

*Social uplift measures of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Government:
Role played in poverty alleviation*

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Received on: 07-11-2023

Accepted on: 11-12-2023

Abstract

Social uplift has remained a key social problem for various governments of Pakistan since its birth. Similarly, the PTI government that had started its rule in Pakistan in 2018 also faced numerous social issues that were hindering the progress of country. This study intends to highlight the key measures taken by the PTI government throughout the country for the betterment of socially deprived people. In this regard, the steps were taken in different sectors, such as in health, education, employment and financial sectors. To control the rising poverty level, cash disbursement program was started to improve the living condition of the people. Similarly, for better health of the people a state level health facility was started for all the people of Pakistan to offer free treatment up to a specific limit of amount. In addition, technical and vocational educational and training program was started to educate the people technically to enhance their capacity building efficiency level. By and large, the social uplift measures taken by the PTI government has brought a positive change in the country and make the living standards better.

Keywords: Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, Economic, Social, Financial and Poverty

Introduction

In recent years, Pakistan has faced significant challenges in tackling poverty and improving the standard of living for its citizens. According to World Bank, as of 2023, poverty is expected to reach 37.2 percent (\$3.65 /day 2017ppp) (Butt, 2022). The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, led by Prime Minister Imran Khan, has implemented various social uplift measures to address these issues and uplift the marginalized segments of society (Raja, 2020). This article explores the initiatives taken by the PTI government and analyzes their role in poverty reduction. Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, has implemented a series of robust social uplift measures to address poverty and empower marginalized communities. One of his flagship initiatives is the Ehsaas Program, which aims to create a

*Social uplift measures of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Government:
Role played in poverty alleviation*

welfare state that supports the vulnerable. Through this program, direct cash assistance is provided to low-income families, interest-free loans are offered to small business owners, and vocational training opportunities are given to the youth to enhance employability (Hussain et al., 2021). Additionally, Khan's government has focused on education reforms, offering financial aid to students from disadvantaged backgrounds and investing in school infrastructure. Healthcare access has been expanded through the Sehat Sahulat Program, and initiatives like Clean Green Pakistan promote health and sanitation. Furthermore, measures to generate employment, such as investments in infrastructure and the establishment of Special Economic Zones, aim to stimulate economic growth and reduce unemployment. Imran Khan's dedication to these social uplift measures is a testament to his commitment to improving the lives of Pakistan's citizens and lifting them out of poverty (Serfraz, 2020).

The Ehsaas Program: A Comprehensive Safety Net

The Ehsaas Program is the flagship initiative of the PTI government, aiming to create a welfare state that protects the vulnerable and empowers the poor. It encompasses a wide range of initiatives; including cash transfer programs, interest-free loans, and vocational training opportunities.

The Ehsaas Program, spearheaded by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, stands as a monumental effort to combat poverty and promote social equality in Pakistan. This multifaceted initiative, launched in 2019, encapsulates a holistic approach to addressing the myriad challenges faced by marginalized communities. At its core, the program is built upon the principles of empathy, inclusivity, and dignity, recognizing that every citizen has the right to basic needs and opportunities (Rasheed et al., 2019).

The program comprises a range of initiatives designed to provide financial assistance, healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities to those who need it the most. The Ehsaas Emergency Cash initiative, for instance, played a pivotal role during times of crisis, offering immediate financial relief to vulnerable households, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. This quick and responsive action underscored the program's commitment to safeguarding the well-being of the most marginalized (Butt, 2022).

Moreover, the Ehsaas Kafalat initiative is dedicated to empowering widows and economically disadvantaged women by offering them financial aid and vocational training. By doing so, the program not only bolsters economic prospects but also strengthens the role of women as essential contributors to their families and communities. Similarly, the Ehsaas Nashonuma initiative focuses on child nutrition, combatting malnutrition and stunting in children under two years of age through specialized food packages, nutritional education, and healthcare support.

