



## LEGAL AND ILLEGAL INFORMAL WORKERS IN PAKISTAN'S SINDH PROVINCE

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### Abstract:

*This study looks at the circumstances, difficulties, and rights of undocumented workers in Pakistan's Sindh Province. It distinguishes them from more seasoned informal workers who frequently provide services and interact with customers. The study found a number of illicit activities that take place in the area, including beggars, illegal bird sellers, animal fights, fake exorcists and palmists, gamblers, thieves, and smugglers. The study combines secondary data gained through literature reviews, reports, and academic publications with primary data collected through direct observation. Legal undocumented workers in Sindh Province face a variety of challenges, such as low income, unstable employment, and limited access to social protections. Legally employed informal laborers may face significant difficulties and maltreatment even if they operate within the confines of the law. Contrarily, unauthorized and undocumented employees abuse society and engage in illicit activity. The analysis makes it clear that successful policies and initiatives are needed to address the challenges faced by legal informal workers. The informal economy should be formalized, social protection should be provided, and working conditions should be improved as the main goals of these initiatives. The Pakistani government must take the necessary action to protect the rights of undocumented employees and enhance their social and economic prosperity.*



**Key Words:** Legal and Illegal informal workers, Working conditions, Job security, Social/Rights protections, Sindh Province, Pakistan.

## **Introduction**

The term "informal sector" originated in the 1970s was used to characterize the distinctive features of the production and employment systems of developing countries. However, there is still continuous debate over what it means. Some see the unorganized sector as a safe haven for people who can't find work elsewhere. It is distinguished by poor infrastructure, a lack of resources and expertise, low productivity, out-of-date technology, low pricing, poor working conditions, and meager wages. On the other hand, it is also recognized as a source of output, invention, and creative thinking. This discussion highlights the complex character of the unorganized sector and its function in economies, which includes both difficulties and possible benefits (Younus Jafri, 1997). Economic activities and employment that take place outside the scope of official labor rules and regulations are referred to as operating in the informal sector. Due to the employment of a sizeable section of the population and its contribution to overall economic activity, the informal sector in Pakistan contributes significantly to the country's economy. Although it operates without official legal safeguards (Mumtaz et al., 2010), Pakistan's informal sector is a vital part of the country's economy. It is anticipated to provide \$661 billion, or 35.6% of the GDP, or close to half of the GDP. The industry employs a sizable share of the workers in both urban (68%) and rural (75%) areas, according to the International Labor Organization. However, problems with Pakistan's informal sector include unregistered employees, unstable employment, and a lack of access to social protection (Khuong et al., 2021).

In Pakistan, informal laborers face challenges such as low pay, lengthy workdays, and unfavorable working conditions. Despite these difficulties, the informal economy continues to be a substantial source of employment, especially in Sindh province where the informal sector employs a sizeable fraction of the labor force (Burki & Ghayur, 1989). Low salaries, a lack of social safety, and a lack of work stability are all characteristics of informal employment in Sindh. Due to their frequent lack of legal status, these employees are frequently prey to abuse and exploitation (Khan & Hussain, 2021). The working circumstances, difficulties, and labor rights of informal workers have sadly received little attention from policymakers and scholars (Charmes, 2020; Choudhary, 2016). A research attempts to thoroughly comprehend both legal and illegal informal laborers in Sindh, including their working circumstances and problems, in order to close this knowledge gap. It will assess how well current legal frameworks and policies protect the rights of undocumented employees, pinpoint factors that lead to informal employment, and offer suggestions for enhancing working conditions, labor rights, and legal recognition. In order to acquire a thorough knowledge of the experiences of informal workers and the complicated aspects influencing their participation in the informal sector, the study uses a qualitative technique that blends secondary and primary data sources.

The research that is currently available on legal and illegal informal laborers in Sindh draws attention to problems including subpar working conditions, low pay, long hours, and scant



social protection. Their vulnerability to abuse and mistreatment by employers is further exacerbated by the absence of employment security and legal recognition. Informal laborers are further marginalized by social protection, healthcare, and educational systems that frequently exclude them. The research emphasizes the necessity for interventions that tackle the economic, social, and cultural drivers of informal work, such as a lack of formal job possibilities, poverty, and gender discrimination. Collaboration between the government, civic society, and private sector players may be necessary to address these issues, which may call for structural changes in the economy and society.

Overall, the literature highlights the significance of laws and programs that enhance Sindh's informal workers' working conditions, labor rights, and legal standing. It is essential to have a holistic strategy that takes into account the economic, social, and cultural variables that contribute to informal employment. The study's conclusions and suggestions can be used to establish policies and actions that will improve the lives of informal workers.

## **1. Literature Review**

According to the literature, human resources are vital to a nation's economic growth and social welfare. Pakistan has 224.78 million people, making it the fifth-most populated nation, with a large proportion of them living in rural regions. This implies that a sizeable workforce participates in unofficial economic activity. The 282 persons per km<sup>2</sup> population density, especially in metropolitan regions, shows the concentration of people and the possibility of informal employment (Khan et al., 2021). While demographic information by itself does not specifically address the circumstances and legal standing of informal workers, it does serve to set the scene for an understanding of their presence and distribution in Pakistan (International Labour Organisation, 2018). There are difficulties in defining and quantifying informal work, which is covered in the literature. Legal recognition, employment stability, and social protection are absent from informal work (Young, 2020). Poor working conditions, restricted access to social protection, and exploitation are challenges faced by legal informal workers. They labour in a variety of jobs, such as domestic work, street vending, and other legitimate jobs (Husmanns, 2004). However, they are not legally recognized, which limits their access to safeguards and rights at work. It is significant to highlight that unlawful practices including child labor, forced labor, and trafficking are all included in the category of "informal work." For marginalized populations, informal labor is a means of surviving, but it also reinforces social inequalities and provides few possibilities for skill development (Lewis et al., 2019). The literature emphasizes the requirement for laws and other measures to enhance working conditions, workers' rights, and legal acknowledgment of undocumented employees. These actions include granting legal recognition, putting social protection programs into place, boosting skill advancement, and supporting economic formalization.

### **1.1 Illegal Informal Workers**

Without the proper permits or licenses, unlicensed, or informal workers provide services in public spaces. The Sindh government has responded to this issue by conducting raids to seize illegal goods and fining unregistered informal laborers. The government does not encourage



illegal activities like gambling, money laundering, or drug usage. These behaviors create a criminal atmosphere and draw in undesirables (Williams & Lansky, 2013).

