

Media Perspectives on Pakistan's Labor Market: Skills Development and Job Creation

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Abstract

This study explores Pakistan's labor market with a focus on the interplay between skills development and job creation, analyzed through the lens of media coverage. As Pakistan grapples with high unemployment rates and a growing skills mismatch, this research examines how government electronic media highlight these challenges and propose solutions. The study identifies key trends in media discourse, including the portrayal of vocational training, digital skills, and government initiatives aimed at employment generation. Through content analysis, it evaluates how media narratives influence public perception and policymaking in the labor market. By addressing gaps in media representation, this research offers insights into leveraging media as a tool for promoting skill enhancement and fostering sustainable job creation in Pakistan. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the media's role in shaping labor market dynamics and supporting economic growth.

Keywords: Pakistan's labor market, growing skills, media's role, promoting skill, policymaking, electronic media

Introduction

Although Pakistan is a country that is rich in natural resources and a number of enormous minerals, such as coal, gold, copper, mineral salt, iron ore, and many other items, the country's current population is 235,877,803 according to the most recent data from the United Nations in 2022. Managing such a large population is a

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major challenge for the country, which has led to a lack of development and poor economic performance. On the other hand, Pakistan possesses an incredible asset in the form of a youth bulge, which means that a significant portion of its population is comprised of young people. If the youth are provided with the appropriate education, guidance, and training, it has the potential to leave a remarkable impression on the country's progress and success. However, Pakistan's youth are not actively participating in productive political, educational, economic, and socio-cultural activities. The present generation of young people in Pakistan, sadly, does not have a clear vision, nor are they receiving the appropriate counseling, mentorship, and guiding.

The primary objective of this research is to provide light on the present composition of Pakistan's work force. Additionally, Pakistan possesses a massive labor force that is ranked among the top 10 largest labour forces in the world. The labor force of Pakistan is not only active within the borders of Pakistan, but it is also providing services in other countries. As of December 2019, more than 11 million Pakistanis have pursued employment opportunities in over 50 countries through official channels. There is a significant concentration of Pakistani workers who migrate to countries that are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (96 percent), with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates being the nations that host the bulk of these workers.

Despite the fact that this huge size ranking of Pakistan's labour force is only obvious in volume, it is not possible that the same can be said about her knowledge and ability. The majority of the workforce is unaware of the positive outcomes that can be achieved through training. Additionally, private companies view training programs as an additional expense and liability, and as a result, they avoid investing in human capital to the same extent as our neighboring countries, such as India, Indonesia, and Malaysia, have done. Furthermore, the education system does not provide the necessary vocational and technical courses, which leads to an increase in the number of individuals who are untrained and unemployed in the country.

With the help of this study, we will concentrate on the disparity between the skills that are now held by the workforce and those that are necessary, as well as the potential obstacles that exist in the labour market, the difficulties that are associated with economic growth, and the potential possibilities that may be generated via the implementation of appropriate labour development policies and programs.

There are more major difficulties that the nation is now facing, such as inflation, energy crises, political instability, and an overall environment of uncertainty. The government of Pakistan has begun a number of projects in an effort to fill this gap; nevertheless, it still requires some time and appropriate resources. When it comes to the agenda for the country's economy, there is still a need to adopt an active holistic strategy and policy that addresses labor skills training, development, and learning programs.

❖ **Significance of Research**

This study is significant as it seeks to identify the initiatives undertaken by the Government of Pakistan at both federal and provincial levels to enhance labor market efficiency. By examining these efforts, both independently and in collaboration with international labor organizations and regulatory authorities, the research sheds light on Pakistan's strategies for addressing the pressing skills development agenda. In the context of rapidly evolving technology and globalization, this research explores how Pakistan can foster competitive economic growth through effective skills enhancement.

The study also investigates critical factors inhibiting public enterprises and private employers from investing in On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Off-the-Job Training (OTJT) programs, providing insights into potential barriers to skills development. It examines the role of labor regulations in shaping and promoting skills development initiatives, offering an understanding of their influence on economic growth and labor market efficiency.

