



# Child Rights Situation Analysis (CRSA)-2023

District: Rahim Yar Khan-Punjab



**RURAL EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (REEDS)** 

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## **Abbreviations & Acronyms**

BHU Basic Health Unit

BISP The Benazir Income Support Programme

CCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CERD Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CESCR International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

CSOs Civil Society Organizations

CM Chief Minister

CNIC Computerized National Identity Card

CRC Child Right Convention

CRSA Child Rights Situation Analysis

CSA Child Sexual Abuse

DCO District Coordination Officer

DHQ District Headquarter

ECD Early Childhood Development

ELD Education and Literacy Department

FGD Focus Group Discussion
HDI Human Development Index

HRCP Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

ILO International Labour Organization

INGO International Non-Government Organization

KII Key Informant Interviews

KNH KindernotHilfe

MCH Maternal & Child Heath

MDGs Millennium Development Goals

MMR Maternal Mortality Rate

NGO Non-Government Organization

PCCWD Provincial Commissions for Child Welfare and Development

PMMS Pakistan Maternal Mortality Survey

PSLM Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey

RDs Rural Dispensaries

REEDS Rural Education and Economic Development Society

RHC Rural Health Centers SHA Self Help Approach

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

THQ Tehsil Head Quarter

UC Union Council UN United Nations

UNCRC United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF United Nations Children Fund WASH Water Sanitation and Hygiene

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to acknowledge the research study conducted on children's issues or child rights social analysis. The findings of this study have shed light on important aspects related to children's well-being, rights, and the social dynamics that impact their lives. The study has contributed to children's, parents and key stakeholders' understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and potential solutions for improving the lives of children and promoting their rights.

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Special gratitude goes to Executive Director – REEDS and Manager Program, whose contribution in stimulating suggestions and encouragement, helped me and the research team to collect the data and especially in writing this report.

Lastly, I recognize the importance of research studies like this in driving positive change and improving the lives of children. The findings and recommendations of this study will contribute to the broader discourse on child rights, policy formulation, and programming aimed at creating a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment for all children. I believe that this is the first step of a long journey ahead which would require commitment, and steadfast support of the organization's staff and partners to achieve the ultimate aim to protect children's rights in District Rahim Yar Khan.

#### Dr. Beniamin Barkat

Research and Education Program REEDS-Pakistan

## 1. Executive Summary

Rural Education and Economic Development Society (REED Society) is a non-profit, non-governmental, and humanitarian organization founded in 2004 that is currently working to strengthen child protection and child well-being in the District of Rahim Yar Khan through Self Help Approach (SHA) in collaboration and financial support with KNH.

REEDS, on the other hand, plans to fortify its child protection program and initiatives with solid evidence from children and other important stakeholders in the field. As a result, REEDS undertook research to analyze the child rights situation in the project region, specifically in District Rahim Yar Khan, in order to identify the extent to which children's rights were being enjoyed and the barrier to the fulfilment of their rights.

Several data collection approaches were used in the study for this objective, including focus group discussions with children and parents/caretakers, key informant interviews and participatory rural appraisal with community-level stakeholders and line departments.

The report's findings are examined in light of the UNCRC's four major themes: child rights participation, child protection, education, and health. Overall, the CRSA exposes a dismal situation of child rights in the area. The enforcement of legislation prohibiting child marriage, child labour, corporal punishment, and child maltreatment was lacking. Children with disabilities, religious minorities, and other vulnerable groups were not enjoying basic rights to protection, development, and survival.

According to the 6<sup>th</sup> census of Pakistan, the population of Pakistan was 207.68 million; of it, about 35 percent were children. On the Human Development Index, Pakistan ranked 161 out of 191 countries. Pakistan is one of the countries that has the highest mortality rate for children under-five. surpassing the global rate of 37 deaths per 1000 live births as of 2020, leading to a child mortality rate 65.2/1000. Child mortality (under 5 years). Accessed August 22, 2022. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/levels-and-trends-in-child-under-5mortality-in-2020

These facts portray the disappointing performance of Pakistan in response to the SDGs. It also indicates little progress on its commitment to the UNCRC. In light of the Committee on the Rights of the Child's recommendations and the UNCRC, Pakistan has to increase its investment in children for the protection and promotion of their rights as a guarantee for economic growth and improvement of the nation. However, at the district or grassroots level, conditions for health, education, and social protection are dismal, owing to a lack of resources, corruption, theft of cash, and underutilization of funds. At the district level, budget allocations were extremely low; as a result, most officials complained that the existing health, education, and social protection facilities were insufficient and that funds allocated to run these facilities were insufficient. Civil society organizations were unaware of the total allocation and utilization of funding in the Rahim Yar Khan district.

Analysis and findings show that Child rights are in a poor state, with critical areas requiring urgent attention at district and provincial levels, including budget allocations, effective resource utilization, capacity building, awareness, and law implementation.

Legal frameworks for child labor, early marriage, and disabilities are in place, but implementation at the district level is minimal and it requires compliance with national and provincial child rights legislation, but no records exist of these activities. Coordination between line agencies and private parties is challenging due to the power and resources involved. The district-level DCO lacks evidence on children's rights issues, and department officials have a coordination gap. Communities lack understanding of child rights as well.

In informal interviews and FGDs, children frequently raised the issue of gender discrimination. Adults' discriminatory behavior towards children, particularly girls, has been noted to be quite blatant in these places. Children (primarily girls) who were from Hindu and Christian communities reported that 50% of them did not have enough to eat because their parents had to work in other homes or on landlord farms as daily wage workers or laborers. Children mention that parents prefer boys to girls in all family matters, including food. The young participant in FGDs mentioned that in the villages, it was customary for the men to receive the food first, followed by the women. Communities also paid little attention to girls' rights and health issues. The majority of respondents agreed that male children enjoy greater social privilege than female children. This gender bias is also reflected in education, as families often prioritize sending their sons to school over their daughters. Additionally, girls are more likely to drop out of school early due to financial constraints or early marriage.

Scolded and punishment in school and homes were commonly reported in FGDs; in discussions, children avoided speaking about it. A child with a disability and children from minority groups were the most ignored and neglected considered. One child in FGD pointed out, "There is no respect for children with disability. Everyone considers them a burden and makes fun of the". The issue of the child's best interests is mandated, but Rahim Yar Khan district stakeholders showed little comprehension of it. Minority communities have low rates of birth registration because they are involved in daily labour and farming activities, ignore it, and have only a passing familiarity with it. The implementation of policies and programs intended to safeguard the rights and welfare of children in these communities is made more difficult by the absence of birth registration in these areas. In order to guarantee that each child's best interests are upheld, efforts should be made to increase awareness and offer accessible registration services.

Child labor was found common among poor minority families although it's not reported in routine. Children categorically said during the FGDs that a vast number of their friends and relatives are involved in child labor not only in their villages but also in nearby villages. Child labor commonly reportedissue because of poverty and parents' lack of interest in children's education. The Punjab Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, of 2015 states that a boy must be 18 years old and a girl must be 16 years old before they can get married. However, in our project area, especially in the Hindu community, marriage before the age of 18 and before the age of 16 was a common practice. Children in the FGD raised the issue of child marriages. The respondents attributed the lack of schools, the lack of female teachers, the lack of parental interest in their daughters' education, the lack of trends in girls' education, and the lack of protection for girls as the causes of these early marriages.

Children did not express child sexual abuse cases as clearly as some parents and religious figures in the Hindu community, but these cases were alarmingly on the rise in Rahim Yar Khan district, and the government paid no attention to them and was unwilling to accept them. The key informants claimed that there are CSA cases in our community that go unreported because the abuse victims lack the courage to do so and because there is little space and awareness of such

issues in our community. From January 2022 to October 2022, 137 cases of child abduction in Rahim Yar Khan were reported (2023-State-of-human-rights-in-2022.pdf). Lack of literacy and parents, particularly mothers, who are unaware of the value of education, the dangers of child labour, household safety, and the dignity of their children.

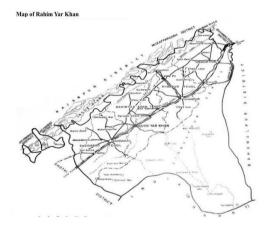
Children expressed disliking the environment in their homes, schools and the community because of the numerous difficulties and problems. One child in FGD expressed his unhappiness, "we [children] in our village face many difficulties because our parents engage us in agriculture and scold us for looking after livestock and even teachers sometimes beat us in schools." some children claimed that their parents respected their views, but in FGDs, probing discussion children offered contrasting views, they shared that child were not considered human beings; parents and teachers did not give any weightage to their views. However, in the UNCRC, respecting the views of children is one of the key principles. Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. The analysis of crosscutting factors and actors and the data from the field show a poor state of child rights in many critical areas, requiring the dire attention of authority stakeholders at the district level. All line agencies such as health, education, social welfare, police and labor department CSOs need to develop their policy and plan of action at the district level. However, these goals should conform with the national and provincial policy and legal frameworks. As it was repeatedly versed that poverty is the root cause behind child rights and protection problems, it is highly recommended to encourage all stakeholders to establish rural poverty reduction plans and projects.

## 2. <u>District Rahim Yar Khan Profile</u>

A well-known city in Punjab's southern region is Rahim Yar Khan. Rahim Yar Khan is bordered to the north by Muzaffargarh district, to the east by Bahawalpur district, to the south by the Sindh province's Ghotki district and Jasilmir (India), and to the west by the district of Rajanpur.

