

THE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT: A KEY TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Investment in HRD has been the major source of economic growth in the developed countries; Pakistan has done little to extend the capacity of their people to meet the challenge of accelerated development. This exploratory research deals with the subject in a step down approach. Starting with defining the problem, factors affecting the HRD and economic growth and the linkage between the two variables, it analyses the obtaining HRD practices which are impinging the economic growth of Pakistan. Towards the end is included a suggested comprehensive HRD plan in the shape of HRD Framework and rolling plan approach which would see Pakistan through the existing problem.

Keywords: *Digital Divide, Economic Growth, Education, Entrepreneurship, HRD, Labour Force, Migration, Population, Social Sector, M-learning*

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Development (HRD) and economic growth run parallel to each other; hence human element cannot be neglected in the process of development activity. Investment in HRD has been the major source of growth in the developed countries, whereas, the inattention to the same in the developing countries has done little to extend the capacity of their people to meet the challenge of accelerated development (Narayana, 2003). The characteristics of economic backwardness are manifested in several forms including low labour efficiency, limited specialisation in occupation, deficiency of entrepreneur-ship, customary values and social institutions that minimise the incentive for economic change (Abbasi & Burdey, 2008; Meier, 1970).

Research Objectives and Significance

Pakistan is a good case study, which though has historically enjoyed respectable GDP growth rates, yet failed to translate it into a satisfactory level of HRD (Pritchett, 2000). Pakistan's policies have been focused on high economic growth and incidentally on the task of providing social necessities. However, at present there is growing realisation that in order to achieve sustainable economic development, HRD merits a relatively higher priority. Discussion on HRD in Pakistan is mostly focused on training and development. Moreover, there exists no clear differentiation between human resources (HR), human resource management (HRM) and HRD. At the collegial level, HRD is viewed as part of the school of business curriculum. This paper explores different activities that

highlight the context of HRD in Pakistan; hence following objectives guided the development of the paper:

- To identify the core factors affecting HRD.
- To analyse the role of HRD particularly in ‘Economic Growth.
- To obtain HRD policies of Pakistan and;
- To introduces/proposed HRD Road Map for Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Factors Affecting HRD and Economic Growth

HRD refers to the population of a country and serves as a vital development factor, whereas ‘National human resource development (NHRD)’ is the “planned and coordinated process of enhancing human resources in one or more political states or geographic regions for economic and/or social purposes” (Kim, 2012). Human capital is defined as the “productive investments in humans, including their skills and health, that are the outcomes of education, health care, and on-the-job training” (Todaro, 1994; Zidan, 2001). In less-developed countries like Pakistan the current quality of human resources and their development strategies are woefully inadequate. Consequently, most of these countries are caught in a vicious circle of the perpetuation of low skill level and under development. Standing at 108 out of 144 in Human Development Index (UNDP, 2015), Pakistan is far from achieving the human resource development related Millennium Development Goals (Education - minimum 4% of GDP & Health – minimum 2% of GDP) (Wasti, 2014), owing to meagre budget allocation. This allocation clearly provides a clear assessment that allocations made for education, health and social welfare have been minimal resulting in unhealthy state of HRD. Various facets impinging the economic growth of Pakistan have been enumerated subsequently.

Education

The pioneer work on the concept of investment in human capital proved that high level of education is a sine qua non for economic growth and no country can make significant economic progress if majority of its citizen are illiterate (Becker, 1960; Schultz, 1961). In the developing countries, including Pakistan, expenditure on education is considerably low as compared to other sectors of the economy. Studies have found that 75% of illiterate adults are residing in ten countries (India, China, Pakistan, Egypt, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Brazil, Indonesia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo)(Agency, 2015). Pakistan’s adult literacy rate is 55% (age 15 +) and youth literacy rate is 71% (age 15 –24) (“Effective Literacy Programmes,” 2012). Globally, Pakistan ranks 189 out of 206 countries (Winthrop & Graff, 2010) and ranks 113 out of 120 countries in the UNESCO’s Education for All Education Development Index. Survey conducted by Riphah International University on finding reasons for alarmingly low literacy rate in Pakistan, reveal

following four contributing factors in the same order; poverty, lack of awareness, gender discrimination, and mismanagement of government (“World Literacy Rate,” 2010).