The program also tackles economic empowerment through initiatives like Ehsaas Amdan, which promotes livelihood opportunities and entrepreneurship among the underprivileged. This effort includes vocational training, asset provision, and microfinance options, all geared towards fostering self-reliance and financial stability. Ehsaas Langar and Panagahs, on the other hand, provide free meals and shelter to homeless and low-income individuals, ensuring that no one sleeps hungry on the streets and upholding human dignity (Saleem, 2019).

Education is a cornerstone of the Ehsaas Program, exemplified by the Ehsaas Undergraduate Scholarship. By covering tuition fees and living expenses, this initiative enables students from

*Social uplift measures of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Government:
Role played in poverty alleviation*

low-income families to access higher education, thereby expanding their horizons and future prospects. Additionally, the program offers interest-free loans through Ehsaas Interest-Free Loans, facilitating the establishment or expansion of small businesses, and thus breaking the cycle of poverty (Sheikh, 2018).

The Ehsaas Asset Transfer initiative provides families in need with assets such as rickshaws, sewing machines, and livestock, creating income-generating opportunities and improving their economic conditions. Digital transformation is also a key aspect of the program, enhancing efficiency, transparency, and accessibility through the Ehsaas Digital System. This digitalization ensures that resources reach the intended recipients without intermediaries, minimizing the risk of misallocation (Batool & Siddiqui, 2021).

The success of the Ehsaas Program is founded on collaboration and partnerships with various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international bodies. These collaborations extend the program's reach and amplify its impact. However, the program does face challenges, ranging from bureaucratic obstacles to securing sustained funding. Nonetheless, its commitment to innovation and change paves the way for a more inclusive and equitable society.

In conclusion, the Ehsaas Program of PTI represents a landmark initiative aimed at uplifting marginalized communities, promoting economic empowerment, and fostering social equality. Through its diverse range of initiatives, the program strives to address the multifaceted dimensions of poverty, thereby creating a stronger and more inclusive Pakistan. As the program continues to evolve, it serves as a beacon of hope for a future where every citizen can realize their full potential (Ali et al., 2020).

One of the key components of the Ehsaas Program is the provision of direct cash assistance to low-income families. Through the Ehsaas Kafaalat program, cash is distributed to deserving women, empowering them to meet their basic needs and enhance their economic status.

The Ehsaas Interest-Free Loan program targets small business owners and entrepreneurs who lack access to formal credit. By providing interest-free loans, the government aims to enable these individuals to expand their businesses and improve their livelihoods.

To address the issue of unemployment and lack of skills among the youth, the PTI government has launched various vocational training programs. These initiatives aim to equip young individuals with relevant skills and knowledge, making them employable in different sectors.

Education Reforms and Empowerment

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government has embarked on an ambitious journey of education reforms, aiming to revolutionize the educational landscape of the country and empower its citizens through knowledge and skill development. Recognizing the pivotal role that education plays in socio-economic growth and national progress, PTI's education reforms encompass a comprehensive range of policies and initiatives. These reforms seek to address the longstanding challenges that have plagued the education sector, including inadequate infrastructure, outdated curriculum, low enrollment rates, and a lack of quality education opportunities (Kurji et al., 2016).

At the heart of PTI's education reforms is a commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. The government has taken substantial steps to increase enrollment rates, particularly among

*Social uplift measures of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Government:
Role played in poverty alleviation*

marginalized communities and underserved areas. By building and renovating schools in remote regions, providing transportation facilities, and implementing policies that incentivize parents to send their children to school, PTI is striving to ensure that every child has the opportunity to receive an education (Nishtar et al., 2013).

Moreover, curriculum reform lies at the core of PTI's education agenda. The government is working to update and modernize the curriculum to align it with contemporary needs and global standards. This includes incorporating digital literacy, critical thinking skills, and vocational training to equip students with the tools they need to excel in a rapidly changing world. By focusing on a more holistic and practical approach to education, PTI aims to produce well-rounded individuals who are not only academically competent but also equipped with the skills required for success in various fields.

Teacher training and capacity-building have also been prioritized under PTI's education reforms. Recognizing that teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the educational experience, the government is investing in comprehensive training programs to enhance teaching methodologies, subject knowledge, and classroom management skills. This ensures that students receive high-quality education and are better prepared for their academic journey (Khuhro et al., 2018).