Moreover, the research addresses the broader issues of skills supply and demand in Pakistan, emphasizing the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs. These programs have immense potential to bridge skills gaps, alleviate unemployment, and contribute to economic stability. The study highlights the challenges posed by the negative perception of TVET as inferior to general academic education and explores strategies to transform this mindset.

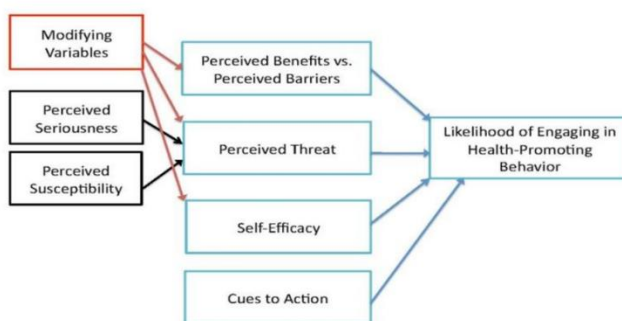
Additionally, the research examines how each province in Pakistan implements its unique skills development programs tailored to local needs. This provincial diversity, while valuable, contributes to an ambiguous and fragmented national skills ecosystem. The findings of this study will provide valuable recommendations

for harmonizing efforts, aligning provincial and federal programs, and optimizing the labor market to meet the demands of a competitive global economy.

❖ Research Frame Work

This study emphasizes the critical importance of equipping Pakistan's labor force with job-specific expertise and operational competency as well as critically evaluating the role of state-owned media in portraying the labor force. Enhanced skills and strong competency among workers can significantly reduce production wastage, minimize errors, and lead to increased output and a more motivated workforce.

A key factor contributing to the prevalence of low-skilled labor in Pakistan is the rising trend of temporary and contractual employment. According to a World Bank report, approximately 36 percent of workers in Pakistan are employed on a temporary basis, a figure that far exceeds that of neighboring countries such as India (15 percent) and Bangladesh (3 percent). This reliance on temporary workers discourages employers from investing in skill development for contractual employees due to the absence of job stability and reciprocal loyalty. While temporary employment offers flexibility for businesses to adapt to technological advancements and market demands, this short-term advantage is outweighed by the benefits of stable, long-term employment relationships. Stability fosters loyalty and provides firms with a workforce that consistently upgrades its skills to remain competitive through innovation and technological adoption.



To address this issue, a holistic reform of Pakistan's education system is essential, incorporating technical and vocational training as a mandatory component of the curriculum. Although the literacy rate has improved to 60 percent, the quality of

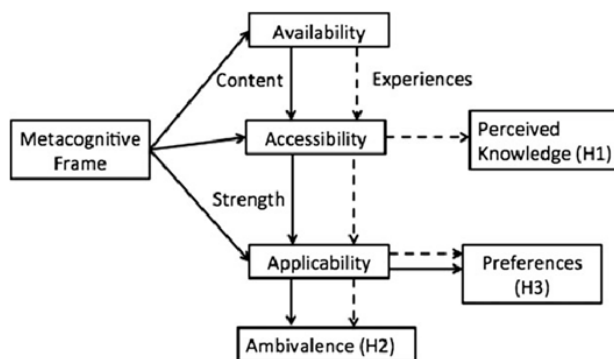
education remains inadequate to meet the demands of a modern economy. Poor learning outcomes result in insufficient human capital development, which in turn hinders economic productivity. Despite school attendance, many children fail to acquire the foundational skills and knowledge required for meaningful employment.

The integration of technical and vocational education at all levels is crucial for equipping the workforce with both foundational and advanced skills. Presently, 60 percent of Pakistan’s labor force is either low-skilled or uneducated, with 87 percent of these individuals engaged in the informal sector. This trend highlights a direct link between a lack of education and skills and participation in low-productivity, informal economic activities.

For Pakistan to enhance its economic and socio-cultural development, policymakers, educationists, and government stakeholders must align the education system with international standards. This alignment should prioritize technical and vocational education to foster a skilled labor force capable of driving innovation, productivity, and competitiveness in the global market.

