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Efforts to Alleviate Poverty Through Social Support Programs: Are we on the Right Track

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Abstract

Poverty has long afflicted Pakistan and continues to exist as a great socioeconomic concern. This study examines the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) and the Ehsaas Program in detail using the qualitative data analysis approach. It recognizes the importance of these programs in eradicating poverty by providing immediate financial assistance to millions of low-income individuals. These initiatives have increased household consumption, empowered women and tackles not just financial insecurity but also healthcare, education, and malnutrition. The analysis also highlights significant challenges like targeting inefficiencies, administrative issues, corruption and regional differences in the prevalence of poverty. However, these programs fail to address the root causes that foster poverty, such as low literacy rates, unemployment, and limited access to healthcare. The study underlines the need for Pakistan to carry out more conditional cash transfers and job creation initiatives, to treat rural poverty, like India's MGNREGA and Brazil's Bolsa Família plans. In conclusion, the policy proposals stress the need of moving away from providing temporary financial assistance to targeting the underlying cause of poverty with an integrated strategy. This strategy should target poverty with broader development objectives in the areas of employment, healthcare, education and climate change.

Key Words: Social Security Programs, BISP, Ehsaas Program, Poverty Alleviation, Social Safety Net, Micro financing in Pakistan.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Context

With a population of nearly 240 million, Pakistan has an array of socioeconomic issues, with poverty continuing to be one of the most persistent. In 2022, over 24.3% of Pakistan's population was estimated by the World Bank to be below the country's poverty line (World Bank, 2022). Natural disasters, political upheaval, and economic volatility have led poverty levels to fluctuate despite decades of programs

intended at economic progress. The disparity between urban and rural poverty rates is discernible, with rural areas continuously lagging behind in respect of income and development.

Successive governments over the years have launched a variety of poverty alleviation efforts, including large-scale interventions based on cash transfer schemes like Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), and Ehsaas Program. In spite of all these initiatives, poverty is still a multi-pronged and inherently intricate phenomenon that is amplified by factors like, poor targeting, insufficient funding and corruption.

1.2. Research Questions

This research aims to address the following research questions:

Question No. 1

What are the primary gaps in prevailing poverty mitigation policies?

Question No. 2

What supplemental changes or reforms are indispensable to achieve sustainable poverty alleviation in Pakistan?

1.3. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study comes from its extensive probe into Pakistan's initiatives to scale down poverty. The appraisal of aforesaid programs is bound to offer important insights for academicians, politicians, and development professionals, as poverty alleviation is Pakistan's principal socioeconomic development objective. This work can aid in the formulation of future programs and assist in the designing of more robust poverty abatement strategies by drawing attention to the achievements and lapses of current efforts to counter poverty.

2. Literature Review

Poverty is a multifarious problem which has been examined from a variety of theoretical viewpoints. One of the most convincing theories, The Capability Approach, is introduced by Amartya Sen in 1999. It illustrates the significance of encouraging freedom of people in order to secure individual well-being. Sen contends that poverty is much more than just a lack of money; it additionally includes lack of the skills, primarily required to live a life that defines certain material values. This idea elaborates the need for comprehending poverty that not only encompasses financial limitations but also indicates rather education, health and social inclusiveness.

Another relevant belief, maintains that The Social Safety Nets, may protect the most susceptible groups of society from severe indigence through infrastructure projects, subsidies, and targeted transfers of money. This approach has been widely employed in many developing countries to protect financially disadvantaged groups from economic shocks (Barrientos & Hulme, 2016). In consonance with these theoretical backdrops, Pakistan is somewhat directing its efforts to combat poverty, particularly initiatives like the Ehsaas Program, which aims to strengthen social safety nets, and BISP, that offers cash transfers to the most vulnerable individuals in society, are in strict compliance to these parameters. (Nabi et al., 2020).

Pakistan can learn a lot from the experiences of the other nations which have successfully reduced poverty through the implementation of social protection systems. One of such most commonly referred model of a successful conditional cash transfer (CCT) program is Bolsa Família in Brazil. In 2003, Bolsa Família was initiated to provide poverty stricken families with cash subsidy, depending on certain health and educational benchmarks. By 2014, in a period of decade, it supported in rescuing around 20 million people from indignant poverty (Lindert et al., 2007). In a similar manner, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was introduced in 2005, under which rural families in India are ensured 100 days of paid employment annually. This program has considerably increased household income and dropped rural poverty. (Dutta et al., 2014).

