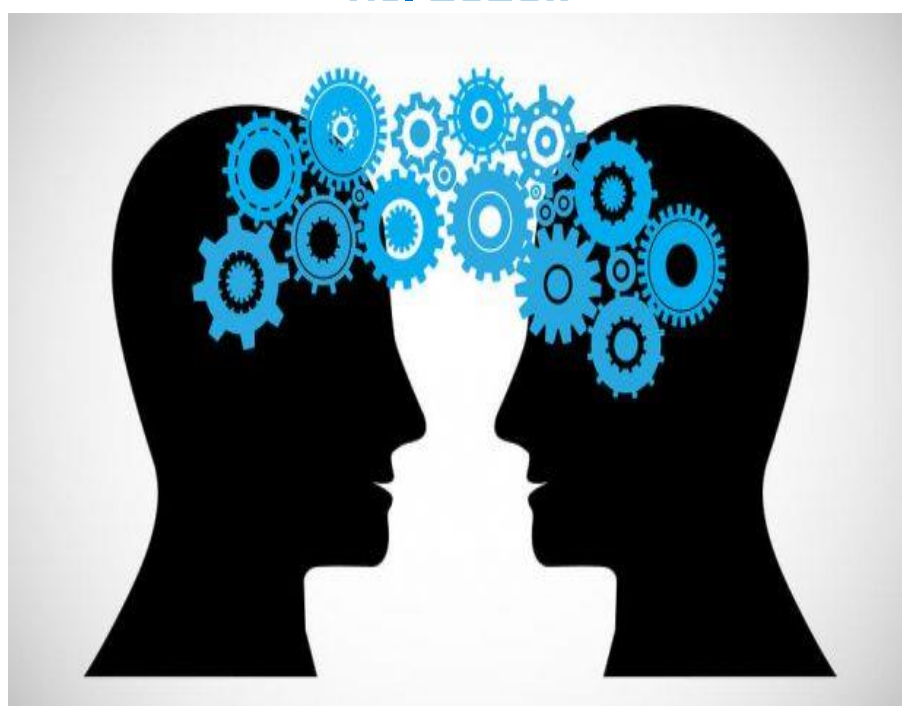


Learning from Discourse at PIDE

No. 2020:1



by

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Title picture credit: Source: <http://www.strateratech.com/node/40>

Table of Contents

Preface.....	4
Acknowledgements.....	7
Regional Connectivity and Research Needs	8
Faith and Feminism in Pakistan	9
Gender, Urban Spaces and Mobility in Lyari, Karachi	10
Population Growth: Implications for Human Development.....	11
Medicalization of Childbirth in Pakistan	12
Reforms of Local Government in Pakistan.....	13
National Tariff Policy	14
Pride and Abstention: Christian National Identity in Pakistan	15
Water and Sustainable Development	16
Sustainable Urban Transportation.....	17
Media and Responsible Tourism in Pakistan.....	18
Master Plan of Islamabad 2020-2040	19
Designing Affordable Housing Policy.....	20
Global Value Chains & Trade Policy	21
Ideas Matter: A Reading List for Policy Wallahs	22
Development Politics and Donors reflection from a Practitioner	23
Economy of Debt: Alternatives to Austerity and Neoliberalism in Pakistan	24
State of Institutional Reforms	25
Charter City: Romer's Failed Attempt to Import Institutions.....	26
Unpacking Punjab's Education Reforms	27
Law and Economics	28
Making Sense of Joan Robinson on China	29
With ongoing Developments in Afghanistan and Tension Brewing Between India and Pakistan: What are Prospects of Reconciliation and Peace in the Region.....	30
Culture of Research in Pakistan.....	31
So Much Aid, So Little Development.....	32
Urban Development in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities.....	33
German Experience of Exports and Value Chains	34
Reaching Out to Markets for Pakistani Goods in Central Asia	35
Agriculture in Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges.....	36
Pakistani Diaspora Philanthropy in UK.....	37

Prime Minister’s Directives for High Rise in Pakistan: Consultation with Lahore Development Authority (LDA).....	38
Doing Development Better - Analyzing the PSDP	39
Empowering Women in South Asia’s Slums: The Challenges of Environmental Degradation	40
Islam and Politics of Development	41
Doing Taxes Better: Shifting the Paradigm of Tax Policy and Administration	42
PIDE’s COVID War	43
Prime Minister's Construction Package	44
Sugar Industry in Pakistan	45
Financial Markets in 21 st Century	46
Innovative HR and Business Strategy Responses to the #COVID19	47
Towards a Stable Economy and Politics.....	48
Future of Higher Education in Pakistan.....	49
Our Administrative Mess	50
References	51

Preface

The prime objective of this book is to collect the important policy themes that have been developed at PIDE through a series of invited lectures to direct PIDE's research agenda as well as to build Pakistan's research community at large. The idea behind this exercise is for us to learn how our current policies and more so our system of policymaking has lost its ways. Through exposing these themes, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque not only guides us to identify the root causes of our country's economic problems but also makes us learn the much-needed paradigm shifts that can put Pakistan, if adopted, on the trajectory of rapid growth and development. To collect the main policy messages from the discourse, I found that Dr. Nadeem has exposed us primarily to three areas of policy loopholes that are being practiced in Pakistan which have roots in:

- Too much regulation of markets
- Outsourcing our policy thought processes to donors
- Remnants of colonial era in Pakistan's laws and institutional setup

The case of the first point is primarily shown in the context of the impact of regulation in case of construction¹, sugar and financial markets through economic disincentives created by their respective regulatory authorities and regulatory laws and also in the education sector through HEC. Whereas, the second point will be elaborated not just by understanding the process of aid but also in the context of its impacts on misguiding tax policies and research culture in Pakistan² to trapping Pakistan in low human capital and bad civil service trap and how all this leads to the vicious cycle of donor assistance and hence aid continuity³. Finally, in the last theme, we learn about how laws have a vital role to play for economic outcomes and how our laws having colonial roots are misguiding us towards the wrong economic ends⁴. To show this point, not only the impacts are analyzed in agricultural land markets but also in sugar markets. Besides that issue of colonial hung is explored not just in case of laws but how our civil services are structured on practices that are rooted in the institutional setup that was practiced in British era and what impact it has created for us in today's times along with the role of elites that have had power in their hold of shrines, land, and politics post-independence and how these in their self-interest kept their constituencies in the low educational trap.

Last but not least, some other important themes that Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque made us understand through these seminars, conferences, and webinars include what is wrong with Pakistan's planning processes behind the public investment, our tax policy, our system of

¹ Please refer to PIDE Policy Viewpoint No.12:2020 titled as "Lahore's Urban Dilemma" for detail.

² Please refer to the book titled "The University Research System in Pakistan" for an in-depth analysis of the issue.

³ Please refer to a book titled "Looking Back: How Pakistan Became an Asian Tiger by 2050" that provided an analysis of issues using complexity as an approach.

⁴ Please refer to PIDE Policy Knowledge Brief No.6:2020 titled as "The Economic Analysis of Law in Pakistan" for details.

reforms and in the way we plan our cities. In this context, Dr. Haque not only provides us with the critical review of processes for both as to how PSDP are planned and on wrong myths on which our tax policy is based and how we need to change these very notions if our nation ever wants to achieve efficient outcomes but also raise a very important question that why we as a nation are so averse to reforms?⁵ And time and time again, why do we just see donors' notions of reforms that are bound to fail, being adopted than seeing a consistent thought-process for change to emerge from within us? Similarly, in the context of urban planning, besides regulation, Dr. Haque also pointed towards many other important issues such as what is the master plan for a city, why it needed and how it should evolve; what is a sustainable inclusive model of affordable urban living that is should cities develop vertically as opposed to their horizontal growth to have an analysis of PM's initiatives of high rise construction and Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme, and finally to what is the right model of urban mobility⁶.

Besides all these policy themes, some other important channels of research that were identified within PIDE included policy debate of where is our high population growth rooted in-demand-side factors or supply-side factors initiated by Dr. Durre Nayab; the understanding and defining the COVID response⁷ that the whole PIDE research team including notable contributions from Dr. Nasir Iqbal, Dr. Mohammad Nasir, Dr. Mahmood Khalid, Dr. Naseem Faraz and Dr. Abdul Jalil⁸ to name a few⁹ worked on under the guidance of Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque and Dr. Durre Nayab; identification of challenges and opportunities for agriculture sector by Dr. Abedullah Anjum; discussion on agenda of water conservation and sustainability by Dr. Ghulam Samad; National Tariff Policy by Dr. Usman Qadir; Global Value Chains by Dr. Karim Khan and an attempt to understand discrepancies in line of faith and gender by Dr. Zulfiqar Ali are some important themes to look into.

Among the important policy insights that I have learned through this book is that the art of good policymaking requires a deep understanding of the root of the problem and then making changes that have a foundation in research. If one develops the right skills to identify the right policy gaps as shown by Dr. Haque, then one will realize that path to development may not require big policy changes but small shifts. Such as in case of tax policy paradigm shift, Dr. Haque makes one see how if one changes the narrative of us being a tax cheater nation (being promoted by donors) as a premise to trusting people, then our whole approach to tax policy will shift from targeting low tax to GDP ratio to rise to simplification of tax structures. Which as shown by Dr. Haque will not only lead to a tremendous positive impact on our tax collection targets with an expansion of the tax base but will also help in the reduction of economic

⁵ The issue of reforms within the discourse was taken up in the context of local governments, institutional and civil service reforms, and reform of electoral processes. To find a detailed analysis of civil service reform, please refer to PIDE's book titled "Public Sector Efficiency: Perspective on Civil Service Reform".

⁶ To learn more about the related issues, please refer to the PIDE book titled "Cities- Engines of Growth".

⁷ Please refer to the PIDE COVID-19 eBook, PIDE COVID newsletter, e-book, PIDE COVID-19 archives.

⁸ Please refer to recent PIDE publication COVID-19 and Pakistan's Economy by Dr. Mohammad Nasir, Dr. Mahmood Khalid, Dr. Abdul Jalil, Dr. Naseem Faraz and Dr. Nasir Iqbal for more details of their work.

⁹ Many other researchers from PIDE took part in COVID-19 response. To see the complete list of team members, please refer to the PIDE COVID-19 eBook, PIDE COVID Newsletter, e-book and PIDE COVID-19 archives.

distortions as a result of the current system of excessive taxation and that too at unnecessarily high rates.

Similarly, if we develop an understanding that our failure of public investments is rooted firstly in not having cost-benefit analysis as a parameter to chose project on and secondly by not looking for future return generation from the aimed asset, then we will realize that only if our planners make a minor paradigm shift from input-based to output-based planning, then problem of why our public investments are not contributing much to growth can be resolved.

Moreover, a simple realization that how we have killed the culture of promoting our talent both in the private and public sector by offering limited opportunities for career growth has made our country talent repellant, can help us not only re-structure our human resource (HR) practices better but help in devising policies to reverse brain drain. However, to make this shift, the first thing that is required is the right identification of problems that only comes with deep research, communication of one's research to others, and also learning from others. Hence for evidence-based policymaking, research is the key and that too that is motivated towards national interests and not merely feeding into donor requirements for need of funding or benefits.

Acknowledgements

PIDE is extremely grateful to all the invited speakers. Without their deep insights and experience, we would not have been able to bring forward something as meaningful as we have now. On behalf of PIDE, I will like to acknowledge these exceptional intellectuals of Pakistan from whom we learned a lot namely Mr. Haroon Sharif, Dr. Afia Shehribano Zia, Dr. Nida Kirmani, Dr. Zeba Sathar, Dr. G. M. Arif, Dr. Durr-e-Nayab, Dr. Saman Nazir, Mr. Bilal Rao, Dr. Manzoor Ahmad, Mr. Muhammad Ashraf, Ms. Robina Ather, Dr. Ryan Brasher, Ms. Zaigham Habi, Mr. Ahmed Kamal, Mr. Syed Abu Ahmad Akif, Mr. Naeem Qureshi, Mr. Muhammad Rizwan, Mr. Wajahat Malik, Mr. Zafar Iqbal, Mr. Nadeem Khurshid, Dr. Naveed Iftikhar, Miss Maira Khan, Mr. Ibrahim Khalil, Mr. Umar Nadeem, Mr. Gonzalo J. Varela, Prof. Adil Najam, Mr. Raza Rumi, Dr. Aasim Sajjad Akhtar, Mr. Nawfal Saleemi, Mr. Ammar Rashid, Dr. Ishrat Hussain, Dr. Naveed Iftikhar, Ms. Maha Ahmed, Dr. Amna Ansari, Mr. Abdal Mufti, Ms. Mariam Aamir, Mr. Feisal Naqvi, Dr. Pervaiz Tahir, Mr. Michael Kugelman, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haq, Dr. Zain Ul Abidin, Dr. Idrees Khawaja, Dr. Zahid Asghar, Dr. Samia Altaf, Dr. Murtaza Haider, Dr. Christoph Scherrer, Mr. Amer Zafar Durrani, Dr. M. Azeem Khan, Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan, Mr. Arif Nadeem, Dr. Umer Khalid, Dr. Ammar A. Malik, Prof. Adeel Malik, Dr. Noman Ahmad, Mr. Abdul Hafeez Sheikh Pasha, Mr. Wasim Hayat Bajwa, Mr. Muhammad Adil Mansoor, Mr. Aqif Saeed, Mr. Samir Ahmed, Ms. Maheen Rehman, Mr. Atyab Tahir, Mr. Ahmed Ali Zia, Mr. Malik Ahmed Jalal, Mr. Imran Azhar, Mr. Wasim Sajjad, Mr. Irfan Qadir, Mr. Hasan Askari Rizvi, Dr. S. Akbar Zaidi, Ms. Shireen Mustafa, Mr. Moazzam Janjua, Mr. Tariq Malik, Mr. Tariq Bajwa, and Dr. Ilhan Niaz.

