

## THE CHALLENGES OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the challenges posed in the area of human development in Pakistan. Pakistan has made little progress in key indicators of human development - education and health - due to years of neglect in policy making and implementation issues. Based on available data, it is highlighted that despite achieving a respectable growth rate, Pakistan has not been able to reduce poverty as other nations have (with similar or even lower levels of GDP per capita). Poor human development has also hampered economic growth.

The paper brings out the principal challenges of human resource development in Pakistan, which are mainly the untrained, unskilled and uneducated workforce with low productivity perpetuated by rising population, which is unsuited to the demands of globalization and the 'new' economy. Finally, the paper discusses the integrated approach adopted by the government which is likely to improve the human resources and make poverty alleviation a reality in Pakistan.

**KEY WORDS:** human resource; human development; poverty; Pakistan

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Human resource* is a combination of the *education, training and motivation embodied in people*. Human resource development is the primary factor that influences the direction and pace of socio-economic development in any country. The real wealth of a country is its human capital – its people. Without creating the critical mass of a qualitative human resource, a country cannot sustain a high growth rate. It is the quality of education that enables a country to make full use of its manpower for development.

Human development is simply “**a process of enlarging people’s choices**<sup>1</sup>” and aims at creating an environment in which people can utilize their potential to the maximum and become more productive.

### **Nexus between Human Development and Security**

It is important to note that human security is directly linked with human development<sup>2</sup>. Progress in one area enhances the chances of progress in the other. But failure in one area also heightens the risk of failure in the other. Marginalized or limited human development leads to a backlog of human deprivation – poverty, hunger, disease or persisting disparities between ethnic communities or between regions, leading to security issues in a given country.

Human development paradigm, as developed by the late Dr. Mahbubul Haq, an eminent Pakistani social scientist, is concerned not only with *building human capabilities through investment in education and health, it is also concerned with using those capabilities fully through an enabling framework for growth and employment*. The human development model regards economic growth as essential, but pays equal attention to its quality and distribution, its link to human lives and to its sustainability<sup>3</sup>.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), human development means to give people access to the resources essential for a decent standard of living and participating in communal life and particularly in making decisions that affect them<sup>4</sup>. *Human development is thus, about making individuals, as productive economic agents and empowering them.*

It is measured by the Human Development Index (HDI) developed by UNDP. A score of 1 is perfect while lower scores reflect lesser level of human development. Human Development Index (HDI) is a measure of socio-economic progress, and includes:

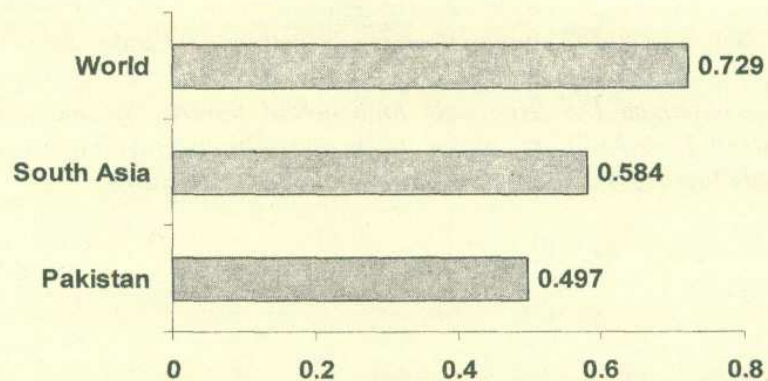
- Longevity: as measured by life expectancy at birth

- Knowledge: measured by adult literacy (2/3) and combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrollment (1/3).
- Income: measured by current global average real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) dollars.

### Current Situation of Human Development in Pakistan

Although, human resources are of great importance for a poor country like Pakistan, unfortunately, the nation faces a crisis in human development, which is evident from the annual reports of UNDP on Human Development. Pakistan HDI ranking is very low - 142 out of 175 countries according to *Human Development Report 2004* - depicting the poor level of human development in the country (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: HDI Comparison

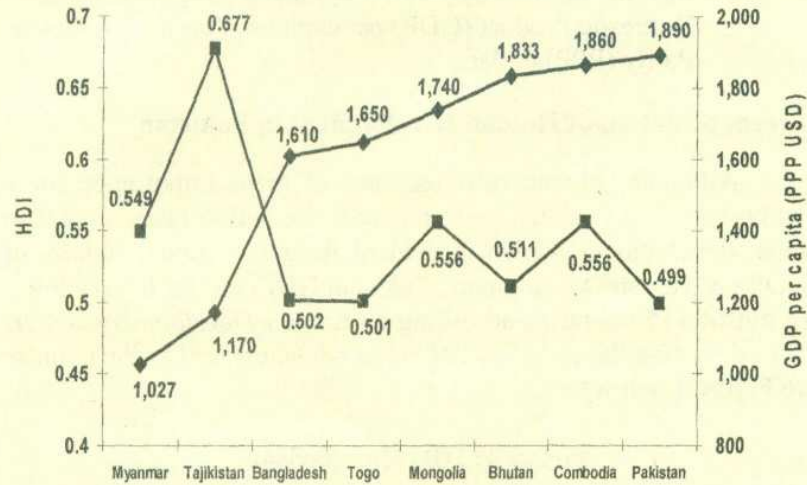


Source: *Human Development Report 2004* – UNDP

*A high GDP does not necessarily mean a high degree of human development which is indicated below by a comparison of selected countries showing their standing on HDI, including Pakistan (Figure 2).*



