

Beggarization: Beggary as an Organized Crime in Pakistan

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Abstract

This research analyzes beggary as an organized crime, or beggarization, in Pakistan, focusing on economic, religious, and political trends enabling the growth of this lucrative industry. Economic factors include the economic viability of beggary as organized crime, inequalities, inflation, and a lack of viable economic alternatives. Religious factors such as *zakat* and *madrassas* serve to socially and financially legitimize beggary. Criminal networks thrive under adverse political conditions including government weakness and corruption. Demographic pressures include urbanization, refugee and internally displaced populations, population growth, and a high youth population.

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Acronyms

AIDS – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GT – Grand Trunk

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IDP – Internally Displaced Persons

ILO – International Labour Organization

NGO – Nongovernmental Organization

PEPCO – Pakistan Electric Power Company

PIA – Pakistan International Airlines

PLM-N – Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz

PPP – Pakistan People’s Party

PSE – Public Sector Enterprises

TI – Transparency International

ToT – Terms of Trade

WAPDA – Water and Power Development Authority

WFP – World Food Programme

Foreign Words

Allah – God

Asnad – Diploma or Certificate

Charas – Marijuana

Daule Shah ke Chuhay – Rat Children

Hala Rozi ke Talqeen

Hijra – blanket descriptor for transsexuals, transgender, hermaphrodites, and transvestites

Islamayat – Study of Islam

Jali – Fake

Jhonpris – Huts

Jhuggis – Huts made of cloth and wood sticks

Jihad – The struggle in the way of *Allah*

Katchi Abadi – Slums

Khawajasira – Hermaphrodites

Madrassa – Islamic Religious School

Mullah – Islamic School Teacher

Musafir – Traveler

Mustahiqqin – Deserving poor

Pir – Sufi Spiritual Person

Sadaqah – Charity

Talibe – Islamic School Student

Zakat – Obligatory Charity

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Anybody who has recently been to Pakistan can tell you that beggars are everywhere.¹ They are found in front of the mosques, restaurants, religious shrines, tourist places, street corners, and cinemas. The number of beggars today is apparently much greater than was the case several decades ago. Not only have their numbers increased, the nature and extent of begging has evolved over time. In recent decades, beggary has turned into a lucrative business for some opportunists, turning it into, in some cases, organized crime. Additionally, traditional and localized criminal networks are turning into transnational networks of crime.

Although recently beggars and beggarization have been getting some attention from journalists, scholars, media, nongovernmental organizations, and researchers, begging as an organized crime has not been studied in its entirety, particularly in Pakistan. This research analyzes beggary as an organized crime in Pakistan, focusing on economic, religious, and political trends enabling the growth of this lucrative industry.

Economic factors include the economic viability of beggary as organized crime, inequalities, inflation, and a lack of viable economic alternatives. Religious factors such as *zakat* and *madrassas* serve to socially and financially legitimize beggary. Criminal networks thrive under adverse political conditions including government weakness and corruption. Demographic pressures include

¹ Beggars are also referred to as panhandlers, vagrants, vagabonds, mendicants, hobos, and bums.

urbanization, refugee and internally displaced populations, population growth, and a high youth population.

Research Methodology and Significance

The method used to conduct this research is a review and analysis of the existing literature. Academic and other empirical research is supplemented by news sources, documentaries, and other online publications due to the lack of existing information on beggary as an organized crime in Pakistan. Research on this topic is still in its early stages, which is complicated by the illegal nature of the topic. Researching underground criminal networks is difficult and dangerous.

This research is important, as it sheds light on a significant but neglected criminal industry that is thriving. Creating an awareness of how religion is manipulated by these criminal organizations is important not just in relation to beggarization, but to the wider misapplication and manipulation of religion by other influential organizations such as governments and militant groups. The revenue generated by beggarization is revenue that could be channeled into more productive uses and sustainable economic development. In addition, the spread of beggarization is directly linked to growing health epidemics, as beggars are connected to the spread of HIV and other diseases such as Hepatitis B and C, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.² This research could be of interest to nongovernmental organizations (NGO), those with international security interests, the government of Pakistan, particularly law enforcement, academicians, future

² Pakistan Voluntary Health and Nutrition Association, "GFATM – Global Fund for Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria", n.d., http://pavhna.com/activities.php?subaction=showfull&id=1217248597&archive=&start_from=&ucat=10&.

researchers of beggarization, and the citizens of Pakistan, who, whether they know it or not, are intricately involved in the growth and survival of this industry.

Research Limitations and Future Research

The greatest limitation in this research is the data on beggars and beggarization. Given the informal or illegal nature of begging and beggarization, data is difficult to obtain, and little empirical research on these issues exists, especially in relation to Pakistan. This research does not take into consideration specific legislative initiatives in depth or the role of nongovernmental organizations, except madrassas, in beggarization.³ The role of the diaspora is also unaddressed, however, the effects of the diaspora in terms of perception as well as funding, whether through zakat or otherwise, would be an interesting area for future research. Another interesting area for future research includes the involvement of doctors and other professionals in beggarization. The absence of academic research on these connections inhibited their inclusion in this analysis, although some news evidence exists, such as in the case of Bangalore, where there are increasing reports of “a large racket” involving the “illegal extraction and sale of organs from dead beggars’ bodies.”⁴

³ These NGOs have been omitted from this analysis primarily because NGOs deal with individual beggars, especially child beggars.

⁴ Nandini Chandrashekar, “Bodies go missing in beggars’ colony, finds probe,” *Deccan Herald*, October 15, 2011, <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/105207/bodies-go-missing-beggars-colony.html>.

Chapter 2 – Beggary and Beggary as an Organized Crime

Beggary is a dynamic, complex, multi-faceted phenomena, and its nature and extent has evolved over time into a loose network of organized crime. This chapter discusses the concepts of beggary, organized crime, and beggary as an organized crime. These three concepts are also analyzed within the context of Pakistan. Organized criminal beggary involves the exploitation of individuals for monetary gain. Some people are categorically more vulnerable to exploitation by criminal beggary operations. These vulnerable populations are also discussed and analyzed in relation to Kevin Bales' work on disposable people.

Beggary

Begging is an informal economic activity that involves “the solicitation of a voluntary unilateral gift – most often money – in a public place.”⁵ In addition, beggars may “sell small items, such as dusters or flowers, in return for money that may have little to do with the value of the item for sale.”⁶ Beggary can be

⁵ Philip Lynch, “Critique and Comment - Understanding and Responding to Begging,” *Melbourne University Law Review* 29 (2005): 518-555. The informal economy is not monitored or regulated by the government. Economic activities such as home brewing, street trade, shop-keeping, sex work, domestic work, and begging are informal, as are drug trafficking, political and financial corruption, offshore banking, and various other kinds of work that avoid state regulation, taxes, and penalties. K Hart, “The Informal Economy,” in *New Palgrave Dictionary of Economic Theory and Doctrine* (London: Macmillan, 1987). There are some informal economic activities in which the activities themselves are not illegal, however, when conducted informally, or outside formal rules and regulations, these activities become illegal. For example, if a person opens a shoe store and fails to register their business and pay taxes, the business is operating informally and doing so violates government laws. However, selling shoes is not an illegal activity, but conducting business without paying legally mandated taxes is. Put simply, the informal economy consists of the forces that generate production and distribution of income and wealth for individuals in an informal setting. Ibid.

⁶ Collective for Social Science Research, Karachi, “A rapid assessment of bonded labour in domestic work and begging in Pakistan” (International Labour Organization, 2004), 22.

classified into three distinct categories. According to its motivation, beggary can be based on need, convenience, or organized crime.

1. Need

- The most common form of beggary stems from the human need to survive.⁷ If an individual runs out of all options to sustain his existence, he will eventually resort to begging.

2. Convenience or Preference

- Some people find begging to be their most efficient way of making a living, given their skill set, aspirations, and preferences as between income and leisure.

3. Organized Crime

- People forced into begging via criminal networks.

Organized Crime

Organized crime is a conceptually contested term, the meaning of which evolves over time.⁸ However, a broad consensus surrounds the basic elements of organized crime; *organized crime* involves financial gains, illicit business activities, organizational hierarchy, corruption, and the use of violence or intimidation.⁹

⁷ B.C. Das Gupta, "Beggars-A Menace to Public Health," in *Our Beggar Problem - How to Tackle it*, by Dr. J.M. Kumarappa (Bombay: Fadma Publications Ltd, 1945), 41-52.

⁸ Frank E. Hagan, "'Organized crime' and 'organized crime': Indeterminate problems of definition," *Trends in Organized Crime* 9 (June 2006): 136.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 129; Silke Meyer, "Trafficking in Human Organs in Europe," *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law, and Criminal Justice* 14.2 (2006): 210.

Many analyses of organized crime propose classification schemes based on group characteristics. Hagan distinguishes between *Organized Crime*, Organized Crime groups, and *organized crime*, referring to organized criminal activities.¹⁰ He asserts that crimes “may be committed by a variety of groups that are organized,”¹¹ organized crime, while Organized Crime groups are labeled as such for their sophistication, power, and continuity.¹² Hagan suggests a classification model for Organized Crime groups consisting of three levels. Groups classified under level one include highly sophisticated and well-established organizations such as Cosa Nostra. Level two groups are semi-organized, while level three groups are low-level establishments such as street gangs.¹³ Gottschalk introduces an evolutionary model characterized by four levels of organizational maturity.¹⁴ His progressive model is based on the assumption that criminal organizations mature with time. Criminal organizations can be classified according to their level of maturity:

- 1) Level 1 – Activity-Based Criminal Organizations
 - Rule-based
- 2) Level 2 – Knowledge-Based Criminal Organizations
 - Specialization, institutional knowledge development
- 3) Level 3 – Strategy-Based Criminal Organizations
 - Power hierarchy, organizational goals

¹⁰ Hagan, “‘Organized crime’ and ‘organized crime,’” 134.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 136.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 134–135.

¹⁴ P Gottschalk, “Maturity levels for criminal organizations,” *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 36 (June 2008): 108.

4) Level 4 – Value-Based Criminal Organizations

- Charismatic leadership, shared vision and values¹⁵

“As globalization has expanded international trade, so the range of organized crime activities has broadened and diversified. The traditional hierarchical forms of organized crime groups have diminished; replaced with loose networks who work together in order to exploit new market opportunities.”¹⁶

Beggarization: Beggary as an Organized Crime

Beggarization is the practice of begging with the criminal intent to defraud the donor, carried out in an organized fashion, and handled as a business. The organizers have criminal intent to maximize profit for themselves by forcing people, often of disadvantaged social groups, to beg. These disadvantaged groups include but are not limited to those who are mentally and physically handicapped, women, third gender, children, and the elderly. Beggarization can be voluntary or involuntary.

a) Voluntary Beggarization

Those involved in beggarization on a voluntary basis and have not been coerced or forced into the activity. These include individuals in an organization's positions of power and those involved in coercion and forcing others to be in the business of beggarization.

¹⁵ P Gottschalk, “Maturity levels for criminal organizations,” *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 36 (June 2008): 108–109.

¹⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, “UNODC and organized crime”, n.d.

The intent remains defrauding people, however, individuals are free to join or leave the organization.

b) Involuntary Beggarization

In this form of beggarization, the “employees” and enslaved are exploited for their economic potential and may be subjected to physical or mental abuse involving threats, disfiguration, or other violent means and they are sometimes disposed of.

Its economic profitability is resulting in a growing number of organized beggars and giving rise to beggarization.

Whereas organized begging may refer “simply to the fact that beggars have organized themselves in a group,”¹⁷ organized *criminal* begging requires the exploitation of beggars. Anti-Slavery International classifies organized criminal begging as a type of forced begging. In researching forced child begging, Anti-Slavery International distinguishes between children who are forced to beg by third-parties and those who are forced to beg by their parents or guardians.¹⁸ *Organized* criminal begging involves third-party forced begging. Parents or guardians sending a child to beg on the corner out of need may or may not be criminal, but unless doing so is part of a larger enterprise, it is not organized.

¹⁷ Charles Kirchofer, *Organized Begging in Vienna, Austria - Right-Wing Propaganda, Benevolent Necessity, Illicit Business, Human Smuggling, or Human Trafficking?* (Vienna: Webster University, 2010), 3.

