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political, social and economic development of any country. Neglecting these basic parameters of human capital will lead <sup>Pakistan</sup> towards backwardness, like Pakistan.

Such obstacles towards national development ~~should~~ must be controlled ~~immediately~~ immediately.

To begin with, the importance of Sustainable development goals provides an idea for how a country can achieve its progress. Unfortunately, Pakistan stands at a critical juncture in its journey towards achieving the Sustainable Development goal (SDGs), a global framework set by <sup>the</sup> UN to tackle key development challenges by 2030.

However, Pakistan ranks 137<sup>th</sup> out of 167 countries in the Sustainable Development Report 2024 with a score of 57 on the SDG Index. This report highlights a stark reminder that Pakistan has failed to provide the basic health, education and poverty reduction levels to its citizens.

Consequently, lead to high mortality rates and illiteracy levels. Additionally, President Clinton in her book "Paradox of Prosperity", has given the idea that traditional methods of prosperity do not work rather focus on welfare of the people and stress on science and technology paves the way to success. But, Pakistan's main reason of its backwardness seems of a continuous neglect of the basic amenities of life. In short, Pakistan is not only left behind in achieving the SDG goals rather it

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also failed to adopt the Clinton's idea of prosperity which results in its backwardness.

After discussing the main indicators of Sustainable development goals and the neglected basic essentials of prosperity which lead Pakistan towards backwardness, now the essay will focus on how the neglect of primary health care is the primary reason of Pakistan's backwardness.

Initially, women's health are an important factor behind the progress of any country because of its population. However, in Pakistan there has been a highest rate of mortality rates underscoring the grave situation. In Pakistan, the maternal mortality rate (MMR) remains a significant challenge with approximately 154 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Moreover, in the "Health and Survival Index", the sub-index of the gender gap assessment, Pakistan ranks 143rd out of 146 countries. This shows the critical condition of women in Pakistan.

Moreover, as per World Economic Forum Report titled, "Closing the Women Gap: A \$1 trillion Opportunity to Improve Lives and Economies" says that closing the gender health gap facing women globally could lead to a 1.7% increase in per capita GDP, with every \$4 investment can potentially unlock \$3 in economic growth.

Hence, Pakistan continuous neglect of women's health became the major reason of its ~~its~~ impeding its progress.

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Along with the importance of women's health, children health concerns are increasing day by day in Pakistan causing an existential threat to its sustainable progress. Children are the asset of any national development. The future of any country lies with the welfare of the young generation. However, in Pakistan, as per Dairy Product Association, 40% of children have stunted growth and 29% are underweight. This poor health and diet concern underscores the denial of primary health facilities provided to kids. Moreover, as per UNICEF report, eight out of 10 children in Pakistan do not eat the right type of food, highlighting the shortage of food that ought to be provided to young generation for their growth and development. In short, the neglect of children health is the foremost reason behind Pakistan's backwardness.

In addition to children health concerns, shortage of specialized doctors and nurses further adds fuels to the fire. As per Report of Senate Standing Committee, Pakistan has a shortage of <sup>approximately</sup> 4 million nurses and 30,000 to 40,000 doctors registered with PMDC are not practising medicines. This is the basic dilemma of our society where the rate of unemployment even for the educated people of our society has been the most serious concern that should be imminently resolved. Moreover, the shortage

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of female doctors and nurses further compounds this issue because ~~the~~ our religion does not allow women to ~~check~~ be checked by a male doctor. This is the reason why the conservative families ~~do~~ not allow women to prefer male doctor. Resultantly, Pakistan ranks 143rd in the "Health and Survival" of Gender Gap Index. To sum up, the doctors and nurses should be given facilities in order to prosper the national development otherwise it would be one of the reasons of Pakistan backwardness.

Furthermore, the poor infrastructure and maintenance of hospitals along with the scarcity of doctors and nurses poses the alarming situation in Pakistan. ~~The~~ Any country which give its citizens proper sanitation and well-equipped hospitals with essential items, saves most of its people lives and continue to thrive in progress. Unfortunately, Pakistan's backwardness ~~can~~ be one of the reasons that it does not provide any essential facilities and take care to hospitals. ~~The~~ Instance, the case of Holly family hospital can be one of the example which not only contains outdated surgical equipments, but also lack of specialized doctors and poor sanitation and structural flaws in manufacturing of the famous public-sector hospital of Islamabad. That is why world Bank in its report, in 2024, illustrated

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the chronic <sup>under</sup> investment in these areas which has hampered the country's human capital development. To conclude, the poor sanitation and structural flaws underscores the grave situation and is impeding national prosperity.

