AZAD GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
Secretariat Industries, Labour & Mineral Resources
Muzaffarabad
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"Muzaffarabad"
Dated: 10th February, 2026

NOTIFICATION:

No./Ind./730-47/2026. The President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has been pleased to accord approval for notifying, "The Azad Jammu & Kashmir Child Labour Action Plan" along with targets and monitoring framework to eliminate the child labour throughout the State of Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

Elimination of Child Labour in AJ&K- Action Plan

Child labour remains a significant challenge in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K), affecting 16.9% of all children aged 5–17 years. Based on the Child Labour Survey 2024–25, older children (10–17) are particularly vulnerable, with prevalence more than doubling compared to younger age groups. Boys are almost twice as likely to be in child labour as girls, and rural children experience significantly higher exposure than those in urban areas. The highest-burden districts include Kotli, Bagh, Haveli, Bhimber and Neelum, reflecting socio-economic vulnerability, enforcement gaps and limited educational access.

Although AJ&K has enacted strong legislation—Brick Kiln Act 2017, Children Pledging of Labour Act 2017, and Restriction on Employment of Children Act 2019—enforcement remains weak. Poverty, lack of parental education, limited social protection and cultural acceptance of child labour further contribute to the issue.

This Comprehensive Child Labour Action Plan (2025–2030) outlines a fully integrated strategy focusing on enforcement, education, social protection, child protection mechanisms, behavior change and data systems. The Government of AJ&K commits to reducing child labour to below 8.5% by 2030, aligned with SDG 8.7, national commitments, and UNICEF/ILO standards.

Salient Features

The 2025-30 Action Plan includes legal, administrative and development intervention.

1. **Legal Enforcement:** Implement the AJK Child Labour Act 2019 across all districts, with functional inspection and sanction systems.
2. **Education & Skills:** Ensure all children at risk or withdrawn from child labour access appropriate education or safe skills development.
3. **Social Protection:** Reduce household reliance on child income via cash transfers and livelihood support.
4. **Child Protection Systems:** Establish effective mechanisms to identify, withdraw, and rehabilitate child labourers.
5. **Social Norms & Awareness:** Shift attitudes that tolerate child labour through sustained communication and community engagement.

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6. **Data & Coordination:** Operationalize CL-MIS and strong coordination platforms to track progress and adjust strategies.

STRATEGIC PILLARS & DETAILED INTERVENTIONS

PILLAR 1: Legal, Policy & Enforcement

Purpose: Operationalize the AJK Restriction on Employment of Children Act, 2019 so that employing a child below 15 or an adolescent in hazardous work becomes high-risk for employers and socially unacceptable.

1. **Update and enforce the hazardous work list.**
    - Review the 35 hazardous sectors in the Act in light of AJ&K's current economy (e.g., new service sectors).
    - Consult with labour experts, employers and unions.
    - Notify the updated list widely to employers, local government and enforcement agencies.
2. **Strengthen the labour inspectorate.**
    - Recruit additional inspectors in high-burden districts, prioritizing Kotli, Bagh, Haveli, Bhimber and Neelum.
    - Provide specialized training on:
        - Child rights and child labour law,
        - Safe interviewing of children,
        - Recognizing signs of abuse/violence,
        - Referral to child protection services.
3. **Introduce risk-based and sector-focused inspections.**
    - Prioritize inspections in sectors where median working hours are long and risks are high: construction, workshops, small manufacturing, hospitality.
    - Include surprise visits and off-hours inspections where night work is suspected.
4. **Use legal powers fully (warnings, penalties, sealing).**
    - Apply fines and prosecution for repeated offenders as per the AJK Act.
    - Where children are found in hazardous work, inspectors use powers to seal the establishment temporarily and trigger child protection referrals.
5. **Establish District Child Labour Committees (DCLCs).**
    - Chaired by the Deputy Commissioner with Labour, Social Welfare, Education, Police, Local Government, and key NGOs.
    - Review inspection reports, decide on joint actions, and oversee district-level implementation.
6. **Digitalize inspection records through CL-MIS.**
    - Equip inspectors with tablets to record: location, sector, number of children, gender, age, type of work, hours, hazards, and actions taken.
    - Centralize data at the Labour Department and BOS to track trends.

PILLAR 2: Education, Second-Chance Learning & Adolescent Skills

Purpose: Make education the default pathway and work a last resort, by ensuring child labourers and at-risk children are in school or safe training.

