

Social Safety Net Programmes As A Social Protection Shield For Persons With Disabilities: A Qualitative Study In Pakistan

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Abstract: This study is designed to explore the detailed information regarding social safety net programmes and social protection of the disabled persons. There are multiple types of social safety nets interventions. In Pakistan, private safety nets in the form of informal or community based intervention and formal social safety nets designed and implemented by the government help in mitigating adverse outcomes. The goal of social safety net programmes (SSNPs) is to safeguard vulnerable persons from the economic and social consequences of a large drop in family income. In contrast to savings or financial institution accounts, SSNPs are primarily intended to serve as a redistributive instrument, distributing money to the poorest segments of society in order to lift them out of poverty, as well as to give individuals greater opportunities to reduce their risk of incurring catastrophic financial loss. Present study is conducted in the Pakistan. Qualitative information gathered through focus group discussions. For this purpose six focus group discussions was conducted with the persons with disabilities, their families and official from social safety net programme. The collected information was analyzed by using thematic analysis technique. Findings reveals that social safety nets programme provide social protection and assistance to the persons with disability.

Keyword: Social Protection, Social Safety net programmes (SSNPs), disability, Focus group discussion, thematic analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of social safety net programmes (SSNPs) is to safeguard vulnerable persons from

the economic and social consequences of a large drop in family income. In contrast to savings or financial institution accounts, SSNPs are

primarily intended to serve as a redistributive instrument, distributing money to the poorest segments of society in order to lift them out of poverty, as well as to give individuals greater opportunities to reduce their risk of incurring catastrophic financial loss. At its core, SSNPs are needed to deal with issues such as uncontrollable events, poverty, and others. Lifetime poverty may arise from issues such as a lack of education and poor health, especially in childhood. Such government safety net programmes provide more equity in long-term resource allocation. The goal of the safety net programme is to reduce poverty and increase investment in human capital, using an efficient and equitable method (Sifat, 2020; Hardy, 2017).

A definitive definition of disability is difficult to come up with since it is subjective in nature. First and foremost, the term "disability" has been used to a variety of individuals in contemporary times. A true definition of "disability" may be defined as either a locus to legitimately forced restrictions on rights and powers or as a synonym for the word "inability" depending on the situation. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, only aforementioned two (02) definitions of the expressions were recognized in 2006 (Boorse, 2010). This means that utilizing intuition to understand the meaning of the term "disability" is almost difficult since individuals may get incorrect intuitions as a consequence of the interaction between common, outdated linguistic meanings and newer, more specific ones (Amede, 2020).

1.1 Social Safety Nets in Pakistan

Pakistan has a long history of social protection and SSN Programmes, merged both from public and private sector. Historically public social protection schemes in Pakistan have been implemented but not remained as part of a persuasive social protection framework. In public sector perspective, social safety nets are

characterized into two categories: social security schemes and social safety net cash assistance. The first type safety net interventions are designed for formal employed labor force or retirees by providing benefits on contingencies of sickness, work related injury, invalidity, maternity, old age etc. Examples in this regard are, Employees Old Age Benefits Institutions (EOBI) and Workers Welfare Fund. Whereas the second type of interventions, commonly designed for poorest of the poor and marginalized groups or communities. Food Support Schemes, Pakistan bait-ul-Mal (PBM), Zakat and Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), and etc. are run both by federal and provincial governments through various pro-poor interventions. Besides, these afore-said prescribed interventions, there are variety of non-prescribed interventions such as support availed through family systems, exclusive charities, donations, and other means of funding. Entire of these interventions perform a pivotal role in implementation of coordinated social safety net mechanism (Bari et al., 2005).

It is worth mentioning that the existing social protection programmes run by the government, both social security and social safety nets in Pakistan do not target the agricultural workers and the workers involved in informal economy or temporary laid-off due to seasonal or contractual adjustments. Both the agriculture sector and informal sector are the major constituents both in terms of labor and GDP share in these sectors (Nayab and Shujaat, 2014). There are two characteristics in common as far as social safety net programmes are concerned in Pakistan i.e., ineptness to realize financial objectives, and public comprehend that despite these interventions, significant changes in lives and the livelihood of rural communities are not observed (Arif, 2006).

