



POVERTY REDUCTION THROUGH VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT:

There is an example in the Chinese language, don't give a man a fish, but teach him to catch fish. Poverty has various manifestations including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood, hunger and malnutrition, ill-health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increased morbidity and mortality form, illness, homelessness and inadequate, unsafe and degraded environment, as well as social discrimination and exclusion. Vocational and technical education has frequently been described as a form of education whose purpose is to prepare person(s) for employment in an occupation or group of occupations. The development of skills through vocational and technical education is now one of the most often-cited priorities by ministers of education in both developing and developed countries. The study is useful for policy makers, professionals, researchers and practitioners. To fill employment gaps and encourage economic recovery and even national security, governments have high expectations for technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

Keywords: impact of vocational and technical education on poverty, TVET sector reforms, economic growth, employment for all.

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Introduction and background of the study

Vocational and technical education have been recognized the Pakistan as tools for reducing poverty and enhancing national development. Pakistan is one of the few countries in the world that has a majority of its population in the age group of 18 to 25 years. The eternal survival and invincible progress and prosperity of nations does not lie in military and military forces but in the power of knowledge. Even if a nation is destroyed geographically by the indiscriminate force of a military force. But it cannot be



completely eradicated from the ideological point of view until one completely destroys the intellectual intelligence under the national individuality of that nation.

Pakistan is one of the blessed continents, yet remains the average and the under developed region of the world. Education of every citizen is essential in reducing poverty and enhancing national development. Many Asian countries have been engulfed by series of internal crises over the past five decades. There is a concern for poverty reduction in the industrialized countries as well as in developing countries, with a focus on the poor. The cost of education from government to the people has put additional economic burden on the already poverty-stricken parents. A good percentage of children and youth leave primary, secondary and universities before graduation. These may be due to lack of fund, poor feeding, inability to read, write and so on, resulting from poor beginning, effect of family background. As a result of these crises, poverty has increased throughout the Nations, and it has underpinned the education and national development of the affected countries. Vocational and technical education is usually linked with improvements in productivity, quality, diversity, occupational safety, health and income benefits. In other words, in terms of linking skills development to poverty reduction, there is a much narrower focus on individual and biophysical/ income related aspects of poverty, and less attention to the multidimensional nature of poverty.

1.2 what is poverty?

In economic context, poverty is a situation in which a person has fewer resources and consequently less welfare and joys to live on.

Poverty is also defined as a situation in which command over resources falls below a certain level (Robert & Felicity, 2003). Firstly, poverty is considered in terms of deprivation in some materials of wellbeing which can usually be assessed in terms of money (Edward, 2008). Secondly, poverty is considered not only deprivation of basic needs but also secondary needs as health, literacy, communication, no threat from future, having job, availability of pure water, rights of property and freedom (Cristovam et al. 2006). Thirdly, poverty is subjective and has physical as well as psychological aspects that affect its victims to hunger, insecurity, violence, crime, discrimination, political repression and victimization (Aliyu & Abu, 2013). According to World Bank benchmark, a poor person is one who lives on \$2 or below a day. Whereas 2735 million people in the world out of 6150 million are living on less than that. About 850 million people are under-nourished, over 1000 million have no access to pure water and 2600 million lack



access to basic sanitation. In the world 2000 million people have no medical facility, 1000 million are shelter less and 2000 million are living without electricity (Pogge, 2007).

1.3 Problem Statement

There is lack of linkages between training schemes, employers and microfinance institutions. Over 55% of TVET Centers in all areas do not provide any post-training support or placement services. Managing of TVET under various government departments has result the TVET sector to be stagnated and cause disparities in the training standards. The problems mentioned below having great importance in the pursuit of technical and professional education

- High drop-out rate at the secondary level.
- Huge demand-supply of skill gap.
- The poor quality of mainstream education.
- Limited access and capacity of current VET.
- Lack of focus on skills required for the current job market.
- The poor enabling environment are major challenges of the sector.

1.4 Objective of the study

Vocational and technical education improves productivity and enhances efficiency of labour for better participation in poverty reduction through economic development. The objective of this study is to determine the impact of vocational and technical education on economic growth of Pakistan. At this time, it is necessary that the youth who cannot get traditional education should get technical education and training. Considering the conditions of our country, it is very important to acquire a skill along with education. We have very few technical education institutions. Many students lose valuable time due to lack of institutions and where there are institutions, resource and admission limits are met. Through this research paper we have tried to explain why technical and vocational education is essential for the economic and social development of any country and what are the reasons why the technical and vocational education system in Pakistan is not successful.

