

# Trade Unions Movement in Pakistan

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Pakistan trade union movement is very weak at this time. Only 6% of the total workers are organized in the union movement.

The main trade union organization is Pakistan Workers Confederation. PWC was established in 1995, when 8 major labour federations got together and formed one single platform. It represents only 2% of the total organized sector of the movement. Rest is organized in the trade unions affiliated with different political parties. PWC cannot be compared with the European Trade Unions Confederation. It is at very early stage.

One reason for the weakening of the trade union movement is the government and bosses attitude towards the union movement. Military Government at this time has banned all trade union activities in the public places and all the strikes and demonstrations are banned. In 13 different sectors, government has not allowed any trade union activities. They include the health workers, railway open lines, government security printing press, All government clericals staff, electricity workers and so on. It is very difficult to organize a union in a private sector. The bosses with the help of the Labour Department of the government always try that no union should be registered at the department. Every effort of the workers in the private sector to form the unions is normally met with suspensions, loosing the jobs and also different criminal cases against the workers.

Despite that workers are fighting to form the unions. One good example is the carpet workers union, which is spreading all over Pakistan. The minimum wages in Pakistan is only 1950 Rupees a month. Almost all the workers are forced to do a second or third job daily. The official working hours are 44 a week. But workers are normally working 14 to 16 hours daily to help the both ends meet.

One major problem is gender issue.

Female workers are having a lot of problem if they go to work. They are normally discouraged to find a job. They are promoted to do the household work. They are normally facing male chauvinism attitude. They are not paid properly and not equal to men's wages. There are problems of child labour. Many workers send their children to learn some technical help. They think that if children goes to the schools, it does not help as they will not find any jobs after their studies, So why to waste time and they should learn something and earn some thing.