Though not documented well, the volume and targeting of individual social giving through philanthropy is much higher than

government coverage. Poor and vulnerable masses all around the country have been benefiting from large number of social activities, usually run by individuals, charity organizations and corporate sector i.e. hospitals, schools, orphanages, public kitchens etc. Civil society has always played a critical role in disasters to protect needy masses. One can see the active role of society in assisting to needy and vulnerable persons from the old 1947 migration to recent 2005 earthquake, 2008 IDPs, recent 2010 and onward floods and IDPs from FATA from 2013 to onward.

1.1.1 Types of Social Safety Net

According to World Bank report 2015, there are six types of safety nets, which are:

- i. **Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs)**
CCTs are the programmes that have a conditionality factor in its procedure manual. The condition could be one or more along with the terms of weakly endorsed or strongly endorsed. For instance, visits to the health services or minimum level of school attendance. The Philippines Pantawid programme falls under this category. The Waseela-e Taleem of BISP falls under this category in Pakistan
- ii. **Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs)**
UCTs provide cash assistance to their beneficiaries with any condition to be fulfilled and beneficiary can spend the money according to his/her wish. The Hunger Safety Net programme in Kenya and BISP in Pakistan are the examples of this type. BISP Kafaalat Programme falls under this category in Pakistan.
- iii. **School feeding programmes**
These programmes require certain conformities from the recipients, such as assured level of monthly attendance in school can make them eligible to take home food rations for children's families.

Example includes, Brazil's Programa Nacional de Alimentacao Escola.

- iv. **Unconditional in-kind transfers**
Such programmes permit the distribution of grant or food without any set conditions. For instance, The Programa Nacional de Reabilitacao Nutricional in Mozambique provide nutritional food to pregnant women and malnourished children.
- v. **Public works programmes (PWs)**
These types of programmes involve their recipients in labor oriented activities such as construction of public infrastructure. Public works carried out under prolific safety net programme in Ethiopia are an example of this kind.
- vi. **Fee waivers**
Such programmes assist their beneficiaries with free social services, for example The Capitation Grant Programme in Ghana provides free primary health services to the beneficiary.

1.2 Social Protection and Disability

In order for the social and economic development of all individuals to occur, it is necessary to provide social protection. However, this is even more essential for those who are socially and economically marginalised. Social security programmes have the capacity to relieve and prevent poverty as well as to ensure the well-being of the individuals they are provided to. They may help persons have additional opportunities to earn a livelihood and acquire riches. Providing access to food, health care, education, and support services may also help increase social inclusion and participation. Well-designed social protection initiatives have the potential to improve the direct enjoyment of human rights for persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, traditional welfare techniques have only inspired alternative approaches to

disability and poverty, including charity organizations and healthcare professionals that advocate for social welfare alternatives. Many national social protection systems have been in place for too long, keeping persons with disabilities dependent, segregated, and institutionalized in their communities.

Although the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities states that these attitudes are challenged by providing broad social safety nets that encourage civic activism, social integration, and engagement in community life, it is worth

considering the possibility that persons may hold biases against those with disabilities. While States Parties are required to ensure that disabled citizens have equal access to social protection programmes and services, as well as specialized programmes and services for disability-related requirements and costs, they should also ensure accessibility to the conventions' universal programmes, such as accessibility support services. This is the aim of this study: to outline how many stakeholders should come together to design comprehensive social protection systems that uphold the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Devandas, 2017).

