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POLICY RESEARCH REPORT

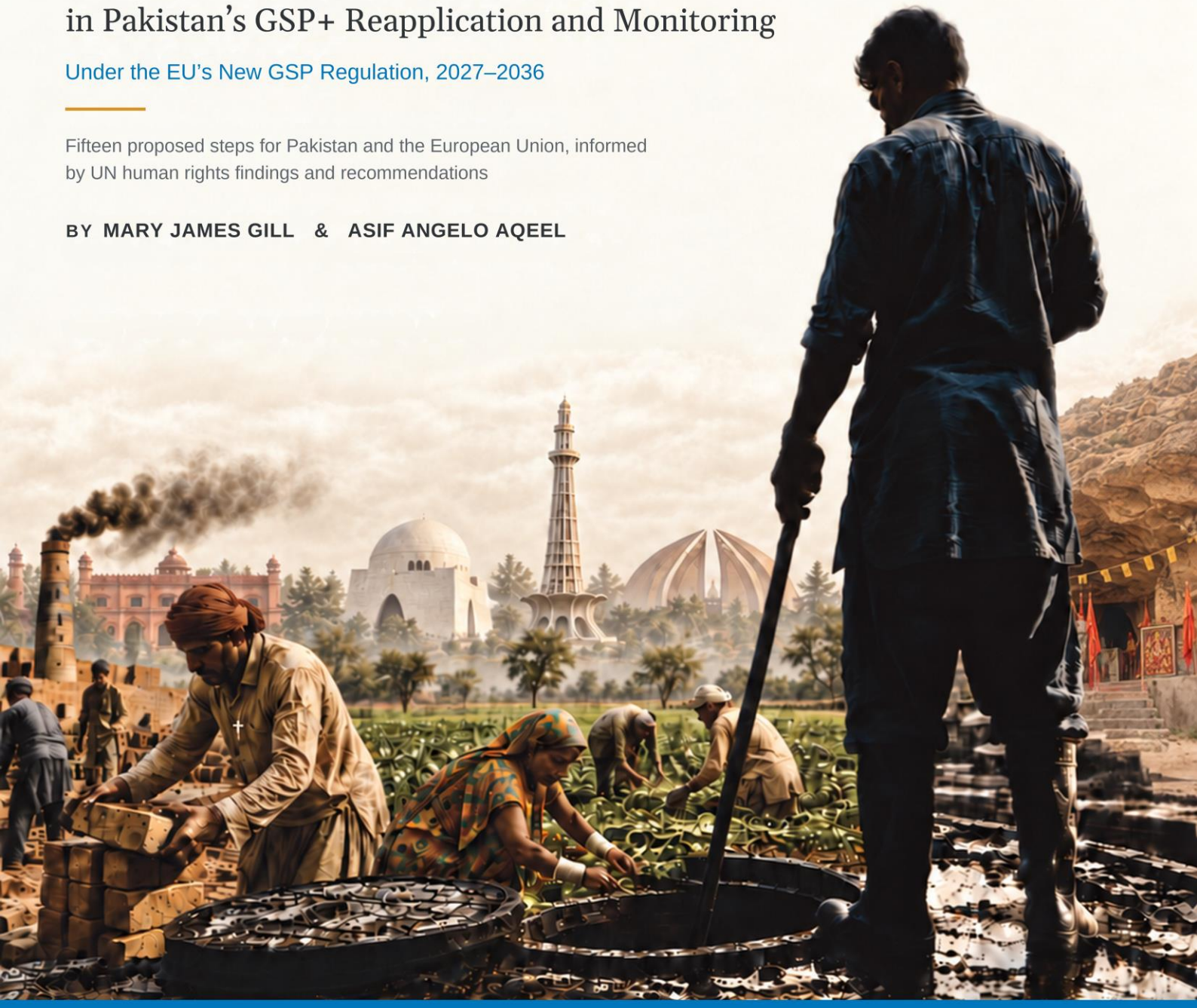
Naming *Caste* in Pakistan

A Shared Agenda for Inclusion and Prosperity of Caste-Marginalised Religious Minorities (CMRMs) in Pakistan's GSP+ Reapplication and Monitoring

Under the EU's New GSP Regulation, 2027–2036

Fifteen proposed steps for Pakistan and the European Union, informed by UN human rights findings and recommendations

BY MARY JAMES GILL & ASIF ANGELO AQEEL



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ABOUT THE COVER

The cover places the people this report is about in front of the nation they helped build. In the foreground are a Christian brick-kiln worker, a woman labouring in the fields, and a sewer worker standing over an open manhole: Christians and Hindus, the two religious minorities whom caste has marginalised in Pakistan like no other. Behind them rise monuments from every province, among them the Mazar-e-Quaid in Karachi, the Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore and the Pakistan Monument in Islamabad. Two stand for the communities at the heart of this report. Edwardes College, Peshawar, rooted in a mission school of the 1850s and a college since 1900, has endured nationalisation and still testifies to Pakistani Christian heritage and identity. The Hinglaj Mata temple in Balochistan's Hingol National Park is one of Hinduism's most sacred shrines and the destination of Pakistan's largest Hindu pilgrimage. The workers stand before the monuments, not apart from them. They built the cities, they keep them clean, and this report asks the reader to see them first.

REFERENCE

Abbreviations

APP	Associated Press of Pakistan
BPS	Basic Pay Scale (government grades 1–22)
CADL	Comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation
CEACR	ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CEDAW	Convention (and Committee) on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CLJ	Center for Law and Justice, Lahore
CMRM	Caste-Marginalised Religious Minority
CRC	Convention (and Committee) on the Rights of the Child
CSJ	Centre for Social Justice, Pakistan
CSS	Central Superior Services (the federal competitive examination)
DDPA	Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001)
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
EEAS	European External Action Service
EP	European Parliament
ESTACODE	Establishment Code: the Establishment Division's compilation of civil service rules and orders
EU	European Union
FPSC / PPSC	Federal Public Service Commission / Punjab Public Service Commission
GR	General Recommendation (of CERD)
GSP+	EU Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDS	Institute of Development Studies, Brighton
IDSN	International Dalit Solidarity Network
ILO	International Labour Organization
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LWMC	Lahore Waste Management Company
NCHR	National Commission for Human Rights, Pakistan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
O.M.	Office Memorandum (Establishment Division)
PDSN	Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network
PLD / SCMR	All Pakistan Legal Decisions / Supreme Court Monthly Review (law reports)
PPC	Pakistan Penal Code
PSC	Public Service Commission
RTI	Right to Information
SWD	European Commission Staff Working Document
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
US DOL / US TIP	US Department of Labor / US Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WASA	Water and Sanitation Agency

Preface

This report draws on twenty-two years of studying where caste and religion intersect in Pakistan. For most of that time I have been met with the same objection: caste is India's problem. The objection is understandable. Pakistan was founded in the name of a faith that rejects hereditary hierarchy, and the state has consistently told the world, including United Nations bodies, that caste is not a Pakistani concern. Yet the same state routinely records caste in First Information Reports, counts Scheduled Castes in its census, and once legislated against untouchability by name.

That contradiction is why this report spends time on history. Nothing in it comes out of nowhere. The argument rests on documents and events: the Punjab's reservation of five per cent of its posts for Christians and Scheduled Castes together in 1942; the testimony of Scheduled Caste and Christian leaders before the Punjab Boundary Commission in 1947, who asked to be included in Pakistan because they believed a Muslim state would free them from untouchability; the six per cent federal quota for Scheduled Castes in 1948; Article 20 of the 1956 Constitution; and the 1957 Ordinance that scheduled forty communities by name.

That history shows something since forgotten. Affirmative action in this region began as a remedy for outcastes, through mission schools, colonial schedules and, finally, reserved posts. In Pakistan its intended beneficiaries were Dalit Hindus and the Christians who overwhelmingly descend from the same communities. Over the past few decades that remedy has been recast as a quota for religious minorities in general. The change looks inclusive, but it defeats the purpose: a protection built for people excluded by descent now goes first to those best placed to claim it.

The same flattening runs through how minorities are discussed, at home and abroad. Treating all non-Muslims as one bloc may be tactically useful when the subject is the Muslim majority. As a basis for policy it does more harm than good, because one recommendation does not serve every minority equally. A family in a Lahore sanitation colony and a family in bonded labour in Sindh share a legal label with Pakistan's most prosperous non-Muslims, but they do not share a situation.

Documenting this intersection was never enough on its own; what I lacked was a way to act on it. That came through Mary James Gill, with whom I have worked since 2014. She brought to the research what a historian and journalist could not: a legislator's experience in the Punjab Assembly, a lawyer's challenge to caste-coded recruitment in the Supreme Court, and the commitment of the founder of Sweepers Are Superheroes, who has stood with sanitation workers in their own campaign. She shaped the evidence into a policy framework, and its central concept is hers. Her insistence that every recommendation name an office able to act on it is why this report offers steps rather than grievances.

This report therefore proposes a narrower lens: Caste-Marginalised Religious Minorities (CMRM). It identifies communities at the intersection of three markers: outcaste descent, minority religion, and confinement to menial, stigmatised work, sometimes in debt bondage. We propose it because it can be achieved. Amending the Constitution for minorities or repealing religion-based laws are demands that matter, but they remain distant. This lens has its roots in the commitments of Pakistan's own founders. It asks only that the state again see the citizens it once named.

Asif Angelo Aqeel
Lahore, 16 November 2026

Dedication

As we mark World Toilet Day, 19 November 2026, we dedicate this work to the workers who keep our toilets and sewers running, yet are the least spoken of whenever sanitation services are discussed. This work is of workers, by workers and for workers; we are only the vehicle that carries their voices.

Above all, it is dedicated to the waste and sanitation workers who did not come home: the men, and even children, who died in sewers and manholes, on the streets and in the dumps, so that cities could stay clean. Most were never counted; many were never named.

We name three of them here: Irfan Masih, sanitation supervisor, Umerkot; Nadeem Masih, sanitation worker, Sargodha; and Asad Masih, child sanitation worker, Faisalabad. With them we remember Waris Masih, sanitation labour leader of Karachi, who led the Sweepers Association Pakistan with us under Empowering Sanitation Workers, and who has since passed away. They are no longer with us, but this work would not have been possible without them, and it is written so that others do not follow them.

Over the past fifteen years we have sat with dozens of Pakistani government officials, politicians, United Nations mandate-holders and diplomats, and with delegates of the European Union in Pakistan and in Brussels. They always wanted to understand what religious minorities in Pakistan face, and too often we could describe the problems that intersect in their lives but could not hand them an answer. Those conversations taught us why this issue has stayed invisible: no one had looked at it through the lens of policy, and so funding, whether for affirmative action or for development programmes, has been blind to it.

Pakistan may be the clearest case anywhere of this intersection. Elsewhere, race or caste stands visible on its own, and other markers follow. Here a religious minority has been tagged with a caste, and that tag still decides who goes down into the sewers. The lens is so absent that even when governments invest in waste management and sewerage, the workers who are the backbone of those systems remain unseen. This work has strengthened our conviction that no sewage or waste system anywhere in the world can be called sound until it brings dignity to the people who keep it running.

We now hand this work to the world: to the Government of Pakistan, to the United Nations and its human rights bodies, and to the European Union and its institutions. It does not only describe a wrong; it sets out how to right it. Few cases bring human rights, labour rights and minority rights together so clearly, and few offer the values the European Union stands for so measurable a chance to make a difference.

This is a living document. We ask governments, United Nations bodies and our friends in the European Union to help us improve it, so that it may help Pakistan become a country that is kinder to its minorities, fairer to its workers, and true to the rights it has promised.

It is dedicated to everyone whose drive is to make Pakistan a better place for religious minorities, for every worker and for every vulnerable person.

Acknowledgements

This report is the pinnacle of everything the Center for Law and Justice has done since its founding in 2011, and the point where three journeys converge: that of CLJ itself; that of its Founding Director, Asif Angelo Aqeel, who has studied the intersection of caste and religion since 2004; and my own, from the day I met Asif in 2014, to rebuilding CLJ as a research organisation in 2019, to becoming its Executive Director in January 2020. When USIP funding ended abruptly in January 2025, CLJ suffered the greatest shock in its history, and financial constraints brought us close to closing our doors. We chose to spend that time producing something that would make our work worth carrying forward, and for two years we have worked on this report and on almost nothing else. That we are still here is owed to those who believed in this work when we were no longer sure we could carry it, and whose faith kept us going until it became our reason to continue.

This report rests, first of all, on the experience of the people it describes. Over many years, waste and sanitation workers in Lahore and elsewhere, brick-kiln and farm labourers, and their families have shared with CLJ's researchers what their work costs them and what they hope for their children. We thank them before anyone else, and we hope the report does justice to what they told us. CLJ's field volunteers and mobilisers carried this work into colonies, kilns and fields that few researchers reach; it is as much theirs as ours.

Our deepest gratitude goes to Claire Thomas, Executive Director of Minority Rights Group, whose leadership and steady faith carried us through our hardest years. Together with Professor Joshua Castellino, MRG's former Co-Executive Director, she stood behind this work for a long time. MRG's backing made possible CLJ's documentation of sanitation workers' deaths, of their occupational health and safety, and of discriminatory job advertisements, evidence later used by the National Commission for Human Rights in its own report. From safety kits for workers during COVID-19, to public interest litigation in the Supreme Court against discriminatory advertisements, to advocacy with the European Union on GSP+ in Brussels and Islamabad, Claire has been with us at every step. Alongside MRG, we thank the Embassy of France in Islamabad and His Excellency Nicolas Galey, former Ambassador of France to Pakistan, whose unprecedented support brought us to where we stand today.

We owe a special debt to Dr Andrés Hueso González, Senior Policy Analyst for Sanitation at WaterAid, whose help through the Initiative for Sanitation Workers — the ILO, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, WaterAid and SNV — made a decisive difference to this work and to the evidence behind it. CLJ has served on the Initiative's advisory committee since 2021. Under Empowering Sanitation Workers, CLJ first built a network of sanitation workers, the Sweepers Association Pakistan, across 41 districts of Pakistan. Through that network, workers were trained in research and became the surveyors of our study *Unseen Slavery in Sanitation*, not only its subjects. The ILO has since taken up the issue, adding it to its Decent Work Country Programme for Pakistan and researching sanitation workers in Lahore; it has built on the same network, from which a sanitation workers' union and a national federation have emerged.

Dr Sally Cawood, Lecturer in Economic Geography at Lancaster University, has been a partner in this work since 2020. Her scholarship on sanitation workers, including her research in Bangladesh, helped us place what we see in Pakistan in its regional context. Through the Khushhali Fellowship Program we were able to work with her directly, and that partnership deepened our understanding of the barriers to social mobility faced by families in sanitation work. It is why this framework attaches affirmative action to disadvantage rooted in caste, not religion alone.

We are also grateful to Dr Paul Rollier, researcher and anthropologist at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS), Paris, and to Andrés and Sally, who read the report in draft and gave generous and searching comments. Part of the research behind this report was carried out with Amnesty International, and we thank our colleagues there.

We acknowledge with gratitude the Honourable Chief Minister of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, for embracing the message that sweepers are our heroes and for honouring their work in public and with visible warmth; it has done much to raise the dignity and standing of these workers. In the Punjab Assembly, we thank the Honourable Speaker, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, whose compassion for sanitation workers has been constant since he took office. He has raised their deaths in the House more than once, and the Punjab Waste and Sanitation Workers (Dignity, Safety, Security and Welfare) Bill, 2026 reached the Assembly through his encouragement.

This journey cannot be told without Mr Ahmad Iqbal Chaudhary, MPA, who joined the Sweepers Are Superheroes campaign in 2021 and, since entering the Assembly, has spoken for these workers through adjournment motions and in public. He is the mover of the Bill, which now awaits the Government's decision: to adopt it, or to let it proceed as a private member's bill. We also thank the members of the Punjab Assembly who have raised these workers' cause as a matter of public importance, and the officials in Punjab who answered our Right to Information requests.

AI tools, in particular Claude by Anthropic, were used to assist with editing, proofreading and the layout scheme of this report. The research, analysis, judgements and recommendations are the authors' own, and the authors take full responsibility for its content.

Mary James Gill
Lahore, 18 November 2026

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At a glance

This report strongly supports Pakistan's reapplication for GSP+ status. It offers a framework that is achievable and measurable and needs no major shift in policy; instead, it invites Pakistan to complete the unfinished agenda of its founder, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and of the non-Muslim leaders who stood by his side. The data show that a religious lens alone cannot reach the large number of religious minorities who suffer because of their outcaste status and the occupations attached to it. Measures such as employment and education quotas become meaningful only when they are sensitive to these markers of exclusion.

83%
of the Christians and Hindus counted in West Pakistan in 1951 were Christians or Scheduled Caste Hindus

396 of 400
sanitation workers at the University of the Punjab, Lahore, were recorded as Christian in 2023

1 of 900
faculty members at the same university is non-Muslim, on rounded figures

Pakistan's religious minorities, under four per cent of the population, differ widely from one another: in belief and history, and also in economic condition, social exclusion and political participation. Yet the Government of Pakistan, international donors, the United Nations and the European Union tend to treat them as one group with the same set of problems. This makes policy easier to write. It does not produce lasting solutions.

The constitutional division between Muslim and non-Muslim limits every non-Muslim, but it cannot explain why minorities differ so much in their challenges, social status, political participation and legal standing. Parsis do not seek job quotas; they are more often employers. Hindu and Sikh properties are administered by the Evacuee Trust Property Board; those of Christians, Baha'is and Parsis are not. Forced conversion followed by marriage falls on Hindu and Christian girls, not on Ahmadi or Parsi girls. Blasphemy accusations rarely touch Sikhs or Baha'is, while sections 298-B and 298-C of the Penal Code apply to Ahmadis alone.

In this homogenising view, one dimension has been lost: caste. Certain non-Muslim communities are confined by descent to menial occupations and bonded labour, and are marked twice, by birth and by religion.

Christians and Scheduled Caste Hindus made up some 83 per cent of the non-Muslim population of what is now Pakistan in the 1951 census.[1] Both were historically treated as *achhut*, or untouchable: kept out of ordinary neighbourhoods, wells and schools, and left only the most menial work. By the census's own count they are still more than half of all non-Muslims.[2] They supply most of the country's sanitation workers and a large share of its domestic workers and bonded farm and brick-kiln labourers.[3] They are the non-Muslim communities that live in large numbers in segregated informal settlements, where blasphemy accusations have been used to clear land,[4] and their daughters are the most exposed to forced conversion.[5] There is no comparable evidence that Parsis, Ahmadis, upper-caste Hindus, Sikhs or Baha'is are tied by birth to stigmatised, hazardous, low-paid work.

The history of the job quota shows how this was forgotten. Before Partition, the Punjab reserved five per cent of posts for Scheduled Castes and Christians, half for each, treating the two as one disadvantaged class.[6] In 1948

[1] Census of Pakistan, 1951; Murray T. Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan: A Religious History of Islam in India and Pakistan* (Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1959), 275. The share is of the Christians and Hindus enumerated in West Pakistan, almost all of its non-Muslims (Section 2 and Table B1).

[2] Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Seventh Population and Housing Census 2023*, Table 9, "Population by Sex, Religion and Rural/Urban" (national), https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/population/2023/tables/table_9_national.pdf. Christians (3,300,788) and Scheduled Castes (1,349,487) were 53 per cent of the 8,771,380 non-Muslims counted (Table C2).

[3] Fraser Murray, Samanthi Theminimulle, Nida Mustaq and Shehryar Fazli, *Modern Slavery in Pakistan: Final Report* (London: DFID and British High Commission Islamabad, August 2019), 13, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e56a35a86650c53b6909337/DFID_Modern_Slavery_in_Pakistan_.pdf. In Sindh most bonded agricultural labourers are Hindu *haris*; in the brick kilns of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa most labourers are Christians.

[4] Mudassir Raja, "Joseph Colony Case: SC Suspects Land Occupation as Motive for Arson," *Express Tribune*, 12 March 2013, https://tribune.com.pk/story/519502/joseph-colony-case-sc-suspects-land-occupation-as-motive-for-arson.

[5] Asif Aqeel, *The Index of Religious Diversity and Inclusion in Pakistan* (Lahore: Center for Law and Justice, 2020), 63, https://clj.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/The-Index-of-Religious-Diversity-and-Inclusion-in-Pakistan.pdf.

[6] Punjab Legislative Assembly, *Debates*, vol. 19, 10 March 1942, 187–88.

Pakistan introduced a six per cent quota for Scheduled Castes alone.[7] It was withdrawn in 1996, and in 2009 a five per cent quota returned, this time for all religious minorities. A remedy for historic disadvantage had become a quota by religion, although there is no evidence that any minority other than Scheduled Caste Hindus and Christians ever asked for it. To the authors' knowledge, many Hindus, including some from the Menghwar community, itself a Scheduled Caste, do not support the job quota at all. The European Commission's July 2026 assessment finds that quota under-implemented, often applied in a discriminatory way, and confined in practice to lower-grade, manual or hazardous jobs, but it does not recognise that, among non-Muslims, these are the jobs held by Scheduled Caste Hindus and Christians.

International bodies have seen parts of this. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination raised caste-based discrimination in 2024 and asked Pakistan to end sanitation job advertisements reserved for non-Muslims.[8] The EU's 2023 assessment noted the concentration of minorities in sanitation work.[9] The European Parliament's resolution on the forced conversion and marriage of Maria Shahbaz, a Christian girl, named "discrimination based on caste, gender and religion" among the root causes Pakistan must address.[10] The Commission's July 2026 assessment covers blasphemy, mob violence and the job quota, and calls for a fuller definition of minorities,[11] but it does not address the point where caste, menial occupation and non-Muslim identity meet.

This report offers a framework for that intersection: Caste-Marginalised Religious Minorities (CMRMs). It identifies three markers of exclusion that reinforce one another: descent, non-Muslim religion and menial occupation. It is a lens for measurement, not a new legal category. The report sets the problem in its historical context, traces its legal trajectory and, with current data, documents the social and economic conditions of the two communities today. It then proposes fifteen steps, eight for Pakistan and seven for the European Union, and singles out four priority commitments for Pakistan's GSP+ plan of action:

1. End recruitment that reserves sanitation work for non-Muslims, in public bodies and their contractors (step 3).
2. Publish minority employment data by grade and occupation, not only by religion (step 4).
3. Bring sanitation, kiln and farm labour within labour-inspection priorities, and record religion in the planned Forced Labour Survey (steps 5 and 6).
4. Report on caste in the next reports under the conventions on racial discrimination and on discrimination against women, and track action on their recommendations (step 8).

These steps can be completed within a fixed period. They do not depend on repealing the blasphemy laws, amending the Constitution or opening the highest offices of state, such as those of President and Prime Minister, to non-Muslims. They return to what Jinnah promised, what Pakistan inherited and what its first Constitution enshrined. Pakistan can take them without major social or political change, and the EU can support and measure them when the two sides discuss the renewal of GSP+ status.

[7] Establishment Division, O.M. No. 56/2/48-Ests.(ME), 19 October 1948, "Rules for Reservation of Vacancies for the Scheduled Castes," in *Establishment Code (ESTACODE)*, serial no. 54, https://doi.org/10.17632/v55v6bwnd6.1; reproduced in Annex E (Document E1).

[8] CERD, *Concluding Observations on the Combined Twenty-Fourth to Twenty-Sixth Periodic Reports of Pakistan*, CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26 (24 September 2024), paras. 21–22, https://undocs.org/en/CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26.

[9] European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *The EU Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance (GSP+): Assessment of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Covering the Period 2020–2022*, SWD(2023) 363 final (Brussels, 21 November 2023), https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD(2023)363&lang=en.

[10] European Parliament, Resolution of 9 July 2026 on the Abduction, Forced Conversion and Child Marriage of Maria Shahbaz and the Protection of Girls in Pakistan, P10_TA(2026)0269, recital B and paras. 7–8, https://data.europarl.europa.eu/distribution/doc/TA-10-2026-0269_en.pdf.

[11] European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *The EU Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance (GSP+) Assessment of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Covering the Period 2023–2025*, Joint Staff Working Document SWD(2026) 184 final (Brussels, 16 July 2026), 7, https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12037-2026-ADD-1/en/pdf.

POLICY BRIEF · FIFTEEN STEPS

What we ask: fifteen steps

A proposed shared agenda: eight steps for the Government of Pakistan and seven for the European Union.

