

MORAL DEPRAVITY IS THE ROOT CAUSE OF POVERTY

Outline

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- 2 Moral depravity as the root cause of poverty at the social level:
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 - i) Neglected responsibilities
 - ii) Impact on mental health
 - iii) Compromised performance in education and career
 - iv) Perpetual cycle of poverty
 - b) Neglect of vulnerable members of the society
 - i) Islamic model of Zakat (charity)
 - ii) Rights of neighbours (Hadith)
 - iii) Guardianship of orphans
 - c) Patriarchal practices exacerbating poverty
 - i) Women restricted to work and support family (WB Report)

- ii) Wage disparities among men and women (ILO survey 2019)
- iii) Harassment at public places restrict mobility

d) Acceptance of unethical behaviours in the society

- i) Child labour
- ii) Marginalization of certain communities (Case in point: Stereotyping of Christians with manual sweeping and sewage chores)

3. Moral depravity as the root cause of the poverty at the national level:

a) Immoral political practices

- i) Personal interest over national interest (IPPs owned by politicians)
- ii) Horse trading leading to political instability (Ministry of finance report)
- iii) Neglecting the poor to serve the elites (Canals on Indus River)

b) Widespread unethical values in governance sector

- i) Corruption
- ii) Colonial mentality in officers

c) Deteriorated rule of law

i) Slow judicial process

ii) Exploitation of poor by lawyers

(Anatol Lieven: Pakistan a Hard Country)

d) Exacerbating terrorism and extremism

i) Loss of investors' confidence

(Attack of Chinese engineers in Karachi)

ii) Bad name in international market

4 Moral depravity as the root cause of poverty at the global level:

a) Machiavellian approach of super powers

i) Exploitation of veto power

(US vetoed UNSC resolution on humanitarian aid for Gaza)

ii) Control over international institution

(IMF debt trap and conditionalities)

iii) ~~Protectionism~~

(~~US-China trade war~~)

b) Global conflicts

i) Genocidal approaches of morally depraved leaders

(Palestine: UNDP Report, 2024)

c) Exploitation by transnational companies

i) Profit driven interests

ii) Promotion of consumerism

iii) Exploitation of poor countries

(Dependency theory: Raul Prebisch)

d) Indifference to climate change

i) Industrialized countries ignore the environmental impact on poor countries.

(Global warming leading to floods and loss of infrastructure)

5 Conclusion:

In the 19th century, Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar succeeded to the throne of the weakened Mughal dynasty. His court was known for nurturing art and hold great historic value in poetry to this day. However, the emperor's overindulgence in the luxuries and ignorance of the court's matter cost him his empire. Moral depravity prevailed among his courtiers, causing widespread corruption and depletion of state resources, which led to the widespread poverty among the people. Taking advantage of the weakened state, colonizers overthrew him and further, colonized the sub-continent, exacerbating the financial difficulties of the indigenous people. This historic tale is a manifestation of how moral depravity led to the unending suffering of the people, entrenched in poverty. Indeed, moral depravity is the root cause of poverty at social, national and global levels. Firstly, at the social level, it ~~lead~~ leads to family chaos, neglect of social responsibilities and patriarchal practices leading to perpetual cycle of poverty. Secondly, moral depravity impacts national economy further exacerbating poverty. Lastly, immoral approaches

global leadership exploits poor countries for their self interests. This results in disparities and concentration of power in the hands of few. This essay comprehensively discusses how moral depravity leads to poverty in all spheres of life.

First and foremost, moral depravity among individuals impacts family. The family is the basic building block of society that shapes and nurtures individuals for a prosperous community. If the foundation is decayed by immorality the whole structure becomes unstable. Unethical behaviours such as domestic abuse and neglect of financial responsibilities lead to dysfunctional families. It immediately affects the family by pushing it into the abyss of the poverty, ultimately leave a profound strain on the family members' mental health. Children growing in such environments struggle to compete in educational sphere and resultantly struggle in career too. This compromised career growth leads to poverty and in this way a perpetual cycle of poverty led by ~~immorality~~ immorality continues.

Another significant morally depraved act is neglecting the vulnerable members of society. Morally healthy societies prevail when communities share responsibility of supporting their weaker members. Islam introduced this concept 1400 years ago, making the rights of individuals obligatory on one another. To implement this, Islam introduced the concept of 'Zakat', which obligates wealthy individuals to share a portion of wealth with those in need. Noncompliance with this obligation is considered a grave moral failing in Islam, leading to a widespread poverty and wealth concentration. Additionally, Islam places a great emphasis on the rights of neighbours. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: "He is not a believer who eats his fill while his neighbour beside him goes hungry." This shows that well-being of others is considered a great moral virtue in Islam. Moreover, Islam also reinforces individuals to take guardianship of orphans in the society to save them from poverty and difficulties. This focus over moral virtues by Islam is essential for a thriving welfare state and opposition to these commands can lead to a poverty-stricken,

and weak society.