Figure 1: Subdivisions of Social Safety Net Programmes (SSNPs) in Pakistan



An obstacle to hiring individuals with disabilities may be found in the design of social support programmes and their implementation. Many countries that provide disability benefits have a deterrent to looking for work as a result of their disability benefits policy. The majority of persons with disabilities would continue to choose benefits because the risk of attempting to hold down a job that does not suit their needs is too high, or because a job is not flexible enough to meet their needs. Moreover, if persons with disabilities are not covered by social protection programmes, they suffer extra costs while at

work, which lowers their total ability to return to work.

Thus, social protection programmes for persons who do not have impairments and systems that target the handicapped have the potential to provide the foundation for a large number of individuals with disabilities to enter and stay in the labour. Individuals with disabilities may benefit from these approaches if they are more actively involved in the job market and in society as a whole. The International Labor Organization (ILO) advocates for policies that help persons with disabilities maintain their

financial stability and meet their support requirements while also encouraging their economic empowerment.

Among the focused approaches to social protection, there are two approaches which are generally used for defining social protection. One approach focuses on risk reduction and mitigation as the primary purpose of social protection. The other approach is rooted in the concept of rights and entitlements. According to the concept that the citizenship of a state confers the right to its citizens of a certain minimum standard of living, social protection is considered an entitlement of citizenship. Globally, social safety nets are being executed in ways that are amalgamated with conformist poverty contexts and address structural inequalities leading to poverty and social exclusion. Moreover, it is being designed in many countries to elevate receivers from the depth of scarcity, instead of protecting them entirely from any unforeseen event (Jamal, 2010). Social protection is generally divided into six major categories:

- (i) Social Assistance
- (ii) Social Security
- (iii) Labour Market Interventions
- (iv) Natural & other disasters
- (v) Fundamental Facilities headed for underprivileged
- (vi) Alteration Instruments

Another classification of social protection on the basis of procedures is;

- i. Protective procedures, to provide relief from extreme deficiency.
- ii. Preventive procedures, to straightforwardly hunt for the prevention of dispossession in a range of conducts.
- iii. Promotional procedures, to boost actual revenues as well as potentials.
- iv. Transformative procedures, to track down such guidelines that transmit

societal discrepancies and result in continual susceptibilities.

1.7 Significance of Study

Pakistan has a long history of devised programmes to address disabilities through SSNPs or SP but majority of the government programmes in past relied on development programmes for addressing disability i.e. Village Aid, Job quota, health care, education facilities and stipulation of other societal services. Every Muslim who meets the necessary criteria of wealth according to the Islamic laws has to pay Zakat as a foremost economic compulsion. The main purpose behind the concept of Zakat is to sustain an economic balance in the community. Officially Zakāt is initiated in 1980 in Pakistan under the Zakat and Ushr Ordinance. Later on, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) was constituted in 1991 under Act of Parliament and Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) in 2008. These programmes do not have any specially criteria for persons with disabilities rather it includes widows, disabled persons, orphans and other needy personnel (Suhaib, 2009)

2. Objectives

- To explore the knowledge of respondents towards social safety net programme
- To assess the effects of social safety nets programmes on the social protection of differently able persons
- To suggest some way forward for improving the social safety net programme

3. Theoretical Frame Work: Foucauldian Analyses of Disability

Critical disability theory is influenced by the study of French philosopher Michel Foucault, specifically his approach to ideas and his analysis of power, which is considered trenchant. The ideas of Foucault may be found in this section of the study, along with examples of how they have been used in critical disability theory. Consider

the book Foucault and the Government of Disability: A Genealogy of Power, which collects an interdisciplinary collection of literature on disability from perspective of various theorists, each of whom integrates Foucault's theoretical ideas into their own work. Tremain also says in the preface to that book, among other things, that Specifically, the book responds to Foucault's demand to bring into question widely accepted practices and concepts, particularly those pertaining to disability, such as rehabilitation and community care, as well as impairment, normalcy, and abnormality. A Foucauldian approach is used to carry out critical disability theory's efforts to call into question the difference between handicap and disability. Tremblay contends that the social model, which is recognized in traditional disability studies as well as contemporary British thought. He further stated that it is crucial to a comprehensive understanding of disability and its causes. Activism groups will be dissatisfied with the video since it distinguishes between impairment and disability in a very clear way. Rather from being "natural, value-neutral, and objective," Tremain thinks that disability is "historically specific and performative" (Tremain, 2017).