Health and Nutrition

The impact of health on economic growth can be enumerated through the gains in workers’ productivity, and improved utilisation of national resources (Bloom & Canning, 2008). Sri Lanka is a case point wherein the national income rose by 9 % consequent to eradication of malaria between 1947-77 (Mundial, 1980). Spending that reduces the incidence of disease results in reduction of treatment costs. The benefit also passes on to the next generation (Todaro, 1997). Health infrastructure growth in Pakistan is sluggish and insufficiency of such health services result in very high rates of infant mortality, low life expectancy as compared to other developing countries (Qureshi & Davidsen, n.d.). Pakistan’s government has adopted 16 MDG targets and 41 indicators. According to the UNDP report on progress made on MDGs, Pakistan is likely to attain ten of MDG indicators, while progress on several others indicates that additional and more focussed efforts are needed to meet targets (Mumtaz et al., 2014). The existing national network of health services in the public sector consists of public sector hospitals – 1096, more than 5527 basic health units (BHUs), 650 rural health centres (RHCs) and 5310 dispensaries. These facilities together with 167759 doctors, 13716 dentists and 86183 nurses bring the current ratio of one doctor for 1099 persons. 13441 persons per dentist and availability of one hospital bed for 1647 persons (Wasti, 2014).

Migration- Brain Drain

The empirical literature on migration shows that during 1961 to 1966, about 13,261 highly qualified Pakistanis went to UK and Saudi Arabia (Arif, Irfan, & Cohen, 1997). From 1990 this outflow was directed to USA and Canada. The migration of Pakistanis to developed countries was permanent and it resulted in brain drain, thus loss in productivity. On the other hand temporary migration to Middle East is economically beneficial but induces the problem of integration and unemployment when they repatriate to Pakistan. In both cases people tend to migrate due to political and economic unrest in the country (Abbasi & Burdey, 2008). There is thus, a definite need to recognise the importance of internal and external migration. The trend must be arrested to stem brain drain and to integrate the two-way relationship between migration and population distribution versus the economic variables, into a more comprehensive framework designed to improve development policy formulation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on available literature in the social sciences and on reports on HD, this paper explores the socio-cultural climates in Pakistan and the potential opportunities for HRD development. Where available, indigenous research has been utilized to avoid biases in research. Empirical and theoretical literatures from a wide range of disciplines have been included in the paper to capture

the multi-faceted nature of the topic. The research approach adopted for the study is primarily inductive with the study being exploratory in nature, allowing for salient themes to emerge from the study. The purpose of this paper was to identify the key factors that play important role in HRD and role of HRD in economic growth of Pakistan. For this purpose, available literature of social science was analysed. Secondary data was also used from reports of different government and non-government departments. Empirical and theoretical finding and literature of different discipline was utilized for fulfil the objectives of the paper.

DATA ANALYSIS

Role of HRD in Economic Growth

Economic Growth

According to the development economists, there exists a clear and irrefutable link between investment in HRD and economic growth (La Croix & Michel, 2002). The principal factors that promote economic growth are; demography, human capital, and literacy and health (Sajid Ali, Farooq, & Chaudhry, 2012; Wooldridge, 2007). According to World Population Data Sheet 2013, “Pakistan with population of 363 million in 2050 is expected to retain its present position (i.e. sixth position). The population growth rate in Pakistan is 1.95 % which is higher than average growth rate of South Asian countries”(Wasti, 2014). Pakistan is 6th fastest growing country in the world (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2015). In the domain of human capital, improvement in the quality of labour due to education, training, health and the efficiency of capital use has resulted in an unprecedented growth in per capita income (Denison, 1974).

Population

Pakistan is the 6th most populous country in the world (Rawan & Rahim, 2008). The estimated population in 2014 is 186 million with 1.95 per cent growth rate per annum (Agency, 2015; Wasti, 2014). The two-way relationship between population growth and economic development is explained through the “Theory of Demographic Transition”(Chesnais & others, 1992; Kirk, 1996). The rapidly growing population is retarding economic growth in a number of ways. The rapidly growing population leads to sluggish growth in per capita income (Afzal, 2009; Coale & Hoover, 2015). The per capita income of Pakistan is about 1254 dollars (Wasti, 2014) compared to 10500 dollars in Malaysia (Bernama, 2014) and South Korea’s 23892 dollars(“Trading Economics,” 2016). Rapid rise in population growth increases the dependency ratio of non-workers to workers. Pakistan has relatively better age dependency ratio owing to existing large youth bulge (48%), offering demographic dividend. The reduction in savings and investment is a crucial factor of slowing down the rate of economic development in the country.