¹⁸ Emily Delap, *Begging for Change: Research findings and recommendations on forced child begging in Albania/Greece, India and Senegal* (Anti-Slavery International, 2009), 6.

Parents or guardians may ‘sell’ or ‘rent’ their children out to third parties who then force their children to beg.¹⁹ On the one hand, parents and guardians exploit their children by selling them, while on the other hand, criminal organizations exploit the parents and the children, preying on their economic vulnerabilities. However, criminal organizations may trick or deceive parents and guardians into giving up their children by promising to give the children an apprenticeship, decent working conditions, an education, or any number of things so that parents or guardians entrust their children to these third parties.²⁰

Like other businesses, criminal groups in the business of forced begging have organizational structures. Typically, a *beggar master* is at the top of the hierarchy. Forced beggars are at the bottom of the hierarchy, while middlemen fulfill organizational functions. For example, middlemen seek out vulnerable individuals to prey on, as the organization constantly needs new and future beggars to grow and prosper. Additionally, middlemen control and monitor beggars, making sure they do not flee the organization or attempt to expose the beggar ring. Beggar masters and middlemen may at times perform the same functions; however, beggar masters are the ultimate organizational authority.²¹

Beggar masters, or *contractors*, exploit beggars by forcing them to beg for money. Contractors often physically disfigure and perform other atrocities to fit beggars into disabled and disadvantaged groups, so they can earn sympathy

¹⁹ Ibid., 6–7.

²⁰ United States Department of State, “2011 Trafficking in Persons Report - Pakistan”, June 2011.

²¹ Kirchofer, *Organized Begging in Vienna, Austria - Right-Wing Propaganda, Benevolent Necessity, Illicit Business, Human Smuggling, or Human Trafficking?*, 1. See figure 14 for an organizational chart.

and hence, more money from the passer by.²² Common tactics involve burning their faces or other parts of their bodies with acid, leg or arm amputation, and starvation.²³ These beggars are properly trained in begging tactics. They are taught where to beg, what to say, and how to say it.²⁴

Beggarization is linked to other criminal activities such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, drug use, organ selling, child abuse, prostitution, and terrorism. Beggarization is not limited to forced begging; beggars are often exploited in other forms, either under the guise of beggary or not. Beggary, to some extent, is socially, religiously, and culturally acceptable in most places, particularly in developing countries. Given this acceptability, beggary is a strategic tool used by criminal networks as a front under which other unacceptable activities are carried out. Beggars oftentimes have interchangeable roles.

Disposable Beggars

Kevin Bales has thoroughly researched the topic of new slavery in modern times. He defines *new slavery* as “the total control of one person by another for the purpose of economic exploitation;”²⁵ “people are enslaved by violence and held against their wills for the purpose of exploitation.”²⁶ Bales classifies beggary as a form of forced labor; one of many others such as domestic work and carpet

²² Maswood Alam Khan, “Commerce of begging,” *The Financial Express*, February 3, 2011; Delap, *Begging for Change: Research findings and recommendations on forced child begging in Albania/Greece, India and Senegal*, 6.

²³ “Beggars in Pakistan” (CSS of Pakistan, 2005).

²⁴ our

²⁵ Kevin Bales, *Disposable people: new slavery in the global economy* (Berkeley Calif.: University of California Press, 1999), 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

making. For Bales, forced labor constitutes a form of new slavery.²⁷ Although forced beggary is a form of forced labor, rather than classify forced begging as new slavery, it is more appropriate to consider beggarization as organized crime. Bales does not elaborate on forced begging, nor does he consider the organizational aspects of criminal networks.

Bales characterizes new slavery as the highly profitable, illegal exploitation of cheap or surplus labor. Vulnerable individuals are totally controlled, or enslaved; control is maintained through violence.²⁸ These features also characterize organized crime. Not all organized criminal activity constitutes new slavery, as organized criminal activity does not necessarily involve the enslavement of human beings. Likewise, *unorganized* new slavery does not constitute organized crime. New slavery, in any organized form, is essentially organized crime.

Beggarization can also be viewed as a potential lower tier to forced labor. Once individuals are exploited through forced labor of many kinds, including domestic work or brick kiln, they are discarded. Bales terms these discarded workers *disposable people*. Bales asserts “useless and unprofitable infants, the elderly, and the sick or injured are dumped.”²⁹ On the surface, this assertion seems plausible. Looking further, and within the context of beggarization, these individuals are still disposable; however, they are not disposed of yet. These supposedly useless individuals are actually some of the most attractive

²⁷ Ibid., 198.

²⁸ Kevin Bales, *Disposable people: new slavery in the global economy*, Rev. ed. with a new preface. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 6, 12, 20, 31.

²⁹ Ibid., 25.

candidates for begging, as people give more money to beggars who are disfigured, old, or otherwise physically disadvantaged than to healthy able-bodied beggars. Thus, these people may be reusable (in beggarization) instead of being disposable (as in new slavery) in that they have not yet been fully exploited. It is just a shift from one form of exploitation to another. Once these people are disposed of, they generally have nowhere to go to and as a result they most likely end up on the streets, begging to survive. But after years of violence and exploitation, they are once again highly vulnerable to being exploited, this time, most likely by the beggar masters who force them into begging. Thus, another booming business is waiting to exploit them again....beggarization.

Bales illustrates the disposability of new slaves through brothels. He says that while a prostitute may prove profitable for brothel owners for some years, if she is later found to have HIV, she is disposed of.³⁰ HIV positive prostitutes are bad for business. However, organized criminal networks do not care whether a girl has HIV. She can serve as a beggar by day and prostitute by night. Whether she has HIV is of no concern to these organizations or their reputations.

Many laborers who have either escaped from their forced labor arrangements or been disposed of by their former 'employers' will be exploited once again. They will be forced to beg on the streets for money, an activity that may in fact prove more profitable, at least for their bosses, than their previous labor. Based on the available data, begging, in some places, may be more profitable than the typical work performed by forced laborers. Beggarization is

³⁰ Bales, *Disposable people*, 18–19.

largely outside the radar of powerful international institutions, thus beggarization flourishes. Beggars, albeit a social nuisance, are not considered a threat and therefore addressing beggary is less of a priority than are traditional organized criminal networks such as human trafficking rings or terrorist networks.

Pakistan



Figure 1: Map of Pakistan

Source: <http://www.desichat.org/images/pakistanmap2.gif>

Beggary in Pakistan

Beggars have always been a common sight throughout the country, even though beggary is illegal in Pakistan and has been since 1958.³¹ Beggars are everywhere and the law remains largely unenforced.³² Over the past few decades, however, the number of beggars has increased tremendously. According to contemporary estimates, there are somewhere between two and twenty-five million beggars in Pakistan.³³ Pakistani beggary, as with beggary in general, can be classified as need-based, based on convenience or preference, or organized criminal beggary.

Our Beggar Problem provides a detailed account of beggary in the subcontinent in 1945.³⁴ This publication provides ample evidence that beggary at that time was considered a significant social problem, and beggars were prevalent throughout the region. *Our Beggar Problem* characterizes beggars by type, including beggars such as religious mendicants, migrant beggars, and physically and mentally disabled beggars.³⁵ These types of beggars are still common today, while technological advancements, which beggars have taken full advantage of, have allowed for the development of high profile, rap beggars, ibeggars and e-beggars. Child beggars rap in English to attract foreign tourists

³¹ See West Pakistan Vagrancy Ordinance, 1958

³² Fahad Hameed Rana, "Begging a Sickening Nuisance", n.d.

³³ S Mohammad Ali, "VIEW: Issues concerning beggars," *Daily Times*, February 22, 2005; Ambreen Kazmi, "Beggars: The Professional Parasites," *Chowrangji - Pakistan Politics, Current Affairs, Business and Lifestyle*, October 24, 2008.

³⁴ In 1945 Pakistan was not yet an independent state.

³⁵ See Appendix A for an elaboration on the beggar types.

and the expatriate community due to their well-known generosity. Jefferson reports “children in Karachi rap this little verse, no doubt learned by rote:”³⁶

*“Buy one flower/take a flower/gimme 10 rupees/wassup my nigger/year nigger/once you go black you never go back/motherfucker.”*³⁷

These illiterate children, without access to MTV and with no knowledge of the English language, clearly do not come up with these begging tactics and techniques on their own; “someone had to export these phrases. Someone knew what they meant.”³⁸ The music is strategically chosen with a particular audience in mind, to create humor and maximize donations. Today, many beggar masters, middlemen, and beggars carry cell phones. Beggars send random text messages asking for phone credits or to help them make other payments. A business man from Rawalpindi reports receiving “almost 10 messages a day from a beggar,” who sends messages such as “if you have faith in one God, please send me a credit of at least Rs 10. God may reward you and take you out of all troubles.”³⁹ Beggars also beg via email, sometimes posing as NGOs or as individuals in need.

In 2004, the International Labour Organization (ILO) conducted a rapid assessment of beggars in Pakistan, providing ethnographic beggar profiles. The report indicates that beggary is essentially an urban phenomenon, in terms of the profitability of begging. The ILO also highlights the very important aspect of

³⁶ Cord Jefferson, “Cultural Globalization and Pakistani Rap Beggars”, February 3, 2010, <http://www.theawl.com/2010/02/cultural-globalization-and-pakistani-rap-beggars-with-cord-jefferson>.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ “Beggars in Pakistan use cell phones to beg,” *Top News*, May 5, 2008.

combination begging, in which people engage in begging alongside other economic activities, confirming the linkages between begging and other illegal activities such as sex work and drug use.⁴⁰

Beggary as an Organized Crime in Pakistan

Organized criminal beggary is a growing industry in Pakistan. News reports on beggar mafias have grown over the past decade. Significant political, economic, and religious factors contribute to beggarization. National governments and NGOs have also taken note of the increasingly organizational and criminal aspects of beggary in Pakistan. For example, the US State Department's 2011 Trafficking in Persons Report on Pakistan says children are frequently "bought, sold, rented, or kidnapped to work in organized, forced begging rings."⁴¹

An ILO survey of 198 beggars in Pakistan found most people beg to survive and many reported begging due to a lack of viable economic alternatives, while some beggars were forced to beg for criminal groups.⁴² For the ILO regional study, researchers surveyed 210, 198, 167, and 200 beggars in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Bangladesh, respectively. In Pakistan, 34% of beggars interviewed were reportedly begging under an organized begging operation in which beggar masters were involved. Comparatively, between 6 and 11% of beggars were found to be begging under organized situations in the other countries. Of the 130 child beggars interviewed, 92% reported they were

⁴⁰ See Appendix B for a table illustrating the beggars outlined in the ILO's rapid assessment.

⁴¹ United States Department of State, "2011 Trafficking in Persons Report - Pakistan."

⁴² International Labour Organization, "A demand side of human trafficking in Asia: empirical findings", 2006, 78–82.

not allowed to leave the begging operation and they would be punished if they tried. In addition, beggar masters had bought 73% of them. Over 50% the child beggars interviewed were younger than ten.⁴³

The ILO's beggar survey on begging partially exposes the situation of forced begging in Pakistan; however, this survey is not without its limitations. These limitations include the small number of beggars surveyed and the purposive nature of their survey sample. The ILO openly admits many beggars declined to participate in the survey. Thus, if 34% of beggars surveyed admitted to being involved in organized begging, the actual percentage of beggars in forced begging situations is likely higher. Forced beggars would be unsurprisingly opposed to participating in the survey for fear of getting in trouble with their beggar masters or the police. Nevertheless, given the near absence of empirical research that exists on forced begging in Pakistan, this survey is a valuable contribution to understanding this nearly invisible phenomenon.

In the process of implementing the Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act of 2004, in which beggars were removed from the streets and put into rehabilitation centers, government officials uncovered fourteen organized begging operations throughout the process of conducting rescue operations in Lahore. Officials encountered these beggar rings by chance, as the initiative was aimed at getting individual beggars off the streets, not at finding or investigating organized criminal activities.⁴⁴ Thus, if these fourteen criminal groups were found in just one city, certainly many more organized begging operations exist

⁴³ Ibid., 79.

⁴⁴ Rana, "Begging a Sickening Nuisance."

throughout the country, and likely even in Lahore. Further research needs to investigate potentially how many organized begging operations exist, as well as their characteristics.