### **I. Beggars**

In Sindh, Pakistan, a significant societal problem is the existence of unlicensed, unpermitted informal laborers, such as beggars, who engage in illicit operations in public places (Massey et al., 2010). The frequency of unlawful street begging is an issue that is made worse by elements like poverty, unemployment, and inflation (Massey et al., 2010). Interventions should concentrate on addressing the root causes if they are to successfully address this problem. By giving disadvantaged people other possibilities, policies like job development, social safety nets, and education can help minimize unlawful street begging (Azam, 2011). Additionally, public awareness programmers, targeted help for disadvantaged groups, and tighter law enforcement against organized begging rackets can deter the exploitation and disruption that unlawful street beggars create (Azam, 2011). The Sindh Vagrancy Act of 1958, in particular, intends to regulate begging and stop the exploitation of weak people in Pakistan (Akhtar & Nisar, 2018). The effectiveness of these legislation has been hampered by subpar execution and corruption, nevertheless (Akhtar & Nisar, 2018). In order to combat this, the government should concentrate on strengthening regulations, maintaining strict law enforcement, and provide social support in order to reduce poverty and deter people from turning to begging (Ali, 2022). For civilization to advance and flourish fully, the scourge of begging must be ended (Azam, 2011).

### **II. Illegal Bird Trade**

The illegal bird trade is a significant global issue, ranking as the third largest illegal activity after drug and arms trafficking (Barber-Meyer & Wilson-Wilde, 2010). This trade generates substantial profits annually and poses a major threat to biodiversity and the survival of certain species (Barber-Meyer & Wilson-Wilde, 2010). In Pakistan, the illegal wildlife trade persists due to poor management, weak law enforcement, and established networks of poachers and dealers (Jordaan, 2016). This trade involves capturing wild birds from their natural habitats and selling them in urban areas, leading to disease transmission and endangering the survival of endangered species (Ilyas, 2019). To combat the illegal bird trade, the government has implemented stricter laws and enforcement efforts, but the high demand for exotic birds continues to drive the trade (Hussain & Khan, 2021). It is crucial for individuals to avoid supporting the illegal bird trade and instead obtain birds from legal and ethical sources. Initiatives such as the Wildlife Trade Control Act and partnerships between organizations aim to combat the illicit wildlife trade and raise awareness (Hussain & Khan, 2021). Reporting suspected cases of illegal bird trade to local authorities, the police, or the Animal Welfare Department is essential in curbing this practice (Ilyas & Qazilbash, 2021).

### **III. Animal/ Birds Fighter**

Animal fighting, including bird fighting, is illegal in many countries, including Pakistan. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1890 is the primary law in Pakistan that addresses animal welfare issues and protects animals from harm and suffering (Mughal & Ahmad, 2020). The Quran mentions various aspects related to animals and birds, but there is no direct mention



of animal or bird fighting in the Quran. However, the Quran emphasizes the importance of treating animals with kindness and compassion. In Surah Al-An'am, verse 38, it is mentioned, "There is not an animal on earth, nor a bird that flies on its wings, but they are communities like you. We have not neglected anything in the Book, and then unto their Lord shall they be gathered." This verse highlights the fact that animals and birds are also living beings and deserve to be treated with respect. In another verse, Surah Al-Ma'ida, verse 4, Allah says, "They ask you, [O Muhammad], what has been made lawful for them. Say, "Lawful for you are [all] good foods and [game caught by] what you have trained of hunting animals which you train as Allah has taught you. So eat of what they catch for you, and mention the name of Allah upon it, and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is swift in account." This verse implies that hunting animals is allowed in Islam but with certain conditions, such as the animal must be hunted in a humane way and with proper training. It is also important to mention the name of Allah before eating the animal. In general, the Quran encourages kindness and compassion towards all living beings, including animals and birds, and discourages any form of cruelty or violence towards them. Hazrat Ibn Abbas (Radi Allahu anhu ) narrated that: "Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) has prohibited us from inciting animals to fight each other" (Hadith #1762). Hazrat Mujahid (Radiyallahu Anhu) narrated that, "Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) disallowed putting animals against one another in a fight" (Hadith #1763). Islam, the dominant religion in Pakistan, encourages kindness and compassion towards all living beings, including animals, and prohibits any form of cruelty or violence towards them (Admin, 2019).

According to Ilyas and Qazilbash (2021), The act prohibits negligence, physical abuse, and acts that cause harm or injury to animals. Violators can face fines and imprisonment. If illegal animal fighting is suspected in the Sindh province of Pakistan, it should be reported to local authorities, the police, or the Animal Welfare Department. Animal welfare organizations, such as the Pakistan Animal Welfare Society, can provide assistance in reporting and investigating such activities. It is important to recognize that animal fighting is not only illegal but also morally wrong. It inflicts immense suffering and harm on the animals involved and should not be supported or condoned as a form of entertainment. Dogfighting is an illegal activity in Pakistan, as it is considered a form of animal cruelty (Nurse, 2021). Nevertheless, while being illegal, dogfights nevertheless take place because of the significant financial stakes and public fascination. The gatherings that host dogfights are illegal and draw unsavory people. Dogfight participants and spectators may partake in illicit activities like the selling and use of drugs, firearms, and other weapons. A six-month jail sentence as well as fines are possible consequences for organizing dogfights (Shahid, 2021). According to Hafeez (2014), dog fighting has been declared illegal in Pakistan as a sport. The promoters of this illegal sport face a fine and a maximum six-month jail sentence. However, it appears that law enforcement officials have disregarded this established and repulsive kind of entertainment. As a result, the breeders who decide on the combat dates and venue hold frequent meetings to conduct these informal competitions. Law enforcement officers frequently disregard this sort of entertainment as well, allowing informal competitions to be organized through breeders' gatherings. Dogfighters have a warped idea of what constitutes fun and find delight in the vicious battles between growling canines (Mota-Rojas et al., 2022).



#### **IV. Fake Palmists and Exorcists**

Palmistry, also known as palm reading, is a practice that involves studying the palm to make predictions about the future. It is called by various names such as chiromancy, chirolgy, or chiromony and has cultural variations across different regions. People who practice palmistry are often referred to as palmists, hand readers, hand analysts, or chirologists (Michael, 1986). However, it is important to be aware that there are individuals who engage in fraudulent activities within this field for financial gain. In Islam, divination and fortune-telling, including palmistry, are considered prohibited and are seen as associating partners with God, known as shirk. Muslims are advised to seek guidance solely from Allah and acquire knowledge and wisdom through prayer, meditation, and the study of the Quran. Islam strongly condemns all forms of divination and considers palmistry haram (forbidden). The Quran explicitly discourages seeking knowledge of fate through divination methods (Sahih al-Bukhari).

While palmistry is a popular divination method that interprets hand lines and features to reveal information about a person's character and future (Dwivedi, 1970), it is illegal in the Sindh province of Pakistan. The Sindh Prohibition of Fortune-telling and Like Practices Bill, passed in 2016, bans various forms of divination, including palmistry, astrology, and numerology. This law was enacted due to complaints from citizens who had been deceived by fraudulent fortune-tellers. Those found practicing palmistry or other forms of divination can face fines and imprisonment of up to three years, with the possibility of confiscation of relevant materials and instruments (Khan, 2004). Despite the ban, some individuals continue to practice palmistry clandestinely, relying on referrals to find clients. However, engaging in this practice puts them at risk of legal consequences. It is worth noting that palmistry and other forms of divination remain legal in other regions of Pakistan and many countries worldwide. The prohibition in Sindh reflects the concerns specific to that province and should not be considered representative of the entire country's stance. It is important to recognize that palmistry and fortune-telling are not recognized as legitimate scientific practices in many parts of the world, including Pakistan. The Pakistani government has taken measures to regulate and monitor palmistry to protect individuals from exploitation and deception. The Pakistan Penal Code also prohibits fraud and deception in all forms, including through palmistry. If you suspect any illegal or fraudulent activities related to palmistry or other services, it is advisable to report them to local authorities, who have the authority to investigate and take appropriate actions to prevent such illicit practices.