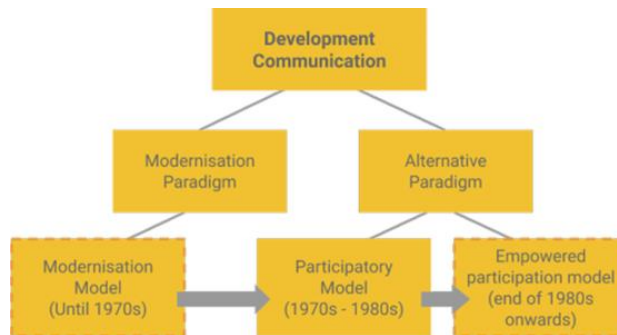
Framing Theory (Media Narrative Construction)

Framing theory focuses on how media constructs narratives and shapes the perception of issues. This study investigates how media frames the discourse on labor market policies, skills training, and job creation in Pakistan. It analyzes whether media portrayals encourage positive engagement with initiatives such as technical education and international labor standards or reinforce negative stereotypes about vocational training and informal labor.



Development Support Communication Theory (Media as a Development Tool)

This theory highlights the role of communication in promoting societal development. It examines how media can serve as a tool for advocacy, awareness, and capacity-building in labor market reforms. By addressing skills development and job creation through targeted campaigns, media can contribute to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.



Models of Development

Review of the Literature

Human resources are the paramount resource among all assets (capital, land, and technology). All developing nations now recognize that continuous learning and enhanced adaptability to global market demands are essential for sustaining and optimizing their output, production, and results. They have expedited investment in their human capital by implementing various training, technical, and interpersonal programs, which therefore enhances their efficiency in reaching targets while also fostering worker loyalty, job satisfaction, and reducing employee turnover.

However, although Pakistan progresses in its development, it still needs a highly qualified workforce. Kemal's study (2006) elucidates the need of enhancing production levels via the advancement of human resources. It emphasizes that for Pakistan to diversify its production structure towards high value-added and complex sectors, it must enhance scientific, technological, vocational, and technical capabilities.

According to the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLSM) district-level survey for 2019-20, the literacy rate for individuals aged 10 and above remains unchanged at 60 percent. However, Pakistan's educational system encounters numerous challenges, lacking both competency and practicality, as most schools emphasize theoretical knowledge and lack access to modern technology and resources.

Skill acquisition and human capital development predominantly occur within educational institutions, resulting in a significant population of out-of-school youngsters in Pakistan. The Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2015 indicates that Pakistan has around 21.5 million children and youth (ages 4 to 18) who are out of school, with over half being of primary school age. This leads to diminished human capital development, especially among the impoverished, females, and those in rural regions.

The World Bank's newly published Human Capital Index indicates that a kid in Pakistan is projected to get just 4.8 years of learning-adjusted education; specifically, 5.1 years for boys and 4.4 years for girls, reflecting both inadequate school enrolment and subpar learning results.

As per the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) Reforms in Pakistan's education system necessitate public-private collaboration, as the system consists of 260,903 institutions, including 180,846 public and 80,057 private entities. Consequently, 31% of educational institutions are operated by the commercial sector, whilst 69% are governmental institutions. Likewise, to transform the young of the nation into an asset, significant emphasis must be placed on vocational and technical training programs.

Numerous studies, including the Skill Assessments Report published by the World Bank in 2019, indicate that Pakistan possesses a substantial and rapidly expanding labour force (70 million, with an annual increase of 2 million). However, the majority of these workers are low-skilled, and the nation has not fully realised its economic productivity potential due to low female labour force participation (25 percent).

Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative approach by synthesizing secondary data available from reports, publications, journals, and studies related to Pakistan's labor skills, workforce structure, and the initiatives undertaken by the government media and international organizations to address the skills gap. By reviewing these existing resources, the research examines the effectiveness of various programs designed to enhance skills and competencies within the Pakistani labor force.

The study also highlights the pressing need for an essential upgrade of Pakistan's educational curriculum. Incorporating technical and vocational courses at all educational levels is identified as a critical step toward producing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. This transformation has the potential to significantly contribute to Pakistan's economic development across all sectors.