The Government of Pakistan

1. Pass a comprehensive anti-discrimination law that names caste and descent, completing the promise of Pakistan's first Constitution, which in 1956 abolished untouchability.
2. Bring "Scheduled Castes" — named in the Constitution and counted in the census, but used for no measure today — within a wider CMRM category, with a provisional three-fifths share of minority measures and a proportionate share of reserved seats.
3. End "non-Muslims only" recruitment for sanitation and similar work; keep the five per cent quota in all grades, with the CMRM share under step 2 applied in each grade.
4. Publish quota data every year; count descent and occupation in official surveys; and identify the occupations in which non-Muslims are under-represented, as the data from the University of the Punjab and other public bodies in this report show.
5. Protect waste and sanitation workers through a dedicated law; make the work safe; record deaths and injuries; publish spending on workers; and extend the same protection to bonded labourers in brick kilns and agriculture.
6. Include religion in the Forced Labour Survey.
7. Have the National Commission for Minorities Rights monitor the quota by descent, and make the Commission more representative of the most marginalised groups among minorities.
8. Report on caste in the next reports to the UN committees on racial discrimination (due by 4 January 2028) and on discrimination against women.

The European Union

1. Name caste and descent in the GSP+ assessment, together with waste and sanitation workers,[12] bonded brick-kiln labourers in Punjab and bonded agricultural labourers in Sindh.
2. Look for Pakistan's eight steps, as dated benchmarks, in its plan of action.
3. Report on those benchmarks in every monitoring cycle.
4. Hear the communities themselves on monitoring visits, and set what they say beside the information and data the Government provides.
5. Direct EU cooperation to these communities, and count who is reached.
6. Support projects that help the Government of Pakistan carry out the eight steps and build its reporting mechanisms.
7. Help Pakistan measure and end debt bondage as the Forced Labour Regulation takes effect.

WHERE THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAREST

Waste and sanitation workers across Pakistan are this report's case study (Section 4): a large public programme, a workforce that, where it has been counted, is largely non-Muslim, and no dedicated law to protect it. Bonded brick-kiln labourers in Punjab and bonded agricultural labourers in Sindh are its supporting evidence.

[12] Many sources use "sanitation work" for all of this work, and this report keeps their wording when it reports them. Where the difference matters, *sanitation workers* are sewer cleaners (the wet work, mostly for the water and sanitation agencies, WASA) and *waste workers* are sanitary workers and street sweepers (the dry work, in Punjab now under the Suthra Punjab programme).

SECTION 1

What the EU's 2026 assessment says — and what it no longer says

The European Commission's central criticism of Pakistan's framework is conceptual. Pakistan's legal system and political discourse, it says, "lack a comprehensive concept of 'minorities'": Pakistan defines minorities as non-Muslims only, instead of covering "all grounds of discrimination included in the CERD".[13] The examples the Commission gives are Shia Muslims and ethnic, linguistic and racial minorities. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), however, lists one further ground — descent — which the UN Committee has long read to include caste and analogous systems of inherited status.[14] Applied inwardly as well as outwardly, the Commission's own test points straight at the communities this report describes.

Table 1 sets the two assessments side by side. The 2026 text is fuller on several fronts and credits real progress; on descent-based occupational exclusion it has become less specific.

Aspect	2020–2022 assessment (2023)	2023–2025 assessment (2026)
Sanitation	Named: sanitation work "is primarily conducted by minorities"; religious minorities and other vulnerable groups hold "nearly 80%" of low-skill sanitation jobs	Not named. Quota posts are "predominantly limited to lower-grade, manual, or hazardous jobs"
Which minorities	Minorities in general	"Different minorities experience varying levels of discrimination" — but neither the minorities nor the levels are identified
Definition of minorities	Not discussed	Criticised as too narrow; CERD grounds cited, but descent not mentioned
CERD 2024 on caste and sanitation advertisements	—	Not referred to
Progress credited	—	National Commission for Minorities Rights Bill (2025; enacted as Act XL of 2025); Christian Marriage (Amendment) Act 2024; child-marriage laws

Table 1. How the two GSP+ assessments treat descent-linked exclusion. Sources: SWD(2023) 363 final; SWD(2026) 184 final.

The omission matters because it removes the part of the minority question that is most within reach. Blasphemy-law reform and the death penalty involve deep political disagreement; ending caste-coded recruitment and measuring who fills reserved posts do not. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination addressed exactly this practice in 2024, expressing concern at "persistent racial discrimination, in particular caste-based discrimination", including "discriminatory employment and advertisement practices … such as those targeting non-Muslim minority groups for sanitation work", and recommending that Pakistan "prevent and combat" them.[15] It also found that the Constitution's guarantees of equality were applied only rarely and were "limited to cases concerning discrimination based on religion".[16]

[13] SWD(2026) 184 final, 7 and 19n11. The 2023 column of Table 1 is from SWD(2023) 363 final.

[14] CERD, *General Recommendation No. 29 on Article 1, Paragraph 1, of the Convention (Descent)*, sixty-first session (2002), in *Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*, A/57/18, 111, https://undocs.org/en/A/57/18.

[15] CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26, paras. 21, 21(c) and 22(d). These paragraphs are reproduced in Annex E (Document E10).

[16] CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26, para. 7.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Sources and limits

This report draws on the European Commission's GSP+ assessments of Pakistan for 2020–2022 and 2023–2025, the concluding observations of UN treaty bodies, reports of UN Special Rapporteurs and the ILO, the European Parliament's resolutions of 10 October 2013 and 9 July 2026, Regulations (EU) 2026/1395 and 2024/3015, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and its 2026 review, Pakistan's census and constitutional record, Establishment Division orders, reported judgments of the Supreme Court, the debates of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan and of the Punjab and West Punjab Legislative Assemblies, press reports, and employment data obtained under Right to Information law and analysed with Amnesty International. It also draws on CLJ's own research, including chapters published by Bristol University Press and the Institute of Development Studies. Figures are those reported in the sources cited; where official data do not record religion or descent, the report says so; the one estimate it relies on, of descent among Christians, is marked as such (Annex C). Every source is cited in full at its first mention in the notes and in short form thereafter, following the Chicago style, with a web address wherever one exists; addresses were checked on 8 October 2026, and United Nations documents link through the UN's official document-symbol resolver (undocs.org).

CLJ is not a neutral observer. We have worked on these issues for years, drafted the Punjab Bill discussed in step 5, and carried out part of the research cited here with Amnesty International. The report is also selective: it deals with caste-linked exclusion and leaves the wider GSP+ agenda to others.

Much of the evidence comes from Right to Information requests, CLJ's own surveys, press reports and other organisations' studies, because official data do not record caste or descent. Some of it is partial or dated, and a few figures rest on a single report; the text says so where this is the case. The evidence is strongest for waste and sanitation work and public employment in Punjab, and thinner for other provinces and sectors. The risks facing women and girls are noted but not studied in depth. The size of the proposed share rests on the census, one scholar's estimate and a judgment about need (Annex C); the records do not show who, by descent, holds the reserved posts that are filled; and other quotas have gaps of their own (Section 4). Who used the old Scheduled Caste quota, and how Punjab's share for Christians worked after 1950, is likewise unrecorded (Section 3).

SECTION 2

Who carries caste in Pakistan

2.1 Caste, descent and occupation

Caste in South Asia is a hereditary ranking of communities, fixed by birth and tied to occupation, which governs whom one may marry, sit close to, eat with or touch — even to shake hands with. In Pakistan caste touches almost everyone through kinship (*biradari*), marriage[17] and politics,[18] and it is recorded in police reports and other legal documents. This report is concerned with one side of it: occupation, and the social stigma attached to it.

Communities treated as "untouchable" were traditionally made to do work considered polluting, such as scavenging and removing waste. Colonial administrators came to call them the "depressed classes"; under the Government of India Act 1935 they were listed in a schedule, set out in the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1936, and so became the "Scheduled Castes". In India today they are widely known as Dalits (Figure 1). International human-rights law treats the discrimination they face as discrimination based on descent.

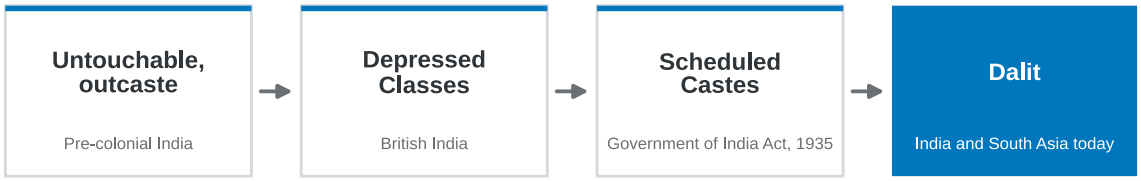


Figure 1. One people, many labels: the same communities renamed across eras — from a ritual category, to colonial administrative terms, to today's human-rights vocabulary.

The Chuhra are among the Scheduled Castes listed in 1957 (Document E2 in Annex E). Their caste-assigned work included removing dead animals and human excreta and serving as hangmen. Between the 1870s and the 1920s most of the Chuhra, or sweeper, caste in the Punjab converted to Christianity; the name itself is now a slur. In the 1961 census in Lahore, those recorded as Chuhra in earlier censuses were classified simply as *Isai* (Christian).[19] By one scholarly estimate, 90 to 95 per cent of Pakistani Christians are Punjabis of Chuhra descent, a fact no census records;[20] CLJ's own fieldwork points the same way. Sanitation workers across Pakistan still come mostly from Christian and Scheduled Caste Hindu families, and among Christians the caste duty of the hangman has persisted too: Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was hanged in 1979 by Tara Masih, from a Christian family of hangmen, and Punjab's executioners have continued to come from the same Christian families.[21] For this reason, in everyday Punjabi and Urdu the words "Christian", "Chuhra" and "sweeper" are still used as if they meant the same thing (Figure 2).[22]

[17]Muhammad Rizwan Safdar, Muhammad Akram, Falak Sher and Abid Rahman, "Socioeconomic Determinants of Caste-based Endogamy: A Qualitative Study," *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* 8, no. 2 (2021): 39–54, https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/697.

[18]Ahmed Usman, "Marginalized Voters and Supporters: Biradari System, Caste Hierarchy and Rights to Political Participation in Rural Punjab," *Journal of Political Studies* 23, no. 2 (2016): 607–616, https://jps.pu.edu.pk/6/article/view/357.

[19]John O'Brien, *The Construction of Pakistani Christian Identity* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 2006), 225; Asif Aqeel and Sama Faruqi, "Caste Away: The Ongoing Struggle of Punjabi Christians," *Herald*, 2 October 2016, https://herald.dawn.com/news/1153539.

[20]Elizabeth Koepping, "India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma/Myanmar," in *Christianities in Asia*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 27 in the copy posted by the author, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230123309_India_Pakistan_Bangladesh_BurmaMyanmar: "90 to 95% of Pakistani Christians are Punjabi of the chura (dalit) group converted from Hinduism". It is a scholar's estimate, not a count. John O'Brien writes likewise, without a figure: "The overwhelming majority of these Christians are the descendants of one tribe-caste of oppressed and excluded people": "The Quest for Pakistani Christian Identity," in *Church and Religious 'Other'*, ed. Gerard Mannion (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 78.

[21]Shaikh Aziz, "A Leaf from History: Calling Tara Masih," *Dawn*, 25 January 2015, https://www.dawn.com/news/1158918; "Pakistan's Angel of Death," *Al Jazeera*, 15 October 2017, https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/10/15/pakistans-angel-of-death, on Sabir Masih, a Lahore hangman whose great-uncle was Tara Masih and whose father, grandfather and grandfather's brothers did the same work.

[22]Asif Aqeel and Mary James Gill, *Shame and Stigma in Sanitation: Competing Faiths and Compromised Dignity, Safety and Employment Security of Sanitation Workers in Pakistan* (Lahore: Center for Law and Justice, 2021), https://clj.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Shame-and-Stigma-in-Sanitation-New-Edition-2021.pdf.

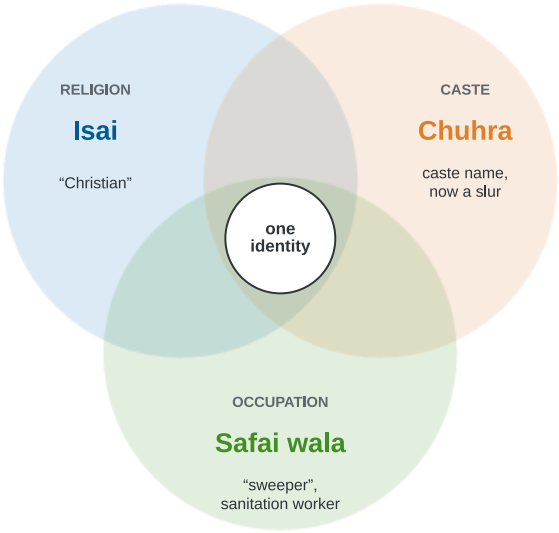


Figure 2. In everyday Urdu and Punjabi, *Isai* (Christian), *Chuhra* (the pejorative caste term) and *safai wala* (sanitation worker) are used interchangeably: religion, caste and occupation are named as one identity.

In Sindh, Scheduled Caste Hindus, whose castes were also listed in 1957, are over-represented in bonded farm labour (Table B5). Muslims of so-called outcaste origin have, over generations, often found some social cover in their shared faith; many remain in the same work (Table B5), but social mobility among them is evident.[23] Non-Muslims of the same origin have found no such cover: their minority religion and their caste identity reinforce one another.

These are not small subsets of the minority population: at the founding they were most of it, and they are about half of it today. In the 1951 census non-Muslims were 2.9 per cent of the population of West Pakistan, and Christians and Scheduled Caste Hindus together made up 83 per cent of the roughly 965,000 Christians and Hindus enumerated, who were almost all of its non-Muslims; upper-caste (Jati) Hindus were only about 17 per cent (Figure 3). The census recorded Christians by religion, not by caste origin, so it does not establish that every Christian belonged to a caste-marginalised group; the history of conversion described above explains why most did.[24]

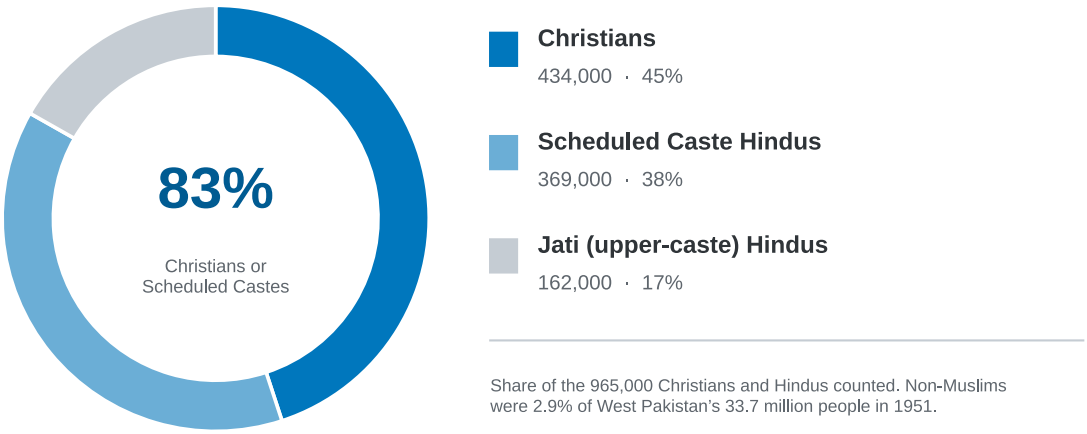


Figure 3. Who the minorities were: non-Muslims in West Pakistan (today’s Pakistan), 1951. Source: Census of Pakistan, 1951.

[23]The 1931 census recorded 412,300 Mussallis — Muslims of Chuhra origin — in the Punjab; after Partition the name largely fell out of use in the cities, while “Chuhra” continued to be used of Christians. Aqeel and Gill, *Shame and Stigma in Sanitation*, 31.

[24]Census of Pakistan, 1951 (no online copy found). In West Pakistan, Muslims were 97.1 per cent of 33.7 million people; Christians numbered 434,000, Scheduled Castes 369,000 and Jati Hindus 162,000. The percentages in the text, in Figure 3 and in Table B1 are of these three groups together (965,000). The census also recorded small numbers of Parsis, Buddhists and others, so the share of all non-Muslims may be a point or so lower.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

The founding promise that never materialised

Pakistan's founders assured Christians and Scheduled Caste Hindus that the burden of untouchability would be lifted, and this is why, in 1947, many of them chose Pakistan. Their own words, and those of the leaders they trusted, record what they hoped for and what they were promised.

> *Seventy-nine years on, there is almost no discussion — among academics or the public, policymakers or politicians — of the promises made to the caste-marginalised minorities who stood by the creation of Pakistan.*

24 APRIL 1943

"I assure you, in the name of humanity I care more for [the untouchables] than for Mussalmans."

QUAID-I-AZAM MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH[25]

15 AUGUST 1944

"I can tell my friends of the Scheduled Castes that at no time have I overlooked their interests and position … and I shall always stand for their protection and safeguard in any future scheme of constitution for I think that the wrongs and injustices inflicted on them for centuries should not be allowed to continue under any civilized form of government."

QUAID-I-AZAM MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH[26]

JULY 1947

"… our people [Christians] have been living with the Muslims for a long time and they become Muslimized more or less in culture and outlook. … There is a great affinity between the two communities, especially in the villages. This question of Chhoot Chhat, i.e. untouchability, is a great sore in their hearts … In non-Muslim villages we [Christians] have no graveyards and we are not allowed to draw water from the wells."

S. P. SINGHA Christian leader; Speaker of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, 1946–47[27]

11 AUGUST 1947

"… unless the backward section … are raised to the level of the other people, the State of Pakistan cannot be prosperous, happy and peaceful."

JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL Scheduled Caste leader; Pakistan's first Minister of Law and Labour[28]

5 JANUARY 1948

"We cannot deprive minorities, especially Christians, of their due rights … The Christian minority will be given its due right in policymaking in this cabinet."

SHEIKH KARAMAT ALI Minister of Education, West Punjab[29]

Why did so many Christians and Scheduled Caste Hindus stay on the Pakistani side of the new border? Indu Mitha, whose mother was S. P. Singha's cousin, recalled in an interview that Singha told her father of a meeting with Jinnah at which he said that Christians were very poor, could not travel to India and wanted to live in Pakistan; Jinnah, she said, assured him of full protection for them.[30] The words of Christian and Scheduled Caste leaders at the time, gathered above and given below, show what they expected: that their lives would be better in Pakistan than in India, because caste would be easier to leave behind in a state that was both Islamic

[25]Muhammad Ali Jinnah, presidential address to the thirtieth session of the All-India Muslim League, Delhi, 24 April 1943, in G. H. Zulfiqar, comp., *Pakistan as Visualized by Iqbal and Jinnah* (Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, n.d.), 91; also in Khurshid Ahmad Khan Yusufi, ed., *Speeches, Statements and Messages of the Quaid-e-Azam*, vol. 3 (Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1996). The word rendered "[the untouchables]" is "them" in the original; it refers to the "60 millions" of his preceding sentence, "kept as untouchables".

[26]Muhammad Ali Jinnah, statement at a press conference, 15 August 1944, as quoted in Thardeep Rural Development Programme, Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research and International Dalit Solidarity Network, "Caste-Based Discrimination in Pakistan," joint submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Pakistan, second session (May 2008), 3, note xiii, https://upr-info.org/sites/default/files/documents/2013-10/trdppakuprs22008thardeepruraldevelopmentprogrammeuprsubmissionjoint.pdf.

[27]S. P. Singha, statement before the Punjab Boundary Commission, July 1947, in Mian Muhammad Sadullah, comp., *The Partition of the Punjab, 1947: A Compilation of Official Documents*, vol. 2 (Lahore: National Documentation Centre, 1983), 225, as cited in Yaqoob Khan Bangash, "'Slow Death in India against Quick Death in Pakistan': Indian Christian Politics during the Punjab Partition," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 53, no. 4 (2025), nn. 102–105, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03086534.2025.2484409.

[28]Jogendra Nath Mandal, speaking for the Scheduled Castes, *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates*, vol. 1, no. 2, 11 August 1947 (Karachi), 15, https://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1434523779_849.pdf. The second ellipsis omits "of the people of your beloved Pakistan".

[29]Sheikh Karamat Ali, remarks following the election of the Speaker, *West Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 1, 5 January 1948 (Lahore: Superintendent, Government Printing, West Punjab, 1949), 6–7, https://www.pap.gov.pk/uploads/verbatim/text/en/west-pb-legis-assembly-debates-vol-i-1948.pdf (in Urdu; our translation).

[30]Aqeel and Faruqi, "Caste Away," quoting Indu Mitha, whose mother was Singha's cousin.

and a progressive democracy, in which they could imagine themselves equal and in which untouchability would be outlawed.

Advocate Salig Ram, speaking for the Scheduled Castes before the Punjab Boundary Commission in 1947, told it that "untouchability is not known to Islam … our people are having better treatment in Muhammadan villages".[31] The Christian leaders S. P. Singha and C. E. Gibbon asked for Christian areas to be included in Pakistan. For Singha, untouchability was "a great sore" in the hearts of his people, who in non-Muslim villages were "not allowed to draw water from the wells" (see "In their own words").[32]

In the 2023 census Hindus (Jati and Scheduled Caste together) were 2.17 per cent and Christians 1.37 per cent of the population.[33] Within the Hindu count, the share recorded as Scheduled Caste fell from about 70 per cent in 1951 to 14 per cent in 1998 and 19 per cent in 2017, before rising to 26 per cent in 2023 (Table B2) — swings too large to be explained by birth rates alone. Scheduled Caste activists attribute them to a census that offers "Scheduled Caste" only as an alternative to "Hindu", and to pressure to register simply as Hindu.[34] On these figures, Christians and recorded Scheduled Castes together are still a little over half of all Christians and Hindus — and, on the activists' account, the Scheduled Caste count is too low.

Religion, descent and occupational stigma therefore fall on the same people at once. This report calls them caste-marginalised religious minorities, or CMRMs (Figure 4).

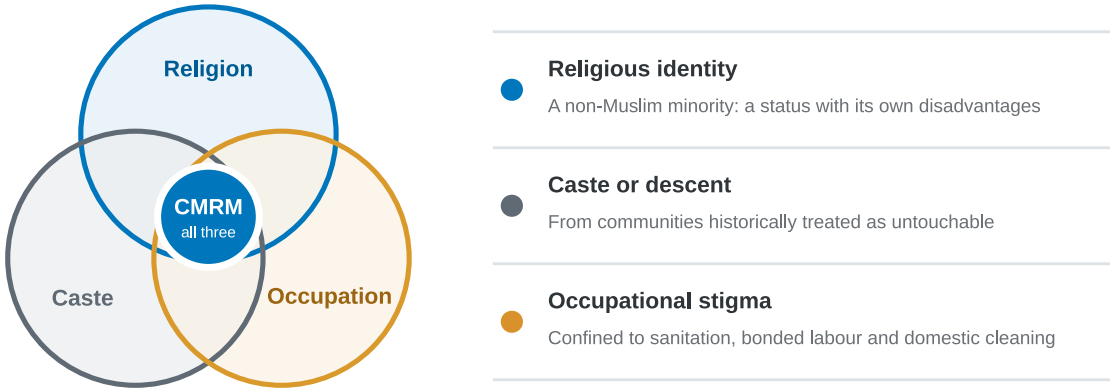


Figure 4. The CMRM lens: communities whose exclusion is shaped by religious identity, caste descent and occupational stigma at once.

2.2 Official denial

Officially, caste has more often been denied than named. At its first Universal Periodic Review, in 2008, Pakistan told the Human Rights Council that it "does not have the concept of Dalit or Scheduled [Castes]" and is "free from such kind of prejudices".[35] In 2016 CERD recorded Pakistan's statement that it "does not recognize any discrimination among individuals on the basis of their membership of a specific caste", and in 2017, according to the UN's summary of the meeting, its delegation told the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that "no problems were faced by the Dalit 'untouchables' community".[36] Yet the state never

[31] Sadullah, *Partition of the Punjab*, vol. 2, 430.

[32] Singha, statement before the Punjab Boundary Commission, in Sadullah, *Partition of the Punjab*, vol. 2, 225, as cited in Bangash, "Slow Death in India," nn. 102–105.

[33] Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Census 2023*, Table 9: Hindus (Jati and Scheduled Caste) 2.17 per cent and Christians 1.37 per cent of the population.