It consists of four Tehsils with a total of 122 UCs, with about 80% of the population living in rural areas and the remaining 20% in urban areas. The district's economy is primarily agrobased, and the majority of its residents live in rural areas.

According to the most recent census, the district had a total population of 5,445,880 people (men 2,838,074 and women



2,607,809) and a population density of 421 people per square kilometre. The growth rate yearly is 3.19%. The typical household has 7.5 people. Approximately 42.4 % of people under the age of 15. Muslims account for 96.7 percent of the district's population. The next largest group, the Hindu (Jati) people, makeup 1.8 percent of the population, followed by the Scheduled Castes with 0.6 percent. Other minorities are common, like Christians and Ahmadis. A higher proportion of Muslims reside in rural areas. This is probably because urban areas typically have better access to services and job opportunities, which may make them more attractive to Muslim families than to minorities who are landless and employed as laborers or farm workers on farmers' land.

The average household monthly income in 2022 was between 25,000 and 30,000 rupees, which

was considered the lowest amount ever. The availability, access, utilization, and stability of food security indicators demonstrated that these districts did not experience food insecurity. Although there is enough food available in these areas, people's access to it and food consumption practices are low due to socioeconomically.

In 2022, 191 health facilities (104 BHUs, 19 RHCs,56 Rural Dispensaries (RDs), 3 THQs, 7 MCH centers, 1 eye hospital Khanpur) were recorded in district Rahim Yar Khan. Similarly, there were no appropriate education facilities s addressing the educational needs (from primary - matric) of the young population from the district. In 2022, there were recorded 191 health facilities/outlets in the district shared by the Health department. PSLM survey district level 2019 -20, immunization is the lowest in Rahim Yar Khan as compared to other districts in Punjab with 65% in 2019-20 as compared to 39% in 2014-15.

Natural catastrophes including river floods and heavy rains devastated this district in 2010, 2022. These calamities not only destroyed/damaged education, health infrastructures and facilities but also livelihood sources, which rendered serious effects on children.

https://www.citypopulation.de/en/pakistan/distr/admin/726\_\_rahim\_yar\_khan/

https://rykhan.punjab.gov.pk/health\_authority

In Rahim Yar Khan District, only one in three people were literate in 2021, with 227,151 children enrolled in public primary schools. However, only 63% of the total children were literate, and over 20% were out of school, mostly from marginalized areas. The district's 2,250 public schools are substandard, with 87 buildings unsafe for classes and lacking functional basic facilities.

(http://humgadam.pk/districtprofiles/rahim-yar-khan/)

School Enrollment & Out-of-School Children in Rahim Yar Khan 2021

Source: http://aserpakistan.org/index.php?func=news Annul Status of Education Report ASER – Pakistan 2021

#### **Project Area Profile**

REEDS project area is in 02 tehsils, Rahim Yar Khan & Khan Pur, covering 02 UCs (51-P & 45-P) with a total population of 57519 including estimated 28,2080 children.

Children categorically said during the FGDs and Interviews that a vast number of children from their respective villages are working at farms with their parents not only in their villages but also in nearby towns. Furthermore, child labor and child marriage are major factors contributing to the low literacy rate in the area. Efforts need to be made to raise awareness among parents about the importance of education and discourage child labor and early marriages. During the assessment through focus group discussions and already interaction with the community during social well-being conducted in the project areas, discrimination against women especially along with the track of the Cholistan desert area starts from birth and lasts throughout their lives. The girl continues to face it throughout her life, as she grows. She is discriminated against for nutritious food, clothing, upbringing, education, choice of life and everything. Forced marriages, child marriages, and exchanged marriages are very common in these areas. <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35724078">https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35724078</a> The labour role of girls and women is of value in the family as they fetch water for the family, do household everyday jobs, work in the fields, collect fodder for livestock and take care of all the male family members.

## 3- International Commitments & Constitutional Provisions towards Child Rights

International Commitments in November 1990, Pakistan ratified the UNCRC- a human rights treaty that establishes the civil, political, economic, social, cultural, developmental and cultural rights of children. In 2016, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict; in July 2011, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography; in 2010, Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT); in 2010, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR); in 1996, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); in 1966, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); in 2008, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR); in 2011, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.32

Pakistan has also ratified eight (8) fundamental ILO conventions; of those, the following four were directly related to children; in 1957, ratified - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (C029); in 1960, Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (C105); in 1961, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (C111); in 2006, Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (C138); and in 2001, Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (C182).

Constitutional Rights The Constitution of Pakistan 1973 provides fundamental human rights to all of the citizens and residents irrespective of their race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth. The Constitution of Pakistan has no definition of the child; the legislators and interpreters take reference to Articles 11 and 25A of the Constitution when competing or defending children at any legal forums. These Articles are contextual; therefore, do not offer a reference for defining a child in view of the UNCRC. Following are the children-specific rights in the constitution:

- Article 11 (Slavery, forced labor, etc. prohibited):
- 3) No child below the age of fourteen years shall be engaged in any factory or mine or any other hazardous employment.
- Article 25(1) of the constitution enshrines the foundational concept of legal equality of citizens and holds that all citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law.
- Article 25 (3): Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the protection of women and children.
- Article 25A (the right to education): The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years.

## 4- Introduction and Background

The CRSA used the normative framework of the principles established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – survival and development; non-discrimination; right for the views of the child; and the best interests of the child – as its point of reference not only for standards that were assessed but also as a methodology for carrying out the situation analysis.

In Feb-March 2023, this Child Rights Situation Analysis (CRSA) was conducted in Eight villages of 2 union councils 51-P and 45-P from Tehsil; Rahim Yar Khan and Khan Pur of Rahim Yar Khan of Punjab province to understand the extent to which children's rights were being enjoyed and what were the obstacles that became a barrier to the realization of their rights in the project area. The CRSA will not only help the REEDS, KNH and other implementing partners' programs and actions in the target area, but also the district and provincial in designing policies and action plans. It portrays and depicts the current situation of children and identified obstacles and barriers hampering efforts in promoting and protecting children's rights to protection, health, education and welfare.

In specific, the main objectives of the CRSA were to:

#### **Objectives:**

- To know the situation of the child rights in target areas and take some advice from the analysis
  for organizational strategic decision making
- 2. Identify and analyze the immediate and underlying (immediate root) causes of violations of rights disaggregated data on the affected children and trends over the last years;
- 3. Identify and analyze the gaps between policy, planning and implementation with taking into account its effects on the rights of children at the district level
- 4. To map the roles and assess the capacities of those with responsibility for children's rights i.e. parents, state institutions, civil society, private sector etc.
- 5. Present clear, concrete, realistic and practical recommendations, which must be in line with the context.
- 6. Identify the opportunities and constraints for civil society to make a significant contribution to the fulfilment of children's rights in the near future.
- 7. To utilize the information and insights by the REEDS to identify where it can best contribute to the achievement of a nation's goals/SDGs for its children.

## 5- Methodology and Approach

To carry out the CRSA, the Project team have used relevant and effective approach and methodology to extract information in light of the UNCRC the Conclusion Observations and Recommendations and other national and international obligations. Without these, it is difficult to ascertain the gaps, problems, and issues in the implementation and realization of the rights of children.

For doing the CRSA, the following steps have been followed:

- CRSA Capacity Building and Planning
- Secondary data review with scope District provincial and national level reviewed the literature
- Development of data collection tools

- Data gathering and analysis as per the prescribed Adult & Children tools
- identified certain issues and problems, collected data,
- analyzed and compilation the report.

Unfortunately, governments at district, provincial and federal levels lack systems and mechanisms to collect and update disaggregated data on all groups and dimensions of communities. Such a lack of disaggregated data and unreliable sources do not allow us to have exact measurements and indepth analysis of the ground realities. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data adds great value to situation analysis, and conclusions and recommendations drawn from such analysis are evidence-based. However, in this CRSA, inthe absence of quantitative data at the district level, we have drawn much data from the qualitative data directly received from children, young persons, parents, teacher, civil society organization members and government officials. The secondary sources include all human and labor rights treaties ratified by the state (such as UNCRC, CEDAW, ILO conventions and others), concluding observations and recommendations, District reports, alternative reports and documents and the media and civil society organizations' reports.

## 6- Types of Right-Based Analyses Applied

We have used the following types of analyses

#### **Disaggregated Mapping:**

In this report, the data has been analyzed from different perspectives, e.g. gendesr age, religion, geography, livelihoods and ethnicity factors concerning violations of children's rights. This dimension was taken into account in all types of analyses mentioned above. This analysis has helped us to understand measures (program, policies, and decisions) with reference to: 1) The differences between girls, boys, women, and men in different contexts; 2) The consequences of these differences in the fulfillment of rights. Gender analysis helped us to analyze information disaggregated by sex, a gender perspective to explain any differences and specific gender considerations.

#### **Causal Analysis**

This analysis is known as 'problem tree analysis. It helped us underlying reasons for violations of children's rights, the immediate causes of children's rights violations and interlinks between the immediate and underlying causes e.g., power relations, patriarchy, norms and values on participation).

## Stakeholder Analysis

We have attempted to look at the relevant stakeholders and their respective tasks and activities regarding child rights in the district of Rahim Yar Khan; reasons and goals of the desired changes in their minds; also looked at the positive or negative impacts of their activities on the situation; and the way through which they envisaged the change that could take place through their activities.