1.5 Significance of the study

Vocational and technical education has attracted wide attention with its potential to alleviate poverty and improve youth employment in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Through effective and efficient technical and vocational training system, the manpower needs of the country are substantially met. The various national and private technical and vocational institutes strive to churn out graduates to meet the



manpower needs of various firms in the industrial sector of the economy. Graduates who take the time to learn a technical skill often receive higher pay. Businesses are always on the lookout for knowledgeable staff, as their clients expect to work with highly skilled teams who they have confidence in to deliver the results they need. The technical education and training of the youth can not only significantly increase the development of the country's industry, handicrafts and agriculture, but if the youth are aligned with the technical education, the employment opportunities in the country and abroad can be greatly expanded.

The recommendations based on the findings and conclusion of the study will facilitate the concerned public sector institutions of Pakistan, policy makers, legislators, research institutes, non-governmental organizations, academicians and other stakeholders.

2. POVERTY, VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH CORRELATION:

2.1 Poverty means destitution, it signifies conditions of life, limited by low nutrition. Illiteracy, disease, high infant mortality and low life expectancy. The World Bank development report 1990 defines poverty as the “inability to sustain a minimum standard of living”. Poverty is such an oppressive socio-economic condition where people cannot meet the bare subsistence of living”. From the above mentioned definition, it can be said that, poverty is a situation of life in which people suffer from malnutrition, illiteracy, disease etc. and are unable to sustain a minimum standard of living. Declining ecosystem and growing social and ecological vulnerability affects everybody but poor people suffer their consequences more than the others. The question arises why they are poor? Is it that they have chosen to remain poor or they are poor because they are poor mentally, physically, economically and environmentally?. Nobel Laureate Dr. Amartya Sen concludes, they are poor because they are deprived of their access to resources and so suffer from poverty.

2.2 Human Capital

Human Capital is an essential determinant of Economic Growth. It comprises of different factors like education, health, migration, vocational training, IT development. Vocational training and skill development is among one of them. Vocational education improves the productivity and enhances the efficiency of the labour for better participation in economic development. Vocational education and training, allows students to gain practical



experience in their chosen career path before they even graduate." Students who finish those rigorous programs, have the credentials and training they need to get started right away in their chosen career path.

2.3 Economic Growth

In the context of Pakistan's economic growth real GDP to expand by 3% in FY 2021-22 (July-June), the incidence of high inflation on a sustained basis has eroded consumer sentiment, which will affect private consumption, despite expected robustness in remittance inflows from overseas workers. Growth will accelerated in 2022-23 with sturdy government spending, as well as broad based recovery in consumption. Over the forecast period, growth will benefit from stronger fixed investment and private consumption, as well as investment by Chinese companies under the CPEC, averaging 4.4% per year in 2022-23, amid. Nevertheless. Growth will continue to be constrained by the government's fiscal consolidation moves and its efforts to address balance of payments pressures.

GDP growth rate of Pakistan FY 2014-21 (main data source: CIA World Fact Book):



3. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)1948, as resolution 217 A(III), everyone has the right to get basic facilities of life not for him alone but also for his family and dependents. It is fact that we need to access safe food and water, clothing, shelter, and basic medical care in order to live well, indeed, in order to live (Thomas, 2007). Poverty has been admitted as massive, systematic and continuous violation of human rights. The poor is in fact injured party and it is duty of government, the international community and ultimately each citizen to compensate.



3.1 Education is the most powerful weapon for fighting against poverty. In a developing country like our vocational education is a must for economic up-liftment and poverty alleviation. Poverty and education are strongly correlated, for example, parents seem to be reluctant to send their children for education of poverty. It is significant to study the poverty problem in context of education since effective education can alleviate poverty. Observations shows that many Pakistanis are living below the poverty level of one US\$ per day. Finance Minister of Pakistan declared that over half of the Pakistan's population was living below the poverty line **in 2014**. Studying the relationship between education, poverty and economic growth in Pakistan seems to be very important.

3.2 German Model

Government in partnership with vocational training institutions implements the Technical Vocational Education & Training (TVET) model followed by Germany. Germany's vocational education and training system, also known as the dual training system, is highly recognized worldwide due to its combination of theory and training embedded in a real-life work environment. The dual system is firmly established in the German education system. Its main characteristic is cooperation between small and medium sized companies and publicly funded vocational schools which is regulated by law. Trainees typically spend part of each week at a vocational school and the other part at a company, or they may spend longer periods at each place before alternating. Dual training usually lasts two to 3.5 years. In this system, trainees spend 70% of their time acquiring training and 30% of their time on theory. If the government serious about eradicating poverty and providing earning opportunities to the youth, they have to thoroughly study the German TVET system and implement it.