#### **V. Gambler**

In Sindh Province, Pakistan, gambling is deemed a criminal offense and is prohibited by the Sindh Prevention of Gambling Act of 1977. This law encompasses various forms of gambling, including sports betting, card games, and other games of chance, whether conducted in physical locations or online platforms within the province. Those found to be in violation of this law may face fines, imprisonment, or both. It's important to note that gambling is generally illegal throughout most of Pakistan, and individuals are advised to refrain from engaging in such activities to avoid legal consequences. Gambling involves participating in games where individuals can win or lose money or possessions, and it entails taking risks that may result in financial or significant losses in pursuit of a desired outcome.



## **The Prevention of Gambling Act, 1977**

Gambling is illegal for citizens in Pakistan under the Prevention of Gambling Act of 1977, which is based on the British-era Public Gambling Act of 1867. The provincial versions of this act were implemented in 1978 (Haroon, 2016). This legislation replaced earlier laws such as the Baluchistan Prevention of Gambling Ordinance of 1961, the West Pakistan Prevention of Gambling Ordinance of 1961, the Punjab Prevention of Gambling Ordinance of 1961, and the Sindh Prevention of Gambling Ordinance of 1961 (The Prevention of Gambling Act, 1977). According to this act, individuals involved in gambling activities may face penalties depending on the circumstances. Those who knowingly operate gambling facilities can be fined up to 1,000 rupees, imprisoned for a maximum of one year, or both. Individuals found gambling at "common gaming houses" are subject to fines up to 5,000 rupees, a maximum imprisonment of one year, or both. The definition of a common gaming house includes any facility where evidence of gaming with playing cards, dice, counters, money, or instruments is found (Haroon, 2016). People gambling in public places can be fined up to 500 rupees, imprisoned for a maximum of one year, or both. Similarly, individuals found gambling in private facilities may face a fine of up to 1,000 rupees, a maximum imprisonment of two years, or both. Repeat offenders may be fined up to 2,000 rupees, imprisoned for up to three years, or both. The legislation grants law enforcement agencies the authority to enter and search premises reported or suspected of operating as gaming facilities.

### **1.2 Legal Informal Workers**

The issue of legal informal workers, such as street vendors, domestic workers, and construction workers, has been extensively discussed in academic and policy circles, including in Pakistan. Studies indicate that the informal sector constitutes approximately 73% of total employment in Pakistan, presenting various challenges such as low wages, job insecurity, poor working conditions, and limited access to social protection (Dharejo et al., 2022). Research has specifically highlighted the mistreatment and underpayment experienced by domestic workers and the difficulties faced by street vendors, including harassment and restricted market access (Bodla & AFZA, 1997). To tackle these challenges, research suggests several policy strategies. These include formalizing the informal sector and providing social protection for informal workers to enhance their working conditions and productivity. Moreover, implementing inclusive policies tailored to the specific needs of different categories of informal workers can be beneficial. For instance, the Punjab Domestic Workers Act enacted in 2019 offers legal protection and benefits to domestic workers in the Punjab province. Overall, the literature underscores the significant hurdles encountered by legal informal workers and emphasizes the significance of policy solutions that address their needs and safeguard their rights as workers (Chen & Shalini, 2019).

#### **I. Street Hawkers/ Street Vendors**

Hawkers and street vendors are vital participants in the informal economy of Sindh province, Pakistan. They play a crucial role in providing affordable goods and services to the public. Operating within the informal sector, they contribute to the livelihoods of many individuals and families by selling a wide range of products, including fruits, vegetables, snacks, and



clothing (Dharejo et al., 2023). However, they face various challenges due to the lack of legal recognition, licensing issues, space allocation problems, and limited access to amenities (Racaud et al., 2018). Street vendors typically operate in public spaces and encounter difficulties such as space constraints, fluctuating customer demand, and exposure to weather conditions (Linares, 2017). Regulations concerning street vendors vary across different regions in Sindh, with some areas having designated vending zones while others imposing stricter rules or periodic eviction drives. Street vendors often face harassment, competition, limited access to financial services, and a lack of social security benefits (Bhowmik, 2005). Despite these challenges, they make significant contributions to the local economy, providing affordable goods to diverse customers and adding vibrancy to urban spaces. The government and civil society organizations are making efforts to address their issues, improve working conditions, provide social protection, and support their economic activities (Al-Jundi et al., 2022).

## **II. Domestic Workers**

Domestic work constitutes a significant portion of the informal sector in Sindh province, Pakistan, representing approximately 73% of the total economy (according to official sources). As a result, existing labor laws do not fully apply to this sector. While labor laws mention domestic workers only twice, there are some provisions related to their welfare. The Provincial Employees Social Security Ordinance 1965 (applicable in Balochistan, ICT, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab) mandates employers to provide healthcare, including maternity care, to full-time domestic workers (Section 55-A). Similarly, the Sindh Employees' Social Security Act 2016 (section 59) includes a similar provision. The Minimum Wages Ordinance of 1961 (applicable in Balochistan, ICT, and Punjab) incorporates domestic workers into the definition of workers, although the government has not specified the minimum wages for this category under this law. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minimum Wages Act 2013 and Sindh Minimum Wages Act 2015 do not include such provisions. In 2013, the first bill on Domestic Workers (Employment Rights) Act was drafted and presented in the Senate, which aimed to bring domestic workers under the jurisdiction of labor laws. Subsequently, it was resubmitted in 2015 and passed by the Senate in 2017. Domestic workers in Sindh province fulfill crucial roles in the informal economy, providing essential household services such as cleaning, cooking, and childcare (Shahid, 2022). However, they encounter various challenges, including low wages, job insecurity, and limited access to social protection (Shahid, 2019). Efforts have been made to enhance their working conditions through the Sindh Domestic Workers Act of 2018, which grants legal recognition, protection, fair wages, and benefits. However, the effective implementation of the law remains a challenge, and many domestic workers are unaware of their rights. Raising awareness and implementing capacity-building programs for both domestic workers and employers are essential (Shaikh & Bhutto, 2014). Collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, and stakeholders is crucial to promoting the rights and dignity of domestic workers. Enforcing labor laws, ensuring access to justice, and providing effective remedies in cases of violation are also imperative (Menegatti, 2016)

## **III. Home-Based Workers**



Home-based work has shown varying trends in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. In Bangladesh, from 2005 to 2009, the overall size of the home-based workforce increased by 41%, with a significant rise in the number of men engaged in home-based work, particularly in rural areas. However, the number of women involved in home-based work decreased, especially in urban areas (Mahmud, 2014). In India, over a 12-year period, the number of both male and female home-based workers grew from 23.3 million in 1999/2000 to 37.4 million in 2011/12 (Raveendran et al., 2014). In contrast, Pakistan witnessed a decline in the number and percentage of home-based workers in non-agricultural sectors between 2005/6 and 2008/9, with the figures dropping from 1.7 million to 1.4 million and from 6.6% to 5.3%, respectively (Akhtar and Vanek, 2013).