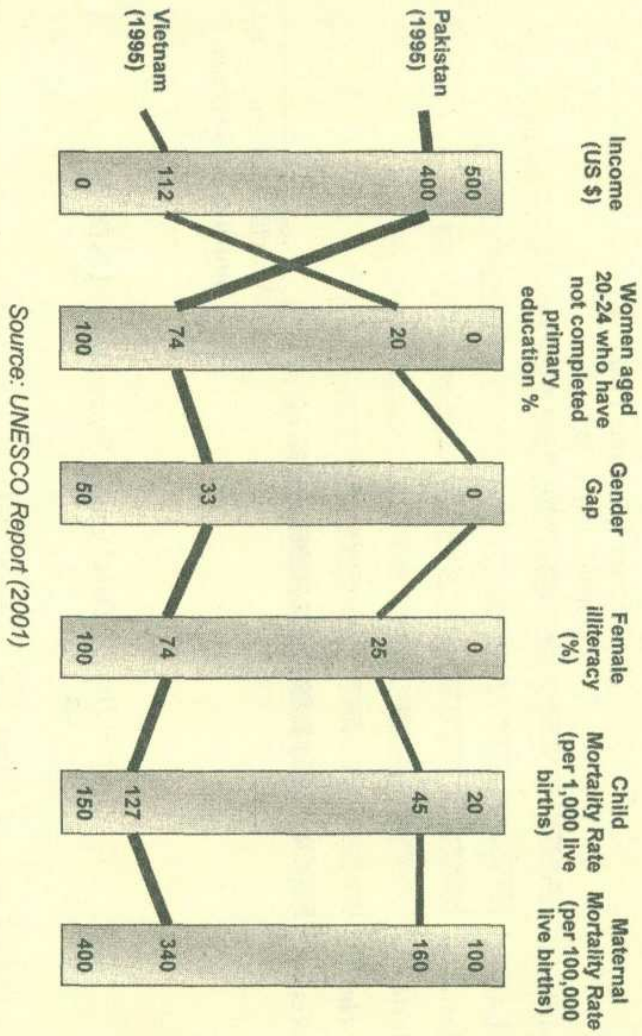
Figure: No.2: HDI vs. GDP per capita



Source: SAARC Human Resource Development Center 2002

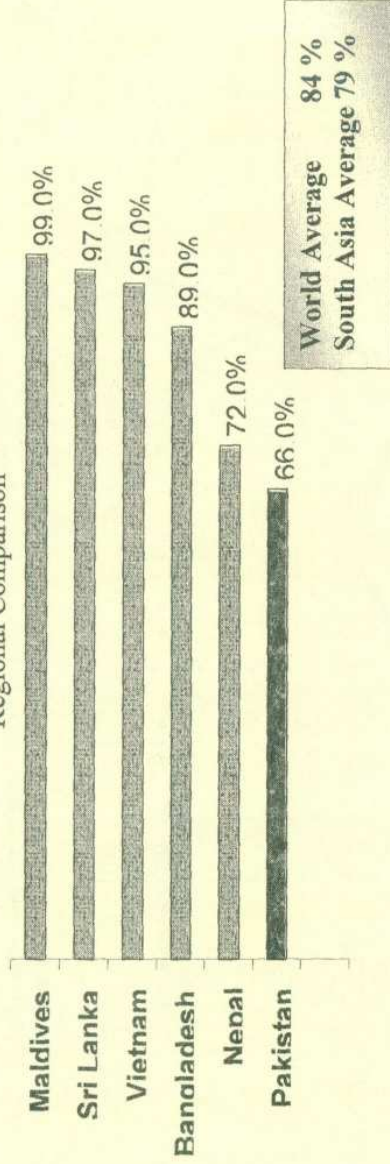
*Vietnam has been able to decrease poverty by one half between 1990-2000 because of its relatively higher investments in female literacy and basic health care (see Figure 3 below).*

Figure 3: Comparison of Human Development Indicators: Vietnam vs. Pakistan



In the context of South Asia, Pakistan has the lowest net enrollment rates in the region according to the UNDP *Human Development Report* (see below).

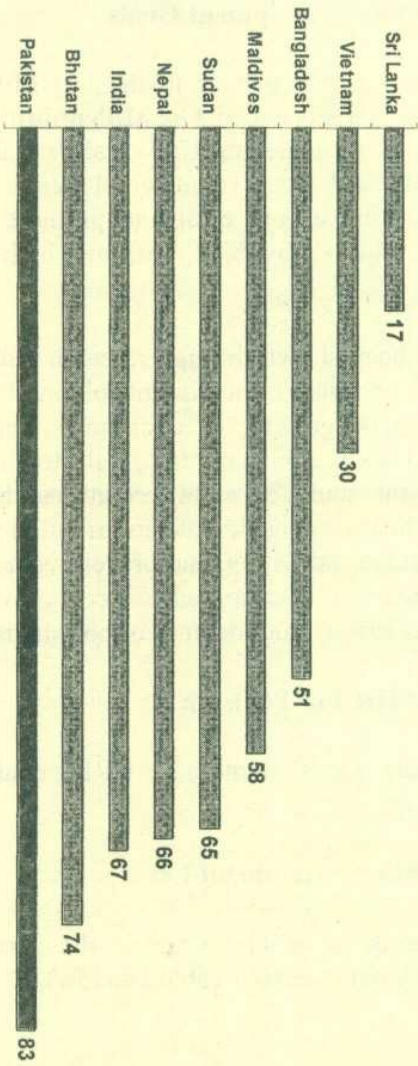
Figure 4: Net Primary Enrollment Rate (%)  
Regional Comparison