[34] Census of Pakistan, 1951 (Scheduled Castes 369,000; Jati Hindus 162,000); 1998 census as reported in Zulfiqar Shah, *Caste-Based Discrimination in South Asia: A Study of Pakistan* (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Dalit Studies and IDSN, 2008), 23, https://idsn.org/wp-content/uploads/user_folder/pdf/Old_files/asia/pdf/RR_Pakistan.pdf (Scheduled Castes 332,343; Jati Hindus just over 2.1 million); Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017 census (Scheduled Castes 849,614; Jati Hindus 3,595,256) and 2023 census, Table 9 (Scheduled Castes 1,349,487; Jati Hindus 3,867,729). On pressure to register as Hindu: Satram Sangi, "Scheduled Castes or Hindus? Digital Census Sparks Debate Among Minority Communities," *The Friday Times*, 18 March 2023, https://www.thefridaytimes.com/18-Mar-2023/scheduled-castes-or-hindus-digital-census-sparks-debate-among-minority-communities; Zulfiqar Kunbhar, "As Pakistan Votes, 'Untouchables' Fight for Representation," *FairPlanet*, 5 February 2024, https://www.fairplanet.org/story/pakistan-election-dalit-representation-in-parliament.

[35] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Pakistan*, A/HRC/8/42 (4 June 2008), para. 99, https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/8/42.

[36] CERD, *Concluding Observations on the Combined Twenty-First to Twenty-Third Periodic Reports of Pakistan*, CERD/C/PAK/CO/21-23 (3 October 2016), para. 31, https://undocs.org/en/CERD/C/PAK/CO/21-23; United Nations Office at Geneva, "Committee on

stopped recording caste: police reports note it, the census still counts Scheduled Castes, and Article 260 names them. Both committees replied with concern at the discrimination that Scheduled Castes continue to face in practice.[37] Schools add to the silence. Where caste is taught at all, it is often presented as a Hindu matter of the past, and not always accurately: a Punjab history textbook for Class 6 describes Dalits as Shudras, the fourth tier of the caste order, although Dalits were placed outside and beneath it. CERD has asked Pakistan to review all educational materials and remove content that perpetuates racist stereotypes.[38]

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Considers Initial Report of Pakistan," meeting summary, June 2017, https://ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2017/06/committee-economic-social-and-cultural-rights-considers-initial.

[37]CERD/C/PAK/CO/21-23, para. 31 ("the de facto existence of the scheduled castes (Dalits) and the continuing discrimination against them, particularly in employment and education"); Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *Concluding Observations on the Initial Report of Pakistan*, E/C.12/PAK/CO/1 (20 July 2017), paras. 31–32, https://undocs.org/en/E/C.12/PAK/CO/1.

[38]Saima Naz, *History: Class 6, Based on Single National Curriculum 2022* (Lahore: Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board, experimental edition); CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26, paras. 33–34.

SECTION 3

How a caste protection became a religion quota

3.1 Christians and Scheduled Castes in one share, 1921–1950

Pakistan did not begin with a minority quota defined by religion. In the Punjab it inherited something much closer to what this report proposes: a reserved share in which Christians and the communities treated as untouchable were counted together (Figure 5).

Reservation in the Punjab had long followed communal lines. In 1921 the provincial government directed King Edward Medical College, Lahore, to divide its admissions among Muslims (40 per cent), Sikhs (20 per cent) and "others" (40 per cent). By 1938 government appointments were divided among Muslims (50 per cent), Hindus (30 per cent) and Sikhs (20 per cent), and in March 1939 the government confirmed that the 30 per cent covered "others" as well as Hindus, and placed Christians among the others.[39] On 10 March 1942 it set aside five percentage points of that share for Christians and for those the debates call "Achhuts" — people treated as untouchable, identified in the question as the Scheduled Castes — two and a half points each.[40]

This arrangement is the background to S. P. Singha's intervention of 22 January 1948, five months after Partition. Speaking in the West Punjab Legislative Assembly, Singha challenged the way the province counted Christians in government employment: their share was being met in the most menial posts while the higher grades stayed closed to them.[41] He spoke against a long history of caste-assigned village labour, including the removal of animal carcasses and human excreta, by the communities from which many Punjabi Christians descend.[42] Writing in 1950, Richard Symonds recorded that the position of Christians in West Punjab had since improved and that they were receiving their quota.[43] What became of that share afterwards, and who filled it, the records we have found do not show.

The Punjab arrangement matters for this report. It shows that, before and just after Partition, the state already treated Christians and the Scheduled Castes as communities that shared one disadvantage and could share one reserved share. The CMRM category proposed in step 2 is in this sense not a new idea but the return of an old one.

[39] Gurnam Singh Rekhi, *Sir Sundar Singh Majithia and His Relevance in Sikh Politics* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1999), 141, citing Punjab Government notification No. 7929-L-2643-S.G.38/33386; Punjab Legislative Assembly, *Debates*, vol. 8, 13 March 1939, question 4120, 70–72.

[40] Punjab Legislative Assembly, *Debates*, 10 March 1942, 187–88. For an earlier reference, Peter Scragg, *The Muslims of the Punjab and Their Politics, 1936–1947*, 135n69, cites the debates of 10 December 1940, vol. 14, 921, IOR/V/9/3674. Singha's 1948 speech leaves open whether West Punjab formally reassigned the full five per cent to Christians.

[41] *West Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 1, 22 January 1948, 465.

[42] Ayra Indrias Patras, "Examining Pakistan's Relationship with Religious Minorities: A Case Study of the Christian Community," *NUST Journal of International Peace and Stability* 7, no. 1 (2024): 90; Aqeel and Gill, *Shame and Stigma in Sanitation*.

[43] Richard Symonds, *The Making of Pakistan* (London: Faber and Faber, 1950), 99.

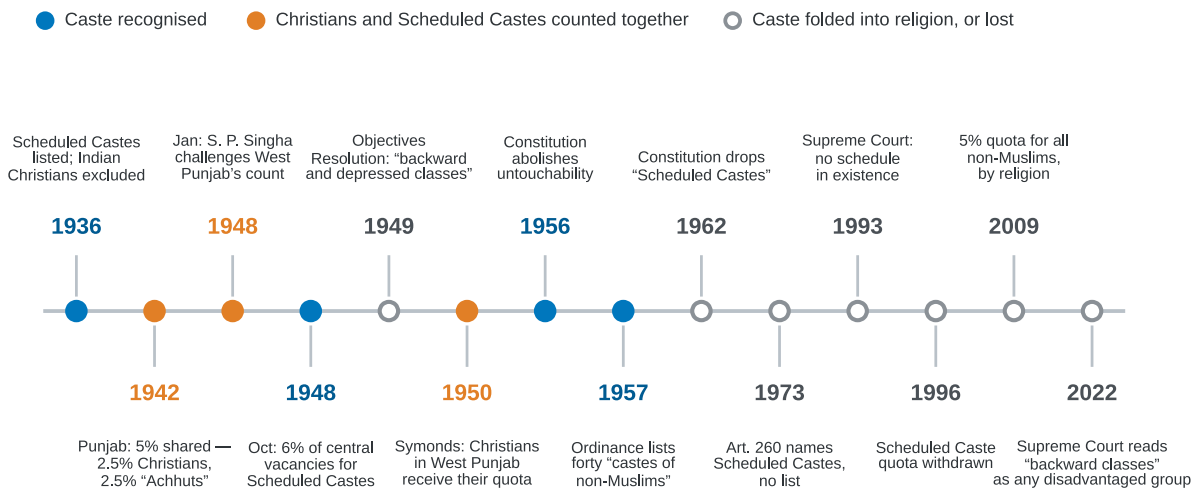


Figure 5. Recognised, then folded into religion: caste in Pakistan's law and policy, 1936–2022. Amber marks the moments when Christians and Scheduled Castes were counted together.

3.2 Recognition at the centre, 1948–1957

The federal government took a different course. In October 1948 it reserved six per cent of the vacancies filled by direct recruitment in the central services for the Scheduled Castes, under a list that excluded Indian Christians.[44] The Scheduled Castes were then about 7 per cent of the population of Pakistan as a whole, East and West, but little more than 1 per cent of the population of West Pakistan (Table B1). Once East Pakistan became Bangladesh in 1971, a six per cent reservation for a group that was about one per cent of the remaining population could no longer work as intended.

The 1956 Constitution abolished untouchability and forbade its practice "in any form" (Article 20), and provided for a commission and a special officer for the Scheduled Castes and backward classes; the Scheduled Castes (Declaration) Ordinance, 1957 then declared forty "castes of non-Muslims", among them "Chuhra, or Balmiki", to be Scheduled Castes in West Pakistan and the federal capital (Document E2 in Annex E).[45] Its text does not repeat the exclusion of Christians. We have found no record that the commission or the special officer was ever appointed. As for the reserved vacancies, an official memorandum noted that same year that they "are not filled by such candidates, the main reason being non-availability of qualified candidates".[46]

3.3 The caste lens fades, 1949–2022

Before Partition the state's special protection had gone mainly to the Scheduled Castes; in the new state's division between Muslims and non-Muslims, they became one more group of "others". The Objectives Resolution of 1949, which set the course for the Islamisation of Pakistan, placed "minorities" and "backward and depressed classes" in a single phrase. The 1956 Constitution named the Scheduled Castes; the 1962 Constitution did not use the term. It asked the provinces instead to schedule "under-privileged castes, races,

[44] Establishment Division, O.M. No. 56/2/48-Ests.(ME), 115–117 of the ESTACODE compendium deposited on Mendeley Data (edition not stated); 116–118 in a later copy of Chapter 2. The rules reserved "6% of all vacancies (as distinct from posts) to be filled by direct recruitment" in the superior and central services, Classes I to III, other than vacancies filled on merit (an exclusion the reproduced text attributes to an amendment of 1950). Reservation in Class IV was left "under consideration", no roster was prescribed, and reserved vacancies for which no qualified candidate was found were "treated as unreserved and filled on merit". Extracts are reproduced in Annex E (Document E1). The list then in force was the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1936 (Order in Council, 30 April 1936), whose para. 3 provided that "No Indian Christian shall be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste" (as quoted by the Supreme Court of India in *Soosai v. Union of India*, 1985 Supp. (3) SCR 242, 249, https://main.sci.gov.in/jonew/judis/9179.pdf). The Order went on defining the Scheduled Castes in Pakistan until the 1957 Ordinance replaced it: *Election Commission of Pakistan v. M.P. Bhandara*, PLD 1993 SC 439.

[45] Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1956, Arts. 20 and 206 (the commission); Scheduled Castes (Declaration) Ordinance, 1957 (Ordinance XVI of 1957, 12 November 1957), ss. 1(2) and 2: "The castes of non-Muslims mentioned in the Schedule to this Ordinance are declared to be Scheduled Castes for the purposes of the Constitution within the meaning of Article 204 thereof", in Ministry of Law, *A Collection of the Central Acts and Ordinances for the Year 1957*, https://molaw.gov.pk/SiteImage/Misc/files/Collections/1957.pdf. The Ordinance is reproduced in Annex E (Document E2).

[46] Establishment Division, O.M. No. 5/5/57-R, 30 October 1957, in ESTACODE, serial no. 55, which asked that "proper publicity should be given in the Scheduled Castes areas". It gives no figures. Reproduced in Annex E (Document E3).

tribes and groups", and the schedule that West Pakistan notified in 1968 was, the Lahore High Court held, "completely separate and distinct" from the Scheduled Castes.[47]

The 1973 Constitution, as it now stands, names Scheduled Castes only in defining who is a "non-Muslim" (Article 260), and attaches no list to the term and no purpose to recording it. In 1993 the Supreme Court, in a case about separate electoral rolls, observed that the 1957 Ordinance had been "allowed to lapse", that there is "no such schedule in existence in Pakistan" and that no law enables one to be issued, so that nobody can be placed in the category unless they claim it themselves.[48] By then the quota was "not being observed", as the Establishment Division recorded that year.[49] It was withdrawn on 24 September 1996, leaving Scheduled Castes to "compete alongwith other candidates of their own province", and we have found no federal reservation in its place for nearly thirteen years.

In May 2009 a five per cent quota was created for all non-Muslims as Article 260 defines them, Scheduled Castes being one group among eight.[50] In November 2022 the Supreme Court read "backward" and "depressed" classes as meaning any disadvantaged group, including persons with disabilities.[51]

3.4 A quota that cannot see caste

The basis of entitlement thus moved from descent to religion. The two overlap heavily but not completely, and those outside the overlap are more likely to be the better placed: families with education, urban networks and no inherited occupational stigma. Minority communities differ widely in status: Zoroastrians, for example, are largely in business, while Christians are concentrated in menial work.[52] A quota open to all non-Muslims cannot tell them apart. And because performance is reported as a headcount of posts filled, rather than as who filled them and at what grade, the quota can appear to work while people of the descent that reservation was first created to reach stay where they were. We do not say that this change caused the segregation described in Section 4, which is far older than any quota. Our point is that a quota defined by religion alone cannot reliably identify caste-linked exclusion or address it specifically, and that the records do not yet show who, by descent, holds the posts that are filled. The Commission's finding — a quota "predominantly limited to lower-grade, manual, or hazardous jobs" — is what one would expect of a caste protection spread across a religion, because

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[47] Constitution of the Republic of Pakistan, 1962, Principles of Policy, no. 5 ("Advancement of Under-privileged Castes, etc."); *Abdul Hamid Khan v. Government of Pakistan*, PLD 1972 Lahore 336 (decided 14 December 1971), on the West Pakistan notification of 2 May 1968, https://pakistancaselaw.com/case/2645/abdul-hamid-khan-vs-1-government-of-pakistan-and-2-central-1972-pld-lahore-336. The same judgment treated the 1957 Ordinance as "kept in force" by the 1962 Constitution and "still in force", and records that candidates claiming to belong to a Scheduled Caste had to submit "a certificate from the District Magistrate". When the Ordinance ceased to have effect is therefore an open question.

[48] *Election Commission of Pakistan v. M.P. Bhandara*, PLD 1993 Supreme Court 439 (Civil Appeals Nos. 38 and 39 of 1991, decided 8 March 1993), https://pakistancaselaw.com/case/55404/election-commission-of-pakistan-through-its-secretary-islamabad-vs-m-p-bhandara. The case concerned 191 voters, said to be Sansis, and which of the separate electoral rolls for non-Muslims they belonged on. The Court allowed the appeals and sent the matter back because those affected had not been heard; its remarks on the Ordinance were made in that setting. We quote from this unofficial transcription of the report.

[49] Cabinet Secretariat (Establishment Division), O.M. No. 4/2/93-R.2, 15 March 1993, on the six per cent quota and the three-year relaxation of the age limit; it recalls an earlier reminder of 20 July 1991. The only copy we have seen is a scan on the archived website of the Scheduled Castes Federation of Pakistan, http://www.geocities.ws/pakdalits/1/scnot3.jpg, reproduced in Annex E (Document E4).

[50] Establishment Division, O.M. No. F.4/15/94-R.II, 24 September 1996, in ESTACODE, serial no. 54-A; it gives no reason for the withdrawal. O.M. No. 4/15/94-R-2, 26 May 2009, in *ESTACODE* (2021 edition), ch. 3, s. 4.6, 127–128, https://www.establishment.gov.pk/SiteImage/Downloads/Estacode%202021_compress.pdf: five per cent for "Minorities (Non-Muslims), as defined in Article 260(3)(b)", that is, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, Ahmadis, Bahais and Scheduled Castes. Unlike the 1948 rules, it carries unfilled vacancies forward. See Kalavanti Raja, "From 6% Scheduled Castes to 5% Minorities: The Forgotten Promise of Employment Quotas," *The Friday Times*, 8 September 2026, https://www.thefridaytimes.com/08-Sep-2026/6-percent-scheduled-castes-5-percent-minorities-forgotten-promise-employment-quotas. Both memoranda are reproduced in Annex E (Documents E5 and E6). In Punjab the five per cent quota rests on separate orders: Services and General Administration Department, Notification No. SOR-III(S&GAD)1-35/93, 23 October 2009, replaced by a notification of the same number of 27 March 2010 that expressly includes competitive recruitment through the Punjab Public Service Commission, in *Punjab Estacode* (2013), Policies, 28–29, https://rmur.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Punjab-Estacode-Policies.pdf. The 2010 notification treated reserved vacancies for which no qualified minority candidate was available as "unreserved and filled on merit"; Notification No. SOR-IV(S&GAD)16-1/2013 of 9 February 2015 (Regulations Wing) replaced this with a rule that they "be carried forward and filled through appointment of persons belonging to minorities (Non-Muslims)", as recorded in *Mubarik Ali Babar v. Punjab Public Service Commission*, 2023 SCMR 518, para. 8 and n. 16. The 2015 notification is reproduced in Annex E (Document E11). The federal memorandum and the 2010 Punjab notification are reproduced in Supreme Court of Pakistan, *Suo Motu Case No. 1 of 2014* (judgment of 19 June 2014), PLD 2014 SC 699, paras. 5–6, https://globalfreedomofexpression.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/smc_1_2014.pdf. These later orders are distinct from the earlier West Punjab reservation.

[51] *Mubarik Ali Babar v. Punjab Public Service Commission*, Civil Petition No. 2045 of 2019, 2023 SCMR 518 (decided 18 November 2022), para. 8, https://www.supremecourt.gov.pk/downloads_judgements/c.p._2045_2019.pdf.

[52] Mary James Gill, Asif Aqeel and Basil Dogra, *Stories of Resilience and Resolve: An Intersectional Study on the Plight of Non-Muslim Women and Girls in Pakistan* (Lahore: Center for Law and Justice and South Asia Collective, January 2022), https://thesouthasiacollective.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ResearchPaper_MinorityWomen_Pakistan.pdf.

the reserved posts that are filled are largely the jobs into which these communities have historically been forced. A second lens, alongside religion, makes the difference visible (Figure 6).

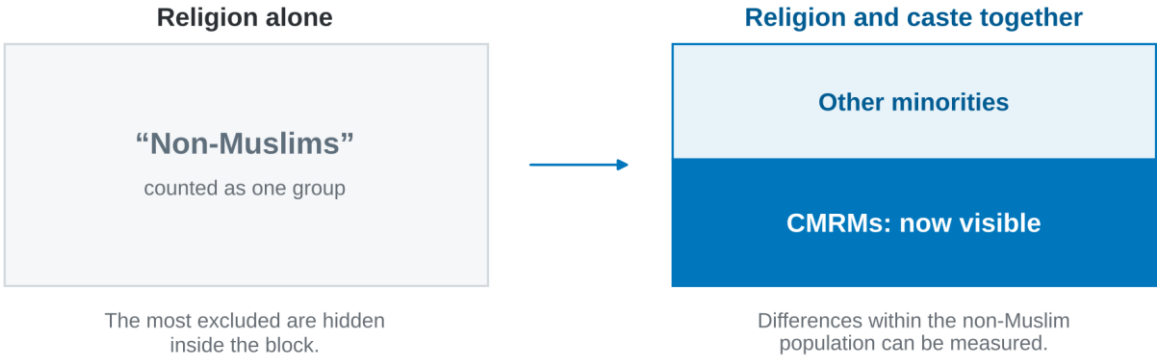


Figure 6. What a second lens lets you see: with religion alone, the most excluded are hidden inside a single “non-Muslim” block.

SECTION 4

What the exclusion looks like

4.1 One employer in Lahore

The University of the Punjab, Pakistan's oldest university, has one administration, one recruitment system and the same pay scales as the government. Of its 400 sanitation workers, 396 are Christian. Of its roughly 900 faculty members, about one is non-Muslim. Christians are around five per cent of Lahore's population.[53] The most telling numbers lie in between (Figure 7): in the same lowest pay grade, Christians hold 99 per cent of sanitation posts but under five per cent of messenger posts and three per cent of gardening posts.

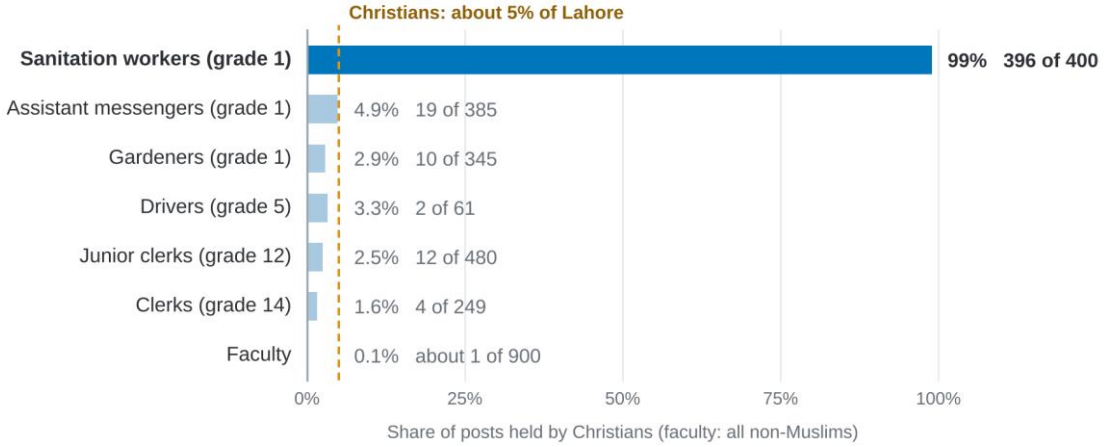


Figure 7. Christian share of posts at the University of the Punjab, by job. Sources: Amnesty International (2025); CLJ Right to Information data.

This pattern is consistent with occupational segregation by inherited identity. It is hard to explain by qualifications, because a gardener's post demands no more than a sweeper's. Nor is poverty a sufficient explanation: poverty pushes people out of well-paid work, but it does not steer them into one particular badly paid job and away from all the others. There are also cases in which Christians who applied for other posts, such as that of office assistant or peon, were placed in sanitation work instead.[54] What lets the pattern persist is the long official denial that caste disabilities exist at all: generation after generation, the same families are recruited into the same work, with the same stigma attached. The most plausible explanation is assignment by inherited identity.

Across Lahore, Christians make up an overwhelming share of sanitation workers. In CLJ's 2019 survey of 102 of the city's waste and sanitation workers, 57 per cent had parents in the same work and 74 per cent had never enrolled in school. One case shows the mechanism. In 2010 Naeem Nazir, a Christian, applied to the Education Department for a post as an office assistant at a government school and was appointed a sanitation worker instead, because his father was one. It took six years before the Lahore High Court, in October 2016, had that appointment cancelled and an office assistant's appointment issued; the court heard that all 20 vacancies allocated for non-Muslims had been filled with sanitation workers.[55]

4.2 The same pattern, across the state

The National Commission for Human Rights found in 2022 that nearly half of the posts reserved for minorities were vacant and that 80 per cent of non-Muslim government employees were in grades 1 to 4 — a pattern it

[53] Amnesty International, *"Cut Us Open and See That We Bleed Like Them": Discrimination and Stigmatization of Sanitation Workers in Pakistan*, ASA 33/0120/2025 (29 July 2025), 37–41, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa33/0120/2025/en/. The faculty figure is from Right to Information data obtained by CLJ.

[54] American Center for Law and Justice, "Victory in Religious Discrimination Case against Pakistan's Education Department," November 2016, https://aclj.org/persecuted-church/victory-in-religious-discrimination-case-against-pakistans-education-department.

[55] Aqeel and Gill, *Shame and Stigma in Sanitation*, 32, 35 and 40–41. The survey covered 102 workers in Lahore, chosen by quota sampling: 54 at the Lahore Waste Management Company and 48 at the Water and Sanitation Agency. On Naeem Nazir's case: American Center for Law and Justice, "Victory in Religious Discrimination Case."

called "state-led discrimination".[56] At the Water and Sanitation Agency in Lahore, 1,515 of 1,538 non-Muslim employees (98.5 per cent) work in grades 1 to 5; the Punjab Police employs 1,909 non-Muslims in grades 1 to 5 but only 55 in grades 7 to 18.[57] Federal employment data show why a headcount can mislead. In 2017–18, on a civil-society analysis of the official figures, nine in ten non-Muslim federal employees were Christian.[58] The Establishment Division's own bulletin for 2021–22 counts 19,128 non-Muslim employees: four in five in grades 1 to 4, almost half in grade 1 alone, and only 249, or 1.3 per cent, in grades 17 to 22 (Table B3).[59]

Above the lowest grades, many reserved posts go unfilled (Table B4). In the examination for the Central Superior Services, four candidates were allocated to minority seats and 78 seats were left unfilled in 2018, three and 85 in 2019, and none and 98 in 2020.[60] Of 655 minority-quota posts to be filled through the Punjab Public Service Commission between January 2025 and July 2026, 500 remained vacant; of 74 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2024, 62 did.[61] Non-Muslims are employed in large numbers where stigma has already placed these communities; above that level many reserved posts stay empty.

