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Pakistan's Compliance with International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions: A Legal Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The involvement of the International Labour Organization (ILO) by Pakistan can be viewed as the long-term formal adherence to the international standards of labour and a continuous struggle to adhere to and enforce the rules in Pakistan. Pakistan being one of the founding members of the ILO has ratified many ILO conventions of which all the eight core conventions, which address freedom of association, collective bargaining, forced labour, child labour and non-discrimination in employment are included. Although states have signed these ratifications widely, there are loopholes between international obligations and domestic labour law, administrative practices and workplace realities. This paper critically examines how Pakistan adheres to ILO conventions through its constitutional system, labour laws, institutional levels of enforcing the laws, and the participation of courts in the enforcement of international labour policies. It postulates that the challenges to compliance in Pakistan are not due to failure of the country to formally accept ILO norms, but structural flaws in the harmonization of the law, decentralized institutional responsibility after constitutional devolution, poor labour inspection regimes and poor access to effective remedies of the workers. The paper also points to the role of informal labour, subcontracting and sectoral exclusions in limiting the application of labour standards provided by ILO conventions. By placing the labour law system in Pakistan in the international supervision systems of the ILO and comparative practice, the paper illustrates that the level of compliance is more procedural than substantive. It concludes that a significant alignment with ILO standards must be achieved through a coordinated legislative reform, increased strength of labour institutions, a greater role of judicial activism and political willingness to recognise labour rights as key human rights and not as a secondary social policy.

Keywords: International Labour Organization; ILO Conventions; Labour Rights;

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Pakistan; Freedom Of Association; Child Labour; Forced Labour; Labour Inspection; Constitutional Law; International Labour Standards.

Introduction

The issue of labour rights holds a leading role in the context of international human rights and social justice and is based on the fact that decent work is applied as central to human dignity and economic progress. The international labour organization, which was formed in 1919, has been instrumental in formulating and monitoring international labour standards in form of conventions and recommendations that focus on the main areas of interest such as freedom of association, eradication of forced and child labour, equality of opportunity and safe and healthy working conditions. As a pioneer member of ILO, Pakistan has long been a member of this normative framework, and officially the country has undertaken to respect the standards of international labour standards by ratifying many conventions of ILO. These undertakings impose both legal and ethical responsibilities on the state to harmonize domestic labour rules, institutions, and practices regarding the international standards.[1]

This wide activity with the ILO notwithstanding, the labour rights protection in Pakistan is still unequal and disputable. Although Pakistan is a signatory to all the eight core ILO conventions, there are still persistent reports of violation of labour rights at the sector like in agriculture, construction, domestic work, and informal economy. There are concerns on the effectiveness of domestic compliance evidenced by issues like the limitation of freedom of association, poor collective bargaining practices, prevalence of child labour, bonded labour, forced labour, gender-based discriminatory practices, and unsafe working environments. All these issues present an emerging pattern in the way Pakistan is pursuing international obligations; an apparent formal ratification and little substantive action.[2]

The constitutional framework offers a valuable background of the labour law obligations in Pakistan. The Constitution of Pakistan is aware of concepts connected with social justice, equality, and employee security and permits federal and provincial governments to enact laws concerning labour. Nonetheless, the devolution of labour regulation to the provinces under the constitution has greatly changed the institutional environment, leading to the existence of disjointed legal regimes and varying enforcement abilities. Devolution has the advantage of adopting labour regulation to the local environment, although it has also complicated the homogenisation of ILO standards and undermined centralised coordination and supervision.[3]

Another complexity is legislative consistency with ILO conventions. The labour laws in Pakistan are a combination of a patchwork of federal and provincial laws, most of

[1] Iqbal, A., Xuan, Z., & Xianbing, P. (2025). Labor Standards, Labor Policy, and Compliance Mechanisms: A Case Study in Pakistan. *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies*, *3*(2), 1057-1070.

[2] Iftikhar, A. (2023). Compliance of Pakistan with ILO standards on freedom of association. *Ежегодник трудового права*, (13), 319-328.