Source: *Human Development Report 2004 - UNDP*

Pakistan has the highest rate of infant and under-5 child mortality in the region, according to *Human Development Report* (see below).

**Figure 5: Infant Mortality Rate (Deaths per 1,000 Live Births) Comparison**



Source: Human Development Report 2004 - UNDP



This persistent under-achievement in access to health and education is in part attributable to the exclusion of significant segments of society from access to development benefits. This low standing in human development needs to be redressed in view of the nation's commitments.

### **The Millennium Development Goals**

Pakistan is a signatory to the UN Millennium Declaration 2000, which set targets called **The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** – such as achieving Universal Primary Education, reduce child mortality and improve maternal health -- that obligate the country to making all-out efforts to promote human dignity, and reduce poverty in half by 2015, both of which are linked to human development.

It has been shown through research that initiatives in health and education can play an important role in alleviating poverty and accelerating GDP growth, in addition to enhancing the human development resource of a country. Paul Streeten<sup>5</sup> et al. have shown in an important study of eighty countries that improvements in literacy have made a considerable contribution to growth. Similarly, improved hygiene, sanitation, and preventive health care can lead to reduced frequency of disease, reduced cost of medical treatment and increased productivity and incomes of poor households.

### **Challenges of HRD in Pakistan**

Pakistan faces numerous HRD challenges, which are described below:

#### **1) Low Education Attainment Level**

According to official sources, the current literacy rate in Pakistan is 54.0 per cent (see Table 1 below).



**Table 1: Literacy Rate (%) vs. Population Growth (%)**

Year	Literacy Rate	Change by Percent-age Point	Population Growth*
1996	40.9	1.3	2.47
1997	42.2	1.3	2.45
1998	43.6	1.4	2.42
1999	45.0	1.4	2.34
2000	47.1	2.1	3.40
2001	49.0	1.9	2.06
2002	50.5	1.5	2.00
2003	51.6	1.1	1.94
<b>2004</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.90</b>

Source: *Pakistan Economic Survey 2003-04*, p.123; (\* fiscal year)

The educational challenges facing Pakistan are huge (see below) starting with primary education (Classes 1-5), which lays the foundation for the subsequent stages of education. Although the nation's gross primary school enrolment rate has gone up to 83 per cent (2001) against the target of 100% enrolment<sup>6</sup>, almost 50 per cent of the children who enrol drop out before completing the primary cycle; only about 17 per cent of primary school graduates enrol for secondary education; less than 2 per cent of the relevant age group enrolls for technical and vocational training; and there are huge gender gaps at all levels of education.

#### **Causes of Poor Education Indicators in Pakistan<sup>7</sup>**

- The quality of education provided by government schools has been dismal and continues to deteriorate;
- Enrollment in these schools continues to fall due to outdated curriculum and textbooks, damaged buildings, and absent teachers;
- High opportunity cost in the form of loss of income, distance to school, and safety concerns further

discourages parents from sending their children to school.

There is no mechanism at the provincial level for addressing universal primary education (UPE) completion, i.e. to increase enrollment; decrease dropout and improve quality education in Classes I-V; especially the most important area of early childhood learning.

Less than 1% of education resources are allocated to projects promoting adult literacy<sup>8</sup>, an indication of the neglect of this key target group (15-49). High illiteracy among rural women creates a shortage of available teachers for primary schools, further affecting the quality and output of primary school education.

Therefore, unless UPE and adult literacy is ensured quickly through a concerted national education campaign, particularly for women, the government's target of 86 per cent literacy may not be achieved by 2015.

## **2) Low Health Coverage**

Health is key development indicator of a country. Unfortunately, the poor state of health sector in Pakistan perpetuates poverty as unhealthy citizens cannot perform at an optimal level of efficiency and cannot contribute effectively to economic development. The nation pays a heavy economic cost for this deprivation, as the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Survey 2001 shows that almost 90 working days are lost in illness in poor households.<sup>9</sup> This is evident from the following table (see Table 2 below).