Proportion of Working Population

The development of a country and the rate of rural-urban migration are directly proportional to each other. This upsets the ratio of working population in rural and urban areas (Jolly, 1971; Mazumdar, 1987). Therefore, Pakistan cannot afford migration of large number of people from rural to urban areas. Average age of Pakistan is 20 years making it a young nation (Wasti, 2014). Capitalizing over the existing youth bulge, it is, therefore, essential to establish the job market. Moreover, it is also essential to invest in social sector (education, health and training), so that these children and youth become a productive asset for the nation; resulting in better Human Resource available to our country.

Labour Force

The labour force of Pakistan stands at 59.74 million (Wasti, 2014). According to Pakistan Economic Survey 2013/ 14, 56.01 million are employed and 3.73 million unemployed. The unemployment of skilled, unskilled and educated people is attributed to high rate of population growth versus lower rate of creation of job opportunities, declining employment opportunities in agriculture forcing the rural labour force to migrate to urban areas where absorption potential of industries has reduced due to political instability. The problem of unemployment is to be tackled on war footings. It is so obvious that a reduced population growth with healthy labour force coupled with increased employment opportunities would address the problem. Employment opportunities can be improved by encouraging small-scale industries by providing liberal credit facilities, provide incentive to establish industries in rural areas.

Analysis of Obtaining HRD Policies of Pakistan

Economic Growth Rate vis-à-vis Social Sector Development

It is obvious that human resource development is a result of improvements in education, health and socio-economic and political freedom (Ul Haq, 1995). These issues are closely linked to the growth of the country. In the early stages of development, Pakistan concentrated on production sectors. As a result, it succeeded in generating considerable growth rates (Papanek, 1967). With focus of the development plans in the initial stages on growth and ignoring the social sectors, the benefit of growth did not filter down to the people in terms of improvement in educational and health facilities (Khan & Mahmood, 1997). Recent rise in poverty and decline in quality of life has raised serious concerns. It is found that over time Pakistan was able to achieve consistent reduction in infant mortality rate, rise in life expectancy, and access to safe drinking water.

Education Sector

The performance of the education sector in Pakistan can be judged from the low literacy and deterioration in the quality of education (Khan & Mahmood, 1997). Average public expenditure

on education has remained below 1% of GDP for most of the fifty-three years of Pakistan (Khan & Mahmood, 1997). Meagre allocation coupled with low priority in use of the resource presents a situation that does not seem very encouraging in education sector. In addition the education sector is facing the problem declining quality of teaching, curriculum and employability of graduates.

Health Sector

The trends in the supply of health facilities and the cost of health services and medicines are good indicators of the input in the health status of a nation (Organization, 2003). Despite a sharp increase in the number of doctors, nurses, and other health related infrastructure, the life expectancy in Pakistan is lower than most of the developing countries (Kemal, 2013). As a result, Pakistan remains short of achieving the MDGs. Another problem is of very low doctor to nurse ratio (Talati & Pappas, 2006). In Pakistan it is 3:1 whereas acceptable ratio of according to WHO is 1:2

Social Sector Development

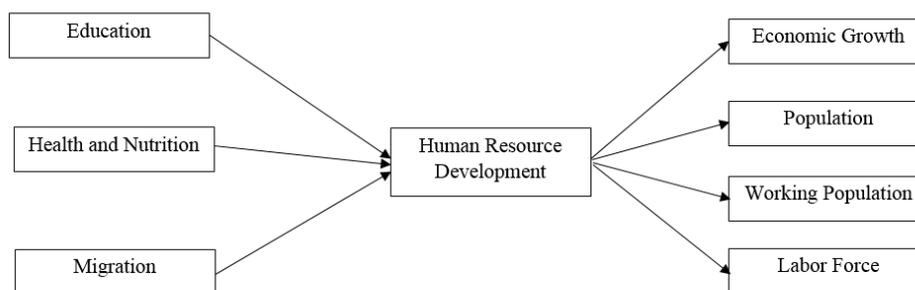
The allocations made on social sector in the Five-Year Plans could not achieve desired results from time to time because of limited focus on health and education, which have comparatively higher payoff in term of HRD (Mahmood, Akhtar, & Butt, 2015). The policies for HRD have been formulated but the interdependence among these policies was ignored. The primary objective of education policies, pursued in Pakistan has been universal literacy but this objective has not been achieved. Small allocations for the social sectors in the past resulted in low human development. High population growth rate with increasing unemployment has resulted in social tension. The access of poor people to education, health, employment and other social services was not ensured.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Proposed Framework of HRD for Pakistan