[3] Hussain, K. T., & Abad, Q. (2023). Examining the Legal Dimensions of ILO's Various Conventions and Their Adherence in Pakistan Concerning Labour Safety and Security. *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies*, *23*(2), 83-99.

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which were enacted before the country signed some of the most important ILO conventions or are based on very old-fashioned regulatory methods. Despite the reforms made to make domestic law more oriented towards the laws in the world the reforms are usually partial and ad hoc. Some groups of workers such as those in the informal sector cannot enjoy the benefits of the laws and this threatens the universality of the labour protections envisaged by ILO conventions. Besides, enforcement mechanisms, including labour inspection and dispute resolution mechanisms are plagued by chronic under-resourcing and lack of power.[4]

Socio-economic and political factors once again limit institution enforcement. The informal employment, subcontracting, and low unionization are likely contributors to high levels of informal employment, which restricts the scope of formal labour regulation. Employers can avoid compliance by use of informal deals and workers cannot seek legal remedies because of the fear of retaliation, ignorance, and complexity of the procedures. Here, the concept of international labour standards has the danger of being more inspirational than practical, especially when it comes to the neediest groups of workers in the labour market.[5]

This paper will analyse the adherence of Pakistan to ILO conventions in terms of legal and institutional, and the degree to which the international labour standards are reflected in the domestic law and practice. It aims at determining the effectiveness of the labour law framework in Pakistan in meeting international requirements and at outlining structural aspects that impede meeting these requirements. Through the study of the provisions in the constitution, the labour laws, the institutional modes of enforcement and judicial precedents, the article attempts to give a detailed account of how Pakistan is interacting with the ILO standards. The subsequent sections will examine the available academic sources on labour rights and IHL compliance, discuss the methodology that I will be using in this study, examine Pakistan compliance/implementation track record, and present the proposed reforms that will enhance the substantive compliance with the international labour requirements.

Literature Review

The academic sources relating to the issue of the compliance of Pakistan with the conventions of the International Labour Organization emphasize the continuing gap between the official signing of the international labour standards and their practical implementation in the domestic legal and institutional-political frameworks. The early history of labour law in Pakistan was inclined to concentrate on the historical evolution of labour legislations and the part the state played in designing and controlling the industrial relations, and more often on international labour standards that served as remote goals instead of legal commitments. Due to the growing scope of Pakistan ratifying ILO conventions (mostly core conventions), academic interest

[4] Rasool, A. R. A. (2022). Equal Opportunity in Employment: A Comparative Analysis of Pakistan's Legal Framework and International Standards. *Indus Journal of Law and Social Sciences*, *1*(1), 44-49.

[5] Khan, E. U. K. E. U. (2022). Analyzing the Consistency of Pakistan's Occupational Safety and Health Legislation with International Labor Standards: A Comprehensive Review. *Indus Journal of Law and Social Sciences*, *1*(1), 37-43.

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turned to evaluating the thoroughness of compliance on top of the formal ratification.[6]
There exists a large amount of literature that explores the involvement of Pakistan with the ILO conventions on the basis of constitutional and legislative correspondence. According DM javaid, whereas the Constitution of Pakistan has general commitments on social justice and equality, it lacks the clear connection between the international labour standards and enforceable domestic rights. It is this constitutional void, they believe, which enables labour rights to be viewed as policy goals and not as justiciable rights. Consequently, ILO conventions have only a selective legislative impact on domestic labour law and not a direct enforcement impact by the judiciary, and thus their scope of transformation is limited.[7]
The other significant stream of literature targets the freedom of association and collective bargaining, especially as it applies to the ILO Conventions No. 87 and No. 98. I. Ahmed comment that even after the formal ratification, Pakistan still restricts the establishment of trade unions and collective bargaining via legal and administrative means, particularly in the state sector and the export-oriented industry. According to scholars, these limitations are an expression of a state-centered conception of labour regulation that focuses on economic stability and the control of workers autonomy. These issues have been periodically raised by ILO supervisory bodies and academic criticism that compliance is more a matter of procedure has been strengthened.[8]
Child labour and forced labour has been fairly studied and discussed by scholars and policy-makers, notably those who have discussed them considering ILO Conventions No. 138, No. 182 and No. 29. Such researchers as A. Rashid and Siraj ud din report that the lack of poverty, informal work, and poorly developed enforcement systems perpetuate child and bonded labour despite extensive legal prohibitions. The literature has highlighted that although there are laws in Pakistan that are in line with the ILO requirements, there is a weak enforcement that has been coupled with socio-economic realities that affect conformity. The argument of the scholars is consistent that it is not enough to implement legal reforms without focusing on structural factors like inequality, social protection shortage, and education restricted access.[9]
The aspect of institutional analysis is very noticeable in the context of ILO compliance. The research conducted by the International Labour Organization, and other researchers also emphasize the vulnerabilities in the labour inspection system in Pakistan which are inadequate staffing, lack of training and constrained enforcement authority. With constitutional devolution, researchers like M. Ali and M. Azeem indicate that provincial labour departments differ greatly in capability and dedication