Pakistan could reap potential benefits from some of the characteristics of both schemes. Bolsa Família's successful outcomes with targeting and conditionality may help in governing Pakistan's cash transfer approach; While MGNREGA's commitment to rural employment can be adapted to cope with Pakistan's rural poverty. Pakistan has a long history of various programs to reduce poverty. One of the most important social safety net programs in the history, the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) was first launched in 2008 and it provided low-income families with unconditional cash support. With payment intended to facilitate the most impoverished class of society, BISP had granted relief to around 8 million families by 2022 (Government of Pakistan, 2022). Research outcomes reflects that, among children and women, BISP has increased household consumption and access to health care, which has notably served in curbing the poverty ratio.

In 2019, the Ehsaas Program was launched to curtail poverty, which is a more all-encompassing initiative and constituted of a number of sub-programs. To tackle various facets of poverty, sub programs include few models like, Interest-free income support (Ehsaas Amdan), interest free loans (Ehsaas Qaraz), funds transfers (Ehsaas Kafalat), and nourishment (Ehsaas Nashonuma). The program's all-embracing outreach to more than 20 million recipients, demonstrates its substantial advancement towards a multipronged strategy to address poverty (Nabi et al., 2020).

Pakistan offers microfinance schemes which provide small loans to needy people, mainly women. Khushhali Microfinance Bank and Akhuwat are such efforts in the right direction to nurture entrepreneurship and promote the growth of small businesses (Akhter et al., 2020). Despite their inconsistent achievements, these microfinance schemes have also drawn criticism. Relevant studies indicate that, inherent flaws of these programs with targeting inefficiencies have caused many affluent household units to secure assistance and excluded some deserving families from receiving the intended benefits (Chaudhry & Rehman, 2016).

Rampant corruption and leakages in the distribution system has adversely affected the desired objective of these schemes (Khan et al., 2020). Social safety initiatives like Ehsaas have drawn plenty of consideration time and again, but despite this fact, little efforts have been invested on devising strategies that could integrate these initiatives with more all-encompassing developmental goals like revamping of education and healthcare sector. For lasting poverty mitigation, follow up studies

ought to deduce a well-rounded approach so that Pakistan's policies are more in conformity with these areas.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The subject study is carried out to evaluate the practical utility of the Pakistan's measures to eradicate poverty. A mixed-methods research design is applied to conduct this analysis which embodies both quantitative and qualitative methods. For quantitative study, secondary data from government agencies like national polls and the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has been examined. It has also scrutinized reports from international organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Statistics on various aspects like poverty index, coverage of social protection programs and regional changes in socioeconomic disparity have reviewed.

The subject inquiry highlighted the dominant patterns in the implementation and outcomes of the programs targeted at reducing poverty by utilizing qualitative approach for the content analysis of available literature and policy documents. This study also includes the detailed investigation of the government papers and academic publications. Moreover, reports from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that assess the socio-economic outcomes of programs like the Ehsaas Program and Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) have been also consulted for this research manuscript.

3.2. Data Sources

The subject study draws primary data from:

1. Government Reports
2. International Data
3. Peer-Reviewed Journals
4. Program Evaluations

3.3. Analytical Framework

This study assessed the usefulness of the selected poverty alleviation initiatives by employing a poverty reduction impact evaluation framework. This arrangement examines programs based on their ability to:

- Reduce the poverty headcount ratio.
- Increase access to education and healthcare services.
- Improve household income and consumption levels.
- Target vulnerable populations effectively, including women, children, and marginalized communities.

4. Analysis of Pakistan's Poverty Alleviation Efforts

Since Pakistan gained independence in 1947, the country's poverty rate has varied greatly. Although the nation's economy thrived in the 1950s and 1960s, poverty persisted, particularly across rural areas. Economic instability, political upheaval,

and external influences like the Afghan refugee crisis intensified poverty in the 1970s and 1980s. Numerous programs to reduce poverty have been put in place by successive governments since the 1990s, but the progress has been inconsistent, with rural areas continuously falling behind metropolitan areas. The graph below shows a rising trend in pro-poor spending over time.

Figure 1: Pro-Poor Expenditures



Source: Pakistan Economic Survey, 2023-2024

According to World Bank data, poverty index declined from 34.7% in 2000 to 24.3% in 2022, (2022). Major factors responsible for this drop in poverty are economic growth, remittances from foreign employees, and focused initiatives by government to reduce poverty. Despite this, poverty ratio in rural Sindh and Balochistan, is still high where it stands above 30% (Government of Pakistan, 2022).