The official explanation has not changed in more than sixty years. In 1957 the unfilled Scheduled Caste vacancies were put down to the "non-availability of qualified candidates"; the Cabinet Division's report for 2018–20 says that minority seats go unfilled "as suitably qualified candidates are not available".[62] Other quotas have gaps too. In Punjab in 2024 the women's and minority quotas were left unfilled at almost the same rate, about 41 per cent, and the disability quota at 66 per cent; in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the minority quota fared far worse than the women's, at 84 against 24 per cent.[63] A reserved seat helps only those who can reach the examination hall, which is why step 2 pairs a reserved share with funded routes to it: schooling, preparation and the cost of applying. The share keeps posts for caste-marginalised candidates; the routes are what will fill them.

Sometimes the rule is written down. CLJ has collected 281 government advertisements, from 2010 to March 2025, that reserve sanitation posts for non-Muslims or for so-called low castes — despite a 2015 Punjab government notification against such advertisements and the Supreme Court's direction of November 2022 (reported in 2023) to "strictly avoid discriminatory and demeaning advertisements". At least 16 appeared between that judgment and March 2025, the end of the period documented.[64] Step 3 would prohibit them by binding instruction, and step 1 would attach a penalty.

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[56] National Commission for Human Rights, *Unequal Citizens* (Islamabad, 2022), https://www.nchr.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Minority-Report.pdf, as cited in Amnesty International, *"Cut Us Open"*, 36.

[57] Amnesty International, *"Cut Us Open."*

[58] Centre for Social Justice and Peoples Commission for Minorities' Rights, *Implementation of Job Quota for Religious Minorities in Pakistan* (provisional report), 7, https://csjpak.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Implementation_of_Job_Quota_Religious_Minorities_Pakistan.pdf: of 16,711 non-Muslim federal employees in 2017–18, 15,069 were Christian. The total is the one CSJ gives from the Establishment Division's statistical bulletin for 2017–18 (Table 29). See Annex B.

[59] Pakistan Public Administration Research Centre, Establishment Division, *Annual Statistical Bulletin of Federal Government Employees, 2021–22*, Tables 19 and 29, https://pparc.establishment.gov.pk/SiteImage/Publication/attached21-22.pdf: of 19,128 non-Muslim employees, 15,541 were in grades 1 to 4 (9,392 of them in grade 1) and 249 in grades 17 to 22. These are counts of serving employees, however recruited, not of quota appointments. Table 19 is reproduced in Annex E (Document E8).

[60] Cabinet Division, *Report on Observance and Implementation of Principles of Policy in Relation to the Affairs of the Federation, 2018–19 & 2019–20*, ch. 7, 74–75, https://www.cabinet.gov.pk/SiteImage/Misc/files/Publication/Principle-Policy-2018-20.pdf. The years should not be added together: the report says that "98 vacancies were carried over to the next year in 2020". The page is reproduced in Annex E (Document E7).

[61] Punjab Public Service Commission data, January 2025–July 2026, reported in Ashiknaz Khokhar, "Why 500 Minority Quota Jobs Remain Unfilled in Punjab," *The Friday Times*, 13 September 2026, https://www.thefridaytimes.com/13-Sep-2026/500-minority-quota-jobs-remain-unfilled-punjab (155 candidates recommended under the quota; the article also reports 481 minority candidates recommended on open merit in the same period); Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission, *Annual Report 2024*, 69, https://www.pakp.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Annual-Report-of-the-Public-Service-Commission-for-the-year-2024.pdf (74 posts, 12 recommendations). Both count recommendations, not appointments. See Annex B. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa table is reproduced in Annex E (Document E9).

[62] For 1957; for 2018–20, Cabinet Division, *Principles of Policy 2018–20*, 75. The explanation is contested: at the Senate's minority caucus on 10 September 2026 a member of the National Assembly disputed that qualified minority candidates are lacking for grade 16 and above, and the Ministry of Human Rights proposed a public database of vacant quota posts, special recruitment drives, flexible age relaxation and targeted publicity: Senate of Pakistan, "Senate Minority Caucus Convenes to Address the Issues of Quota Shortfalls and Workplace Discrimination Across Federal Ministries," press release, 10 September 2026, https://www.senate.gov.pk/en/news_content.php?id=Nzg5Mg%3D%3D.

[63] Punjab: 351 of 592 posts advertised under the women's quota, 235 of 397 under the minority quota and 97 of 284 under the disability quota were filled, in the sense that candidates were recommended, and a further 314 non-Muslims were selected on open merit: Associated Press of Pakistan, "PPSC Cleared 683 Candidates under Quota System in 2024," 17 April 2025, https://www.app.com.pk/domestic/ppsc-cleared-683-candidates-under-quota-system-in-2024/. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: 29 of 38, 12 of 74 and 12 of 24: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission, *Annual Report 2024*, 69.

[64] Amnesty International, *"Cut Us Open"*, 40–41. The 2015 notification was issued by the Punjab Services and General Administration Department.

4.3 Where people live

Exclusion reaches basic services as well. Youhanabad, a Christian neighbourhood of about 100,000 people in Lahore, has no water filtration plant, and its residents fetch clean water from neighbouring Nishtar Town, which is mainly Muslim. Non-Muslims, particularly those from Dalit backgrounds, lack connections to the powerful actors who decide where supply goes.[65]

Where people live reinforces the work they do. Many families live in so-called sanitation colonies, built to house sanitation workers on the margins of cities, with limited access to clean water, health care, schooling and transport. Weak schooling narrows the choice of other work, and staying in sanitation means staying in the colony — a condition that Sally Cawood and her colleagues, writing of sanitation workers in South Asia, call "entrapment".[66] The cycle feeds itself, which is why step 2 pairs affirmative action with a programme to open other work and upgrade these settlements.

CASE STUDY

4.4 Waste and sanitation workers: where the evidence is clearest

Among caste-marginalised minorities, waste and sanitation workers are the group for whom the evidence is clearest. We treat them as this report's case study; the other sectors (Table B5) are supporting evidence. Two workforces are involved, and protection has to tell them apart. *Sanitation workers* clean sewers and drains: the wet work, done mostly for the water and sanitation agencies (WASA). *Waste workers* — sanitary workers and street sweepers — sweep streets and collect and dispose of solid waste: the dry work, done mostly for the waste management companies and their contractors.[67] A non-governmental organisation's written statement, circulated at the Human Rights Council in September 2026 on the "Intersection of Caste and Religion in Discrimination Against Sanitation Workforce in Pakistan", states that "explicit statutory protections against caste- or descent-based discrimination remain absent".[68]

Sanitation workers die in sewers, and CLJ has been drawing attention to these deaths for years.[69] In the eight months to September 2026, 26 of them died — 18 in Punjab and eight in Karachi — and, as *Dawn* noted, none of them was Muslim (Figure 8).[70] Its editorial linked the deaths to advertisements inviting "only Christians and Hindus" to apply, and recalled the "bigotry that stigmatises an essential service" documented in Amnesty International and CLJ's 2025 report. Much of the work is done without protective equipment: in CLJ's survey of sewer workers, none had a face mask.[71] Injuries are common and often go unrecorded.

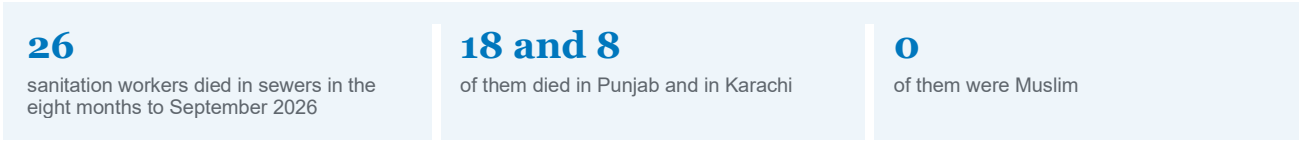


Figure 8. Deaths of sanitation workers in sewers, eight months to September 2026. Source: *Dawn*, 26 September 2026.

[65] Mary James Gill and Asif Aqeel, "Why Do Religious Minorities in Pakistan Receive Less Water?," in *Poverty and Prejudice: Religious Inequality and the Struggle for Sustainable Development*, ed. Mariz Tadros, Philip Mader and Kathryn Cheeseman (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2023), 112–16, open access at https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/76368.

[66] Sally Cawood, Malisha Farzana and K. M. Faisal Naeem, "*Nongra Kaj* / 'Dirty Work': Caste, Colonialism and Entrapment in Bangladesh," *Contemporary South Asia* 33, no. 4 (2025): 537–58, https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2025.2575161.

[67] Aqeel and Gill, *Shame and Stigma in Sanitation*, 35.

[68] International Support For Human Rights, written statement to the Human Rights Council, sixty-third session, agenda item 9, A/HRC/63/NGO/90 (24 September 2026), para. 6, https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/63/NGO/90. The statement draws in part on research by Amnesty International and CLJ, and it is an NGO submission, not a finding of a UN body. Its four recommendations — a country visit by the Special Rapporteurs on racism and on extreme poverty, legislation against caste-based discrimination and discriminatory job advertisements, accountability and compensation, and ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 — overlap with steps 1, 3 and 6.

[69] Saad Zuberi, "How Death and Despair Haunt Pakistan's Christian Minority," *Al Jazeera*, 9 April 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/4/9/how-death-and-despair-haunt-pakistans-christian-minority.

[70] Editorial, "Disposable Humans," *Dawn*, 26 September 2026, https://www.dawn.com/news/2032766/disposable-humans. The figures were given by Naeem Sadiq, an occupational health and safety expert, at a press conference called by the Citizens Commission for Equality and Human Rights: Shazia Hasan, "Call to Completely Ban Sending Sanitation Workers into Sewers," *Dawn*, 25 September 2026, https://www.dawn.com/news/2032497/call-to-completely-ban-sending-sanitation-workers-into-sewers.

[71] Aqeel and Gill, *Shame and Stigma in Sanitation*, 13 (equipment of sewer workers of the Water and Sanitation Agency); see also Amnesty International, *"Cut Us Open"*.

Waste workers die too, less visibly. The Lahore Waste Management Company told CLJ's 2021 study that 70 of its workers had died at work in 2019 alone, that all 9,000 of its waste workers were non-Muslim, and that it kept a record only of major accidents, so that no mechanism existed to record injuries.[72] Road accidents during sweeping and collection are a further risk: in April 2020 a contract worker in Gujranwala died after a vehicle struck him as he collected roadside garbage.[73] Without a register, the number of such deaths cannot be known.

Since December 2024 waste work in Punjab has been organised under the Suthra Punjab programme, described by the head of the Lahore company as "the world's largest, fully digitised waste management system" and showcased at the COP30 climate conference.[74] Its budget rose from Rs120 billion to Rs150 billion in 2025–26 and to Rs170 billion in 2026–27.[75] Official figures give 176,846 workers, described as sanitation workers,[76] and much of the work is contracted out to nearly 140 private firms (Figure 9).[77]

Rs150 bn
allocated to Suthra Punjab in 2025–26, up from Rs120 billion the year before

176,846
workers in Punjab's waste programme, by official figures reported in August 2026

Rs20,000
minimum monthly pay at one waste contractor in Gujranwala, as reported to a Senate committee; the legal minimum wage is Rs40,000

Figure 9. Waste management in Punjab: budget, workforce and pay. Sources: *Dawn*, 17 June 2025; *The Express Tribune*, 5 August 2026; Senate of Pakistan, 17 July 2026.

The programme's scale is not yet matched by protection for its workers. During 2026 waste workers in several districts protested over salaries unpaid for two months or more, over deductions and over the lack of social security cover,[78] and a Senate committee was told that workers at a contractor of the Gujranwala Waste Management Company were paid a minimum of Rs20,000 a month against a legal minimum wage of Rs40,000.[79] At that minimum wage, a year's pay for all 176,846 workers would come to about Rs85 billion — about half of the Rs170 billion allocated for 2026–27. We could find no published statement of how much of the programme's budget is spent on its workers: on wages, on protective equipment and occupational health, on training, and on social security and secure employment.[80]

This is why a dedicated law matters. Like mining, which has had its own statute since the Mines Act of 1923, waste and sanitation work is specialised and hazardous, and general labour law is not designed for it: many of

[72] Aqeel and Gill, *Shame and Stigma in Sanitation*, 12 and 40: "The LWMC says that 70 sanitation workers died during work in 2019 alone"; the company "only has a record of major accidents and leaves of employees which means that the mechanism to record injuries does not exist". The study calls the company's workers sanitation workers.

[73] "Expectations of Justice Low for Grieving Family of Street Sweeper in Pakistan," *Morning Star News*, 1 May 2020, https://morningstarnews.org/2020/05/expectations-of-justice-low-for-grieving-family-of-street-sweeper-in-pakistan/ (Ashiq Masih, a contract worker of the Gujranwala Municipal Corporation, 24 April 2020). It is one reported case, not a count.

[74] "Punjab's Waste Management Initiative Achieves International Recognition," *Geo News*, 1 December 2025, https://www.geo.tv/latest/636683-punjabs-waste-management-initiative-achieves-international-recognition. The launch date, 3 December 2024, is from "Suthra Punjab under Scrutiny over Wage Complaints, Financial Mismanagement," *Dunya News*, 9 July 2026, https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/961654-suthra-punjab-under-scrutiny-over-wage-complaints-financial-mismanage.

[75] Khalid Hasnain, "Punjab Presents Infrastructure-Focused Rs5.33tr Budget," *Dawn*, 17 June 2025, https://www.dawn.com/news/1917559/punjab-presents-infrastructure-focused-rs533tr-budget (budget raised "from Rs120bn to Rs150bn"; the same budget proposed raising the minimum wage to Rs40,000 a month). For 2026–27: Associated Press of Pakistan, "Punjab Allocates Rs170b for Suthra Punjab Programme," 16 June 2026, https://www.app.com.pk/punjab/punjab-allocates-rs170b-for-suthra-punjab-programme/.

[76] Afzal Talib, "Suthra Punjab Faces Financial Strain," *The Express Tribune*, 5 August 2026, https://tribune.com.pk/story/2622154/suthra-punjab-faces-financial-strain.

[77] "Suthra Punjab under Scrutiny," *Dunya News*, 9 July 2026.

[78] "Suthra Punjab Workers' Protest for Unpaid Dues Continues," *Dawn*, 24 April 2026, https://www.dawn.com/news/1994488 (Sahiwal); *Dunya News*, 9 July 2026 (Multan; deductions); "Suthra Punjab Workers Stage Protest against Illegal Salary Cuts in Faisalabad," *The Nation*, 25 August 2026, https://www.nation.com.pk/25-Aug-2026/suthra-punjab-workers-stage-protest-illegal-salary-cuts-faisalabad (social security).

[79] Senate of Pakistan, "Senate Committee on Human Rights Demands Accountability on Sanitary Workers Exploitation, Child Protection, and Law Enforcement Delays," press release, 17 July 2026, https://www.senate.gov.pk/en/news_content.php?catid=6&cattitle=Press+Releases&id=NzY2OQ%3D%3D&subcatid=59: a contract covering 675 sanitary workers and 60 helpers, with Rs29,890 billed for each worker a month. See also Nadeem Tanoli, "'Death of Humanity': Senate Slams Contractor System after Sanitary Worker's Suicide," *Minute Mirror*, 19 July 2026, https://minutemirror.com.pk/death-of-humanity-senate-slams-contractor-system-after-sanitary-workers-suicide-594389/.

[80] Published figures would also support the authorities' own oversight. The Punjab Anti-Corruption Establishment is investigating allegations in Faisalabad that salaries were drawn for 633 workers who did not exist, among losses put at about Rs1 billion: "7 Held in Rs1b FWMC Suthra Punjab Scam," *The Express Tribune*, 15 May 2026, https://tribune.com.pk/story/2608208/7-held-in-rs1b-fwmc-suthra-punjab-scam; see also *Dunya News*, 9 July 2026.

these workers are hired through contractors or on daily wages, and the hazards — toxic gases, traffic, untreated waste — are particular to the work. The Punjab Labour Code, 2026 gives agricultural, construction, domestic and platform workers, among others, chapters of their own; waste and sanitation workers have none, though the Code's general protections apply to them.[81] The Punjab Waste and Sanitation Workers (Dignity, Safety, Security and Welfare) Bill, 2026, placed on the Punjab Assembly's list of business for introduction as a private member's bill on 1 September 2026, would fill that gap, recognising these workers as a category of their own and providing for their safety, protective equipment and social security.[82] The same approach is open to the other provinces and the federal capital (step 5). Pakistan's own National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (2021–2026) points the same way: it lists human-rights standards in public procurement contracts and occupational health and safety among its priorities, and undertakes to "safeguard adherence to minimum wage and other labour rights".[83]

> *Unless these workers are named in the law and made visible in the GSP+ dialogue, they are unlikely to be protected, however large the budget.*

4.5 Other sectors: bonded labour

Pakistan ranked 18th on the Global Slavery Index 2023.[84] The European Commission, citing the National Commission for Human Rights, puts the number of people in debt bondage at about three million, mainly on tenant farms in Sindh and in brick kilns in Punjab, and notes that the Government has yet to carry out the statistical survey on bonded labour that the ILO has repeatedly requested.[85]

A study commissioned by the UK's Department for International Development reported that brick-kiln labourers in Punjab "mostly consist of Christians", that most bonded agricultural labourers in Sindh are Hindu *haris*, and that a "generational history of bonded labour and caste-based discrimination" keeps other livelihoods out of reach.[86] Sources differ on the shares (Table B5). The geography in the Commission's report is precise; the people are not named.

The same communities appear in the sectors where bonded labour is best documented (Table B5). This evidence is thinner than for waste and sanitation work, and we offer it in support. The UN Special Rapporteur on slavery found in 2016 that debt bondage in Pakistan "is mainly found among minorities, such as non-Muslims (Hindus or Christians) or Muslims who have converted from Hinduism".[87] CERD found it persisting "particularly in the brick kiln and textile industries and among the scheduled castes (Dalits)".[88] The United States lists Pakistani bricks, carpets, coal, cotton, sugarcane and wheat as goods produced with forced labour, and reports that bonded labour "disproportionately affects religious and ethnic minorities".[89] In Karachi's garment factories, a 2025 study reported Scheduled Caste workers concentrated in the lowest jobs, as sweepers and helpers, many

[81] Punjab Labour Code, 2026 (Act IX of 2026), Part IV, chapters 4.2–4.4 and 4.7, ss. 216–225 and 234–243, text at https://clr.org.pk/Labour-Laws/Punjab/Punjab%20Labour%20Code%202026..pdf. Part IV also covers home-based workers, interns and apprentices, and road transport workers. On daily-wage work see ILO, *Decent Work Country Programme for Pakistan (2023–27)* (Islamabad: ILO, 2023), section 2.3.3 (no public copy found).

[82] Provincial Assembly of the Punjab, List of Business for the sitting of 1 September 2026 (45th session), Private Members' Business, "Introduction of Bill", in the name of Mr Ahmad Iqbal Chaudhary (copy held by CLJ). CLJ drafted the Bill. The provisions described are clauses 4, 11–15 and 19 of the draft, which also defines sanitation work and waste work separately (clause 2).

[83] Ministry of Human Rights, *Pakistan's First Five-Year National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (2021–2026)*, 10, 18–36 (actions 10 and 41), https://www.mohr.gov.pk/SiteImage/Misc/files/NAP-BHR(1).pdf.

[84] Walk Free, *Modern Slavery in Pakistan: Global Slavery Index 2023 Country Snapshot* (Perth: Minderoo Foundation, 2023), https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2023/09/27164917/GSI-Snapshot-Pakistan.pdf.

[85] SWD(2026) 184 final, 10, citing National Commission for Human Rights, *The Issue of Bonded Labour in Pakistan* (August 2023), and the 2024 observation of the ILO Committee of Experts on Convention No. 29.

[86] Murray et al., *Modern Slavery in Pakistan*, 10 and 13.

[87] Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, *Report*, A/HRC/33/46 (4 July 2016), para. 20, https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/33/46.

[88] CERD/C/PAK/CO/21-23, para. 27.

[89] US Department of Labor, *2024 List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor* (September 2024), table of goods by country, https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2023/2024-tvpra-list-of-goods.pdf; US Department of State, *2025 Trafficking in Persons Report: Pakistan* (29 September 2025), https://www.state.gov/reports/2025-trafficking-in-persons-report/pakistan/, which adds that traffickers "target lower-caste Hindus, Christians, and Muslims specifically for forced and bonded labor".

of them formerly bonded on farms or at kilns.[90] What no source provides is a count. Pakistan has carried out no national survey of bonded labour, and outside sanitation we found no official data on the religion or caste of workers in any of these sectors — which is why step 6 matters.

4.6 Gender and caste beneath religion

For women and girls from these communities, gender, minority status and caste stigma arrive together (Figure 10). The European Parliament cites 2025 UN figures showing that, among women and girls affected by forced conversion through marriage, around 75 per cent were Hindu and 25 per cent Christian, and it calls for "addressing the root causes … including gender inequality, poverty, social exclusion and discrimination based on caste, gender and religion".[91]



Figure 10. A compounded burden: for CMRM women and girls, gender, minority status and caste stigma combine to produce specific vulnerabilities.

CLJ's own research has found that the girls most exposed come overwhelmingly from caste-marginalised families, where poverty and early entry into domestic work leave them unprotected.[92] In Sindh, a 2013 report to the CEDAW Committee found that the girls abducted and converted came from Scheduled Caste Hindu backgrounds, and recent research traces how police, courts and religious institutions handle such cases in Sindh and Punjab alike.[93] CERD itself urged Pakistan in 2016 to "end the forced conversion and forced marriage of Christian and Hindu Dalit women".[94] We do not infer the caste of any individual, including Maria Shahbaz, whose case prompted the European Parliament's resolution. Our point is narrower: protection that cannot see how risk is distributed within a minority cannot direct help to where the risk is greatest.

The case of Asia Bibi shows the same blind spot. It is remembered, rightly, as a blasphemy case. But it began not with a theological argument: it began when co-workers refused to take water from her hands because she was a Christian — which, as one of the present authors has argued, is a caste taboo about pollution expressed in religious terms.[95] CLJ's research shows untouchability being not simply carried over but rearticulated in the

[90] Arisa, The Knowledge Forum and Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network, *Precarious Labour and Silenced Workers: The Position of Workers from Scheduled Caste Communities in the Textiles and Garment Industry in Pakistan* (January 2025), https://arisa.nl/wp-content/uploads/Precarious-labour-and-silenced-workers_Arisa_TKF_PDSN_Jan25.pdf, based on 94 workers in Karachi.

[91] European Parliament, Resolution of 9 July 2026, recital B and paras. 7–8.

[92] Aqeel, *Index of Religious Diversity and Inclusion*, 63.

[93] Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network and IDSN, *Scheduled Caste Women in Pakistan: Alternative Report to CEDAW* (January 2013), 74, https://idsn.org/fileadmin/user_folder/pdf/New_files/Pakistan/SCHEDULED_CASTE_WOMEN_IN_PAKISTAN_-_Alternative_report_to_CEDAW_-_PDSN_and_IDSN_-_Jan_2013.pdf; Abira Ashfaq and Seema Rana Maheshwary, "Ideological Grooming and Forced Conversion of Hindu Women in Pakistan," and Raja M. Ali Saleem and Mary James Gill, "Ideologically Motivated Sexual Grooming in Pakistan: The Phenomenon, Context, and Institutions," in *Ideologically Motivated Sexual Grooming*, ed. Mariz Tadros and Grant Sinnamon (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 2025), chs. 3 and 4, https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/articles/book/Ideologically_Motivated_Sexual_Grooming/29589692.

[94] CERD/C/PAK/CO/21-23, para. 32.

[95] *Mst. Asia Bibi v. The State*, Criminal Appeal No. 39-L of 2015 (Supreme Court of Pakistan, judgment announced 31 October 2018), PLD 2019 SC 64, main judgment, paras. 28 and 40, and Khosa J., concurring, para. 21, https://www.supremecourt.gov.pk/downloads_judgements/Crl.A._39_L_2015.pdf. The judgment records exclusion on the ground of religion; the reading of it as a caste taboo is argued in Asif Aqeel, "'Untouchable' Caste Identity Haunts Pakistani Christians like Asia Bibi," *World Watch Monitor*, November 2018, https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/11/untouchable-caste-identity-haunts-pakistani-christians-like-asia-bibi/.

language of Islamic ritual purity, so that a caste taboo acquires religious sanction.[96] The same logic was blamed for the death of Irfan Masih, a Christian sanitation worker who fell unconscious while cleaning a sewer in Umerkot in 2017: doctors who were fasting reportedly refused to treat him because he was drenched in sewer sludge and so, in their eyes, "unclean".[97] A record that captures only religion cannot show how the exclusion grew out of the caste disabilities that produced it.