In addition to poor infrastructural problems, the population explosion and the lack of proper family planning lead to the hinder the country's sustainable development. It is the saying that, educated youth is the asset of national prosperity whereas the illiterate youth becomes a liability and a burden on any country. Pakistan, as per UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund, ranks world fifth most populous country. This However, having this most populous nation, if Pakistan youth is illiterate, then it will not give benefit rather a burden on national budget. Further, the lack of family family institutes and the nonserious attitude of families further compounds the issue. Thus, a proper start-up is ~~is~~ crucial for Pakistan's development by providing better family  $\therefore$  planning strategies.

After discussing the importance of family planning, it is an imperative requirement in this Era of Knowledge economy to have the proper well-being of mental health. Individuals having good cognitive thinking can undoubtedly

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perform innovative tasks which leads a country towards sustainable development. However, Pakistan has been grappling with the high suicide rate and mental disorders today. As per WHO reports, approximately 10 percent mental disorders are affecting almost 20 percent million people in Pakistan. Not only this, many students are facing high depression rates which results in suicide rates. For instance, recently, a young woman of Punjab University committed suicide <sup>from the top of</sup> a university building. Moreover, as per WHO 2020 reports 15 to 35 people per day die by suicide in Pakistan. Such reasons are the failure of Pakistan's progress. In short, Pakistan must focus to provide mental health facilities to her people.

It is not just that neglecting only health can impede country's progress and cause its backwardness, but this is the world of knowledge economy where every individual being educated drives the nation towards prosperity. Now, this essay will shed some light on education problems in Pakistan.

Firstly, the rise of elite culture and feudalistic authority over the major resources of the country is the primary concern that hinders the national development. The rise of elite capture,

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creates a societal division as it results in resource concentration. For instance, one of the famous writers of Pakistan, Qudratullah Shahab, in his essay "Shahab Nama" stated that once he was working as a Deputy Commissioner in some district of Pakistan, there a feudal lord offered him not to open a school. For that purpose, he offered him bribery as well. Thus, having the threat to lose power if people get education is one of the reasons why education is not provided in backward areas.

Similarly, in India, Prof. Wine and Namou (1996) explained the poor performance of education. Basically, in this research Indians do not want Muslims to get education. Similarly, in Pakistan, the rise of military dictatorship in the era of Ayub and Zia has neglected the role of education and spent most of the budget on defense. In short, there has been a continuous neglect of basic education because of elite and military dictatorships.

Secondly, the elites' control over major resources further results into the bifurcated education system in Pakistan. There has been a continuous non-uniformity in the education system. There is a public-sector institutions, private one for automatic people, and Madrasah's system. So, the people can only afford according to

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their budget. Therefore, as per District Education Performance Index Report, August 2024, there has been a regional disparities of education system in Pakistan. The contrast between the nearly 2.3 million population of the same Islamabad and Rajanpur unfolds that, in Islamabad 84% individuals are literate while 37% in Rajanpur. Furthermore, in the book, "Why Nations Fail", clearly stated that the extractive state institutions in any country never make progress as compare to inclusive state institutions. In short, quoting Naam Chom Sky, "Education is a system of imposed governance." This line perfectly fits in the undergoing economic recession of Pakistan.

Furthermore, as there is an bifurcated education system in Pakistan, adding the ~~end~~ of corruption, further aggravates the already strained progress of Pakistan.

There is a continuous external and internal factors which are impeding the ~~the growth of~~ meritocracy of Pakistan. Such factors are caused by Political and bureaucratic intervention in the education system primarily when it comes to admission process, jobs, or ~~ex~~ in examination system. This is the major problem often because of nepotism and favoritism in Pakistan. Already, Pakistan is ranks 133rd out of 180, according to the ~~the~~ Corruption Perception



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Index 2024. The ongoing appointment of illiterate Education ministers in Pakistan underscore the grave situation which often retards the process of modernization in Pakistan. Such processes do not allow educated people to come forward and serve for the well-being of society. Hence, corruption is also one of the major reasons of country's impeding growth.

Afterwards, the continuous neglect of allocating sufficient budget for education and gender disparity, also adds fuel to the fire and impedes economic and societal growth. As per World Bank Report 2024, Pakistan's education spending stands at around 2.2% of its GDP, far below the recommended 4% to 6% and health expenditures remain similarly low.

This lack of investment in human capital development sectors has contributed to persistent economic stagnation and inequality. Though,

Article 25-A of the constitution states to give free and compulsory education to every child up to 18 years. yet it does not have fulfilled its implementation. Pakistan is far behind India and Bangladesh in ~~economic~~ educational progress as well as overall development. Their allocation is almost 4 to 6% of their GDP for education. which is why they are persistently making progress in every fields. In sum,

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Pakistan ought to learn from the educational inclusiveness of Bangladesh and India in order to thrive.