Furthermore, PTI's education reforms embrace technology as a catalyst for change. The government is working to bridge the digital divide by providing schools with necessary infrastructure, such as computer labs and internet connectivity. This facilitates e-learning and empowers students with access to a wealth of educational resources beyond the confines of traditional textbooks.

In conclusion, the PTI government's education reforms represent a transformative effort to empower the nation through education. By addressing accessibility, curriculum, teacher training, and technology integration, these reforms are paving the way for a brighter future where Pakistan's youth can unlock their full potential and contribute meaningfully to the progress of the country. As these reforms continue to be implemented and refined, they hold the promise of a more educated, skilled, and empowered population that can lead Pakistan towards prosperity and innovation (Syed et al., 2022).

The PTI government has prioritized education reforms, focusing on increasing access to quality education. Through the Ehsaas Education Stipends, the government provides financial assistance to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, encouraging them to continue their studies.

To improve the learning environment, the PTI government has invested in school infrastructure development. Renovation and construction of schools across the country have created better learning spaces for students.

Recognizing the potential of the youth as agents of change, the government has launched skill development programs. These initiatives aim to equip young individuals with skills that are relevant to the job market, fostering entrepreneurship and innovation.

Health Initiatives and Poverty Alleviation

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government has embarked on a multifaceted approach to address the intertwined challenges of health disparities and poverty in the country. Understanding the critical link between health and socio-economic development, PTI has

*Social uplift measures of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Government:
Role played in poverty alleviation*

implemented a range of health initiatives that not only aim to improve the overall well-being of citizens but also contribute significantly to poverty alleviation.

One of the cornerstones of PTI's health strategy is the expansion of access to quality healthcare services, especially in underserved areas. The government has launched initiatives to build and upgrade healthcare facilities, ensuring that even the most remote communities have access to basic medical services. By bolstering healthcare infrastructure, PTI aims to reduce the burden of preventable diseases and decrease the financial strain on families who often have to travel long distances for medical treatment (Hussain et al., 2022). In addition to infrastructure development, the PTI government has taken steps to enhance the quality of healthcare services. This includes comprehensive training for healthcare professionals, ensuring that they are equipped with the latest medical knowledge and techniques. By investing in the capacity-building of doctors, nurses, and support staff, PTI aims to provide citizens with a higher standard of care, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes and reducing the economic impact of chronic illnesses.

Furthermore, PTI's health initiatives extend to preventive measures and public health campaigns. The government has focused on immunization programs, maternal and child health services, and disease prevention campaigns to curb the prevalence of preventable illnesses. These initiatives not only improve the health of the population but also alleviate the financial burden associated with medical treatments, allowing families to allocate their resources towards other essential needs (Siddique, 2019).

PTI's efforts in health also dovetail with poverty alleviation through its Ehsaas Program, which targets vulnerable populations by providing financial assistance and social support. Recognizing the deep connection between health and poverty, the Ehsaas Program offers healthcare access as a critical component. By ensuring that healthcare services are accessible to all, the program directly contributes to reducing the health-related barriers that perpetuate poverty (Nishtar et al., 2017).

In conclusion, the PTI government's health initiatives stand as a comprehensive effort to address both health disparities and poverty in Pakistan. By focusing on infrastructure development, healthcare quality improvement, preventive measures, and integrated approaches like the Ehsaas Program, PTI is making significant strides towards improving the health and well-being of citizens while simultaneously working towards poverty alleviation. These initiatives collectively serve as a testament to PTI's commitment to creating a healthier, more equitable society where citizens can thrive without being weighed down by the burden of ill health and financial insecurity (Serfraz, 2020).

The PTI government has taken steps to expand healthcare access for all citizens. Through the Sehat Sahulat Program, the government provides health insurance to low-income families, ensuring they have access to quality healthcare services.

Lack of access to clean drinking water and proper sanitation facilities has been a significant challenge for impoverished communities. The PTI government's Clean Green Pakistan initiative aims to address these issues, promoting better health and hygiene.