In Sindh province, Pakistan, home-based workers engage in various crafts and produce goods for both local and international markets from their homes or small workshops. These workers, like other informal workers, face challenges such as low wages, job insecurity, and limited social protection. They often work in poor conditions and lack access to market information (Zhou, 2017). To address these issues, the Sindh Home-based Workers Act of 2018 was introduced, aiming to provide legal recognition and protection for home-based workers, ensuring fair wages, decent working conditions, and social security. The law includes provisions for employer registration, written contracts, minimum wages, and worker benefits (Shaikh, 2016). However, effective implementation remains a challenge, and many workers are unaware of their rights. It is crucial to conduct awareness campaigns and capacity-building programs for both workers and employers. Additionally, improving infrastructure and facilities, including access to finance and technology, is essential. Collaboration among the government, civil society, and stakeholders is necessary to uphold the rights and dignity of home-based workers in Sindh province.

#### **IV. Construction Workers**

Construction workers play a significant role in the informal economy of Sindh province, Pakistan, and they encounter numerous challenges regarding their working conditions and access to social protection (Shafi et al., 2020). Typically employed on a casual basis, construction workers endure long hours of labor in substandard and unsafe environments. They are exposed to various hazards, such as falls, electrical shocks, and contact with hazardous materials like dust, asbestos, and chemicals (Dehury & Kumar, 2023). Many construction workers lack access to formal social protection, including healthcare, pensions, and insurance. Furthermore, they often receive meager wages and are not provided with adequate safety equipment, training, or protective gear (International Labor Office, 2009). To address these challenges, steps have been taken to improve the working conditions of construction workers in Sindh province. The Sindh Workers Welfare Fund Act of 2014 establishes a welfare fund to cater to workers in multiple sectors, including construction. This fund offers social protection benefits, such as medical care, pensions, and disability benefits, to workers and their families. The act also mandates employers to contribute to the fund on behalf of their workers (ShuHong et al., 2017). However, effective implementation of the law remains a hurdle, and many construction workers in Sindh province remain unaware of their rights. It is crucial to conduct



awareness-raising campaigns and implement capacity-building programs targeting both construction workers and employers to rectify this issue.

## **V. Garment Workers**

Garment workers in Pakistan form a significant part of the textile industry, which serves as a major contributor to the country's exports (Wadho & Chaudhry, 2018). Within Sindh Province, several cities, including Karachi, Hyderabad, and Sukkur, are known for their textile and garment manufacturing hubs. These workers often endure long working hours, typically ranging from 10 to 12 hours per day, six days a week. Unfortunately, they frequently receive low wages and toil in unsafe and unhealthy environments. Female workers, in particular, face additional challenges such as sexual harassment and discrimination (Din, 2010). Despite these difficulties, garment workers play a crucial role in the local economy by generating income for themselves and their families. Many are also affiliated with labor unions or worker advocacy groups that strive to enhance their working conditions and wages (Khan, 2007).

In recent years, positive strides have been made within the Pakistani garment industry, including the implementation of new labor laws and the establishment of a minimum wage for workers. However, more efforts are necessary to ensure fair treatment and uphold the dignity of garment workers in Sindh Province and across the country. This entails providing them with safe and healthy working conditions, fair wages, and fundamental rights. It is crucial to prioritize their well-being, granting them access to the basic protections they deserve (Shah, nd)

## **VI. Smallholder Farmers**

The term "smallholders" typically refers to small-scale farmers who do not own or have full control over the land they cultivate (Ren et al., 2021). They are often referred to as "out-growers" when they are in a dependent relationship with an exporter (Glover, 1987). In the global agriculture sector, approximately half of the world's population works as smallholders. These farmers face various challenges, including health risks associated with pesticide exposure and the lack of social protection schemes (Applebaum et al., 2016). In Sindh province, Pakistan, smallholder farmers play a vital role in the local economy, particularly in the agricultural sector, which contributes significantly to the country's GDP. Smallholder farmers in Sindh typically cultivate small plots of land, usually less than 12.5 acres, using labor-intensive farming methods (Chandio et al., 2020). They primarily grow crops such as wheat, rice, sugarcane, cotton, fruits, and vegetables. However, they face numerous challenges. Limited access to finance, modern farming technologies, and technical knowledge hinders their productivity and profitability. Additionally, poor transportation infrastructure and limited market information create barriers to market access (Muzammil et al., 2020; Qureshi, 2020).

To address these challenges, the Pakistani government and non-governmental organizations have launched initiatives to support smallholder farmers in Sindh. These initiatives involve providing training, technical assistance, and introducing modern farming technologies and practices. Efforts are also being made to improve market access through the establishment of market linkages and the development of transportation infrastructure (Bhutto et al., 2012).



Supporting smallholder farmers in Sindh is crucial for the sustainable development of the agricultural sector and the overall economy. By addressing their needs and empowering them with resources and knowledge, the agricultural sector can thrive, benefiting both the farmers and the economy as a whole.

## **VII. Transport Workers**

Transport workers in Sindh province, Pakistan, encompass individuals employed in various roles within the transportation industry, including drivers, conductors, mechanics, cleaners, and other personnel responsible for operating and maintaining public transportation systems like buses, trains, and taxis (Hisam, 2006). These workers may be employed by government-owned or regulated entities such as the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and the Sindh Mass Transit Authority (SMTA). Additionally, private companies also operate in the transportation sector, providing services such as bus and taxi transportation. Over the years, transport workers in Sindh have encountered several challenges, including low wages, unfavorable working conditions, and a lack of job security (Shafi et al., 2020). They have also been impacted by various governmental policies and regulations, such as the recent prohibition on using compressed natural gas (CNG) in public transportation vehicles. Nevertheless, transport workers in Sindh continue to play a crucial role in the province's economy by facilitating the movement of people and ensuring access to essential services.

### **1.3 Research Gap**

Limited empirical studies have been conducted to examine the situation of legal and illegal informal workers in Pakistan. Existing literature tends to focus on the overall contribution of the informal economy to Pakistan's economy, rather than providing insights into the specific sectors or regions regarding the working conditions, labor rights, and legal status of informal workers (Ilyas et al., 2020). This creates a research gap in understanding the situation of legal and illegal informal workers in Sindh Province, Pakistan. Reliable and up-to-date data on informal workers in Sindh is lacking, and the available data is outdated. Comprehensive surveys that capture the diverse experiences of informal workers are also lacking. Although some legal provisions exist for informal workers, their implementation and enforcement are weak, and there is a lack of awareness among informal workers regarding their legal rights. Addressing these research gaps is crucial to gaining a better understanding of the challenges faced by informal workers in Sindh Province and informing policies and interventions that can improve their working conditions, labor rights, and legal status.

