

Bashir Ahmad Khilji. *Sixty Years of Human Resource Development in Pakistan.* Government of Pakistan, Higher Education Commission, Pakistan. Islamabad: HEC Printing Press. 2011. 283 pages. Price not given.

Human resource development (HRD) occupies a central position in the advancement of a society. It is obvious from the historical experience of industrialised countries that developing human capacity is essential for a self-reliant and self-sustaining pattern of growth. Almost all Asian countries, including Pakistan, continue to search for additional appropriate strategies to respond to the rapid changes in the global economy. Unfortunately, despite registering a satisfactory rate of economic growth, Pakistan's progress on the human front lags behind in terms of key indicators such as literacy, primary-level participation rate, basic health facilities, population welfare, water and sanitation, etc. Pakistan ranked 145th out of 179 countries in the world on the human development index in 2011.

In this scenario, the author of *Sixty Years of Human Resource Development in Pakistan* emphasises human development as a crucial factor in the highly competitive world of trade and commerce. Typically, Pakistan faces a situation where its burgeoning population is a challenge to policymakers. Years of neglect on the human development front have left a large proportion of the population without basic necessities such as education, health, and decent job opportunities. Developing their capacities is the only way to lift them out of poverty. To highlight the link between economic growth and demographics, 2011 was declared the 'population year'. This book is an opportune contribution because it examines the issue holistically, i.e., the impact of economic development on human resources as well as the effects of human resources on the economic development of Pakistan. It focuses on how a developing country like Pakistan can utilise its growing population as a dynamic factor in economic growth.

The book consists of eight chapters. Chapter 1 sets the stage for discussion, highlighting the role that human development has played in the advancement of societies and pitching it as the key factor that pulls people out of poverty and reduces inequality. It argues that Pakistan has failed to invest adequately in enhancing the potential of the majority of its population, not only impoverishing them, but forsaking its own growth potential as well. The rest of the chapter lays out the country's historical background, its geography, the structural changes it has gone through, and the present economic scenario. It also reviews the existing literature, which it divides into general studies, studies related to developed countries, and those related to developing countries. The author examines the data and methodological issues with model specifications.

Chapter 2 highlights the concept and meanings of human capital formation, its objectives, components, significance, and comparison of various countries. The author describes the needs of human capital formation in Pakistan's context, referring to different theories of investment in human capital. Identifying factors of human capital formation that include health, education, science and technology, vocational training, and migration, he conceptualises and defines manpower planning, and documents its techniques, important steps, and procedures with reference to Pakistan.

Chapter 3 discusses components of HRD, which encompass education, science and technological development, the development of food, health, and nutrition, sanitation and safe drinking water, professional training, development of migration and remittances, and information and technological development. The salient features of Pakistan's population—size, growth, and composition—are analysed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 compares the efforts made by Pakistani governments in the field of HRD—institutional frameworks, and quantitative and qualitative scenarios of HRD—with those made by other countries in the region. It also highlights the issue of child labour and the importance of women in development with reference to Pakistan.

Demographic estimates and projections play an important role in socioeconomic and developing planning. Targets for future national and regional growth are often fixed on the basis of a population's anticipated size, its distribution, and age structure. Population projections are not only necessary to estimate the growing demand for food, housing, education, and health facilities, but also to indicate the future size of the labour force. Accordingly, Chapter 6 explains the relationship between HRD, economic development, and labour force projections, and provides an empirical model of the imbalance between supply of and demand for manpower in Pakistan.

Chapter 7 explores the relationship between human capital formation and economic development, using a time series econometric technique. The analysis concludes that infant mortality adversely affects economic development while literacy rates, expenditure on education and health, life expectancy, primary school participation rate, and gross fixed capital formation have a positive impact on economic development. Finally, Chapter 8 makes recommendations on how human capital formation could be improved, with the view that a large population can be considered capital instead of a hindrance in economic development.

The book is a valuable resource for students, researchers, and policymakers. Its relevance to Pakistan's national needs is self-evident, given that it covers various phases of its national history and presents a comprehensive picture of HRD in the country.

Rashida Haq

Pakistan Institute of Development Economics,
Islamabad.