[6] Ali, S., & Khan, M. Z. (2024). A comprehensive analysis of unfair labor practices in Pakistan from the perspective of national and international law. *Pakistan Research Journal of Social Sciences*, *3*(4).
[7] Javaid, D. M. (2020). ILO conventions and gender dimensions of labour laws in Pakistan. *South Asian Studies*, *30*(1).
[8] Ahmad, I. (2009). Labour and Employment Law: A Profile on Pakistan. *ILO Memo available on https://wageindicator. org/documents/Labour_and_Employment_Law-A_Profile_on_Pakistan. pdf*.
[9] Rashid, A., Sirajuddin, M., & Shah, N. A. (2022). Human Resource (HR) Audit: Compliance of Labor Laws and HR Effectiveness in Pakistan.

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resulting in inequality in enforcement of labour standards across provinces. This divisiveness, the literature claims, becomes a big burden on meeting the international obligations of Pakistan, which demand standard minimum standards.[10]

The judicial involvement on international labour standards has been comparatively small which has been highlighted severally in the literature. Although there have been cases where courts have used the principles of labour rights in constitutional and statutory interpretation, the occurrence of express reference to ILO conventions is uncommon. Researchers observes that the international labour standards are interpreted in Pakistani courts as persuasive and not binding to support a dualist treaty enforcement strategy. According to scholars, such judicial restraint undermines enforcement and denies workers an effective means of protecting their rights.[11]

Comparative scholarship puts the experience of Pakistan in the context of larger trends in developing economies that have high informal sectors. Analysis of literature by Alfani, M. I., & Sunarno, S. shows that informalization of labour, subcontracting and pressures induced by globalisation may undermine compliance with the ILO conventions. Based on these observations, Pakistani scholars contend that the only way of compliance that is meaningful is through legal alignment as well as labour market reform, social dialogue and empowerment of the workers organizations.[12]

On the whole, the body of literature brings all arguments to the conclusion that the lack of formal commitment is not the main reason that makes Pakistan adhere to ILO conventions but structural, institutional, and socio-economic ones. Although the ratification has created significant normative force and incremental changes, there is little substantive fulfilment of labour rights. This literature forms the basis of analytical methodology of the second section that focuses on the level of compliance of Pakistan to the ILO conventions by organized evaluation of legal frameworks, institutional implementation, and judicial practice.

Methodology

The article takes a doctrinal, and institutional research approach to determine the level of compliance to the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions by Pakistan on a legal front. The methodology is based on the fact that the observation of the international labour standards cannot be achieved by means of only formal ratification documents but the process of the interaction of the principles of the constitution, national labour laws, the institutional elements of enforcement and the practice of the court. In this light, the paper integrates both the inclusion of legal analysis and institutional analysis to offer a complete evaluation of the normative consistency, as well as practical application.

The initial element of the methodology is a doctrinal examination of international

[10] Ali, M. U., & Azeem, M. (2024). Punjab and Sindh Labour Codes: A Critical Legal Analysis. *This Critical Legal Analysis was prepared on behalf of the Labour Alliance-Anti-Punjab Labour Code, the largest joint action committee representing trade unions, federations, and workers' organizations in Pakistan, and subsequently distributed across Pakistan and internationally*.

