

Goal 6

CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

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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

Clean water and sanitation

Pakistan is predominantly a water-dependent and water scarce country. Currently, only 36 percent of the population has access to safely managed drinking water, and 79 percent to safely managed sanitation. The country's water security is affected by several issues including policy incoherence, weak water management, lack of awareness and absence of data compounded by fragile governance mechanisms. The country requires an annual investment of over Rs. 400 billion to enhance its WASH profile:

The country requires fundamental reforms in WASH programs:

1. **Equitable financing for WASH programs combined with strong political will to redress water scarcity in Pakistan**
2. **Urbanization plans must consider adequate measures to meet the demands of hygiene and sanitation facilities**
3. **Inter-departmental synergies need to be unlocked for enhanced coordination**
4. **Regulatory mechanisms need to be operationalized to manage quality assurance standards in water and sanitation services**
5. **Capacity building and sensitization programs need to be devised for whole of a society approach to preservation of fresh water sources**
6. **The availability of data needs to be enhanced for accurate analysis to inform concrete policy action**
7. **Participatory governance is a key recommendation to conjoin various sets of expertise in enhancing WASH in Pakistan**

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