Table 1: Poverty Trends in Pakistan (2000–2022)

Year	Poverty Headcount Ratio (%)	Rural Poverty (%)	Urban Poverty (%)
2000	34.7	43.2	22.5
2010	29.5	37.8	17.9
2020	24.6	32.9	12.5
2022	24.3	32.6	12.2

Source: World Bank (2022), Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2022)

4.1. Key Programs

4.1.1. Benazir Income Support Program (BISP)

In Pakistan social protection scheme namely, the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), was introduced in 2008, which facilitated the poorest families with unconditional cash transfers. Initially, the primary target of the program was to provide financial support to women in the lowest income range with an ambition to ensure that their families could afford basic necessities. As of 2022, BISP has

provided cash transfers to more than 8 million households (Government of Pakistan, 2022).

Research indicates that BISP has improved household consumption levels and brought down poverty. In comparison to non-participants, BISP beneficiaries had an average 20% increase in household consumption, according to Cheema et al. (2016). Furthermore, BISP significantly increased school enrolment rates for children from beneficiary families and encouraged female participation in household decision-making (Naz, 2019).

Figure 2: Yearly Number of Beneficiaries



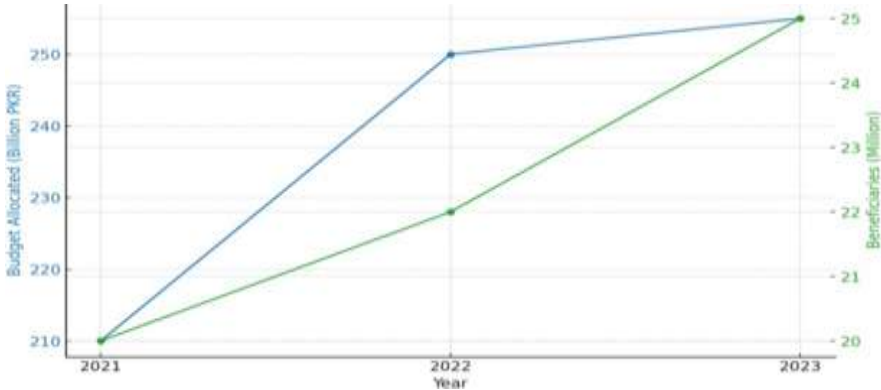
Source: Pakistan Economic Survey, 2023-2024

The graph illustrates that the number of BISP beneficiaries are on the rise. However, there are a number of issues with the program, such as addressing inefficiencies—many eligible households do not receive money transfers, despite reports of non-poor households receiving them. Moreover, its efficacy is compromised by administrative challenges such as payment delays and corruption (Khan et al., 2020)

4.1.2. Ehsaas Program

The Government of Pakistan introduced the Ehsaas Program in 2019 as a more comprehensive approach to alleviate poverty. The program consists of more than 134 sub-programs that address different facets of poverty, including Ehsaas Interest-Free Loans, Ehsaas Kafalat (cash transfers), and Ehsaas Nashonuma (child nutrition support). More than 20 million people were covered by Ehsaas as of 2022 (Government of Pakistan, 2022).

Figure 3: Ehsaas Program Performance (2021-2023)



Source: Government of Pakistan, 2021-2023

Table 4 Poverty Alleviation

The Ehsaas Program's performance over the last three years (2021-2023) is shown in the above graph along with the number of beneficiaries (in millions) and the budget allotted (in billions of PKR). The budgetary allocation is shown by the blue line, and the annual number of recipients reached is represented by the green line. Ehsaas has received recognition for its multidimensional strategy to combat poverty, which addresses problems like financial inclusion, education, and malnutrition. However, similar to BISP, Ehsaas encounters difficulties in efficiently identifying and guaranteeing that the most disadvantaged groups receive the benefits (Nabi et al., 2020).

4.1.3. Micro Finance and Microcredit Initiatives

Apart from extensive government initiatives, microfinance organizations performed a vital role in reducing poverty. Low-income people, especially women, can start small startups and increase household income by seeking small loans from Khushhali Microfinance Bank and Akhuwat. Microfinance initiatives in Pakistan have helped to reduce poverty by boosting employment and entrepreneurial activity in rural regions, according to a study by Akhter et al. (2020).