For women and girls, the steps respond in part: school retention in the Mobility and Inclusion programme (step 2), and all data published by sex (steps 4, 6 and 8).

4.7 Who is in the room

Representation follows the same line. In the legislatures non-Muslims sit mainly in the seats reserved for them — ten in the National Assembly, four in the Senate and 24 in the provincial assemblies — and members for the assembly seats are chosen from lists drawn up by party leaderships.[98] Places on those lists, as on advisory bodies and commissions, tend to go to those with education, networks and standing in the cities — the very things caste-linked exclusion withholds — so waste and sanitation workers and bonded labourers are seldom in the rooms where minority policy is made. CERD has recommended special measures for minority groups, including "reserving a proportionate number of seats", to overcome structural barriers to participation.[99] Step 2(d) and the advisory group in step 7 are meant to change that.

[96] Aqeel and Gill, *Shame and Stigma in Sanitation*, 12.

[97] "The Death of a Sanitary Worker in Pakistan," *Global Voices*, 13 June 2017, https://globalvoices.org/2017/06/13/the-death-of-a-sanitary-worker-in-pakistan/.

[98] Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, Arts. 51(4), 51(6)(e), 59(1)(f), 106(1) and 106(3)(c), text as amended to the Twenty-Seventh Amendment at https://www.pakp.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CoP27thA.pdf; Elections Act, 2017 (Act XXXIII of 2017), s. 104(1), https://pakistancode.gov.pk/pdffiles/administratorf21c97fb85cfdc593f840a4c008caa45.pdf (parties file lists of candidates for the reserved seats in order of priority).

[99] CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26, paras. 19–20, referring to CERD, *General Recommendation No. 32: The Meaning and Scope of Special Measures in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, CERD/C/GC/32 (24 September 2009), https://undocs.org/en/CERD/C/GC/32.

SECTION 5

Why now: the new GSP Regulation

Pakistan has much riding on this. GSP+ has given it mostly zero duties on two-thirds of all product categories since 1 January 2014; the EU is its second most important trading partner, with goods trade worth €12.2 billion in 2025, and about 89 per cent of the textiles and clothing — "the backbone of Pakistani exports" — that it sends to the EU enter at preferential rates.[100] Pakistan is also the scheme's largest beneficiary: the EU is its main export market, taking 28 per cent of all it exports, and in 2024 Pakistan sent €7.5 billion of GSP+-eligible goods to the EU and received an estimated €732 million in tariff exemptions.[101] Regulation (EU) 2026/1395 applies from 1 January 2027. Current beneficiaries that wish to remain in GSP+, Pakistan among them, should submit a new request by 31 December 2028; their preferences are to be maintained while it is assessed. Pakistan's request must include a plan of action which, under Article 9(3), "shall be based … in particular on the most recent conclusions of the monitoring bodies", propose "indicative timeframes" and identify, "where relevant, the responsible institutions". The Commission will then review progress on that plan in three-year cycles, including through monitoring visits, and will take into account information from civil society.[102] The list of conventions to be implemented grows from 27 to 32 and now includes ILO Convention No. 81 on labour inspection; complaints about breaches of GSP commitments go to the Commission through its Single Entry Point.[103]

The most recent conclusions on this subject are CERD's of 2024: concern at caste-based discrimination (paragraph 21), including caste-coded recruitment for sanitation work (paragraph 21(c)), a recommendation to end it (paragraph 22(d)), and regret at the absence of data disaggregated by descent (paragraph 5). Pakistan's next CERD report is due by 4 January 2028[104] — inside the same window. The European Parliament has asked that these issues be raised "within the framework of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus monitoring".[105] For both partners, most of the steps below are therefore not new demands: they are ways of meeting obligations already accepted and recommendations already made.

Nor are these concerns new. International bodies have been pointing in the same direction for well over a decade (Figure 11); what has been missing is a framework that joins their observations together.[106] CERD asked Pakistan in 2024 to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation covering descent;[107] on 28 September 2026, marking twenty-five years since Durban, States were urged again to adopt such legislation and encouraged to collect disaggregated data — the two foundations of the steps that follow.[108] Table 5, in Section 8, sets out the conventions engaged, with a benchmark for each.

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[100] European Commission, Directorate-General for Trade, "EU Trade Relations with Pakistan," https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/pakistan_en.

[101] SWD(2026) 184 final, 1–2: Pakistan remains the "largest beneficiary with EUR 7.5 billion in GSP+ eligible exports to the EU in 2024 (primarily textiles and clothing) and an estimated EUR 732 million in tariff exemptions in 2024 alone", with the EU "its main export market, accounting for 28 % of its total exports".

[102] Regulation (EU) 2026/1395 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2026 on applying a generalised scheme of tariff preferences and repealing Regulation (EU) No 978/2012, OJ L, 22.6.2026, recitals 17, 19 and 22 and Arts. 9(1)(d), 9(3), 10(2), 13(1), 13(3) and 14(3), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2026/1395/oj/eng.

[103] Regulation (EU) 2026/1395, recital 13 (ILO Convention No. 81 among the conventions added; the relevant conventions are listed in Annex VI), recital 20 and Art. 2(13) (complaints through the Single Entry Point). The count of 32 conventions is the Commission's: European Commission, "The EU's Renewed GSP Scheme: Key Updates for 2027," 11 August 2026, https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/news/eus-renewed-gsp-scheme-key-updates-2027. The Commission's 2023 operating guidelines for the Single Entry Point list only complainants based in the EU, who may also represent organisations in the partner country; its news item of August 2026 speaks of "any stakeholder".

[104] CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26, para. 45 (combined twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth periodic reports due by 4 January 2028).

[105] European Parliament, Resolution of 9 July 2026, para. 8.

[106] CERD raised discrimination against Dalits as early as 2009, when it noted that Pakistan had adopted no law prohibiting caste discrimination: CERD, *Concluding Observations: Pakistan*, CERD/C/PAK/CO/20 (16 March 2009), para. 12, https://undocs.org/en/CERD/C/PAK/CO/20; in 2016 it recommended that Pakistan "take the measures necessary to end discrimination against Dalits" (CERD/C/PAK/CO/21-23, para. 32). Most recently, a non-governmental organisation's written statement to the Human Rights Council's sixty-third session addresses caste- and religion-based discrimination against Pakistan's sanitation workforce: A/HRC/63/NGO/90.

[107] CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26, para. 8(c): "comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation at the federal level … that explicitly includes all the grounds specified in article 1 of the Convention and prohibits direct, indirect and intersecting forms of discrimination in both the public and the private spheres."

[108] United Nations General Assembly, *Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting to Mark the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action* (New York, 28 September 2026), paras. 8, 16 and 18, https://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/110/2026/09/Political-Declaration_Durban-Declaration-and-Programme-of-Action.pdf.

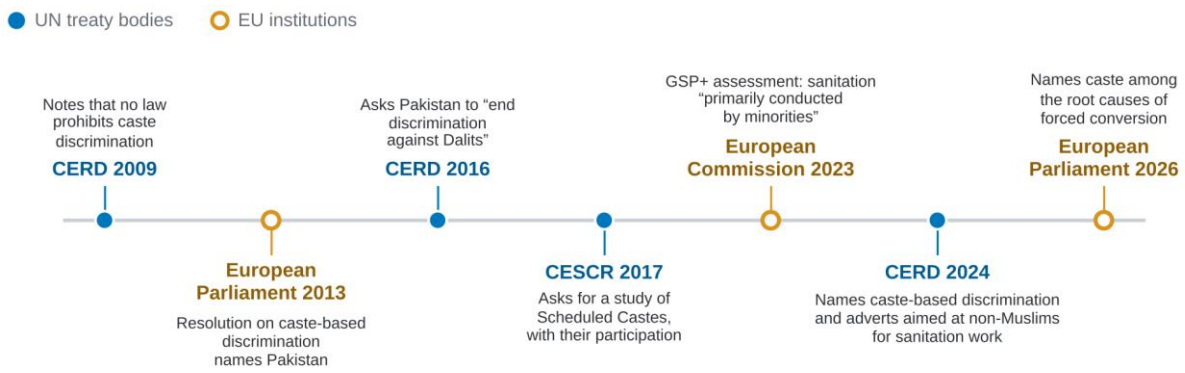


Figure 11. Recognition is already building: international bodies on caste-linked exclusion in Pakistan, 2009–2026.

SECTION 6

Eight steps for the Government of Pakistan

The argument of this report has four parts. Pakistan began with protections that recognised caste: in the Punjab, a share reserved jointly for Christians and the Scheduled Castes; at the centre, a quota for the Scheduled Castes alone. The federal quota was under-used, by the Government's own account, and then withdrawn, and the quota created nearly thirteen years later is open to every non-Muslim (Section 3). What we see today is non-Muslim employment concentrated in the lowest grades, with many reserved posts left empty above them, while the state points, as it did in 1957, to a lack of qualified candidates (Section 4). The remedy we propose is to return a share of what is reserved to its original purpose, and to fund the routes that lead to it (step 2). By original purpose we mean reservation by descent for the communities treated as untouchable: the Scheduled Castes, listed in 1957 as "castes of non-Muslims", and the Christians who share their descent. The Punjab counted the two together from 1942; the federal quota of 1948 left Christians out, and the 1957 Ordinance did not repeat that exclusion. Who actually used either quota, the records we have found do not show. The proposal restores the Punjab principle and applies it across the country. Table 2 links each finding to its remedy.

What the evidence shows	The remedy	Steps
Workers are channelled by birth into stigmatised work (Section 4)	End religion- and caste-coded recruitment; a law that penalises it; a dedicated law for the workers, and protection for bonded labourers	1, 3, 5
Reserved posts above the lowest grades stay unfilled	Funded routes to the posts; published vacancies; a Commission mandated to monitor them	2, 4, 7
Figures by religion alone hide differences within minorities	Voluntary data on caste or descent, with occupation, in the census, surveys and quota returns; religion in the Forced Labour Survey	2, 4, 6, 8
Reservation open to every non-Muslim may not reach those it was first meant for; the records cannot yet show whether it does	A provisional reserved share, tested against a baseline	2

Table 2. From evidence to remedy: what each finding calls for (steps refer to Table 3).

Each step can be taken by an identified office and checked. The first two set the legal framework — a law against discrimination and a category that lets affirmative action reach those it was meant for; most of the others can begin at once. Together they would fit naturally into Pakistan's GSP+ plan of action. Dates not fixed by others are proposals, set out in three stages in Table 6; the Regulation itself asks only for "indicative timeframes". The law in step 1, the worker protections in step 5 and the survey in step 6 cover everyone, and the Mobility and Inclusion programme in step 2 is open by descent or occupation, whatever the religion; only the reserved share is confined to religious minorities, because that is where caste descent and minority status combine.

TABLE 3 · EIGHT STEPS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

LEGAL RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION · STEPS 1 AND 2

1 Enact comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation (CADL).

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
A federal law, as CERD recommended in 2024, mirrored by the provinces, prohibiting discrimination in public and private life on the grounds the Constitution names (Arts. 22, 26, 27) — with caste defined to cover descent and hereditary occupation, in line with CERD's reading of descent — and protecting everyone, whatever their religion. It should make the practice of untouchability in any form an offence — restoring in law the ban in Article 20 of the 1956 Constitution — together with caste-coded recruitment, caste slurs, denial of access to services and water, and forced hazardous work, with higher penalties for public officials; shift the burden of proof; require positive action, including a review of school textbooks; and create an independent equality body.	Parliament; provincial assemblies; Ministry of Human Rights; Ministry of Law and Justice	Bill introduced before reapplication and in force by 2031; complaints, remedies and prosecutions reported each year

Basis CERD paras. 8(c), 33–34; Arts. 22, 26, 27; Art. 20 (1956); PPC s.153-A; ICERD Arts. 2(1)(d), 4; CERD GR 29; DDPA; Durban+25, para. 16; OHCHR Guide (2022)

TABLE 3 · EIGHT STEPS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

2 Bring "Scheduled Castes" within a wider CMRM category for counting and affirmative action.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
Give Caste-Marginalised Religious Minorities a reserved share of every minority measure, returning reservation to its original purpose: (a) three of the five percentage points of the job quota, allocated by roster in each grade band (for example grades 1–4, 5–16 and 17–22) and across kinds of post. The quota and the share are both calculated on vacancies outside the occupations designated under step 3, and appointments to those occupations count towards neither (worked example in Annex C); (b) three-fifths of minority education places and scholarships, with funded preparation for competitive examinations and help with the cost of applying; (c) the same share of minority development and welfare schemes; (d) the seats reserved for non-Muslims in the National Assembly, the Senate, the provincial assemblies and local councils, in proportion to their share of the non-Muslim population, through parties' lists and nominations. Alongside the share, a Mobility and Inclusion programme open by descent or occupation, whatever the religion: skills training and apprenticeships, school retention, social protection, and upgraded sanitation colonies (water, sanitation, tenure). Eligibility for the share is by descent, not present occupation, and only on a person's own application: descent from a listed community, or a declaration of descent supported by work in a listed occupation by the applicant, a parent or a grandparent, shown by an eligibility certificate that names no caste (Annex C). Legal route: the proviso to Article 27(1), which lets Parliament redress under-representation in public service, Article 37(a) and an amendment to the Elections Act, 2017; meanwhile, amend the 2009 Office Memorandum and the matching provincial orders; seats on local councils fall under the provincial local government Acts. In the census, ask religion first and then a voluntary question on caste or descent, put to everyone, so that Scheduled Castes are no longer counted only as an alternative to "Hindu". CMRM is then counted by combining the two answers, never as a box to tick, and Scheduled Castes go on being published as before. Scheduled Castes keep their name, their recognition and their own count within the category. The share is provisional: it is to be reviewed within three years of its adoption, or as soon as the surveys in step 4 give a baseline of population and disadvantage, whichever is earlier, and again after the next census (Annex C).	Parliament and provincial assemblies; Establishment Division and its provincial counterparts; Election Commission and political parties; education and welfare departments; Pakistan Bureau of Statistics; Ministry of Human Rights	Act passed or O.M. amended; eligibility rules settled with the advisory group (step 7); CMRM shares of reserved posts, education places, welfare spending and reserved seats published; Mobility and Inclusion pilot running; CMRM question in the next census and labour force surveys

Basis Arts. 27(1), 36, 37(a), 51(6)(e), 59(1)(f), 106(3)(c); Elections Act 2017, s. 104; PLD 1993 SC 439; 2023 SCMR 518; CERD paras. 5, 6, 20, 21(f), 22(c), (i); GR 32; Durban+25, para. 8

TABLE 3 · EIGHT STEPS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

RECRUITMENT AND DATA · STEPS 3 AND 4

3 End "non-Muslims only" recruitment.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
Issue binding instructions that no post in sanitation or other designated occupations may be advertised, reserved or filled by religion or caste — including wording such as "non-Muslim only", "Isai" or "Chuhra only" — and write the same condition into outsourcing contracts. The five per cent minority quota must be expressly preserved and applied across all grades; this follows the Supreme Court's judgment in 2023 SCMR 518. Designated occupations carry no reservation by religion at all and are left out when the quota is calculated, so that sanitation posts can no longer be used to meet it; outside them the quota stays at five per cent. The share in step 2 reserves no occupation.	Federal Establishment Division; provincial services and general administration departments; local governments	No such advertisements in newspapers or official portals; contract clauses in place; minority quota applied in all grades

Basis CERD para. 22(d); 2023 SCMR 518; Art. 27

4 Publish minority-quota data, and count descent and occupation in official surveys.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
Report each year how many reserved posts are filled, vacant and carried forward, by grade (BPS 1–22), post type and sex, and by religion and caste/descent as voluntarily self-identified. Add voluntary questions on religion and caste or descent to the Labour Force Survey and the main household surveys, which already record occupation, and ask for parents' occupation; publish the results in aggregate, with occupation shown by religion and descent. Have public bodies, waste companies and their contractors report their workforce in the same way. Survey data are for monitoring, not for deciding individual claims.	Establishment Division and provincial counterparts; Pakistan Bureau of Statistics	Annual public table; share of minority posts above grade 4 rising; vacancies in commission-recruited posts falling; survey tables of occupation by religion and descent

Basis SWD(2026) 184; NCHR 2022; 2023 SCMR 518; CERD para. 6; CERD GR 32, para. 17; Durban+25, para. 18

TABLE 3 · EIGHT STEPS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

WORKER PROTECTION AND MEASUREMENT · STEPS 5 AND 6

5 Protect waste and sanitation workers through a dedicated law, make the work safe, and extend protection to bonded labourers.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
Enact the Punjab Waste and Sanitation Workers (Dignity, Safety, Security and Welfare) Bill, 2026, and adopt it as a model for the federal capital and the other provinces. For sanitation workers (sewer cleaners): at once, no sewer entry without protective equipment, gas testing and rescue cover, with supervisors and contractors answerable for deaths; within five years of the law, mechanise sewer cleaning and retrain workers as machine operators. For waste workers: contract terms that guarantee the minimum wage, social security and safety equipment. For both: a register of deaths and injuries; a yearly statement of what waste programmes spend on their workers; labour inspection; and ratification of ILO Convention No. 190. Extend the same protections — the minimum wage, social security, a register of deaths and injuries, and labour inspection — to bonded labourers in brick kilns and agriculture, and enforce the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 and its provincial counterparts in the kilns and on the farms where these communities work.	Provincial assemblies and governments; water and sanitation agencies; waste companies; Federal Government (capital; C190); provincial labour departments and district vigilance committees	Bill enacted in Punjab and followed elsewhere; register of deaths and injuries published; yearly statement of spending on workers; inspections; mechanisation plan; C190 ratified; inspections of brick kilns and farms, and releases from bondage, reported each year

Basis ILO C81 (GSP+ from 2027); ILO C111; ILO C190; ICESCR Art. 7; Business and Human Rights Action Plan (2021–2026); Amnesty (2025); ILO C29; Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992

6 Include religion in the Forced Labour Survey.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
Record respondents' religion, by voluntary self-identification, and their sex, in the nationwide survey on bonded and forced labour.	Federal and provincial labour departments; Pakistan Bureau of Statistics	Survey published with aggregate results by religion and sex

Basis SWD(2026) 184, p. 10 (reporting ILO CEACR, 2024); CERD paras. 5, 6

A bill now before the National Assembly, the Prohibition of Manual Scavenging and Protection of Sanitation Workers (ICT) Bill, 2026, would prohibit all manual sewer entry in the federal capital and mandate mechanised cleaning. We share its aim, but India's experience counsels against a ban that runs ahead of a transition. India prohibited manual scavenging in 2013 and launched its NAMASTE mechanisation scheme in 2022, yet its National Commission for Safai Karamcharis records 1,377 sewer and septic-tank deaths between 1993 and 2025, and the work persists because manual labour remains cheaper and informal workers can be dismissed without consequence.[109] Banned work does not disappear; it moves out of sight, and the families who depend on it lose their income. Machines bought for workers, rather than with them, have too often stood idle.

CLJ's answer is already written into law-in-waiting: the Punjab Waste and Sanitation Workers Bill, 2026 provides for safety rules at once and mechanisation within five years, with today's workers retrained as operators. To make that transition real, CLJ is developing an affordable, worker-operated sewer-cleaning prototype, to be piloted in Islamabad, built on the principle that those who know the sewers best should shape the technology that replaces manual entry, and keep their livelihoods when it does. We propose that the Government adopt it.

[109] Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (India); National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2022; National Commission for Safai Karamcharis, *Annual Report 2025–26*, as reported in Raj Valmiki, "Can India Be Truly 'Swachh' If Sanitation Workers Pay for It with Their Lives?," *The Wire*, 2 October 2026, https://thewire.in/caste/can-india-be-truly-swachh-if-sanitation-workers-pay-for-it-with-their-lives.

TABLE 3 · EIGHT STEPS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING · STEPS 7 AND 8

7 Have the National Commission for Minorities Rights monitor the quota by descent, and make the Commission more representative.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
The Act already requires the Commission to "ensure and monitor implementation of minorities job quota in private and public sector organizations" (section 12(g)) and to "take special measures for integration of all groups among minorities including Dalit and scheduled caste" (section 12(s)), and two of the three Hindu members of its Council must come from the Scheduled Castes (section 24).[110] It names no caste among Christians. Under these powers the Commission should report each year whether reserved posts, places, schemes and seats reach caste-marginalised minorities, Christians as well as Hindus, from returns by religion and self-identified descent; it need classify no one. It should convene an advisory group drawn from affected communities — waste and sanitation workers, brick-kiln and farm labourers, and women — and consult those communities on the CMRM category and share (step 2); and it, or a separate body, should be designated as the equality body under step 1. The Commission should itself become more representative of the most marginalised groups among minorities, with members drawn from caste-marginalised Christian communities as well as from the Scheduled Castes.	Ministry of Human Rights; the Commission	Annual chapter on quota implementation in the Commission's report; advisory group meeting regularly; complaints under step 1 received and resolved; members from caste-marginalised communities on the Commission

Basis National Commission for Minorities Rights Act, 2025, ss. 12(g), 12(s), 24(2); Art. 36; OHCHR Guide (2022)

8 Report on caste to CERD and CEDAW.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
In the next report to CERD, due by 4 January 2028, and in the next periodic report under CEDAW, explain the measures taken under steps 1–7, including on caste-coded recruitment; provide employment data by religion and caste/descent (voluntary self-identification), sex and grade; and track action on each committee's recommendations.	Ministry of Human Rights	CERD report submitted by 4 January 2028 with these sections; CEDAW report covering women and girls from these communities; a public table of action on each committee's recommendations

Basis CERD paras. 5, 21, 22(d); CEDAW 2020, paras. 47(a), 48(a)

Table 3. Eight practical steps for the Government of Pakistan, in three groups. In the last column: "CERD" with paragraph numbers is CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26 (2024); GR = a general recommendation of CERD; Arts. = articles of the 1973 Constitution unless marked; DDPA and Durban+25 = the Durban Declaration (2001) and the political declaration of 28 September 2026; OHCHR Guide = OHCHR and Equal Rights Trust, Protecting Minority Rights: A Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation (2022); NCHR 2022 = Unequal Citizens; Amnesty (2025) = ASA 33/0120/2025.

[110] National Commission for Minorities Rights Act, 2025 (Act No. XL of 2025), ss. 12(g), 12(s) and 24(2), Pakistan Code, https://pakistancode.gov.pk/pdffiles/administratore4325bc295486048c9fe04f2e101056f.pdf.

SECTION 7

Seven steps for the European Union

> *We strongly support Pakistan's reapplication for GSP+ status: in our view it is the strongest leverage available to incentivise better living and working conditions for marginalised communities, especially CMRMs.*

We therefore ask for benchmarks and reporting, not penalties. The European Parliament has recalled that failure to implement human-rights commitments should lead to the withdrawal of GSP+ status;[111] the Regulation's own preamble says withdrawal "should be considered as a last resort".[112] Clear benchmarks are how both partners make sure it never comes to that. Table 4 sets out seven steps for the EU.[113] Several of them refer to the benchmarks for Pakistan's plan of action, set out in Table 5 (Section 8); the offices responsible are named in Table 3. We offer these steps from our vantage point in Pakistan, with respect for the EU's own procedures.

TABLE 4 · SEVEN STEPS FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION

1 Name caste and descent, and waste and sanitation workers, in the GSP+ assessment.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
Say in each assessment of Pakistan which minorities are concentrated in sanitation, brick kilns and bonded farm labour, and treat descent alongside religion when the definition of minorities is discussed. The 2023 assessment recorded that sanitation work "is primarily conducted by minorities"; the 2026 assessment does not repeat it.	European Commission; EEAS	The Commission's next GSP+ report, due by 1 January 2030, names caste or descent, and waste and sanitation workers, in Pakistan and reports on each Table 5 benchmark

Basis ICERD Art. 1(1); CERD GR 29; CERD paras. 21–22; EP 2013, paras. 9–10; EP 2026, paras. 7–8; Reg. Art. 14(1)

2 Look for the eight steps, as dated benchmarks, in Pakistan's plan of action.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
The plan must rest on the most recent conclusions of the monitoring bodies and propose timeframes and, where relevant, responsible institutions. When examining Pakistan's request, check that the benchmarks in Table 5 are in it — and say in the dialogue beforehand that they will be looked for.	European Commission; EEAS; EU Delegation to Pakistan	Pakistan's request, due by 31 December 2028, carries a plan of action with the Table 5 benchmarks, dates and responsible offices; the plan is published once GSP+ is granted

Basis Reg. Arts. 2(10), 9(1)(d), 9(3), 10(2); recitals 17, 22

3 Report on the benchmarks in every monitoring cycle.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
Review progress against each benchmark in the three-year cycles and, where progress falls short, list it among the issues and actions to be prioritised in the next cycle.	European Commission; EEAS	Each three-yearly report to the European Parliament and the Council shows the status of every benchmark

Basis Reg. Arts. 13(1), 14(1), 14(2)

[111] European Parliament, Resolution of 9 July 2026, para. 8.