Recognizing the importance of proper nutrition, especially for children and pregnant women, the government has implemented nutrition support programs. These initiatives aim to combat malnutrition and its adverse effects on health and cognitive development.

*Social uplift measures of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Government:
Role played in poverty alleviation*

Employment Generation and Economic Growth

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government has pursued a robust strategy to stimulate employment generation and foster economic growth in the country. Recognizing that sustainable economic development is closely intertwined with job creation, PTI's policies and initiatives have been designed to address unemployment and uplift the overall economic landscape.

One of the key pillars of PTI's approach to employment generation is the promotion of entrepreneurship and small businesses. The government has launched various programs and incentives to encourage the establishment of new enterprises and the expansion of existing ones. By providing access to financing, offering business development support, and simplifying regulatory processes, PTI aims to empower individuals to become job creators rather than job seekers, consequently reducing unemployment rates (Malik et al., 2020).

Furthermore, PTI has focused on skill development to equip the workforce with the competencies required for the modern job market. The government has initiated vocational training programs that align with industry needs, ensuring that individuals are equipped with relevant skills that enhance their employability. This not only benefits job seekers but also supports economic growth by supplying industries with a skilled workforce, thereby attracting investment and driving productivity (Hussain & Rao, 2020).

Investments in infrastructure have also played a pivotal role in PTI's efforts to stimulate economic growth and create jobs. The government has embarked on ambitious infrastructure projects spanning transportation, energy, and telecommunications sectors. These projects not only provide immediate job opportunities during construction but also have a long-lasting impact by improving connectivity, reducing costs, and attracting private investment. Moreover, PTI's economic policies have aimed at creating an enabling environment for businesses to flourish. The government has undertaken regulatory reforms to streamline business processes, reduce red tape, and improve the ease of doing business. These measures not only encourage local entrepreneurship but also attract foreign direct investment, leading to the establishment of new industries and the subsequent generation of jobs (Khan & Liu, 2019).

The agriculture sector, a significant contributor to Pakistan's economy, has also received attention under PTI's economic agenda. The government has launched initiatives to modernize agricultural practices, improve access to credit and technology for farmers, and enhance the value chain. By boosting agricultural productivity, PTI aims to create employment opportunities along the entire agriculture value chain, from farming to processing and distribution.

In conclusion, the PTI government's approach to employment generation and economic growth is multifaceted and holistic. Through promoting entrepreneurship, skill development, infrastructure investment, and business-friendly policies, PTI is striving to create an environment where job opportunities are abundant, and economic prosperity is attainable for all. By addressing unemployment and fostering economic growth, PTI is not only enhancing the well-being of its citizens but also setting the stage for a thriving and vibrant economy that can contribute to Pakistan's long-term development (Hussain, 2017).

To stimulate economic growth and create employment opportunities, the PTI government has invested in infrastructure development. This includes the construction of roads, bridges,

Social uplift measures of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Government: Role played in poverty alleviation

and energy projects that create jobs and boost economic activities.

The establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) is another measure taken to attract foreign investment and encourage industrialization. These zones offer various incentives to businesses, leading to job creation and technology transfer.

Agriculture is a significant sector of Pakistan's economy, and the government has introduced agricultural reforms to support farmers and enhance agricultural productivity. These reforms aim to uplift rural communities and reduce poverty in rural areas.

Conclusion

The PTI government's social uplift measures have played a crucial role in poverty reduction and improving the lives of the marginalized. The Ehsaas Program, education reforms, health initiatives, and employment generation efforts have collectively contributed to alleviating poverty and empowering the vulnerable sections of society. In the past few years since the eruption of Covid-19 in 2019, the economic, social and financial condition of the people was deplorable. In this economic, there was need of abrupt and long-lasting steps to improve the living standards of the people along with making them financially strong. So, the steps taken by the PTI Government during its tenure are very positive and gave robust feedback in shape of better financial and economic situation of the people.

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*Social uplift measures of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Government:
Role played in poverty alleviation*

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