Nevertheless, there is a wide consensus that organized criminal begging groups exist in Pakistan, and the number of these groups has been growing in recent years. This growth in beggarization has occurred alongside the professionalization of beggary in general, as convenience or preference beggars proliferate in Pakistan's generally profitable begging environment. According to Imtiaz Sarwar, Lahore's City Division Superintendent of Traffic Police, "most beggars are professionals and earn thousands of rupees on [a] daily basis."⁴⁵ Further, he affirms organized begging is prevalent and beggar masters control individual beggar activities.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Shafiq Sharif, "A begger free city? - 'We have a right to beg'," *Pakistan Today*, February 1, 2011.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Chapter 3: Economics and Beggarization

Economic factors contributing to beggarization's profitability include the lack of alternative economic opportunities, economic inequalities, and higher food prices. These conditions lead to an increase in the number of vulnerable people, creating more opportunities for criminal organizations to exploit such people to their advantage.

Inequality

As illustrated in the chart below, the gap between the rich and the poor has been growing. In 1971-1972, 44.27% of the country's total income went to the richest 20% of the population. By 2004-2005, 50% of the country's total income went to the richest 20% of the population. During that same time period, the percentage of income commanded by the poorest 20% of the population declined from 7.79% to 6.37%.⁴⁷ According to the World Bank, GINI Index data also reflects these increases in inequality. In 2002, Pakistan had a GINI Index score of 30, which rose to 33 in 2006.⁴⁸ Increases in inequality are linked to increases in crime.⁴⁹ On the one hand, "greater income inequality also means a greater number of destitute persons, increasing the supply of beggars,"⁵⁰ and on the other hand, rich people have more money to spare for beggars. This is

⁴⁷ Shahzad Hussain, Imran Sharif Chaudhry, and ul-Hasan ul-Hasan, *Globalization and Income Distribution: Evidence from Pakistan*, Pakistan Conference Paper, December 29, 2006, 5.

⁴⁸ The World Bank, "World dataBank", 2011, <http://databank.worldbank.org>.

⁴⁹ Muhammad Mazhar Iqbal and Hafiz Hanzla Jalil, "Urbanization and Crime: A Case Study of Pakistan", n.d., 22.

⁵⁰ Patrick Smith, "The Economics of Anti-Begging Regulations," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 64, no. 2 (2005): 561.

particularly true in the case of *zakat*, which is a percentage based donation, however other charitable donations would likely increase as well.

Pakistan: Poorest 20% and Richest 20% Share of Total Income

Years	Share of poorest 20%	Share of richest 20%
1971-72	7.79	44.27
1979	7.19	47.11
1984-85	7.1	45.57
1985-86	7.41	44.16
1986-87	7.67	43.91
1987-88	7.66	44.16
1990-91	6.07	47.53
1992-93	6.59	46.44
1993-94	6.57	45.69
1996-97	7.11	43.51
1998-99	6.57	48.67
2001-02	6.66	48.08
2004-05	6.37	50.02

Source: Pakistan Economic Survey (various issues)

Figure 2: Inequality in Pakistan

Source: Shahzad Hussain, Imran Chaudhry, and Mahmood ul-Hasan, "Globalization and Income Distribution: Evidence from Pakistan*," *European Journal of Social Sciences* 8, no. 4 (2009): 5.

Higher Food Prices (Inflation)

"Inflation is regarded as a regressive taxation against the poor,"⁵¹ resulting in higher consumer prices. A primary factor pushing vulnerable people into poverty is inflation. In 2009, inflation was at 11.5%, by 2010-2011, inflation reached 14.1%. Similarly, food inflation rose from 12% in 2009-2010 to 18.4% in 2010-2011.⁵² Wheat flour, milk, and meat prices are at all time highs. Decreases in food purchasing power between 2007 and 2009 have been particularly hard on the poor, as the World Food Program (WFP) explains,

"Wheat flour is the major staple food consumed in Pakistan... and contributes to almost 50 percent of caloric intake of poor households. A

⁵¹ "Inflation," in *Economic Survey 2010-11* (Government of Pakistan, 2010), 93.

⁵² *Ibid.*

simple measure of poor households' access to food is the purchasing power of a daily wage worker or the "Terms of Trade" (ToT) – *the quantity of wheat that can be purchased with one day unskilled labor wage* – Since 2007 these TOT have declined from 14 to 10. This represents a 30 percent reduction in purchasing power over the past three years."⁵³

Even though Pakistan can produce a sufficient amount of food, there has been an increase in food insecurity over the past decade. In 2003, 38% of the population was categorized as food insecure, according to the WFP. In 2009, 50% of the population (83 million people) was classified as food insecure. After the 2010 floods, 90 million people, over half of the population, were considered food insecure.⁵⁴ This high level of food insecurity, in which food becomes so valuable a commodity that "street children offer to provide a 'massage', a euphemism for sex, for as little as a dish of rice,"⁵⁵ can lead to high levels of exploitation.

The Economic Viability of Beggary and Beggarization in Pakistan

In one way or another, begging is always economically motivated. In short, different classes of beggars include impoverished people who beg to survive, people who beg out of preference, and people who beg because they are forced by criminal organizations. Regardless of its effectiveness, those who

⁵³ World Food Programme, "Pakistan Food Security Market Price Monitoring" (World Food Programme, December 2009).

⁵⁴ World Food Programme, "Pakistan: Overview", n.d.

⁵⁵ "PAKISTAN: Number of street children on the rise," *IRIN News*, May 2005.

beg out of “poverty, or indigence, and as an occupation of last resort,”⁵⁶ will beg out of desperation. Those who choose to beg out of preference find begging a convenient or preferred source of income because it is a relatively profitable endeavor. Society enables these beggars since enough people give enough money to beggars for begging to be worth doing in the first place.

In Pakistan, beggary is an economically lucrative business and often provides a substantially higher income compared to what an unskilled laborer can otherwise command in the market.⁵⁷ Begging can be more profitable than domestic work. For example, a female child full-time domestic worker makes up to \$9.23 (800 rupees) per month, whereas a female child beggar in Islamabad makes up to \$46.16 (4,000 rupees) per month.⁵⁸ Another example is of a beggar-family of seven from Singpura. They used to sell pots but insufficient income from pot selling pushed them towards begging, which they claim is very lucrative. Each member makes \$1.15-\$1.73 (100-150 rupees) per day.

⁵⁶ Collective for Social Science Research, Karachi, “A rapid assessment of bonded labour in domestic work and begging in Pakistan,” 20.

⁵⁷ Mohammad Ali, “VIEW: Issues concerning beggars.”

⁵⁸ Interview with an afghan child labor in F-11 Markaz, Islamabad by Nadia Azam

Occupation	Average Income Per Month
Child Domestic Worker	\$9 (0-800 rupees)
Female Domestic Worker	\$11 - 17 (1000-1500 rupees)
Elite School Teacher	\$92 - 173 (8,000 - 15,000 rupees)
Middle Class School Teacher	\$34 - 103 (3,000 - 9,000 rupees)
Low Income School Teacher	\$10 - 23 (900 - 2,000 rupees)
Beggar	\$1 - 115 (100 - 10,000 rupees)
Gardner	\$5 (500 rupees)
Nannies*	\$40 (3500 rupees)
Cooks	\$40 (3500 rupees)
Drivers	\$40 (3500 rupees)
Garment Factory Worker	\$23-46 (2000 - 4000 rupees)

Figure 3: Wages in Pakistan

Sources: Based on data estimates of beggars in Pakistan and beggar income in Pakistan, as estimated in: Collective for Social Science Research, Karachi, "A rapid assessment of bonded labour in domestic work and begging in Pakistan" (International Labour Organization, 2004).; Haris Hanif, "Professional beggars in city double this Ramazan," Daily Times, August 22, 2011.; Ambreen Kazmi, "Beggars: The Professional Parasites," Chowranghi - Pakistan Politics, Current Affairs, Business and Lifestyle, October 24, 2008.; Mohammad Ali, "VIEW: Issues concerning beggars," Daily Times, February 22, 2005.

Rachyal investigated the profile and economic yield of beggars in Pakistan. His reports show that beggars on the streets of Pakistan are fraud beggars. Beggars who pretend to be handicapped, blind, injured or hurt are in fact professional beggars and are turning into a mafia. He interviews old, young, male, female, and child beggars, uncovering their drama. Rachyal finds most beggars are *musafir*, who come from somewhere else, another town. Although beggars told him they beg because they are poor, there have been very few who would qualify as real beggars, people begging out of need. Rachyal reports that from Peshawar to Karachi and also the flourishing small towns in between are taken over by the professional beggars.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Rachayl, *Beggars*, vol. 1, Rachayl Reports (Pakistan, 2009). Documentary translated from Urdu language to English language by the author.

Reports estimate beggars make anywhere between 100 and 10,000 rupees (\$1.15 and \$115 US dollars) per day.⁶⁰ A beggar making 100 rupees per day would make 36,500 rupees, or \$421.00, per year. A beggar making 10,000 rupees per day would make 3,650,000 rupees, or \$42,123.00, per year.⁶¹ Numerous factors contribute to this variation such as age, disability, talent, time, and especially location. It is generally noted that beggars make more in big cities, at religious shrines, at shopping centers, and near tourist places. Based on these income estimates, the following model hypothesizes the profitability of begging. This model is based on available estimates of total numbers of beggars and beggar income, using both low and high estimations of the beggar population (2-25 million) and beggar income (\$1.15-115 per day).⁶²

Annual Economic Yield of Begging in Pakistan		
	2 Million Beggars in Pakistan	25 Million Beggars in Pakistan
Low End Income per Year (\$421 per Beggar)	\$842,469,705	\$10,530,871,321
High End Income per Year (\$42,123 per Beggar)	\$84,246,970,571	\$1,053,087,132,140

Figure 4: Begging in Pakistan

Sources: Based on data estimates of beggars in Pakistan and beggar income in Pakistan, as estimated in: Collective for Social Science Research, Karachi, "A rapid assessment of bonded labour in domestic work and begging in Pakistan" (International Labour Organization, 2004).; Haris Hanif, "Professional beggars in city double this Ramadan," *Daily Times*, August 22, 2011.; Ambreen Kazmi, "Beggars: The Professional Parasites," *Chowrangi - Pakistan Politics*, Current

⁶⁰ Haris Hanif, "Professional beggars in city double this Ramadan," *Daily Times* (Pakistan, August 22, 2011); Collective for Social Science Research, Karachi, "A rapid assessment of bonded labour in domestic work and begging in Pakistan."

⁶¹ Estimates based on begging 365 days per year.

⁶² Collective for Social Science Research, Karachi, "A rapid assessment of bonded labour in domestic work and begging in Pakistan," 25.

Affairs, Business and Lifestyle, October 24, 2008.; Mohammad Ali, "VIEW: Issues concerning beggars," Daily Times, February 22, 2005.

The following model hypothesizes the potential yield of a criminal begging operation. This model is based on an organization with 25 forced beggars earning between \$1.15 and \$115 per day.⁶³

Criminal Begging Organization	
25 Forced Beggars	
Low Estimate	High Estimate
Each beggar making 100 (\$1.15) rupees per day	Each beggar making 10,000 (\$115) rupees per day
Total begging revenue of 25 beggars: Annual Revenue = \$10,530 (912,500 rupees per year)	Total begging revenue of 25 beggars: Annual Revenue = \$1,053,087 (91,250,000 rupees per year)

Figure 5: Beggarization in Pakistan

An organized begging operation with 25 forced beggars can generate annual revenues between \$10,530 and \$1,053,087. Although perhaps it is unrealistic that all 25 beggars would make 10,000 (\$115) rupees per day, it is equally unrealistic that all 25 would make just 100 rupees (\$1.15) per day, as criminal organizations use tactics and strategies to maximize profit such as placing beggars at high traffic, upper class locations and train beggars to beg in ways that prove most profitable. This range of potential revenues, albeit wide, is based on the existing estimates. The above data and estimates are based solely on begging. The profitability of organized criminal begging increases through its

⁶³ No data is available on the operational expenses of forced begging rings, thus these expenses such as paying bribes, buying beggars, maintaining beggars, and employing middlemen, are not estimated in this research. Further research on operational characteristics and expenses is needed.

linkages with other criminal activities. At Shah Abdullah Mazar, for example, researchers found linkages between begging, sex work, drug trade, and drug use.⁶⁴ Researchers interviewing beggars in the provinces of Sindh and Punjab found many beggars beg alongside engaging in “illicit sex work.”⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Collective for Social Science Research, Karachi, “A rapid assessment of bonded labour in domestic work and begging in Pakistan,” 21.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

Chapter 4: Religion and Beggarization

“Religious connotations of charity”⁶⁶ are a primary contributor to beggarization. Religions, especially the three monotheist religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, stress support for beggars through their emphasis on charity. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all tell their followers to be compassionate towards the poor and to give charity/alms. These ideas are articulated in the New Testament, the Old Testament, and the Quran.