Despite the demographic advantage of having a third of the population aged between 15 and 29 (UNDP, 2017), the lack of job-ready skills prevents many youths from securing decent employment opportunities. The study underscores the critical skills gap in Pakistan and emphasizes the need for urgent national-level interventions to address this issue. The findings aim to provide actionable insights into the strategies required to develop a competitive and skilled labor force capable of driving sustainable economic growth.

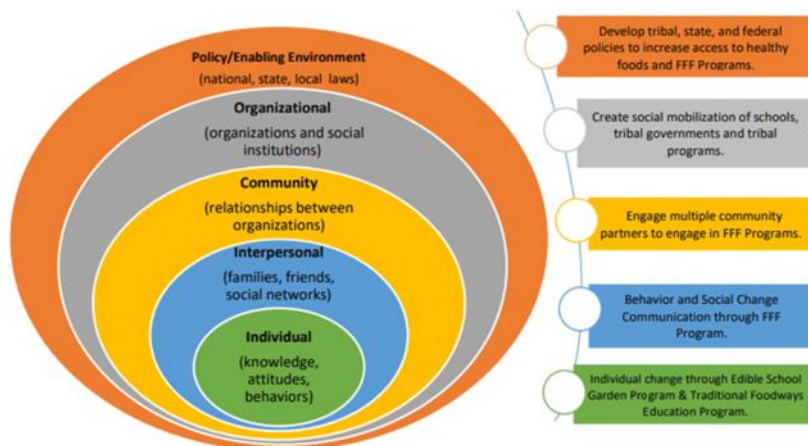
Discussion

The issue of skills mismatch in Pakistan's labor market is multifaceted, involving not only the educational and vocational training systems but also the broader economic environment, governance, and societal attitudes. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that includes both supply-side improvements (such as enhancing the quality of education and skills training) and demand-side initiatives (such as improving job creation, business development, and economic stability). However, one often overlooked factor that can significantly contribute to bridging the skills gap is the role of media in shaping public perception and influencing policy.

In Pakistan, media can play a vital role in highlighting the importance of vocational and technical education (TVET), which is often perceived as inferior to traditional

academic routes. This negative perception stems from historical biases that equate academic education with success, while undervaluing the potential of technical skills. Media platforms, especially television, radio, and digital outlets, can shift this narrative by showcasing successful stories of individuals who have benefited from vocational training. By amplifying these success stories, the media can challenge stereotypes and encourage more youth to pursue technical and vocational pathways. The media's role can also extend to educating the public about the economic benefits of a skilled workforce. Pakistan's labor market, particularly in the informal sector, often suffers from low-skilled labor that is underpaid and lacks job security. Through focused campaigns, media can raise awareness about the importance of skill development and the opportunities that come with a higher level of competence. By providing platforms for employers, industry experts, and vocational training institutions, media can help create a bridge between job seekers and employers by showcasing the demand for skilled labor.

Moreover, media can be instrumental in promoting government and private sector initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education and training. Programs like the ones launched by the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) and Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) can gain visibility and support through media campaigns. Public awareness of these programs can lead to increased enrollment in technical and vocational courses, helping to fill the growing demand for skilled workers in various industries.



Communication for Development

However, the media's influence can only be effective if it works in collaboration with the government and educational institutions. For instance, educational policies and curriculum reforms should be communicated effectively to the public through various media channels. Additionally, media outlets can serve as a conduit for feedback from employers and training institutions, providing valuable insights into the alignment of skills with industry needs.

This research emphasizes the need for Pakistan to adopt a holistic approach to human capital development to ensure continuous growth and higher productivity. Addressing the development of education and skills is a national and provincial priority; however, it has been hindered by various challenges. The early childhood development (ECD) and general education systems play a critical role in laying the foundation for skill development, but their performance in Pakistan has been subpar. The education system largely focuses on rote memorization and exam preparation, rather than nurturing critical thinking, creativity, and innovation. This limits students' ability to develop the necessary skills for problem-solving and adapting to a rapidly changing global economy.