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1. **Identify high-risk children in schools and communities.**
    - Use EMIS, teacher reports and community-based mechanisms to spot children who show signs of fatigue, irregular attendance, or known work involvement.
    - Prioritize 10–17-year-olds, where prevalence is highest.
2. **Second-chance education programmes.**
    - Establish flexible, accelerated learning centers in high-prevalence districts (Kotli, Bagh, Haveli, Bhimber and Neelum).
    - Provide short-term bridging to bring children back to age-appropriate grades.
3. **Flexible and non-formal education-Technical Education for Dropouts**
    - For children who currently combine school and work, introduce:
        - Double-shift or evening classes,
        - Non-formal education centers closer to settlements.
    - Ensure that flexible timing is a transition step, not a permanent acceptance of child labour.
4. **Education incentives tied to non-involvement in hazardous labour.**
    - Offer school stipends, uniforms, books and transport in high-burden areas.
    - Condition these on:
        - Regular attendance, and
        - Families' agreement not to engage children in hazardous work.
5. **Teacher training on child labour and violence.**
    - Train teachers/head teachers to:
        - Identify working children and children experiencing workplace violence,
        - Counsel families about risks,
        - Refer cases to District Child Protection Units (CPUs).
6. **Safe adolescent skills and TEVTA.**
    - For 15–17-year-olds, develop non-hazardous apprenticeships with local businesses (e.g., ICT, retail, hospitality with strict safety rules, office support).
    - Ensure no exposure to hazardous machinery, chemicals, heights, or night work.
    - Integrate life skills, workers' rights, and safety training.

PILLAR 3: Social Protection & Livelihood Support

Purpose: Tackle the **economic roots** of child labour so that families can afford for their children to stop working and stay in school.

1. **Household vulnerability mapping.**
    - Use survey and CL-MIS data to identify households with:
        - Multiple working children,
        - Very low income,
        - Single-parent households,
        - Orphans or children with disabilities.
2. **Linking families to existing schemes.**
    - Proactively connect identified households to:

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- BISP/Kafaalat,
- Zakat Funds,
- Food Assistance,
- Health Insurance Schemes/Health Card
- Scholarships.

3. **Child-sensitive social assistance.**
    - Pilot child-labour-sensitive cash transfers in 2–3 high-prevalence districts.
    - Provide modest, predictable support conditional on:
        - Children's school enrolment/attendance, and
        - Withdrawal from hazardous work.
4. **Livelihood training for parents (especially women).**
    - Involve NAVTTC/TEVTA-like institutions to provide short skills courses: tailoring, food processing, small trade, home-based safe enterprise.
    - Provide market linkages so families can replace child income sustainably.
5. **Micro-enterprise grants and soft credit.**
    - In coordination with microfinance banks and donor projects, offer small grants/loans to families that formally commit to keeping children out of hazardous work.

PILLAR 4: Child Protection, Case Management & Response to Violence

Purpose: Respond to child labour as a child protection and violence issue, not just a labour violation.

1. **District Child Protection Units (CPUs).**
    - Establish CPUs in all districts, starting with high-burden ones.
    - Staff them with trained Child Protection Officers and social workers.
2. **Standard Case Management Procedures.**
    - Develop step-by-step SOPs for:
        - Case identification (through inspections, schools, helpline, community reports),
        - Risk assessment and immediate protection,
        - Withdrawal from work,
        - Psychosocial support,
        - Family counselling,
        - Educational/vocational placement,
        - Long-term follow-up.
3. **Child Protection Helpline.**
    - Set up or integrate an existing toll-free number for reporting:
        - Child Labour,
        - Violence,
        - Abuse, Exploitation, Neglect.
    - Publicize it via schools, mosques, media and at workplaces.
4. **Coordination with Police and Judiciary.**
    - In serious cases of violence/abuse at workplaces, CPUs to work with police to:
        - Ensure child-friendly interviewing,
        - Provide protective custody if needed,
        - Pursue legal action against perpetrators.

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5. **Special attention to violence types.**
    - The PPT notes multiple forms of abuse (psychological, physical, sexual).
    - CPUs ensure access to:
        - Medical care,
        - Psychosocial support,
        - Safe shelter (if needed),
        - Legal aid.