**Table 2: Pakistan Health Indicators compared with the Region<sup>10</sup>**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>Bhutan</b>	<b>Maldives</b>	<b>Nepal</b>	<b>Sri Lanka</b>
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000 live births)	82	67	51	74	58	66	17

Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100,000 live births)	350	407	230	255	160	415	59.6
Children with low weight-for-age %	37	47	47.7	18.7	30	48.3	8.5
Low Birth Weight Newborns %	37	23	19.5	15.1	17.6	23.2	16.7
Physicians Per 10,000 Population	7.3	5.6	2.5	1.7	8.4	1.6	3.7
Hospital Beds per 10,000 Population	6.8	6.9	3.4	16	17.4	1.5	29
Total Life Expectancy at Birth (years)	63.4	61	62.6	61.3	66.1	60	70.3

Source: World Health Organization *Basic Indicators*

### 3) Exclusion of people due to rising poverty and unemployment

There is a reciprocal relationship between poverty and human development. Lack of health and education reduces people's productive capacity which curtails their employability and earning power thus, increasing their poverty. On the other hand, poverty makes it difficult for the people to have access to health and education and thus restricts their development not only as economic agents, but also as responsible citizens.

Although the country has achieved a very healthy economic growth recently with 6.4 per cent growth rate recorded during 2003-04<sup>11</sup>, poverty continues to pose serious challenges. This is evident from high unemployment and poverty levels. According to the *Pakistan Economic Survey 2003-04*, the unemployment rate in



Pakistan has increased from 5.3 per cent in 1995 to 8.2 per cent in 2004.

In order to reduce the poverty level to half, as per one of the key Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), major efforts will be needed to take the poor households in Pakistan above the poverty line through focused socioeconomic pro-poor policies.

#### **4) Lack of Planning and need to learn from International Best Practices**

Pakistan never had a coherent, long-term policy for educating its masses. Although, successive governments had made the achievement of universal primary education a priority in each five-year plan, there remained a huge gap between planning rhetoric and actual implementation. Similarly, adult literacy has not been a priority of successive governments, yielding an increased level of illiterate population in the country.

During the first five-year plan period (1955-60), the number of illiterate adults was 20.9 million, and 5.9 million children were out of school. By the time the 8th five-year plan (1993-98) was put forward, there were 50.8 million illiterate adults and 9.6 million out of school children.<sup>12</sup>

Pakistan must learn from the best practices of developing countries which have adopted successful models of human development, especially in maternal care, poverty alleviation, education and population planning. Pakistan, with a sustained political will, should implement a coherent integrated plan to improve its HDI on a war footing.

#### **5) Inadequate and non-optimal utilization of budgetary allocations**

The low budgetary allocations for education and health over the last 50 years are also significantly responsible for poor human development and low social indicators of Pakistan. Education and health, to which human development is fundamentally linked, have

not received proper government attention. From 1997-98 to 2001-02, national expenditure on education has been only 1.7 per cent of the GDP<sup>13</sup> while the recommended allocation for developing countries is 4.5% of GDP. Despite enhanced allocations from 2000-2004, total expenditure on education and health remains far below acceptable allocations, even by the standards of Pakistan's regional neighbours.

More importantly, whatever resources that are allocated for education and health sectors, are not utilized efficiently and effectively.

#### **6) Rising population accentuates poverty & reduces productivity**

A high population growth rate exacerbates poverty in the country, thus affecting the already low human development profile. The following alarming figures show that<sup>14</sup>:

- Pakistan's population has increased five times since 1947
- 5 children are added every minute, which comes to 2.9 million per year
- Population doubling time is 37 years with a current growth rate of 1.9%
- Poverty, measured by the international standard of earning less than \$1 a day, was estimated at 32.1% in 2000-01 (from 30.6 per cent in 1998-99)<sup>15</sup>.

Research undertaken both in developed and developing countries reveals that for an increase in output, the quality of labour is more important than the quantity. Cheap and abundant labour is an advantage. However, this advantage is lost if labour is not productive. Labour in Pakistan has low productivity because human resource development (HRD) has been a low priority area in Pakistan in both public and private sectors.

With 40 per cent of children and 45 per cent of women in the child bearing age (15 to 49 years) suffering from malnutrition, not only is the health and productivity of existing population adversely



affected, but also of future pregnancy outcomes.<sup>16</sup> Pakistan National Human Development Report 2003 concludes that “a predominant proportion of major earners in poor households are unskilled workers engaged in low productivity and low income occupations”.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, Pakistan needs to curb its population rate to a manageable level – close to replacement levels - for two main reasons: first, the existing backlog of deprived human lives can be catered for properly, and secondly, the growing population does not become a drag on the already meager resources and add to the huge untrained and unskilled pool of human resources.

#### **7) Poor Governance and Lack of Capacity at the District Level**

The sub-optimal utilization of available resources (both financial and human) and outcomes leading to the dismal human development situation in Pakistan are caused by the implementation gaps in delivery of social services (such as education and health)<sup>17</sup>.

The key factor for implementation gaps is the lack of institutional capacity of the government line departments needed for better management of the existing educational and health institutions in a more efficient and cost effective manner, and implementing new policies and programmes that are required in these sectors in view of their new responsibilities under the Local Government Ordinance (LGO), 2001.

Thus, there is a need to facilitate the recently empowered local governments in initiating change management and capacity development in effective planning, optimal utilization of financial resources and efficient human resource management at the district and *tehsil* levels.

#### **8) Mismatch between education and required occupational skills**

It is widely recognized today that vocational and technical education enhances the productive capacity of individuals and leads to higher output<sup>18</sup>. Yet, Pakistan produces very few people with



technical skills and often these skills are inappropriate for either domestic or global markets.