4. Methodology

Social scientists may use methodology to organise their work in many ways. "Methodology is a set of explicit principles and procedures that govern research and serve as a standard against which knowledge claims are evaluated," according to the American Psychological Association (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992). The data for the study was collected and analyzed by using a qualitative research techniques. The under investigation issue was conducted to find out policy level issues, gaps in existing social safety nets of Pakistan keeping in mind of Persons with disabilities (PWDs) and their needs in Pakistan. To determine the representative sample size for the present study, researcher used

multistage sampling technique, at first stage researcher get the information form the different social safety nets programmes that providing assistance to the disabled persons. At second stage researcher get the House Hold Integrated Economic Survey that provided the overall information of five provinces of Pakistan with primary sampling units of rural and urban areas as well as secondary sample unit. At third stage of the sampling researcher selected the PSU and SSU of the rural and urban areas of the Province Punjab by using convenience sampling technique. For qualitative analysis six focus group discussions were conducted through convenient sampling design. The members of focus groups were comprised of persons with disabilities, their family members and the officials from they are getting the support. The collected information was analyzed by using thematic analysis technique.

5. Results and discussions

In order to investigate some other hidden factors that are not into the knowledge of researcher perform qualitative data collection technique was also used. "A qualitative analysis is an effective tool for obtaining information, values, beliefs, opinions and behaviours in a particular population" (Mack et al., 2005).

- **Knowledge about Social Safety Nets**

Most of the persons did not aware with the typical term of social safety nets but researcher elaborate it in easy way, than respondents start responding about it. Most of them is listen from their friends and media resources.

Group members peaks that social safety nets are the different programs run by government or non-governmental institutions that provide helps to the poor and needy persons as well to the disabled persons.

One respondent added that

“ ye aise programs hoty hy jo poor aur mazoor afrad ko madad dety hy ye madad paisy ki tara b hoti hy aur baz dafa chezain ly di jati hy. Ye ek tara se hamry liye hafzati band hy jo hum ko mazed gareebi ma jany se rokty hy aur hum ko apny paon per kara krny ma madad deti hy”

Evidence presently shows that safety net cash transfers assist nations invest in human capital, and also aid as a source of income for the poor, thereby increasing the quality of life they have enjoyed. Around 2.5 billion persons are now covered by safety net programmes, with 650 million persons or 56 percent getting help who are falling in lowest of the quintile (Sifat, 2020). Different academics describe societal safety nets differently. Cheta (2000) described networks of social security as 'transfer schemes aimed both at the function of redistribution and insurance against the risk of vulnerability and marginalisation.' Social protection is described as 'policies and practices that protect and improve the livelihood and health of persons who suffer from the critical levels of poverty and deprivation and/or who are vulnerable to risk and shock,' as stated in the Global Resource zone (GRZ) (2005). The Asian Development Bank (2013) defines social protection as 'a collection of policies and programmes to decrease poverty and vulnerability, through fostering efficient labour markets, decreasing the risk of individuals, and improving their ability to protect themselves from hazards, disruptions and loss of income.'

- **Which Social Safety Nets Programmes are working in Pakistan**

Formal and informal safety networks are two types of public SSN efforts that may be distinguished. In most cases, law enforcement distinguishes between formal and informal safety networks. Formal safety networks are those that provide individuals with legal access to economic and social support, whereas informal safety networks provide individuals with the likelihood

of receiving support to ensure that the minimum standard of living is met or maintained, but with no legal guarantee. Most of the time formal safety nets are designed and implemented by the state or government. Some examples of private informal SSNs are transfers from family members, friends, neighbours, wealthy individuals, and community members, and non-governmental organisations, whereas examples of public formal SSNs include assistance that individuals may expect from the government through programmes that transfer of assets or jobs, transfer cash assistance, or provision of basic social services in their best interests.