### **1.4 Objectives**

The objectives of the study that examines the legal and illegal informal workers in Pakistan's Sindh Province are:

- To identify the working conditions of informal workers in Sindh, including their wages, working hours, safety, and health conditions.
- To explore the challenges faced by informal workers in Sindh, such as job insecurity, lack of access to social protection, and discrimination.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of existing legal frameworks and policies in protecting the rights of informal workers in Sindh.



- To identify the factors contributing to informal employment in Sindh, including economic, social, and cultural factors.
- To provide recommendations for policies and interventions that can improve the working conditions, labor rights, and legal recognition of informal workers in Sindh.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- **RQ1:** What are the working conditions of informal workers in Sindh, Pakistan, including their wages, working hours, safety, and health conditions?
- **RQ2:** What are the challenges faced by informal workers in Sindh, Pakistan, including job insecurity, lack of access to social protection, and experiences of discrimination?
- **RQ3:** How effective are the existing legal frameworks and policies in protecting the rights of informal workers in Sindh, Pakistan?
- **RQ4:** What are the factors contributing to informal employment in Sindh, Pakistan, including economic, social, and cultural factors?
- **RQ5:** What policies and interventions can be recommended to improve the working conditions, labor rights, and legal recognition of informal workers in Sindh, Pakistan?

### **1.6 Methodology**

This study aims to examine the working conditions, challenges, and rights of informal workers in Pakistan's Sindh Province, including both legal and illegal workers. To achieve this, a qualitative research approach is adopted, utilizing secondary data from various sources such as reports, academic articles, and policy documents. In addition, primary data is collected through observational methods to enhance the understanding of the topic.

#### **I. Observation Method**

The observation method is employed in this study to systematically observe and describe the behavior of informal workers in Pakistan's Sindh Province. Researchers collected data by recording videos and taking notes during the observation process (Asan & Montague, 2014). This method is considered one of the oldest and fundamental research methods in qualitative research, involving careful looking and listening (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018). In this study, the research team conducted fieldwork in specific areas of Sindh Province, observing both legal and illegal informal workers from various sectors.

#### **II. Participant Observation**

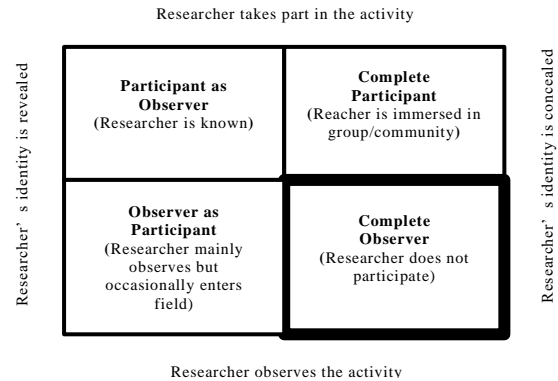
The research team conducted fieldwork in specific areas of Sindh Province, observing both legal and illegal informal workers from various sectors. Participant observation, a method where researchers observe and sometimes participate in the activities of the target audience, was utilized in this study (Kawulich, 2005). By actively engaging in the natural setting and observing the activities of the workers, the researchers aimed to enhance the validity and obtain a better understanding of the context and phenomenon under study (Dewalt & DeWalt, 2002).

#### **III. Sample**



The sample included all types of informal workers, both legal and illegal, who were observed during the research process.

Gold, (1970) describes participant observer's techniques: 1) Complete participant, 2) Participant as observer, 3) Observe as participant and 4) Complete observer. In a complete observer stand the researcher is neither seen nor noticed by the participants (Baker, 2006).



The researcher adopted a complete observer stance in the participant observation method, refraining from interacting with the research population. They visited various locations such as cities, public places, open grounds, streets, and crossroads at different times of the day to observe the behaviors, working conditions, and challenges faced by legal and illegal informal workers in Pakistan's Sindh province. Detailed notes were taken, documenting the date, time, location, and noteworthy findings of each observation. Additionally, photographs were captured to complement the observations, including images of the informal workers, their equipment, and relevant aspects. This short-term observation approach allowed for data collection within a specific timeframe, providing insights into the work processes, interactions, and working conditions of the informal workers (McLeod, 2010; Taherdoost, 2021).

## V. Locations

The observed locations encompassed various sectors and settings where informal work is prevalent in the Sindh province of Pakistan. Common areas included local markets, bazaars, streets, and public spaces. Informal workers engaged in activities such as street vending, car washing, shoe shining, waste collection, construction work, small-scale industries, and agricultural activities. The researcher conducted regular short-term observations to study the behaviors, activities, and conditions of the informal workers. This approach enabled the identification of patterns, routines, and working hours specific to each sector. It is important to acknowledge that informal work exists across diverse sectors and settings, reflecting the multifaceted nature of informal employment in the region.

### 1.7 Data Analysis

The analysis of observational data includes examining various documents, such as written field notes, reports, and materials obtained from the environment, such as pictures, videos, and pamphlets. These sources contribute to the analysis of the data collected through observation (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). To analyze the collected data, a thematic analysis approach is employed. This involves identifying common themes, patterns, and categories that are relevant to legal informal workers. By systematically examining the data, meaningful insights can be derived and organized into coherent themes and categories for further interpretation and understanding.



**Table NO: 1**

*Emerged From Observational Data in Charts*

<b>Themes emerged from Observational data</b>		
<b>Theme No: 1 Informal Worker’s working conditions</b>		
<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Explanations</b>
<p><b>What are the working conditions of informal workers in Sindh, Pakistan, including their wages, working hours, safety, and health conditions?</b></p> <p>This research question aims to investigate and understand the various aspects of working conditions experienced by informal workers in Sindh Province. The question focuses on key factors that directly affect their well-being and quality of life, such as wages, working hours, safety, and health conditions. By exploring these dimensions, the research seeks to gain insights into the challenges faced by informal workers and identify areas that require attention and improvement.</p>	<b>Wages</b>	Informal workers often receive lower wages compared to those in formal employment. Due to the absence of legal regulations, wage rates may be negotiated individually or depend on the prevailing market conditions. There is no standardized minimum wage for informal workers in Pakistan, making them vulnerable to exploitation and inconsistent income.
	<b>Working Hours</b>	The working hours for informal workers can be long and irregular. They may have to work extended hours, including evenings and weekends, without the benefits of overtime pay or rest periods. Since informal work lacks formal contracts, the hours of work are often determined by the demands of the job or the employer.
	<b>Safety</b>	Informal workers typically lack adequate safety protections in their workplaces. They may work in hazardous conditions, such as construction sites or street-side stalls, without proper safety equipment or training. The risk of accidents and occupational hazards is often higher for informal workers due to the absence of safety regulations and monitoring.
	<b>Health Conditions</b>	Informal workers in Sindh may face health risks due to their working conditions. Lack of access to healthcare facilities, limited or no social security benefits, and inadequate safety measures contribute to their vulnerability. Factors such as exposure to environmental pollutants, physical strain, and poor sanitation facilities can negatively impact their health.