In addition to the importance of proper allocation of budget and gender inclusiveness, the importance of Knowledge Economy that is leading in today's world cannot be undermined. Yuvraj Nath Harrai in his book "21 Lessons of the 21st Century" underscores the importance of Knowledge Economy with the help of technological innovation. He states that previously states were fighting for economies, but in future countries will fight because of technological advancement. Those states who will prefer scientific revolution in the form of AI and the importance of innovation, will lead the world. The countries like Pakistan which do not give importance to knowledge will be left behind. Moreover, the education system of Finland is considered one of the best in the world. This is because of their inclusive educational preferences and importance given to innovation and human capital development. To conclude, Pakistan also needs to realize the significance of Knowledge Economy by investing in human capital development <sup>in order</sup> to succeed in the world.

After discussing the persistent neglect of education and knowledge in Pakistan which <sup>has</sup> impacted its growth,

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Now the coming information in this essay will focus on the consequences of this continuous neglect of primary health and education on Pakistan's sustainable development.

Initially, one of the biggest concern now is the threat of brain drain which is impacting severely on the economic growth of Pakistan. As of April 2024, over 13.53 million Pakistanis have migrated abroad for employment, according to Pakistan Economic Survey. This underscores the dangerous situation where if the educated class is persistently preferring moving abroad and a vast rate of illiterate population specifically the youth youth is left behind, then there will be no mean to have prosperity. This is because, an educated section of society only becomes a burden on the state. So, the proper mechanism is required to tackle this grave issue which is the only reason of state's backwardness.

Then, adding to the problem of brain drain, the Pakistan's continuous economic downturn <sup>is</sup> further encapsulated by this neglect of human capital. <sup>upon</sup> Neglecting the welfare of the people, Pakistan can make no progress. As per World Bank Report, the neglect of primary essentials services <sup>of</sup> further worsen's Pakistan overall.

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economic resilience, impacting its ability to recover from crisis such as 2022 floods, which caused nearly \$15 billion in damages. Furthermore, it also asserts that investing in human capital can be the most effective way to promote economic growth and reduce poverty. Dr. Mehbubul-Haq in his book "Poverty Curtains" presented seven sins of planners and developers. He said that the unforgivable sin is neglecting or wide gap between growth and justice. The second sin is neglecting human capital development. Unless a country equip its younger generation with knowledge, it will not achieve desirable results. Hence, the deprivation of knowledge impacts directly on the economic growth of Pakistan.

Despite this, the problem of high drop out rates because of already minimal budget and the imposition of higher taxes on the working class further aggravates the situation. People cannot afford to buy grocery item due to high rates of GST taxes then how they can afford such large amount of fees for education. The poor people can hardly make both ends meet. This grave situation resulted into the Education Emergency in Pakistan where PM. Shehbaz Sharif stated that 26 million children are out of school. <sup>This</sup> this shows

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The state's failure to provide basic amenities to her citizens and children which is the cause of its stagnating economic growth.

After discussing the causes, this essay will provide some measures to counter this issue and to pave the way for sustainable economic growth.

Finally, there is some remedies that can be adopted in order to counter the impacts of the neglected primary health and basic education in Pakistan which has resulted in to its backwardness.

So, firstly, the Government should realize the concept of prosperity and form stringent long-term policies and their implementation. Afterwards, providing important to the knowledge economy i.e., critical thinking, innovation, STEAM education etc. Also, equipping hospitals with trained doctors and advanced medical instruments would be crucial. The concept of mobile hospitals should be opted for vulnerable communities in far flung areas. Next is working on the development of human capital and training teachers and students for global competitiveness. All of the aforementioned strategies if adopted, will result in sustainable development of Pakistan. - leading the world economies.

To conclude, today's powerful world leading economies give preference

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to the welfare of their people which often forms the basis of their socio-economic and their political development. However, the neglect of <sup>basic</sup> health and education is the major reason of Pakistan's stagnating progress. Pakistan has not fulfilled the basic guidelines of Sustainable Development Goals and thus failed to achieve the SDG's 2030 target. Moreover, the major neglect of women's health, rising children health concerns, improper family planning which resulted into population explosion, and mental health concerns, are the stark reminder of the consequences that Pakistan is facing today. Furthermore, the rise of corruption, low budgetary allocation for education, gender disparity, and the continuous neglect of the importance of knowledge economy resulted into high rate of brain drain and economic recession in Pakistan. However, by ensuring some stringent measures can thrive Pakistan's sustainable development: prioritizing knowledge economy, providing basic health facilities, and training teachers and students with effective policy implementation can safeguard the country. As Yuval Noah Harari in his book "21 Lessons for the 21st Century" advises that there is still time to realign our education.

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... system towards the four Cs:  
Critical Thinking, communication, collabora-  
tion and creativity. It is time to  
reform our thinking, and time to  
invest in ourselves.

— The End —