All of Pakistan's social safety programmes were developed as a result of an ad-hoc response to problems that emerged under particular circumstances. So far as programmes are concerned, some have been developed in response to proposals from international donor organisations. Pakistan does not have a strong social protection system in place. On account of the absenteeism of a comprehensive social protection system, the present framework contains overlapping and redundant programmes that are unnecessary.

- **Access to social protection programs easily**

Means of approach to essential services, e.g. education and health care facilities, clean drinking water and sufficient sanitation, are basic requirements of our society today. The government provides basic facilities and opportunities in order to preserve macroeconomic stability and to improve governance and protect vulnerable populations. A social protection/security network is a system of regular and preventable cash or non-cash transfers to poor and vulnerable persons, aimed at alleviating poverty, encouraging inclusive growth and sharing prosperity, reducing food insecurity and malnutrition, increasing

educational and health services demand, improving risk management and absorbing unexpected shocks. Social security networks are more than just a source of support; they are also a key element in the creation and strengthening of social contracts between governments and individuals.

- **Specific Social Protection programme for Disabled and type of services provided by such programmes**

The majority of the programmes, according to the respondents, are managed by governments in low- or low-middle-income countries. Many programmes have been created in the last decade, including Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), the Ehasas Programme, and Disability Welfare, among others. Some of the selected programmes were created specifically for persons with disabilities, while others were produced for general audiences. Those who labour in extreme poverty and as social security networks in general are among those who are most in demand. Individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and orphaned or vulnerable youngsters are all included in these programmes since their socioeconomic status is often among the lowest. Instead of focusing on individuals, five of the nine programmes are directed towards families. One of the criteria for most programmes was that the applicant must be in poverty. However, there is seldom a clear definition of what it means to be a member of the poor. Some of the most common constraints in programme design and implementation are as follows: Most programmes only cover a small percentage of the population of persons with disabilities who are in need. This is usually due to a lack of resources and manpower, and national governments frequently depend on the assistance and funding provided by donors and development partners.

For all of the programmes listed, no information has been found about the process by which disability pension eligibility is determined. In addition, an evaluation of the social protection programme in Bangladesh revealed that, although the criteria were stated at the national level in the guidance guide, they were not always possible to implement in the country. Local authorities and facilitators often used their discretion in determining whether or not to include beneficiaries in their programmes. A lack of specific identification criteria may result in impairments that are more obvious than invisible, with the majority of symptoms visible rather than invisible.

When applying for a disability pension, a medical disability certificate is often required. Many of the prospective beneficiaries are turned away because they are unable to afford the treatment or because it would require them to travel long distances to the nearest facility.

- **Major problems faced by Person with disability**

Respondents reported that as a disabled person “hum ko education, sehat, nokri aur dosri es tara ki tamam chezo tak apparoach krn mushkil ho jata hy jis ki waja se hum bki logo se peachy reh jaty hy. Hona to ye chai k log aur hakomat hamry liye asani paida kry but hum ko utni easy acces nai di jati jitni ki hum ko zarorat hy. Baz dafa hamri family waly b hum se tawan nai krty jis se issue mazed barh jaty hy”

According to one research, each step we take must overcome a lot of obstacles. This is considerably worse for those with physical disabilities. When they move about, they are generally limited to wheelchairs or crutches. Consequently, they cannot afford the luxury of moving freely. Moreover, the public places that we have were seldom built with disadvantaged persons in mind. There are no ramps, or the

passageways are too narrow to handle easily. Many wheelchairs are now motorized and many buildings have private elevators to make the movement of persons with disabilities a little more comfortable for them.

Education – education is a basic right for all persons and education is free and available for everyone in an ideal society. Education is a fundamental right. A large proportion of children with disabilities do not go to school, which means they are deprived of basic education. As a result, they are unable to participate in life games like the other young persons. Many educational institutions have been created for the education of children with special needs to solve this issue. These kids learn the braille system and adapted technology enables them to have a more enhanced existence.

