

Pathways to Pakistan's prosperity.

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Problems must be solved before
they ballooned into full-
blown crises.

- Elizabeth May.

The saying rings true in case of Pakistan where majority of the problems are already developed into crises. Pakistan, a country with rich tapestry, is grappling with many challenges. For instance, the poor education system and unequal opportunities have caused about 26.2 million children deprived of education. Also, the poor socio economic condition, characterized by high prices of commodities, has caused unrest among the public. ~~It~~ rises at the pump. What further exacerbate the situation, is the rise in population, resulting in scarcity of resources. However, ^{all} these problems can be solved by taking the necessary steps. For example,

the development of single National curriculum will help to combat educational disparity. Also, by reassessing policies like NFC Award and empowering local industries the problem of population control and economic disparity can be resolved. Thus, the pathway to Pakistan's prosperity contains numerous challenges, but they can be resolved by taking the necessary steps.

Pakistan is facing numerous challenges but these challenges can be eradicated through earnest efforts. The poor educational system, the surge in electricity prices, and the high unemployment rate, accentuates that there are many leaks in the bucket. However, necessary steps can bolster the structure of the country. For instance, to address the substantial concern of population, one can reassess policies like NFC award that allocate resources based on population.

thus, the country can prevail over all the challenges by taking necessary steps.

One of the major challenge in Pakistan is educational crises.

Children in Pakistan are unable to pay the school ^{fee} due to poverty. They lack the means to pay school fee which forces them into child labour.

As per Pakistan statistic report, about 26.2 million children are out of school. These children have fewer opportunities to improve their economic condition. Also they limit the country's potential for innovation and productivity. Thus, educational crises is a major impediment in the country's path to prosperity.

Another major problem is ^{brain drain due to} unemployment, and eroded trust of youth. A large percentage of country's population is made up of

youth. But these young and energetic folks are not ready to roll up their sleeves, and serve the country, due to limited opportunities. Thus, they choose to move away from the country for better opportunities, characterized as Brain drain. As per the ministry of overseas about 2 million people left the country in FY 22-23. This causes the country to lose one of its major asset. And as said by John Kane. "the music can never sound the same without its lead conductor."

In the similar manner, the country cannot grow to its full potential without its major asset, the youth. In a nutshell, brain drain is a significant issue of Pakistan.

In the same vein, economic crises is ~~the~~ another major problem of Pakistan. The excessive dependence of the country on the international lenders has exacerbated the economic

condition of the country. The austerity measures articulated by IMF such as surge in electricity prices, has caused unrest among the people. The electricity prices has raised from Rs. 23 per unit in July 2023 to Rs. 69 per unit in July 2024, as per PIDE-report. This has made it difficult for many households to afford their electricity bills. Thus, economic crisis is a major problem of Pakistan.

Subsequently, the instability in the governance system is a major obstacle in its path to prosperity. In the book 'Governing the ungovernable', Ishrat Hussain accentuates that in Pakistan political parties tries to topple down each other. From 1988 to 1999, the country has six prime ministers. This instability in the governance

system results in inconsistent policies. Consequently, it erodes the trust of the investor i.e impacting the economic condition of the country. In a nutshell, instability of the governance system is ^{a major} another obstruction. $\$$

Another major issue is the rise in social evils like corruption. The country ranks 133 out of 147 in the corruption perception index 2024, this accentuates a substantial rise in social evils. The powerful elites use money to manipulate policies in their vested interest, perplexing social inequality. As the low-income families couldn't afford to skew policies, this erodes the trust of the people on the system, and contributes to inefficiency. Thus, corruption is another conundrum in the country.

Lastly, the surge in population is a major setback for the country. As per the latest census, the population reaches to 241 million. This surge in population results in scarcity of resources. It causes an increase in the demand of food, which leads to shortages and high prices. It causes strain in healthcare system and hampers economic development, leading to lower standard of living and higher unemployment rate. In a nutshell, overpopulation is a major quagmire in the country.

One has discussed the impediments in the path to prosperity of Pakistan. However, there are ^{some} steps that can help in overcoming these challenges. Firstly, the development of single National curriculum is

can help combat educational disparity. One of the major reasons of unemployment is the disparity in education. In the research paper, 'Single National Curriculum: Critical Analysis and Policy Recommendation' Anjad Nadeem accentuates that there are two different types of curriculum in the country. These two curriculum cater to different segments of society, that creates inequality. Students from public school finds themselves at disadvantage. They face challenges in seeking job opportunities. Whereas the student from Cambridge has better access to the opportunity. In order to solve this problem single national curriculum must be developed, that will provide equal opportunity for everyone. Thus, single national curriculum

can play a critical role in overcoming educational disparity.