[11] Afzal, A. (2006). Pakist, the WTO, and Labor Reform. *BC Int'l & Comp. L. Rev.*, *29*, 107.

[12] Alfani, M. I., & Sunarno, S. (2024). Comparison of Legal Protection of Labor in Indonesia and Pakistan. *Jurnal Suara Hukum*, *6*(1), 187-205.

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labour law commitments that the country of Pakistan has embraced by ratifying the ILO conventions. This entails determining the scope and the content of obligation under the core ILO conventions that have been ratified by Pakistan, especially the trade unions rights like the freedom of association, collective bargaining, eradication of forced and child labour, and non-discrimination in employment provisions. International obligations are then discussed and compared to the appropriate provisions of the Constitution of Pakistan and the labour legislation to determine the level of legal harmonization. The review is about whether the domestic laws are based on minimum standards as set by the ILO conventions and whether restrictions or exclusions are invalidating compliance.

The second methodological aspect looks at the labour laws in the country both on the federal and provincial levels. With the constitutional devolution, labour regulation in Pakistan has grown more decentralized and this has led to the emergence of several provincial labour laws with different standards and enforcement systems. This paper analyses some of the chosen labour laws with the aim of determining those trends of divergence, gaps, and inconsistencies as applied to ILO obligations. Instead of listing all labour laws, the analysis appraises symbolic legislations influencing vital rights departments like trade union regulation, health protection, child labour forbidding and labour checking. Through this method, structural compliance problems that come as a result of legislative fragmentation can be assessed.

The third aspect of the methodology is concerned with institutional enforcement and administrative practice. This is a review of the role and capacity of the labour departments, the regimes of inspection, the dispute resolution organs, and the regulatory authorities that handle the enforcement of the labour laws. Institutional design, resource allocation, inspection powers and sanctioning mechanisms are considered in the study to find out whether the enforcement structures can actually achieve protections provided by the ILO. Specific focus is made on the influence of informal employment, subcontracting and sectoral exclusions on the effectiveness of enforcement as these suggest that the scope of the labour regulation in Pakistan is largely determined by these elements.

Consistent with the approach taken in the methodological framework used throughout this set of articles, analytical tools of the form are implemented in an attempt to maximize coherence and precision. Later analysis The ratified ILO conventions in Pakistan could be mapped to the domestic legal provisions and enforcement mechanisms with the help of comparative tables later in the analysis. The compliance chain, ratification and legislation to inspection, adjudication, and remedy can also be mapped in conceptual diagrams, and points where implementation usually fails identified. These instruments help to conduct the systematic assessment without converting the sophisticated legal dynamics to the strictly quantitative ones.

It is also through the methodology that ILO supervisory mechanisms are also analyzed such as observations and comments given by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. These materials are seen as authoritative interpretive materials that give an insight into common compliance issues and international expectations. The analysis of the participation of Pakistan in these mechanisms will enable one to estimate whether the compliance efforts are substantive or procedural.

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Lastly, the evaluatory paradigm used in this paper sets the meaning of compliance in substantive terms. Good compliance is evaluated by looking to whether ILO conventions have any substantial impact over domestic law, institutional practice and access to remedies to workers as opposed to formal ratification or reporting only. This is because this approach acknowledges that international labour standards are supposed to enhance the working conditions and safeguard the rights of the workers in practice. The methodological principles outlined herein underlie the following section of the research in which the findings are given on the ratification track record, legal harmony, and implementation issues of Pakistan adhering to the ILO conventions.

Research Findings

The outcomes of the research show that the adherence of Pakistan to the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions is rather formal and procedural, and there are big gaps between the international and national measures of fulfilling the labour rights. Among other important findings, it is established that even though Pakistan has ratified all the eight core ILO conventions, the ratification has failed to provide a consistent and effective application in legal, institutional and sectoral contexts. The highest level of compliance is at the area of international reporting and legislative symbolism, and the lowest level of compliance is at the area of enforcement and workplace practice, especially among the vulnerable and informal workers.[13]