Religion has been embedded in the Pakistani political system since its inception and is central to life in Pakistan. This state would allow Muslims to have freedom to practice and live by Islamic values.⁶⁷ In Islam begging is discouraged and in fact it is considered as a sin. Prophet Mohammad stressed to earn a living by working, *hala rozi ke Talqeen*, and not by begging.⁶⁸ Beggary is banned in Pakistan and is prohibited in Islam, though it is permitted in the religion in times of great need. Thus, Islam plays a significant role in the acceptance of beggars in society and at times, requires sympathy for them.⁶⁹

When the public sector fails the vacuum is filled by the private sector.⁷⁰ Oftentimes religious leaders, or *Mullahs*, and NGOs step in to provide for needy people for whom the government cannot or will not provide subsistence.

Madressas and *zakat* are two religious contributors to beggarization in Pakistan.

⁶⁶ Rana, “Begging a Sickening Nuisance.”

⁶⁷ BBC News, “Flashback to Indian Partition,” *BBC News*, January 11.

⁶⁸ Rachayl, *Beggars*, 1.

⁶⁹ The Prophet stated that people are permitted to beg in three cases. They are as follows: people who are indebted and cannot pay their debts; people suffering from the destruction of a natural disaster; and people on the brink of starvation. Yusuf Al-Qardawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam* (Cairo: Al-Falah Foundation, 2001), 122.

⁷⁰ Henry Korson, *Contemporary Problems of Pakistan* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 11.

Religious people inadvertently encourage begging in the name of helping those who are impoverished. But not all poor and needy are beggars. Also, not all beggars are poor and needy – many of them are fake religious beggars and criminalized cocktail beggars who are taking advantage of people’s religious sentiments.

Zakat

The economic viability and profitability of beggarization is vested in deep rooted religious beliefs and customs, as well as state sponsored religious laws that prevail in Pakistan’s society where the financial religious obligation of *zakat* exists on individual and state levels; both are integral to the existing and potential growth of beggarization. The state distribution of *zakat* is regulated and *zakat* spent by individuals is unregulated. The principle of *zakat* contributes to the generosity beggarization depends on; the ineffectiveness of the government instituted *zakat* system reinforces it.

Unregulated Charity

Religion legitimizes beggarization financially, particularly through *zakat*. *Zakat* refers to the mandatory obligation to give charity. *Zakat* is one of the five pillars, or central tenants, of Islam. In Islam, the basic objective of *zakat* is to achieve an equitable distribution of income. “It involves [the] transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor.”⁷¹ Under Islam, an almsgiving, or *zakat*, of 2.5% from the amount that is saved or unused for a year is a religious duty of all financially

⁷¹ Ataina Hidayati and Achmad Tohirin, “Management Of Zakah: Centralised Vs Decentralised Approach” (Bangi, 2010), 352.

able Muslims.⁷² Another form of charity is *sadaqah*. *Sadaqah* refers to non-mandatory charity; there are no limitations on the amount one can donate.

Limitations exist on who can receive *zakat* and *sadaqah*.⁷³

It is the responsibility of the giver to verify whether the recipient of one's charity qualifies to receive *zakat* or *sadaqah*. In reality, however, the confusion arises from the fact that religion emphasizes giving charity to the poor and beggars, therefore emancipating the giver responsibility of verifying before giving because the appearance of a pathetic looking beggar would automatically qualify for charity. In today's world, no one has spare time to investigate the legitimacy of the recipient of *zakat* or *sadaqah*, inhibiting the identification of real or needy beggars from professional or forced beggars. In addition, givers are primarily interested only in fulfilling their own religious obligation of timely distributing *zakat* and raising their status in the eyes of *Allah*. These two factors, the lack of time and the lack of interest, exacerbate begging and beggarization. Oftentimes a person only has a few seconds to decide whether to give to a beggar, such as when beggars approach cars at traffic stops. The appearance of need, as indicated by characteristics such as disfigurement, disability, malnourishment, ragged or dirty clothing, is often the only evidence a giver has to determine whether a beggar deserves charity. Given the obligatory nature of *zakat*, people are mentally ready to part with a set amount of *zakat*. In normal cases when one may think twice about giving money, the readiness to part with *zakat* makes it

⁷² Ian Talbot, *Pakistan - a modern history*, 3rd ed. (New York N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 278. This includes gold, silver, and monetary savings and investments. Ibrahim Syed, "Charity in Islam" (Islamic Research Foundation International, 2009).

⁷³ Ibid.

easier for the donor to quickly distribute money and for the beggar to receive. During the month of Ramadan,⁷⁴ increasing numbers of beggars are seen overflowing in cities, markets, religious shrines and other places to take advantage of the opportunity to extort money from religious adherents in the name of *Allah*.⁷⁵

State Regulated Charity

Upon seizing power in 1977, Zia used Islam to take severe measures to change the legal, social, political, and economic systems of Pakistan, reforming all of these sectors according to the Quran and Sunnah.⁷⁶ Accordingly, Zia instituted a *zakat* ordinance, under which the distribution and collection of *zakat* became a government function, to create an “Islamic welfare society.”⁷⁷ In reality, only a small proportion of *zakat* funds were actually distributed to the *mustahiqqin*, those truly in need.⁷⁸ In 1980, *zakat* became institutionalized, as banks began deducting the 2.5% tax from account holders in response to a government mandate.⁷⁹ Consequently, people took advantage of various loopholes to avoid government appropriation of *zakat*, as many people have not had faith in the government’s abilities to effectively and incorruptly distribute *zakat*.⁸⁰ Institutionalizing *zakat* did little to alleviate poverty or the substantial social inequalities pervasive in Pakistani society, two social problems that still

⁷⁴ The month of Ramadan is the month where Muslims get higher ranking in the eyes of *Allah* for doing good. Of course, fulfilling ones charitable obligation is not limited to the month of Ramadan, however, it is preferable.

⁷⁵ Hanif, “Professional beggars in city double this Ramazan.”

⁷⁶ Hanafi school of thought

⁷⁷ Talbot, *Pakistan - a modern history*, 272.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 270–272.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 278.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 271–272.

exist today. Thus, the government administered collection and redistribution of *zakat* has been an ineffective welfare system in Pakistan.⁸¹

Madrassas

Zia's educational reforms under Islamization were a catalyst for the growth of *madrassas*, or Islamic schools, in Pakistan. Educational curriculum was Islamicized. Islamic education was further legitimized and institutionalized through the formal reclassification of "*asnad* (certificates) awarded by Islamic seminaries as equivalent to the MA university degree in Arabic/*Islamayat*."⁸² Additionally, religious educational pursuits became eligible for government funding. Subsequently, as many as 12,000 new *madrassas* sprang up across the country between 1983 and 1984.⁸³

In modern times, education is considered a critical strategic asset to a country's future in terms of productive and efficient human capital. However, in Pakistan, the education system has been ineffective and has generally failed to prepare the majority of the country's young people for the future.⁸⁴ The existing education system is responsible for creating and perpetuating existing class divisions. There are essentially three systems of education in Pakistan: private schools, public government schools, and religious seminaries, or *madrassas*.⁸⁵

High-income level families generally send their kids to elite private schools because of their high quality and English language classes. These schools are

⁸¹ Ibid., 272.

⁸² Ibid., 279.

⁸³ Ibid., 280.

⁸⁴ Maleeha Lodhi, ed., *Pakistan Beyond the Crisis State* (Columbia University Press, 2010), 250–251.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 251–257.

relatively expensive. Middle and low-income families send their kids to government schools. *Madrasas* generally provide not only free education, but also free food and board, which are particularly attractive to low income and poor families.⁸⁶ Government and *madrasa* provided education has been insufficient and low quality. The religious education provided at *madrasas* creates a culture of dependency, as students become dependent on charity and donations, while the religiously focused education leaves students ill prepared to engage in mainstream economic opportunities.⁸⁷

Educational Enrollment in Pakistan by Type of School	
School	Percentage Enrollment
Government	64-67%
Private	29-33%
Madrasa	1-7%

Figure 6: Educational Enrollment in Pakistan
 Source: data from: “Beyond Madrasas Assessing the Links Between Education and Militancy In Pakistan” (Brookings Center for Universal Education, June 2010).

The failure of the government is indicated by the lack of resources dedicated to education. In 2009-2010, government spending on education constituted 2% of GDP. In fact, government spending on education has averaged just 2% of Pakistan’s GDP since the mid-1990s.⁸⁸

“The lack of planning culture and capacity and weaknesses in administrative capacity and accountability mechanisms result in only 20 to 30 percent of the allocated funds being utilized effectively. Corruption, manifested in funds siphoned away for personal gain, influence and

⁸⁶ Ibid., 251.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 258.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 256. Pakistan’s GDP totaled \$465 billion in 2010. US Central Intelligence Agency, “Pakistan,” *CIA - The World Factbook*, n.d.

allocation of resources, in the recruitment, training and posting of teachers, in selection of textbooks, and in the conduct of examinations and assessments are significant implementation challenges that decision-makers have struggled to address.”⁸⁹

Eleven percent of Pakistan’s 163,914 public schools lack physical buildings. Of the existing school buildings, 61% have no electricity, there is no drinking water in 36.5% of them, and 42.4% do not have bathrooms.⁹⁰ As a result, only 54% of the population is literate.⁹¹ The number of illiterate adults exceeds 47 million and is growing.⁹² There are also substantial educational disparities between males and females throughout the country, while the gap is more pronounced in rural areas and “the gender gap has widened between 1981 and 2008 from 20.6 to 26.8 per cent.”⁹³ Nearly 7 million children between the ages of 5 and 9 do not attend school. Of the 66% of all children who enroll in primary school, 30% drop out before completing fifth grade; less than 25% of girls finish primary school education.⁹⁴

In addition, insufficient employment opportunities exist for those who are educated. The education system in Pakistan reproduces social inequalities, as quality education exists primarily for those who can afford it. Those educated in

⁸⁹ Lodhi, *Pakistan Beyond the Crisis State*, 257.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁹¹ Based on 2008 data.

⁹² “Beyond Madrasas Assessing The Links Between Education And Militancy In Pakistan” (Brookings Center for Universal Education, June 2010), 10, http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2010/06_pakistan_education_winthrop/06_pakistan_education_winthrop.pdf.

⁹³ Lodhi, *Pakistan Beyond the Crisis State*, 254.

⁹⁴ “Beyond Madrasas Assessing The Links Between Education And Militancy In Pakistan,” 10–12.

the elite schools are the future givers and potential sponsors of beggarization, while those educated in *madrassas* and public schools may end up as beggars.

Beggarization and Madrassas

Although there is no empirical research on the connections between beggarization and *madrassas* in Pakistan specifically, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence suggesting the two are linked, while there is ample research from other countries illustrating these links. For example, research on eight Islamic boarding schools in Senegal found that all of the schools made students beg every day. Kids are recruited from villages and then forced into begging.⁹⁵ These forced begging operations are clearly organized and hierarchical. Religious teachers use older religious students, or *talibes*, as middlemen to discipline new and younger students.⁹⁶ Given the high number of *madrassas* in Pakistan, the precarious economic situations of most students' families, and the prevalence of beggars in the country, it is likely that some *madrassas* are linked to beggarization in similar ways. More research on these connections is needed.

Mullahs, or *madrassa* teachers, send kids out to beg, collect charity, and ask for donations.⁹⁷ Many people make charitable contributions to religious schools, giving charity in the name of *Allah* to secure their future spot in heaven. These *mullahs* take all the money from the child beggars, while the income and expenditures resulting from beggars' income remains undocumented and it is

⁹⁵ Delap, *Begging for Change: Research findings and recommendations on forced child begging in Albania/Greece, India and Senegal*, 7.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹⁷ *Madrasah Education: What Creative Associates has learned* (Creative Associates International, 2008), 3.

unknown what percentage goes towards maintaining and operating the *madrassa* and what percentage becomes the personal income of the *mullah*.⁹⁸ These students may even be unaware of the fact that begging is illegal in Pakistan, even though it is socially and religiously accepted.