Technical and vocational skills should be considered as upper-level skills, complementing foundational education. Currently, 60% of Pakistan's labor force is either unskilled or uneducated, and 87% of them work in the informal sector. This trend highlights the strong connection between low education levels and informal sector employment, which, in turn, limits productivity. The lack of adequate skills prevents individuals from engaging in higher-productivity economic activities.

It is essential to recognize the importance of foundational skills, including basic literacy, numeracy, and cognitive and socio-behavioral abilities. These skills form the bedrock for future learning and can be transferred across various sectors, allowing workers to adapt to evolving skill demands. By improving the quality and breadth of foundational education and vocational training, Pakistan can better equip its workforce for the challenges of globalization and technological advancements, ultimately leading to greater economic outcomes and societal benefits.

In conclusion, while addressing the skills gap in Pakistan requires structural and policy reforms, the role of media in changing societal perceptions, raising awareness, and promoting government and industry initiatives cannot be overstated. By

leveraging the media's broad reach and influence, Pakistan can foster a culture that values technical and vocational education, thus helping to bridge the skills gap, enhance productivity, and drive sustainable economic growth.

❖ **Efficiency of Skills Matching**

The skill-matching process, which connects workers and firms, plays a pivotal role in addressing skill gaps and driving industrial growth. Pakistan is currently facing a critical skills gap and requires a strategic shift in the demand-and-supply equilibrium from a low-skill, low-productivity state to a high-skill, high-productivity environment. A key factor contributing to this gap is mismatched skills between job seekers and employers. While a sufficient number of job seekers may possess good-quality skills, poor alignment between the skills available and those demanded by firms perpetuates the gap.

Employers typically prefer candidates with qualifications and skills that precisely match their job requirements. An analysis of an online job portal in Pakistan revealed that firms are most likely to shortlist applicants with qualifications that are “just-matched” to their needs. In terms of education and experience, both just-matched and overqualified candidates are favored over underqualified applicants. However, for occupational roles, employers prioritize candidates whose skills and qualifications align perfectly with the specific job level. For instance, a professional-level candidate applying for a non-professional role may not be considered despite their qualifications. Similarly, technical skills and industry alignment also significantly influence hiring decisions (Matsuda et al., 2019).

Two key issues contribute to the information gap in the skill-matching process. First, employers often fail to clearly signal the exact skill sets they require, while job seekers do not adequately communicate their qualifications and capabilities. Second, employers and job seekers struggle to find matches due to a lack of robust mechanisms for connecting skills demand with supply. This information asymmetry exacerbates the skills gap and hinders effective job placement.

The implications of this skills gap are evident in wage dynamics. Low-skilled workers are paid significantly less due to their limited competencies, resulting in poor bargaining power and job insecurity. For example, the average wages for low-skilled workers in Pakistan increased from PKR 21,700 in 2017 to PKR 28,700 in 2018

(WageIndicator Foundation). Despite similar working hours, high-skilled workers earn nearly double, with wages rising from PKR 49,200 in 2017 to PKR 51,400 in 2018. The disparity in wages reflects the value of unique competencies, specialized training, and qualifications that skilled workers bring to the labor market. Skilled workers possess greater bargaining power, as their expertise makes them less replaceable. Employers view skilled workers as valuable assets, given their higher productivity and capacity to generate more revenue for the firm. This leads to a stronger impact on wage determination, further incentivizing firms to invest in skills development.

To address these challenges, Pakistan must focus on improving skill matching through better communication of job requirements, robust career readiness programs for job seekers, and policies aimed at bridging the information gap. Simultaneously, prioritizing technical and vocational training will enhance the skill levels of the labor force, ensuring equitable wage growth and sustained economic development.