Most of the plans for technical/vocational education have been conceived without due analysis of the employment situation or the changing patterns of the skills and competencies required as a consequence of changing technologies. This has resulted in an unbalanced development of various technical education levels, leading to a mismatch between the output of educational institutions and the job market.

#### **9) Training gaps**

A major human resource issue in Pakistan is the training, nurturing, and retention of technically skilled manpower. There are 29 training institutes under the ministries of commerce, industries and production run by the private sector, which are imparting training in the skills of textiles, surgical, leather, plastics and chemicals, but there is a dire need of upgrading their training outfits to bring them to global standards.

The current training gaps cannot be filled in by the public sector alone. The private sector needs to look into creative ways to improve trainings, so that the value imparted can be utilized on a sustained basis.

This includes establishing specialized training centres on priority basis in sub-sectors such as food technology, petroleum, forest products, micro industries electronic engineering, textiles, etc., with special attention given to the technical vocational schools and special science and technology schools with arrangement for greater use of practical experience.

#### **10) Gender Bias and Inequality**

Promoting gender equity and empowerment of women is one of the serious challenges for developing countries. In a conservative society like Pakistan, women face major hurdles in achieving socio-

economic progress and economic empowerment. This is clear from the current scenario of Education and Health in Pakistan:

- Female literacy rate is nearly 42 per cent while the literacy rate for men is 66%<sup>19</sup>; it means that nearly two women out of every three are illiterate (compared to one man out of every three men).
- About 60 mothers die each day from pregnancies and childbirths<sup>20</sup>;
- Married women with no education stand at 75%<sup>21</sup>.

This inequality and imbalance is partly to be blamed on the poor economic conditions of Pakistan where men are preferred over women. Consequently, more attention is given towards their educational and health needs. Unless gender equity is established, Pakistan will never attain prosperity and reduce poverty.

#### **11) Lack of Public Private Partnerships**

The consensus of development experts is that Pakistan's sustained economic growth can be achieved with emphasis on the quality of its human capital. There is a need to mobilize the entire civil society groups and development partners to achieve this overarching social development goal, through creative and efficient use of all available resources.

Although NGOs and grassroots efforts have played a major role in spreading primary education, basic healthcare and family planning services, they lack scale for maximum outreach, which exists only with the government sector. Hence, there is a need for public private partnerships for improving social sector delivery in Pakistan.

#### **12) Brain Drain**

The last decade (1994-2004) has seen an increase in the international mobility of highly skilled, talented individuals in response to the expansion of the knowledge-based economies<sup>22</sup>. This international movement of human capital can be identified, in



practice, as the movement of scientists, doctors, educationists, engineers, executives, and other professionals across frontiers. Since the great majority of these migrants move on a permanent basis, this brain drain represents loss of valuable human resources.

According to IMF<sup>23</sup>, the migration rate of individuals (with tertiary education) from Pakistan to the OECD countries is more than 7.0 per cent. These figures, however, fail to take into account the sizable flow of professionals from the subcontinent to Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates and therefore, neglect an important component of the brain drain from the relevant source countries.

The government needs to adopt initiatives to reverse the brain-drain and attract trained manpower from abroad, as the implications of the brain drain are disastrous. An outflow of such strategic manpower seriously affects skill formation and creates a growth retarding effect.

### **13) Paucity of highly skilled and specialized knowledge workers**

In addition to brain drain, Pakistan faces a shortage of highly skilled and specialized knowledge workers to meet the domestic requirements to compete in the knowledge-based sector. By most common indicators of skill creation, Pakistan does not perform well by regional standards<sup>24</sup>. According to the Harbison-Myer index<sup>25</sup>, a classic index of skills based on school and university enrolments used by UNIDO to benchmark 87 countries, Pakistan ranks below all other South Asian economies (Table 3).

*What is more worrying, Pakistan's score and its relative position have deteriorated since the mid-1980s, making it the only country in Asia in which the index declined over the 1985-1997 period.*



Table 3: Harbison-Myer Index of Skills

Country	1998 (Country Ranking)	1985 (Country Ranking)
South Korea	36.1 (10)	26.8 (6)
Taiwan	27.8 (23)	22.5 (21)
Singapore	23.1 (29)	14.8 (37)
Philippines	21.6 (32)	21.3 (23)
Thailand	15.6 (45)	10.8 (48)
Malaysia	11.1 (55)	9.2 (51)
Indonesia	10.4 (56)	8.3 (57)
Sri Lanka	10.1 (58)	9.1 (53)
China	9.8 (59)	5.2 (67)
India	8.1 (69)	7.1 (60)
Nepal	6.4 (71)	5.4 (66)
Bangladesh	4.3 (76)	4.0 (72)
Pakistan	4.1 (77)	4.4 (69)

Source: Lall, S. & John Wass (2004), *Industrial Competitiveness: The Challenge for Pakistan*, Asian Development Bank Institute, p.54

In Pakistan, science and technology sector has not been paid due attention. Only 2% of age group 18-23 is enrolled in university compared to 32% in Korea and 30% for both Japan and Germany<sup>26</sup>. Currently, it is estimated that Pakistan produces 50 PhDs every year<sup>27</sup> whereas 300 to 400 PhDs are needed in research institutes and universities<sup>28</sup>. In order to train high level manpower in accordance with national needs, the PhD programme at Pakistani universities needs to be strengthened. This is now being addressed by the HEC.