#### Role/Responsibility Analysis

It helped to identify the people responsible for dealing with child rights issues and also enlisted the

current actors responsible for the situation of child rights; through this, we have shown how all actors were linked together with each other in failing to provide protection and justice to children. To address this approach, a series of questions were asked to the children, adults and other participants (parents, community, community leaders' religious leaders, civil society, government, etc.) to identify the roles towards child rights. The exercise helped to understand the status of members of society and their expected and existing roles which are explained in the data analysis sections.

#### **Capacity Gap Analysis**

In this analysis, we have focused on the duty bearers especially causes of incapacity to perform their responsibilities. Here, we tried to investigate if there was a lack of information, knowledge or skills, will or motivation and financial or material resources in these project areas However, availability of resources was one of the key issues but it was noticed that dutybearers, in most of the cases, might not be aware of their responsibilities, or they might not be provided with the authority and support to carry out their duties.

## 7- Methods/Tools for Data Collection

For the study purpose, both primary and secondary data are used. To collect both types of data mixed methods research involving both quantitative and qualitative techniques was exploited. With the use of two data collection tools, results are reliable and recommendations are based on evidence.

- 1- The FGDs with parents/adults/caretakers were both qualitative and quantitative
- 2- KIIs interviews with teacher religious leaders and government officers were conducted and government officials were informal but guided by structured interviews.
- 3- FDGs with Children by using the following tools
  - Tool 1 Body Mapping Tool
  - Tool 2 Traffic Signal Lights Tools
  - Tool 3- Problem Tree Analyses Tool

## 8- Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in compliance with REEDS Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis. In addition, ethical standards for research involving children, reflected in the following principles, were also adhered to.

- 1- **No conflict of interest** was expected and identified as a part of the research.
- 2- **Informed consent –** all participants were informed about the research, its objective and their part in the process. It was clearly stated that their participation would cause no harm, but also no immediate benefit for them. Parents/adults were asked to express verbal consent to participate in the research and were explained that they could withdraw from the process at any time while children's consents were taken into written form.
- 3- Confidentiality and anonymity all participants in the research were informed that their privacy would be protected, that data collected in the research would be published in aggregated form only, and that identity of children and adults would not be disclosed under

any circumstances.

#### 4- No payment or compensation was used in the research.

Bearing in mind that the research covers sensitive areas and participation of marginalized groups, the data collection tools and procedures were reviewed and approved by KNH, in line with REEDS Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis.

## 9- Secondary Data Collection

As per CRSA, when appropriate, boys and girls can also be involved in the collection, examination and analysis of secondary data but in given conditions, it was not possible to involve children in the process of secondary data collection and examination. For this research, some major types of documentary data including websites and other information on the internet, newspapers, reports and NGO multi-lateral and government publications and statistics, national and provincial laws and international treaties were collected and analyzed. While analyzing the data the elements of the child rights situation, in general, in Pakistan and, in particular, in Punjab and district Rahim Yar Khan were kept in consideration. The exhaustive reference reports and documents are referenced in the brackets for confirmation and further review.

## 10- Primary Data Collection and Findings

## **Key Findings with Children**

FGD Group		Total Participants		
1 OB Group	Muslim	Christian	Hindu	
Boys	2	0	2	62
Girls	1	1	2	67
Total	3	1	4	129

Sr.No	District Name	UC Name	Village	Ethnicity	Number of Children
1	Rahim Yar khan	45/P	110-1L	Hindu	17 Boys
2	Rahim Yar khan	51/P	53/P	Muslim	15 Boys
3	Rahim Yar khan	51/P	54/P	Muslim	15 Boys
4	Rahim Yar khan	51/P	54/P	Hindu	15 Girls
5	Rahim Yar khan	45/P	115/1L	Hindu	15 Boys
6	Rahim Yar Khan	51/P	53/P	Hindu	16 Girls
7	Rahim Yar Khan	45/P	111/1L	Christian	20 Girls
8	Rahim Yar Khan	51/P	New Tibba (Abu Zahbi Colony)	Muslim	16 Girls

## a. Tool-1 Body Mapping Tool

In order to provide an opportunity to children to bring out their inside thoughts out, body mapping tool was used by the research team. Through this tool children were encouraged to expresses their liking and disliking about the things happening with them and around them. Study team conducted eight body mapping exercises with 129 children (62 boys, 67 girls).

From the responses of the children, it can be inferred that there are certain deprivations and challenges they face in their homes and villages. The following observations and records indicate **Limited access to resources**: The children's preferences for clean drinking water, milk, and a clean environment suggest that these resources might be scarce or not readily available in their homes or villages. This indicates a deprivation of basic necessities for a healthy and hygienic lifestyle.

**Lack of educational opportunities**: The children's mention of attending good schools for education highlights a potential lack of quality educational institutions in their villages. This suggests that they might not have access to adequate educational resources and opportunities, which can hinder their overall development.

**Limited recreational facilities**: While the children expressed their liking for recreational activities such as singing songs, listening to music, and watching TV, they may lack proper recreational facilities or access to diverse forms of entertainment. This indicates a potential lack of recreational opportunities for their overall well-being and enjoyment.

**Exposure to violence and disrespectful behavior**: The children's dislikes regarding the use of nasty/obnoxious language and experiencing beatings suggest that they might be exposed to violence and disrespectful behavior within their homes or communities. This points to a concerning issue of child protection and the need for creating safe and nurturing environments for children.

Hygiene and sanitation challenges: The children's dislikes related to walking barefoot, wearing

unwashed clothes, and engaging in unsanitary tasks indicate that they may face challenges in maintaining personal hygiene and living in unclean surroundings. This suggests a need for improved sanitation infrastructure and awareness regarding hygiene practices in their homes and villages.

**Lack of freedom and autonomy**: The children's mention of disliking unnecessary restrictions imposed by parents and teachers implies that they may have limited freedom and autonomy in decision-making and exploring their interests. This indicates a potential deprivation of agency and independence within their familial and educational contexts.

**Overall**, these responses highlight various areas where children might be experiencing deprivations and limitations in their homes and villages. Addressing these challenges requires efforts to improve access to resources, quality education, recreational opportunities, child protection measures, hygiene and sanitation facilities, and promoting children's rights to freedom and autonomy.

## 9.2 Tool-2 Traffic Signal Lights Tools

## 9.2.1-The Right to Education

The traffic signal lights tool was used to know the views of children about the right to education. Altogether in eight Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) 129 children (62 boys, 67 girls) took part in the FGDs and expressed their views. 69% of children (40 boys, 50 girls) chose the red color and shared that they don't enjoy their right to education.

The majority of the participants of the FGDs shared that the main causes of not enjoying the right to education include lack of financial resources, non-existence of schools in the village, mistreatment by the teachers, illiterate parents, unawareness of parents with the importance of education, socio-cultural inhibitions, particularly in the Hindu Community ."My father stopped sending me to school after the second class I am the elder of all nine siblings and I started helping my father at the farm but I continued to love my parents and learn by requesting books from a wealthy friend" (FGD Participant-Boy)

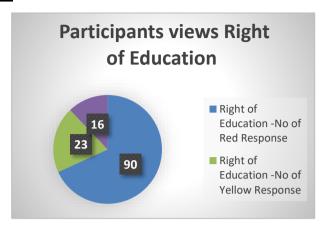
20% of children (13 boys, 10 girls) chose a yellow color to express that most of the time, they do not attend school and sometimes they do not attend school regularly.

"During the summer holidays in school, I helped my mother in cotton picking in the field. But after the holidays, she permanently stopped school as need my help to take care of family members when she left home for the farms. I know family care is important. I dishearten and quiet and I did like other girls of my age do in our community" (FGD Participant-Girl). Unemployment, poverty, parents being trapped in the vicious cycle of debt, parents are depressed, no nearby high or girls' school, involvement in cotton picking, girls' discrimination and lack of awareness about the child right, feudal system were the main reasons which hinder children to enjoy this right.

11% (9 boys, 7 girls) choosing green children indicated that they are enjoying their right to education. The children shared that their parents are aware of the importance of education and but due to poverty, they can't afford to send school.

Table:1: Participant views on the right of Education

Particular	No. of Children	%
Right of Education -No of Red Response	90	69%
Right of Education -No of Yellow Response	23	20%
Right of Education -No of Green Response	16	11%
Total	129	100%



#### 9.2.2-The Right to Protection from Being Beaten

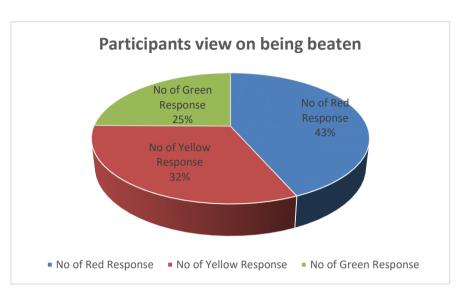
The research team used traffic lights signal tool for knowing the children's views about the right to protection from being beaten. Only 25% of children shared that they enjoy the right to protection from being beaten. They further added that are not beaten at home and children by their parents, teachers or any elders. Some of the children almost 32% shared that most of the time we enjoy this right but occasionally, this right is violated.

While 43% of children 56 (34 boys, 22 girls) shared that they don't enjoy this right. They further shared that at the household level, they are beaten or scolded by the eldest members of the family (father, mother, eldest brother & sister) and at school. Somehow, they experience harsh discipline from their parents, primarily through verbal discipline (scolding, yelling) especially when parents/teachers demand children's obedience and when parents confront children's wrongdoings. One child in FGD expressed his unhappiness, "we [children] in our village face many difficulties because our parents scold us for looking after livestock and even teachers sometimes beat us in schools.