PILLAR 5: Awareness, Behavior Change & Community Engagement

Purpose: Make child labour socially unacceptable, while also offering realistic alternatives to families.

1. **AJK child labour communication strategy.**
    - Develop a strategy with clear messages:
        - Child labour is harmful and illegal,
        - Education and skills are pathways to a better future,
        - Islam stresses protection of children and fair treatment.
    - Tailor messages for parents, employers, community leaders and youth.
2. **Mass and social media campaigns.**
    - Use radio, local TV, cable scrolls, social media, and mosque announcements to:
        - Share stories of children harmed by labour,
        - Highlight positive role-model businesses that are child-labour-free.
3. **Community child protection committees.**
    - In hotspot villages/urban pockets, form committees comprising elders, teachers, youth and women.
    - Train them to:
        - Identify child labour,
        - Mediate with families,
        - Refer cases to CPUs.
4. **Employer engagement and recognition.**
    - Organize dialogues with chambers of commerce, market unions, hotel associations, brick-kiln owners, etc.
    - Promote a "Child Labour-Free Establishment" certification/award, with public recognition.
5. **School-based campaigns.**
    - Child clubs in schools to organize debates, theatre, and poster competitions on child rights, schooling and safe work.
    - Encourage peer support for classmates in or at risk of labour.

PILLAR 6: Data, Monitoring & Coordination

Purpose: Ensure that action is targeted, measurable and adaptable over time.

1. **Child Labour Management Information System (CL-MIS).**
    - Integrate data from:
        - Labour inspections,
        - CPUs,
        - Social protection,

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- EMIS,
- Surveys (CL Survey, MICS).

- Enable district and provincial dashboards to track prevalence and response.

2. **AJ&K Child Labour Steering Committee.**
   - Chaired by Department of Labour Welfare, with P&DD, Social Welfare, Education, BOS, Finance and partners (UNICEF, ILO, C4ED).
   - Approves annual plans, reviews progress, and unlocks bottlenecks.
3. **District planning and review.**
   - DCLCs in each district to set annual targets (e.g., number of children withdrawn, inspections conducted, families supported).
   - Quarterly review meetings with documented minutes and follow-up actions.
4. **Mid-term (2027) and End-line (2030) review.**
   - Use a follow-up survey (or MICS module) to re-measure child labour prevalence.
   - Compare with 16.9% baseline and adjust strategies accordingly.

Targets & Monitoring Framework (with Baseline 16.9%)

Level	Indicator	Baseline	2030 Target	Notes
Impact	% of children 5–17 in child labour	**16.9%**	**≤ 8.5%**	~50% reduction
Outcome	No. of children withdrawn from child labour and reintegrated into school/trainings	0	30,000	Tracked via CPUs & CL-MIS
Outcome	School attendance in high-burden districts	89.6%	≥ 96%	Focus on Kotli, Bagh, Haveli, Bhimber, Neelum
Output	No. of functional CPUs	2	CPUs in all districts	Phased rollout
Output	No. of labour inspectors trained on child labour	--	100% of inspectors	Training records
Output	No. of at-risk households receiving social protection or livelihood support	--	20,000+ households	Social Protection database
Output	No. of community child protection committees formed	0	At least 2 per hotspot cluster	Social Welfare/Local Govt

Implementation Phasing (2025–2030)

Phase 1 (2025–2026): Launch & Focus on Priority Districts

- Establish Steering Committee and DCLCs.
- Start CPUs and intensive interventions in Kotli, Bagh, Haveli, Bhimber, Neelum.
- Recruit inspectors and begin risk-based inspections.
- Launch CL-MIS development and communication campaigns.

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Phase 2 (2027–2028): Scale-Up to Remaining Districts

- Expand CPUs to all districts.
- Extend second-chance education and social protection programmes.
- Consolidate community child protection committees and employer engagement.
- Conduct mid-term review; adjust interventions.

Phase 3 (2029–2030): Consolidation & Sustainability

- Integrate child labour measures into routine ADP planning and budgets.
- Strengthen institutional ownership in each department.
- Conduct end-line survey; refine long-term strategy beyond 2030.

Conclusion

The AJ&K Child Labour Action Plan (2025-30) reflects the Government's commitment to eliminate child labour through policy enforcement, education, social protection and awareness mechanisms. A joint effort of Government departments, employers, workers, NGOs and communities is essential to protect children from exploitation and secure their future.

10/3/26

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