This portion presents a comprehensive HRD proposal for Pakistan to move towards a new era leading to a much improved economy and society by 2020. The challenges are numerous. However, these challenges can be addressed with a rational policy framework designed to suit the existing environment and a committed implementation plan. The proposed roadmap endeavours to simultaneously tackle Pakistan's socio-economic and macro-economic development agenda. The broad policy objectives of the plan are; improvement in HRD by addressing the issues of education, health services, population growth and social amenities in order to create a healthy and skilled labour force, and creation of appropriate employment opportunities in the rural and urban areas, involving private and public sectors to utilise the healthy and skilled manpower in productivity. The proposed HRD Framework is given below:

Figure1: Human Resource Development Framework



Revised Strategic Objectives;

There is a need to alter our approach at the national level. In this approach we should lay more emphasis on the possibility of increment in the funds accorded to HRD and need for introducing innovative solutions, placing the socio-economic reforms at top priority, and adopting a self-accountable implementation programme.

Increase in Development Funds & Innovative Solution

For sustainable socio-economic development, Pakistan requires continuing flow of investment funds (especially in the case of foreign borrowing) into the socio-economic development (Lahiri, 2016). The country must focus on raising the investment of domestic saving to assure a sustainable flow of funds for development (Sharafat Ali, 2013). However, Pakistan is entrapped in a vicious cycle wherein since it cannot allocate sufficient resources for HR Development, the Country is not being developed and since the country is not being developed, hence the share of existing resources for HR Development cannot be increased. Only an innovative and out of box solution can bring Pakistan out of this trap. Besides many other aspects that Pakistan has achieved tremendous development, the pace of development in communication technology is unparalleled (Baqir & Palvia, 2009). There is therefore a need to take advantage of this technological leap to compensate for the poor educational and HR infrastructure and resource allocation.

Socio-Economic Reforms

The second objective of elevating the socio-economic condition will include provision of education, social amenities and effective population control. These factors are discussed below:

Education

The universalization of primary education and restructuring of secondary education is of undeniable importance for broad-based human resource development. It must not merely prepare students for admission to college, but it should also include vocational and technical subjects in the curriculum, to enhance the capabilities of students. Vocational and technical schools should be promoted in order to generate knowledge and skill required for industrial development of the

country (Connell, Lowe, Skilbeck & Tait, 2002). There is also an urgent need to improve the quality of higher education in order to strengthen and improve research and developmental activities (Green, 2014). The gender disparities and rural-urban disparities in education should be removed quickly. It is necessary to increase the expenditure on education from the current level of 1.9 % of GDP (Wasti, 2014) to 4.0 %, which is the target of MDG as well. The foundation stone for this increasingly form of education has already been laid by AIOU, Virtual University and VCOMSAT, which has set international standards of provision of education at the door steps in the remote areas. VU, AIOU and VCOMSAT have also made greater strides in female emancipation by obviating the need to travel long distances for education and thus enabling this deprived segment of the society to acquire education in their home.

The contributions of these universities in the National Development are thus unprecedented and are being acknowledged at international level (Remenyi). Towards this end, it is strongly recommended that the Govt should formulate the national e-learning strategy, which should be inseparably linked to the education policy of Pakistan. The e-education policy should be duly manifested in the “Vision Pakistan 2025’. Following the footsteps of VU, all the educational contents be digitized put on the national repository. Similarly, the ICT revolution of Pakistan should be fully exploited for spread of education and HR development by fostering e-learning for deeper penetration to minimize the urban –rural divide. Further expansion in the internet coverage should be undertaken while keeping the spread of e-learning across the country. In view of the exponential growth in the telecom sector vis-à-vis its penetration in the rural areas, all the cellular companies may be compulsorily asked to adopt M-Learning at minimum cost to provide access to low cost education in the remote areas and bring these areas at par with the developed areas so as to eliminate rural-urban divide (Bakhsh, Mahmood, & Sangi, 2015; Report, 2014). It should be made compulsory for all the tertiary educational institutions to run conventional f2f education along with e-learning. This would offer cheap educational alternatives to the burgeoning youth of the society and prevent radicalization of the society.

All the leading private premier educational institutions like beacon house, roots and city school may be directed to concurrently run e-learning form of education by maintain their own LMS (Learning Management System) for provision of free or low cost education to the pupil of rural areas/ disadvantaged classes. Massive spread of technical education by resorting to e-education can bring in real developmental revolution in Pakistan. Collaboration with world leading technical institutions would result into better employment opportunities and increased production. With the increasing tendency of creation of opportunities for self-employment by running own businesses through innovative practices, entrepreneurship is the call of the day all over the world (Gartner & Vesper, 1994). And digitization has open transformed entrepreneurship into e-entrepreneurship (Jelolnek, 2015). If properly steered, Pakistani youth can become an important instrument of the national development and prevent radicalization of the society.