Further, I will also like to thank Dr. Salman Shah for holding a consultative session with PIDE and representatives of Lahore Development Authority (LDA) and University of Management and Technology (UMT) on PM's high rise construction initiative; Pakistan Sugar Mills Association's Representative for joining PIDE's webinar on sugar Industry and all participants in PIDE's conferences on "Doing Development Better- Analyzing The PSDP" and on "Doing Taxes Better".

Last but not least, I will like to thank my colleagues and students who provided inputs by means of comprehensive summaries to extract policy messages from these discussions. This task could not have been completed without their kind help. So for this, I will like to offer my extreme gratitude to Dr. Ayaz Ahmad, Dr. Hassan Rasool, Dr. Rizwan Ul Haq, Dr. Hafsa Hina, Ms. Unbreen Qayyum, Mr. Fahd Zulfiqar, Ms. Fizzah Khalid Butt, Mr. Hafeez Ur Rehman Hadi, Mr. Muhammad Rafay Rehman, Ms. Filza Ayaz, Ms. Ramsha Masood Ahmad, Ms. Syeda Um Ul Baneen, Ms. Ayesha Waheed, Mr. Ahmad Saeed, Ms. Mehwish Kanwal and also to my brother Irfan Bhai for teaching me with much-needed editing skills.

Last but the least I would like to offer my extreme gratitude to Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque and all our senior researchers who took lead in arranging these seminars and conferences namely Dr. Durre Nayab, Dr. Ghulam Samad, Dr. Karim Khan, Dr. Abedullah Anjum, Dr. Nasir Iqbal, and Dr. Muhammad Nasir. And as a last note, I will also like to acknowledge the leadership of Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque for providing us all with a platform for collective brainstorming. Not only this discourse is helping us learn the art of policymaking but also will hopefully help us take PIDE to the stature that it once had within the policy arena as the leading policy research institute of the developing world.

Regional Connectivity and Research Needs

Mr. Haroon Sharif



Source: <https://www.viewpoint.net.in/2019/12/03/moody-report/amp/>

Takeaways

- *Pakistan has opened up for Foreign Direct Investment FDI, yet failing to attract it – Why?*
- *Improvement in industrial and growth policy are required to attract FDI*
- *Modern technologies should be adopted in both production and policy implementation*
- *Ease of doing business has improved over the years but needs to improve further*
- *CPEC can help but only if economic diplomacy takes prominence over strategic goals*
- *Emerging markets in western China, Pakistan, Central Asia and possibly Iran can help*

Growth is the most fundamental indicator of development and also among the key agenda of PIDE. For the last many years, Pakistan has not done well in terms of growth. And post COVID-19 recessionary pressure will grow further. Hence, understanding the drivers of growth slowdown both pre and post COVID-19 along with identification of the plausible opportunities through which Pakistan can increase the size of its economy is critical.

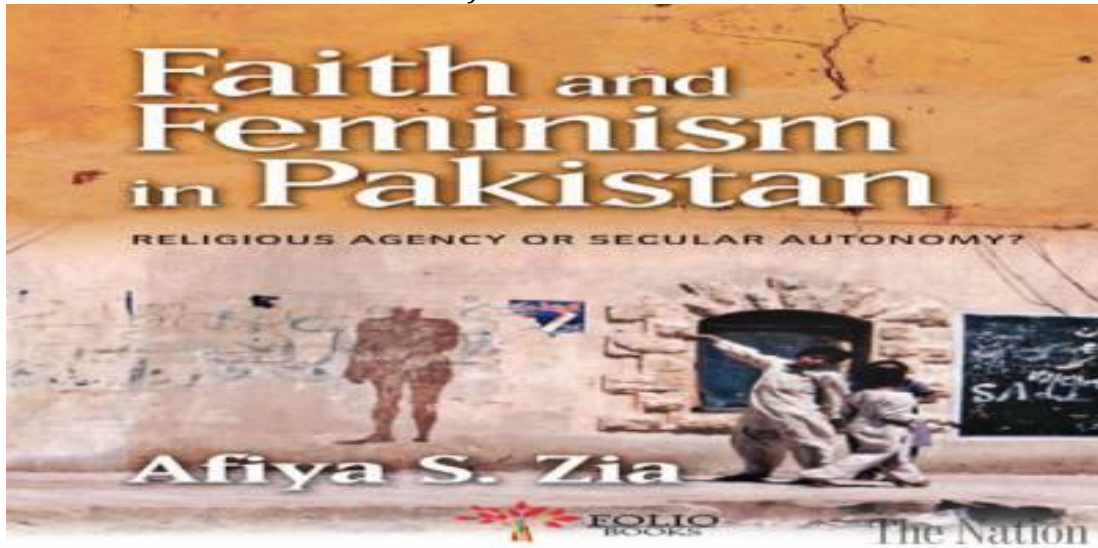
With this intent, PIDE in this seminar attempted to understand how growth can be enhanced through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)¹⁰ and what role can regional connectivity, especially in the context of CPEC can play in such a nexus¹¹. More importantly, this talk is built around the identification of two key processes related to the inflow of FDI that is what are the constraints within Pakistan that are stopping such investment inflows and how the policy environment can be made better to attract more of them.

¹⁰ Please refer to PIDE blogs related to investment opportunities in Pakistan titled "Need of the Hour: Simplicity and not Complexity in the SEZ Act" and "Production or Real Estate Activities: What do we want from SEZs and IEs?"

¹¹ Please refer to PIDE blogs titled "CPEC: Phases and Challenges" and "CPEC and Pakistan's Debt Burden" for a more detailed analysis of CPEC's role for Pakistan's economy.

Faith and Feminism in Pakistan

Dr. Afia Shehrbano Zia



Source: <https://nation.com.pk/10-Feb-2019/review-on-faith-and-feminism-in-pakistan-religious-agency-or-secular-autonomy>

Takeaways

- *Evaluates divergent feminist explanations of female agency within Islamic society*
- *Argues in favor of a secular, human rights approach to feminist agency within Pakistan*

The recent *aurat movement* has brought to prominence the issue of female rights which despite its immense importance remains the most neglected part within our society's discourse. However, at PIDE, we have a rich tradition of research on the issues of gender disparities from its identification in educational and health endowments and its labor market consequence to understanding the very formation of gender roles within Pakistan's patriarchal system¹².

To further this research agenda and understand how to design effective policy interventions that can strengthen positions of females within Pakistan, it is vital to develop an understanding of the link of religious beliefs and the female agency. This was the prime motivation to hold this talk within PIDE.

Learning from Dr. Afia Shehrbano Zia's work on the issue, PIDE found that literature on feminist thought can broadly be divided into two categories referred by Zia as "Islamic Feminism" and "Secular Feminism". However, Zia builds an argument in favor of a secular, human rights approach to feminist agency, refuting the claim that secular thoughts have no meaning and relevance for Pakistan's Muslim females.

¹² For more detail of gender dynamics in educational endowments and its labor force outcomes, please refer to the following studies by PIDE staff members: Qureshi, M. G. (2012, 2015) and Qureshi, M. G., & Quyyum, A. (2017).

Gender, Urban Spaces and Mobility in Lyari, Karachi

Dr. Nida Kirmani



Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1445156>

Takeaways

- *An understanding of females experiences in a crime-ridden area such as Lyari*
- *Use of Recreation as a means to push against patriarchal boundaries by female – how?*

Urban development despite its tremendous growth potential has been the most ignored policy area. PIDE, under Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, is pushing for a policy narrative that may encourage cities to become engine of growth¹³. One dimension to push such a change is to mobilize females to come out and participate in the labor force¹⁴.

Time and again, PIDE's research has shown that gender is primarily an issue of rural areas only. And that the dynamics in big cities are unlike the common perception of limited female agency. Building on this insight, PIDE through this talk has tried to re-invent the image of urban females even further – but this time not from the angle of their economic activity but more so how they make their day to day lives fun.

Exploring the females' lives in Lyari, Karachi, Dr. Kirmani in her research highlights urban female dynamism in how they create comfort and fun for themselves in an area that is known for conflict across criminal gangs, political parties, and law enforcement agencies. Hence, there is more to Pakistani urban females than just merely identifying them as victims of violence. Hence, lesson for policymaking from this talk is that it is to identify such lever of female agency in poverty and conflict-ridden Pakistani communities and make policy intervention to capture such females to bring a meaningful impact in the lives of people of areas such as Lyari.

¹³ Please refer to books titled "Cities- Engines of Growth" and "Framework of Economic Growth, 2020" for detailed analysis.

¹⁴ For more detail of gender dynamics in educational endowments and its labor force outcomes, please refer to the following studies by PIDE staff members: Qureshi, M. G. (2012, 2015) and Qureshi, M. G., & Quyyum, A. (2017).

Population Growth: Implications for Human Development

Dr. Zeba Sathar, Dr. G. M. Arif and Dr. Durr-e-Nayab



Source: <https://www.natcour.com/news/2018/11/time-to-population-bomb/>

Takeaways

- *Why Pakistan has not been able to control its high population growth?*
- *Is it the failure of demand side factors or supply?*

Pakistan has the highest population growth rate in South Asia, standing at 2.4% as per the 2017 census. Why have we failed to restrict our population growth rate close to 1.5% when other South Asian countries like Bangladesh and India have successfully done so is the question that has been debated within PIDE, recently. Two contrasting viewpoints had emerged where Dr. Zeba Sathar's sided with the policy failure on the supply side and Dr. G. M. Arif and Dr. Durr-e-Nayab built their case for demand-side factors as the most important cause¹⁵.

Dr. Sathar argued on lapse on the supply-side as the key policy failure. Building on high rates of abortion within Pakistani urban females, she argued demand for population control exists and such high abortion rates indicate a failure of family planning services to stop such unwanted births at the stage of conception¹⁶. Whereas, Dr. Arif emphasized that unless the norm of having small families is not cultivated culturally and a discussion on the importance of small family size does not initiate at household and community level, we will not see our investment into family planning initiative yield fruit. Dr. Nayab added to the debate of demand-side causes of population outburst by highlighting how in absence of an institutional mechanism of old-age support for general population within Pakistan, there will always emerge the need of having high family size to have children as means of financial insurance for parents at the end of their life cycle.

Hence, the debate ended at the consensus that there is a need to take a holistic view of the family planning initiative. Stress needs to move from family size control by creating easy access to family planning means to create a norm of small family size. However, supply-side dynamics cannot be ignored, and should not be ignored also. Human development is a long-term strategy, but in the short-term creating awareness through media, civil society, and lady health workers is the need of the day.

¹⁵ For more details, please refer to the PIDE blog titled High Population Growth in Pakistan: A supply and Demand Side issue.

¹⁶ Please refer to the PIDE blog titled "Educated Women are at Higher Risk of Mistimed Birth" for more on this.

Medicalization of Childbirth in Pakistan

Dr. Saman Nazir



Source: <https://iops.org.pk/course/challenging-the-biomedical-model-of-childbirth/>

Takeaways

- *C-Section rates in Pakistan have doubled between 2006-07 to 2012-13*
- *Maternal or neonatal mortality rates have not decreased as C- section increased*
- *These patterns indicate a practice of overuse of C-section for reasons other than health*

Public health is another domain where PIDE is currently developing its research base. In past, PIDE has produced research related to mortality rates (infant, maternal and neonatal) and malnourishment from identification of their levels to understanding of their determinants. Similarly, understanding the policy implication of interventions like lady health workers for their economic and health impacts¹⁷, doing birth registration surveys and research on what are out of pocket health expenditures¹⁸ for people have been some of PIDE's prominent contributions in this domain.