A further noteworthy morally depraved virtue is patriarchy. Prevalent patriarchal practices exacerbate poverty. Women are often restricted from working by male family members, placing an excessive burden on men to support the family. When only one member of the family earns a livelihood for the whole family, it leads to poverty. Pakistan constitutes women population of 48.9 percent and as per World Bank report, only 22 percent of them are part of labour force. The staggering disparity between statistics shows the dependency of women on men. Moreover, the women who manage to become a part of labour force, are not given equal salaries as their male counterparts. According to ILO Survey 2019, women earn 34 percent less than men in Pakistan. Such disparities create problems for women who are breadwinner of their house. Furthermore, unethical and immoral act such as harassment at public places restrict mobility of women. Women often rely more on expensive taxis to commute which put an additional financial strain on their limited salaries. These morally corrupt

practices embed in the social fabric of our society make lives of women miserable by pushing them towards poverty.

On top of that the acceptance of such morally depraved social practices acts as a catalyst, pushing the marginalized strata of the society further into poverty.

For instance, child labour is common in the society. No advocacy for these gentle souls compel them to work to earn bread and butter for their poor families. According to Labour Force Survey Pakistan, there were 13.9 percent of children - between age 10-17 - working as child labours in 2019. This shows that society has become so immoral that ~~they don't~~ it doesn't realize the impact of child labour on the mental, physical and cognitive growth of these children. From roadside cafes to mechanics children are seen everywhere working for minimal wage and yet no collective effort is witnessed by the society. Furthermore, society has accepted certain roles for marginalized communities which they cannot escape. For instance, lower strata of Christian community belonging to Dalit caste are associated with chores like sweeping and manual sewage cleaning. This

immoral stereotyping of any community made it difficult for the individuals belonging to that community - to escape the poverty trap and perform in other fields of life. Thus, grave prevalence and acceptance of unethical norms contribute increased disparities and poverty.

Moreover, the moral depravity of politician has a profound impact on increasing poverty in the national sphere. Such politicians prioritize personal interests over national interests. For instance, Independent Power Producers (IPPs) were introduced in Pakistan in 1994 to overcome the electricity shortages. Since then, these IPPs are a major source of budget deficit due to capacity payments and payments in dollars. To the surprise of the nation, 43 such IPPs are owned by political elites of Pakistan. This profit driven politics has caused immense poverty of the whole nation. Another, significant immoral act of politicians is horse trading.

Back door agreements are signed to destabilize the coalition governments leading to perpetual political instability in the country. As per Ministry of Finance report, frequent protests in Islamabad resulted in daily loss of PKR 144bn of the GDP. These losses to the national

economy causes inflation hike and ultimately increase poverty. Furthermore, these politicians often neglect the voices of the poor and only serve their interests. For instance, the recent proposal to construct six canals on Indus river is projected to ~~benefit~~ irrigate 1.2 million acres of land in Punjab. On the other side of the coin, this project will obstruct the flow of water to the Sindh province causing water shortage for 12 million acres of land. Such sidelining of poor voices further exacerbate the poor conditions of the underprivileged people.

Another morally depraved sector leading to poverty is governance. There is a widespread corruption in almost all departments of public service. As per Transparency International, Pakistan stands at 133 out of 180 countries in Corruption Perception Index (CPI). This shows the condition of government sector in Pakistan. Government officers are often indulge in exploiting public funds and taking bribes from the weaker strata of the society. Poor people pay hefty amounts to proceed their files in these offices and spend ~~enormous~~ a significant amount on their intermediaries. Furthermore, colonial mindset of these officers create hurdles

for poor people. For instance, anti-encroachment drives by assistant commissioners are just a power show. Ruthless officers are often seen destroying carts of poor people and throwing eatable on road. These poor people are not even allotted any proper place to earn their livelihood which further worsen their conditions. According to PIDE survey, informal economy in Pakistan accounts of 35 percent of the total GDP. Disrupting these businesses without any proper compensation plan put a grave burden on the economy.