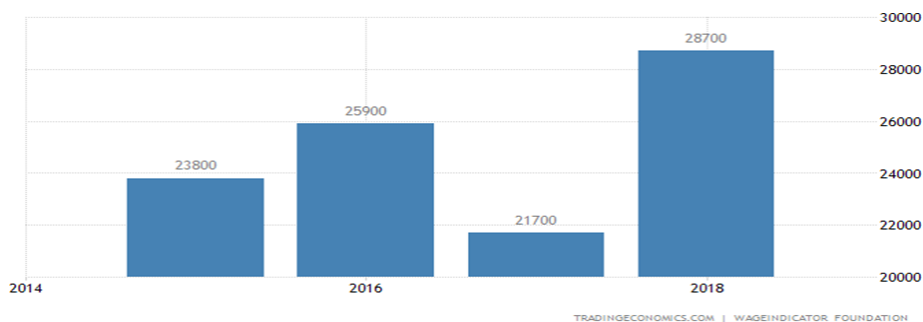


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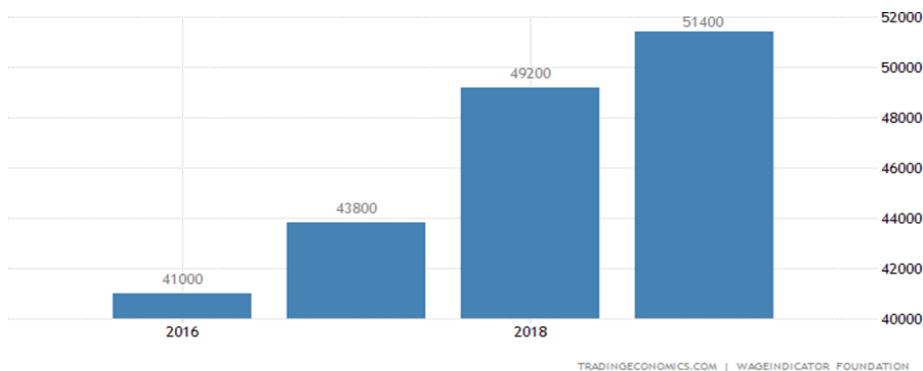


Figure: 02

❖ **Technical and Vocational Education and Training**

Globalization has spurred rapid technological advancements, creating an ever-growing demand for new and redefined skills. This presents both an opportunity and a challenge for Pakistan, where 60% of the population is under the age of 30, a demographic that could significantly contribute to the country's economic development. However, despite the fact that nearly 3 million men and women enter the job market each year, only about 2% receive technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The skills that are taught often fail to meet job market requirements due to several systemic issues, including the low reputation of TVET, a supply-driven TVET system, limited engagement with industry, weak governance, unqualified staff, and outdated curricula.

In recent years, the government of Pakistan has recognized the importance of addressing this skills gap and has launched various training programs aimed at transforming Pakistan into an industrial hub by 2030. These initiatives, supported by both international and national agencies, are being implemented by the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) and the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA).

Currently, there are over 3,581 public and private TVET institutions in Pakistan, with an enrollment of approximately 314,188 students. These institutions are working to equip the labor force with essential technical skills, with the following objectives:

- **Enhancing the Quality of Training:** To align training programs with industry standards and ensure that graduates possess the skills required by the modern job market.
- **Increasing Access to Vocational Education:** Expanding the reach of technical training programs to more students, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds, to ensure a wider pool of skilled workers.
- **Strengthening Industry Linkages:** Fostering greater collaboration between educational institutions and industries to ensure that training programs are relevant and aligned with the evolving demands of the labor market.
- **Improving Governance and Infrastructure:** Strengthening the governance of TVET institutions and modernizing training facilities and curricula to meet the needs of an increasingly globalized economy.

- Addressing Skill Mismatches: Ensuring that the skills taught in TVET institutions closely match the actual requirements of employers, reducing the gap between supply and demand for skilled workers.

These initiatives aim to build a skilled workforce capable of contributing to the country's industrialization goals. However, significant reforms are needed to overcome the systemic challenges and make the TVET sector more effective in meeting the dynamic needs of the labor market.

- a. To know about gap between demand and supply of skilled and semi-skilled workforce.
- b. To provide statistical information to develop the national occupational skills standard.
- c. To facilitate the TVET to utilize the NSIS data & statistics in planning and decision making.
- d. To calculate the public & private sector contribution in development of skilled human capital.