However, with this research from PIDE by Dr. Saman Nazir¹⁹, not only an extremely unique policy question in context of public health was addressed but how it has captured a practice of over-medicalization by doctors for their economic gains, has deep policy implications. Further, its findings are interesting from a commoner perspective too given mal-practice of over-medicalization at some level is known to everyone, yet nothing can be notified to relevant authorities given no evidence for it can ever be found. Hence, this research has implication not just on policy front but also in context of welfare of society.

¹⁷ Please refer to Farooq, S., Nayab, D., & Arif, G. M. (2014) for more details of PIDE work in this dimension.

¹⁸ Please refer to Khalid, M., & Sattar, A. (2016) for more details of PIDE in this context.

¹⁹ Please refer to PIDE Working Papers No. 176:2020 titled as "The C-Section Epidemic in Pakistan" and PIDE blog titled "The C-Section Epidemic in Pakistan" for more detailed analysis.

Reforms of Local Government in Pakistan

Mr. Bilal Rao



Source: <https://smjrizvi.wordpress.com/2015/04/20/local-government-empower-the-people/>

Takeaways

- *Direct election of city mayors as an essential shift*
- *Clash resolution between functions of development authorities and City Mayors*

Why the devolution process has not reaped positive results? PIDE believes that it is because so far stress had been on devolution and little thought has gone to how to make it effective²⁰. Hence, to generate debate towards effective devolution, PIDE took an initiative to arrange a seminar on reforms in local government to start the discourse. In this context, some important questions on which the PIDE platform is gearing up to develop an understanding of the reform process include how this process is being financed and what role has the 18th amendment has in it. Besides these, a valid concern that Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque is pointing time and again is that given we are witnessing a lot of stress in media of letting go of 18th amendment and hence a move back to re-centralization - hypothetically if such a reversal indeed take place, then what can be plausible implications for the local governments needs attention and debate.

With the above agenda in mind, PIDE in this seminar tried to understand the critical aspects of local government reforms that are currently underway across Punjab and KPK. Speaker firstly highlights the direct election of city mayors as an essential shift in the current setup and with that also discusses the problems that are coming within its implementational process. In this context, the speaker discusses not just the process through which functions of development authorities like CDA, LDA, etc. are being devolved and how their services may interact with powers of directly elected mayors.

Some important questions raised at our platform were to understand the revenue side of local governments along with transparency in the election process. The key point for finding the right electable mayor was stressed to be not just an asset declaration in the election process but also the transparency in how these representative finance elections. And secondly, it was pointed that as long as financial resource allocation is linked to population sizes as per NFC, the incentives for over-reporting of population and hence incentives for corruption remain. Hence reform process should also re-think the mechanism of local generation of revenues for the city mayor and its transparency. Such a system where the mayor can be made accountable for funds directly collected from the community, PIDE believes can help reflect citizen priorities within local governments.

²⁰ Please refer to the PIDE blog titled "Decentralization and Institutions: An Insight" for more details.

National Tariff Policy

Dr. Manzor Ahmad, Mr. Muhammad Ashraf, Ms. Robina Ather



Source: <https://www.twpteam.com/post/another-tariff-another-downturn>

Takeaways

- *Tariff has been used as a revenue generation tool pre-National Tariff Policy 2019*
- *New National Tariff Policy-2019 has made tariff an instrument of industrialization*
- *This policy initiative is believed to increase Pakistan's export competitiveness*

Tariff structure is an important policy instrument. Not only it defines incentives for international trade but can also have meaningful implication for a country's industrial development. Hence, considering its significance, this seminar has tried to bring forth the policy shift that recently announced National Tariff Policy is trying to offer and why?

Table1: Inverse Relation between Import Tariffs and Exports

	Weighted Average Tariff	Exports	Evidence of Inverse Relation	
2000	23%	USD 8.6 billion	Tariff decrease and exports increased	
2015	8.9%	USD 25.1 billion		
2018	12.7%	USD 23.2 billion		Tariff increases and exports decreased

Source: Dr. Muhammad Ashraf's Presentation

The key insight that came from this discussion was how through the current tariff policy the institutional control of this instrument has been shifted from FBR to National Tariff Commission²¹. The thought behind this shift is to allow tariff setting to be used as an instrument of promoting trade competitiveness and industrialization rather than a mere means of revenue generation and filling in revenue gaps in the tax targets. However, this has raised some interesting questions as to how such a shift will be sustained in the future. Considering this, PIDE has taken up the issue of persistently high fiscal deficits and revenue gaps in Pakistan in PIDE's Conference - Doing Taxes Better: Shifting the Paradigm of Tax Policy and Administration. The idea of the conference was mainly to understand the gaps in Pakistan's taxation system which forced governments for the last many years to increase import taxes as opposed to the reduction of tariffs as a measure of trade liberalization as has been followed in most of other developing countries.

²¹ Please to PIDE Policy Viewpoint No. 14:2020 titled as "National Tariff Policy 2019-24" and PIDE Blogs titled as "Pakistan's New Tariff Policy –Long Overdue Strategy for the Future" for more details on the issue.

Pride and Abstention: Christian National Identity in Pakistan

Dr. Ryan Brasher



Source: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2019-10/pakistan-minorities-christians-violence-human-rights.html>

Takeaways

- *Christian students own their Pakistani Identity*
- *Divisions are more in line of ethnic identities than religious*
- *Dr. Ryan maintains that his finding needs to be tested against more broader samples*

Are people discriminated within Pakistan in the name of religion? To understand this question, PIDE through this seminar tried to learn from the work of Dr. Brasher on the issue. The key insights were very interesting. In contrast to common perception from the literature²², Dr. Brasher's found that within his sample of students of FC College Lahore, Christians were found to be not just well integrated but having pride in being Pakistani. Hence as per his surveys, the feeling of less national attachment was more in line with ethnic division than religion.

However, since understanding Christian identity, citizenry, and voice within majoritarian Muslim populated countries like Pakistan is a complex process, Dr. Brasher maintained that the external validity of his findings needs to be tested against much richer samples and also analysis.

²² As per Dr. Brasher's research, the literature on the issue can be divided into two broader domains. One domain that analyzes the problem from the perspective of political and legal rights along with the context of social discrimination and violence and the other that uses the anthropological and sociological distinctions such as caste and working-class status. In both these contexts, Christian within Pakistan has been classified as oppressed.

Water and Sustainable Development

Ms. Zaigham Habi, Mr. Ahmed Kamal, Mr. Syed Abu Ahmad Akif, and Mr. Naeem Qureshi



Source: <https://www.alamy.com/>

Takeaways

- *Pakistan has moved from ranking of water stressed to that of water scarce*
- *Almost 90% of water of Pakistan is used in agriculture out of which 50 % is lost*
- *Crisis has started not in agriculture sector alone but also in sustainability of urban needs*
- *Water crisis within urban areas is much related to policy and administrative inefficiencies*

Time and time again, the issue of water comes within the public debate. Its significance can not be stressed enough. There are so many questions that PIDE has in the past and will like to take on for addressing issues related to water and sustainable development²³.

Among some of the gaps that PIDE under Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque's guidance is trying to understand are issues related to water productivity within the agriculture sector of Pakistan as to why water for agriculture is not being priced at competitive rates. No water prices or very low water prices lead to over-investment by farmers in water-inefficient crops like sugarcane? Is sugarcane the most water-intensive crop? Can having more dams resolve the problem of water loss within agriculture? However, the issue of water shortages and losses is not limited to the agriculture sector alone. These issues have significance for urban development too. Here again, given the shortages of water comes an issue of water pricing and its administration.

This seminar brought out various stakeholders from the ministry of water resources to people working in the private sector for water conservation. This seminar not only brought out the structural issue for water conservation, such as the debate on dams, efficient use of water for urban management, agricultural and industrial usage, etc. but also on how to conserve water in our day to day uses.

²³ Please refer to PIDE Policy Viewpoint No.10:2019 titled "Turning solarization of agricultural tubewells into a social, economic and environmental Win-win in Balochistan" and PIDE Policy Viewpoint No.9:2017 titled "Efficient use of ground water for agriculture in Pakistan" for some past work on the issue related to water and environment.

Sustainable Urban Transportation

Mr. Muhammad Rizwan



ADVANCING
PUBLIC
TRANSPORT



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ApE3eXNRfIA>

Takeaways

- *Planning of urban transportation as a system*
- *Objective to encourage public transport and integrate it with walk or bicycle*
- *Car use needs to be discouraged*

PIDE has a history of working on urban issues. Keeping with its tradition, PIDE is actively working on many dimensions of urban planning to re-think the urban space of Pakistan from planning for its residential and commerce requirements²⁴ and also on the issue of what should be policy stance for generating inclusive and sustainable means of connectivity within a city. This lecture is first in the line of many to come on the issues of urban management.

This talk explains how improvements within urban transportation should not be merely made through a few sets of isolated projects as is usually done within Pakistan, such as the metro bus project or a few flyovers but through working on it as a system of interlinked transportation facilities. The objective was to show how in organized urban communities, the planning of the urban transport system is done in a way that people who walk or use bicycles are well integrated with public transport facilities. Such a policy will not only control excessive car use but will encourage the use of public transport.

Through this talk, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque is not only trying to creating a knowledge base of how road and train networks should be spread across a city – a thought process ignored in the mindset of Pakistan’s policymakers but points towards a very important question of what is our current car policy. Is Pakistan subsidizing car use and hence the automobile industry through the current layout of urban road and public transport network?²⁵ This question just not has an efficiency dimension but also an equity side to it that PIDE is trying to highlight through this discussion.

²⁴ Please refer to PIDE Policy Viewpoint No.12:2020 titled as “Lahore’s Urban Dilemma” for more on mix-use buildings.

²⁵ Please refer to Pide blogs titled “Bikes, Density, and Cars”, “Why are we subsidizing car use?” and “Exposing the Metro Bus Scheme: for more on the issue.

Media and Responsible Tourism in Pakistan

Mr. Wajahat Malik



Figure 1: Account of Mr. Wajahat's Travel across Pakistan in a Rickshaw

Takeaways

- *Tourism needs to be promoted responsibly*
- *The negative environmental and cultural impacts of tourism need to be identified*
- *Solutions for protecting the communities exposed to tourism need to be debated at public forums*

Tourism is a double-edged sword. At one level, it boosts the business activity for the tourist places but at the other level can also have a negative impact on both environment and also the culture of the visited spots. Given that the speaker, Mr. Wajahat Malik, has been running an active media campaign to create awareness in this very context across Pakistan, hence through this seminar, PIDE tried to learn from his experiences²⁶.

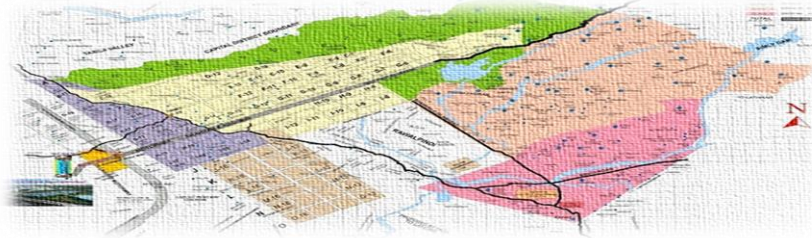
From his account of travels across different parts of Pakistan, important policy insight that came out was that indeed an opportunity in tourism development seems to exist for Pakistan especially in the unexplored Northern areas. Yet, the tourists disregard for the physical and cultural landscapes through practices like littering, photography without permission, and increased incidence of open waste dumping, traffic congestion and cutting and burning of wood remains a big concern for existing and unexplored tourist spots and needs an active policy check. These issues such as open waste dumping; increased traffic and tree loss become even more magnified in light of the lack of infrastructural support from the government.

In the wake of the identified issues, Mr. Wajahat has been delivering lectures at universities, meeting policymakers, discussing unregulated and unchecked domestic tourism, and creating a dialogue with environmentalists and civil society members about destruction associated with unregulated tourism.

²⁶ Please refer to the PIDE blog titled "Mapping out a Tourism Policy for the Potohar Plateau" to learn more about tourism in Pakistan and its impacts.