[112] Regulation (EU) 2026/1395, recital 30.

[113] European Parliament, *Resolution of 10 October 2013 on Caste-Based Discrimination*, P7_TA(2013)0420, OJ C 181, 19.5.2016, 69, paras. 9, 10, 13 and 16 (paragraph 16 names Pakistan), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-7-2013-0420_EN.html. Regulation (EU) 2024/3015 of 27 November 2024 on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the Union market, OJ L, 12.12.2024, Arts. 2(7) and 9(2), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/3015/oj/eng; the date of application is from the European Commission's "Forced Labour Regulation" page, https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/single-market/goods/forced-labour-regulation_en. Council of the European Union, *EU Human Rights Guidelines on Non-Discrimination in External Action*, doc. 6337/19 (18 March 2019), sections 3.3 and 3.4, listing "discrimination based on caste (work and descent)", https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6337-2019-INIT/en/pdf. European Commission, *Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021–2027: Pakistan*, Objective 8 and 36 ("the fight against child labour and bonded labour"), launched with the Government of Pakistan on 4 August 2022 (no public copy of the programme found; launch announcement at https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/pakistan/press-release-european-union-launches-support-package-pakistan-under-multi-annual-indicative_en).

TABLE 4 · SEVEN STEPS FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION

4 Hear the communities themselves.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
On every monitoring visit, meet waste and sanitation workers, brick-kiln and farm labourers, domestic workers and women from these communities where they live and work, alongside established organisations, and invite written submissions from their own organisations.	European Commission; EEAS; EU Delegation	Such meetings held outside Islamabad on every visit; community submissions assessed in the report

Basis Reg. Arts. 13(3), 14(3); recitals 19, 22

5 Direct EU cooperation to these communities, and count who is reached.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
Direct EU-funded programmes in Pakistan to these communities and support organisations led by them. Report what share of the beneficiaries of EU-funded programmes come from them, by voluntary self-identification: research on a World Bank programme in Pakistan found that the prosperity it aimed to share did not reach non-Muslims.[114]	European Commission; EU Delegation; Member States	EU-funded programmes in Pakistan publish beneficiary shares by religion and caste/descent; community-led organisations among their partners

Basis EP 2013, para. 13; Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021–2027, Objective 8 and p. 36

6 Support projects that help the Government of Pakistan carry out the eight steps and build its reporting mechanisms.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
Give technical and financial support where the steps need it: drafting the anti-discrimination law and its rules (step 1); quota returns, the census question and the survey questions (steps 2 and 4); mechanised sewer cleaning, labour inspection and the register of deaths and injuries (step 5); the Forced Labour Survey (step 6); and the National Commission for Minorities Rights' annual reporting (step 7). Help build the reporting mechanisms on which the benchmarks in Table 5 depend, so that progress can be measured in every monitoring cycle.	European Commission; EU Delegation; Member States	Projects in place by the end of 2028 supporting named steps; the yearly quota table, the register of deaths and injuries and the Commission's annual report produced with EU support

Basis EP 2013, para. 13; Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021–2027, Objective 8; Reg. Arts. 13(1), 14(1)

7 Help Pakistan measure and end debt bondage as the Forced Labour Regulation takes effect.

ACTION	WHO ACTS	EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
It applies from 14 December 2027 and covers forced labour "at any stage" of a product's supply chain. Debt bondage is reported in sectors linked to exports — CERD named the textile industry in 2016 (Table B5) — but we know of no source that traces it into goods sold in the EU; only data can settle the question. Support Pakistan's survey (its step 6) and inspection (its step 5), and prefer remedy to disengagement.	European Commission; EU Delegation; EU buyers and brands	Forced Labour Survey under way by the end of 2028, with EU support; organisations in Pakistan able to use the information submission point, open to "any natural or legal person"

Basis Regulation (EU) 2024/3015, Arts. 2(7), 9(2); Reg. Art. 23(1)(b); ILO C29; CERD 2016, para. 27

Table 4. Seven steps for the European Union. Reg. = Regulation (EU) 2026/1395; EP 2013 and EP 2026 = European Parliament resolutions of 10 October 2013 and 9 July 2026; CERD = CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26.

[114] Asif Aqeel and Mary James Gill, "International Assistance and Impoverished Religious Minorities in Pakistan," in *What About Us? Global Perspectives on Redressing Religious Inequalities*, ed. Mariz Tadros (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 2022), 221, https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/17660.

SECTION 8

A shared agenda: benchmarks and three stages

Two tables bring the agenda together. Table 5 restates Pakistan's eight steps as benchmarks, each tied to a GSP+ convention and to the findings it rests on. Table 6 sets the steps of both partners in three proposed stages.

Convention	Benchmark for Pakistan's plan of action	Proposed date	Findings it rests on	Step
ICERD Arts. 1(1), 2(1)(d)	A comprehensive anti-discrimination law in force, covering caste and descent in public and private life	Bill: 2028. In force: 2029–2031	CERD 2024, para. 8(c); CERD 2009, para. 12 (asked for a law prohibiting caste-based discrimination)	1
ICERD Art. 5; ILO C111	Binding instructions issued; no sanitation or other designated occupational post restricted to a religion or caste; the minority quota applied in all grades	2028	CERD 2024, paras. 21(c), 22(d); SWD(2026) 184, p. 9; ILO Decent Work Country Programme 2023–27	3
ICERD Art. 9	CERD report submitted, with the data then available by religion and caste/descent (voluntary self-identification), sex and grade; action on the committee's recommendations tracked	4 January 2028	CERD 2024, paras. 5, 6, 45	8
ICESCR Arts. 2(2), 6, 13	CMRM shares of the job quota, education places and welfare schemes set and published; quota data published every year by grade and community; religion and descent added to the Labour Force Survey; the National Commission for Minorities Rights reports on both	Quota data: 2028. Shares and surveys: 2029–2031	CESCR 2017, paras. 32 (a study and data on Scheduled Castes, with their participation) and 37 (no information on how quotas are implemented)	2, 4, 7
ICCPR Arts. 25–27	Elections Act amended, if possible before the next general election, so that CMRM candidates hold a proportionate share of the seats reserved for non-Muslims	2029–2031	Human Rights Committee 2024, para. 10 (discrimination against religious minorities, including Christians and Hindus). Rests on the Covenant itself, not on a finding about caste	2
ILO C29; ICCPR Art. 8	Forced Labour Survey published, with results by religion and sex; inspections of brick kilns and farms and releases from bondage reported each year	Under way: 2028. Published: 2029–2031	SWD(2026) 184, p. 10 (no survey yet; an estimate of three million in debt bondage in 2023); CERD 2009, para. 21; CERD 2016, para. 27; CESCR 2017, paras. 45–46; Human Rights Committee 2024, paras. 32–33	5, 6

Convention	Benchmark for Pakistan's plan of action	Proposed date	Findings it rests on	Step
ILO C81; ICESCR Art. 7	A dedicated law for waste and sanitation workers enacted in Punjab; no sewer entry without protective equipment, gas testing and rescue cover; a register of deaths and injuries; a yearly statement of what waste programmes spend on their workers; the work brought within labour inspection; mechanisation plan adopted; manual entry ended within five years of the law	Rules and register: 2028. Law: 2029–2031	SWD(2026) 184, p. 11, n. 59 (fewer than 600 labour inspectors nationwide); CESCR 2017, paras. 43 (minimum wages do not cover all workers), 47, 48(b); CERD 2016, para. 28. None names sanitation work	5
CEDAW; CRC	All data under steps 4, 6 and 8 published by sex, and the next CEDAW report covering women and girls from these communities; girls' school retention reported in the Mobility and Inclusion programme	With each release	CEDAW 2020, paras. 42(d) (data on women's employment), 47(a), 48(a) (Christian, Dalit, Hindu and scheduled caste women and girls); CRC 2016, paras. 71(c), 72(c) (bonded labour affecting Dalit children)	2, 4, 6, 8

Table 5. Benchmarks for Pakistan's plan of action, by convention (steps refer to Table 3). The dates are proposals, in the three stages of Table 6; only the CERD date is fixed by others. ILO C81 becomes a GSP+ convention in 2027; ILO C190 is not one, and its ratification is part of step 5.[115]

Proposed stage	Government of Pakistan	European Union
Stage 1 by reapplication, end of 2028	Administrative steps in place: instructions ending religion- and caste-coded recruitment, with the minority quota preserved (3); grade-wise quota table published, then yearly (4); safety rules for sewer work and a register of deaths and injuries (5); National Commission for Minorities Rights reporting by descent, with its advisory group (7). CERD report covering caste, due by 4 January 2028 (8). Bills before the legislatures: anti-discrimination (1) and waste and sanitation workers (5). Forced Labour Survey under way, counting religion (6). Mobility and Inclusion pilot (2). Plan of action carrying steps 1–8.	Name caste and descent in dialogue and monitoring (EU 1); say that the Table 5 benchmarks will be looked for (EU 2); meet affected communities (EU 4); begin support for these communities and for the Government's steps and reporting (EU 5, 6, 7).
Stage 2 2029–2031	Laws in force: anti-discrimination (1) and, in Punjab, waste and sanitation workers, with other provinces following (5). CMRM category and shares adopted, and the Elections Act amended, if possible before the next general election (2). Forced Labour Survey published (6). Religion and descent added to the Labour Force Survey and household surveys (4). Spending on workers published each year, labour inspection extended, and inspections of kilns and farms reported (5). Next CEDAW report covering caste (8).	Examine Pakistan's request and plan of action against the Table 5 benchmarks (EU 2); name caste and descent, and report on each benchmark, in the three-yearly GSP+ reports, the first due by 1 January 2030 (EU 1, 3).
Stage 3 2032–2036	Manual sewer entry ended and cleaning mechanised, with workers retrained as operators (5). Question on caste or descent asked in the next census (2). The CMRM share reviewed within three years of its adoption, against the survey baseline, and again after the census (2, 4). Results measured against the Annex A baseline.	Report again on each benchmark (EU 3); publish who EU-funded programmes have reached (EU 5).

Table 6. A proposed shared agenda in three stages (numbers refer to Table 3; "EU" numbers to Table 4). Dates set by others are given as dates; the stages are our proposals.

[115]CERD 2024: CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26. CERD 2016: CERD/C/PAK/CO/21-23. CERD 2009: CERD/C/PAK/CO/20. CESCR 2017: E/C.12/PAK/CO/1. Human Rights Committee 2024: CCPR/C/PAK/CO/2 (2 December 2024), https://undocs.org/en/CCPR/C/PAK/CO/2. CEDAW 2020: CEDAW/C/PAK/CO/5 (10 March 2020), https://undocs.org/en/CEDAW/C/PAK/CO/5. CRC 2016: CRC/C/PAK/CO/5 (11 July 2016), https://undocs.org/en/CRC/C/PAK/CO/5. ILO, *Decent Work Country Programme*, section 2.3.3. Older conclusions are cited where they are the most recent to address the point: CERD's 2024 conclusions do not mention bonded labour. SWD(2026) 184 final and the ILO programme are not monitoring-body conclusions; the ILO Committee of Experts is cited only as the Commission reports it.

CONCLUSION

Looking forward

Pakistan was founded on a promise of dignity to people whom older social orders had pushed to the margins, and many of them chose it for that reason. Naming caste is not an admission of failure; it is how that promise can be kept and measured. It begins simply — with honest recruitment and honest numbers — and every later step becomes easier once those are in place.

> *Without a name there can be no data; without data, no well-targeted policy; with both, steady and verifiable progress.*

What remains open

We have not costed the steps or assessed their political feasibility. The dates in Tables 3 to 6 that are not fixed by others are proposals for the two partners to settle, not forecasts. Some legal questions also remain open, and on these we recommend legal advice before drafting: whether the CMRM share and its schedules need an Act of Parliament and not only an executive order (the proviso to Article 27(1) speaks of an Act, and the Supreme Court's 1993 observations suggest that a schedule needs a law); when the 1957 Ordinance ceased to have effect, and how a new schedule would sit beside the words "Scheduled Castes" in Article 260; whether Article 36, which promises all minorities due representation in the services, limits the share; whether a share confined to religious minorities, among people of the same descent, is consistent with Articles 25 and 27; whether a rule on party lists would withstand challenge (see Annex D); whether leaving designated occupations out of the quota's base is consistent with the 2009 Office Memorandum; and whether ILO Convention No. 81 reaches municipal waste and sanitation work.

ANNEX A

Monitoring baseline

Table A1 sets indicators for each step in Table 3, with the latest baseline and its source. It is meant to be updated at each GSP+ monitoring cycle and when Pakistan reports to CERD, so that progress can be read against the same measures each time.

Step	Indicator	Baseline	Source
1. Anti-discrimination law	Law prohibiting discrimination on the constitutional grounds, with caste defined to include descent; penalties; an equality body	None. Articles 22, 26 and 27 name caste but carry no penalty for discrimination	Constitution of Pakistan
2. CMRM category	Category for affirmative action; CMRM share of quota posts, education places, welfare schemes and reserved seats; voluntary census question on caste or descent	No Scheduled Caste quota since 24 September 1996; the census lists Scheduled Castes as a religion option beside Hindu; Christians are not counted by descent; no share in education, welfare schemes or reserved seats; no baseline yet of population and disadvantage, which the data in steps 2 and 4 would supply	O.M. F.4/15/94-R.II; census questionnaire; Elections Act 2017
3. Recruitment	Government advertisements reserving sanitation posts for non-Muslims or “low castes”	281 advertisements, 2010–March 2025; at least 16 after the November 2022 judgment	CLJ; Amnesty International (2025)
4. Quota data	Share of non-Muslim federal employees in grades 1–4 and 17–22; vacancy rate in minority-quota posts	81% and 1.3% (2021–22); 76% unfilled (Punjab PSC, Jan 2025–Jul 2026); 84% unfilled (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa PSC, 2024); no CSS candidate allocated to a minority seat in 2020	Establishment Division bulletin, 2021–22; PPSC data (The Friday Times); Khyber Pakhtunkhwa PSC Annual Report 2024; Cabinet Division
5. Waste and sanitation workers; bonded labourers	Dedicated law; register of deaths and injuries for sewer and waste workers; yearly statement of spending on workers; inspection coverage; mechanisation plan; inspections of kilns and farms and releases from bondage	26 deaths in sewers in the eight months to September 2026 (18 in Punjab, 8 in Karachi), none of them Muslim; 70 deaths reported by the Lahore waste company for 2019, with no mechanism to record injuries; Punjab Bill on the Assembly’s list of business for introduction on 1 September 2026; no published statement of spending on workers found (October 2026)	Dawn, 26 September 2026; CLJ (2021); CLJ Bill tracking; Amnesty International (2025)
6. Forced Labour Survey	Survey with results by religion and sex	Survey not yet carried out; about three million people estimated to be in debt bondage	SWD(2026) 184; NCHR (2023)
7. National Commission for Minorities Rights	Quota chapter in the annual report; equality-body mandate; advisory group from affected communities; members from caste-marginalised communities	The National Commission for Minorities Rights Act, 2025 gives the Commission the monitoring of the job quota (s. 12(g)) and names Dalits and Scheduled Castes (s. 12(s)); no reporting by descent, equality-body role or advisory group yet	CLJ assessment
8. CERD and CEDAW reports	Reports covering caste, progress towards the anti-discrimination law and the data then available; action on recommendations tracked	CERD report due 4 January 2028; in 2024 CERD regretted the absence of data disaggregated by descent; CEDAW’s last concluding observations on Pakistan date from 2020	CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26, paras. 5, 45; CEDAW/C/PAK/CO/5

Table A1. Indicators for each step, with baseline (to be updated each monitoring cycle).

ANNEX B

Evidence tables

The tables in this annex gather the figures on which the text relies, with their sources and their limits.

Religion or group	Pakistan	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
Muslims	64,959,000	32,732,000	32,227,000
Caste Hindus	4,349,000	162,000	4,187,000
Scheduled Castes	5,421,000	369,000	5,052,000
Christians	541,000	434,000	107,000
Others	366,000	7,000	359,000
Total	**75,636,000**	**33,704,000**	**41,932,000**

Table B1. Population by religion, Pakistan and its two wings, 1951. Scheduled Castes were about 7 per cent of the population of Pakistan but 1.1 per cent of West Pakistan; there, Scheduled Castes and Christians together were 83 per cent of the Christians and Hindus counted. Source: Census of Pakistan, 1951.

Census	Scheduled Castes	Jati Hindus	Scheduled Caste share of Hindus	Source
1951 (West Pakistan)	369,000	162,000	about 70%	Census of Pakistan, 1951
1998	332,343	just over 2.1 million	about 14%	Shah (2008), citing the 1998 census
2017	849,614	3,595,256	about 19%	Pakistan Bureau of Statistics
2023	1,349,487	3,867,729	about 26%	Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Table B2. Scheduled Castes within the Hindu count, 1951–2023. Sources as shown.

Grade, 2021–22	Employees	Share	Religion, 2017–18	Employees	Share
BPS 17–22	249	1.3%	Christian	15,069	90.2%
BPS 11–16	1,216	6.4%	Hindu	1,294	7.7%
BPS 5–10	2,122	11.1%	Ahmadi	248	1.5%
BPS 1–4	15,541	81.2%	Sikh and others	100	0.6%
Total	**19,128**	**100%**	**Total**	**16,711**	**100%**

Table B3. Non-Muslim federal employees by grade, 2021–22, and by religion, 2017–18. Sources: grades from Establishment Division, Annual Statistical Bulletin of Federal Government Employees, 2021–22, Table 19 (Document E8); religion from CSJ and Peoples Commission for Minorities' Rights, p. 7, the only breakdown by religion we have found.

Recruiting body	Period	Reserved	Filled	Unfilled	Source
Central superior services (CSS) examination	2018; 2019; 2020	Not stated	4; 3; 0 allocated	78; 85; 98	Cabinet Division, p. 75
CSS examination	2022	Not stated	Not stated	111	FPSC Annual Report 2023, Table 18
Punjab Public Service Commission	2024	397	235	162 (41%)	APP, 17 April 2025
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission	2024	74	12	62 (84%)	Commission's Annual Report 2024, p. 69
Punjab Public Service Commission	Jan 2025–Jul 2026	655	155	500 (76%)	The Friday Times, 2026
Balochistan Police (constables, all posts)	May 2026	1,142	440	702 (61%)	Senate of Pakistan, 11 May 2026
Punjab public universities (2% seats)	2023–24	1,086	218	868 (80%)	Express Tribune, 2024

Table B4. Minority-quota posts and seats left unfilled. "Filled" means recommended, allocated or reported filled, as each source has it; none shows who took up a post. The CSS years should not be added together: the report says that 98 vacancies were carried over in 2020. The Balochistan row counts all constable posts, not one recruitment round, and the universities row covers those that answered information requests. Sources as shown; The Friday Times, 13 September 2026; Express Tribune, 27 October 2024.[116]

[116] Federal Public Service Commission, *Annual Report 2023*, Table 18, https://www.fpsc.gov.pk/assets/media/2025-08-15-08-22-35-Annual-Report-2023.pdf. Senate Minority Caucus, meeting of 11 May 2026, as reported in "Senate Caucus Concerned about Non-Compliance with Minority Quotas," *Dawn*, 12 May 2026, https://www.dawn.com/news/1999490/senate-caucus-concerned-about-non-compliance-with-minority-quotas. Nabila Feroz Bhatti, "Educational Quota: Halfway to a Solution," *The Express Tribune*, 27 October 2024, https://tribune.com.pk/story/2505536/educational-quota-halfway-to-a-solution. The other sources in the table are cited in full in the notes to Section 4.

Sector and conventions	What the sources say about who does the work	What they do not show
Waste and sanitation (case study) ICERD; ILO C111, C81	Hazardous sanitation work is "primarily conducted by minorities"; religious minorities and other vulnerable groups hold "nearly 80%" of low-skill sanitation jobs (EU 2023). Sewage cleaning is "performed by Christian workers" (ILO 2023). Recruitment "targeting non-Muslim minority groups for sanitation work" (CERD 2024, para. 21(c)). All 9,000 waste workers of the Lahore Waste Management Company were reported non-Muslim in CLJ's 2021 study (Section 4).	No province-wide official count of waste and sanitation workers by religion or caste.
Tenant farming in Sindh ILO C29; ICERD	Debt bondage is "mainly found among minorities, such as non-Muslims (Hindus or Christians) or Muslims who have converted from Hinduism", and haris in Sindh are among "the most affected by debt bondage" (UN Special Rapporteur on slavery, 2016). Dalits are "disproportionately affected by forced and bonded labour, particularly in the Sindh and Balochistan provinces" (UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, 2016). Non-Muslim haris are Kolhi, Bheel, Menghwar and Oad (Od in the 1957 schedule), and "Hindu households generally suffer more than Christian and Muslim households" (ILO 2004). "In Sindh, most agricultural bonded labourers are Hindu haris" (study for DFID, 2019). Scheduled Caste Hindus are "vulnerable to exploitation in the form of bonded labour" (HRCP 2024).	No survey counts bonded labourers by religion or caste. The ILO put non-Muslims at about 0.1 million of 0.8 million haris in Sindh: they are over-represented among the bonded, not the majority of sharecroppers. Menghwars are largely settled and seldom bonded.
Cotton, sugarcane and wheat ILO C29	Listed by the United States as goods produced with forced labour (US DOL 2024); "traffickers force workers to labor in the agricultural sectors of wheat, cotton, and sugarcane" (US TIP 2025). In five cotton districts, 75 per cent of workers surveyed had borrowed and one in eight had a written agreement; of 25 non-Muslim key informants, 8 said they were paid less than Muslims (ILO 2024, funded by the EU and Inditex). Two of those districts, Sanghar and Mirpur Khas, are among the three in Sindh with the most court-ordered releases of bonded labourers in 2011–2014, on Human Rights Commission of Pakistan estimates (UN Special Rapporteur on slavery, 2016).	No survey records the religion or caste of cotton pickers. The ILO study reports indicators of forced labour, not bonded labour as such. About half the cotton used by Pakistan's mills is imported (USDA 2025, estimate for 2024/25), and no source traces bonded labour into goods sold in the EU.
Brick kilns ILO C29, C182	Brickmakers in Punjab are among "the most affected by debt bondage" (UN Special Rapporteur on slavery, 2016); bonded labour persists "particularly in the brick kiln and textile industries and among the scheduled castes (Dalits)" (CERD 2016, para. 27). "Christians also supply a significant proportion of pathera family labour, especially in Punjab" (ILO 2004); "In brick kilns in Punjab and in KP [Khyber Pakhtunkhwa], the labourers mostly consist of Christians" (study for DFID, 2019). In Sindh, forced labour was measured at between 12 and 34 per cent of kiln workers, depending on the method and threshold, with "religious minorities (Hindus)" among the vulnerable (Johns Hopkins and Aga Khan universities, 2024, results presentation). In Punjab, 97 per cent of 200 kiln workers surveyed "entered kilns because of urgent loans" (NCHR 2025, as reported by *Dawn*).	Sources disagree on the Christian share: the ILO (2004) found Muslims the majority of kiln workers. We found no count of kiln workers by religion. The safe statement is that Christians are over-represented in Punjab's kilns; for Hindus in Sindh's kilns the evidence is thinner.
Textiles and garments ILO C29, C111	Named with brick kilns by CERD (2016, para. 27). In Karachi garment factories, respondents said that cleaning and sweeping staff "are predominantly from the Kohli [Kolhi] community, many of whom previously worked in agriculture or brick kilns as bonded labourers"; Scheduled Caste workers are "often disproportionately represented in low-paid and undervalued occupations" (Arisa and partners, 2025). Forced labour is reported "to a lesser extent" in textile manufacturing (US TIP 2025); garments and textiles are listed for child labour (US DOL 2024). Textiles and clothing were roughly 70–76 per cent of Pakistan's exports to the EU in 2024 (EU 2026).	One study, of 94 workers in one city. No industry-wide data on religion or caste, and no source traces forced labour into goods sold in the EU.
Carpets ILO C29, C182	In the workshops of Thar the workforce is "mostly Hindu belonging to the low caste Hindu tribes", and about 40 per cent of weavers there are children under 15 (ILO 2004). Carpets are listed for forced and child labour (US DOL 2024). Minority Rights Group (2025) reports that "significant numbers of Christians residing in Sindh and Punjab work under harsh conditions as bonded labourers in areas such as carpet-weaving and the brick kiln industry".	The ILO found bondage in 29 of 374 cases nationally, and in one Thar village it visited the weavers were mainly Muslim.
Domestic work ILO C29, C182	Forced and bonded labour occurs "particularly in sectors such as brick kilns, agriculture and domestic work" (Human Rights Committee 2024, para. 32). "Low-caste Christians (known as Masihs) also form communities of domestic workers in small towns in the Punjab", and bondage among rural domestic workers is "usually caste-based" (ILO 2004). Christian women report discrimination in "sanitary, domestic and factory work" (IDS 2020, publication summary).	In the ILO's Punjab sample the main caste in domestic service was Mussalli (Muslim Sheikh). There are "no firm figures" on domestic workers (ILO 2015).
Leather, home-based work, mining, fisheries, glass bangles ILO C29, C111, C182	Little or no evidence on who does the work. In Kasur's tanneries the Christian community "provided the initial core of employees" and was thought to be "less than half of the workforce" by 2004 (ILO 2004). About 4.4 million people worked from home in 2017–18, some 3.6 million of them women (WIEGO 2020). The UN Special Rapporteur on slavery (2016) lists mining, fisheries and glass bangles among industries where debt bondage has been reported; coal is listed for forced labour, and leather and glass bangles for child labour (US DOL 2024).	The tannery evidence is more than twenty years old and from one town. No source records the religion or caste of home-based workers, miners, fishers or bangle makers. We make no claim about them.