Children appeared to force obedience and respect from their parents. Which sometimes leads to the use of harsh discipline when children do not obey orders or when they make mistakes. Numerous children noted that they were less likely to open up and discuss mistakes with their parents out of fear of harsh punishment. The study shows that this level of obedience may be an unrealistic expectation for children, which may result in inappropriate parenting practices in terms of verbal or physical violence Another child shared "My father not used to beat us; just scolded us. But I don't like when he beat my mother simply because we don't have enough money to provide us to eat."

Table:2: Participant views on the Right to protection from being Beaten

Particular	No. of Children	%
No of Red Response	56	43
No of Yellow Response	41	32
No of Green Response	32	25
Total	129	100



#### 9.2.3 -The Right to Protection from Labor Exploitation

Most of the children 37% of the children (08 boys, 40 girls) shared that they enjoy the right to protection from labor exploitation as they enjoy their education right development and well-being. Some of the children 45% (45 boys, 13 girls) shared that they don't enjoy this right.

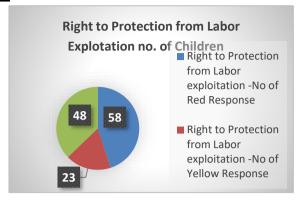
The causes for not enjoying this right include deep-rooted poverty, unemployment, early child marriages, non-existence of school, no access to government schemes/initiatives and discrimination. All these causes badly affect the children's mental health, physical development and growth and low self-esteem, children get to indulge in bad activities and lose quality childhood. A few of the children 18% (09 boys, 14 girls) shared that most of the time we enjoy this right but occasionally, this right is violated. Children shared that after school time and summer vacations, they have to accompany their parents in the field to give a hand to them. The children shared that lack of school, far location of the school, lack of support for education, unaware parents, gender and religious-based discrimination, and unavailability of skill centres. All the aforesaid causes have deleterious effects on children's mental health, physical development and growth, low self-esteem, suicide cases increase, children get to indulge in bad activities, and losing quality childhood. Children in the areas have been deprived of family bonding and childhood, and are enduring mental torturers as a result of child work and early marriage, as shared by the children in the locations. "Both my younger brother and I are working in the field, helping our father. However, they only pay

my father, not me".

"Gull Badan said that when I went back to school, I would go to farms with my mother to help her. Sometimes, I would play near my mother".

Table:3: Right the Protection from Labor Exploitation

Particular	No. of Children	%
No of Red Response	58	45%
No of Yellow Response	23	18%
No of Green Response	48	37%
Total	129	100%



#### 9.2.4 - The Right to Expression and Participation among Children:

The research team used traffic lights signal tool for knowing the children's views about the rights to expression and participation among children. 79 % of children (44 boys, 58 girls) shared that they don't enjoy the right to expression and participation. Participation of children and adolescents in decision-making in the project area and children's life is weak. When asked, children say they are not adequately consulted on issues concerning them. As a result, children do not believe that they can have an active role in participation and in finding solutions to problems. Since children are not consulted enough, their needs are not fulfilled which leads to a proliferation of problems. Even when children's voices are heard they are not taken properly into consideration. 09% (12 Children) were occasionally enjoying this right by having a say related to dress colors and food choice but not in values matters of their concern.

The causes for not enjoying the right to expression and participation among children include gap, gender inequality, lack of awareness about the child's rights, unfriendly environment, societal pressure, and conservative thinking of parents. These negative effects on children include lack of confidence, low self-esteem, mental and psychological disturbance, inability to make informed decisions, no focus on education, difficulty survival, indulgence in bad activities, and barriers to open and heart-to-heart discussion with parents.12% of (15 children) said that their parents respected them and their views and they are enjoying their expression and decision power.

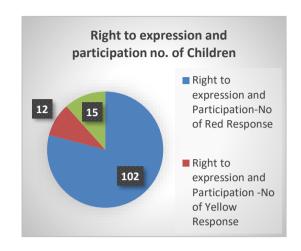
"Sometimes, my mother asks me what we should cook when she's in a good mood and feeling happy otherwise we will eat sasta khana ( affordable food) ".

In my life, neither my mother nor my father asked or got involved in any decisions, not even regarding what we wear and where we married.

Another participant shared, "One day, my mother brought a dress for me on Eid. I didn't like it, but my mother forced me to wear it, disregarding my preference".

Table:4: Participant views on the right to expression and Participation

Particular	No. of Children	%
No of Red Response	102	79%
No of Yellow Response	12	9%
No of Green Response	15	12%
Total	129	100%



## 9.3-Tool-3 Problem Tree Analyses Tool

The research team used a problem tree analysis tool in the focus group discussion with children to know the causes and effects of the top most prioritized children's rights issue.

#### 1- Education

22% of children shared that Education emerged as the topmost root cause in their views through probing questions to understand the causes this issue. Children have not high school for boys in their area while not have primary schools for girls or at a distance from the house The participants of the FGDs shared causes that parents are uneducated and unaware of the importance of child education and right, unsafe environment for girls particularly for minority community, local landlord not give value for the education. This causes Early marriage, child labor, overburdened children, indulging in bad activities, illiterate children, impaired decision making, low self-esteem, ill-mannered, low confidence, bad impact on children's mental, physical and social health, behavioral issues in children, and inferior complexity. It is slowing down family and community growth and development and affecting the community's ability to combat the local issues and the community will not move out of the vicious cycle of poverty, and deprivation among the community increase.

#### 2- Gender Discrimination

Gender-based discrimination emerged as a big issue highlighted by 23% children as a problem tree analyses. Girls shared that being a girl they were not given preferences in their families; whereas only some boys said that it is not the case, they were given preferences in their families. The participants shared that parent don't invest in girls' education as there is a notion that girls will move outside the family after marriage. In boys FGDs it was noted that they had no idea about whether girls are given less food or not. They said that in actual life, in the village, male members were

usually first served with the food. Then, women eat. In a similar way, boys were fed first then girls were served. If the food was scarce or limited, girls were given less. Participants said that their parents were paying little attention to girls. They shared that parent invest on boys because they think, they will take care of them when they will get older. The negative effects of the gender-based discrimination include education denied, low confidence, early child marriage, health issues stress, depression etc.

#### 3- Early Child Marriage

22% of children emerged early child marriage as the root cause which revealed that most of the girls who dropped from school are the victim of early child marriage. The other causes include exchange marriage, more female children in the family, girls being considered as a burden on the family, poverty, lack of school or far location of the school, parents' awareness about the effects of early child marriage, the risk of fleeing of girls from home. Early child marriage has enormous negative effects on the health of the children. This is driven by cultural norms and economic factors especially in minority Hindu communities, significantly impacting girls' rights to withdraw from school, as their responsibilities shift to domestic roles and childbearing at a young age.

#### 4- Child Labor

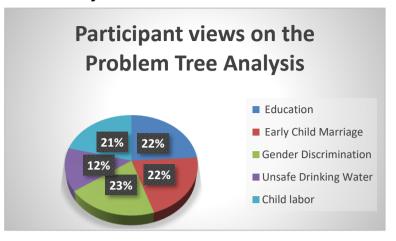
Child labor emerged as another big issue. The study concludes that 21% children of the farm children were involved in different Agricultural practices at different levels (full-time and part-time after schooling). Mostly they were involved in grazing animals, feeding, watering, milking, harvesting, threshing, weeding, cotton picking ploughing, storage, firewood collection and spraying fertilizer as helpers. Regression analysis shows that poverty child's age, gender and school distance are the most important determinants of their involvement in child labor. Similarly, household characteristics such as education and income are affecting children's involvement in child labor. Children have limited access to nearby schools. This could be the main factor of children involved in the study area. All the aforesaid causes have deleterious effects on children's mental health, physical development and growth, low self-esteem, suicide cases increase, unprotected children get to indulge in bad activities, and loss quality childhood.

#### 5- Lack of Access to Clean Drinking Water

12% of participants in the focus group discussion said that clean drinking water is not available to them and the problem is caused by children's health and education. The causes of non-availability of the clean drinking water include groundwater is not drinkable, the sweet water hand pumps are located far away from the village and hard to fetch water from there. The use of uncleaned water affects the health of the children. Children suffer from gastrointestinal problems, diarrhoea, hepatitis, kidney diseases, skin diseases etc. A child said that his parents did not take him to any health outlet and gave him medicines themselves. 22 children said they took them to private clinics and 37 said that they were taken to government hospitals whenever and wherever they get ill or sick.

Table:5: Participant Views on the Problem Tree Analysis

Root Cause identified by children	No. of Children	%
Education	29	22
Gender Discrimination	29	23
Early Child Marriage	28	22
Child labor	28	21
Unsafe Drinking Water	15	12
Total	129	100%



## 9.4- Are Children Happy in Their Villages?

Before going to the next theme, it is important to understand, what children said about their happiness in their villages during activities and FGDs with researchers. The number of children is so small; however, many would agree that their views represent the majority of children from their area

In all the FGDs, children have described the following statement: "Most of the children are happy in the village because they live a good life, eat good food, they go to school, teachers do not beat them and elders and parents do not beat them and they feel safe in their village." After reading this brief statement, they were asked, is this statement true?

It proved a good idea to get an insight of children where they challenged that this statement is not completely true. They said that there might be some children who were living a happy life getting 3 times the food; however, one child said, "We in our village face many difficulties, [because] they [parents] engage us in agriculture, looking after livestock, and even teachers beat us and discriminate in schools as we are from Chak 53-P (mainly Hindu community residential area)."