Health and Nutrition

The government should increase its funding for health sector, in order to provide essential health facilities. Keeping in view the present state, there is a need for more nurses and other paramedical staff to meet the requirements. More emphasis should be given to preventive measures, for disease control and primary health care. The areas which need attention by the government to improve health and nutrition include; emphasise community-oriented education, in the medical colleges and universities, reversing the disproportionate levels of funds currently allocated to curative health care at the expense of primary health care, improving the district and tehsil level hospitals, to serve as filter clinics, so as to reduce the burden on teaching hospitals, and subjecting the existing unregulated private sector, which is a major provider of services to patients, to an appropriate legal and regulatory framework.

Population

There is a strong need to regularly monitor the implementation of population control programmes (Rondinelli, 1983). Since earlier plans have not succeeded in curtailing the population growth rate, we need to embark upon a new approach to population policies. The suggested steps include; take measures designed to motivate people to opt for smaller family size and associated family planning services, special education programmes and mass media campaign to influence the reproductive norms and behaviour of the target population, and introduction of population related messages in the syllabus at the high school and college level.

Rolling Plan Approach

The futuristic requirement of Pakistan's HRD and economic growth calls for a shift from blueprint implementations to a flexible-planning framework. A rolling plan approach calls for an increased share of intervention at the market level, in turn concentrated participation of both the public and private sectors in plan implementation, monitoring and redirection. We need a new planning model, which should be designed to provide flexibility in adapting to the dynamic competitive changes in the global economy (Pasha, 2010). The plan would not end after giving policy guidelines but would rather demand participation in implementation, determining the efficacy through rational feed backs and re-framing the objectives if necessary. It would also require a co-ordination between the public and private sectors while rejecting the traditional hierarchy of bureaucracy. The key features of the plan are enumerated below:

Blueprint Development and Refinement

The purpose of the plan is to develop a comprehensive agenda for change, a blueprint that would provide guidelines to improve HRD and economic development. However, after implementation the same institution should assess the practicability and efficacy of the plan through results divulged from the field and refines the guidelines. Pakistan currently does not possess the responsive and

supportive kind of information feedback and must accordingly develop it to make the rolling plan effective.

Institutional Support and Development

The organisational infrastructure would constitute multiple agencies, representing diverse government institutions and networks of buyers, suppliers and specialised service providers from the private sectors, all “locking horns” to improve HRD and future economy of Pakistan. What is being suggested is a radically new way of thinking about HRD planning. For the plan to work, a significant coordination effort is required to ensure that the functional elements of government are in close rapport, both among themselves and with industrial interests and the social progress units. This organisation must be made responsible for updating the blueprint continually. It needs to ensure that plans are being implemented and must provide the infrastructure support so that all policy initiatives can be enforced effectively.

Organisational Structure

The motivation for an institutional change, is based on the need to harness and focus government efforts in HRD in the coming decades (Beck, 2003; Saasa, 2007). The key requirements defining what a dedicated establishment needs, in order to run the plan successfully and effectively are; the need for directed focus, the need for a focal point and motivation.

Motivation

Proper utilisation of human resource, involves issues of behaviour, attitude, and motivation (Hislop, 2003). The survival of the organisations, in public and private sector requires constant motivation of their employees. Motivation functions, include provision of monetary incentives, e.g. bonuses, grant of psychological incentives like certificates of merit. Maintenance function is concerned with keeping with the employees with the organisation by offering attractive compensation programmes, caring for employee wellbeing.

CONCLUSION

Investment in human capital along with physical capital is essential for rapid growth of the economy. Important factors, which contributed to enhance HRD are the wide base of education, basic health care with high life expectancy and low fertility rates. Diversity in human capacity is a direct result of formal investment in these factors. Therefore, investment in human capital is as important as investment in physical capital. Pakistan’s HDI ranking indicates a lower trend in human resource development. For future economic growth and progress of the country these indicators need to be raised by investment in human resource development. Our future development strategy must focus around checking population growth rate, improving education, health and nutrition of the people, developing skills and providing employment opportunities to the labour force. The low level of HRD is detrimental to future economic growth and progress of the country.

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