To achieve human resource development at an accelerated rate, knowledge-based growth must become the driving force of our development. In order to achieve this goal, we must upgrade our universities and research centres. Therefore, the government has to take a lead in facilitating the development of *higher education*, so that the universities of Pakistan reach international standards in education, research and development.

Human resource development is imperative for the local *Information Technology* (IT) industry to position the country as an important player in the international market. This is because IT has opened a new business frontier for Pakistan, as the U.S. has started outsourcing its IT needs, especially development of software and running of call centres.

A large cadre of academically and technically skilled manpower must be developed to meet both local and export needs to bridge the “digital divide”<sup>29</sup>. Government should assign high priority to information technology both in terms of policy and resource allocation.

### **The Way Forward**

There is no automatic link between expanding income and promoting human welfare<sup>30</sup>. *A link between growth and human lives has to be created consciously through deliberate public policy*, such as public spending on social services, and fiscal policy to redistribute income and assets.

Such a deliberate and equitable public policy has been lacking in Pakistan over the last fifty years which what has led to the current state of both increased poverty and human deprivation. The current government has responded to the challenge by *integrating its Poverty Alleviation Strategy with National Human Resource Development Strategy*.

Currently Pakistan has aligned its development focus to the recommendations of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) that links poverty alleviation to the provision of education, health, nutrition and empowerment of women as well as to ownership of assets in rural areas by adopting the following priorities<sup>31</sup>:

- Accelerating economic growth;
- Improving governance and devolution;



- Investing in human capital; and,
- Targeting the poor and the vulnerable.

The salient features of this approach are the following:

**1) Optimal utilization of resources**

Sufficient resources must be allocated to achieve human development goals in Pakistan within a realistic and manageable timeframe. But, more importantly, whatever resources have been allocated for education and health must be used efficiently and effectively.

PRSP has earmarked high budgetary allocation for human development, with education sector getting the major share. During the year 2003-04, the education budget comprises nearly 70 percent of the total human development allocation (see Table 4 below).

Higher expenditure on education will help effectively reduce the poverty level in the country, as illiteracy is directly linked to poverty. Health care spending is another important area and the government has assigned priority with budget for the fiscal year 2003-04 being Rs 29.17 billion -- 30.4 percent higher than last year. During the year 2004-05, health expenditure will rise to nearly a quarter of all human development spending (Table 4).

**Table 4: Pakistan's Human Development Related Expenditures (Rs. billion)**

	<i>FY 2001-02</i>	<i>2002-03</i>	<i>2003-04*</i>	<i>2004-05**</i>
<i>Human Development (Total)</i>	<b>90.67</b>	<b>105.81</b>	<b>126.56</b>	<b>147.73</b>
i. Education	<b>66.29</b>	<b>78.61</b>	<b>88.84</b>	<b>102.38</b>
ii. Health	<b>19.21</b>	<b>22.37</b>	<b>29.17</b>	<b>36.08</b>



iii. Population Planning	1.33	3.12	4.60	4.88
iv. Social Security & Welfare	3.66	1.30	3.68	3.90
v. Natural Calamities	0.19	0.41	0.27	0.49

Source: *Pakistan Economic Survey 2003-04*, Ministry of Finance p.47 \* Budgeted, \*\* Projected

Economic growth is as much a process of knowledge accumulation as of capital accumulation<sup>32</sup>. Education must be thought of as an essential investment in national development. Therefore, Pakistan is turning its attention to all aspects of educational development. It is moving as quickly as possible towards universal primary education for both boys and girls and in all regions of the country with initiatives like National Commission for Human Development (see below).

This is being done with the help of the recently empowered local governments. The government is also proceeding with the reform of the *madressa* system by introducing a core curriculum in addition to providing religious education. Finally, the development of the tertiary education is also being addressed.

## 2) Improving Governance and Capacity Development at the District Level

Apart from increasing financial allocations, the key factor in delivery of social services is capacity development of provincial governments and district administrations to improve performance, and at the same time, ensure the optimal utilization of available funds through better management to fill the implementation gaps.

National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) was established in 2002 to specifically propose innovative solutions for

effective and transformed social service delivery in Pakistan. NCHD has set up a specialized Capacity Building program which operates at the district level to support the Government's Devolution Plan (LGO).

This program has assisted the recently empowered local governments at the district and tehsil levels in capacity development of the key stakeholders i.e. district level governments, including elected representatives and government functionaries; government line departments of education, health and community development, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in effective planning, optimal utilization of financial resources and efficient human resource management.

### **3) Public Private Partnerships**

In order to improve the quality of its human capital, the government has encouraged public-private partnerships with the twin objectives of improving social sector delivery in Pakistan, plus harnessing the creative and efficient use of *all* available resources for maximum outreach.

This strategy was put into practice by conceiving NCHD, which provides a classic example of such an initiative where human development endeavors are supported by a Public Private Partnership between the Government of Pakistan, the private sector and the international donor community.