Some children pointed out class segregation which reflects in the children's experiences, as some children shared that the "only statement could be for children of landlords as they have had unjoyful life, they have everything toys books and bags and they went to private schools."

Children confessed that they belong to poor families and went to government schools and work at home, their schools have no boundaries where dogs and animals also come to learn. They said that statement may reflect with landlord's children or maybe facilities provided to children which they see in TV shows. One child added, "We [children] do not have good clothes as children of landlords wear".

## 9.5 - Children Recommendation:

Based on findings from Children they also recommend

- An increase in the number of government schools in our areas to ensure children's access to free and quality education
- Provide us medical care, vaccinations, food, clean water to ensure our health

- treated with dignity and respect, keep us equal without any gender religious disability poor or rich difference
- Protect us from hazards and violence
- Provide us opportunities to play, engage in recreational activities to experience childhood joys
- Listen to our voices and include us in matters that concern us.
- Provide us with skill training on additional income-generating activities for our parents as well as for themselves to cope with poverty.

## 10-Key Findings with Adults (Parents & Caretakers)

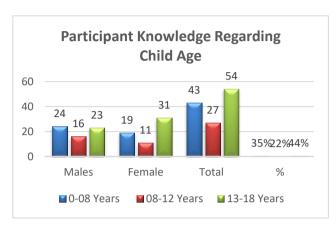
Sr.No	Tehsil	UC Name	Village	FGD Target Group	Ethnicity	No. of Participants
1	Rahim Yar Khan	51/p	53/P	Mothers	Muslim	15
2	Khan pur	45/p	115/1L	Mothers	Hindu	15
3	Rahim Yar Khan	51/p	Chak 54/P	Mothers	Hindu	15
4	Rahim Yar Khan	51/p	54/P	Fathers	Muslim	15
5	Rahim Yar Khan	51/p	New Tibba (Abu Zahbi Colony)	Mothers	Muslim	16
6	Khan pur	45/P	115/1L	Fathers	Hindu	17
7	Khan pur	45/P	116/1L	Fathers	Christian	16
8	Khan pur	45/P	110/1L	Fathers	Muslim	15

FGD Group	Ethnicity			Total Participants
	Muslim	Christian	Hindu	Participants
Fathers	2	1	1	63
Mothers	2	0	2	61
Total				124

Summary statics for the socioeconomic characteristics of the participant's households. The household size was on average, six to seven individuals, and they were headed mostly by male individuals. and most of the parents /caretakers were uneducated. Their mean education was around the primary level (5 years). Agriculture was the main source of income for 87 percent of the households. Their total household income was on average, 15,000 -20,000 Pakistani rupees (PKR) per month.

In many countries, there are legal definitions of a child that set a minimum age for certain rights and responsibilities, such as access to education, protection from child labor, and participation in decision-making processes. These legal definitions often consider a person under the age of 18 as a child.

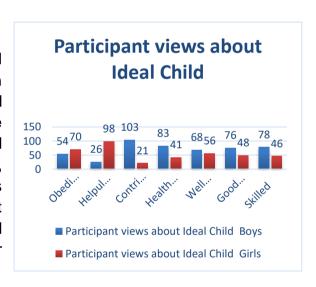
Table:6: Participants Knowledge of Child Age



Parents discussed that 56% of shared children are below 08-12 years old, while 44% consider children are their offspring or extended family members. They noted an increased emphasis on child rights and protection which was lacking in their time. 52% of parents believe improvements in healthcare services and awareness campaigns improved access to healthcare for children. 37% focus on education, but 11% acknowledge fast and less obedient children.

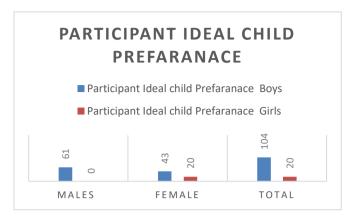
## Table:7: Participants views regarding Ideal Child

A noticeable number of 79 % of parents responded that they expected their girls to obey and help them in household chores and 83 % shared boys to obey and earn income. Play and leisure are less likely to be mentioned as a child's need across parents of all communities. The majority of parents, both mothers, and fathers, who have children across the age groups also expect children to take care of their own and get advice to protect themselves Ideal children should have good health, and strength, and contribute to their families' livelihood.



Out of 124 parents, 27 stated their children did not have rights, possibly due to social/traditional practices that empower adults to use violence. All parents struggled to provide enough food for their children due to poverty and instability.

**Table:8: Participants Child Preference** 



Only 20 female parents preferred girls as a child and no single male parents. Male child preference is a significant discriminatory practice and girls' rights violence's an issue not only in Rahim Yar Khan but in Pakistan, particularly in rural areas, where girls are seen as a burden for parents who will cost a large sum of money in terms of their education and dowry while getting married. However, the male child is considered to be a bread earner and a link to the next generation.

Despite the fact 47% Parents shared that children have limited access to quality early childhood education and care, insufficient nutrition and healthcare, and lack of safe play areas and toys that promote physical development. Exposure to unhygienic environments increases the risk of diseases as well as high dropout rates due to economic pressures, child labor, early marriage, limited access to vocational training opportunities, and lack of awareness about sexual and reproductive health. it was highlighted that very few parents have the realization of the importance of birth registration and certificates. Only on the occasion of registration in schools or to get CNIC, parents in rural areas get their children registered. As a result of poor interest in birth registration, in Punjab, the overall birth registration is 34 percent. In Pakistan, the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and local union councils, have initiated programs for the registration of children at birth through awarenessraising and facilitation in providing certificates; however, these programs in district Rahim Yar Khan have not gained the attention of people.

During the discussion regarding the children's group who has more problems than the average and why? 47% of parents report gender disparities in their areas, limiting girls' access to education, early marriage, and violence, impacting their well-being and prospects. According to 43% of parents, Ethnic minority children face marginalization, discrimination, and limited access to resources, while 10 % of parents highlighted economically disadvantaged children face high risk due to agricultural work and hazardous tasks.

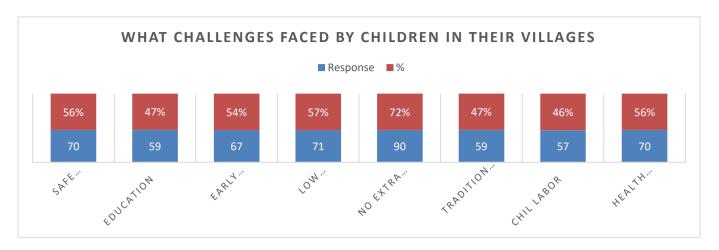
FGD groups lack a significant sample size of parents with disabled children, but they reported limited time and resources for extra attention, care, and protection. One parent emphasized earning something more important for integrating the child into society.

Parents report teachers and landlords supporting children's education, financial assistance through BISP and REEDS, and health department polio campaigns. However, 54% of parents share early child marriage practices, particularly "Vatta Satta" marriage in their community.

Girls become pregnant early and boys don't take responsibility. The money situation isn't sufficient. They can stop going to school and it ruins their future. (Mother of Adolescent girl)

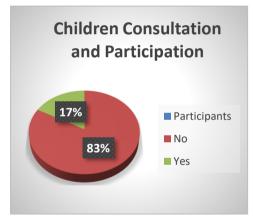
while 46% shared that child labour, particularly hard work and hazardous work is harmful to them 72% of Parents shared that there are no entertainment activities that children enjoy and learn from while 18% shared that such activities are only conducted in schools or the programs organized by the REED.

Table:9: Children Faced Challenges in their Villages



After a deep-down discussion, parents shared that to fulfill the family needs we send our boys to work in shops, hotels, fields etc. so at the workplace our children are abused, harassed and even they are also beaten by the owners. In this situation some children share with their parents while most of the children don't talk to anyone because of fear although they have a good relationship with them 65% of parents claimed no doubt, they love their children and work hard day and night to fulfil their needs still some children remain angry due to poverty and unemployment to meet their basic needs.

Table:10: Children Consultation and Participation



Regarding the discussion of children's involvement in decisionmaking processes they shared it may vary, there is increasing recognition of the value of their participation and efforts to promote their rights and inclusion in relevant discussions but almost 83% of parents shared that children are not consulted in our society; adults make decisions about them while few shared that children may be consulted in schools to some extent and their opinion is asked.

Children no participation is due to a lack of information and trust. Parents don't want to talk to their children as they do have

not much time and they say it's the elders' responsibility to keep away children from the daily matters which caused stress.

Parents shared in deep sorrow, they play a crucial role in protecting their child rights by promoting education, preventing child labor, ensuring health and nutrition, raising awareness, and collaborating with relevant stakeholders as this is their top priority and the government should support in reducing poverty by creating employment opportunities. Certainly, this is the parents' obligation to raise awareness and educate the community about child rights, including their rights to education, protection, participation, awareness and understanding. Parents may actively involve children and youth in decision-making processes and community development initiatives as well as parents may strengthen partnerships with local government agencies, NGOs, and civil society organizations working on child rights, keeping in view the children's issues like Child Labour, Early marriage and discrimination.

The most essential priorities for improving children's development are access to quality education, access to healthcare, access to clean drinking water and proper sanitation, a protective environment, raising awareness about child rights and protection, establishing child protection mechanisms, ensuring reporting and response systems are in place as well as addressing poverty and promoting sustainable livelihoods. So, it is a community member's responsibility to actively engage in dialogue, collaborate with relevant stakeholders and work collectively towards addressing these issues and contribute to creating a nurturing and supportive environment for children, ensuring their rights are protected, and fostering their holistic development. Because by actively involving children and people they become agents of change and contribute to their well-being and that of their community. Their participation fosters a sense of ownership, empowerment, and collective responsibility in creating positive change.