Beggar Bombers

The greatest concern surrounding *madrassas* in Pakistan is militancy. The main problem is that militancy or *jihad* is justified through the teachings at these radicalized *madrassas*. Religion is misconstrued and indoctrinated to *madrassa* students in ways that legitimize committing terrorist acts and even suicide attacks in the name of religion. Beggars have been linked to terrorism through their roles as informants and even suicide bombers. Beggars are increasingly being considered as potential security threats, as their connections to radicalization become increasingly publicized.⁹⁹ The connections involved between militancy, beggary, and *madrassas* may be complex. *Madrassa* students may be forced to beg while being indoctrinated by religious teachings at the *madrassa*, and their vulnerability may lead them to be used as a beggar-bomber. Knowing the social accessibility beggars have, suicide bombers have posed as beggars to gain access to high value sites. In August 2009 a suicide bomber posing as an injured beggar blew himself up in a Baghdad mosque, killing 29 people. Apparently, “the bomber had a bandaged hand and appeared

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ US Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, “Terrorist Tactics” (US Department of State, 2005).

to pose no threat.”¹⁰⁰ Similarly, six people died in 2008 when a beggar bomber blew up a government building in Afghanistan.¹⁰¹

According to the 2010 US State Department’s Human Rights Report, “nonstate militant groups... kidnapped boys and girls and coerced parents with fraudulent promises into giving away children as young as age 12 to spy, fight, or die as suicide bombers.”¹⁰² Likewise, the report contends, “boys and girls are also bought, sold, rented, or kidnapped to work in organized, illegal begging rings... Illegal labor agents charged high fees to parents with false promises of decent work for their children, who were later exploited.”¹⁰³ As illustrated, these criminal organizations are using the same exact tactics to gain control of children, whether by force or coercion, and in fact these may be the same exact criminal organizations. Forced begging rings are highly profitable, while children are physically and mentally immature, making them easy to manipulate and control, as well as indoctrinate with ideological glorifications and justifications of suicide attacks. The 2010 US State Department’s Human Rights Report highlights these two scenarios in isolation, however, in reality, in some cases they are likely linked, as transnational criminal organizations are often involved in a variety of illicit activities rather than specializing in just one. It is common knowledge that transnational criminal operations are highly profitable endeavors and ideological religious militant groups have been shown to engage in lucrative transnational

¹⁰⁰ Sinan Salaheddin, “Baghdad Mosque Suicide Bomber Disguised Self as Beggar,” *Huffington Post*, 2011.

¹⁰¹ “Afghanistan: Taliban suicide bomber disguised as beggar kills 21” (Jihad Watch, 2008).

¹⁰² US State Department, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Pakistan*, 2010.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 71.

criminal activities such as drug trafficking in order to fund their ideologically motivated operations.¹⁰⁴ In south Asia, this phenomenon is referred to as Narco-*Jihad* trafficking.

Indirect Legitimization under Islam

A) Depraved Beggars

Beggary is often used as guise under which other illegal activities are pursued. Prostitution provides one prominent example. In Islam, prostitution is forbidden, while beggary is legitimate under certain conditions.¹⁰⁵ If a prostitute is also a beggar, his or her role as a beggar may be religiously acceptable; thus, religion legitimizes the beggar, who may also illegitimately prostitute. This phenomenon is not unique to Pakistan. Prostitution has thrived under the guise of beggary in other Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, where police have arrested “beggars and women indulging in prostitution,” as part of a larger operation wherein police arrested a group of beggars and “found huge amounts of money and fake medical reports.”¹⁰⁶ Beggary in turn, may facilitate a prostitute’s abilities to find new clients or serve as a means by which their services are put on the market. Therefore, through its indirect legitimization of beggarization, religion indirectly and implicitly facilitates prostitution. In this example, the prostitute is socially invisible, while the beggar is visible, and that visibility is socially and religiously acceptable.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Under Islam, the consequence of getting caught while prostituting includes stoning to death.

¹⁰⁶ Ibrahim Alawi, “Beggars, prostitutes arrested in Jeddah,” *The Saudi Gazette* (Jeddah, January 20, 2011), <http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentID=2011012091711>.

B) Pseudo Pirs

Under the Sufi variant of Islam, religious mendicants, or *pirs*, are thought to possess spiritual powers because of their lineage with Sufi saints. Today, fake, or *jali*, *pirs* prey on people's ignorance, people who consult these fake *pirs*, thinking they are intermediaries "between Allah and the community,"¹⁰⁷ who then exploit their patrons. In one example, a family went to a *pir* to find a cure for their mentally ill son. The *pir* lured the boy's 13 year old sister to pray at a religious shrine and then abducted, raped, and impregnated her.¹⁰⁸ It is believed that there are thousands of fake *pirs* in Pakistan. For victims of these fake *pirs*, according to Pakistani Supreme Court lawyer Asma Jahangir, "it would take a lifetime"¹⁰⁹ to obtain justice through the legal system "because many police are corrupt, and many *pirs* are well connected, even politically. Some are feudal landowners, and some are even Members of Parliament."¹¹⁰ "These *Pirs* in Pakistan [are] not only grabbing the money of innocent people but also raping women [and] burying them alive...common precedents in Pakistan."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Arlene Gregorius, "Pakistan's holy men under fire," *BBC News*, July 15, 1999.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Rana Eijaz Ahmad and Abida Eijaz, "Commercialization of Religion in Pakistan," *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 1, no. 2 (September 2011): 189.

Chapter 5: Government and Beggarization

The Pakistani government's weaknesses inhibit its abilities to tackle beggarization. These weaknesses include corruption, an inability to enforce the rule of law across its territory, and a seeming inability to tackle current and looming challenges such as urbanization, population growth, refugees and internally displaced people, and discrimination. Beggarization, like other organized criminal activities, thrives where government control is weak and where normalized corruption enables the use of bribery and collusion to advance organizational interests. Pakistan ranked tenth on the Failed States Index in 2010 and twelfth in 2011.¹¹²

Failed States Index: Pakistan



Figure 7: State Failure in Pakistan

Source: The Fund for Peace, "Profile: Pakistan | The Fund for Peace," *The Fund for Peace*, 2011, <http://www.fundforpeace.org/global/?q=states-pakistan>.

Corruption

Pakistan has a strong legal framework against corruption, but there is a gap between the letter of the law and its implementation. Under the penal code, attempted corruption, extortion, offering bribes, receiving bribes, using public

¹¹² "The Fund for Peace - Failed States Index Scores 2010", n.d.

resources for private gain, and using confidential state information for private gain are all illegal.¹¹³ However, in actuality, one of the main reasons for corruption has been the government itself. Transparency International's (TI) 2009 report notes that the lack of political will is a major cause of rampant corruption; many government officials, bureaucrats, military officials, and landlords are involved in corruption.¹¹⁴

Corruption is persistently high and according to TI's 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index, Pakistan was ranked the forty-sixth most corrupt country out of one hundred and eighty countries in the world. The government of Pakistan threatened to shut down TI's operations in the country and the head of TI, Syed Adil Gilani, received death threats a few weeks prior to the publication of the 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.¹¹⁵ Not coincidentally, Pakistan dropped 8 places from the previous year and is now at one hundred and forty-third out of one hundred and seventy-eight countries, scoring 2.3 out of 10 points on the scale.¹¹⁶ TI estimates the cost of petty corruption rose from 45 billion rupees (\$521 million) in 2002 to 195 billion rupees (\$2.3 billion) in 2009.¹¹⁷

Corruption in Political Leadership

Corruption is not only monetary. Non-monetary corruption is also pervasive. Some analysts argue that Pakistan's two major political parties, the

¹¹³ Global Integrity Report, "Pakistan: 2008", 2008.

¹¹⁴ Transparency International, *Corruption in last three years has increased 400%* (Karachi: Transparency International, June 17, 2009). TI has been working in the country since 2000.

¹¹⁵ "Pakistan head of anti-corruption group 'receives death threats'," *Pakistan | DAWN.COM*, November 30, 2010.

¹¹⁶ "Pakistan: National Corruption Perception Survey 2009 shows police and 'power' to be most corrupt institutions," *Transparency International*, June 16, 2009.

¹¹⁷ Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2010", 2010.

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PLM-N), are a mix of monarchy and autocracy. A monarchy, in the sense that the ruling political parties such as PPP and PLM-N will always be in certain families (Zardari family, Sharif family) and autocracy, because they are controlled by a single individual (Zardari, Sharif).¹¹⁸ Party leadership is transmitted through familial lines. The PPP was founded by the late Zulfikar Bhutto. After his execution, party leadership came under his daughter, Benazir Bhutto. When she was assassinated in December 2007, party leadership was then taken over by her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, which he co-chairs with his son, Bilawal.¹¹⁹ The government of Pakistan and most of the political parties are not committed to democratic values.¹²⁰

High official positions are granted to family relatives, friends, or party members, who are generally incompetent and corrupt.¹²¹ The size of the ministries is huge and ministry positions are given on the basis of nepotism.¹²² Similarly, the decision making process at high levels is not transparent and lacks meritocratic criteria. For example, the CEOs of public sector enterprises (PSE) such as Pakistan Electric Power Company (PEPCO), Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), and Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) are political appointees.¹²³ Corruption of the political leadership, regardless of whether military or civilian, reduces public trust in the government and leads to

¹¹⁸ Lodhi, *Pakistan Beyond the Crisis State*, 53.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 54.

¹²¹ Ibid., 161.

¹²² Ibid., 56.

¹²³ Ibid., 161.

the appropriation of state funds into private hands at the expense of society at large.

Corruption in the Police Sector

Corruption in governmental institutions, primarily within the police forces, is one of the main reasons for continuous and growing begging. “In Europe and North America the police fight organized crime; in Thailand the police *are* organized crime. The same holds true for many parts of Africa and Asia,”¹²⁴ Pakistan included. The police sector has repeatedly been ranked the most corrupt sector in Pakistan, as illustrated in the table below. The police are not doing their duty, as they are not enforcing the laws regarding beggars and criminal begging rings. Beggars are involved in a number of illegal activities that are taking place right under the noses of police officials, activities in which they are complicit. Police let beggars occupy land and use electricity illegally. It is reported that in one case a police officer was involved in transporting and selling drugs and alcohol, which is not only illegal, but also immoral.¹²⁵ In fact, there is evidence that the police have been involved in beggarization.

¹²⁴ Bales, *Disposable people*, 29.

¹²⁵ Muhammad Waheed Iqbal, “Street Children: An Overlooked Issue in Pakistan,” *Child Abuse Review* 17 (2008): 201-209.

Most Corrupt Sectors in Pakistan		
2002	2006	2009
1. Police	1. Police	1. Police
2. Power	2. Power	2. Power
3. Taxation	3. Judiciary	3. Health
4. Judiciary	4. Land	4. Land
5. Custom	5. Taxation	5. Education

Figure 8: Corruption in Pakistan

Data source: Transparency International, *Corruption in last three years has increased 400%*, Press Release (Karachi: Transparency International, June 17, 2009), 2.

Police officers are said to be taking bribes, in some cases up to 50 percent, cut from the beggar's income.¹²⁶ At the Data Darbar in Lahore, for example, beggars "are managed by a few individuals with the cooperation of the policeman on duty...with delineated groups occupying fixed spots."¹²⁷ The police are effectively bribed into letting beggars beg, which is illegal.¹²⁸ The amount of the bribe depends on the locality; higher amounts have to be paid to police officers in posh localities. And when the police arrest beggars, beggar masters pay bribes to police officers and get their beggars released. In cases when the police raid and arrest beggars, influential people, including ministers, make calls and pressurize police officials for the release of captured beggars.¹²⁹ These influential people are most likely taking kickbacks from beggar masters or they themselves may be a part of the organizational hierarchy of beggarization; otherwise, such

¹²⁶ Collective for Social Science Research, Karachi, "A rapid assessment of bonded labour in domestic work and begging in Pakistan," 27.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ "Beggars becoming a 'public nuisance'," *Daily Times*, January 9, 2007.

individuals would presumably have no interest in an individual beggar's release from prison.