One of the key findings is related to legislative correspondence to the ILO conventions. The labour laws in Pakistan partially have echoed the sentiments embedded in the core ILO instruments especially in aspects like banning of child labour, forced labour as well as discrimination at the workplace. But these standards are often introduced in domestic legislation in a selective and disjointed way. Some types of workers including agricultural workers, domestic workers, home-based workers and contract labour are either omitted or inadequately covered by statutory protection which challenges the universality of the ILO conventions. In addition, provincial labour laws are not uniform with the extent and stringency of provincial labour laws being inconsistent across the provinces giving different levels of compliance.[14]

An institutional enforcement is found as one of the key weaknesses with regard to compliance. In Pakistan, the labour inspection regimes are poorly resourced, technologically-weak and lack adequate enforcement authority. Lack of sufficient power by the inspectors to sanction or prosecute acts of misconduct, and thus make inspections a figurative act or ritual. Informal employment and the subcontracting further undermine the level of enforcement since employers can avoid regulatory controls by doing informal arrangements. The implication of these institutional failures is that in some instances where laws may be written on paper, their

[13] Yu, S., & Zia-ud-Din, M. (2018). International Trade Agreements and Their Relation to Core Labor Standards. *J. Pol. & L.*, *11*, 33.
[14] Ghayur, S. (2009). Evolution of the industrial relations system in Pakistan.

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contravention may often be unchecked in reality.[15]

Table 1: Pakistan's Compliance with Core ILO Conventions

ILO Convention	Status	Key Compliance Issues
C87 (Freedom of Association)	Ratified	Restrictions on unionization, public sector limits
C98 (Collective Bargaining)	Ratified	Weak bargaining mechanisms, employer interference
C29 (Forced Labour)	Ratified	Persistence of bonded labour, weak enforcement
C138 & C182 (Child Labour)	Ratified	Informal sector prevalence, enforcement gaps
C100 & C111 (Non-Discrimination)	Ratified	Gender wage gaps, limited remedies

The other significant conclusion is associated with judicial involvement in ILO standards. In Pakistan, the ILO conventions are seldom used expressly in the resolution of labour disputes and the international labour standards are not binding but just persuasive to the courts. Although the courts have infrequently applied constitutional principles to support the rights of employees, direct allusions to the ILO norms are still sporadic and uneven. This reticence in judicial rulings undermines the local legality of ILO conventions and curtails their ability to influence jurisprudence of labour.[16]

The results also reflect the association of socio-economic structures with compliance. The degree of informality, poverty and unemployment limits the capacity of workers to assert their rights and remedies. The trade union density is low and especially in the private sector which undermines collective implementation of labour standards. Children and women are mostly the victims of non-compliance particularly in informal and home based work. These structural reasons combine with the legal and institutional inefficiencies to continue the process of labour rights violations, even when the law is formally observed through ILO conventions.[17]

Another aspect of compliance will be seen upon involvement in ILO supervisory mechanisms. Pakistan is a member of the ILO where it frequently reports and attends review processes, however, minimal follow-up of observations and recommendation is done. Compliance activities are usually geared towards domestic counteractions to international scrutiny and not on long-term domestic reform. This reactive strategy reinforces compliance through procedures and leaves only entrench issues of

[15] Ali, M. K. (2022). The EU GSP Plus Status for Pakistan and Child Labour: Compliance and Compulsions. *Journal of European Studies (JES)*, *38*(1), 1-13.
[16] NIAZI, D. S. M. AN ANALYSIS OF CONTRACTS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SALE OF GOODS IN ENSURING PROTECTION AGAINST CHILD LABOR IN PAKISTAN.
[17] Syed, J. (2008). An Islamic perspective of industrial relations: the case of Pakistan.

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substantive enforcement.[18]

In general, research results indicate that Pakistan adheres to ILO conventions limited by disjointed laws, poor enforcement agencies, less involvement of judicial systems and poor socio-economic situations. Although international labour standards have affected the policy discourse and legislative change, their effective application to working conditions is lopsided and limited. These results form the basis of the formulation of discussion that follows and focuses on the interaction of design of laws, institutional capacity, and political economy in influencing the observance of ILO conventions of labour rights in Pakistan.