Master Plan of Islamabad 2020-2040

Mr. Zafar Iqbal, Mr. Nadeem Khurshid, Dr. Naveed Iftikhar, Miss Maira Khan



Source: <https://www.islamabadscene.com/>

Takeaways

- *What is master plan of Islamabad – A brief history*
- *How often should such a plan be revised*
- *Should there be city planning or should cities develop organically?*
- *Has master planning of Islamabad ensured it as an inclusive city?*
- *Should Islamabad's restricted commercial activity - it being an administrative city be maintained?*

Through this panel discussion, Dr. Nadeem ul Haque has provoked an important policy debate that *whether a city should be planned or should it develop organically*. In this perspective, the panelists brought in their views in the context of Islamabad's master plan. What was its original design to begin with, how it has evolved, and what it should evolve to, and how? - were the key inspection points of the seminar²⁷.

Some interesting divisions came out from this debate across the views of urban planners and the CDA representative on one side and Dr. Nadeem ul Haque as an economist with no formal training in urban planning on the other. In this divide, the former group believed that planning is essential for the development of any city as opposed to Dr. Nadeem who believes that the need of planning at some level is being confused with the requirement of good governance and that planning exercises by imposing too much regulation do more harm than good for cities.

In this context, some important questions in the context of how often should plan to be revised and how to involve citizens' voices into the planning process were also debated²⁸. Further, some important themes, related specifically to Islamabad such as restrictions on commercial activity within its residential areas on the premise of it being an administrative city and element of inclusivity in its initial design and in its growth over time were also discussed in depth.

²⁷ Please refer to PIDE Policy Viewpoint No. 16:2020 titled "The Islamabad Master Plan" for more details.

²⁸ Please refer to the PIDE blog titled "Urban Management -Thinking Beyond Master Plans" for more on inclusive urban development.

Designing Affordable Housing Policy

Mr. Ibrahim Khalil and Mr. Umar Nadeem



Source: <https://www.ghar47.com/2014/10/01/history-of-affordable-housing-in-pakistan/>

Takeaways

- *To ensure affordability for all, the supply and demand need to be synchronized*
- *Demand side initiative - mortgage depth without increasing supply may lead to failure*
- *Supply-side focus without working on the land supply regulation may fail too*

Policy discourse that what should be the path to affordable housing within urban planning is something on top of the PIDE's agenda just as that of the current Government's. Prime Minister (PM) is trying to move in this direction through two initiatives namely the Naya Pakistan Housing Program and secondly through PM's directive of high rise construction. In this context, PIDE is evaluating both programs under a series of seminars²⁹.

Within this current talk the speakers, Mr. Ibrahim Khalil and Mr. Umar assess and analyze the government's 'Naya Pakistan Housing Program (NPHP)'. The primary focus of the discussion is affordability in terms of housing and assessment of the implications of factors that affect affordable housing namely interest rates, mortgage terms, income, and cost of housing. The speakers stressed that to truly benefit from the NPHP, a multidimensional and cross-sectoral policy needs to be devised. This policy should address two fundamental issues, which include regulation of housing finance and real estate markets and the efforts for the revitalization of the domestic industry connected to the construction sector.

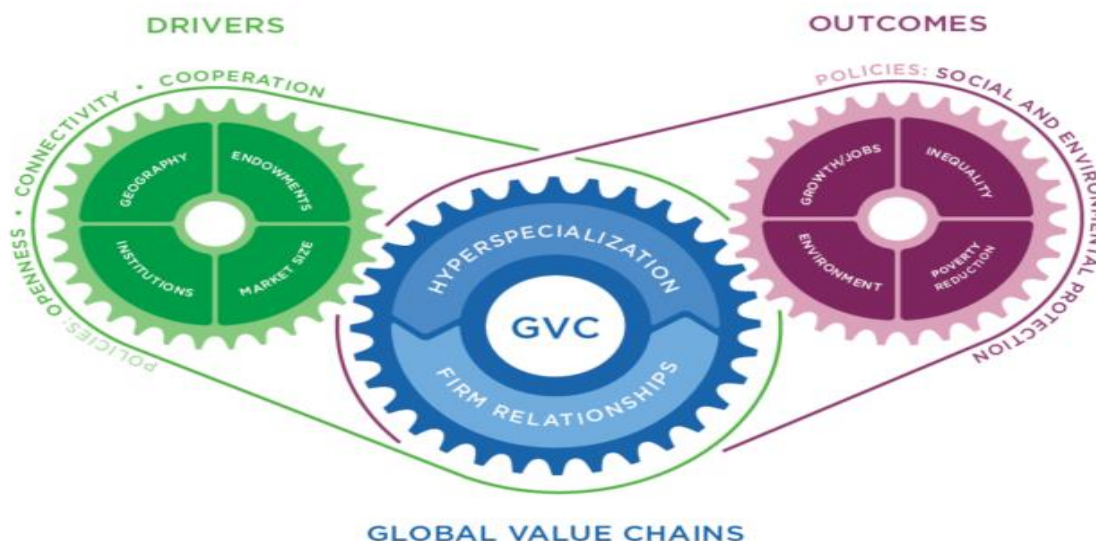
However, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque's take was slightly different. The problem, in his view, is not the assessment of factors that may impact the Naya Pakistan Housing Program but to assess the two initiatives by PM which one is most effective for creating affordable means of living. Given that it is common knowledge as construction goes high, the cost of housing relative to land decreases. Hence just applying this insight along with that schemes like NPHP will only increase the horizontal spread of the city further, Dr. Nadeem stressed that high rise construction is most appropriate. And in this context, the most important thing is to de-regulate high rise construction and let market forces take over³⁰.

²⁹ Please refer to PIDE Policy Viewpoint No.12:2020 titled "Lahore's Urban Dilemma", PIDE Blogs titled as "Urban Management -Thinking Beyond Master Plans", "High Rise, Lahore Urban Sprawl and PM Khan's Directive", "Our Poor 'Ease of Living' Indicators" and Where are the opportunities for the poor? that spark the debate on the inclusivity of the poor in urban growth.

³⁰ Please refer to PIDE Policy Viewpoint No.12:2020 titled as "Lahore's Urban Dilemma" and PIDE blog titled as "High Rise, Lahore Urban Sprawl and PM Khan's Directive" for more details on the issue.

Global Value Chains & Trade Policy

Mr. Gonzalo J. Varela



Source: <http://www.developmentafrica.net/2019/07/07/how-important-are-global-value-chains-for-development/>

Takeaways

- *Pakistan is not benefiting from global value chains (GVC)*
- *Opportunity in GVC will only come if Pakistan can attract FDI*
- *Trade costs need to be cut further to integrate Pakistani exporters in GVC*

Pakistan has been struggling with its trade deficit and export competitiveness for the last many decades. Integration in global value chains not only has the power to boost a country's exports but can also serve as a means of technological transfers as FDI to that effect flows in, hence assessment, where Pakistan stands in this process, is crucial.

With this intent, PIDE through this lecture tried to gather evidence as to what extent are Pakistani exporter integrated into global value chains (GVC) and gaining from them. The findings show a bleak picture, and the prominent feature that comes out is that not all Pakistani exporters were well-integrated.

In this context, presenter Mr. Gonzalo J. Varela identified two critical corrective measures. First, Pakistan needs to attract more foreign direct investment (FDI), particularly the type of FDI that is efficient seeking, and that is aiming at setting up export platforms within Pakistan, which creates more and better jobs within Pakistan to produce for the world. Second, Pakistan needs to find a way to decrease trade cost that can quickly accumulate as goods move around global value chains also presents an avenue through which Pakistan can better integrate into such chains.

Ideas Matter: A Reading List for Policy Wallahs

Prof. Adil Najam



Source: <https://www.vectorstock.com/>

Takeaways

- *The policy ideas can only come when a person reads widely*
- *Leaders read books, follower read newspaper and losers do not read anything*

Dr. Nadeem ul Haque envisions PIDE as a consistent supplier of dynamic students that have a thinking mind of their own. And that PIDE's students should have the ability to ask right policy questions and an open mind that provides implementable solutions. To motivate students, he through Dr. Adil Najam tried to introduce them to love of reading and how great ideas can be learned from books.

Key Policy Idea from discussed books

"Nudge" by Richard Thaler- Small Policy shift may align incentives in a way that can have huge effect.

"Thinking Fast and Slow" by Daniel Kahneman- Political motivations compel the politicians to make fast decisions to get quick results.

"The Black Swan" by Nassim Taleb- Crisis can not be predicted but preparation of safety measures can be done.

"Silent Spring" by Rachel Carson-. Makes one learn the analytical art of evidence based policy making.

"The Strategy of Conflict" by Thomas Schelling- Shows how not strategizing for behavior of the opponent can lead to policy failures.

"Governing the Commons" by Elinor Ostrom – Reveals a contrast to notion of self-interest invisible hand in form of functioning commons

"Why Nations Fail" by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson- Provides evidence for Institutional explanation of why some nation fail and some rise.

"The Great Escape" by Angus Deaton. Challenges the hypothesis of policy makers to approach the poor as if making aggregate decisions as a group by providing evidence in how those in poverty make individual choices.

"Development as Freedom" by Amartya Sen- Freedom of people defined in terms of their capabilities to choose for themselves.

"Human Development Report by Mahbub-ul-Haq" Get to see the art of explaining complex concepts through simple graphs.

Development Politics and Donors reflection from a Practitioner

Raza Rumi



Source: <https://rogerhelmermep.wordpress.com>

Takeaways

- Failure of donor's project rest in taking on projects without proper research by our planners
- Comfort of donors to deal with bureaucracy creates avenues for leakages
- Civil Service reform that cut size of bureaucracy and increase its competency is need of the day

Who controls policy and policy-making processes in Pakistan? Is it the Pakistani policymakers or is it donors is the question explored in a series of seminars on aid and role of the donor. This seminar was the first one in line. Why PIDE believes this question holds crucial policy significance is because in its answer is hidden our sovereignty of thought? If it is the case indeed that we have lost our ability to think on our own and require outsourcing our policy decision to foreign experts, then can we still consider ourselves a free nation.

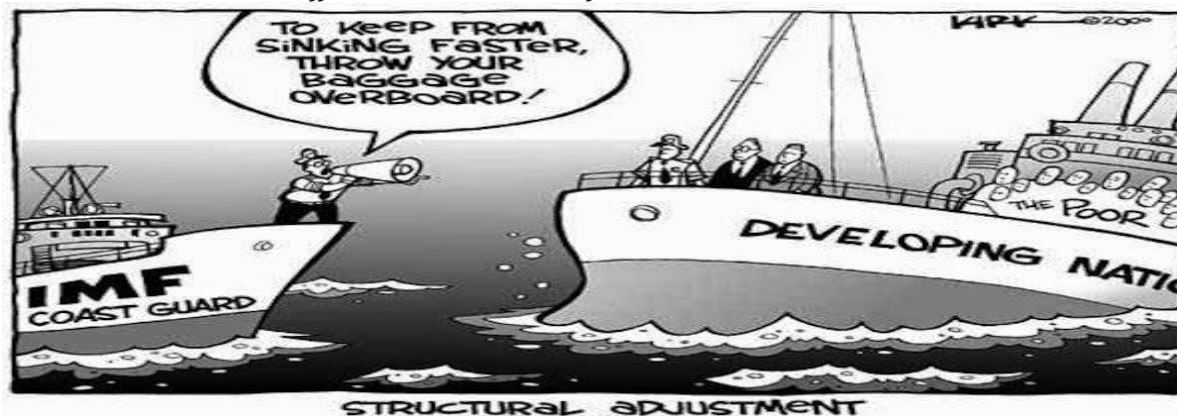
In view of Raza Rumi, sadly the policy discourse has left Pakistan because of our governments' constant lookout for external bailouts through aid time and again. Not only this has strengthened donor influence in Pakistan but has trapped us into an intellectual trap. Not only most of our research is donor-funded but we look towards outside help even to finance our reforms processes³¹. Hence you do not find our researcher now working on questions central to Pakistan's policy planning priorities but rather on issues motivated towards donor agenda only. Last but not the least, Raza Rumi elaborates in-depth his take on how our flawed bureaucracy has a major role in the vicious cycle of donor injections and failed outcomes³².

³¹ Please refer to Chapter 2: Reform Efforts in Pakistan: Limited Success and Possibilities for the Future by Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque in the book titled as "50 years of Pakistan's Economy: Traditional Topics and Contemporary Concerns" and book titled as "Looking Back: How Pakistan Became an Asian Tiger by 2050" again by Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque for more details on the issue.

³² Please refer to PIDE blogs titled "SDGs and Donor Involvement" and "Take Policy Back From the 'Economic Hit-men'" for more analysis.