Demographics

Demographic factors contribute to beggarization in Pakistan.

Demography itself is not a determinant of beggarization, however, certain demographic conditions, when combined with a political system that is unable or unwilling to provide an institutional environment in which the costs of organized criminal begging outweigh the benefits, exacerbate beggarization. These conditions include population growth, a large percentage of disenchanting young people, rapid urbanization, and large numbers of internally displaced people and refugees, and an environment where discrimination is a social norm and an institutionalized reality.

Population Growth and Population Age

In 1951, the population of Pakistan was 34 million. By 2001, it was 144 million, and as of 2011, the population totals 187 million.¹³⁰ According to current growth trends, the population is expected to reach 226 million by 2020.¹³¹ Half of Pakistan's 187 million people are children. This high supply of children benefits beggarization.

¹³⁰ US Department of State Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, "Pakistan," *US Department of State Diplomacy in Action*, October 6, 2010.

¹³¹ Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, "World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision and World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision" (United Nations, n.d.).

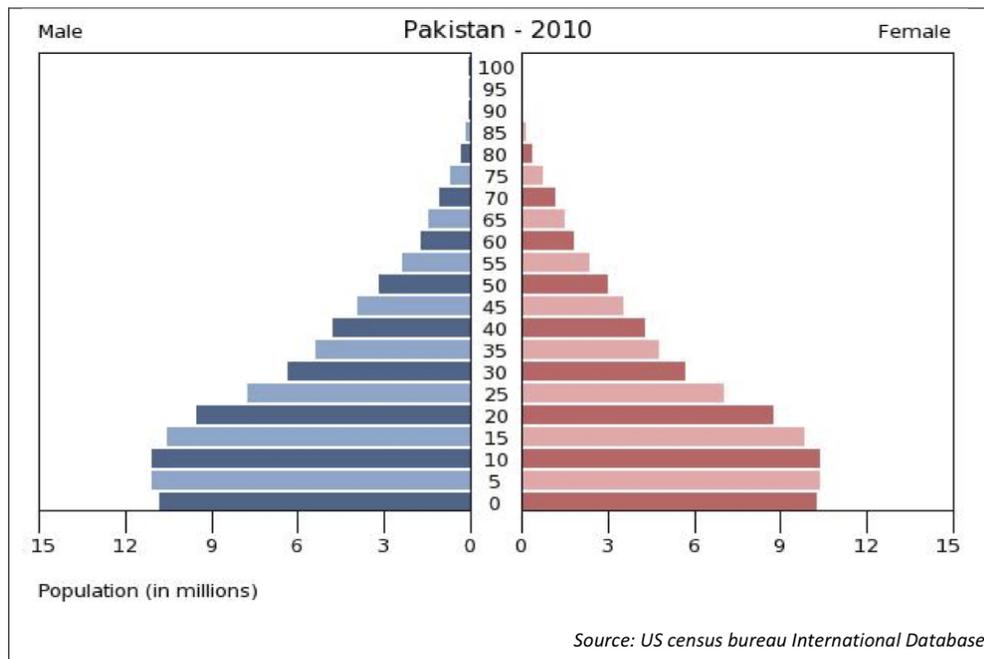


Figure 9: Population Age in Pakistan

Source: NZ Nizami, "Population, Labour Force and Employment" (Ministry of Finance, 2010), 239.

Children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by organized criminal begging groups because of their large numbers and because children are easier to control than adults. Given their high vulnerability and their considerable share of the population, the involvement of children in organized beggary deserves special attention. Today's children are central to the future of Pakistan, while "alienation, depravation, and marginalization of youth are in turn linked to radicalization and discord."¹³²

Exploitation of children is one of the major issues in Pakistan's society. The exploitation of children can be in various forms, such as child labor, debt bondage, child prostitution, forced beggary, and trafficking. The exploitation of children as such is not a new phenomenon in this society; however, the exploitation of child beggars and street children has gotten the attention of policy

¹³² Lodhi, *Pakistan Beyond the Crisis State*, 253.

makers and academicians only recently.¹³³ Street children can be defined as those “children who transit to the street, children who work on the street, or children who live on the street, with a variety of occupations including beggars, garbage pickers, shoeshine boys, flower sellers, sweet shop workers, commercial sex workers and petty criminals.”¹³⁴ Street children and child beggars are two phrases that are often used synonymously.

The number of street children in Pakistan has increased rapidly. In 2006, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs’ IRIN News estimated the number of street children in Pakistan totaled nearly 70,000.¹³⁵ In 2003, there were approximately 8,000 street children in Karachi. By 2005, that number rose to 12,000.¹³⁶ Lahore is home to approximately 7,000 street children, while roughly 3,000 reside in Rawalpindi.¹³⁷ There are approximately 2,500 and 5,000 in Quetta and Peshawar, respectively.¹³⁸

There can be various reasons that bring children to the street. According to a Human Development Foundation Study in 2003, “economically dysfunctional, disputed and disturbed families were the main factors forcing children to leave home.”¹³⁹ Population growth and high unemployment has contributed to a mass of poverty stricken families with no alternative but to send their children to beg or work (child labor). In Pakistan, the increase in child labor has made more

¹³³ Waheed Iqbal, “Street Children: An Overlooked Issue in Pakistan.”

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ “PAKISTAN: Number of street children on the rise.”

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Society of the Protection of the Rights of the Child, *Violence Against Children in Pakistan: A Civil Society Report* (Islamabad, Pakistan: Society of the Protection of the Rights of the Child, 2005).

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Waheed Iqbal, “Street Children: An Overlooked Issue in Pakistan.”

children vulnerable to exploitation by their employers. However, once the children are on the streets, they are vulnerable to various kinds of physical and mental abuse and exploitation by organized criminal groups. There is an estimate that “45 percent of street children are involved with criminal activity in order to survive while 49 percent are at a high risk of HIV/AIDS through intravenous drug usage and sexual abuse.”¹⁴⁰ In one survey, 92% of street children respondents reported using drugs; “70% use charas, 66% inhale glue and 15% use heroine.”¹⁴¹ Street children and child beggars

“are often looked upon as delinquents, so nobody is willing to employ them in their homes and workplaces. This rejection from the society has an effect on the society. They develop anti social behavior, become criminals abusers, addicts, molesters, robbers, or drug traffickers just at the age of 16 to 18 years. They have no faith in humanity, no obligation. They know no law, no education, no system, no future and no life.”¹⁴²

Urbanization

Pakistan’s urban population represents 36% of the total population, with an annual urbanization rate of 3%. Over half of the urban population exists in eight major urban centers, including Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Multan, Hyderabad, and Peshawar, as illustrated in the table below.¹⁴³ Iqbal and Jalil find that crime rates increase alongside urbanization.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ “PAKISTAN: Number of street children on the rise.”

¹⁴¹ “Plight of Street Children Worsens,” *The Nation* (Karachi, April 25, 2008).

¹⁴² “Street Children and child abuse” (The Justice Foundation, Pakistan, n.d.).

¹⁴³ NZ Nizami, “Population, Labour Force and Employment” (Ministry of Finance, 2010), 242.

As has been reported, alongside rapid urbanization, cities have seen an increase in “beggaries...robberies, pick pockets, and drug sales.”¹⁴⁵ Current trends project Pakistan’s population will be 50% urban by 2030.¹⁴⁶

2010 Urban Center Populations	
City	Population
Karachi	13,386,730
Lahore	7,214,954
Faisalabad	2,912,269
Rawalpindi	2,013,876
Gujranwala	1,676,357
Multan	1,610,180
Hyderabad	1,521,231
Peshawar	1,386,529

Figure 10: Urban Populations in Pakistan
 Source: data from: NZ Nizami, “Population, Labour Force and Employment” (Ministry of Finance, 2010), 242.

Poor families from rural areas migrate towards large cities with hopes of finding better ways to make a living. However, due to a lack of education and necessary skill sets, it becomes extremely difficult for them to find a job. Rural-urban migrant beggars typically end up living in *jhuggis*¹⁴⁷ and *jhonpris*,¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Muhammad Mazhar Iqbal and Hafiz Hanzla Jalil, “Urbanization and Crime: A Case Study of Pakistan”, November 1, 2011, http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=.%20%20increases%20in%20inequality%20are%20linked%20to%20increases%20in%20crime.%20%20pg%2022%20pakistan%20case%20study&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CCoQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.pide.org.pk%2Fpsde%2F25%2Fpdf%2Fagm26%2Fday2%2FHafiz%2520Hanzla%2520Jalil.pdf&ei=Hzm0TqfgBNK_tgfg3dntAw&usg=AFQjCNFepus1bz4uQZMjd0u8JLXQI7YEyA&cad=rja.

¹⁴⁵ Jam Sajjad Hussain, “Beggar-cum-dacoit nomads a threat to City’s peace,” *The Nation* (Lahore, March 29, 2010), <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Lahore/29-Mar-2010/Beggarcum-dacoit-nomads-a-threat-to-Citys-peace/1>.

¹⁴⁶ Nizami, “Population, Labour Force and Employment,” 241.

¹⁴⁷ Huts made of cloth and wood sticks.

generally deserted land owned by the government which they occupy illegally.¹⁴⁹

Urban poverty, high urban land prices, and high costs of living block lower-income families out of the formal market, forcing them into slums and *katchi abadis*, or squatter settlements. The estimated number of people living in slums in the Punjab is between 7.5 million in slums with another 2.8 million in *katchi abadis*.¹⁵⁰ The Director of United Nations Habitat reports "there is a vacuum developing, because local authorities have no access to the many slums."

"Extreme inequality and idleness lead people to anti-social behavior. Slums are the places where all the evils come together, where peace and security is elusive and where young people cannot be protected."¹⁵¹ Organized criminal beggary groups may occupy land in these slums by co-opting the police and by threatening other potential occupants. Beggar masters can also recruit or kidnap people in these slums to beg for them.

Transportation facilitates the movement of people from one city to another. Beggars utilize transportation systems to reach urban areas to beg. In addition, beggars go on inter city transportation systems such as buses and railroads to beg from the passengers. For example, the ILO documented one girl beggar who begged on the bus all day, constantly changing buses between cities, making 30 rupees (\$0.35) every half hour.¹⁵² Grand Trunk (GT) road is one of the

¹⁴⁸ Hut made of wooden sticks and thatch.

¹⁴⁹ In this example, beggars migrated from Raiwind (village) to Lahore.

¹⁵⁰ David Dowall and Peter Ellis, "Urban Land and Housing Markets in the Punjab, Pakistan" (University of California, November 2007), 2283.

¹⁵¹ John Vidal, "Every third person will be a slum dweller within 30 years, UN agency warns," *The Guardian*, October 3, 2003.

¹⁵² Collective for Social Science Research, Karachi, "A rapid assessment of bonded labour in domestic work and begging in Pakistan," 34.

major highways in Pakistan that connects many towns and cities. It is also one of the major routes that people use to go from city to city. And beggars are no exception.

One would imagine that beggars would normally choose cities or towns which are on the main GT road but that might not always be the case. The motivation of making higher amounts of money leads beggars to using buses and making other transportation arrangements beyond where the main GT road connects. Rachayal gives an example of one city in Azad Kashmir, Mir Pur. Raychal highlights that, to get to Mir Pur, beggars have to arrange special transport and it is not on the main GT road. But for beggars it is still profitable to pay extra to get to Mir Pur because it is like Dubai, USA, and Britain for them.¹⁵³ Very few beggars are residents of Mir Pur. Most beggars come from Lahore, Sargodha, Bakhar, Dera Ghazi Khan, Balochistan, Multan, and other cities of Pakistan. Another favored place is Chitral, where one beggar reports earning over 500 (\$5.77) rupees per day.¹⁵⁴ Beggars migrate and travel to beg in the most profitable locales.

Refugees, and Internally Displaced Persons, and Illegal Immigrants

Illegal immigrants are also part of the beggar market. These immigrants include people such as gypsies who enter Pakistan illegally, they have no identification documents or registration. They are contributing to social and health problems in cities. Furthermore, Afghans and Tajiks have also been reported as involved in forced begging, oftentimes forcing other Afghans and

¹⁵³ Rachayal, *Beggars*, vol. 1, Rachayal Reports (Pakistan, 2009).