Table B5. Who does the work: the evidence by sector, and its limits.

Sources for Table B5. EU 2023, EU 2026: SWD(2023) 363 final, SWD(2026) 184 final. ILO 2023: *Decent Work Country Programme for Pakistan (2023–27)*. UN Special Rapporteur on slavery: A/HRC/33/46 (4 July 2016), para. 20. UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues: A/HRC/31/56 (28 January 2016), para. 77. CERD 2016, CERD 2024: CERD/C/PAK/CO/21-23, CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26. Human Rights Committee 2024: CCPR/C/PAK/CO/2. ILO 2004: rapid assessments of bonded labour, DECLARATION/WP/21 (tanneries and other hazardous industries), 22 (domestic work), 23 (carpets), 24 (brick kilns) and 26 (agriculture, Sindh and Balochistan), March 2004. ILO 2015: "Giving Rights to Millions of Domestic Workers in Pakistan," 26 February 2015. ILO 2024: *Mapping of the Cotton Supply Chain at the Community Level in Pakistan*. Study for DFID, 2019: Murray and others, *Modern Slavery in Pakistan*. HRCP 2024: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, *Exodus: Is the Hindu Community Leaving Sindh?* US DOL 2024: US Department of Labor, *2024 List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*. US TIP 2025: US Department of State, *2025 Trafficking in Persons Report: Pakistan*. USDA 2025: *Cotton and Products Annual: Pakistan*, report PK2025-0002. Johns Hopkins and Aga Khan universities 2024: "Results from the Field: Forced Labor in the Brick Kiln Industry in Pakistan," 8 August 2024. NCHR 2025: *Unveiling Exploitation and Abuse in the Brick Kilns of Punjab*, as reported in *Dawn*, 27 August 2025. Arisa and partners 2025: Arisa, The Knowledge Forum and Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network, *Precarious Labour and Silenced Workers* (January 2025). Minority Rights Group 2025: "Christians in Pakistan," *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, updated December 2025. WIEGO 2020: S. Akhtar, *Home-Based Workers in Pakistan: A*

Statistical Profile, WIEGO Statistical Brief No. 26. IDS 2020: N. Suleman, *Experiences of Intersecting Inequalities for Christian Women and Girls in Pakistan*, CREID Policy Briefing 3 (Institute of Development Studies).[117]

[117]Web addresses for the sources of Table B5 not given elsewhere in the notes: A/HRC/31/56, https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/31/56; ILO 2004, working paper 24, https://www.ilo.org/publications/unfree-labour-pakistan-work-debt-and-bondage-brick-kilns; ILO 2024, https://www.ilo.org/publications/mapping-cotton-supply-chain-community-level-pakistan-report-selected; HRCP 2024, https://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2024-Exodus-Is-the-Hindu-community-leaving-Sindh.pdf; USDA 2025, https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/pakistan-cotton-and-products-annual-9; Johns Hopkins and Aga Khan universities 2024, https://cenhtro.uga.edu/_resources/documents/PRIF_LS6_Pakistan%20Forced%20Labor%20Study_JHU_CenHTRO.pdf; NCHR 2025, https://www.dawn.com/news/1937528/national-commission-for-human-rights-exposes-systematic-exploitation-gbv-in-brick-kilns; WIEGO 2020, https://wiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WIEGO_Statistical_Brief_N26_Pakistan_final.pdf; IDS 2020, https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/15880. The EU assessments, the UN documents, the DFID study, the US reports and the Arisa report are cited with addresses in the notes to Sections 1, 4 and 5. No stable web address was found for the other ILO working papers (21, 22, 23 and 26), the ILO 2015 statement or the Minority Rights Group entry as updated in December 2025.

ANNEX C

Eligibility and the size of the share

Step 2 asks for a reserved share of every minority measure. This annex sets out who would be eligible, how eligibility would be shown, and how the size of the share was reached. It is a proposal for the advisory group in step 7 to advise on and for Parliament to settle, not a finished scheme; what it leaves open is listed in the last row of Table C1.

Element	Proposal
Basis	Descent, not present occupation. A family that has left the work remains eligible: occupation is evidence of descent, not a condition.
Schedule I: communities	The 1957 list (Document E2), re-enacted and reviewed with the communities concerned. Shown by the applicant's sworn declaration and one supporting item, such as a relative's certificate or older family records; what else may serve is left open (last row).
Schedule II: occupations	Sewer cleaning and sweeping, brick-kiln work, bonded farm labour and similar work named in the schedule: the manual tasks themselves, not supervisory or clerical posts in the same departments. Shown by a sworn declaration of descent together with the applicant's own, a parent's or a grandparent's employment or social-security record. Such work by a member of a religious minority raises a presumption of descent. The issuing office may rebut it only on documentary evidence, with written reasons and a right of appeal, and never on appearance, surname or an official's impression of caste. Much of this work was never recorded, so other proof will be needed (last row).
Either route	A person may use either schedule, and neither is tied to one faith among the minorities. Either way the certificate rests on proof of descent. How a person is recorded in the census or on an identity document neither confers eligibility nor removes it, so that nobody enters the share by declaration alone.
Eligibility certificate	Issued only on the person's own application. It states eligibility and names no caste; it is not printed on the identity card; it is issued once for a family, so that the children of a certified parent need not prove it again; it is free of charge, issued within a fixed time and open to appeal; a deliberately false declaration carries a penalty, but an honest claim that fails for want of records does not; records are confidential, and there is no public list. Certification is not new: the 1967 notice for the central services examination required Scheduled Caste candidates to "submit a certificate from the District Magistrate in support of their claim".[118] That certificate named the caste; this one would not.
Two tiers	The reserved share is for religious minorities. Outside the quota, the anti-discrimination law, worker protection and the Forced Labour Survey cover everyone, and the Mobility and Inclusion programme is open by descent or occupation, whatever the religion.
Scheduled Castes	Keep their name, their recognition in Article 260 and their separate census count. CMRM is the wider category for policy; its figures are published community by community, in aggregate and from the issuing office's records, so that no community's numbers disappear into the whole.
Counting in the census	Religion is asked first, then a voluntary question on caste or descent, put to everyone. CMRM is derived by combining the answers (a non-Muslim religion, and descent declared); it is never a category to tick. Scheduled Castes keep a count comparable with earlier censuses, Christians of this descent are counted for the first time, and Muslims of similar descent become visible. Because of stigma the census gives a floor, not the true figure; the surveys in step 4 complement it.
Communities not listed	Reached through Schedule II where proof exists, and by a clause providing for review of Schedule I.
Allocation and unfilled posts	Posts are allocated by roster within each grade band and across kinds of post. Both the five per cent quota and the three-point share are calculated on vacancies outside the occupations designated under step 3, and appointments to those occupations count towards neither, so that neither can be met where stigma already places people. For example: of 1,000 vacancies in a grade band, 400 are in sanitation; the quota is five per cent of the other 600, or 30 posts, of which 18 are kept for CMRM candidates and 12 are open to every non-Muslim, CMRM candidates included. Sanitation posts stay open to all, and those who hold them are protected under step 5. The results are published each year (step 4). CMRM posts left unfilled would be carried forward for CMRM candidates. We suggest that after a set period they revert to the wider minority quota, never to open merit; the period is left open.
Left open, for the advisory group (step 7) and Parliament	Who issues the certificate, and whether a local panel that includes community representatives should verify claims; what should support a Schedule I declaration; what counts as proof where the work was informal and unrecorded; how and when the lists are reviewed; how the survey and census question is worded (a list that includes "Scheduled Caste", or an open question); when a family, or the category as a whole, no longer needs the measure; the effect of a change of religion; whether the share should differ by province, since the quota is counted against the province of origin; and consultation with church leaders and Scheduled Caste organisations.

Table C1. Who would be eligible for the CMRM share, and how eligibility would be shown.

Group	Number	Basis
Christians	3,300,788	Census 2023
of whom of Chuhra or other Dalit descent, at 90 to 95 per cent	2.97 to 3.14 million	A scholar's estimate (Section 2), not a count
Scheduled Castes, as recorded	1,349,487	Census 2023
Hindus (Jati)	3,867,729	Census 2023
Ahmadis, Sikhs, Parsis and others	253,376	Census 2023

[118] Central Public Service Commission, Notice No. F2/1/67-E-II, 2 August 1967, as reproduced in *Abdul Hamid Khan v. Government of Pakistan*, PLD 1972 Lahore 336.

Group	Number	Basis
All non-Muslims	8,771,380	Census 2023 (total population 240,458,089)
Caste-marginalised religious minorities	4.32 to 4.49 million	49 to 51 per cent of non-Muslims; about 1.8 per cent of the population

Table C2. How the size of the share was reached. Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Seventh Population and Housing Census 2023, Table 9 (national); the estimate of descent is Koepping's (Section 2).

On the census and the one estimate of Christian descent, caste-marginalised minorities are about half of all non-Muslims (Table C2), which would be two and a half of the quota's five points. We propose three of five, as a provisional figure, for two reasons. First, special measures "should be designed and implemented on the basis of need" (CERD, general recommendation No. 32, CERD/C/GC/32, para. 16), and these communities remain the poorest of Pakistan's minorities (see Annex D). Second, Scheduled Caste activists hold the recorded count to be too low: the Scheduled Caste share of all Hindus fell from about 70 per cent in 1951 to 26 per cent in 2023 (Section 2), and if it were half, the group would be nearly two-thirds of non-Muslims. For reserved seats, which are few, we propose the population share itself. The figure should be reviewed by the authority that sets it, on the advisory group's advice, against a baseline of population and disadvantage: within three years of adoption, or as soon as the surveys in step 4 supply that baseline, whichever is earlier, and again after the next census. General recommendation No. 32 also says that special measures should be temporary; when the share is no longer needed is among the points left open (Table C1).

The other two points stay open to every non-Muslim, certificate holders included, so the three points are a protected minimum, not a ceiling. Other minorities would compete for two points where they now compete for five; whether Article 36 allows this is an open legal question (see the Conclusion). The estimate of descent is one scholar's, not a count, and the records do not yet show who, by descent, holds the filled posts.

ANNEX D

Questions we are often asked

These answers are brief; the evidence and sources are in the sections and annexes of this report. One sequence of dates runs through them. From 1942 the Punjab reserved two and a half per cent of its posts for Christians and two and a half per cent for the Scheduled Castes. In 1948 Pakistan reserved for the Scheduled Castes six per cent of the vacancies filled by direct recruitment in the central services, and in 1957 it listed forty castes by name. That quota was withdrawn in 1996. Since 2009 five per cent of posts have been reserved for all non-Muslims together (Section 3). CERD is the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; CLJ is the Center for Law and Justice.

1 **Islam does not recognise caste, so how can caste exist in Pakistan?**	Islam's rejection of hereditary rank is exactly why many Scheduled Castes chose Pakistan in 1947, and on 11 August 1947 the Quaid-i-Azam promised a state with "no discrimination between one caste or creed and another".[119] The problem lies not in the faith but in social practice, which still assigns sewers and brick kilns by birth — as the employment data in this report show. Pakistan's own Constitution names caste among the grounds on which no citizen may be discriminated against (Articles 22, 26 and 27); what is missing is a penalty for discriminating on grounds of caste, which step 1 would supply.
2 **Minorities already have a five per cent quota.**	They do, and the Commission itself finds its posts "predominantly limited to lower-grade, manual, or hazardous jobs"; in the federal government in 2021–22, four in five non-Muslim employees were in grades 1 to 4, and almost half in grade 1 alone (Section 4). A quota reported only as a headcount cannot show whether it reaches the communities described here. Step 2 would direct three-fifths of each existing minority measure — posts, education places and welfare schemes — and a proportionate share of reserved seats to people of the descent that reservation was first created to reach, without adding a new quota; steps 4 and 7 would make the result visible.
3 **Is this the old Scheduled Caste quota again?**	In purpose, yes; in design, no. The 1948 rules reserved vacancies by descent, but they let unfilled vacancies revert to open merit, prescribed no roster and left the lowest class of posts to a later order, which we have not found. A memorandum of 1957 noted that the vacancies were not being filled, and one of 1993 that ministries were not observing the quota (Section 3). Step 2 keeps the purpose and changes the design: a share inside the existing quota, allocated by roster — a fixed order in which vacancies are assigned — in every band of grades; unfilled posts carried forward, as the 2009 rules already provide (Document E6 in Annex E); a yearly public table of the results (step 4); and funded routes to the posts. It would also reach Christians of the same descent, whom the federal list in force in 1948 left out but whom the Punjab had counted alongside the Scheduled Castes since 1942 (Section 3).
4 **Why three of the five percentage points?**	On the 2023 census and one scholar's estimate of Christian descent, caste-marginalised minorities are about half of all non-Muslims. We propose somewhat more than half for two reasons. CERD's general recommendation No. 32 says that special measures "should be designed and implemented on the basis of need", and these communities remain the poorest of Pakistan's minorities.[120] And Scheduled Caste activists say the recorded count of their communities is too low (Section 2). Three of five is a provisional figure, with its working in Annex C, to be reviewed within three years of adoption, on the advice of the advisory group in step 7, against a baseline of both population and disadvantage. The other two points stay open to every non-Muslim, CMRM candidates included, so the three points are a protected minimum and not a ceiling.
5	Probably not for the assemblies. The Constitution leaves the parties' lists for the seats reserved for non-Muslims to be settled "in accordance with law" (Articles 51(6)(e) and 106(3)(c)), and the Elections Act, 2017 already requires parties to rank their candidates (section 104); an amendment to that Act could require CMRM

[119] Muhammad Ali Jinnah, address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, Karachi, 11 August 1947, *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates*, vol. 1, no. 2, 20.

[120] CERD, *General Recommendation No. 32*, para. 16. Paragraph 17 adds that appraisals of the need for such measures "should be carried out on the basis of accurate data, disaggregated by race, colour, descent and ethnic or national origin and incorporating a gender perspective".

Would a share of reserved seats need a constitutional amendment?	candidates in a proportionate share of list positions. The Senate is different: each province elects one non-Muslim senator by single transferable vote (Article 59), so a share there would rest on the parties' nominations. Whether a statutory list rule would survive a challenge in the name of party autonomy (Article 17) is untested — a question for Parliament and, in time, the courts.
6 **Will this create a caste register?**	Not a public one. Nobody would be placed in the category except on their own application, which is consistent with what the Supreme Court observed in 1993 (Section 3). A person claiming the reserved share would hold an eligibility certificate. Scheduled Caste candidates were once required to submit a District Magistrate's certificate of their caste; this one would name no caste, would not appear on the identity card, and would be issued once for a family, so that children need not prove it again (Annex C). The issuing office would keep its records confidential, and there would be no public list. Any data on religion or caste/descent — including the census question in step 2 — would be voluntary, collected for a stated purpose, protected, and published only in aggregate, alongside data about grades and posts that the state already holds.
7 **Does naming caste stigmatise Christians and Hindus further?**	The stigma already exists; it is written into advertisements that reserve sweeping for non-Muslims. Naming it is the first step to removing it. Nothing here suggests that any community belongs in any occupation — only that none should be assigned one.
8 **Why only non-Muslims?**	Muslims of similar descent can also face exclusion, and many remain in the same work (Table B5). The law in step 1, the worker protections in step 5 and the survey in step 6 cover everyone, and the Mobility and Inclusion programme in step 2 is open by descent or occupation, whatever their religion; only the reserved share is limited, and the survey and the census question (step 2) will show whether it should be widened. That share should go first where exclusion has not eased, as the 1957 Ordinance did when it listed "castes of non-Muslims". Muslims of "Chuhra" origin (the sweeper caste; the word is now a slur) — 412,300 Mussallis in the 1931 census of Punjab — could often leave the caste name behind through a shared faith; in CLJ's Lahore survey, 72 per cent of the waste and sanitation workers surveyed said their Muslim co-workers believe the work is "not for them", and in 2018 a judicial commission appointed by the Supreme Court ordered Karachi's municipal authorities to dismiss Muslim sanitation workers who refused to clean sewers.[121] Christians and Hindus of the same origin carry caste descent and minority status together.
9 **Why one category for Christians and Hindus?**	Because they share one history and one disadvantage. Both descend from communities listed in the 1957 schedule, and the Punjab already counted them together in 1942; no protection by descent has existed for either since the Scheduled Caste quota was withdrawn in 1996; and both remain the poorest of Pakistan's minorities, marked by landlessness and ultra-poverty. CERD itself still names "scheduled castes" among those left behind in health and schooling.[122] Progress is uneven — some Scheduled Caste communities, such as the Menghwar, are better placed than others (Table B5) — which is why data within the category matter. Scheduled Castes would keep their name, their recognition in Article 260 and their own count; CMRM is the wider category for policy, and its figures would be published community by community.
10 **Do the communities themselves ask for this?**	In parts, and separately. Scheduled Caste activists in Sindh have asked "to be counted as a separate subset of Hindus in the census", and have defended recognition as a way "to deliver better chances to economically and socially deprived people"; the general secretary of the Scheduled Castes Federation of Pakistan has described how upper-caste Hindus "have more influence and money to be able to gain nominations from political parties".[123] Christian voices describe the same

[121]Aqeel and Gill, *Shame and Stigma in Sanitation*, 20, 31 and 41.

[122]Aqeel, *Index of Religious Diversity and Inclusion*, 9 and 40; Aqeel and Gill, "International Assistance and Impoverished Religious Minorities," 221; CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26, paras. 21(f) and 22(g).

[123]Radha Bheel, of Dalit Sujag Tehreek, in Saman Ghani Khan, "Mosaic Nation: What Made the Census Flawed and Controversial," *Herald*, 14 November 2017, https://herald.dawn.com/news/1153901/mosaic-nation-what-made-the-census-flawed-and-controversial; in 2023 she asked again for "a distinct column": Sangi, "Scheduled Castes or Hindus?". Sajan Permar, an activist in Mithi, in Sangi,

exclusion from the other side. A rights advocate says: "Untouchability in Pakistan has not yet been abolished." A nurse of twenty-five years' service reports that a caste slur greets the promotion of a Christian nurse to head her department. A sweeper in Islamabad, whose children hold diplomas but found no work except sweeping, puts it this way: "Once a Chura, always a Chura."[124] Not everyone agrees: one Scheduled Caste professional calls the term "a sign of hatred".[125] None of these voices has endorsed CMRM or the share proposed here. The framework joins demands already made separately; whether the communities want them joined is for the consultation in step 7, and it is why Scheduled Castes keep their own name and count.

11

Does this change the constitutional definition of non-Muslim?

No. Article 260 is left as it is, and none of the steps here depends on changing it.

"Scheduled Castes or Hindus?". Arjun Das, in Asif Aqeel, "Problems with the Electoral Representation of Non-Muslims," *Herald*, 1 March 2018, https://herald.dawn.com/news/1154039; the author of that article is a co-author of this report.

[124]Peter Jacob, director of the Centre for Social Justice, and Shakeela, a nurse and union official at a public hospital in Lahore, in Tanveer Ahmed, "The Narcissism of Religious Differences," *Lok Sujag*, 7 September 2022, https://loksujag.com/story/white-collar-workers-in-pakistan-eng. Kiran Masih, in Amanda Leonie, "The Churas of Pakistan: Alienated in Their Own Homeland," Pax Romana (ICMICA), 22 May 2016, https://www.icmica-miic.org/2016/05/the-churas-of-pakistan-alienated-in-their-own-homeland/. The International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) treats the two groups together: "Christians and lower caste Hindus are often employed as manual scavengers … Typically, these Christians will be Dalits who converted centuries ago": IDSN, "Pakistan," country page, https://idsn.org/countries/pakistan/. These are individual accounts and one organisation's analysis, not a survey of opinion.

[125]Atam Meghwar, in Sangi, "Scheduled Castes or Hindus?": "The Scheduled Castes term has become a sign of hatred. It affects self-respect and dignity."

ANNEX E

Original documents

Eleven of the official documents on which this report rests are reproduced here, so that readers can check them for themselves. Documents E1 to E6 trace reservation from the federal Scheduled Caste quota of 1948 to the minority quota of 2009; Documents E7 to E9 show minority recruitment and employment in recent years; Document E10 is the finding of the UN Committee from which this report starts; Document E11, added last, is Punjab's 2015 amendment carrying unfilled minority vacancies forward. Each is a page or an extract from an official publication, cropped to the passage that matters. Where an extract joins two pages or leaves a passage out, a dashed line marks the place; nothing else has been altered. Document E4 is the exception: a scan published by a community organisation. The source is given beneath each.

Rules for reservation of vacancies for the Scheduled Castes

Sl. No. 54

The following rules will be observed in future in pursuance of the decision to reserve vacancies for the Scheduled Castes:-

(i) 6% of all vacancies (as distinct from posts) to be filled by direct recruitment in the All-Pakistan Superior Services and Central Services. Class I, II and III (including Central Ministerial Service) to which recruitment is made on an All-Pakistan basis will be reserved for Scheduled Castes candidates.

(vi) If duly qualified Scheduled Caste candidates are not available to fill the vacancies reserved for them, the vacancies not filled by them will be treated as unreserved and filled on merit.

2. Ministries should initiate action required under sub-paras (ii) (c), (iii) and (iv) of para 1. Ministries should also proceed to lay down the minimum standards of qualifications required in respect of all the Services and posts under their control to which recruitment is made direct. As far as possible, the standards should be the same as laid down before Independence.

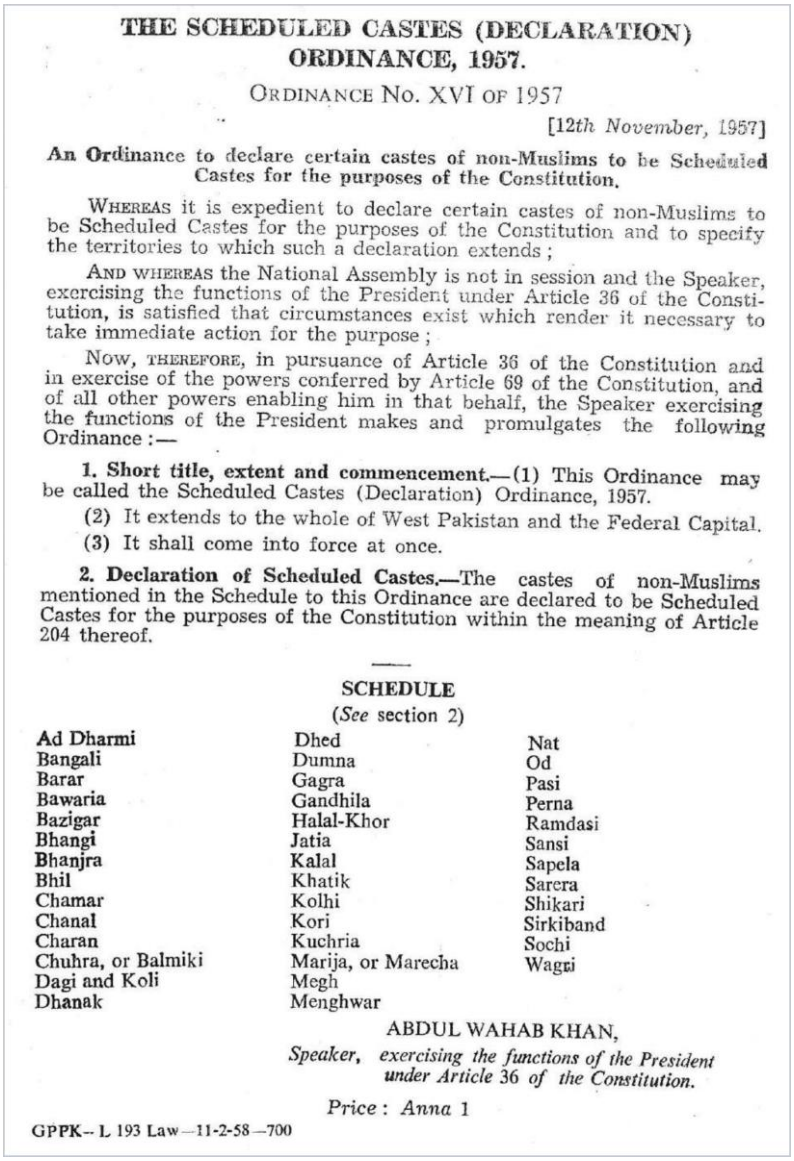
3. It does not seem necessary to prescribe a model roster to fill the vacancies reserved for the Scheduled Caste candidates. The Head of the Department or Office concerned making recruitment should, however, ensure that Scheduled Caste candidates are allotted their due share of vacancies under these rules promptly and properly.