Economy of Debt: Alternatives to Austerity and Neoliberalism in Pakistan

Dr. Aasim Sajjad Akhtar, Mr. Nawfal Saleemi, and Mr. Ammar Rashid



Source: <https://atlantablackstar.com>

Takeaways

- *Crises of Pakistan's Economy are for reasons that are more political than economic.*
- *After defense budget, not much is left which creates the need to go to IMF repeatedly*
- *IMF's support for neoliberal policies by structure are non-inclusive*

This seminar was a discussion on the paper presented³³, which had been written about the same time when the government of Pakistan decided to sign into the recent IMF program. Using the repeated entry of Pakistan into the IMF program as the central focus, speakers within this lecture tried to instigate a debate by identifying what has been the base of Pakistan's economic crisis and what was the political aspect of it.

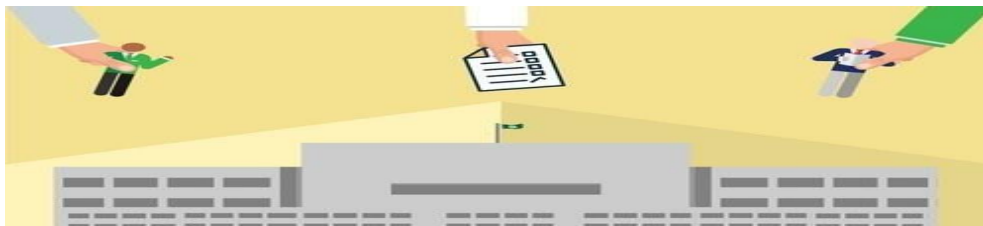
The main point around which the whole discussion revolves within the talk is how military expenditure within Pakistan takes up a significant share of budgetary funds, leaving not much room for the economic development of people. The presenters stress that unless this practice does not change, Pakistan will remain trapped in the cycle of underdevelopment. The cause of such a vicious cycle is two-fold as asserted by the presenters. Not only most of Pakistan's resources are wasted in the name of national security on unproductive activities, but our country repeatedly borrows to fill in the budgetary gaps by turning to institutions such as IMF.

As the last point, presenters in the backdrop of how economic fundamentals have trended for Pakistan, build a case for how the neoliberal policies committed under IMF structural programs are doom for failure. And these policies of opening up to market and taking up all economic resources from the state can be good slogans but cannot lead to sustainable and inclusive growth.

³³ The discussion paper titled as "Economy of Debt: Alternatives to Austerity and Neoliberalism in Pakistan" is available at <https://awamiworkersparty.org/economy-of-debt-position-paper/>.

State of Institutional Reforms

Dr. Ishrat Hussain



Source: <https://www.dawn.com>

Takeaways

- *Provides in-depth analysis of current civil service reform*
- *Details the process through which government size will be reduced*
- *Analyze the processes through which the governing institutions are being improved*

Dr. Ishrat Hussain, in this lecture, not only explains the key elements of institutional reforms that are currently being undertaken but also pinpoints the research gaps for future research that policymakers need from think tanks and academics³⁴. In this context, he not only gives a detailed description of civil service reforms but also highlights the performance gaps within ministries and governing institutions and how these are being removed within the ongoing-reform process.

Dr. Ishrat emphasized that the key objective of the reform process has been to increase efficiency and reduce the fiscal burden of the government. For this, he emphasized the current reform process is not only trying to cut the size of the federal government from an initial of 449 ministries to 324 but to figure out a method for strengthening of the remaining ministries by limiting the role of executive bodies to 87 and having rest as 237 autonomous bodies. Among the governing institution, he mainly focuses on the reform process within the State Bank of Pakistan, the Competition Commission of Pakistan, and the Auditor General of Pakistan, where he discussed how gaps in their performance are being corrected through various measures.

Within civil service reform, he gives an in-depth analysis of changes that are being made in recruitment, performance evaluation, and compensation of the new inductees along with through what ways future pension bills can be made affordable for the government. Dr. Ishrat's description for the civil service reform process highlights how incentives are being structured in a way that not only gets the best inductee based on merit, but there should be an equal opportunity of job acceleration for all. In this context, steps are being taken to eliminate differential treatment across cadre and non-cadre, to offer training to specialists and domain experts such as medical doctors, engineers, agriculturalists, economists and accountants, to devise a transparent and interactive performance evaluation system between supervisors and workers and how to make compensations in par with the private sector, especially for those at a senior position.

³⁴ Civil service reform has been on the PIDE's agenda for some time. To find a detailed analysis of it, please refer to PIDE's book titled "Public Sector Efficiency: Perspective on Civil Service Reform".

Charter City: Romer's Failed Attempt to Import Institutions

Dr. Naveed Iftikhar and Ms. Maha Ahmed



Source: <https://www.borgenmagazine.com/will-charter-cities-solve-global-poverty/>

Takeaways

- *Provides details of Paul Romer's idea of chartered city along with its critique*
- *The critique is based on the notion that such a city will not be accepted by locals*

Paul Romer is an exceptional economist. However, his idea of chartered city has attracted much criticism. In this seminar, the speaker explains the concept of Paul Romer's idea on the charter city³⁵ and provides a critique of its practical implementation. According to the speaker, this idea seems quite attractive on the theoretical front, but in practice, notion of importation of good institutions through the charter city in a country is very much eyed as to be challenging the sovereignty of people. Hence, a better alternative for the speaker is to work with the existing institutional setup and try to improve it.

The speaker at some level compared the idea of the chartered city as outsourcing of governance to some other country. However, as per Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque's analysis, this parallel is somewhat misguided. As the idea of the chartered city is starting a city with a new institutional setup. That set up may be influenced by some other country's institutional design but it is not comparable to the notion of institutional import as done in colonialism where governance of colonies remains with the colonizer's mother country.

³⁵ Please refer to <https://www.chartercitiesinstitute.org/post/paul-romer-on-charter-cities-and-what-we-learned-since> to find more of Paul Romer's idea of "Chartered City".

Unpacking Punjab's Education Reforms

Dr. Amna Ansari, Mr. Abdal Mufti and Ms. Mariam Aamir



Source: <https://digitallearning.eletsonline.com/>

Takeaways

- *Identification of structure of Punjab's educational reform process.*
- *What is Punjab's Early Childhood Learning Program and why?*
- *Taking training program to teachers themselves by monitoring their in-class room instruction.*

The seminar held at PIDE titled “Unpacking Punjab’s Education Reforms,” delved deeper into the education system of Punjab. The main focus of discussion was to understand the Early Childhood Education (ECE) initiative that the government of Punjab has currently initiated within its public schools and will be implemented from next year.

Among important changes that are underway in this reform process is that firstly the medium of instruction in Punjab is also being changed to Urdu, at least for the primary. Secondly, not only Punjab is the first province in Pakistan that has developed a two-year ECE curriculum but has changed its philosophy in terms of teacher training. Historically, in Punjab during the past 15 years, the model that was used to train teachers was a cascade model, so it was a top-to-bottom approach. This leads to a loss of learning at each level. Now, the focus lies on mentoring and support that starts from the school level, and training also takes place at that very level. Additionally, the system of E-Transfer is also underway in Punjab. This allows teachers to submit their transfer requests online, and it gives them an equal opportunity to participate and take advantage of this merit-based transfer system.

However, a key policy question that was raised at the seminar by Dr. Nadeem ul Haque was that why do we need teachers in this day of digitalization? Further, the given so much has been invested into education in terms of building both hard infrastructure and also teacher’s training with marginal outcomes³⁶ so is it now time that we look into other alternatives for instruction from in-classroom instruction to its digitization and evolve learning in classrooms from instruction to creative thinking.

³⁶ For more detail on this, please refer to the PIDE blog titled “Enough Brick and Mortar!”.

Law and Economics

Mr. Feisal Naqvi



Source: <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-relation-between-law-and-economics>

Takeaways

- *Colonial overhang in laws*
- *Existing Laws in Pakistan are creating economic distortions*
- *Laws need to be re-formulated in light of their economic impacts*

If one has to define economics in one word, then the word that suits best for it is "incentives." How incentives are defined for the economic actors is very much linked to the prevailing structure of laws in a country. Hence, understanding the legal system of Pakistan and where and how it is causing economic distortions is also one of the key agendas of PIDE's framework. In this context, PIDE is taking many steps to develop a knowledge base for a better understanding of existing laws and their economic effect.

So far, PIDE has conducted two seminars in this context. The first one is the talk under consideration by Mr. Feisel Naqvi, a leading Pakistani lawyer who primarily explains in-depth this very link of law and economics with Pakistan specific examples³⁷. And the second seminar is by Dr. Ikramul Haq, advocate supreme court, in a PIDE's conference on Doing Taxes Better, which had focused in detail the structure of laws that apply to Pakistan's tax system and their economic impacts.

The central theme of the seminar by Mr. Naqvi besides showing how laws having their colonial origins are creating wrong signals for economic activity in Pakistan was two-fold. Firstly, to make the audience understand the kind of economic disincentives that comes out from being governed under laws that are economically illiterate. And secondly, to explain how judiciary may make uninformed decisions or get overburden by litigations working under a misdirected legal framework as an unintended consequence of laws and their economic impacts are not well understood. In the context of the first objective, the speaker explains through examples of laws related to land and custom duties to start with and then moves on to the legal issues associated with the corporate sector development and bilateral investment treaties for Pakistan. The second issue is raised primarily from the perspective of flaws within laws about land rights and within the structure of the judicial system itself and its lack of understanding of the commercial activity.

³⁷ Please refer to PIDE Policy Knowledge Brief No.6:2020 titled as "The Economic Analysis of Law in Pakistan" for more in-depth analysis.

Making Sense of Joan Robinson on China

Dr. Pervaiz Tahir



Source: <https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/blog/joan-robinson-the-rational-rebel>

Takeaways

- Robinson's genius is evident from her prediction of China in 1950's that has proved true
- Prediction being that China would lead the world's economy in the late 20th century

China's model is fascinating for every country. Now, all the developing countries want to learn from it and appreciate the way they have controlled poverty and their population³⁸. Not just this everyone wants to understand how they use their massive population size so wisely that now they have turned the tables by becoming an economic power.

However, this was not always the case. Back in times of ma'am Joan Robinson, no one had thought that such a turn-around for china was ever possible. Yet not only ma'am Robinson could see and appreciate China's efforts but predicted China's economic power status as world leader status in the late 20th century that has now come true.

In this book launch event, the author Dr. Pervaiz Tahir explains the professional journey of Joan Robinson, who not only excelled in economic theory but was second to none in work. The aspects of her professional life that he has touched are how being a woman and having sympathetic views on China led Joan to lose out Nobel prize win and why.

³⁸ Please refer to the PIDE's study titled "Poverty Reduction in Pakistan: Learning from the Experience of China".

With ongoing Developments in Afghanistan and Tension Brewing between India and Pakistan: What are Prospects of Reconciliation and Peace in the Region

Mr. Michael Kugelman



Source: <https://jamesfaheyire.com/2019/11/08/india-pakistan-afghanistan-2001-2010/>

Takeaways

- *Peace seems a difficult possibility in the region*
- *Successful negotiation do not seem likely between Taliban and Afghan Government*
- *Toxic Anti-peace sentiments within current Indian regime is hurdle to peace with Pakistan*

Countries and even a region can not develop unless peace and security prevail. Pakistan has suffered from instability and conflict in Afghanistan for decades. Given that the USA is trying to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, hence what can be possible repercussions for the region during the process of withdrawal and post it is being analyzed from all angles among all stakeholders. PIDE to understand such dynamic initiated this session³⁹.

In this discussion, Mr. Michael Kugelman explains why he finds peace as a difficult possibility within the region of India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. In the context of Afghanistan, he builds the argument around the failure of the Afghan government to bring forward a negotiating team and also an incentive structure within the Taliban to continue the fight even if the USA chose to go as the key hurdles in the peace process.

Further, in the case of India and Pakistan tension, he stresses the toxic anti-peace sentiments within the current Indian regime as just not the prime cause of the recent conflict but also its continuity. The recent events of India's change of position on Kashmir and what has materialized in Afghanistan so far has proved his analysis right in many ways.

³⁹ Please refer to the PIDE blog titled "FATF: A Challenge for Pakistan in the US-Taliban Peace Talk Scenario" to learn more about the issue.

Culture of Research in Pakistan

Dr. Nadeem Ul Haq, Dr. Zain Ul Abdin, Dr. Idrees Khawaja, Dr. Zahid Asghar



Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1218751>

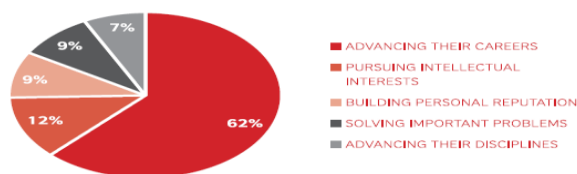
Takeaways

- *No funding for research in university*
- *There is a disconnect of research being done from issue of policy importance*
- *Research incentives are inclined to meet the promotion requirement than knowledge building*

Post formation of Higher Education Commission, the university has mushroomed almost in every part of Pakistan. But the question is that do these universities have the human capacity to be called the university in the first place or our mere bundle of brick and mortar. Through his own research, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque shows how the research quality has deteriorated across all Pakistani academia ever since incentive structures under HEC regulation have made publications a tool for promotion instead of being solution-oriented. Though the number of publications has increased yet the impact of such research is very low since the questions these ask do not address matters of local significance but those required by donors or international publications⁴⁰.