NCHD is designed to enhance and develop the nation's human capital through strategic interventions by acting as an orchestrating body for human development efforts in Pakistan, both public and private, to help achieve the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

NCHD acts as a support organization in education and health sectors, in achieving Mass Literacy, Preventive/Promotive Primary Health Care, and Capacity Development at grassroots by bridging the implementation gap between strategy and delivery through the introduction of best practices into social programs.



### **Education Programme**

Through its formal Universal Primary Education (UPE) Programme, NCHD has been able to enrol over 1.0 million out of school children, reduce the drop out rate to less than 10% in its 16 operational districts compared to the national average of 50% and assisted in imparting training to over 19,000 teachers in UPE. Furthermore, NCHD's UPE Programme has added value by providing trainings to over 40,000 volunteers to create social capital at the grassroots level and ensure community participation in service delivery in education and health. The Adult Literacy Programme has established around 4000 Adult Literacy Centres where over 83,000 adults (comprising over 80% women) have been educated in basic literacy.

### **Primary Health Care Extension (PHCE)**

Under the NCHD's PHCE Programme, 200,000 immunization shots have been given to children under five years of age, more than 165,000 children under 5 are being monitored for growth regularly, 228,000 women and 131,000 men have been educated on health issues, 678,000 women trained in preparing ORS at home, while 23,000 women receive antenatal care monthly in remote areas where no government facilities exist.

### **4) Pro-Poor Growth**

Economic growth is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for human development, as evident from recent economic growth in Pakistan. It is not just the speed of growth which is important, but *the quality or type of growth*. In other words, it is not growth *per se* which is important; what is important is that the growth should be ***pro-poor*** --- **growth in sectors where the poor benefit the most.**

Accordingly, the government has identified five key sectors which can play an important role in achieving and sustaining a 7-8 percent growth rate with the poor benefiting the most<sup>33</sup>. These



sectors include agriculture, housing and construction, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), information technology, and the oil and gas sector. Among these, the first three sectors have the potential to generate pro-poor growth by creating greater employment opportunities.

#### **5) Improving Gender Equity**

In Pakistan, the traditional attribution of female and masculine standards of behaviour, division of labour and family responsibilities have been the main barriers in female literacy rate being lower than that of males. The issue of the female literacy is built on sharply differentiated gender roles; therefore, the programming of equitable provision of female education has to be addressed.

This vital national human development deficiency is being rectified under targeted programmes for adult literacy. Special emphasis is being paid on women illiteracy, with programs such as the successful Mass Education intervention of NCHD – Adult Literacy Programme, where over 80% literacy centres are earmarked for illiterate women.

#### **6) Curbing population growth**

The government is using the best practices' approach to curb the high population growth, following the successful example of developing countries such as Iran, because a growing, unskilled and uneducated manpower will simply stifle growth no matter how much is spent on developing industry, agriculture and services. The population growth is showing signs of subsiding, as the growth rate has steadily fallen from 2.47% in 1996 to 1.90%<sup>34</sup> in 2004 (see Table 1 above).

#### **National Human Resource Development Strategy**

In order to progress and compete internationally, Pakistan needs to harness the whole range of creative national capabilities, potential of high level manpower and its optimum utilization.

Human resource can only contribute meaningfully to economic growth and development when people are provided with the skills they can market, and also take advantage of the opportunities offered by the "new economy".

The current Government puts great emphasis on developing its large human resource. To complement the human development efforts in the country, a National Human Resource Development Strategy is being implemented concurrently, based on Skill Development and Training, as under:

**First: Systematic planning for manpower development**

An effective utilization of highly educated professionals (scientific and technical manpower which constitutes the most valuable asset of the country), is an essential prerequisite for achieving advancement. Hence, a viable Human Resource Development Strategy for highly trained manpower at the national level is being promoted consisting of the following three elements:

- Manpower and Employment Planning through preparation of a pragmatic policy, in collaboration with the sources of labour market information with a view to assess training needs.
- Vocational Training by providing apprentices training and certification in various occupations in the industry; and,
- Skill Development through Public-Private Partnership to identify needs of geographical area, prioritize them on market demand, and to facilitate the training of workers.

A number of initiatives have been implemented to realize these objectives. A National Talent Pool has been established under Ministry of Labour, Manpower & Overseas Pakistanis to identify key manpower occupations according to scarcity and to compile inventory of basic data of high level manpower in the country. Currently, the National Talent Pool has compiled detailed



particulars of 120,000 high level professional manpower including doctors, engineers, scientists, chartered / cost accountants etc.

A National Training Bureau has been created as an attached department of Manpower Division with the dual objectives to formulate and implement vocational training policies, and to facilitate training of skilled workers to meet domestic and overseas labour requirements.

### **Second: Developing IT Sector**

Under the Government's HR Action Plan, a multi-dimensional strategy has been adopted to overcome the deficiency in human resources which involves initiation of new government-sponsored programmes. Four new IT Universities are being established to meet this need, along with a Virtual IT University, National Testing and Accreditation Services and Educational Intranet.

Existing IT institutes are also being strengthened and faculty hired from abroad. The training program includes training of medical and legal transcriptionists, data entry operators, training in Java and number of other tools, internet working and training of 15,000 government employees.