Table 1: Step-by-step Analysis of the Observation Dataset. Informal workers in Sindh,

Pakistan, encompass individuals involved in unregulated or unprotected employment, such as street vendors, domestic workers, daily wage laborers, and similar occupations. Recognizing Challenging Working Conditions Informal workers often experience difficult working conditions characterized by limited legal protections. These conditions may vary across sectors and industries. Variability in Working Conditions It is crucial to acknowledge that working



conditions for informal workers can differ significantly depending on factors such as occupation, location, and individual circumstances. Efforts to Address Challenges The government of Pakistan, along with various non-governmental organizations, has undertaken initiatives to tackle the challenges faced by informal workers and enhance their working conditions. Persistence of Issues Despite these efforts, the informal sector remains predominantly unregulated, leading to ongoing concerns relating to wages, working hours, safety, and health. By following this step-by-step analysis, a comprehensive understanding of the observation dataset can be developed, shedding light on the specific issues and circumstances faced by informal workers in Sindh, Pakistan.

**Table No: 2**

*Emerg From Observational Data in Charts*

<i>Themes emerged from Observational data</i>		
<i>Theme No: 2 Challenges Faced By Informal Workers</i>		
<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Explanations</b>
<b>What are the challenges faced by informal workers in Sindh, Pakistan, including job insecurity, lack of access to social protection, and experiences of discrimination?</b> This research question aims to delve into the specific challenges encountered by informal workers in Sindh Province. The question focuses on key areas of concern, including job insecurity, which refers to the unpredictability and instability of employment, lack of access to social protection mechanisms such as health insurance	<b>Job Insecurity</b>	Informal workers often experience job insecurity due to the absence of formal employment contracts or protections. They may have irregular income streams and face challenges in finding consistent work opportunities. The lack of job security makes it difficult for them to plan for the future, secure stable incomes, and access benefits associated with formal employment
	<b>Lack of Access to Social Protection</b>	Informal workers in Sindh typically have limited or no access to social protection mechanisms such as health insurance, disability benefits, pensions, or unemployment benefits. This lack of social safety nets increases their vulnerability to economic shocks, illness, or accidents, and can lead to financial insecurity and hardships.
	<b>Discrimination</b>	Informal workers often face discrimination based on their occupation, gender, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity. They may encounter limited access to resources, services, and opportunities compared to formal workers. Discrimination can hinder their ability to secure fair wages, access education and skill development, and be treated with dignity and respect.



<p>and pensions, and the presence of discrimination based on factors like occupation, gender, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity. By exploring these challenges, the research seeks to shed light on the barriers that hinder the well-being and rights of informal workers, as well as identify potential strategies and interventions to address these issues effectively.</p>	<p><b>Limited Access to Finance and Credit</b></p>	<p>Informal workers may face challenges in accessing formal financial services such as loans, credit, and savings accounts. This restricts their ability to invest in their work, expand their businesses, or cope with emergencies. Without access to finance and credit, their opportunities for growth and upward mobility can be severely limited.</p>
	<p><b>Lack of Social Dialogue and Representation</b></p>	<p>Informal workers often have limited representation and collective bargaining power. They may not have avenues to voice their concerns, negotiate for better working conditions, or advocate for their rights. The absence of social dialogue and representation can contribute to a lack of recognition and protection of their interests.</p>
	<p><b>Limited Access to Education and Skill Development</b></p>	<p>Informal workers may face barriers in accessing education and skill development opportunities for themselves and their children. This lack of access restricts their potential for improving their skills, earning higher incomes, and breaking the cycle of poverty. It can perpetuate generational poverty and limit their ability to escape informal work.</p>

Table 2: Step-by-step Analysis of the Observation Dataset.

Addressing the challenges faced by informal workers in Sindh requires collaborative efforts from multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, employers, trade unions, and civil society organizations. Extending Social Protection Expanding social protection coverage is crucial to provide informal workers with access to essential benefits and support, such as healthcare, pensions, and insurance. Promoting Inclusive Labor Policies Implementing inclusive labor policies that protect the rights of informal workers and ensure fair wages, decent working conditions, and job security is essential for their well-being. Access to Finance and Credit Facilitating access to finance and credit can empower informal workers to invest in their businesses, improve productivity, and enhance their economic stability. Fostering Social Dialogue and Representation Encouraging social dialogue and representation allows informal workers to voice their concerns, negotiate their rights, and actively participate in decision-making processes. Improving Access to Education and Skill Development Providing informal workers with opportunities for education and skill development can enhance their employability, income potential, and upward mobility. By following this step-by-step analysis, stakeholders can work together to address the challenges faced by informal workers in Sindh, Pakistan. Implementing measures such as extending social protection, promoting inclusive labor policies, facilitating access to finance and credit, fostering social dialogue and



representation, and improving access to education and skill development can contribute to improving the livelihoods and well-being of informal workers.

**Table No: 3**

*Emerged From Observational Data in Charts*

<i>Themes emerged from Observational data</i>		
<i>Theme No: 3 legal frameworks and policies in protecting the rights of informal workers</i>		
<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Explanations</b>
<p>How effective are the existing legal frameworks and policies in protecting the rights of informal workers in Sindh, Pakistan?</p> <p>This research question aims to assess the effectiveness of the current legal frameworks and policies in place to safeguard the rights of informal workers in Sindh Province. The question seeks to evaluate the extent to which these legal provisions address the unique challenges faced by informal workers, protect their rights, and ensure their overall well-being. It also aims to identify any gaps or limitations in the existing legal frameworks and policies that may hinder their effectiveness. By examining the</p>	<b>Legal Frameworks</b>	Sindh province, like the rest of Pakistan, has specific laws and regulations pertaining to labor rights, including the rights of informal workers. These laws include the Sindh Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, the Sindh Workers' Welfare Fund Act, and the Sindh Industrial Relations Act, among others. The effectiveness of these legal frameworks depends on their implementation, enforcement, and accessibility to informal workers.
	<b>Awareness and Understanding</b>	Informal workers may lack awareness and understanding of their rights and the legal protections available to them. It is important to ensure that the legal frameworks and policies are effectively communicated and accessible to informal workers. Awareness campaigns, training programs, and community outreach efforts can play a crucial role in enhancing workers' understanding of their rights and how to avail themselves of legal protections.
	<b>Enforcement and Monitoring</b>	The enforcement of existing labor laws is critical for protecting the rights of informal workers. This includes regular inspections, monitoring mechanisms, and strong enforcement measures to ensure compliance by employers. Adequate resources, capacity building of labor inspection agencies, and coordination among various stakeholders are essential for effective enforcement.