¹⁵⁴ Zahiruddin, "Heavenly Chitral a destination for beggars too," *Dawn.com*, July 1, 2011.

Tajiks to beg, especially women.¹⁵⁵ Pakistan has had a huge influx of refugees, particularly Afghan refugees since 09/11. A 2001 Pakistani police report emphasized that a majority of the 100,000 Afghan refugees residing in Islamabad were “involved in drug trafficking, gun-running, robbery, begging, and prostitution.”¹⁵⁶ The refugee population has been an economic burden on the government of Pakistan. In January 2011, there were 1.9 million registered refugees in Pakistan.¹⁵⁷ There are also at least 1 million internally displaced persons in Pakistan.¹⁵⁸ In 2010, Pakistan experienced the worst floods in the country’s history, which left almost 20 million homeless.¹⁵⁹ The cost of the 2010 flood damages is estimated at \$10 billion.¹⁶⁰ Many sources indicate refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP) are involved in begging due to a lack of basic necessities and unsubstantial support from the government.¹⁶¹ Refugees and IDPs are vulnerable to organized criminal begging groups because of their desperation and their precarious situations. “In January 2011, UNICEF reported

¹⁵⁵ Hussain, “Beggars-cum-dacoit nomads a threat to City’s peace.”

¹⁵⁶ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, “Pakistan: Societal treatment of second generation Afghan immigrants in urban centres, particularly in Islamabad; whether it is possible for school-aged children of second generation Afghan immigrants in urban centres, particularly in Islamabad, to speak only Pashto (1996-2001)”, 2003.

¹⁵⁷ William Maley and Frederic Grare, “The Afghan Refugees in Pakistan” (Middle East Institute, June 30, 2011).

¹⁵⁸ UNCHR, “UNHCR - Pakistan,” *UNCHR - The UN Refugee Agency*, 2011. Data as of January 2011.

¹⁵⁹ “Floods affect 20m people - Pakistan PM Gilani,” *BBC News*, 2010.

¹⁶⁰ Lodhi, *Pakistan Beyond the Crisis State*, 197.

¹⁶¹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, “Pakistan: Returns continue in some areas but comprehensive IDP policy needed”, May 31, 2011; Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, “Pakistan: Societal treatment of second generation Afghan immigrants in urban centres, particularly in Islamabad; whether it is possible for school-aged children of second generation Afghan immigrants in urban centres, particularly in Islamabad, to speak only Pashto (1996-2001).”

an increase in child labour and begging as a result of conflict-induced displacement.”¹⁶²

Discrimination

Discrimination is widespread in Pakistan and has been since the state’s inception. Prejudices exist along ethnic, religious, linguistic, sexual orientation, gender, and physical lines. In relation to beggarization, two discriminated groups are of particular interest, as their connections to beggary and organized begging are well documented. These include *hijras* and rat children.

***Hijra* Beggars**

Hijras, also known as *khawajasira*, include individuals such as transgendered males, transsexuals, and members of the ‘third sex’. Unofficial estimates suggest there are between 80,000 and 300,000 in Pakistan.¹⁶³ This sexual minority has been socially, economically, and politically ridiculed, marginalized, and discriminated against since Pakistan’s inception. Being such social outcasts, *hijras* typically end up abandoned by their parents, illiterate, and uneducated; they survive as beggars or prostitutes, typically under the guise of being singers, artists, or entertainers. Family Health International reports *hijras* are susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases.¹⁶⁴ *Hijras* have no official legal acknowledgement or protection and often lack official identification documentation.¹⁶⁵ Without such documentation, many *hijras* were denied access

¹⁶² Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, “Pakistan: Returns continue in some areas but comprehensive IDP policy needed,” 5.

¹⁶³ Zeeba Hashimi, “The Vulnerability Of Khawja Siras In Pakistan”, 2011.

¹⁶⁴ Mustafa Qadri, “Pakistan’s hijras deserve acceptance,” *Guardian*, May 26, 2010.

¹⁶⁵ Hashimi, “The Vulnerability Of Khawja Siras In Pakistan.”

to Sindh relief camps for internally displaced people in the aftermath of the floods in 2010.¹⁶⁶ Although today an object of public humiliation, historically, *hijras*, being neither male nor female, were considered closer to *Allah*. During the Mughal Empire, *hijras* worked as cooks, bodyguards, and messengers that could liaise between males and females in a sexually segregated society.¹⁶⁷ As such, superstitious people may give extra money to *hijra* beggars due to their mythological spirituality. Thus, *hijras* are categorically one of the most profitable groups of beggars.

Pakistani Hijras



Figure 11: Hijra

Source: Declan Walsh, "Harassed, intimidated, abused: but now Pakistan's hijra transgender minority finds its voice." *Guardian* (Islamabad, Pakistan, January 29, 2010).

¹⁶⁶ "Sexual minorities face severe neglect in flood relief efforts," *Daily Times*, October 24, 2011.

¹⁶⁷ Qadri, "Pakistan's hijras deserve acceptance."

Rat Children Beggars

Pakistan is home to 10,000-20,000 rat children beggars.¹⁶⁸ *Rat children*, or *Daule Shah ke Chuhay*, is a term used to describe individuals, including both children and adults, who have miniature heads. Rat children are led around “by their masters with a chain about their necks to get the sympathies of the masses for the sake of begging.”¹⁶⁹ Rat children begging rings have been operating at the Shah Dola shrine for decades. Beggar masters can buy rat children for \$462-\$923 (40,000-80,000 rupees). On the streets, a rat child beggar makes \$4.62-\$5.77 (400-500 rupees) per day.¹⁷⁰ At the Shah Dola shrine in Gujrat, legend has it that if infertile women pray at the shrine, they will lose their infertility. According to legend, newly fertile women must give their first-born baby back to the shrine, or face *Allah's* retribution. BBC News reports the Shah Dola legend has been “fabricated to trick ordinary people into handing over perfectly healthy babies,” and these babies “are then deliberately deformed so that they can be sold for begging.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Richard Galpin, “World: South Asia: The rat children of Pakistan,” *BBC News*, June 29, 1998; Malik Ayub Sumbal, “PAKISTAN: Child slavery -- 20,000 children with small heads are run by the shrines for beggary”, May 5, 2011.

¹⁶⁹ Sumbal, “PAKISTAN: Child slavery -- 20,000 children with small heads are run by the shrines for beggary.”

¹⁷⁰ Galpin, “World: South Asia: The rat children of Pakistan.”

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Rat Child of Pakistan



Figure 12: Rat Child

Source: Sarah Naqvi, "dolah shah choha", December 10, 2009,
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/sarahnaqvi/4305714479/sizes//in/photostream/>.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

The existence and expansion of beggarization in Pakistan is a clear reflection of state failure, as indicated by prevailing economic, political, and social conditions. Based on current trends, beggarization is likely to grow and flourish; criminal begging groups are becoming more sophisticated, as they network and merge with other illegal enterprises, and incorporate other organized criminal activities into their operations. This sophistication is evident in the recent growth of organized car thief beggars across Lahore. As Hussain reports, “car thieves have changed their modus operandi,”¹⁷² posing as beggars who recommend parking spots and offer to watch over parked cars, only to steal them once the owner is out of sight. Likewise, these beggar tactics are used to commit other robberies. Hussain reports “this mafia inspects the inner location of the houses by sending their women in guise of beggars and later commits robberies.”¹⁷³ More research is needed to fully understand this underground criminal activity, its links with other illicit activities, and the extent of beggarization in Pakistan.

The available information indicates the current organizational structures of criminal begging groups in Pakistan primarily correspond with Hagan’s level 2 semi-organized crime groups. According to Gottschalk’s model of organizational maturity, as illustrated in the graphic below, most criminal begging rings are likely operating at levels 2 and 3. Over time, these organizations develop institutional knowledge, tactics, and techniques such as timing, location, and the use of

¹⁷² Jam Sajjad Hussain, “Beware! woman beggars keep eye on your car,” *The Nation*, April 21, 2010.

¹⁷³ Hussain, “Beggar-cum-dacoit nom ads a threat to City’s peace.”

violence and threats, to enhance operational efficiency. These groups clearly have organizational hierarchies, which Gottschalk classifies as a level 3 characteristic. Organizational development at this level is also evidenced through “the tendency towards the consolidation of criminal groups within given territories.”¹⁷⁴ Groups use technologies such as cell phones, emails, and modern transportation systems to strategize and implement organizational goals. For example, cell phones are used not only to beg, but also to inform member beggars about law enforcement activities, warning them when “anti-begging squads” are near.¹⁷⁵

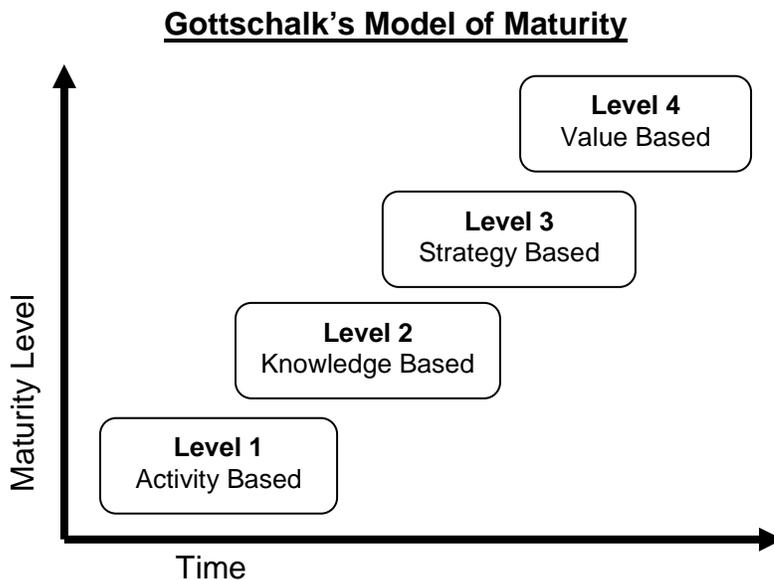


Figure 13: Organizational Maturity Model

Source: Based on P Gottschalk, “Maturity levels for criminal organizations,” *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 36 (June 2008): 108.

¹⁷⁴ P Gottschalk, “Maturity levels for criminal organizations,” *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 36 (June 2008): 110.

¹⁷⁵ Talha Jamshaid, “Beggars Go High Tech”, December 9, 2010, <http://authorshive.com/2010/12/09/beggars-go-high-tech-in-saudi-arabia/>.

Through their in depth understanding of the geopolitical and domestic economic environment, these groups manipulate political and religious factors that can be used to their advantage. Organized criminal groups obtain funding by manipulating religion to extract *zakat* and other charity. In order to minimize operational costs, forced beggars are sustained at the least expense possible, which means beggars typically receive no healthcare, no education, and live in poor conditions. Beggars are intentionally under fed because profits increase when beggars are undernourished and malnourished; such beggars gain the most sympathy, maximizing donations. Criminal organizations thrive on the ample supply of cheap, surplus, and disposable people without fear of political or judicial consequence, and if faced with such consequences, groups can easily bribe their way out. Weak political institutions render the government of Pakistan incapable of adequately dealing with demographic realities organized criminal beggary groups thrive on such as the population bomb, urbanization, refugees and IDPs, and disenchanting young people. Organized criminal groups are unlikely to face a shortage of vulnerable people to exploit anytime soon.

Whereas *Our Beggar Problem* described beggary as a social problem in 1945, today it is also a criminal problem. The new trend shows that beggary has grown to constitute organized crime. Traditionally, beggars were considered public nuisances or social annoyances, but not security threats. Beggarization has linkages with terrorist activities and organizations, as illustrated by the rise of beggar bombers. The social and religious acceptance of beggars provides an

outlet for criminal organizations to indoctrinate beggars by manipulating religion, turning them into beggar bombers.

As long as political institutions and governance remain weak and corruption in political and civil governance remains rampant, beggarization will thrive. There is little political will to acknowledge beggary or beggarization, and even less interest in enacting and enforcing policies to eradicate these problems. NGO and government initiatives generally focus on beggary as a social problem, not a criminal problem. Additionally, they have focused on individual beggars, not organized begging. Specific initiatives like the Punjab Child Act of 2004 are clearly a step in the right direction, but these initiatives are not enough and their effectiveness is questionable. Religious institutions and sentiments have filled in where the government has been lacking, however, rather than filling the gap left by the government, religion has been used largely as a tool to further criminal interests and exploitation. Bigger and more apparent social ills like drugs, new slavery, child labor, and terrorism are currently at the center stage of geopolitics; however, beggarization is a considerable and growing problem that is intricately linked to these other criminal activities. Thus, beggarization deserves more attention than it is currently afforded.