3.3 Institute of employment statistics, UK

According to the Institute of Employment Statistics, thirty occupations are considered successful, half of which require practical training instead of a university degree. The pace of economic development there is very high. Germany 78%, Korea, Hungary and Finland have made 100% technical education mandatory. China and Japan have also achieved a prominent position in the world by making technical education mandatory.

3.4 China's poverty alleviation strategy

While China is tightening regulations on academic tutoring for school-age students, it is simultaneously encouraging private investment in vocational education. China believes



upskilling its workforce is key to the country's continued economic growth. Foreign investment is explicitly welcome in the vocational education sector. Vocational education at junior secondary level is part of China's nine-year compulsory education system. Vocational schools at junior secondary level deliver the programs. Primary school graduates or equivalent are recruited to study for 3 to 4 years on both general subjects and technical skills.

Through its education reforms in China more than **8 million** middle and high school graduates from poor families have received vocational training, and 5.14 million poor students have received higher education. The per capita yearly subsistence allowances in rural areas had grown from RMB2,068 in 2012 to RMB5,962 in 2020, registering an increase of **188.3%**.

4. GAP ANALYSIS;

The government wants to introduce the Single National Curriculum but even in this not much importance is given to technical education. The lack of interest in technical education at the government level is hampering Pakistan's progress. Currently, numerous organizations are providing skills training but considering the huge youth population of Pakistan, their efforts are falling short. Neither our education system nor curriculum has been reformed. Different education systems for different classes have completely destroyed education itself. We have never been able to progress in the field of education because of the monopoly of bureaucrats and not academicians over education. Our class division is also a big obstacle in the way of education. To improve the education system, first of all we have to apply the policies properly. Our industries and factories cannot develop unless we give self-respect to skilled people. Our current education is still following the same pattern. Only by changing the education system according to the values of the new age can we aspire to achieve higher goals.

Pakistan's population is growing rapidly, in which 63% of the population is youth, which is a welcome development for any country, but these young people, who are deprived of education and skills, are instead of supporting the country's economy due to increasing unemployment. Loads are proving. University graduates are also forced to live a life of unemployment due to lack of practical training and skills despite having a degree. If their curriculum had included even one technical course, they would never have faced disappointment.



On the contrary, in a country with a literacy rate of 30%, only 6% of youth have access to technical education. We have no funds for vocational education. The lack of interest in technical education at the government level is hampering Pakistan's progress. 41% of curricula have not been updated in the past 5 years. Another problem is the lack of institutes geographically accessible to rural populations. With the construction and development of the "China-Pak Economic Corridor", the demand for professional and talented talent in all industries has increased significantly in Pakistan. As of 2016, the annual new skilled labor demand in Pakistan is about 2.4 million, but the existing training capacity in Pakistan can meet only 17% of the demand, and there is a huge gap between market demand and supply capacity.

5. CHALLENGES, PROSPECTS TO ERADICATE POVERTY THROUGH VOCATION AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN:

5.1 Government loan schemes

If the government is serious in eradicating poverty, it should derive a strategy for a massive skills enhancement programme across Pakistan. The Government and its predecessors launched programmes to give loans to the youth to run their own business. However, these programmes that seemed appealing on paper failed to give the desired results, because people lacked the technical expertise to run their businesses.

5.2 Private sector contribution

The importance of possessing skills can be gauged from the fact that the unemployment rate in Sialkot due to Covid-19 is the lowest in the country. This is because Sialkot is the city of skilled workers. The business community of Sialkot is very different from that of other cities. They take ownership of their workers and city. Unfortunately, this gesture is missing in businessmen in the other parts of the country. The government should try and emulate Sialkot's example and work actively to increase the number of institutions capable of providing vocational training.

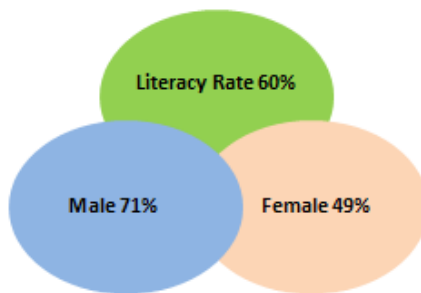
5.3 Conventional education

We focus on imparting conventional education but not much emphasis is given on TVET. This lack of focus can be gauged from the fact that only 6% youngsters acquired skill-based training.