### **Third: Public Sector Reforms**

Apart from imparting knowledge-based skills, the Government is restructuring governmental and civil service structures and systems for optimum human resource utilization. The lead for this initiative is provided by the successful examples of some newly industrialized and developing countries, such as Singapore and Zambia. This strategy of *building institutional capacity* includes designing of structures and systems for recruitment, training, career planning, human resource development and compensation.



#### **Fourth: Fulfilling training gaps for facing Global competition**

Investment in human resource development is necessary for preparing the Pakistani industry to face the globalization challenge by increasing the productivity of workforce and improving the quality of products. For achieving a substantial part of our industrial vision, particularly in view of the demands of World Trade Organization (WTO) from 2005 onwards, there is a need to create and nurture a well-developed human capital base, with skills and work ethics of highest quality.

The country needs to switch to a strategy of better educated, well trained employees with global orientation and with more productive forms of work organization. In addition to investment in machinery and technology, the government is investing in human resource development so that the skilled labour required for undertaking quality improvement is at hand.

#### **Fifth: Learning from International Best Practices**

Pakistan is keenly following the best practices from developing countries which have adopted successful models of human development and poverty alleviation, such as Sri Lanka, Vietnam, South Korea and Iran in their areas of excellence and expertise i.e., maternal care, poverty alleviation, education and population planning, respectively.

*Targeted interventions, based on lessons learnt from best practices, is the new approach being adopted in delivery of social services in the country for optimal utilization of resources and cost effectiveness of projects.*

#### **Sixth: Enhancing knowledge-based human capital**

Realizing the importance of higher education and the need to upgrade our universities and research centres, the present government established the Higher Education Commission (HEC). HEC assists universities and degree awarding institutes in the

pursuit of quality education, especially science and technology, in both public and private sectors. Its goal is to mobilize financial, technical, human and social resources for enhancing the quality of educational institutions, and facilitate the reform process initiated within these institutions.<sup>35</sup>

The HEC has taken several initiatives, including one to reverse the brain drain and attract trained manpower from abroad, which augur well for the future. The major thrust of programs being developed by the Higher Education Commission is directed towards developing a strong base of Ph.D. level highly qualified faculty members of Pakistani origin to bridge the nation's "Ph.D. deficit".

### **Conclusion**

Pakistan faces considerable challenges in improving key indicators of human development - education and health - due to years of neglect in policy making and implementation issues. However, the current government has resolved to redress the nation's current state of poverty and human deprivation. The task may not be accomplished in the short-term, but by embracing a coherent integrated strategy of Poverty Alleviation and National Human Resource Development, backed by sustained political will, the government is likely to be successful in achieving the targets of the MDGs by the year 2015.

### **End Notes**

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- <sup>5</sup> Paul Streen et al., *First Things: Meeting Basic Needs in Developing Countries*, New York, OUP, 1981
- <sup>6</sup> *Pakistan Economic Survey 2003-04*, p.126.

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- <sup>7</sup> *President's Task Force on Human Development*, p.18
- <sup>8</sup> Op. cit.
- <sup>9</sup> *Pakistan Human Development Report 2003*, p.16.
- <sup>10</sup> Compiled from: <http://www.emro.who.int/emrinfor/CountryProfiles-pak.htm#HumanResources> and [http://w3.whosea.org/LinkFiles/HealthSituation\\_indicators04.pdf](http://w3.whosea.org/LinkFiles/HealthSituation_indicators04.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> State Bank of Pakistan, *First Quarterly Report*, 2004-05
- <sup>12</sup> Planning Commission, Govt. of Pakistan
- <sup>13</sup> Economic Survey 2003-04, Government of Pakistan
- <sup>14</sup> Source: Ministry of Population Welfare (2004)
- <sup>15</sup> Planning Commission, Govt. of Pakistan based on the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES)
- <sup>16</sup> *Pakistan Human Development Report 2003*, Overview p.21.
- <sup>17</sup> *President's Task Force on Human Development*
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- <sup>23</sup> Op. cit
- <sup>24</sup> Lall, S. & John Wass (2004): *Industrial Competitiveness: The Challenge for Pakistan*, Asian Development Bank Institute.



- <sup>25</sup> The Harbison-Myer Index is the average of the percentage of the relevant age groups enrolled in secondary & tertiary education with tertiary enrolments given a weight of five.
- <sup>26</sup> Naim, S.T.K.: *50 Years of Science and Technology in Pakistan* Available at: [www.pcst.org.pk/pcst\\_webpages/promotion/Presentation\\_Dr Naim](http://www.pcst.org.pk/pcst_webpages/promotion/Presentation_Dr Naim)
- <sup>27</sup> Hoodbhoy, Pervez: *Reforming our Universities*, Daily DAWN, January 3, 2005.
- <sup>28</sup> Quoted by Dr Atta-ur-Rahman, Chairman, HEC
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- <sup>30</sup> Haq, Khadija: *Reinventing Poverty*, Dawn Century Edition, December 2000.
- <sup>31</sup> Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Ministry of Finance, Govt. of Pakistan
- <sup>32</sup> Burki, Shahid J.: *Education, Key To Progress* , Daily DAWN, 02 December 2003
- <sup>33</sup> PRSP
- <sup>34</sup> Ministry of Population Welfare (2004)
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### **Author**

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