Figure 1: Evidence of Reason for Research in Pakistan

SURVEY: MOST IMPORTANT REASON FACULTY ENGAGE IN RESEARCH (122)



Source: Knowledge Platform Survey

Source:

https://www.britishcouncil.pk/sites/default/files/the_university_research_system_in_pakistan.pdf

In the context of demand and supply-side linkages, the survey results from the book show that there is almost no demand from the government side and very little demand from the industry side for research. Such evidence of weak linkages has partly been found because of a lack of coordination and synergies of government employees with university researchers and also because most of the university researchers are found not to have adequate holistic knowledge to provide to the government which becomes an issue for evidence-based policymaking. Hence, all these factors have created an environment that leaves weak incentives for research on policy-oriented topics, which has led to output with minimal impact.

⁴⁰ Please refer to the book titled "The University Research System in Pakistan" for more details.

So Much Aid, So Little Development

Dr. Samia Altaf



Source: <https://www.opengovguide.com/topics/aid/>

Takeaways

- Donor's engagement align the interests of all stockholders to keep aid going
- Donors do want their programs to succeed but failure arise because of faulty system
- Fault at the end countries receiving aid rests in having weak accountability of donor's money
- Fault at the end of donors rest in bringing foreign nationals at supervisory positions

Continuing with the agenda to understand the impact of aid on Pakistan's policy-making process, in this session, PIDE has tried to gather views on the issue from Dr. Samia Altaf, a well-known public health specialist from the US with vast experience of handling such donor engagement herself. A valuable insight that was learned from her was how all stakeholders in this nexus have the interest to keep things in the existing status quo⁴¹.

In this context, she stressed that it is crucial to understand all the actors involved in the process of aid disbursement from the government giving aid to that receiving it and all those in between such as donor agencies, etc. And more so it is important to analyze their motives and how their incentives may get aligned towards the continuation of the aid process. In her opinion, donors do want to see outcomes, and the failure is because the accountability mechanism within the developing country for the money given out is weak.

However, the failure on part of the donor, in her view, is to send their representative to supervise the aid process within a developing country which creates conflict and affects the effectiveness of the programs for two reasons. Firstly, most of the time, such representative do not know the context of the developing country compromising their ability as a consultant. And secondly, in her eye-witnessed engagements, she had experienced a USA nurse as a consultant to local Pakistani doctors of a much higher caliber working under her, which created tensions in her opinion.

⁴¹ For more details on the issue, please refer to Dr. Samia Altaf's book titled "So Much Aid, So Little Development: Stories from Pakistan".

Urban Development in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities

Dr. Murtaza Haider



Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1238407>.

Takeaways

- *Rural sector has more urban features than ever before- yet census is blind- Why?*
- *Pakistan has not planned for its urban centers as a place for commerce- Why?*
- *Ever increasing size of urban sprawl in Pakistan and not vertical expansion – Why?*

For the last two decades or so, a lot has been said in academia that Pakistan is more urban than rural. Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque in his effort to revive a culture of effective planning for rural and urban areas is reviving this very important debate at PIDE. In this context, PIDE has not only started a movement for putting to test the current operational definition of how urban areas are defined but also has started to highlight the political economy effects on the going definition and how it may have biased the policy making towards an elitist development⁴².

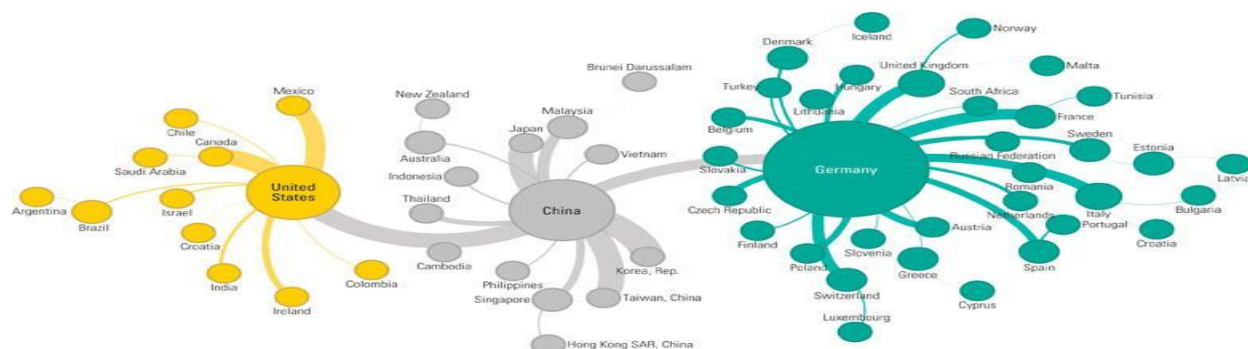
Following this very agenda, PIDE invited Murtaza Haider. He in his talk explains how Pakistan is losing out on by not using its ever-increasing size of urban population as an engine of growth. The reasons for this, in his view, are two-fold. Firstly, there is a need for a redefinition of urban centers within Pakistan in the data compilation process if one wants to counter the misreporting of the size of urban areas and how they have evolved over the years. Secondly, there requires a shift within policymakers' outlook on urban development as a mere demand for housing but as a center of commerce⁴³. Further, in terms of housing requirement, he stresses mid-rise construction as an ideal model for Pakistan because of its ability to cover a vast amount of population density within small space and in light of our limited local capacity for provisions of safety.

⁴² Please refer to relevant Pide blogs titled "Bikes, Density, and Cars", "Why are we subsidizing car use? "Why not Khokas Everywhere"; "Exposing the Metro Bus Scheme", "High Rise, Lahore Urban Sprawl and PM Khan's Directive" and "Our Poor 'Ease of Living' Indicators" for more on the topic.

⁴³ Please refer to the PIDE Policy View Point No. 13:2020 titled "Strategies to Improve Revenue Generation for Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation" and the PIDE Working Paper No.173:2020 titled "Increasing Revenues for Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad" for detailed analysis of such a paradigm shift.

German Experience of Exports and Value Chains

Dr. Christoph Scherrer



Source: <https://disrupt.city/global-value-chains-and-who-is-most-exposed/>

Takeaways

- *Germany for last many years is experiencing a huge trade surplus.*
- *Global Value Chains have played important role in boosting Germany's exports.*
- *Germany's growth is innovation based which has given it an edge – how and why?*

Pakistan is losing out on exports not only in terms of export competitiveness over the years but its exporters are benefitting very little from global value chains. For the last many years, Pakistan has been facing twin deficits of both trade and fiscal deficits – with later showing some positive signs after many years. Hence what should be Pakistan's outlook for reforming its export base is a question that PIDE is exploring from different angles such as from incentive created by taxes and from the failed opportunity of using global value chains as a plausible means.

With these questions in background, PIDE in this session has tried to learn from Germany's experiences and how it achieved its persistent export surplus. In this context, Prof. Dr. Christoph Scherrer explains the structural factors with German growth patterns post world war 2 that have led to its export surplus and how Germany is further benefitting from the global value chains. Within this process, he highlights how research, and high labor productivity that has come out from high wages to labor and a continuous environment of innovation, has played an important role.

This raised an important question at PIDE's platform that does Pakistan have technical capacity for innovation – both physical and human to follow in the footsteps of Germany or not. And if not then what investments we require to go in that direction especially in the context of vocational training. Should we focus on just producing a workforce of plumbers, electricians etc. for export purposes as has been done always or focus more on high-level technical skills under our vocational and technical training as has been followed in Germany was an important policy question that this seminar left the audience with?

Reaching Out to Markets for Pakistani Goods in Central Asia

Mr. Amer Zafar Durrani



Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/>

Takeaways

- *Central Asian market is an open trade opportunity waiting for Pakistan to explore*
- *Afghan Transit is limiting Pakistan's trade to Central Asia. Why and how?*

PIDE's report (2018) on Analyzing Food Security Issues in the ECO Region has shown the immense potential of trade gains for Pakistan with Central Asian ECO countries with positive implications for food security for all. Then why is such trade linkage so weak? This is the question PIDE has attempted to understand from discourse in this seminar.

Learning from Dr. Amer Durrani's experience, PIDE found that problem of relatively low trade with Central Asia has roots in the requirement of trade goods to transit through Afghanistan. The discussion revealed many misconceptions about the possible benefits of this transit route. The speaker shows how this process is so misunderstood and that if within Africa gains from transit through formulating proper policies can be achieved then why can't in our region?

Hence, the speaker shows that in contrast to the common perceptions that Afghanistan transit makes a trade to Central Asia not feasible, what needs to be done is to create awareness that this is not true. And that what Pakistan requires is to help in improving Afghanistan's performance as a transit country⁴⁴.

⁴⁴ For related information, please refer to the PIDE blog titled "Potential for Economic Cooperation with Afghanistan: Proximity Geo-Economic Nexus".

Agriculture in Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges

Dr. M. Azeem Khan, Dr. Iqrar Ahmad Khan, and Mr. Arif Nadeem



Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/>

Takeaways

- *Self-sufficient in wheat in most our history does not imply that we are food secure*
- *Pakistan just not has high undernourished people but also those facing chronic hunger*
- *Agriculture has grown but only to maintain its ever growing population*
- *The research in agriculture is only for maintenance and not for innovation*
- *Pakistan did well on green revolution, missed out on gene revolution*
- *Precision Agriculture is one area of success for Pakistan, yet explored at a low level*
- *Can Pakistan innovate to improve seeds?*
- *Can Pakistan innovate to improve its diversity further?*

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of Pakistan not only it is a base for our food security like any other economy but more so has an important source of raw material for our industries as most of them being agro-based. Further, given that Pakistan is losing out on agricultural growth since last two decades, hence understanding opportunities and challenges to this sector and its impact on employment and poverty are among the most important priority for PIDE.

The vibrant discussion that took place in this seminar endorsed the findings of PIDE's report (2018) on Analyzing Food Security Issues in the ECO Region that Pakistan is a highly food insecure country⁴⁵. Not only it has high numbers of the undernourished population but also those facing chronic hunger. As per debate what was found that our opportunity lies in utilizing our diversity to its fullest potential. This opportunity can be seen from the fact that Pakistan has a huge worth of growing 11 crops, 30 fruits, 32 vegetables, 5 pulses along with 31 breeds of sheep, 34 breeds of goats, 5 buffalo breeds, and 50 cow breeds. Hence utilizing our lands in the best possible combination and through employing proper technologies is where both our opportunity and challenges exist⁴⁶.

Important leads for further research includes issues related to non-functionalities in agriculture markets in terms of too much regulation and lack of proper storage and distribution systems and non-existent rural land markets – topics that PIDE will build its research towards.

⁴⁵Please refer to the PIDE blog titled "Food Insecurity in Pakistan – Status and Plausible Causes" for more analysis.

⁴⁶ Please refer to the PIDE blog titled "Issues and Strategies to Revitalize the Agriculture Sector of Pakistan" for a more detailed discussion on the issue.

Pakistani Diaspora Philanthropy in UK

Dr. Umer Khalid



Source: <https://www.app.com.pk/president-for-promotion-of-philanthropy-to-address-poverty-create-socioeconomic-opportunities/>

Takeaways

- Pakistan receives substantial support in form of diaspora philanthropy from UK
- Obligation of Zakat is a major factor in this connection
- Many more want to give but do not because of trust issue
- Diaspora philanthropy will increase further if secure institutional support is provided

Pakistan is in desperate need to increase its foreign reserves. A lot of research has been done on traditional means of raising such reserves such as through improving means of remittances, or exports, etc. However, one aspect, though most important, yet ignored in terms of research is of diaspora philanthropy.

A recent study presented at the PIDE platform shows that Pakistani diaspora in the UK contributed around \$1.6 billion. Looking into factors that have driven such massive resource inflows to Pakistan, the prime factor comes out to be of the religious obligation of Zakat. Furthermore, it was found that significant more UK residents with Pakistani origin will like to send money back home only if they find a proper and safe institutional support from the government of Pakistan.

Hence in diaspora philanthropy, an unexplored opportunity exists in increasing the volume of foreign exchange. All that is needed as policy support is to streamline and facilitate such flows through proper banking channels. Doing so will not just help formalize these flows but also remittance - much of it also remains out of formal banking system.