Criminal Begging Organization

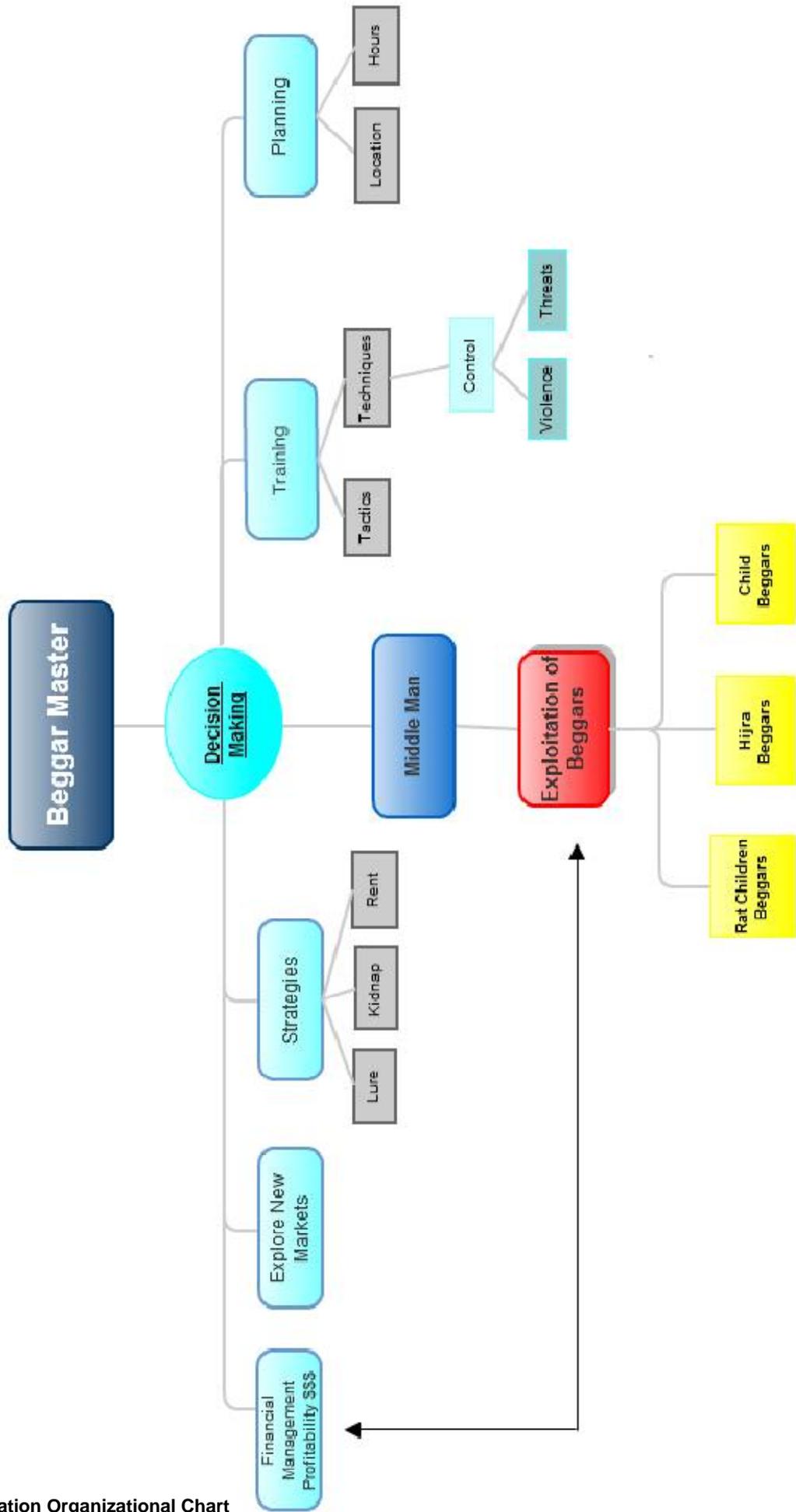


Figure 14: Beggarization Organizational Chart

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Appendix A

The following table outlines the beggar types in the region, as outlined in *Our Beggar Problem*:

Types	Characteristics		Government Policy	Remarks
Child Beggar				
Physically Defective	Crippled, deformed, blind, deaf-mute, under nourished, weakness of vital organs	Public sympathetic towards disabled/deformed beggars; lack of government provided welfare services	Contributions should be given to organizations, rather than individual beggars	Profitable to beg Public and/or beggars disinterested in institutional services for disabled
Mentally Defective / Mentally Ill	Microcephalic (rat children), hydrocephalic, paralytic, traumatic	Socially inefficient, immoral, impoverished, delinquent, criminal	No comprehensive strategy for such beggars	People are ignorant about mental disorders like melancholia, maniac-depressive, dementia, paranoia
Diseased	Leprosy, epilepsy, T.B., skin diseases	My pose public health hazards	National program to prevent and treat diseases Public education and awareness	
Able-Bodied	Aggressive, harasses, bullies, abusive language	Generational beggars, 'the family business'	Legislation to prohibit begging, arrest, rehabilitation	
Religious Mendicant	Live on charity, spiritual devoted to God, people go to them when they have lost all hope in other forms of salvation	Fakir, peers, babas, Darvesh, Mendicant orders	Collaboration of mendicant and government	Not limited to Pakistan
Bogus Religious Mendicant	Invalidated spiritual leaders and street side <i>amil babas</i>	Fakir, peers, babas, Darvesh, Mendicant orders Legitimate religious mendicant and bogus religious mendicant indistinguishable		

<p>Tribal Beggar a) Seasonal b) Permanent</p>	<p>Nomads, live in colonies or temporary settlements. Artistic performers, skillful beggars a) Agricultural work and trade during season, beg in big cities when off season b) Non-workers</p>	<p>Petty criminals, may also work other short term jobs a) Steal and beg</p>	<p>Social reconstruction</p>	<p>Live in temporary colonies or settlements. a) Live in public places such as parks b) Caravans, no fixed place to live, wanderers</p>
<p>Temporarily Unemployed; Unemployable</p>	<p>Socially disenchanted to the extent that they are unemployable. Low wages, unskilled, irregularity in industries</p>	<p>Hazardous working conditions, breakdown of self-respect/esteem/pride. Overcrowded and demoralizing working conditions, long hours, hard work, tough bosses</p>		<p>Honest, hard working, resort to professional begging and become unemployable</p>
<p>Temporarily Unemployed; Employable</p>	<p>Unemployed due to market fluctuations, health problems, and other circumstances</p>	<p>Habitual deprivation leads to begging</p>	<p>Need constant employment opportunities, government provided safety net</p>	
<p>Permanently Unemployed; Unemployable</p>	<p>Inefficient for any work. Work for food and shelter. Physical or mental disabilities.</p>			
<p>Permanently Unemployed; Viciously or Incurably Unwilling to Work</p>	<p>Unwilling to work, stubborn, potentially criminal</p>	<p>Malicious, danger to society</p>	<p>Drastic measures to keep them under control, rehabilitation centers for psychological and physical needs</p>	<p>Anti-social</p>
<p>Small Trade Beggar</p>	<p>Earned enough money to open small truck shops. Continue to beg</p>	<p>May have small shops where they sell items such as fruits and vegetables</p>	<p>Government should facilitate them as they have potential to forgo begging and earn profits from small business</p>	<p>Family members beg and tend shop by rotation. Begging is the main business, shop is the side business</p>

Somewhat Permanently Unemployed; Employable	Willing and able to work	Demoralized and degenerated Unemployment due to economic disruptions	Provide job opportunities to keep motivated, hopeful, and encouraged	
Employed Beggar	Work by night, beg by day	Low wages necessitate begging		Earn more money by begging than by working

Based on: Katayun Cama, "Types of Beggars," in *Our Beggar Problem - How to Tackle it* (Bombay: Fadma Publications Ltd, 1945).

Types	Characteristics		Government Policy	Remarks
iBeggars	Beg via cell phone			
E-Beggars	Beg via email		Requires international collaboration	
Rap Beggars	Perform rap songs and acrobats to attract attention			
High Profile Beggars	Seemingly well-to-do			

Appendix B

Number/ Gender	Income	City / Location	Origin	Reason	Combination Begging	Remarks
Hijra, men, women, children		Shah Abdullah Ghazi Mazar, Karachi			Begging, drugs, sex works	Secret begging, difficult to access data
300-400 residents Men, women, and children	Women: RS1200- 1500 per month Men: RS2400- 3000 per month Children: RS600- 1000 per month	Moria khan road, star gate railway station, shah faisal colony, Karachi	Rajistan India	To improve living standards, displacement from agricultural work in Punjab, lost jobs as porters at the airport	Boys work at vehicle show rooms, shops and bazaars, embroidery, small stalls (pan, vegetable, fruit, or various items)	Men do not admit begging, mostly women beg. Begging is major part of their income
3000-4000 (8-10 people per home)	Bhagris: RS30- 150 per day.	Ghazi Goth University Road, Karachi	Muslims: Southern Punjab Hindus: Bhagris from Hydrabad, Marwaris from Tanduadam / India	Muslims: Better income possibilities. Hindus: Bhagris came due to drought, indebtedness to landlord	Southern Punjabi Muslims: Work in nurseries and self root. Women work from home. Hindu: Self root, women beg, stealing on buses	beggars illegally occupied dessert government land since 1994 Protection given by religious- political organizations Madraza- free education, connection with police plus city administration
		Religion Shrine- Adbullah Shah Ghazi Mazar, Karachi			Begging plus Drug trade. Women- begging plus sex work. Sex work by Hijra, women, young girls	

100 houses (8-12 people per house)		Sohrah Goth, Karachi	Haris in Sukkar		Male-sell onions, balloons, occasional labor. Women- beg on buses.	Under the protection of madrassa. Residents pay RS.100 per month as donation to Moulvis. Zamindars accused of not keeping responsible accounts
1800 (residents)	RS. 50- 150 per day	Badami Bagh, Lahore	Daska near Sialkot		Selling fruit and begging. Women: begging plus sex works.	Reluctant to admit begging, family profession. Men do odd jobs. Bribe police and offer sexual favors .
125 (huts)	RS. 100- 300 per person per day	Singhpura, Lahore	Bhawalnagar, Shikarputh,	Fear of war with India, insufficient income from selling earthenware pots and clothing	Men- rag pickers	Police collects RS. 20-30 per hut
Thousands of huts		Sabzazar scheme, Lahore	Riwind in Punjab	To earn better income. Insufficient income from traditional agricultural or livestock occupation	Agriculture, livestock	Lack of data
		China scheme, Lahore			Paper and waste collectors, charities Women-sex work	Women deny involvement with sex work. Men-well dressed.

Women, disabled		Data Darbar Religious Shrine, Lahore		Women- run away from home	Organized begging and sex work. Women beggars by day, prostitutes by night	Confirmed organized begging. Beggar groups occupy fixed spots. Managed by few contractors with police cooperation. Lucrative business, thousand of rupees bribe to daig-wala
Women, children	RS 100-200 per day	Bibi Pak daman, Lahore			Women- Begging plus fortune telling	Police takes 50% cut from each beggar
Young women, children		Badami Bagh- Bus stops and Truck Stands, Lahore			Sex work, glue sniffing	Professional beggars rent small children ages 3-5 to beg for them for 12 hours a day. Children are given drugs and rags to make them appear retarded, ill and under nourished. These children are likely to end as heroin addicts
20-30 houses Women, children, men		Shahdadpur (urban center)	Southern Punjab	Crop failed could not pay their debts to the landlord	Men sell old paper for RS 30-40 per maund which takes them 3-4 days to collect	
20 households		Shahdadpur (urban center), Sargodah	Bekaneer in India	Failure to get the land they claimed government allotted to them	Claim to sing on TV and radio, festival and public places	

Based on: Collective for Social Science Research, Karachi, "A rapid assessment of bonded labour in domestic work and begging in Pakistan" (International Labour Organization, 2004)