We are optimistic that these initiatives will bring about positive changes and help bridge the gap between skilled and unskilled workers in Pakistan. In this research, I opted not to use primary data collection methods, as there is already a wealth of reliable and updated data available from reputable sources such as World Bank reports, the International Labor Organization (ILO), and various government publications. I have utilized this secondary data and synthesized it into meaningful insights that can benefit Pakistan.

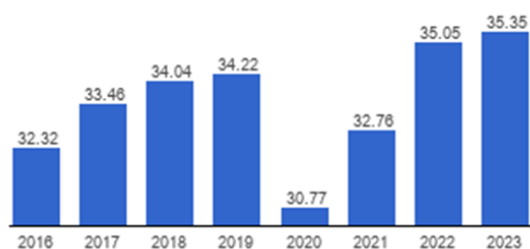


Figure 03: Women Participation in Labor Force

Women's labor force participation in Pakistan hovers around 21%, compared to an average of 56% globally. The majority of working women are engaged in the informal

sector, such as agriculture, domestic work, and home-based production, often underpaid and unprotected by labor laws. Urban-rural disparities are significant, with urban women having slightly more access to education and formal employment opportunities, while rural women predominantly engage in subsistence-level activities.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been actively working in Pakistan since 1947, with its primary objectives including the promotion of international labor standards, the prevention and elimination of child and bonded labor, job creation through employable skills, mainstreaming gender equality, strengthening labor market governance, and supporting employment and livelihoods recovery. Despite these extensive efforts, the outcomes in terms of significant development and improvement for Pakistan's workforce have been limited. The ILO's initiatives, although valuable, have not yet yielded the expected results in bridging the skills gap, enhancing workforce productivity, or fostering long-term sustainable growth for Pakistan's labor market. This reflects the complex challenges within the system that need to be addressed for the successful implementation of ILO's goals.

Policies to Strengthen the Fundamentals of Job Creation

While the private sector plays a crucial role in creating jobs, the government can adopt a range of measures to make the economic environment more conducive to quality job creation, aligning with strategies for sustainable growth.

First, ensuring macroeconomic stability is vital, moving away from the long-standing fluctuations that have hindered consistent development. To achieve this, the government could focus on measures such as modifying tax policies to improve revenue generation, eliminating distortionary subsidies, and reforming public utilities and the energy sectors to rationalize public spending. Strengthening exports through a robust exchange rate policy could also contribute to economic stability.

Second, improving the business environment is critical for facilitating job creation. This can be achieved by streamlining regulations and processes that support the entry of new businesses and the accumulation of physical capital. Key reforms could include simplifying procedures for acquiring construction permits, registering property, enrolling in tax networks, and ensuring regular tax payments. These reforms would help businesses operate more efficiently, reduce barriers to entry,

and encourage both local and foreign investment, thereby contributing to job creation and overall economic growth.

- **Leveraging Digital Media for Workforce Awareness:** Future research can explore the potential of social media platforms, online job portals, and digital campaigns to raise awareness about labor market trends, vocational training programs, and employment opportunities. Investigating how digital tools can bridge the communication gap between employers, job seekers, and training institutions can provide actionable insights for modernizing Pakistan's labor market.
- **Media's Role in Changing Perceptions of Vocational Training:** Studies can focus on how media campaigns can reshape societal attitudes toward technical and vocational education. This includes assessing the effectiveness of media in countering the stigma associated with vocational training and promoting it as a viable alternative to traditional academic pathways.
- **Promoting Industry-Academia Collaboration:** Future research can examine how media coverage can facilitate partnerships between industries and educational institutions to align skill development programs with market demands. Investigating the role of media in showcasing successful collaborations could encourage other industries to follow suit.
- **Analyzing Regional and Sectoral Media Representation:** Media perspectives on labor market issues often vary by region and sector. Future studies could analyze how regional media outlets address labor market challenges in different provinces and sectors (e.g., agriculture, technology, manufacturing) to identify gaps in coverage and representation.
- **Impact of International Media Narratives:** Research can assess the influence of international media on shaping perceptions of Pakistan's labor market globally. This includes analyzing how Pakistan's workforce is represented in international media and its impact on foreign investment, outsourcing opportunities, and participation in global labor markets.
- **Exploring Media's Advocacy Role in Policy Development:** Future studies can investigate how media campaigns influence labor market policies and reforms. This could include case studies of successful media-driven advocacy efforts to promote worker rights, improve job quality, or expand skills development initiatives.