Discussion

As it is evidenced in this paper, the adherence of Pakistan to International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions is conditioned by the fact that there is a long-standing conflict between the global normative obligations and national political, legislative, and economic realities in the country. Although signing of core ILO conventions is an indication that international labour standards are accepted formally in a country, it has been noted in the discussion that compliance in Pakistan is not substantive but mainly procedural. This trend indicates a larger form of governance whereby the labour rights are perceived as policy goals which can be subject to economic and political trade-offs as opposed to enforceable human rights which are based on international obligations.[19]

One of the key questions which has come about as a result of the debate is the disjointed nature of the labour law in the wake of constitutional devolution. As much as devolution was meant to make the regulatory process more responsive and accountable at the local level, devolution has also led to the disproportionate application of the ILO standards in various provinces. The labour regimes in provinces are diverse in coverage, enforcement capacity, and commitment to politics without effective federal coordination or minimum national standards. This disintegration weakens the capacity of Pakistan to secure consistent adherence to the ILO conventions that demand to exercise minimum standards all over the territory of a ratifying nation.[20]

Structural weakness of labour inspection and enforcement systems is also brought up in the discussion. The use of ILO conventions is liable to effective monitoring, enforcement and sanctioning mechanisms that can enforce violations. In Pakistan, labour inspection tends to be under-resource, under-staffed and lack the authority to do what they would want to with the limited resources at their disposal. Inspections may be a form of advisory exercise since the inspectors have no authority to penalize or enforce compliance. Subcontracting and informal employment also undermine enforcement, giving the employer a chance to avoid regulation. Any such

[18] ShuHong, Y., & Zia-ud-Din, M. (2017). Analyzing the Labour Issues in Pakistan: A Historical Background of Labour Laws and Labour Unions. *Labour & Law Issues*, *3*(2), C-21.

[19] Chowdhury, M. S. (2017). compliance With core international Labor standards in National Jurisdiction: evidence from bangladesh. *Labor Law Journal*, *68*(1), 78.

[20] Qayoom, A., & Hadikusumo, B. H. (2019). A narrative review of occupational safety and health legislation in Pakistan. *Construction Health and Safety in Developing Countries*, 43-58.

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shortcomings suggest that there are not legal but rather institutional failures in compliance.

There is still a lack of judicial involvement in international labour standards which strengthens the disjunction between ratification and enforcements. Pakistan has generally avoided the use of the ILO conventions as directly binding by courts, which is a dualist approach to international law. Although constitutional jurisprudence has been used to promote labour rights, it has not been common to rely expressly on ILO norms. The judicial restraint undermines the local legal strength of international labour commitments as well as denying the workers a valuable means of rights protection. The increased role of the judiciary would assist in filling the gap that exists between international norms and their domestic counterparts, especially in cases where the law is vague or incomplete.[21]

The compliance outcomes are further pre-determined by economic and socio-political factors. High informality, low unionization, and low levels of social protection are some of the features that characterize the labour market in Pakistan, and which compromise workers to assert their rights and seek redresses. Employers can oppose the compliance considering the costs, and employees can have no bargaining power, or be afraid of being replaced. In this regard, the international labour standards are in threat of being marginalized to the short term economic demands especially in export based sectors where issues of competitiveness take over policy discussion.[22]

The international viewpoint of this discourse highlights the weaknesses of procedural adherence based on reporting and interaction with the ILO supervisory organs. Although international monitoring has made matters regarding labour rights more transparent and has produced recommendations that are reform oriented, its effectiveness is limited by the lack of strong domestic follow-ups. International supervision will never break the structural obstacles that are deeply embedded without institutionalized processes of implementing and monitoring of ILO recommendations.[23]

Overall, the discussion has concluded that the compliance problems faced in Pakistan are structural and interrelated that are associated with legislative fragmentation, poor enforcement institutions, lack of judicial involvement, and poor socio-economic factors. To mitigate these issues, there is a need to change the trend of formalistic compliance into the rights approach that considers the labour standards as significant elements of constitutional government and human decency. This preconditions the formulation of recommendations which are to be delivered to enhance substantive adherence to ILO conventions in Pakistan.