## 10.1-Recommendations/Suggestions

Poverty should be eradicated by creating employment opportunities.

Child protection should be fully functional in all aspects.

Free health and education facilities for children should be provided in full and educational scholarships should be issued.

- 1- **An awareness campaign** is to be conducted to highlight the importance of good upbringing of children (Positive **parenting program)**
- 2- National-level campaigns against child labour should be conducted.

Parents should also collaborate with community members, schools, and relevant organizations to access additional resources and support for their children's well-being.

Education:

**Prioritize and encourage** regular school attendance for their children. Engage in open and supportive communication with their children about their education, goals, and challenges. Collaborate with teachers and actively participate in parent-teacher meetings and school activities. Protection:

**Educate themselves** and their children about child rights, protection, and potential risks in the community. Establish trust with their children so that they feel comfortable sharing any concerns or incidents with their parents.

Livelihoods:

**Encourage and support** their children's interests and talents, guiding them towards suitable vocational or educational paths. Seek opportunities for skill development and vocational training for their children, based on their interests and local opportunities. Teach financial literacy and encourage savings habits among their children to build economic resilience.

**Connect with local resources**, organizations, or government programs that can support their children's livelihood aspirations.

## 11- Key Finding with Stakeholders

To collect data from the experts, KIIs showed great value. The interviews sought to measure the level to which stakeholders are aware of their role, discern their attitude towards their accountability and identify the gaps in fulfilling legal commitments towards children's rights. It also aided to proffer an opportunity to criticize the other stakeholder concerning their roles and responsibilities.

Sr. No	Location	Respondent Name	Department/Organization	Designation
1	NCHD Office	Mr. Zia-Ul- Qadir	National Commission for Human Development RYK	Deputy Director Operations
2	Govt Girls. High School Chak 101/1L,	Ms. Rehana Iram	Education Department RYK	Focal Person Early Childhood Care & Education
3	Child Protection Department	Kalim Ullah	Child Protection Institute RYK	Department Office Incharge
4	Chak 51-P	Guru Sukh Dev Ji	Member of District Interfaith Harmony Committee RYK	Religious Leader Hindu Community/Member of District Interfaith Harmony Committee RY Khan
5	Health Department	Dr. Yousaf Saeed	Health Department RYK	Focal Person Children Health Preventive Program
6	Social Welfare Department	Rana Muhammad Irfan	Social Welfare Department RYK	Social Welfare Officer

## 11.1-Analysis of Stakeholder

The departmental Support Mechanism for Children seems to be lacking effectiveness at the district level, as it may not be adequately reaching vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals such as women and children. Social welfare Bait-ul-Mal, the oldest program, provides financial assistance but requires government department support and allocation of funds.

The main means to build a support mechanism for child protection and rights are awareness, capacity building, and sensitization. However, all departments in the mandate are not aligned with the CRC and lack data collection mechanisms and systems. Government agencies often collect and report data on child rights issues by NGOs. Collaboration between line agencies and civil society organizations is valued in the district of Rahim Yar Khan. Dr. Yousaf Saeed, the Preventive Health Program's focal person, stated that children are the most impoverished demographic in the district, with a severe lack of health facilities and services. Unsanitary practices affecting children's nutrition and health, as well as water-borne diseases, are the most common health issues among children. He observed a preference for boys over girls in religious minority groups, such as Bheel, Kohli, and Christian, who are poor and often visit Basic Health Units. They noted that most Hindu and Christian parents cannot afford high-priced medications or specific medical tests. The proportion of minority children receiving basic vaccinations is low, with 56% of boys being fully vaccinated than girls, and

significant differences in immunization coverage exist across geographic, social, and economic divides. Low-income families and farm workers in minority communities face challenges in access to and utilization of immunization services. Lack of awareness, challenges from health departments, and doubts about vaccine benefits contribute to low coverage and immunization dropout rates. Low literacy rates, poverty, and women's disempowerment also constrain access to immunization and maternal, newborn, and child health services. Communities become passive recipients, with some expecting vaccinations to be delivered to their doorsteps.

Education department representative Ms. Rehana Irum highlights the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and Waseela e Taaleem cash transfer programs, which aim to provide financial skills, reduce poverty, and promote equitable wealth distribution. The BISP helps qualified households with children aged 5-12 enrol in primary school or continue their education. However, girls in minority rural communities still face discrimination. Irum also addresses gender-based discrimination among children, highlighting the need for knowledge, opportunities, and legal measures to address these challenges. Despite these efforts, state apparatuses have little interest in combating discriminatory practices.

Sukh Dev G, a Hindu religious leader and Committee member of interfaith harmony expressed concern about child rights in the project area where minority girls and children are vulnerable. Gender discrimination is a socio-cultural norm which assigns women and girls primarily reproductive, domestic and dependent roles by increasing child labor early child marriages and children dropping out of school are not considered child rights violations in the community. Govt and Civil society organizations are working to push authorities for gender justice and balance, but limited resources make changes invisible. Religious leaders often can play a positive role to address child rights issues, focusing on poverty, equitable resource distribution, social justice, and economic empowerment initiatives to uplift disadvantaged children and families but their sensitization and awareness towards community development are limited. The state machinery has all resources as well as legal powers to bring positive change for a just and equitable society; however, their will and interests were lacking, they wanted to maintain thesame status so that their and others' negative interests could be served without any barrier.

Local organizations in Rahim Yar Khan are working to protect and promote child rights, but their capacity and resources are limited. Rural children, girls, minorities, and disabled children are particularly disadvantaged due to social stigma and a lack of facilities, educational materials, and trained teachers. This exclusion discourages poor parents from sending children with disabilities to school and hinders the development of inclusive environments.

FGD/KIIs provided space to challenge opinions and develop consensus on issues, identifying stakeholders, roles, and capacity gaps. It elaborated on trends and understanding child rights situations and their expression in children's lives.

## 12- Constraints / Challenge

While conducting this research, the research and data collection team observed the following constraints:

- Due to heavy rain, the work on the CRSA was delayed and staff got involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance to the rain-affected people in the project area.
- It was hard to+ convince and get consent from the parents of children who were not a part of SHGs.
- It was hard to remove the reluctance and build rapport with parents of children belonging to Hindu, Christian and Muslim community.
- Availability of the participants (particularly fathers of children) for the FGDs as they were the causal laborers.
- To make an appointment with government officials for FGDs and their reluctance was another challenge to share any figures and real information which could affect their positions
- CFs and project staff although have basic idea to conduct CRSA but idea is in compare with technical expert which took a long time and may affect the qualitative data and insight

## 13- Analysis of Crosscutting Factors

#### **Gender Discrimination**

Sometimes the respondents are incapable of understanding the social or traditional structures which they follow; therefore, they do not express any issues related to them. Similarly, many children and parent respondents did not mention the type and scale of gender discrimination practiced; however, they were some who were able to mark out discrimination against girls in homes when food is served and in education when girls are stoppedto attend schools because parents had no interests in girls' education. There were the least efforts by the government agencies to address issues of girls and women facing discrimination in homes and public spheres. In addition, the role of civil society organizations was negligible. Even though Pakistan ratified the CEDAW and the UNCRC, which categorically prohibits all kinds of discrimination at all levels; however, the ground realities in district Rahim Yar Khan have not changed much.

#### Low Utilization of Funds for Children-Specific Rights

Realization of child rights is hampered by insignificant funds allocated to increase the number of schools facilities, health facilities, and other child protection and welfare institutions such as child protection and rehabilitation centres, centres for children with disabilities by expressing the stakeholders Generally, it appears that budgets are not allocated as per need in health, education and social welfare sectors of these in district Rahim Yar Khan, the scale of population needs or demands are so higher. The existing health facilities merely cover about 30 percent population's needs and rights. In the absence of health services and facilities, children are usually deprived of their right to life as per response by Govt Officials. In 2022, Pakistan was ranked 140 out of 180 most corrupt countries. Corruption and underutilization of funds have badly affected children's rights in the district. High corruption in the health and education sectors had a serious impact on childrenit implies that they would not receive health and education services.

#### The Absence of Data

The absence of complete and updated data badly undermines children's rights and policies framed for children. Unfortunately, a couple of years ago, there were serious efforts by government departments to gather data on health and education such as Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM), but over the last few years, after covid and political instability such efforts have stopped and overlooked.

#### Unemployment

As indicated by various children, parents, teachers, civil society representative members and government officials, the majority of children abandon studies and work in different sectors, it was because of poverty, and poverty perpetuated in these areas because of a higher rate of unemployment, which led to a higher rate of child labour. The existing resources and employment opportunities were considered insufficient to meet the livelihood, education, health and other needs of families, therefore, child labor and school dropout increased.

#### **Natural Catastrophes**

Heavy rains in 2022 brought the worst nightmares for people in the WAFA project areas as well as the district level. people especially children were in distress, schools and health facilities were damaged and livelihood sources were ruined. These calamities also bring suffering to children. Largely, there is the government's inability to protect or save the environment where children have to live and survive natural calamity put the services has put thousands of families sufferings.

#### The Absence of Policy, Plan of Action and Goals

The CRSA also reveals that all the concerned departments were without a policy, plan of action or goals regarding UNCRC. They were working on an adhock basis. They worked in a cycle around the year without any major and achievable goals. These departments with such an approach, therefore, had not been able to progress in health, education and social welfare services. On the other hand, the number of populations was rapidly increasing every year while resources and funding is squeezing.