- **Media's Role in Promoting Women's Workforce Participation:** A significant area for exploration is how media can encourage greater participation of women in Pakistan's labor market. Research could focus on how targeted campaigns address barriers such as cultural norms, skill gaps, and workplace discrimination to create a more inclusive labor market.
- **Emerging Technologies and Skills Communication:** As technology reshapes the labor market, future research can examine the role of media in preparing the workforce for emerging industries such as artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and digital marketing. Media strategies for communicating the need for upskilling and reskilling in response to technological advancements could be a critical area of study.
- **Evaluating Media's Role in Crisis-Induced Labor Market Adjustments:** Future research can explore how media responds to labor market disruptions caused by crises, such as economic downturns, pandemics, or natural disasters. Investigating how media covers issues like unemployment, skills retraining, and government interventions during such times can provide insights for more effective media strategies.
- **Longitudinal Analysis of Media Trends:** A long-term analysis of how media narratives on labor market issues evolve over time could provide valuable insights into shifting priorities and emerging trends. This could help policymakers and stakeholders better understand the dynamic relationship between media coverage and labor market reforms.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Pakistan faces significant challenges in bridging the gap between skilled and unskilled labor in its workforce. Despite the efforts made by the government and international organizations like the ILO, the skills mismatch, low-quality education systems, and lack of sufficient vocational training remain critical barriers to enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the labor force. The growth of Pakistan's economy is closely tied to the development of human capital, and addressing the skills gap is essential to improving employment outcomes, boosting productivity, and ensuring long-term economic growth. The primary aim of this research is to guide workers, employers, and researchers by highlighting the significant and positive outcomes that can arise from training, apprenticeships, technical and vocational courses, high-quality educational curricula, and the

continuous upgrading of skills. These efforts are critical to enhancing the overall workforce competency and fostering long-term economic growth and development. Pakistan must prioritize human capital development by reforming its education system, expanding access to quality vocational and technical training, and creating an enabling environment for businesses to thrive. The youth population, which constitutes a significant portion of the workforce, presents both an opportunity and a challenge. By equipping this demographic with relevant skills, Pakistan can unlock its potential for greater industrialization and economic competitiveness in the global market.

Recommendations

1. **Revise Educational Curricula:** The education system in Pakistan should shift its focus from rote memorization to critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. Integrating technical and vocational education into the mainstream curriculum at all educational levels will better prepare students for the demands of the job market.
2. **Strengthen TVET Programs:** The government should expand and enhance the scope of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs to meet the evolving needs of industries. This includes aligning training programs with international standards and engaging more actively with the private sector to ensure that the skills being taught are relevant to the job market.
3. **Promote Public-Private Partnerships:** Strengthening partnerships between the public and private sectors is essential for addressing skill mismatches. Encouraging private sector investment in skill development, such as through apprenticeships and on-the-job training programs, will help bridge the gap between labor market demand and supply.
4. **Policy Reforms for Economic Stability:** To create an environment conducive to job creation, the government should focus on ensuring macroeconomic stability, reforming public utilities, and removing subsidies that distort market dynamics. Reforms aimed at improving the ease of doing business, such as simplifying regulations and procedures for starting businesses, will attract more investment and foster entrepreneurship.
5. **Improve Governance in the TVET Sector:** Strengthening the governance of TVET institutions, ensuring quality control, and updating curricula to reflect industry needs are crucial steps toward developing a skilled

workforce. Greater transparency and accountability in the sector will help enhance its effectiveness.

6. **Focus on Informal Sector Workers:** Given the large proportion of the workforce engaged in the informal sector, targeted initiatives that provide training and certification for informal workers will help them transition to the formal economy, where wages and job security are higher.

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