5.4 Literacy rate in Pakistan 2018-19



The Government of Pakistan is seeking international cooperation through various means to overcome the problem of backwardness in vocational education in the country.



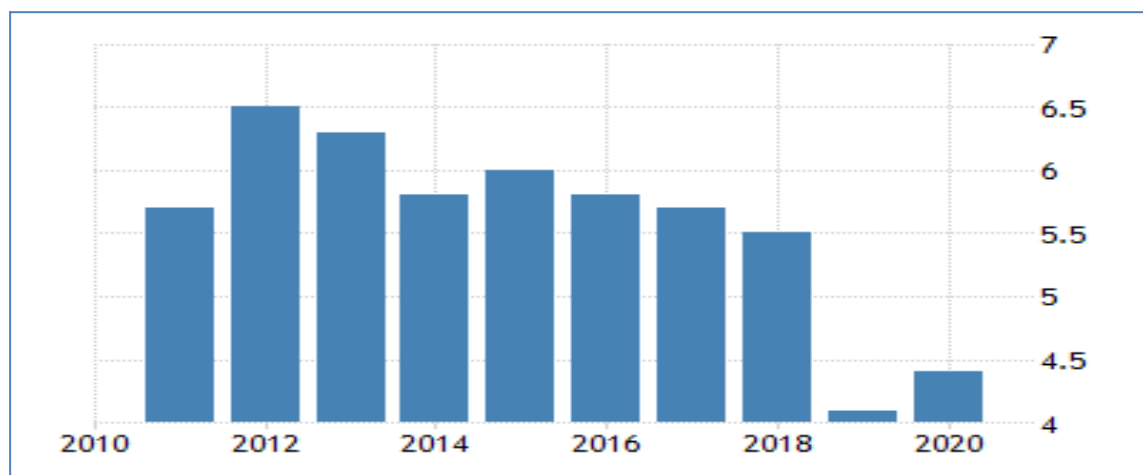
Literacy Rate – Province wise

Province	Literacy Rate (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Punjab	64	73	57
KPK	57	76	40
Baluchistan	40	54	24
Sindh	57	68	44

(main source, M/o Federal Education & Professional Training)

5.5 Un-employment rate in Pakistan-2010-20

Pakistan un-employment rate for 2021 was 4.35%, a 0.05% increase from 2020. Pakistan unemployment rate for 2020 was 4.30%, a 0.76% increase from 2019. Un-employment Rate in Pakistan is expected to reach **6.20 percent** by the end of 2022, according to Trading Economics global macro models and analysts expectations. The former ruling party (PTI), in its election manifesto, mentioned that they would provide 10 million jobs. Although this figure is announced without any due diligence, I am optimistic that 20 to 30 million people can gain employment in the next three years if the government is able to implement a TVET strategy with support from organizations. The below mentioned graph has shown the un-employment rate of last 10 years in Pakistan;





6 RECOMMENDATIONS:

In order to reduce the effects of poverty and enhance national development in the country through effective technical vocational education program just as medical education is linked to hospitals and is efficient, so vocational and technical education should also be linked to industries and factories so that our education system becomes more modern and efficient. Funds should be provided for TVET institutions for effective implementation of the program of the country. Retraining programs should be organized for the technology teachers to keep the abreast of emerging entries into technology. Appointment into instructorship and headship in this field of study should be on merit and competence. It should be void of ethnicity, nepotism, quota system or social affiliates. To ensure that TVET is more market driven, it is necessary for the government to involve organizations/industries in the formulation of the curricula and in the certification of skills offered. Parents should encourage their children to choose technical and vocational education track and reject the perception that TVET is for the less academically endowed. There should only be one body / department to manage, cater the TVET sector.

7 CONCLUSION:

The attainment of poverty reduction through vocational and technical education requires collective and serious effort and commitment on the part of the parents /guardians, educational institutions/training providers, employers and government. Government through relevant agencies has resorted to increase funding to support the sector, employers need to contribute to the development of national skill standards. TVET is currently being acknowledged by every stakeholder as a valid passport to a well-paid job or self-employment or a higher educational opportunity and not meant for the less academically endowed or the poor. Despite the abundance of the natural resources, poverty remains prevalent in the country. Poverty will be reduced when TVET programs are well funded which will invariably develop the nation. However, it must be emphasized that skill acquisition is not sufficient to ameliorate poverty and enhance economic development. It is a pre requisite but a lot needs to be done. Poor governance, poor economic policies, corruption have to be eradicated with adequate infrastructural facilities being put in place before reduction can be achieved.

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