Prime Minister's Directives for High Rise in Pakistan: Consultation with Lahore Development Authority (LDA)

Dr. Salman Shah, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Representative of PIDE, LDA and UMT



Source: <https://www.gettyimages.com/>

Takeaways

- *Over regulation by LDA has favored Lahore increasing sprawl against high rise construction*
- *Complicated LDA rules and NOC requirement at multiple stages of construction further deincesticize the market for high rise buildings from flourishing*

Recently, PIDE has initiated a process of consultation with the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) in association with University Management and Technology (UMT) at the Chief Minister's Office, Lahore. The rationale behind this consultative process is to bring technocratic input into the process of regulation for construction and highlight to LDA how its policies may be disincentivizing the construction market within Pakistan in general and Lahore in specific⁴⁷.

The meeting generated important policy messages in the context of the Prime Minister's Directives for High Rise Construction in Pakistan. The policy prescription by PIDE to LDA showed just not how the role of regulatory authorities can be improved to remove the market rigidities against high rise construction but also identified the technical gaps within LDA's current policies that are leading to Lahore's uncontrolled urban sprawl. The insights from the discussion were many - details of which can be found in PIDE Policy Viewpoint No. 12 titled "Lahore's Urban Dilemma". However, some notable policy prescriptions that were emphasized by Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque in this meeting were as follows:

- The height restriction of the buildings by LDA needs to be relaxed. Given the cost of construction increases as a building increases in height, hence it was shown that the prescribed relaxation will not lead to an uncontrolled increase in buildings' heights as is commonly assumed. Rather what it will most likely do is to redirect market forces towards the optimal height level automatically along with the adoption of flexible construction strategies that may not be box-like as is currently taking place under present rules.
- It was further pointed that as per current LDA rules by not incentivizing to charge anything for car parking, it is subsidizing car use within Lahore. Hence PIDE advocated for the city's mobility and parking policy along with a policy prescription of minimum parking requirement to be fixed at 4000 sq. ft per building so that builders can sell parking separately than flats.

⁴⁷ Please refer to PIDE Policy Viewpoint No.12:2020 titled "Lahore's Urban Dilemma" for detailed analysis of the issue and also policy prescription from PIDE on the issue.

Doing Development Better - Analyzing the PSDP

PIDE's Conference



Source: <https://elearningindustry.com/6-tips-start-planning-elearning-courses>

Takeaways

- *Public Investment has extremely weak impact on growth in Pakistan*
- *Cost Benefit Analysis is found as not being used for project selection in public sector*
- *Public investment taken so far does not have asset generation as an objective*
- *Suggestion for move from an input-based system to a result management system*

Dr. Nadeem ul Haque in his recent research has found an extremely worrisome result that public investments within Pakistan have no significant impact on its growth. Similarly, projects under PSDP should also lead to growth; otherwise, they lose their validity and justification. But PIDE research shows that even in PSDP, there is no growth focus. In view of these results, PIDE through this conference has tried to initiate a debate as to how the public sector has failed miserably at this front⁴⁸. From the discourse, the key reasons for growth and productivity shortfalls from public investments, and its plausible solutions came out to be the following:

1. Firstly, from Pakistan's past planning experience, what seems evident that there was no vision and strategy under which past plans were made. Neither was their evidence of overall planning nor of sectoral coordination through sectoral plans.
2. Secondly, it was stressed that even for the public projects that have been undertaken over the years have found to not follow the Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) approach. This has been causing much harm. Not only there is seen cost and time over-runs for almost every public project, but also some projects that were not technically feasible have been carried out in the past for political rather than economic reasons.
3. Thirdly, it was highlighted that there is though much stress on digitalization and technological transfer in planning and public forums within Pakistan. However, unless and until the government finds means of just not enhancement of its labor force's skills but also for reversal of massive brain drain that has been and is a happening within our country, Pakistan can not benefit from investment in technology alone.
4. Finally, it was stressed that PSDP should take on those projects that create assets. In this context, the agreement was that not only is there a need for Asset Registration from each new project but a way to make these assets profitable and sustainable through the returns they will generate in the future.
5. Hence consensus was for a shift from an input-based system to a result management system (RMS) within the planning process in Pakistan.

⁴⁸ Please refer to the PIDE book titled "Doing Development Better" and the PIDE Policy Viewpoint No.15:2020 titled "Getting more out of PSDP through result based management" for more details.

Empowering Women in South Asia's Slums: The Challenges of Environmental Degradation

Dr. Ammar A. Malik



Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/in-slums-and-windowless-apartments-asias-poor-bear-brunt-of-coronavirus/>

Takeaways

- *Females in slums experience substantial impact from environmental degradation*
- *The negative impact on females is strongest for Pakistan*
- *Poor drainage systems and flooding impacted females the most in Pakistani slums*

The issues of gender discrepancies are well established fact in areas of health and education in Pakistan. But issue of how females are more adversely impacted by environmental degradation, natural disasters and extreme climate events is a less researched area primarily because of lack of data. This study presented at PIDE deals with this very issue.

As per the findings of study, through survey of 1,199 households in 12 slums in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, that among these slums dwellers female were indeed most vulnerable among all gaps being the negative impact being strongest for Pakistan. Hence policy interventions for improving lives of people are required at many fronts not just on count of equity for these poor marginalized groups but also for improving the dismal conditions for females that live in these areas.

Intervention that needs due debate is how to facilitate these areas with proper system of sanitation, proper drainage and access to water so that long walks for females to secure their households water needs can be diminished along with issue of congestion, poor street quality and handling of the experience of climate change related torrential rain are some areas that need thought.

Islam and Politics of Development

Prof. Adeel Malik



Source: <https://theconversation.com/gender-equity-in-schools-in-muslim-countries-it-can-be-done-32271>

Takeaways

- *Historically-embedded shrine elites have control over religion, land and politics*
- *To maintain continuity of power, these religious elites suppress literacy in Pakistan*
- *Literacy is kept low by promoting policies that decreases the quality of education*

An important topic in development policy is to understand the colonial origin of under development. In this session, PIDE to that effect has tried to understand this very phenomenon in the context of discrepancies in educational outcomes across Punjab. The speaker by highlighting the role of historically-embedded religious elites in shaping the politics of development argues that the impact of Islam on economic development can be strongly conditioned by history, and expressed through interplay with formal institutional structures.

Using insights from an on-going project on the political economy of shrines in Pakistan, he explains that regions with a greater presence of historically significant Muslim shrines experienced a more retarded growth of literacy. These empirical patterns are explained by the historical aversion of shrine-based religious elites to education and their greater ability to suppress education in the wake of the 1979 military coup, which brought shrine elites to greater political prominence and gave elected politicians direct control over public goods provision.

Besides understanding the problem in sector education that has a colonial construct, some important policy insight that was raised by Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque at the seminar included that this vicious cycle can only be broken if our processes take money out of politics. As long as development funds allocation will be based on political rather than economic reasons, biased policies representing the interest of those with power and money, whether with the colonial or non-colonial origin, will remain.

Doing Taxes Better: Shifting the Paradigm of Tax Policy and Administration

PIDE's Conference



Source: <https://www.imf.org/en/Capacity-Development/Training/ICDTC/Courses/TPAT>

Takeaways

- *Pakistan is not a tax cheater nation unlike commonly advertised narrative*
- *Pakistan's fiscal problems are not because of low tax to GDP ratio but mismanaged expenditures*
- *Import tariff should not be used as means of revenue generation but industrialization*
- *Simplifications of tax system will increase tax net and tax collection*
- *Technology rather than simplifying has led to over-complication tax administration*

In this conference, PIDE has challenged the donor's narrative of Pakistan's most important policy path to correct its persistent fiscal challenges is through increasing its tax to GDP ratio. Dr. Nadeem ul Haque has confronted this notion by building a consensus that this emphasis on raising the tax to GDP ratios is too arbitrary and also that the prime cause of rising fiscal deficits is not that we have low tax to GDP ratio but mismanaged public expenditures⁴⁹. Hence resolution of circular debt, correcting losses from PSE, and failure of other public sector enterprises along with the reduction of the bloated size of government should be prime policy focus rather than the tax reform to raise the tax to GDP ratio.

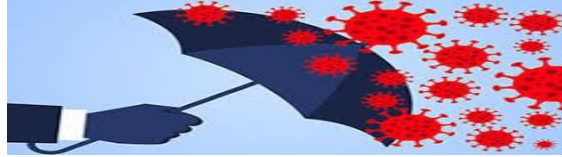
Further, through debate, it was shown that challenging the account of Pakistan as a tax cheater nation is essential for many reasons. Not only the tax system within Pakistan has become over-complicated in an attempt to raise tax nets, but there have emerged two legal classes of citizens, namely filer and non-filer. This practice is nowhere to be found in the world yet is present in Pakistan which makes it questionable and open for further research. Moreover, such classifications do have economic costs for the business and equity concerns that need assessment.

As a last note, debate generated at the forum of PIDE left the audience with an important thought-provoking issue that whether technological improvement implemented across the tax administration has added to its efficiency or has complicated the matters even further through over documentation. In this context, a valuable insight that came out was that yes, technological advancement could help, but until and unless we improve the processes and laws to support the process in the context of sharing and integrating data between governmental organizations, we cannot fully gain the benefits of such technological advancement.

⁴⁹ Please refer to the PIDE Viewpoint No. 17:2020 titled "Doing Taxes Better: Simplify, Open and Grow Economy" and the PIDE Blogs titled "Tax policies for growth" and "Take Policy Back From the 'Economic Hit-men'" for more detailed discussions on the issue.

PIDE's COVID War

Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Dr. Durr-e-Nayab and PIDE's Research Team



Source: <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19>

Takeaways

- COVID-19 needs to be tackled on war footing.
- Detailed analysis of prescribed policy response for Pakistan can be found in PIDE COVID-19 eBook
- Smart Lockdown – a term coined at PIDE to implement lockdown strategically based on incidence

Pakistan is right now at war footing against Covid-19. In these difficult times, PIDE has tried to create a base for coordinated research on the issue to guide the government in response to this epidemic. In this context, PIDE tried to make an effort to organize all leading think-tanks of Pakistan and experts at one platform, not just to understand the policy aspects of the problems in hand, but to guide and facilitate the government in strategizing an effective policy path. The key themes that came out from such consultative meetings can be referred to in the PIDE COVID-19 eBook along with the PIDE COVID-19 archive⁵⁰.

The policy dilemmas in controlling the COVID epidemic are diverse and far more complicated than meets the eye at first glance. The policy challenges may require strategizing for not just immediate response but to counter its medium and long-term impacts too. Hence, it is important not just to be focused on local scenarios but to learn from international best practices too. In this context, PIDE also consulted with ambassadors from Sweden and Germany.

It was learned that Sweden realizing the long time-dimension of the COVID problem, formulated policies that centered on the behavioral needs of its population, and hence followed a path different than the rest of the world by keeping its primary schools open as a measure to facilitate working parents. Though, it may seem that Sweden had much less strict lockdown but learning from the Ambassador it was found that the precautions taken by governments were well implemented by citizens at all levels and that was the prime reason for incidence to go down.

Hence, from Sweden's experience, what was gathered about formulating policies against the Coronavirus, it is important to understand the social context of the people and strategize accordingly. Similarly, learning from Germany, it was found that the importance of aggressive testing cannot be stressed more. An interesting insight that emerged from the discussions was how automation for low skill jobs may be used as a precaution against COVID worldwide in the near future. Given such a shift can damage Pakistan's low-skill workforce (both at home and abroad earning remittances), hence policies to counter these should also be thought over.

⁵⁰ PIDE Covid-19 archive is available at <https://www.pide.org.pk/index.php/covid-19>.

Prime Minister's Construction Package

Dr. Noman Ahmad, Mr. Abdul Hafeez Sheikh Pasha, and Mr. Wasim Hayat Bajwa



Source: <https://profit.pakistantoday.com.pk/2020/04/03/pms-support-package-for-construction-industry-receives-mixed-response/>

Takeaways

- *Impact of package on construction value chains needs due assessment*
- *How the impact of package will be spread across different regions needs assessment*
- *Time element of completion of projects needs to be assessed within package details*
- *Tax suggestions should also be thought through for their implications*
- *Role of regulatory authorities for disincentives they are generating needs assessment*
- *Affordable living can only come by encouraging high rise construction - why and how?*

No doubt, the construction industry is most important given it has multiple forward and backward linkages and hence implications for growth. However, the incentives given out by the Prime Minister's Package for boosting construction needs assessment by identifying the structural constraints that may restrict its intended impacts.