4.1.4. Zakat and Usher System

Pakistan's two conventional social support programs are Zakat and Usher, which aimed at lowering poverty by transferring wealth from the rich to the poor. However, these systems are time and again berated for their performance inefficiency and defective targeting methods. Studies contend that the Zakat system may perform better if it has been transformed to ensure that cash amount is granted in judicious and transparent manner (Chaudhry & Rehman, 2016). Following table reflects the province wise entitlement of Zakat Funds which depicts the quantum thereof.

Table 2: Disbursement of Zakat

Federal Areas/ Provinces	Amount (Rs million)
Punjab	3,944.02
Sindh	1,630.27
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	950.25
Balochistan	351.36
Gilgit-Baltistan	96.11
ICT	181.86
FATA*	239.57
Total	7,393.44

Source: Pakistan Economic Survey, 2023-2024

4.2. Comparative Analysis with Global Best Practices

Pakistan's efforts to address poverty can be compared with two international models: Brazil's Bolsa Família and India's MGNREGA. Through Bolsa Família, low-income families can secure conditional funds transfers, which link benefits to amelioration in health and educational status of the recipient. Effectiveness of the program has been credited to its accuracy in targeting and conditionality, which has enabled millions of people to get out of abject poverty (Lindert et al., 2007). Conversely, even though Pakistan's programs provide unconditional money transfers, they are lacking in the conditionality that may stimulate sustainable educational and health outcomes.

Table 3: Comparative Analysis of Poverty Alleviation Programs

Country	Program	Type of Program	Target Population	Conditionality	Impact on Poverty Reduction
Pakistan	BISP, Ehsaas	Unconditional Cash Transfer	Poorest 20% of households	No	Moderate
Brazil	Bolsa Família	Conditional Cash Transfer	Poorest 30% of Households	Yes	High
India	Mgnrega	Employment Guarantee	Rural Households	No	High

Source: World Bank (2022), Government of Brazil (2022), Government of India (2022).

4.2.1. Outcomes and Impact on Poverty Reduction

Poverty alleviation is not a uniform process and Pakistan's attempts to ameliorate poverty have met with diverse proportions of success. Despite the fact, BISP and Ehsaas programs have facilitated millions of people to flee out of poverty, a lot has to be done to appreciably cut down poverty rates over the sustained period. Albeit these policies have reduced the overall inclusive poverty headcount, but there are also some significant challenges to defy like ineffective targeting, administrative challenges and geographical disparities. Microfinance projects have contributed in lowering poverty by empowering small business owners but still these are unable to generate a remarkable national presence owing to their low magnitude. (Akhter et al., 2020).

5. Successes of Pakistan's Poverty Alleviation Programs

Successful launch of comprehensive schemes such as Ehsaas Program and the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) have profoundly influenced the Pakistan's struggle to alleviate poverty. Millions of impoverished families have benefited enormously through BISP, which by transferring instant monetary relief, has allowed them to fulfill their basic material needs. Since its launch in 2008, through unconditional funds transfers, BISP has fostered domestic consumption and promoted general well-being among millions of deserving households in Pakistan (Cheema et al., 2016).

In the similar vein, the Ehsaas Program was inaugurated in 2019, to amplify the scope of social protection network in Pakistan. A number of sub-programs, such as Ehsaas Kafalat, Ehsaas Nashonum and Ehsaas Amdan were introduced to address various dimensions of poverty, for instance financial constraints, malnourishment, limited access to education and health facilities. Under the Ehsaas Kafalat program alone, more than 8 million females receive money transfers, providing them safety nets which empower them to withstand economic downturns (Nabi et al., 2020).

Likewise, these socioeconomic policies have dramatically increased female empowerment. BISP and Ehsaas have promoted women's emancipation in homes by designating them as the principal beneficiaries. Financial aid has been demonstrated to encourage school enrollment ratios for children, notably girls, and women are more likely to participate in familial decision-making process. (Naz, 2019).

Overall, offering the most vulnerable groups short-term financial support has been the main accomplishment of Pakistan's attempts to reduce poverty. These initiatives have improved fundamental access to healthcare and education while stabilizing consumption patterns in low-income households by easing immediate financial constraints.

5.1. Limitations and Challenges

Notwithstanding these achievements, Pakistan's efforts to reduce poverty have been stalled by a number of pressing problems. Ineffective targeting is one of the major issues. Based on studies, the poorest households do not receive a significant amount of the benefits from either BISP or Ehsaas. Rather, many advantages are taken away by people who are not the intended beneficiaries. (Khan et al., 2020). The programs'

overall impact is compromised by this inclusion error, which occurs when non-poor households receive benefits. However, a persistent problem is exclusion errors, which occur when worthy impoverished households are not given aid (Chaudhry & Rehman, 2016).