Recommendations

To enhance adherence to ILO conventions in Pakistan, it is important to have a

[21] Phattanasin, K., Yaseen, M., & Thummanitchayuth, D. (2025). Bridging the Gap: International Standards and Domestic Realities in Pakistan's Child Protection Laws. *Journal of Posthumanism*, *5*(6), 241-256.

[22] Azeem, M., & Akbar, H. (2022). Labor Conditions and Resistance under Chinese Investment in Pakistan. *Comp. Lab. L. & Pol'y J.*, *43*, 391.

[23] Ali, F., & Knox, A. (2008). Pakistan's commitment to equal employment opportunity for women: a toothless tiger?. *International Journal of Employment Studies*, *16*(1), 39-58.

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holistic approach where legal harmonization, institutional capacity, and socio-economic context are combined in an effort to ensure that the country adheres to all ILO conventions. Among the key pieces of advice is the setting of minimum national labour standards in accordance with the core ILO conventions. Federal coordination systems should also be put in place, although provincial autonomy is respected, with the necessary labour rights being equal to all provinces. International standards would improve international fragmentation of the regulations and strengthen the international obligations of Pakistan.

The legislative change should be focused on bridging coverage gaps and reinforcing enforcement approaches. The labour laws must be amended to offer protection to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of workers such as domestic workers, agriculture labourers, and the workers in informal sectors. The introduction of legislation must have suitable enforcement provisions, penalties, and available solutions. Bringing domestic law closer to ILO would create a more legal and legal compliance.

Labour inspection systems need to be strengthened institutionally. Monitoring and deterrence would be enhanced through investment in training, staffing and enforcement authority of the inspectors. The modern data collection and reporting tools should be integrated into inspection regimes that should incorporate the methods of risk-based approaches to improve the effectiveness. Enforcement would be further enhanced by strengthening the liaison between the labour departments, the prosecution services and the courts.

The international labour standards should be embraced and institutionalised by the judiciary. ILO conventions should always serve as interpretative aids in the settlement of labour disputes in courts especially over fundamental rights matters. Training of judges on the international labour law and availability of ILO jurisprudence would facilitate the making of informed decisions and increased protection of rights.

Compliance also requires social dialogue, as well as worker empowerment. Empowerment of trade unions, encouraging collective bargaining and ensuring freedom of association would help workers have greater ability to claim their rights and oversee adherence. The access to remedies, especially vulnerable workers, could be further facilitated by the efforts of awareness campaigns in the population and legal assistance programs.

Lastly, ILO supervisory recommendations should be institutionalised in Pakistan. Creating an oversight organ that monitors the progression, incorporates stakeholders and reports would make the international supervision not a mere requirement procedure but a form of catalyst to real reform.

Conclusion

This article has discussed the level of compliance by Pakistan with the International Labour Organization conventions with regard to legal and institutional aspects and has found out that there has always been a disparity between the formal ratification and the actual achievement of the labour rights. Although Pakistan has ratified all the core ILO conventions, its adherence is limited to disjointed laws, ineffective enforcement bodies, poor judicial activism, and structural socio-economic factors. All these aspects undermine the practicability of international labour standards on

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working conditions and the rights of the workers.

The key finding of this discussion is that the involvement of Pakistan with ILO conventions has focused more on the compliance rather than enforcement. Although international reporting and dialogue have played a role in normative alignment and incremental reform, they have not come up with any systemic change in labour governance. To achieve compliance, it is important to go beyond symbolic pledges to coordinated legal, institutional and policy reforms which entrench labour rights into national systems of governance.

The article also stresses that adherence to ILO conventions is not a subject to international duty and obligation, but a constitutional and a developmental necessity. The social justice, economic sustainability and human dignity are based on labour rights. Compliance with international labour standards may be strengthened in order to bolster the protection of the workplace, decrease inequality, and promote inclusive economic development.

Finally, effective compliance with ILO conventions is meaningless in Pakistan unless it is a long-term political commitment, legal harmonization, institutional investment, and empowering workers and their organizations. By enforcing the international labour standards as binding human rights to be realised instead of pursuing them as optional policy objectives, Pakistan can proceed to a system of labour governance which not only achieves its international commitments, but also meets its constitutional obligation to social justice.

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