4..... Omitted.....

5. The question whether reservation for the Scheduled Castes should be made in vacancies in Class IV Services under the Central Government is under consideration and orders on the subject will issue in due course.

[Authority.- Estt. Division O.M.No.56/2/48-Ests.(ME), dated 19-10-1948].

Document E1. The six per cent quota, 1948: "Rules for reservation of vacancies for the Scheduled Castes", Establishment Division O.M. No. 56/2/48-Ests.(ME), 19 October 1948, as reproduced in ESTACODE, Serial No. 54 (pages 115–117 of the compendium cited in the notes to Section 3). Extract: rule (i), then rule (vi) and paragraphs 2 to 5; the dashed line marks rules (ii) to (v), not shown.



THE SCHEDULED CASTES (DECLARATION) ORDINANCE, 1957.

ORDINANCE NO. XVI OF 1957

[12*th November*, 1957]

An Ordinance to declare certain castes of non-Muslims to be Scheduled Castes for the purposes of the Constitution.

WHEREAS it is expedient to declare certain castes of non-Muslims to be Scheduled Castes for the purposes of the Constitution and to specify the territories to which such a declaration extends ;

AND WHEREAS the National Assembly is not in session and the Speaker, exercising the functions of the President under Article 36 of the Constitution, is satisfied that circumstances exist which render it necessary to take immediate action for the purpose ;

NOW, THEREFORE, in pursuance of Article 36 of the Constitution and in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 69 of the Constitution, and of all other powers enabling him in that behalf, the Speaker exercising the functions of the President makes and promulgates the following Ordinance :—

1. Short title, extent and commencement.—(1) This Ordinance may be called the Scheduled Castes (Declaration) Ordinance, 1957.

(2) It extends to the whole of West Pakistan and the Federal Capital.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Declaration of Scheduled Castes.—The castes of non-Muslims mentioned in the Schedule to this Ordinance are declared to be Scheduled Castes for the purposes of the Constitution within the meaning of Article 204 thereof.

SCHEDULE

(*See* section 2)

Ad Dharmi	Dhed	Nat
Bangali	Dumna	Od
Barar	Gagra	Pasi
Bawaria	Gandhila	Perna
Bazigar	Halal-Khor	Ramdasi
Bhangi	Jatia	Sansi
Bhanjra	Kalal	Sapela
Bhil	Khatik	Sarera
Chamar	Kolhi	Shikari
Chanal	Kori	Sirkiband
Charan	Kuchria	Sochi
Chuhra, or Balmiki	Marija, or Marecha	Wagri
Dagi and Koli	Megh	
Dhanak	Menghwar	

ABDUL WAHAB KHAN,
Speaker, exercising the functions of the President under Article 36 of the Constitution.

Price : Anna 1

GPPK—L 193 Law—11-2-58—700

Document E2. The Scheduled Castes (Declaration) Ordinance, 1957 (Ordinance XVI of 1957, 12 November 1957), in full. The Schedule lists forty communities, including “Chuhra, or Balmiki”. Source: Ministry of Law, A Collection of the Central Acts and Ordinances for the Year 1957.

The Supreme Court observed in 1993 that the Ordinance had been allowed to lapse (Section 3). Annex C proposes that, under step 2, its Schedule be re-enacted and reviewed as the first of two schedules. Some of the castes listed have Muslim members — the Court noted this of the Sansis — and they are covered by the steps that are open to everyone.

Sl. No. 55

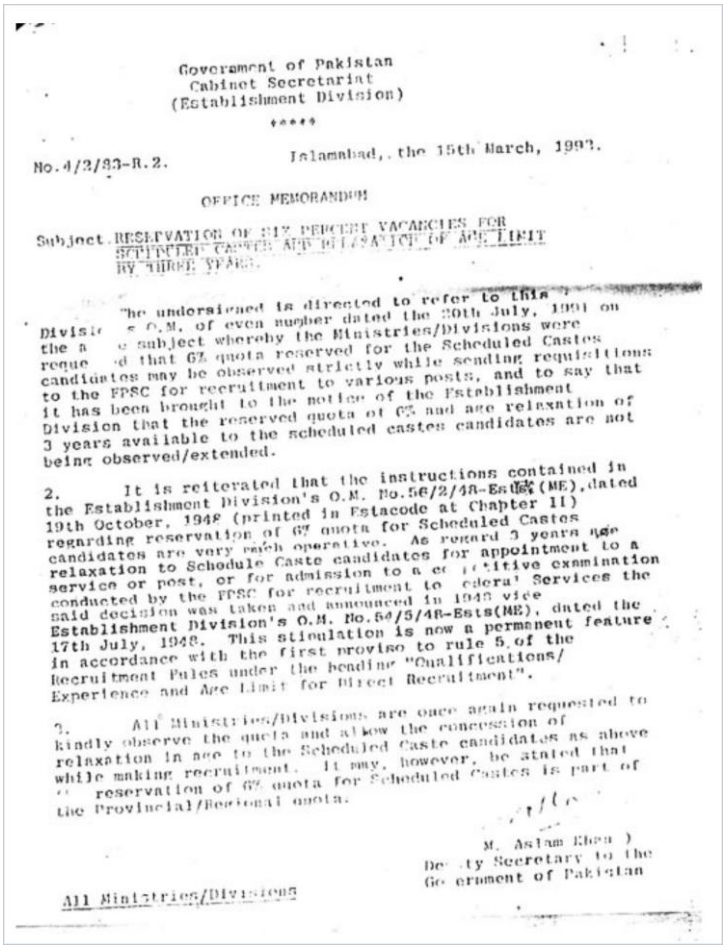
Publicity to Ensure Due Representation of Scheduled Castes

Reference. Establishment Division Office Memorandum No.56/2/48-Estt.(ME), dated the *19th October, 1948.

2. It appears that the six per cent vacancies reserved for Scheduled Castes candidates are not filled by such candidates, the main reason being non-availability of qualified candidates. Therefore, it is desired that while filling the vacancies in which a vacancy or vacancies are reserved for Scheduled Castes candidates, specially when recruitment is made locally, proper publicity should be given in the Scheduled Castes areas in order to ensure that due representation is given to Scheduled Castes candidates in the Central Services**/posts. The Ministries, etc., are, therefore, requested to take necessary action in this respect while making recruitment in future.

[***Authority***:– Estt. Division O.M.No.5/5/57-R, dated 30-10-1957].

Document E3. Reserved vacancies not being filled, 1957: Establishment Division O.M. No. 5/5/57-R, 30 October 1957, as reproduced in ESTACODE, Serial No. 55, in a later copy of Chapter 2. The heading is from the foot of its p. 118 and the text from p. 119; the dashed line marks the page break, and the asterisks refer to editorial footnotes not shown.



Government of Pakistan
Cabinet Secretariat
(Establishment Division)

No.4/2/93-R.2. Islamabad, the 15th March, 1993.

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject. RESERVATION OF SIX PERCENT VACANCIES FOR SCHEDULED CASTES AND RELAXATION OF AGE LIMIT BY THREE YEARS.

The undersigned is directed to refer to this Divisi s O.M. of even number dated the 30th July, 1991 on the s subject whereby the Ministries/Divisions were requ d that 6% quota reserved for the Scheduled Castes candidates may be observed strictly while sending requisitions to the FPSC for recruitment to various posts, and to say that it has been brought to the notice of the Establishment Division that the reserved quota of 6% and age relaxation of 3 years available to the scheduled castes candidates are not being observed/extended.

2. It is reiterated that the instructions contained in the Establishment Division's O.M. No.56/2/48-Estt(ME),dated 19th October, 1948 (printed in Estacode at Chapter II) regarding reservation of 6% quota for Scheduled Castes candidates are very much operative. As regard 3 years age relaxation to Schedule Caste candidates for appointment to a service or post, or for admission to a competitive examination conducted by the FPSC for recruitment to Federal Services the said decision was taken and announced in 1948 vide Establishment Division's O.M. No.56/5/48-Ests(ME), dated the 17th July, 1948. This stipulation is now a permanent feature in accordance with the first proviso to rule 5 of the Recruitment Rules under the heading "Qualifications/ Experience and Age Limit for Direct Recruitment".

3. All Ministries/Divisions are once again requested to kindly observe the quota and allow the concession of relaxation in age to the Scheduled Caste candidates as above while making recruitment. It may, however, be stated that reservation of 6% quota for Scheduled Castes is part of the Provincial/Regional quota.

M. Aslam Khan)
Deputy Secretary to the
Government of Pakistan

All Ministries/Divisions

Document E4. The quota not being observed, 1993: Cabinet Secretariat (Establishment Division) O.M. No. 4/2/93-R.2, 15 March 1993, which records that "the reserved quota of 6% and age relaxation of 3 years available to the scheduled castes candidates are not being observed/extended". The only copy we have seen is this scan, from the archived website of the Scheduled Castes Federation of Pakistan.

Sl. No. 54-A

Reservation of Six Percent Vacancies for Scheduled Castes

The competent authority has decided to withdraw, with immediate effect, the Establishment Division's O.M. No. 56/2/48-Ests-(ME) dated 19th October, 1948 (Sl. No. 54) regarding separate quota for the Scheduled Castes, who would henceforth compete alongwith other candidates of their own province.

2. Ministries/Divisions are requested to also bring the above position to the notice of all Attached Departments/Sub-ordinate Offices/ Autonomous Bodies/ Corporations etc., under their administrative control.

[***Authority***:– Estt. Div.'s O.M No. F.4/15/94-R.II, dated 24th September, 1996]

Document E5. The quota withdrawn, 1996: Establishment Division O.M. No. F.4/15/94-R.II, 24 September 1996, as reproduced in ESTACODE, Serial No. 54-A, p. 118 of the same later copy of Chapter 2.

4.6 Reservation of 05% Quota for Employment of Minorities (Non-Muslims) Across-the-Board in Federal Government Services/Jobs

It has been decided by the Federal Government to reserve, with immediate effect, 05% quota for employment of Minorities (Non-Muslims), as defined in Article 260(3)(b) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973, to all posts across the board in the Federal Government Services/jobs to be filled by direct recruitment including CSS, in addition to their participation in the open merit.

2. This reservation will have the same parameters as were prescribed for reservation of quota for women vide Establishment Division's O.M.No.4/15/2006-R.2 dated 22-05-2007 and will count as part of overall provincial allocation as contained in the Establishment Division's O.M. No.4/10/2006 R-2, dated 12-02-2007 (as reviewed vide O.M No. 4/10/2006-R-2 dated 14-02-2020) and will be calculated against the quota of the province of origin of the Minority (Non-Muslim) candidate concerned.

3. The above reservation will not apply to:-

i) the percentage of vacancies reserved for recruitment on the basis of merit;

ii) Recruitment made by promotion or transfer in accordance with the relevant rules.

iii) Short terms vacancies likely to last for less than six months; and

iv) Isolated posts in which vacancies occur only occasionally;

4. The vacancies reserved for Minorities (Non-Muslims) for which qualified candidates are not available shall be carried forward and filled by Minority (Non-Muslim) candidates.

5. These orders shall also apply to initial appointments in all attached departments / autonomous / semi-autonomous bodies / corporations/Public corporations and Companies *etc.* Administratively controlled by the Federal Government.

6. For removal of any difficulty the interpretation of the Establishment Division shall be final.

[Authority:- Estt. Div.'s O.M.No.4/15/94-R-2 dated 26-05-2009]

Document E6. Five per cent for all non-Muslims, 2009: Establishment Division O.M. No. 4/15/94-R-2, 26 May 2009, as reproduced in ESTACODE (2021 edition), section 4.6, pp. 127–128; the dashed line marks the page break. Paragraph 4 carries unfilled vacancies forward.

Recruitment of minorities for ex-cadre positions

Year	Nominations made	Failure Reported
2018	65	57
2019	30	57
2020	32	16

CSS Competitive Examination

Year	Allocated	Unfilled
2018	04	78
2019	03	85
2020	0	98

b) It is important to mention that despite reservation of seats for the minorities in Federal services, a significant number goes unfilled as suitably qualified candidates are not available against the reserved posts. 98 vacancies were carried over to the next year in 2020.

Document E7. Minority recruitment, 2018 to 2020: Cabinet Division, Report on Observance and Implementation of Principles of Policy in Relation to the Affairs of the Federation, 2018–19 & 2019–20, p. 75.

TABLE-19
MINORITIES EMPLOYEES BY DOMICILE AND BASIC SCALE

BASIC SCALE	TOTAL	DOMICILE								
		ISLAMABAD	PUNJAB	SINDH (R)	SINDH (U)	KP	BALOCHISTAN	AJ&K	GB	FATA
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	8	0	3	2	2	0	1	0	0	0
19	44	1	40	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
18	51	5	26	12	5	2	1	0	0	0
17	145	5	89	37	4	6	4	0	0	0
Sub.Total	**249**	**11**	**159**	**53**	**12**	**8**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**0**
16	578	21	400	55	39	28	33	0	0	2
15	44	5	25	4	4	2	4	0	0	0
14	197	15	99	34	22	13	14	0	0	0
13	24	0	16	5	1	0	2	0	0	0
12	22	0	12	5	1	1	3	0	0	0
11	351	14	201	44	48	27	17	0	0	0
10	57	0	26	4	24	3	0	0	0	0
9	398	26	210	53	48	30	30	1	0	0
8	52	0	44	3	3	2	0	0	0	0
7	860	82	472	103	96	51	50	1	1	4
6	222	0	154	16	40	9	3	0	0	0
5	533	9	304	108	66	17	25	0	0	4
4	1051	13	747	37	106	32	110	0	6	0
3	493	26	339	23	26	14	64	0	0	1
2	4605	75	2680	255	483	981	121	1	2	7
1	9392	1125	5343	520	1586	610	187	3	5	13
Sub.Total	**18879**	**1411**	**11072**	**1269**	**2593**	**1820**	**663**	**6**	**14**	**31**
Total	**19128**	**1422**	**11231**	**1322**	**2605**	**1828**	**669**	**6**	**14**	**31**

Document E8. Non-Muslim federal employees by pay scale and domicile, 2021–22: Pakistan Public Administration Research Centre, Establishment Division, Annual Statistical Bulletin of Federal Government Employees, 2021–22, Table 19. These are serving employees, however recruited.

RECOMMENDATIONS AGAINST SPECIAL QUOTA IN 2024

The Commission follows the prescribed formula of 10 %, 5 % and 2 % laid by the Provincial Government for the recommendation or female, minority and disable candidates respectively. The Commission believes that the share of these marginalized segments of the society into government cake will reduce the inequality. The policy of reserved seats followed in letter and spirit by the Commission and in the case of leftover/ unfilled posts, re-advertised for the same quota. The Commission encourages the candidates of special quota to apply for a post by submitting single fee and considers them for general quota in addition to their special quota. A combined merit list is prepared where from the general posts falling to the share of zones is filled. Candidates who do not come in the orbit of selection under zonal posts are then considered in quotas and thus all the posts are filled from a common merit list. The Commission considers the recruitment of Minority Quota as top priority after the august Supreme Court order for early finalization of the same cases. All special quota posts that remain unfilled are advertised later on and are processed on priority basis. Details of recommendations under special quota are as follows: -

S#	Quota	No. of Posts	No. of Recommendations	Remained Unfilled Posts
1.	Female Quota	38	29	9
2.	Minority Quota	74	12	62
3.	Disable Quota	24	12	12
TOTAL		**136**	**53**	**83**

Document E9. Posts under the special quotas and candidates recommended, 2024: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission, Annual Report 2024, p. 69. The Commission's heading, "Recommendations against special quota in 2024", means recommendations made under the quotas.

Economic, social and cultural rights

21. The Committee is concerned about persistent racial discrimination, in particular caste-based discrimination, in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, including significant barriers in gaining access to fundamental rights and services, which exacerbates marginalization and social exclusion. The Committee is also concerned about:

(a) High levels of poverty and unemployment among ethnic minority groups, including the Sheedi and Baloch communities;

(b) Reports of inadequate living conditions and a lack of infrastructure in areas in which ethnic minority groups reside;

(c) Discriminatory employment and advertisement practices based on racist stereotypes of certain ethnic minority groups or castes, such as those targeting non-Muslim minority groups for sanitation work;

(d) Reports of harassment, intimidation and excessive use of force by security and law enforcement officials deployed to checkpoints and public spaces, such as markets, against ethnic minority groups, including the Hazara and Pashtun communities;

(e) Higher rates of morbidity and mortality among ethnic minority groups, in particular in rural communities, including a high maternal mortality rate due to a lack of resources, leading to post-partum haemorrhages;

(f) Higher rates of absence and dropout among students and children belonging to ethnic minority groups and scheduled castes, in particular in rural communities (art. 5).

22. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

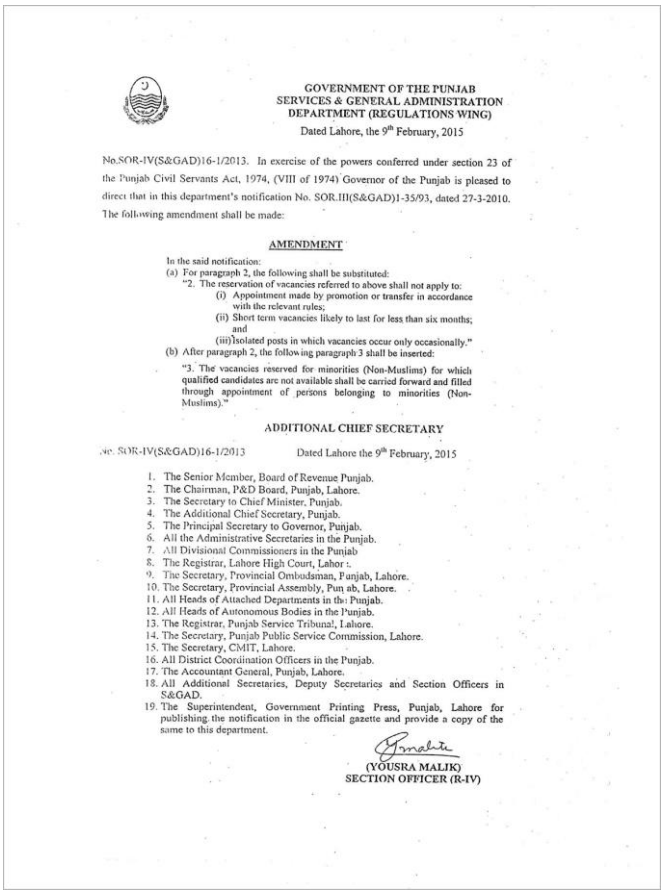
- -

(d) **Prevent and combat discriminatory employment and advertisement practices based on racist stereotypes, in particular those targeting members of non-Muslim ethnic minority groups for sanitation work;**

- -

(g) **Address the underlying socioeconomic determinants of health that contribute to higher morbidity and mortality rates among ethnic minority groups, in particular among ethnic minority women and members of scheduled castes, such as poverty, lack of education and inadequate living conditions;**

Document E10. What the UN Committee said in 2024: Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding Observations on the Combined Twenty-Fourth to Twenty-Sixth Periodic Reports of Pakistan, CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26 (24 September 2024), pp. 6–7. Extract: paragraph 21 and paragraph 22 (d) and (g); the dashed lines mark passages not shown.



GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB
SERVICES & GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT (REGULATIONS WING)
Dated Lahore, the 9th February, 2015

No.SOR-IV(S&GAD)16-1/2013. In exercise of the powers conferred under section 23 of the Punjab Civil Servants Act, 1974, (VIII of 1974) Governor of the Punjab is pleased to direct that in this department's notification No. SOR.III(S&GAD)1-35/93, dated 27-3-2010. The following amendment shall be made:

AMENDMENT

In the said notification:
(a) For paragraph 2, the following shall be substituted:
"2. The reservation of vacancies referred to above shall not apply to:
(i) Appointment made by promotion or transfer in accordance with the relevant rules;
(ii) Short term vacancies likely to last for less than six months; and
(iii) Isolated posts in which vacancies occur only occasionally."
(b) After paragraph 2, the following paragraph 3 shall be inserted:
"3. The vacancies reserved for minorities (Non-Muslims) for which qualified candidates are not available shall be carried forward and filled through appointment of persons belonging to minorities (Non-Muslims)."

ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY

No. SOR-IV(S&GAD)16-1/2013 Dated Lahore the 9th February, 2015

1. The Senior Member, Board of Revenue Punjab.
2. The Chairman, P&D Board, Punjab, Lahore.
3. The Secretary to Chief Minister, Punjab.
4. The Additional Chief Secretary, Punjab.
5. The Principal Secretary to Governor, Punjab.
6. All the Administrative Secretaries in the Punjab.
7. All Divisional Commissioners in the Punjab
8. The Registrar, Lahore High Court, Lahore.
9. The Secretary, Provincial Ombudsman, Punjab, Lahore.
10. The Secretary, Provincial Assembly, Punjab, Lahore.
11. All Heads of Attached Departments in the Punjab.
12. All Heads of Autonomous Bodies in the Punjab.
13. The Registrar, Punjab Service Tribunal, Lahore.
14. The Secretary, Punjab Public Service Commission, Lahore.
15. The Secretary, CMIT, Lahore.
16. All District Coordination Officers in the Punjab.
17. The Accountant General, Punjab, Lahore.
18. All Additional Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries and Section Officers in S&GAD.
19. The Superintendent, Government Printing Press, Punjab, Lahore for publishing the notification in the official gazette and provide a copy of the same to this department.

(YOUSRA MALIK)
SECTION OFFICER (R-IV)

Document E11. Punjab carries unfilled minority vacancies forward, 2015: Services and General Administration Department (Regulations Wing), Government of the Punjab, Notification No. SOR-IV(S&GAD)16-1/2013, 9 February 2015, amending the notification of 27 March 2010. Paragraph 3 replaces the earlier rule that unfilled reserved vacancies were filled on merit. Copy held by CLJ.

ENDORSEMENTS

What reviewers say

"This is such a timely, important intervention that clearly reflects your dedicated work over these past many years! I think the CMRM framework is very helpful, as it highlights and makes a case for looking at how caste and descent intersect with religion to marginalise particular groups, and hinder socio-economic and occupational mobility in contemporary Pakistan."

Dr Sally Cawood
Lecturer in Economic Geography, Lancaster University

"As a social anthropologist with a long-standing interest in interreligious relations in Pakistan, I commend this report for its sociological perceptiveness. Its propositions are both pertinent and challenging the mistaken belief that caste is either a relic of the past or an exclusively Hindu institution, and thus of little consequence in Muslim-majority Pakistan. To appreciate their potential impact, it is worth recalling that, historically in South Asia, naming caste has been central to struggles for social mobility and self-emancipation among marginalized communities.

In India, the adoption of the term Dalit ("broken"), alongside far-reaching affirmative action policies, underpinned the struggle of those once labelled "untouchables" to claim rights, resources, and political representation. Pakistan has seen no comparable movement against untouchability, and its official categories, by treating caste and religious identity as mutually exclusive, have tended to conceal and reproduce the inferiorisation of low-caste non-Muslims. By proposing a state-recognized designation for those it calls "caste-marginalized religious minorities," this report confronts a fundamental mechanism of this marginalization: the shame and humiliation attached to a stigmatized identity, perpetuated in part by the absence of a dignified name with which to challenge the terms of their exclusion."

Dr Paul Rollier
Social anthropologist, School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS), Paris