Among other significant issues are bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption. According to multiple investigations, corruption at various program's administration levels has resulted in resource misallocation, which caused to slow down the payout process and undermined the accountability systems designed to maintain transparency. (Khan et al., 2020).

Another drawback is that Pakistan's efforts to reduce poverty have primarily concentrated on delivering temporary financial assistance rather than treating the underlying causes of poverty. Although these financial transfers offer short-term respite, they fail to cope with long-term problems like unemployment, low literacy, and limited access to healthcare.

These elements still keep millions of Pakistanis trapped in vicious poverty cycles. For instance, rural poverty is still an ongoing concern in spite of considerable investment in cash transfers; in areas like Balochistan and parts of Sindh, poverty rates are significantly higher than the national average (World Bank, 2022). Furthermore, these initiatives have produced a negligible effect on the development of human capital through advancements in healthcare and education. There is minimal indication that the cash transfer schemes have improved beneficiaries' health or employment prospects, and they have only slightly increased school enrollment rates (Naz, 2019).

5.2. Regional Disparities in Program Effectiveness

In Pakistan, regional disparity is one of the key challenges which policymakers confront while implementing of poverty reduction initiatives. Pakistan has a diverse range of poverty rates, especially in the rural regions of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which have largely higher proportions than metropolitan ones. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) claims that urban poverty ratio stands at 12.2% while rural areas experience 32.6%, with some rural areas experiencing even greater rates of poverty (Government of Pakistan, 2022). Social safety Programs designed for the poor people have not been appropriated evenly among the provinces. The superior administrative infrastructure and growing political domination have benefited regions the Punjab and urban areas of Sindh and disproportionately influenced the poverty alleviation measure.

On the contrary, concerning to the allocation of social welfare funds, Baluchistan, the largest and the most indigent province of Pakistan, has earned little to no attention. As reported by Khan et al. (2020), already pronounced economic inequalities among provinces has greatly exacerbated by this inequitable distribution of resources. The failure to take regional disparities in poverty into account has markedly debilitated the successful outcome of national policies to counter poverty. Specifically, there are a number of barriers which aggravated the poverty in Balochistan and impaired the performance of cash transfers programs, including access to education, healthcare and infrastructure. Even in provinces like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh rural areas have consistently lagged behind in poverty eradication than urban centers.

Outcomes by Province (2022)

Province	Poverty Headcount (%)	BISP Beneficiaries (%)	Ehsaas Program Coverage (%)
Punjab	19.3	24.5	28.1
Sindh (Urban)	12.5	12.8	15.6
Sindh (Rural)	30.6	22.3	18.9
KP	33.2	18.7	21.4
Balochistan	42.3	7.6	10.2

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2022), Government of Pakistan (2022).

5.3. Social and Political Barriers to Sustainable Poverty Alleviation

Several societal and political challenges along with administrative and technological issues are posing serious challenges for Pakistan's social safety programs in poverty alleviation. Two most commonly stated factors are political uncertainty and institutional corruption which interfere with the continuity and intended benefits of social welfare projects. Generally, it is observed that political decision of the governing elite to steer cash toward regions that favors their party has profoundly influence the way resources are earmarked. Khan et al. (2020) By impairing the fair apportionment of resources, this political patronage deprives the impoverished groups from sufficient financial coverage.

Beside this, access to social security programs is restrained by social exclusion, especially those originated on the basis of caste and gender. Even though being the primary target population of programs like BISP, female still confront significant impediments when trying to approach social welfare programs and financial services, particularly in rural areas. (Naz, 2019). Furthermore, biases against some religious and ethnic minorities barred them from availing all-inclusive benefits of programs aspiring to eliminate poverty.

The general public's ignorance about the social assistance programs that are accessible to them, made the existing challenges more conspicuous. Many eligible households, especially those in rural and isolated locations, are still ignorant of the aid they are eligible for. Low literacy levels make this problem worse by making it more difficult for people to deal with the administrative procedures requisite for claiming benefits (Chaudhry & Rehman, 2016).

