

# Barriers to work opportunities

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Developing economies worldwide confront various challenges in their quest for economic progress. While each emerging economy has its unique set of issues, most are confronted with issues such as equitable income distribution, job creation, widespread poverty, and infrastructural and institutional deficiency. The high unemployment rate among educated youth is one of Pakistan's key issues.

The study, "Pakistan's opportunity to excel: now and the future," by Dr Nadeem ul Haq, vice chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics and Dr Durre Nayab, Director, PIDE, conducted an in-depth examination of the labour force survey, which revealed that the unemployment rate among university graduates is 31.2 per cent.

The sudden increase in the demand for education in the past decade, combined with a lack of job opportunities, has significantly contributed to this high unemployment rate. The high unemployment rate also indicates the inadequacy of educational institutions to connect their students to the labour market. The misalignment of university-industry linkages.

The goal of the government is to raise the standard of the regulatory environment and encourage private investment throughout the country. Pakistan's rating in the World Bank Group's Doing Business Report 2020 has increased by 28 points from 136 to 108 out of 190 economies due to recent business climate improvements. The report has used data-driven analysis to track advancements in 190 economies' regulatory service delivery and business climate since its establishment in 2002.

Employing the deaf, the food truck Abay KHAO! is facing numerous regulatory challenges in Islamabad

The former prime minister of Pakistan has advised young people on several occasions that they should not limit themselves to becoming civil servants but instead pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. To achieve this goal, the government should establish an environment that encourages young people to start businesses and remove impediments to new business ideas from the market.

However, many people (particularly young people) meet numerous challenges when starting a new business. The same is the case with Abey KHAO!

Abey KHAO! is a social enterprise fast-food chain registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP). It is a food truck business idea, initiated by a group of university students. They have created employment opportunities for the deaf community by managing an environmentally friendly food truck business rather than relying on the government's jobs.

Keeping in mind the "decent work agenda" and "environmental issues", Abey KHAO! has

been conducting business in the market for more than two years and has had to deal with Capital Development Authority (CDA) regularly. The absence of a clear policy regarding mobile food vehicles is now Abey KHAO!'s biggest challenge in scaling the business and creating social impact.

The request for a no-objection certificate from the CDA was submitted two years back and is still not being entertained.

They look forward to expanding their business activities in sectors I-8, F-6, F-7, and F-11 in Islamabad.

Working on social impact, a unit of Abey KHAO! can employ 14 deaf individuals. This cause should be highlighted with maximum government and private stakeholders to support the mission ie, to work on reducing unemployment among the deaf community in Pakistan.

Companies like Coca-Cola or Pepsi will only collaborate with Abey KHAO! if they have formal permission from the authority ie, CDA.

PIDE has lately taken several policy initiatives. 'The Ehsaas Street Hawkers' is one of the current efforts. A memorandum of understanding was signed by Dr Sania Nishtar, the CDA and PIDE to protect the rights of street vendors in Islamabad. The idea of the food truck business somehow falls in the category of street vendors but they face many operating problems in Islamabad.

The most recent joint initiative of PIDE and CDA is the introduction of paid parking in Islamabad.

The most practical solution to Abey KHAO!'s concerns is in both of PIDE's efforts. The authority should develop a basic guideline for street vendors and recognise the food truck industry within it, allowing them to operate legally in Islamabad. The parking issue will be the last to be resolved, and CDA, in collaboration with PIDE, will soon be able to design a paid parking system in Islamabad. It will be a win-win situation for both sides since the government will collect revenue and the business owners profit.

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