Pointing to the most important structural constraint in this regard, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque raises the issue of over-regulation and how regulatory authorities impede the ease-of-doing-business. Other participants, reinforcing Dr. Nadeem's viewpoint on the issue, stressed on the need for reducing the timeframe needed to get the necessary approvals by these regulatory authorities and FBR for its green-signal for such investments, as an important factor.

Besides that, it was emphasized not only there is a need to think over what to include in construction but also to deeply assess how the announced package will impact the construction value chains. Further, it was agreed that the fixed taxation regime shall encourage the investors to invest in the construction industry with per square feet tax-surcharge and withholding taxes only for the large corporations or suppliers including that of steel. However, the double tier taxation regime of provincial ticketing and federal taxation must be addressed to bring clarity to developers.

Finally, the issue of the horizontal and vertical spread of cities needs careful examination. Given that tremendous pressure on our cities for accommodating an ever-increasing size of the population, hence to ensure the affordable living going high is the only plausible solution⁵¹

⁵¹ For a detailed discussion, please refer to the PIDE blog titled "High Rise, Lahore Urban Sprawl and PM Khan's Directive" and PIDE Policy Viewpoint No.12:2020 titled as "Lahore's Urban Dilemma".

Sugar Industry in Pakistan

Mr. Muhammad Adil Mansoor, and Pakistan Sugar Mills Association's Representative



Source: <https://food.ndtv.com/food-drinks/is-brown-sugar-better-than-white-sugar-you-will-be-surprised-1766948>

Takeaways

- *Repeated sugar crisis results from over-regulation in sugar industry*
- *Recent Crisis has roots in government's slow response to timely remove export quotas*
- *Support price for sugar cane are notional.*

Why do we have repeated sugar shortages? Is it smuggling? It is hoarding? Or is it something even deeper? In this session, PIDE has tried to dig deeper into the issue of recent sugar crisis to assess it in terms of economic incentives or disincentives that are generated from regulation facing sugarcane and sugar industry.

The case for regulation for sugarcane has been built on the premise that both buyer and seller need protection. Given sugarcane is non-storable and non-transportable, so Mandatory Crushing Laws and support prices are there to protect the farmers' interests. Similarly, License Raj was put in place to protect the rights of millers by securing their rights to sugarcane in their designated area.

Yet what these regulations do is that first to create cartelization for millers as a result of License Raj, second to ensure that competitive price mechanism does not work as a result of support price and finally to overproduce sugar because of mandatory crushing law in the season of surplus sugarcane. Hence by structure, there can be surplus and shortages as price and supply are not determined by the market. On top of it, with protection to the sugar industry in the form of high import tariff further weaken the competitive price signals.

Hence, as per the analysis of the speaker in contrast to much talk about FIA inquiry report, the driver of sugar shortages was not found to be political influence leading to subsidy but rather the late response from the government to cut subsidy and export quota for sugar in time. As to why subsidy was announced has based not just in political influence but because of the need to offload excess produced stock of sugar in the international markets. And why such excess was produced in the first place was because the over-regulation of sugar and sugarcane industries does let the supply and demand mechanism to work efficiently.

This reinforces PIDE's viewpoint that just as the over-regulation of markets is killing the construction industry, the same is being practiced for the sugar industry. And it is due to the economic distortions that come as a result that Pakistan, again and again, undergoes massive periods of subsidization for sugar. To sum, the politicization of the sugar industry is also an element to consider, but dysfunctionalities such as cartelization and sugar shortages had a foundation in too much regulation than in the political economy itself.

Financial Markets in 21st Century

Mr. Aqif Saeed, Mr. Samir Ahmed and Ms. Maheen Rehman



Source: <https://www.slideshare.net/dhavalddhia3/financial-markets-14599934>

Takeaways

- *Why are financial markets so thin in Pakistan?*
- *What is the real reason behind thin financial market for Pakistan - low saving nation and relatively higher return from real estate/National Saving Certificates or something more?*
- *What role regulatory authority has in restricting our financial markets?*

The key points that were learned from panelists were that not only the listing in our stock exchange for companies is very low but the number of investors is going down as well along with a very narrow base for mutual funds with only a few people dominating these shares. In contrast to Pakistan, it was shown by Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque that Sri Lanka has a much broader financial market with not only small shareholders as a group dominating shares in big companies but also a much larger size of the market along with a lot more activity.

The panelists explaining these dynamics primarily revealed the constraints put by of regulatory authorities as one factor along with Pakistan being a low saving country and having a much attractive return from real estate and National Saving Certificate as other major factors for not having a strong stock market. It was also stressed that not only the mandate of Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SCEP) is questionable from the very start but it has expanded beyond its initial role to include regulation of the capital market, corporate registry, insurance, private pensions, then later the non-banking microfinance institutions and secured transaction registry which is something unheard of in the world.

Dr. Nadeem had a slightly different view of these dynamics. In light of his experience in Pakistan and the world economy, he challenges the notion that Pakistan is a consumption-oriented society. Not only that he argues putting the blame on higher returns and risk-free return from National Saving Certificates or much more profitable investment avenues in real estate as the right explanation – an argument he builds in light of US markets where despite the presence of above both factors, one finds a booming stock market. Hence for him, the only defining factor that can explain the dismal condition of Pakistan's stock markets is that how too many regulations and confusing tax policy for it together has killed the incentives to invest in this market.

Innovative HR and Business Strategy Responses to the #COVID19

Mr. Atyab Tahir, Mr. Ahmed Ali Zia, Mr. Malik Ahmed Jalal, Mr. Imran Azhar, and
Mr. Amer Durrani



Source: <https://www.technogeninc.com/resources>

Takeaways

- *Challenge within Pakistan to convert its indigenous talent to deployable talent.*
- *Pakistan does not have right eco-system to attract and retain its expatriates' talent*
- *Public sector fails in attracting talent due to weak monetary and non-monetary incentives*

Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque digs deep into the question of “Why Pakistan seems to be a “talent repellent” country?”⁵² He explores this question in light of emerging consensus that best people from Pakistan leave the country never to come back as opposed to India where homegrown talent after being groomed further abroad tends to find its way back. So the question of great policy relevance is what has gone wrong in Pakistan?

Learning from people working abroad at a key position and people with experience of interviewing people for jobs in public and private institutions, some key insights came out. Firstly, it was found that Pakistan may not be short of talented people but it surely is short of people who have deployable talent. Second, while in the private sector, it was found that some firms indeed select good people and train them along the way but overall the weak incentive in both private⁵³ and public sector do not let the people’s talent come out fully. Finally, our university sector is also not producing people that are fit for the job market.

From the employer's perspective, an observation that came out was that our cultural values at some level hold people back given they are focused on their families and do not create opportunities for themselves. Besides that, the best one who does go abroad in search of opportunities finds it very hard to come back because they do not get the same monetary and non-monetary benefits on return.

How COVID-19 may possibly impact the HR and business strategies. An important insight that came was that while there is a lot of pessimism in the context of possible mass job loss in the economy, however, this may serve as an exciting opportunity for some. It is a good time for business to hear as some good people might get unemployed and also for people with IT skills to work at more than one job and become the chooser of the employers than being selected by the firms.

⁵² For linked information, please refer to the PIDE blog titled “War for Talent: The Skill Gap”.

⁵³ In developed countries company share stocks with employees as part of their compensation plan so to create stakes for them in the company’s success. This practice is missing in Pakistan.

Towards a Stable Economy and Politics

Mr. Wasim Sajjad, Mr. Irfan Qadir, and Mr. Hasan Askari Rizvi



Source: <https://www.slideshare.net/meghachawla12/relation-between-economics-and-politics>

Takeaways

- *Should the system run as it or there should be reform? And if so what sort?*
- *Should the election process change itself and if so in what ways?*

Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque has started a fresh agenda for research at PIDE that is to dismantle in any and every way how laws in Pakistan affect economic outcomes. But when one thinks of the legal system and its economic effects, the role of the constitution is the first thing that comes to mind and then the system under which a constitution is imposed on people and by whom is the second thing that further grabs attention. Hence, the issue of how candidates are elected into government and through what kind of system, the elected representative gets the power of decision-making and for how long are extremely important dimensions that need debate.

With this very broad agenda, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque tried to understand from the distinguished panelists on their thoughts on whether the system of power-sharing within Pakistan from the election processes to how power is structured at higher levels needs some change and if so then in what ways. This debate had many legal dimensions and answers involved some layers of complications by design so as to find congruence with the constitutional technicalities.

However, one thing that was evident that besides some minor sort of suggestions for change such as females representative in the parliament should come through some process of election or defining limits on the terms an elective representative can have, to finding some intra-institutional means where complicated issues can be decided by coming together of important institutional heads such as PM, Chief Justice and possibly Chief of Army to name a few to find solutions to complex constitutional problems, there was consensus among the participants that the current system should be kept going. Hence a clear aversion to reform was seen.

In this context, Dr. Nadeem ended with another soul-searching question that will our nation just do donor-led reform only and no impetus for real reform ever come from within us despite the fact we know our problems. For example, we all know that money and eligibility criteria involved in politics do not let technocrats who actually know problems and how to tackle them to be elected, hence biasing the power hold toward dynastic politics and those with money. So how will our economy ever stabilize given we know that the system discriminates against the right people to come into power and the demand for reform is non-existent?

Future of Higher Education in Pakistan

Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Dr. S. Akbar Zaidi, Dr. Zain-Ul-Abadin, and Ms. Shireen Mustafa



Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/199336/higher-education-paradigm-shift-pakistan/>

Takeaways

- *Expansion of higher education in terms of number – is it the right policy by HEC?*
- *Has too much regulation by HEC killed both research and its culture in Pakistan?*
- *Is dumping against Pakistani researchers being allowed by HEC?*

More university graduates or no - is not the right question to ask to judge the future of higher education for Pakistan. The more meaningful query as maintained by PIDE's narrative is that what kind of graduates and research is coming out of university and for what? PIDE has constantly stressed that the focus for the future of higher education has to be on the content and not on increasing the number of degree holders.

In this debate organized by IBA and PIDE jointly, an interesting contrast came out from PIDE's viewpoint by Dr. Akbar Zaidi, and Dr. Pervaiz Tahir whereby the former builds an argument in favor of an expansion of higher education on the intrinsic ground - it being a basic right of all and later on its positive impact on female's access especially in remote parts.

Moreover, Dr. Akbar Zaidi agreed with the consensus that the quality of research within Pakistan's universities is not just low but most research is also not relevant to national needs⁵⁴. Yet despite this, he believed that quality will follow infrastructure but with a lag. Why? Because human capital develops slowly,

However, PIDE maintains that expansion policy has to be assessed in a larger perspective such as how equitable the spread has been, how universities are being utilized, and what quality of products are coming out. Sadly, what has been found by PIDE that not only too much regulations by HEC has killed research in Pakistan but it has also encouraged the dumping of foreign consultants on those from Pakistan squeezing the demand for local research to almost zero. So how will quality follow infrastructure is the question that Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque has raised when HEC itself is regulating against it.

⁵⁴ Please refer to the book titled "The University Research System in Pakistan" for more on this point.

Our Administrative Mess

Mr. Moazzam Janjua, Mr. Tariq Malik, Mr. Tariq Bajwa and Dr. Ilhan Niaz



Source: <https://www.cartoonstock.com/>

Takeaways

- *Our civil service is still working under colonial structure . Why?*
- *Consensus for reform of civil service fully there then why it is being delayed?*

What are the structural problems behind Pakistan's administrative mess within its civil services and how to reform them was something that PIDE tried to learn from civil servants themselves in this seminar. As an academic and researcher, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, in view of his research believes that to correct this mess, the only way to go is to decentralize, professionalize, and create autonomy⁵⁵. There was consensus on all these points by the invited panelists and also audience. Then the question really is why such reform has never happened successfully.

One thing that came out very clearly that civil service is the way it is because it has been in the interest of the state, elites, and also the civil servants. So, if that is the case then how the incentives will change in the future remains a question mark.

Besides that, there is consensus that human resource management of civil services is an issue from need for market-based salaries to resolving the problem of getting proper training for all from its need assessment to execution, further promoting the specialized professionals both in grooming, size and ranks along with decentralization are all well-agreed points. And as per what PIDE had already learned from Dr. Ishrat Hussain's earlier seminar that all these measures are very much part of the ongoing reform.

However, the fact that came very strongly from discussion and needs due attention is that the structural factors that are critical for a real reform such as measures for effective decentralization and process of proper accountability of civil servants from a third party still remain missing from the on-going process. Hence, the issue of change may still remain post current reform – again a worrying thought.

⁵⁵ Please refer to PIDE's book titled "Public Sector Efficiency: Perspective on Civil Service Reform" for more on the topic.

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