6. Future Directions and Recommendations

6.1. Need for Integrated Policy Frameworks

Pakistan must abandon temporary solutions and embark on a comprehensive strategy that incorporates social and economic growth with poverty alleviation in order to achieve long-term poverty reduction. In order to address the underlying causes of poverty, an integrated policy framework should prioritize infrastructure investment, job creation, and human capital development. This might entail improved coordination between employment creation, healthcare, education policy and social protection programs. Pakistan needs well-coordinated strategies to curb

poverty with long term goals for accelerated economic growth which will lessen its dependency on temporary assistance and empower its people to get rid of the vicious cycle of poverty.

6.2. Strengthening Social Protection Systems

Notwithstanding the fact that initiatives like BISP and Ehsaas have manifested some accomplishments, they still call for up gradation and broadening of scope with the objective to reach a vast segment of the population and resolution of the previously stated geographical disparities. Targeting strategies should be revised to decrease inclusion and exclusion errors so that intended benefits may reach to the most deserving households. Recipient identification and aid delivery by means of advanced technology applications and digital platforms shall improve the accountability and transparency of these programs (Nabi et al., 2020).

Akin to Brazil's Bolsa Família, that associates financial benefits to health and educational performance, is one of the potential solutions to the execution of conditional cash transfers (CCTs). Lasting improvement in the areas of school attendance, child nutrition, and access to healthcare could be optimized by introducing conditionality.

6.3. Emphasizing Human Capital Development

It is indispensable for lasting poverty alleviation to overcome both educational and healthcare deficiencies. To promote the economic self-reliance of population, Pakistan must direct investments for the growth of its human capital in an effort to equip its people with the required resources and skills.

Sustained poverty alleviation asks for policies aimed at settling the deficiencies of the education and healthcare sector. Pakistan needs to prioritize human capital development to provide its nationals with the resources and expertise requisite to enrich their economic prospects. This includes:

- 6.3.1.1. Launching more programs particularly vocational training and skill development to create employment opportunities, especially among young people and women.
- 6.3.1.2. Capitalizing on the primary education and healthcare systems in the rural regions to undermine regional disparities in access to basic amenities
- 6.3.1.3. Programs like Ehsaas Nashonuma are an excellent start to prevent Malnutrition but its scope must be further amplified to have a nationwide effect.

6.4. Public-Private Partnerships in Poverty Alleviation

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) can play a vital role in poverty alleviation by leveraging private sector resources and expertise to complement government efforts. For example, microfinance institutions like Khushhali Microfinance Bank and Akhuwat have successfully partnered with the government to provide small loans to low-income individuals. Key challenges in poverty alleviation, particularly in areas like job creation, education, and healthcare, might be addressed by expanding such partnerships.

6.5. Digital Inclusion and Financial Inclusion

Public-private partnerships, or PPPs, can substantially contribute to the curtailment of poverty if government engages the experience and resources of the private sector to assist its social welfare programs. For the sake of supplying small loans to low-income families, microfinance institutions like Khushhali Microfinance Bank and Akhuwat have strategically aligned with the government. Extending the outreach of these alliances across various sectors like education, healthcare and employment creation could help in tackling some of the crucial challenges to eliminate poverty (Nabi et al., 2020).

6.6. Climate Change and Poverty

In Pakistan, to certain extent climate change and global warming has also jeopardized the efforts to decrease poverty. The economically disadvantaged groups, who majorly rely on agriculture for their livelihood, has immoderately afflicted by natural disasters like droughts and floods. Pakistan should establish comprehensive climate-resistant poverty alleviation plans that take these sensitive communities into due consideration. This might necessitate offering these risk areas climate-resilient infrastructure, including drought-resistant crops, flood protection and stretching social safety policies to incorporate disaster relief. (World Bank, 2021).

7. Conclusion

It can be concluded that through the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) and the Ehsaas Program, Pakistan has made some strides towards facilitating millions of poverty stricken households by lowering poverty rate. Even though, these programs do encounter certain obstacles, such as poor targeting, regional differences, and preference to immediate rather than long-term poverty alleviation strategies. On the account of studies, despite these programs have contributed to the prompt poverty alleviation, these initiatives perform unsatisfactorily to ensure sustainable poverty reduction.

Pakistan must work on the fortification its social protection systems, targeting methods, and adopt all-inclusive measures to eradicate poverty. In order to address these challenges, policymakers should prioritize investments in employment, education, and healthcare. Prospective plans to eradicate poverty should also emphasis on public-private partnerships, digital inclusion, and climate resilience. Pakistan may fill in these gaps by adopting a more all-encompassing and long term strategy for poverty alleviation.

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