

## AN EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY FOR RURAL AREAS OF PAKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore the rural employment situation and to suggest a strategy to alleviate the most critical problem involved. The primary problem in rural areas has been identified as underemployment. Hence the paper highlights the concept of unemployment used and the occupational groups for which such a situation is endemic.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM:

The employment problem in Pakistan has two dominant dimensions; measurable or "Open" unemployment. Unemployment is chiefly a phenomenon of urban areas where it occurs among the educated youth and among the unskilled. In the first instance it reflects the decisions of matriculates and college graduates to wait on a "satisfactory" job rather than accept "menial" work. They are accepting a period of unemployment as one of the costs of starting their professional life in a higher income category. Poverty is not central to the problems of this group. Those who can afford an education, particularly at the college level, can usually draw on family resources for support while unemployed.

Unemployment also occurs among unskilled urban labor. Where it persists over a prolonged period, these people can face a serious poverty problem. Often they come from village occupational groups with limited surplus income with the result that little assistance can be expected from the extended family. Consequently, the unemployed unskilled worker in an urban area can be the nation's most serious poverty and nutrition problem.

Some unemployment exists in rural areas. To some extent it is associated with education. The number of children being taught in