Secondly, identifying and addressing the core problems of society will help to cater the education emergency.

In the article, **education emergency: a social x-ray**

the author depicts that education emergency, that is initiative by govt. because 26.2 million children are out of school, can only be addressed by identifying the root problems of society. problems such as inequality, human rights violation, social norms and culture have contributed to this problem.

In a nutshell, problems like education emergency can only be solved by addressing the problem at the grass root level.

Thirdly, empowerment of women can play a substantial role in socioeconomic development. In Pakistan, women rights are often neglected and they are hidden behind the curtain of honor. But from the Bangladesh model, which reflects a multifacet approach to enhance women role in society, one can understand the substantial role of women in a country's progress. Also as per the report of world economic forum, the inclusion of women in workforce can improve the GDP of the country by 25%. Thus, the empowerment of women can play a significant role in socioeconomic development.

In the same vein, the country population can be controlled by revisiting the policies that sets population growth as a

prerequisite i.e. the NFC Award.

As per the NFC Award, the province with large population will receive a significant portion of the fund. This provides the public with a reason not to follow contraceptives measures as their resources are dependent on the population. Thus, as highlighted by Professor Ahsan Iqbal "NFC Award should be restructured to decouple." In a nutshell, there is a dire need to restructure policies which are biased on population growth.

Subsequently, improving trade with other countries and promoting local industries will boost the economy of the country. The country export to import ratio is significantly low, accentuating that it highly depend^{UP} on other countries.

The import of resources such as coal exacerbates the country economic condition; as prices of such resources are high ~~to~~ due to ^{escalating} tension in the Middle East. Thus the country should promote its own local industries and improve its trade with other countries. The same has been articulated by Pakistan Institute of Development Economics. According to them, Pakistan trade with its neighbouring country can boost its import by 80%. In a nutshell, there is a dire need to improve the trade with other countries and promotion of local industries.

Also, the government must reassess its agreements with the IPPs in order to reduce the electricity tariff. The agreement with the IPPs are long term agreement based

on capacity payment. These agreements has contributed in the dilapidated energy sector, making the country as one of the most expensive energy producer in the region. In order to solve this problem there is a need to review the agreement with the IPPs in consultation with representatives of the business community. The same has been articulated by the acting president of FPCCI in his latest press conference. Thus in order to reduce the electricity tariff reassessment of agreements with IPPs is necessary.

Along the same line, the government should privatise the sectors that are contributing to the stagnating economy. In the research paper 'Privatisation: a solution to problem of public

Enterprises' the author highlights the importance of privatisation. The author depicts that public sector units which are not generating sufficient revenue must be privatised. These are white elephants, consuming a substantial amount of budget but remaining in a state of despondency. The privatisation of these unit will result in increased efficiency, better service & quality and Economic growth. Also, by fostering competition privatisation will contribute to job creation. Thus in a nutshell, the privatisation of public sector unit that are not generating revenue will contribute in economic growth.

Correspondingly, the country needs to improve the strength and capability of state apparatus and governance structure. In the book "Ten lessons from the post pandemic world" Fareed Zakria highlights that strong bureaucrat and governance structure are ^{more} important than the political

stability. A strong and independent bureaucracy have the potential to work effectively even during times of national turmoil. The country can make the institutions strong through merit based recruitment and by introducing accountability and transparency. The merit based recruitment will ensure that the employees have necessary expertise to perform the task thus will result in better decision making and better implementation of policies. Thus in a nutshell, the country should improve its governance structures, this will help maintain stability in decision making.

Lastly, there is need to introduce agriculture reforms for boosting economy. Majority of the people directly or indirectly depends on this sector. But due to lack of latest technology and modernize, the sector doesnot contribute into its full potential. In the **Agri Connection Conference - 23**, the experts highlighted the need of reforms in the agriculture sector.

for boosting economy. The sector needs an efficient irrigation and water management system, which could save up to 12.5 million acre-feet of water annually. Thus reforms are needed to be introduced in the agriculture sector.

In conclusion, Pakistan is facing numerous challenges which includes educational crises, economic crises, and political instability.

However, as said, it's not the problem that define us, but how we address and overcome them; the country needs some necessary steps in order to overcome these challenges. The solution includes development of single national curriculum, revisiting the NFC Award, and improving trade with other countries.