## 14- Analysis of Crosscutting Actors

#### **UN Agencies and Civil Society Organizations**

The role of UN organizations such as UNICEF and UNDP in the area is not directly visible and has not been for a long time with the communities and government authorities in the area. They typically target officials in urban areas and collaborate with local or national organizations such as Idara Taaleem o Agahe (ITA), NCHD, NRSP Human Development Foundation (HDF), and Bunyad Foundation to support children's rights through any working thematic programme such as education or health, but in the field data and social welfare department KIIs, no single organization exists that is solely and exclusively focused on child rights.

#### **Political Parties**

Children are not a priority for political parties; thus, children are not included in most of the main political parties' development agendas or manifestos.

#### **Role and Capacity of Duty Bearers**

In Key Informative Interviews KIIs, relatively few people cited religion-based discrimination; yet, many people mentioned gender-specific practices; however, these behaviors were common societal behavior among religious minorities related to females and children. Field observations indicate that those in charge of the social, economic, and political fabric of society were unwilling to treat poor and deprived groups fairly. These difficulties must be addressed by the provision of knowledge, opportunities, and legal measures; yet, the state apparatuses have little interest in combating discriminatory practices.

Civil society has an important role in highlighting, supporting, and demanding non-discrimination against children, whether they are females or religious minorities. There are a few organizations that are directly involved in making society just for everyone and without discrimination. Civil society organizations must exert extra effort to persuade authorities to develop policies and practices that promote gender justice and gender balance; at the district level, organizations could collaborate to end gender and religion-based discrimination against children, but their resources are limited, so changes are invisible.

The state machinery possesses all resources and legal capabilities to effect positive change for a just and equitable society; however, their will and interests are lacking; Some local organizations in Rahim Yar Khan were working to protect and promote some areas of child rights; however, their capacity and resources did not allow them to reach out to every single child; however, these groups were motivated to create the best environment for children's rights enjoyment.

#### Parents, Teachers and Civil Society

The role of parents is critical in assisting children in gaining access to their basic rights, which include protection from violence, abuse, and exploitation in homes, workplaces, and schools, as well as access to health and education services and facilities; in the district project intervention area, rural parents and marginalized communities' inclination was towards education.

However, in practice, these parents had little part in protecting children in their homes, schools, and workplaces, as well as in gaining access to health and education facilities.

Among the duty bearers are the parents because children entirely depend on their parents (biological or only social), therefore, parents have to take care of children's social, economic, educational, developmental, psychological and physiological needs and rights. Either the cruelest treatment children receive in the workshops or schools; teachers and employers have total control and authority over children. The field data and children sharing suggests that children's views and opinion did not matter and decisions related to children's education and rather they were punished with sticks.

## 15-Conclusion

Field observations reveal numerous child rights violations and challenges in enforcing relevant laws. Issues like child sexual abuse, early marriages, exploitation, school punishment, and lack of access to education and health services are prevalent, with these areas receiving minimal attention from district administrations. These issues are critical for children's survival, protection, development, and participation.

Poverty and lack of interest in education are the primary reasons for children dropping out of school and engaging in labor or early child marriages. Many children are engaged in child labor, even while attending school, as they must care for their parents and their landlord farms. Traditional practices like child marriages and no education tradition also contribute to a higher rate of girls not attending or dropping out of school.

Child marriages are higher but less reported and shared due to media awareness of illegal practices. People perform these marriages with formal and informal systems, institutions, and structures at the grassroots level. The marriage registrar, one of these institutions, is one of the sources of livelihood for the registrar. The system prevails, but laws are violated due to no monitoring systems at any level.

Child violence and punishment in schools and homes is a prevalent issue in the area. To protect children, education departments in Rahim Yar Khan need to implement measures to address punishment. Parents' and authorities' lack of interest in birth registration and lack of systems for newborn baby registration has created problems for children. The situation of child rights in Rahim Yar Khan is not favorable, requiring urgent steps following UNCRC and other guiding laws and policies.

## 16- Recommendations

"Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them. Any form of discipline involving violence is unacceptable. There are ways to discipline children that are effective in helping children learn about family and social expectations for their behavior – non-violent ones, are appropriate to the child's level of development and consider the best interests of the child" (UN CRC, 1989, FACT SHEET: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child1).

The analysis of crosscutting factors actors and data from the field shows a poor state of child rights in district Rahim Yar Khan. Except for the legal framework, there are found many critical areas, which require the dire attention of authorities at the district level. As a results of the findings of the CRSA, the following main recommendations are forwarded for the betterment and realization of child rights in Rahim Yar Khan:

#### General

All line agencies such as health, education, social welfare, police and labor need to develop their policy and plan of action at the district level. However, these goals should conform with the national

and provincial policy and legal frameworks. Civil society organizations, INGOs and UN agencies can play their role in developing precise and comprehensive district policies and plans of action. As it was repeatedly versed that poverty is the root cause behind child rights and protection problems, it is highly recommended to encourage the national as well as provincial governments to establish rural poverty reduction plans.

#### Health:

Data collection shows that many children in Rahim Yar Khan suffer from acute poverty and use private health facilities. The health sector has faced decades of low investment and commitment to creating an equitable health system. With limited national and provincial resources, significant outside assistance is needed to build an equitable health system that provides high-quality, low-cost preventive, promotive, and curative healthcare in the project area.

A systematic approach to health sector policy-making is necessary for a holistic, integrated strategy for children's and women's healthcare. Strengthening coordination across various entities and service providers is crucial for resource mobilization, child health, nutrition, and malaria care. Addressing insufficient WASH facilities is recommended, as it promotes sustainable systems and practices. This will help address cross-sectoral issues effectively

#### **Education:**

The urgent and prior need for greater allocation to education is crucial for human development, poverty alleviation, and peace and security. A human resource capacity analysis of the Education department can identify capacity gaps and inform a systematic plan to build and strengthen capacities in areas like education policy, planning, teacher education development, curriculum design, examination, special education, inspection systems, education research, and early childhood education.

#### **Child Protection:**

A uniform CRC awareness is essential for a coherent approach to child rights and protection among all departments and communities. Strengthening data collection mechanisms and improving social welfare services are crucial for effective solutions. Increased resources and coordination between agencies are essential for a holistic approach to child protection issues. Community-level efforts should focus on creating protective environments for children, reducing tolerance of working children, domestic violence, punishment, and child marriage, and promoting birth registration and a positive outlook on children with disabilities.

#### For Rural Education and Economic Development Society (REEDS) Pakistan

- 1. Organize consultations with line departments for improving their data collection systems and mechanisms.
- 2. As it was visible that the communities (children, parents, religious leaders' teachers and other caregivers) were also lacking knowledge of and about child rights, REEDS should also spell out a strategy to enhance the understanding of these key actors concerning CRC
- 3. Inaugurate a campaign to sensitize people, from the target area, about the importance of birth registration and the process of birth registration. It may help children to access their civic rights

- and facilities.
- 4. Address the component of gender discrimination in sprogram. There should be some strategies to sensitize people about this discriminatory behavior and treat girls equally to their boys.
- 5. Launch advocacy and awareness campaigns against child labour child marriages punishment in schools and homes
- 6. Strengthen the civil society organizations so that rigorous monitoring of child rights violations should take place.
- 7. Advocate and lobby with the labor department and education department to expand their activities to address the issue of child labor
- 8. Incorporate and exploit the general recommendations, as mentioned above, in their conceptual and operational framework. Promoting low-cost, high-impact interventions to achieve improved newborn care and strengthened routine immunization and WASH facilities
- 9. Lobby with the government for the participation of civil society organizations in the budget allocation and planning process.
- 10. Ensure that children understand their rights and have a say in the planning and evaluation of our projects. This could be through child council's child rights clubs' children's parliaments and child-level video and pictures platform

## 17-Annexes

# 17.1-Annex I – Tools of Data Collection

# Tool- 1: Key Informant Interview with Stakeholders; Child Rights **Situation Analysis District Rahimyar Khan**

## Introduction:

Economic Development Society (REEDS) Palorganization. I am here today to conduct this su under KNH funded project on <b>Self Help Group</b> ask a few questions regarding <b>Child's Rights</b> assess the situation related children and families require 25-30 minutes of your precious time to contact the state of the	Listan. We are a non-Government humanitarian rvey about activity conducted by REEDS Pakistan Approach in District Rahimyar Khan. I want to by REEDS Pakistan in your respective area to s. If you are willing to answer these questions, I will emplete this Questionnaire. The information you will dy and will be used for analysis purposes only. This
Date:	
Tehsil:	
Location:	
Area /Village Name:	
Respondent Name:	
Department/ Organization Name:	
Designation:	

# **Questions:**

1	Please can you briefly tell your name and explain your role and work to support children and families?
2	What are the greatest concerns you have for girls and boys under 18 years of age in your area & why?
3	What are the protection concerns that affect girls in the area most severely?
4	What are the protection concerns that affect boys in the district most severely?
5	Are the concerns different for children living in rural and urban communities? Why?
6	Which children do you consider to be most vulnerable? Why?
7	Are there any trends in Area or District which you think have a negative or positive impact on children & why?
8	Are there any trends in Area or District which you think have a negative or positive impact on families in this district? Why?
9	What are the local government's/Union Council strengths in preventing and responding to child protection and care concerns and/or children's vulnerability?
10	Which legislation and policy developments have been most effective in ensuring children's protection and care & why?
11	What do you consider to be the main gaps or challenges in terms of fulfilment of children's rights to protection in this area & why?
12	What do you consider to be the main gaps or challenges in terms of fulfilment of children's rights to appropriate care in this area? (For example, if children are separated from their families or are unable to live with their parents) Why?
13	How does your government department coordinate with other government departments and/or civil society organisations to respond to the protection and care needs of children in the district?