<p>implementation, enforcement, and impact of these legal measures, the research aims to provide insights into areas where improvements can be made to better protect the rights of informal workers in Sindh.</p>	<p><b>Access Justice to</b></p>	<p>Informal workers may face challenges in accessing justice and seeking redress for violations of their rights. Issues such as high legal costs, complex legal procedures, and limited access to legal aid can hinder their ability to exercise their rights. Improving access to affordable and efficient dispute resolution mechanisms, including labor courts and alternative dispute resolution methods, can enhance the effectiveness of the legal framework in protecting informal workers' rights.</p>
	<p><b>Integration of Informal Sector</b></p>	<p>Existing legal frameworks should consider the unique characteristics and needs of the informal sector. Policies that promote the formalization of informal work, provide incentives for compliance, and create support mechanisms tailored to the informal sector can contribute to better protection of workers' rights. Integration efforts should focus on addressing the specific challenges faced by informal workers, such as job security, access to social protection, and representation.</p>

Table 3: Step-by-step Analysis of the Observation Dataset.

Assessing Legal Frameworks and Policies Analyze the existing legal frameworks and policies pertaining to informal workers in Sindh, Pakistan. Evaluate their effectiveness in protecting the rights and well-being of informal workers. Implementation and Enforcement Examine the extent to which the legal frameworks and policies are implemented and enforced on the ground. Identify any gaps or challenges in the implementation process. Accessibility of Legal Protections Evaluate the accessibility of legal protections for informal workers. Determine whether the information and mechanisms for accessing these protections are readily available and understandable to informal workers. Impact on the Ground Assess the impact of the legal frameworks and policies on the working conditions, labor rights, and well-being of informal workers in Sindh. Identify any positive outcomes or areas where improvements are needed. Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms Highlight the importance of regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms to track the effectiveness of legal protections. These mechanisms can help identify gaps, address emerging issues, and ensure continuous improvement. Periodic Reviews Emphasize the need for periodic reviews of the legal frameworks and policies to adapt to changing contexts and address evolving challenges faced by informal workers. Periodic reviews can contribute to the ongoing improvement of legal protections. By conducting a step-by-step analysis as presented in Table 3, stakeholders can evaluate the effectiveness of existing



legal frameworks and policies in protecting the rights of informal workers in Sindh. This analysis should include an assessment of implementation, enforcement, accessibility, and impact on the ground. Regular monitoring, feedback mechanisms, and periodic reviews are essential to ensure that legal protections are effectively safeguarding the rights and well-being of informal workers.

**Table No: 4**  
*Emerged From Observational Data in Charts*

<b>Themes emerged from Observational data</b>		
<b>Theme No: 4 Informal Worker’s Contribution</b>		
<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Explanations</b>
<p><b>What are the factors contributing to informal employment in Sindh, Pakistan, including economic, social, and cultural factors?</b></p> <p>This research question aims to investigate and understand the underlying factors that contribute to the prevalence of informal employment in Sindh Province. The question explores various dimensions, including economic factors such as the lack of formal job opportunities and poverty, social factors such as limited education and skills, social exclusion, and family/community networks, as well as cultural factors such as traditional practices and perceptions of informal work. By exploring these factors, the research seeks to identify the root causes and contextual influences that shape informal employment in Sindh. The findings will contribute to a</p>	<p><b>Economic Factors:</b></p> <p>a. Lack of Formal Job Opportunities</p>	<p>Insufficient formal job opportunities in the formal sector can push individuals towards informal work as an alternative means of income generation.</p> <p>High levels of poverty and limited access to financial resources make it challenging for individuals to start formal businesses or invest in formal employment.</p> <p>The dominance of informal sectors in Sindh's economy, such as street vending, small-scale manufacturing, and agriculture, can perpetuate informal employment patterns as individuals tend to enter sectors with existing informal networks.</p>
	<p><b>Social Factors:</b></p> <p>a. Limited Education and Skills</p> <p>b. Social Exclusion and Discrimination</p>	<p>Lack of access to quality education and skill development opportunities can limit individuals' employment options, pushing them towards informal work where specific qualifications may not be required.</p> <p>Marginalized groups, such as women, ethnic minorities, and rural populations, may face social exclusion and discrimination in the formal job market, leading them to seek employment in the informal sector.</p>
	<p>c. Family and Community Networks</p>	<p>Informal work often relies on family and community networks for support, as individuals may enter similar occupations as their family members or community peers.</p>
	<p><b>Cultural Factors</b></p>	<p>Some cultural practices, such as home-based work or traditional crafts, are inherently</p>



comprehensive understanding of the factors that perpetuate informal employment and inform potential strategies and interventions to address these issues effectively.	<p>a. Traditional and Informal Practices</p> <p>b. Informal Work Perceptions</p>	informal in nature and have been passed down through generations, contributing to the persistence of informal employment. Informal work may be culturally perceived as a viable and accepted form of employment, particularly in sectors like street vending, where it is deeply ingrained in the local culture and street life.
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Table 4: Step-by-step Analysis of the Observation Dataset.

Understanding Interconnected Factors Recognize the interconnections between economic, social, and cultural factors that contribute to the prevalence of informal employment. Understand how these factors reinforce each other and create a complex environment. Promoting Formal Job Creation Develop strategies to promote formal job creation, aiming to provide more opportunities for individuals to engage in regulated and protected employment. This can involve supporting industries that have the potential for formalization and facilitating an enabling environment for entrepreneurship. Expanding Access to Education and Skills Training Enhance access to education and skills training programs to equip individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills for formal employment. This can involve improving the quality and relevance of education and providing vocational training programs that align with market demands. Addressing Social Discrimination and Exclusion Take measures to address social discrimination and exclusion that may hinder individuals' access to formal employment. This can involve promoting equality, combating gender-based discrimination, and ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background or social status. Cultivating Supportive Cultural and Policy Environment Promote a supportive cultural and policy environment that recognizes and values the rights and contributions of informal workers. This can involve raising awareness, changing societal perceptions about informal work, and advocating for policies that protect and empower informal workers. By conducting a step-by-step analysis as presented in Table 4, stakeholders can develop multifaceted strategies to address the factors contributing to informal employment in Sindh. These strategies should focus on promoting formal job creation, expanding access to education and skills training, addressing social discrimination and exclusion, and cultivating a supportive cultural and policy environment. By adopting a comprehensive approach, it is possible to create an environment that encourages the transition from informal to formal employment and recognizes the value of all workers.

