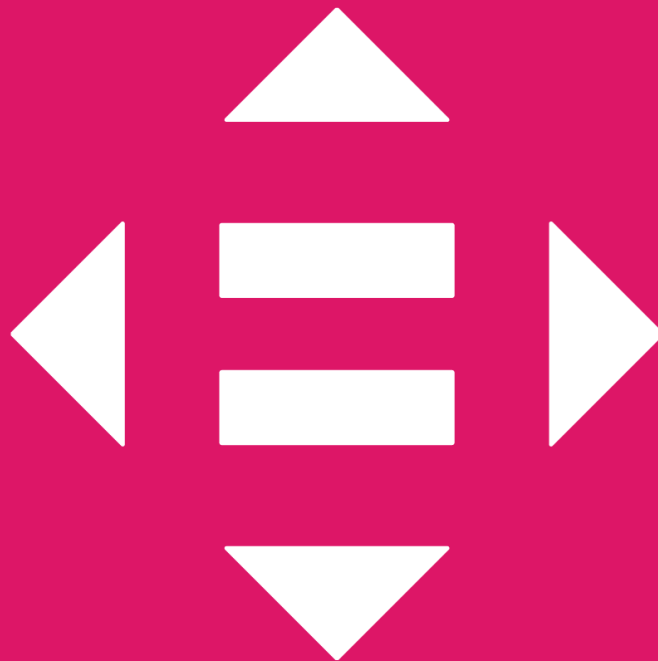


Goal 10

REDUCED INEQUALITIES

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Country Context

Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the fifth largest population on the planet with 213.6 million people,¹ is a sovereign state situated in a geo-strategic location at the junction of middle East and central Asia. Bereft of Quaid's dream for a welfare state, social development has been off the mark with 22.4 million Out of School Children,² 56.3% Out of Pocket Expenditure in health,³ and 29.5% population living below poverty line.⁴ Exclusionist policy patterns marginalizing governance has led to country ranking at 147th out of 188 in Human Development Index⁵ and 143rd out of 144th in Global Gender Gap Index.⁶ Moreover, marginalization of key strategic sectors has led to funding diversions away from social development, barely allocating 3% of the GDP each for Education, Health and Social protection.⁷

With a GDP of \$279 billion (2017 est.),⁸ Pakistan is categorized as a lower middle-income country. Economic stability has been a constant uphill battle with public debts and liabilities escalating up to 74% of GDP.⁹ The country is ranked at 171 out of 188 countries in terms of GDP per capita (PPP) of \$5,400 (2017 est.)¹⁰ while unemployment stands at 6% without factoring in statistics from informal economy which employs almost 70% of the country's workforce.¹¹ Gini index estimates 30.7% inequality with disparities as wide as the income share held by the lowest 10% at 4% against that of the top 10% at 26% (2013 est.)¹² in Pakistan.

In hindsight, political institutions in their formative years - mainly adapted from the colonial rump - were barely able to withstand extraconstitutional maneuvers¹³ in the absence of a strong nation-building consciousness. This resulted in successive instability of civilian governments followed by political proxies and status-quo representatives, beguiling under democratic pretexts. Weak democratic structures led to the absentia of populace from democratic processes and crippled country prospects in socio-economic and political spheres with implications long into its future. This is evident of the country rankings at 110th in Democracy Index¹⁴ and 20th among Failed States rankings in 2018.¹⁵ Fret over it not though, for Quaid's optimism guides our course:

The story of Pakistan, its struggle and its achievement, is the very story of great human ideals, struggling to survive in the face of great odds and difficulties.ⁱ

Amid international isolationism, national calamities and social fragmentation, democratization of state and social institutions is the moral and political imperative. It is essential that we promote critical education and discourse to bring forth analysis that helps adequately influence policy mandates for a just, peaceful and prosperous Pakistan.

ⁱ M.A. Jinnah, Address to the people in Chittagong, March 23, 1948

Reducing Inequalities

The growth in Pakistan has traditionally been pro-rich with wealth inequality almost twice the level of income inequality. This is evident of the fact that the wealthiest 10% own over 60% of the wealth whereas the bottom 60% own barely 10% of the wealth. Gini coefficient at 29.6, although not manifesting the actual measure of inequality on the ground, is exacerbated by the COVID-19 enforced economic downturn. Despite progressive taxation as a revenue instrument, the essence of redistribution remains an academic abstraction. Such level of inequalities of wealth further breed inequalities of power severely affecting the socio-political dynamic of our society. Progressively reducing inequalities of outcomes is an ambitious pursuit, enshrined in Goal 10 of the SDGs, but holistic approaches could help us achieve it.

- 1. Policy focus, inclusive governance and equitable financing needs to be ensured especially for marginalized segments like FATA, AJK, GB and Baluchistan to strengthen state-citizen relationship.**
- 2. Constitutional guarantees, privileges, and access to justice must be ensured for all as equal citizens to avoid provinciality and exclusion.**
- 3. Minority rights must be protected ensuring their equal access to civil and political liberties and social development.**
- 4. Laws should ensure the protection of the most marginalized by eradicating the culture of impunity for the powerful across policy, institutional and social practices.**
- 5. In the spirit of equal citizenship, VIP culture must be eliminated without distinction to ensure equality before the law.**
- 6. Access to justice must be improved by addressing several barriers on the way while also expediting judicial processes for timely remedial measures.**
- 7. Judicial reforms must be enacted across different tiers through vertical and horizontal redress to improve justice systems.**
- 8. Induction to public sector should be streamlined - solely based on merit - disavowing political and bureaucratic patronage.**
- 9. Reinstating peoples' faith in public institutions should be the foremost priority to ensure result-based governance and efficiency. Transparency and accountability should be institutionalized, not just as a norm but a guiding principle.**
- 10. Accountability, a central underpinning to efficient governance, should mean zero tolerance on embezzlement, corruption and fraudulent attitudes and practices.**
- 11. Accountability bodies like auditor general, FBR and NAB should be depoliticized with operational autonomy to leverage institutional efficiency and eradicate corruption.**

12. **Issues of shirking democratic spaces should be resolved and the overall environment for democratic dialogue must be enhanced with active involvement of civil society.**
13. **Cyber harassment/bullying needs to be dealt with seriously by enacting enforceable legislation, also addressing the jurisdictional issue, and effective implementation.**

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