14	What are the strengths and weaknesses of the coordination mechanisms at the union council /tehsil/district levels? Why?
15	What are your views about the benefits or challenges of encouraging girls and boys to express their views and to take part in decisions affecting them in their schools and communities?
16	What are your views about the benefits or challenges of encouraging girls and boys to express their views and to take part in decisions affecting them at higher levels – for example, in policies and practices affecting them at national and district levels?
17	Do you have any suggestions about how local government services or policies can be strengthened to improve children's situation, especially for the most vulnerable children?
18	Do you have any suggestions about what civil society organisations should do to support government efforts to improve children's situation, especially for the most vulnerable children?
19	Do you have any suggestions about the roles those other actors (e.g. business, media, religious leaders, etc.) could play to help strengthen realisation of children's rights?
20	Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Thank you very much time for taking the time to share your views with me.

Moderator:	Respondent:

# Tool- 2: Focus Group Discussion with Adult; Child Rights Situation Analysis District Rahimyar Khan

The facilitator/moderator will explain at the beginning and the end what the purpose of the focus group is. He will assure all participants that personal data will be kept confidential and set the ground rules for the group discussion with participants. The facilitator must ensure, all discussion points are facilitated in local, decent, and easy-to-understand language. He will obtain oral consent: Ask "Do you agree to participate". The focus group discussion time will be 90 minutes.

Date		FGD Location:	
Union Council		Tehsil	
Moderator Name:		Note Taker Name:	
Gender:	Male □ Female □ Transgender □	Number of Participants:	
Time Duration:			
Target Group			

Part 1: Ice Breaking (Introduction of the moderator/facilitator and participants):

Good morning/afternoon; My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I am working with Rural Education & Economic Development Society (REEDS) Pakistan. We are a non-government humanitarian organization. I am here today to conduct this FGD about activity conducted by REEDS Pakistan under KNH funded project on **Self Help Group Approach in District Rahimyar Khan**. I want to ask a few questions regarding **Child's Rights by REEDS Pakistan** in your respective area to assess the situation related to children and families. If you are willing to answer these questions, I will require 90 minutes of your precious time to complete this discussion. The information you will provide in this FGD is of great value to this study and will be used for analysis purposes only. This information will be kept confidential.

DISCUSSION POINT	PARTICIPANTS RESPONSE	FACILITATOR'S OBSERVATIONS (Examples, quotes)
Do you know the definition of children (Like Age)?		
If you think back to when you were children, what do you think has changed positively or negatively for comparatively the current generation? (For girls/for boys)		
Can you describe what the ideal child is like in your opinion? (For girls/for boys)		
(Probe about, physical, intellectual and behaviour characteristics).		
What are the problems faced by children of different ages in this community? (For girls/for boys)		
Are there some groups of children who have more problems than the average? If so which groups of children, are they? Why do they have more problems? (For girls/for boys)		
Are there some people/institutions within the community that are particularly good at supporting children? Who/what are they? Why are they good at this and how do they support children? (For girls/for boys)		
Are there any norms, values and practices that you think are harmful to children? For girls & Boys.		
What are they? Who is practising those norms and values?		
What community-based learning activities exist here? If yes, how often and where are they held? (For girls/for boys)		
Have you heard of children or youth being abused or harassed? What type of children experience these things the most? (For girls/for boys)		

Do you know where children go for support if they experience abuse or violence? What support system is used against them? Is this common/not common?	
What do you think about your relationship with children at your house and community? (Probe, personal, family issue, Children needs, opinion)	
To what extent children are consulted and involved in decisions affecting them in their families, schools and the community? Why? (For girls/for boys.	
What are the main ways that you and your community members currently protect their child rights?	
What additional roles are priorities for the community to take on to improve child rights in the community?	
What are the top three children's issues that usually concern the community?	
What are the most essential priorities for improving children's lives in this community?	
What roles can community members play to address these issues? (priorities)	
What can children and people involved in this community to help and address these issues?	
Do you have any recommendations/suggestions?	
1	
2	
3	

Thank you very much time for giving the time to share your views with us.

### Tool-3: Participatory Tools for Children; District Rahimyar Khan

The facilitator/moderator will explain at the beginning and the end what the purpose to involve the children in through participatory tools. He/she will assure all participants that personal data will be kept confidential and set the ground rules for the group. The facilitator must ensure, all discussion points are facilitated in local, decent, and easy-to-understand language. He will obtain oral consent: Ask "Do you agree to participate". The focus group discussion time will be 90 minutes.

Date			FGD Location:	
Union Council			Tehsil	
Moderator Name:			Note Taker Name:	
Gender:	Boys 🛭	Girls 🛭	Number of Participants:	
Time Duration:				
Target Group				

Part 1: Ice Breaking (Introduction of the moderator/facilitator and participants): Good morning/afternoon; My name is I am working with Rural Education &
Economic Development Society (REEDS) Pakistan. We are a non-government humanitarian organization. I
am here today to conduct this activity conducted by REEDS Pakistan under KNH funded project on <b>Self Help</b>
Group Approach in District Rahimyar Khan. I want to ask a few questions regarding Child's Rights by REEDS
Pakistan in your respective area to assess the situation related to children and families. If you are willing to
answer these questions, I will require 90 minutes of your precious time to complete this discussion. The
information you will provide in this activity is of great value to this study and will be used for analysis
purposes only. This information will be kept confidential.

TOOL For CHILDREN / DISCUSSION POINT	PARTICIPANTS RESPONSE	FACILITATOR'S OBSERVATIONS (Examples, quotes)
Body Mapping with the children		
Child Rights Visual cards & traffic lights with the children		
Problem Tree and Causal Analysis with the children		

Thank you very much time for giving the time to share your views with us.

### **Documentation format**

Community profile background information:			
District name:	Community name:		
Key characteristics of the village- or ward (e.g. rural/urba	an, main livelihoods, ethnic groups, etc.):		
Consultation background information:			
Date of consultation:			
Number and type of children consulted (girls/- boys, sch	ool-going or out-of-school, any other relevant characteristics):		

	8-12-year-old girls	8-12-year-old boys	13-17-year-old girls	13-17-year-old boys
Number of children				
in each gender/ age				
group:				
Other background				
characteristics (e.g.				
including out-of-				
school/working				
children, children				
with disabilities,				
children not living				
with parents,				
ethnicity, etc.)				

Name and position of main facilitator/s:

Name and position of main recorder/s:

#### Icebreaker introductions:

Record children's hobbies or likes shared during the icebreaker introduction:

Record any information about the meanings of children's drawings about what they like or do not like:

RECORD RESULTS SEPARATELY FOR EACH GENDER AND AGE GROUP – circle which group the results are for:

Girls aged 8-12 years Boys aged 8-12 years Girls aged 13-17 years Boys aged 13-17 years

# Mapping of child rights situation:

1. Right to education				
Square/Circle	Overall result	Reasons given (causes and impact), and details		
		about which children do or do not enjoy this right		
Red circle: Few children get this right				
Yellow circle: Some children get this right				
Green circle: Most children get this right				

2. Right to protection from being beaten			
Square/Circle	Overall result	Reasons given (causes and impact), and details	
		about which children do or do not enjoy this right	
Red circle: Few children get this right			
Yellow circle: Some children get this right			
Green circle: Most children get this right			

3. Right to protection from labour exploitation					
Square/Circle	Overall result	Reasons given (causes and impact), and details			
		about which children do or do not enjoy this right			
Red circle: Few children get this right					
Yellow circle: Some children get this right					
Green circle: Most children get this right					

4. Right to expression and participation						
Square/Circle	Overall result	Reasons given (causes and impact), and details about which children do or do not enjoy this right				
Red circle: Few children get this right						
Yellow circle: Some children get this right						
Green circle: Most children get this right						

Creative expression (drama / drawing / story etc.)
Share details about the creative expression (drama, story, poem or story):
Which are the main child right violations highlighted by children in this presentation:
1.
2.
3.



### Child rights violation:

Immediate causes:	Root causes:	Impact on children, families, communities, society:

### Notes:

Alternatively re-create the visual presentation of the problem tree that was created by the group, so that connections between immediate and root causes may be seen more clearly.

Ensure separate documentation for each prioritised child rights violation.

Informati	on about	the next	steps in	the	process:
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Record any questions or discussions about next step

## 17.2-Annex II – Photos from Data Collection Activity



FGD- Adult( Mothers/Caregiver)- Chak116-

FGD-Adult(Fathers/Caregiver)-Chak115-1L

FGD- Adult( Mothers/Caregiver)- Chak116-



FGD- Adult (Mothers) Chak 53-P



KII-Education Department Focal person Madam Rehana iram



KII-Sukh daive Ji Pandit(Religious Leader Hindu community/Member of District Interfaith Harmoney Committee RYKhan)



**Body Mapping Tool with Girls (13-17)** 



Traffic Signal Light Tool with Boys (13-17)



Problem Tree Analysis Tool with Boys (7-12)



KII -Focal Person HEALTH Preventive Program Yousaf Saeed



KII-Zia-UI-Qadir (NCHD) Deputy Director operations



FGD Group picture with Girls(13-