**Table No: 5**

*Emerged From Observational Data in Charts*

<b><i>Themes emerged from Observational data</i></b>		
<b><i>Theme No: 5 Recommendations for Policies and Interventions</i></b>		
<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Explanations</b>



<p><b>What policies and interventions can be recommended to improve the working conditions, labor rights, and legal recognition of informal workers in Sindh, Pakistan?</b></p> <p>This research question aims to identify and propose specific policies and interventions that can enhance the working conditions, labor rights, and legal recognition of informal workers in Sindh Province. The question focuses on exploring potential strategies that can lead to meaningful improvements, such as formalization programs, strengthening legal protections, social protection measures, skills development initiatives, awareness campaigns, and inclusive policy frameworks. By examining best practices and drawing on stakeholder perspectives, the research aims to provide actionable</p>	<p><b>Formalization of Informal Work</b></p>	<p>Simplify registration processes and reduce bureaucratic barriers for informal workers to transition into formal employment. Provide incentives for formalization, such as tax benefits, access to credit, and business support services. Develop targeted programs to facilitate the transition of informal workers into formal sectors, including skills training, capacity building, and entrepreneurship development.</p>
	<p><b>Strengthening Legal Protections</b></p>	<p>Review and update labor laws to ensure that they provide adequate protection and coverage for informal workers. Enhance enforcement mechanisms and labor inspection systems to monitor compliance with labor standards and ensure workers' rights are upheld. Establish mechanisms for informal workers to report violations, seek redress, and access justice, including through labor courts and alternative dispute resolution methods.</p>
	<p><b>Social Protection and Welfare</b></p>	<p>Extend social protection programs to cover informal workers, including health insurance, disability benefits, maternity/paternity leave, and retirement schemes. Establish inclusive social safety nets that address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of informal workers and their families. Promote access to affordable and quality healthcare services, including preventive care, for informal workers and their families.</p>
	<p><b>Skills Development and Education</b></p>	<p>Enhance access to quality education and vocational training for informal workers, enabling them to acquire relevant skills and improve their employability. Develop skill development programs that align with the needs of informal sectors and support entrepreneurship and self-employment. Provide opportunities for lifelong learning and upskilling to enable informal workers to adapt to changing economic conditions.</p>



<p>recommendations that address the unique needs and challenges faced by informal workers in Sindh. The findings will contribute to the development of evidence-based policies and interventions that can promote the well-being and rights of informal workers in the region.</p>	<p><b>Awareness and Capacity Building</b></p>	<p>Conduct awareness campaigns to inform informal workers about their rights, entitlements, and available support mechanisms. Enhance the capacity of informal worker organizations and trade unions to advocate for the rights and interests of informal workers. Promote dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders, including government agencies, employers, and civil society organizations, to develop and implement policies that address the specific needs of informal workers.</p>
	<p><b>Gender Equality and Social Inclusion</b></p>	<p>Address gender-based discrimination and promote equal opportunities for women engaged in informal work, including access to education, skill development, and leadership roles. Implement measures to tackle social exclusion and discrimination based on ethnicity, caste, or other factors, ensuring that all informal workers are treated fairly and with dignity.</p>

Table 5: Step-by-step Analysis of the Observation Dataset.

Collaboration among Stakeholders Recognize the need for collaboration among various stakeholders, including government authorities, employers, trade unions, civil society organizations, and informal worker associations. Understand that addressing working conditions, labor rights, and legal recognition requires collective efforts. Enabling Policy Environment Create an enabling policy environment that acknowledges and values the contributions of informal workers. Develop and implement policies that protect their rights, improve working conditions, and support their socio-economic well-being. Effective Implementation Ensure effective implementation of existing policies and regulations related to informal workers. This requires monitoring mechanisms, enforcement measures, and accountability to ensure that the rights of informal workers are upheld. Capacity Building and Awareness Invest in capacity building programs and awareness campaigns targeting informal workers, employers, and other relevant stakeholders. Provide training on labor rights, occupational safety, and health, and promote understanding of legal provisions and entitlements. Social Dialogue and Representation Foster social dialogue and representation by encouraging the participation of informal workers and their representatives in decision-making processes. This can involve establishing platforms for dialogue, facilitating collective bargaining, and promoting the formation of worker associations. By following the step-by-step analysis as presented in Table 5, stakeholders can work collaboratively to implement recommendations related to working conditions, labor rights, and legal recognition for informal workers. This requires creating an enabling policy environment, ensuring effective implementation, investing in capacity building and awareness, and fostering social dialogue and representation. Through these efforts, the rights and well-being of informal workers can be protected and their contributions to the economy and society can be recognized and valued.



## **1.8 DISCUSSION**

### **I. Illegal Informal Workers**

In the Sindh province of Pakistan, various illegal informal activities have detrimental effects on individuals, society, and the environment. These activities encompass begging, the illegal sale of trapped birds, animal and bird fights, fraudulent practices like fake palmistry and exorcism, gambling, theft, and smuggling. Beggars, including those coerced by organized groups, seek money or food through street solicitation. The illegal sale of trapped birds not only harms the environment but also poses a threat to bird species. Animal and bird fights involve cruelty and potential harm to the animals involved. Fake palmists and exorcists exploit vulnerable individuals in search of assistance. Gambling contributes to addiction and financial distress. Thieves and smugglers partake in criminal behavior. It is of utmost importance to address these issues and provide legal and sustainable employment opportunities for the betterment of society.

### **II. Legal Informal Workers**

In the Sindh province of Pakistan, a significant number of informal workers are engaged in various sectors such as street vending, domestic work, home-based work, construction, garment manufacturing, small-scale farming, and transportation. These workers operate outside the scope of formal labor laws and regulations, depriving them of essential labor rights such as minimum wage, social security benefits, and health and safety protections. Street vendors and hawkers encounter challenges such as harassment, eviction, and limited market access, which directly impact their earnings. Domestic workers face long working hours, lack of rest days, and are vulnerable to mistreatment from employers. Home-based workers confront similar difficulties, including low wages and unsafe working conditions. Construction workers, garment workers, smallholder farmers, and transport workers are also part of the informal sector, experiencing job insecurity and safety hazards. Transport workers additionally face issues like harassment and extortion. The absence of formal protections and government support exposes informal workers in Sindh province to numerous hardships. Nonetheless, there are ongoing efforts to improve their working conditions and livelihoods.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

Informal workers in Pakistan's Sindh Province, which includes street vendors, domestic workers, home-based workers, construction workers, garment workers, smallholder farmers, and transport workers, often experience unfavorable working conditions, low wages, job insecurity, and limited access to social protection. Their informal status exposes them to discrimination, harassment, and exploitation, with inadequate legal safeguards. Moreover, there are individuals involved in illegal informal activities such as begging, selling trapped birds, animal fighting, fake palmistry, gambling, theft, and smuggling, who face additional challenges like criminalization and social exclusion. The rights of informal workers in Sindh Province are frequently disregarded and unprotected, but some progress has been made, such as the introduction of the Home-Based Workers Act in 2018. Addressing the multifaceted issues confronting informal workers necessitates legal reforms, social protection initiatives, and awareness campaigns to uphold their rights and enhance their overall well-being.



### **1.10 ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTION**

The study conducted on legal and illegal informal workers in Sindh Province, Pakistan, provides valuable insights and contributions that are relevant to various stakeholders. It offers an in-depth understanding of the working conditions and factors influencing informal employment, which can inform policymakers in the development of targeted policies and interventions. The evaluation of existing legal frameworks identifies gaps and provides recommendations for improvement, serving as a valuable resource for labor rights organizations engaged in advocacy efforts. The study's recommendations for policies and interventions have the potential to directly improve the lives of informal workers, including aspects such as wages, working conditions, and access to social protection. Furthermore, the adoption of a mixed-method approach in this study sets an example for future research in similar contexts, demonstrating the effectiveness of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Overall, this study holds promise for advancing the recognition of labor rights and improving working conditions for informal workers in Sindh Province, benefiting policymakers, labor rights organizations, and the workers themselves.



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