

Poverty: The Root Cause of All Socio-Economic Problems

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Poverty remains a big issue in Pakistan, causing various problems of society. It is the factor of different socioeconomic challenges, including illiteracy, unemployment, crime, and political instability. Addressing poverty is essential for the national sustainable development and social order.

The finding of a world Bank report state that the poverty rate in Pakistan stood at 25.3 per cent in 2024, showing an increase of seven per cent compared to 2023, with about 13 million additional people falling into poverty. Almost, 58.7 million people in Pakistan dwell below the poverty line according to Sustainable Development Policy Institute in Islamabad. In the fiscal year 2026, the poverty rate is expected to remain 40 per cent in addition 2.6 million people falling below the poverty line according

to the World Bank.

Hascena, a young widow and mother of six children, including five daughters and a son, choose death over life due to no income. Her breaking point came when one of her daughters died of kidney failure due to lack of medical care.

There are some major socio-economic problems due to poverty:

A. Poverty affects education by limiting access to quality learning opportunities. Many children from low income families are forced into child labor to support their families. The public schools in the less developed areas have inadequate infrastructure, unqualified faculty, and a lack of basic facilities. As a result, a large bulge of the population remains uneducated, which limits social and economic growth. Three year

District Education Performance Index reports shows Pakistan's national average score is a modest 53 out of 100, placing the country in the "low" performance category.

B. When people do not have enough money to meet their basic needs, some may follow the way of crime to meet their needs. Poverty increases theft, drug peddling, murder for hire, and violence in society. Young people from poor background may join gangs or extremist groups because they see no other way to earn money.

High crime rates make society unsafe and slow down economic growth. This phenomena makes the poverty situation even worse.

C. Poverty makes it difficult for people to afford medical treatment, leading to serious health conditions. Poor families often cannot buy healthy food,

resulting low nutrition especially among children. In rural areas hospitals are either too far away or do not have enough doctors and medicine which causes inaccessible healthcare to the poor.

D. Poverty causes frustration and anger among people, leading to protest, strikes and political unrest. These people can be easily influenced by corrupt politicians who offer false promises or small financial benefits in exchange for votes.

When these politicians come into the office, make policies to prevent corruption and less focus on governance. This political instability remains country stuck in poverty.

E. In a society affected by poverty, meritocracy often compromise. Jobs and opportunities are given based on personal connections or bribery rather than merit basis. Poor but

but talented individuals are left behind because they lack financial connections needed to succeed. When deserving people do not get opportunities, and merit decline, weakening the country's progress.

F. Poverty often leads to injustice, as poor people have less access to a legal protection. Wealthy individuals can afford good lawyers and influence decision. Corrupt officials and law enforcement often ignore the rights of the poor, leading to wrongful imprisonment.

There are following the effects of socioeconomic problems due to poverty:

A. Socio-economic problems creates a growing gap between the rich and the poor. The wealthy continue to accumulate resources, while the poor struggle to fulfill their basic needs. This economic divide

leads to social tensions and disorders, weakening national unity and stability.

B. When a large portion of the population is uneducated, unemployed, or sick due to poverty then economic growth reduces.

C. High crime rates, leading law enforcement system to become overwhelmed and lead to weaker control. This rise in lawlessness creates fear and insecurity.

D. Poverty insisted frustrations and leads to corruption, injustice and lack of basic services and people lose faith in their Government. This loss of trust weaken democracy and makes it harder for government to implement reforms. This can lead to increased political instability and weak national progress.

E. A nation struggling with poverty and its associated problems

find it difficult to compete on an international level. Economic weakness reduces a country's influence in global affairs, making it dependent on foreign aid and loans. This dependence limits sovereignty, as powerful nations and international organizations dictate policies.

To effectively address poverty, comprehensive approach is essential:

A. By boosting economic growth through industrial expansion and support for small and medium sized businesses can create job opportunities and reduce poverty levels.

B. Allocating resources to improve educational infrastructure and accessibility can help the poor to learn skill and education for reasonable employment.

C. High prices of essential commodities make it difficult for low-income

families. The government should introduce fair pricing policies and subsidies on food, electricity and healthcare. Strengthening local production and reducing dependence on imports can also help stabilize prices.

D. Corruption diverts resources away from poverty alleviation efforts.

Strengthening anti-corruption laws, ensuring transparent use of public funds, can improve the effectiveness of poverty reduction methods.

E. Crime can be reduced through a combination of economic, social and legal measures. Strong law enforcement and fair judicial systems ensure criminals are held accountable. Community policing and social awareness programs help prevent criminal behaviour at grassroots level.

F.

Poverty is the biggest challenge that affects every part of society. It leads to problems like unemployment, poor education, crime and political instability. To reduce poverty, we need more jobs, better education, strong social support, awareness, and fair governance. The Government must create opportunities for people to earn a living, ensure free and quality education, and provide affordable healthcare. Corruption must be controlled so that resources reach the needy. If Pakistan takes strong and consistent steps, poverty can be reduced, and people can live a better and secure life. A nation free from poverty will be more peaceful, prosperous and strong.

"Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity; it is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life."
(Nelson Mandela)