Arzo - a minor Christian girl - had been abducted, forcibly converted, and married off by Ali Azhar. Her birth certificate showed that she was 13 years old and thus considered a 'child' under all relevant laws. The NCRC became aware of the case and requested updated information and relevant documents and copies of the FIR. After analyzing the documents, the NCRC issued guidelines to the local police and asked them to do everything in their power to arrest the culprits so that justice would be served. The case remained under constant observation by the Commission. The accused filed an application in the Sindh High Court and obtained an injunction against his arrest. The Commission found that the injunction had been misinterpreted by the accused. The police were prevented from arresting the accused even though the investigation had not been stayed by the court. The Commission issued the necessary instructions to the local police and asked the court's legal advisor to present the fact that the investigation had been suspended due to a misinterpretation of the court's order; the legal advisor was asked to urge that the order be lifted so that the investigation could continue. The Commission urged a medical examination of the victim and the taking of her statement under Section 164 of the Criminal Code so that all the facts would be on record.

After the suspension was lifted by the High Court, the victim was medically examined - as advocated by the Commission - and it was proven that she was 13-14 years old. As a result, criminal proceedings were initiated against all persons involved in the crime. The case is pending in court. The NCRC has issued a comprehensive policy brief to all concerned stakeholders urging them to take action.

FARAH SHAHEEN

A minor Christian girl, Farah Shaheen, was kidnapped, forcibly converted to Islam, and married to Muhammad Zahid s/o Muhammad Saleem. The girl was 13 years old according to her birth certificate. Muhammad Zahid and his three unknown accomplices were arrested; FIR No. 1197/20 was registered against them.

NCRC was informed about the case and asked the relevant police station for updated information and a copy of the registered FIR and all supporting documents. The NCRC reviewed the documents and raised the case in all appropriate forums. The Commission emphasised the need for a fair investigation in Farah's case.

The Commission was informed that the local police of Faisalabad had found the victim and taken her to the Darul Amaan for safety. The police were requested to ensure that the age of the victim was ascertained by a competent medical board in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations. The police were also asked to direct their investigation to the circumstances that led to the commission of the crime and to ensure that the victim's statement is recorded under Section 164 of Cr.P.C. so that the facts can be officially recorded.

The NCRC emphasised that the best interests of the victim must be considered in terms of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The case is currently pending adjudication, but the Commission will continue to follow it.

NCRC Child Members in Action

NCRC Child members, Tajdar Hashmi and Faryal Javed, actively participated in various activities throughout the year. They attended Commission meetings, hosted webinars on children's issues, participated in a number of events on important issues, interacted with policy makers including government officials and parliamentarians, and appeared on TV and radio stations to promote the cause of children's rights in Pakistan. Both members deserve special recognition as true representatives of children.



NCRC Webinar Series

Child Participation in Policy and Practice

Bringing together Child Representatives and Policy Makers

facebook
24 November 2020
Time:- 8:00 pm

National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC)


Mr. Iqbal Ahmad
Secretary
Ministry of Education
Government of Punjab


Ms. Afshan Tahir
Member
National Commission on the Rights of Child


Ms. Saira Ahmad
Member
National Commission on the Rights of Child


Chairman Azim
Ministry of Education


Saira Qazi
Ministry Education


Faryal Javed
Member


Dr. Rubina Farooq Bharti
Member



Celebrating Universal Children's Day 2020

Featuring Child participants from all four provinces

WEBINAR

17 November 2020
Time: 1800 - 1900

Event Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...>


Ms. Afshan Tahir
Member


Ms. Saira Ahmad
Member


Sahar Akmal Farooq
Member


Sahar Akmal Farooq
Member


Faryal Javed
Member


Tajdar Ali Hashmi
Member


Saira Akram
Member


Saira Akram
Member

Budget

NCRC Financial Budget 2020-21

For the fiscal year 2020-21, the Government of Pakistan allocated 20.48 million rupees to the NCRC, which was processed through the Ministry of Human Rights.

Budget analysis for the period 2020-21 (after re-appropriation)

Budget heads	Budget Estimates 2022-21 (in million)	Actual Expenditure of 2020-21 (in million)	Un-utilized Budget 2020-21 (in million)
1	2	3	4 (2-3)
Developmental Budget			
Training-Domestic & International, Travelling, Conveyance, Publication, Conference, Adv.Publicity, Payment to Service Renders	0.20	0.17	0.03
Non-Developmental Budget			
Employee related expenses	7.30	-	7.30
Assets	5.93	2.96	2.97
Repair and maintenance	0.83	0.59	0.24
Utilities	0.60	0.22	0.39
Infrastructural expenses	5.62	5.44	0.18
Total non-developmental budget	20.28	9.20	11.08
Total	20.48	9.37	11.11

The available budget for programme activities (national/international training, conferences, printing, advertising, payment for services rendered, etc.) was only 3.5 million rupees, which is only 19% of the total budget. Of the total allocated budget, 45% (RS. 9.30 million) was spent. The funds were mainly used for infrastructure development and operational expenses. The unspent budget consisted mainly of two items - employee related expenses and vehicle purchase, i.e. the unspent funds amounted to 10,337,558 rupees, which is half (50.47%) of the total allocated budget for 2020-21. These funds could not be used due to the following reasons: (a) non-payment of salaries for the Chairperson and Members of the Commission and non-recruitment of staff (b) non-approval of a vehicle by the Finance Department.

Way Forward

The 18th Amendment to the Constitution empowers provinces to govern themselves in most matters affecting children, so legislation and implementation mechanisms vary among provinces. Each provincial government must take concrete and definitive action as a matter of priority to improve the protection of children so that they can enjoy their full rights as young citizens of Pakistan.

The NCRC is the only body with a national mandate to deal with child-related issues and children's rights. It serves not only as a linear bridge - between provinces - but also as a vertical bridge - between the province and the federal government. As a legally established institution, the NCRC has been successful in bringing the plight of children to the forefront and initiating legislative, policy and institutional reforms.

As with any human rights institution, the NCRC's progress depends on the government's commitment to making the institution an independent and strong functioning body. To continue its efforts, operate successfully, and fulfil its mandate, the NCRC requires a regular minimum budget for its activities from the state.

For the coming years, the NCRC has identified the main areas in which it needs to prioritise its efforts in order to function effectively as the country's national human rights institute. These areas are:

1. Raising awareness of child rights in Pakistan;
2. Reviewing Pakistan's legal framework to improve the protection and promotion of children's rights;
3. Addressing the issues of marginalised and vulnerable children;
4. Dealing with child rights' violations: Handling complaints and investigations; and
5. Ensuring compliance with international obligations.

The Commission will also work on its institutional development to secure the logistical and financial support, as well as the administrative and managerial arrangements that NCRC needs to pursue its strategic objectives.

The Commission remains committed to its responsibility to promote and protect children's rights as provided for in the NCRC Act 2017.

The Commission envisions an enabling,
responsive and productive society for children to
enjoy their rights with dignity.

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILD (NCRC)

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