Voices of Children

I hate being a child. I hate being hit and I hate being taken for granted, I have feelings, and emotions. I need love, care, protection and attention. (A 13 yr old CDL)

We have no time for study and education, no time to play and rest, we are exposed to unsafe working conditions and we are not protected (Voices from a Children’s Forum)

Mehnaz from Pakistan says

“I was so scared, because it was terrible to live in the employer’s house. The employer and his family treated me like an animal. They shouted at my every move and punished me”

Children are not mini human beings with mini rights. As long as adults continue to regard children as mini human beings, violence against children will persist.

What is “Child Labour”?

There are as many different forms of child labour as there are economic activities. Some children till long hours in noisy and dangerous factories. Others work in the fields from dawn until dusk. Some are trafficked into the sex industry while still others find themselves in bonded labour working to pay off a debt that will never be cleared.

Child Domestic Labour refers to situations where children perform domestic tasks, not in their own home, but in the home of a third party or ‘employer’ under exploitative conditions. Child Domestic Labourers work behind closed doors, in the privacy of peoples’ homes. As well as disguising the scale of the problem, this lack of visibility greatly increases the potential for exploitation and abuse.

Child domestic labour is any domestic service done by children below the legal minimum working age (18 years) that is hazardous in nature, if such service is for more than a couple of hours a day, or stops them from going to school.

The ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) declares child domestic labour to be one of the worst forms of child labour. Often children are sold, contracted or trafficked as domestic servants to repay their families’ debt. Hidden from the public eye and separated from their families many child domestic workers are victims of physical, psychological and sexual abuse.

IN PAKISTAN CDL NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED IN WFCL; ILO CONVENTION 182
### Reasons for employing Child Domestic Labour

**Pakistan**

- A survey conducted in Pakistan in 1993 suggested that one in every six households in Islamabad employed at least one child in domestic labour. A more recent research gives a figure of 264,600 children in 'personal and social services'.
- Of these, 70-80% are girls. This undermines Pakistan’s targets to meet the EFA goals & MDGs.

### Table: Prevalence Rate (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITIES</th>
<th>HOUSEHOLD VISITED</th>
<th>NO. OF CDLs</th>
<th>PREVALENCE RATE (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BOYS</td>
<td>GIRLS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karachi</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahore</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISB/ RWP</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quetta</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peshawar</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2495</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** SPARC. (2004). *Rapid Assessment on Child Domestic Labour in Selected Localities of Pakistan*

### Child Domestic Labour: A Continuum Of Violence Against Children

- **CDL:** The Endangered Girl Child
  - With 30-33% of the population now living below the poverty line, the number of CDLs is increasing in urban and rural areas.
  - Many of the people who employ children in domestic labour are civil servants, politicians, and public representatives.
  - Patronage, tribal affiliation and feudalism complicate issues; poor rural people may use clan ties to request work in the towns.

- **CDL + Abuse + Trafficking + Bondage + Slavery**

Even if the vast majority of people disapprove of violence against children publicly, violence is a common occurrence and remains unrecognized. It is present in every country, frequently invisible and cutting across boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity, and age.