One of the significant impact of moral decay in national sphere is on rule of law. For instance, in Pakistan, slow judicial processes exacerbate the hardships of the poor. This slow process is often due to political influences and corruption in the judicial system. There is a famous quote which says, "Justice delayed is the justice denied." Delayed justice leads to perpetual crimes in the society and leads to the moral decay of society. Furthermore, lawyers intentionally extend the judicial process to extract money from the clients. Anatol Lieven in his book 'Pakistan a Hard Country' quotes his Lahori friend, "Well, what do you expect?... so of course the lawyers wears black jacket and beat up

people. It is what you do if you have power in this country." He further mentioned a case he witnessed in Karachi High Court. This particular case was in process for five years and the plaintiff told him that he had spent over 200,000 PKR in form of bribes. This deteriorated and morally decayed situation of judicial systems costs hefty amount to deprived people leading to hiked poverty.

Unethical activities rooted in moral ~~deprad~~ depravity often leads to terrorism and extremism. Terrorists project their self made ideologies through the violent measures. These acts of terrorism leads to loss of human capital and destruction of infrastructure leading to poverty, as a great portion of finances are spend on rebuilding infrastructure and on treatment of survivors. Furthermore, terrorism erode the the confidence of investors. For instance, in October 2024, six Chinese engineers were killed under a terrorist attack at Karachi airport. Such incident and attacks on foreign officials lead to low foreign direct investments (FDI) and bring bad name to the country in global community. This eventually causes underdevelopment

and job market saturation with limited industries and business leading to widespread poverty and hardships for the nation.

At the global level, the morally depraved acts of superpowers to serve their self interest at the expense of poor countries, lead to global crisis. ~~In~~ ^{This} unethical conduct is root in Machiavellian approach. Machiavelli in his book 'The Prince' defined the characteristics of powerful leaders of that time. According to him, adoption of unethical and immoral virtues is necessary to maintain hegemony. ~~This approach~~ is In today's world order, veto power in the United Nations is a manifestation of Machiavelli's concept of power. The global hegemon U.S. has many times used this power immorally to exacerbate the sufferings of poor countries. For instances, in October 2023, United States vetoed a resolution in United Nations Security Council on humanitarian aid for Gaza. Such practices obstruct in achieving global equity and justice. Moreover, superpowers control international institutions to influence poor countries. For instance, International Monetary Fund (IMF) advances conditionalities ~~in~~ ^{with} ~~exchange~~ of bailouts. These conditionalities are often harsh and serve the interests

of superpowers by controlling the fiscal autonomy of the receiver country. Such unethical treatment results in widespread inflation leading to poverty.

Similarly, genocidal tendencies of morally depraved leaders cause global crisis and humanitarian catastrophes. Human history is filled with such leaders who caused massive destructions in the world. For example, Hitler ~~is~~ committed mass genocide in Germany compelling the Jewish people to leave the land. In similar fashion, Netanyahu, Israeli prime minister is committing genocide of Palestinians. As a result of his cruel and unethical treatment of Palestinians, there is a widespread humanitarian crisis in Palestine. As per United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, poverty increased by 74.3 percent in Palestine in 2024. This hiked poverty is a result of destruction of infrastructure, erosion of agricultural lands and dependence on humanitarian aids. In this way, morally corrupt leaders spread poverty in weaker nation to fulfill their unjust desires, breaching international laws.

Another major factor of morally ~~depraved~~ depravity leading to poverty is

profit-driven interest of transnational companies. These companies often exploit cheap labours & in poor countries to maximize their profits. These labours often work under hazardous conditions to earn bare minimum amount of wage. This creates disparity and leads to subjugation of poor. Moreover, promotion of consumer culture often create rat race among masses to follow trends. To follow these trends and remain in the spotlight, people earn by any possible means without considering any moral impacts. This creates an perpetual cycle of immorality and poverty. Furthermore, according to dependency theory proposed by Raul Prebisch, core countries exploit periphery countries. The companies operating in core countries import raw material from periphery countries and process them, and again export to periphery countries in higher costs. This import-export cycle create dependency leading to trade deficits and inflation in poor countries.

last but not least, immoral and unethical practices of industrialized countries often cause global climate crisis which impact poor countries the most. According

to a survey, 80 percent of the global carbon emission is caused by top-half (developed countries) of the world. These countries having higher income per capita contribute way more to the climate change than developing countries. As a result the global crisis are often bore by developing countries with low income per capita and weak disaster management. For instance, flood in 2022 in Pakistan caused widespread destruction, leaving many people homeless and ~~po~~ poverty-stricken. Moreover, often these developed countries refuse to cooperate in global efforts against climate change and ~~rebo~~ rebuilding of disaster effected countries. Donald Trump's withdrawal from Paris Agreement in 2022 is an example of this act.

In conclusion, moral depravity is the root caused of poverty. It has the potential to impact social, national and global sphere of individual's life. Immoral ~~de~~ actions destroy the very fabric of the humanity leading towards greedy, self-centered and profit driven society deviating from the principles of social welfare and humanity.