Access to health services- The healthcare system is already overloaded in a country of 1.3 billion persons. Poor persons have no access to proper health care and disabled persons are considerably worse off than the general population. Persons with intellectual disabilities are frequently mistreated by health workers, who further aggravate the problem. Only greater awareness and empathy can fix this. In these situations, persons with disabilities seek for the species of kindness and help one other in whatever way they can. As a consequence, everyone is urged to contribute to ensuring that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) better meet their health needs.

Inability to get a job - The ability for any individual to find a job depends on their education and the skills they have gained along the way. If these persons are denied access to a basic education, they are certain to fall behind other candidates. The government has established programmes to guarantee that persons with disabilities have access to work.

Feeling incompetent - Disabled persons require more time than other ordinary persons to accomplish a particular job. Due to his disability, he cannot do even the most basic tasks. This leads the person with impairments to think he brings down his friends, and as a consequence he gets sad and furious.

Teased and abused – Putting others down may give some persons a feeling of pleasure. Bullying the poor and the vulnerable gives them a feeling of superiority. When violent and disgusting actions are involved, handicapped persons are frequently at the receiving end.

Fortunately, if individuals become more comprehensive and patient in dealing with persons with special needs, all these issues may be solved. Work for persons with disabilities should be made accessible since it allows them to attain financial independence while also giving them a feeling of fulfilment in their life. Disabled persons should be permitted to move freer in their environment. Homes for the disabled need to be constructed so that the individuals who live there are more comfortable. Fortunately, all these issues may be resolved if individuals learn to understand better and to be patient when dealing with persons who have special needs. Work for the disabled should be made accessible, since it will enable them to attain financial independence and provide them a feeling of fulfilment. Disabled persons should be permitted to move more freely around them. Homes for the disabled should be designed to make the individuals who live there more comfortable. Moreover, regardless of how little a contribution is, everyone can always make a difference by modestly assisting the less fortunate.

- **How Social Safety Nets Programmes helpful for the Poverty alleviation**

Social safety net programmes provides support in the form of capital to the poor and disable person

for the start of business, education, health and skill provision also provided to the unskilled for their better absorption in the job market.

Social safety nets programmes help out the poor and disable through different scholarship, aid, charity, micro finance and old age assistance and protection like EOBI.

- **Strategies/methods that social protection programmes used to help the disabled person**

- The programme aims to protect poor and vulnerable families against unfavorable shocks to their consumption and well-being, which would further reduce poverty in the absence of addressing poor families and poor households.
- to encourage poor families to make investments in health, nutrition, and education in order to build human and physical assets that would ensure their medium-term resilience and help them break the intergenerational cycle of poverty
- The respondents reported that Strategy include:
 - Expansion of cash transfer cover through conditional cash transfers (CCT) in addition to unconditional transfer schemes as given by Food Support Programme (FSP) and Zakat; creation of a new low-wage public job programme;
 - Working with children and new pilots, for example I integrating cash transfers with the development of fundamental skills so that poor persons qualify for microcredit and (ii) bonded labor programmes, are examples of what is needed.
 - Increased amount of school meals and social assistance for the poorest pupils and short-term solutions:

- to maintain the current level of benefits while moving forward to better and more comprehensive systems
- Providing innovative techniques for evaluating and improving data bases via the deployment in chosen rural and urban areas of specific pilot projects;
- Scaling up successful pilots throughout the country once the lessons gained have been evaluated; Payments should be increased to reach the poorest of the poorest in the target group, rather than remaining at the current level.

- **Suggestions**

Following steps are required at governance level at various point in time:

Short-term: These are often low-cost, fast-win measures that may substantially strengthen the governance of the SSN programme (for example, increasing accessibility of programme information and sharing information amongst the programme's stakeholders in order to improve accountability).

- Medium-term: In order to implement these improvements, a number of changes to programme or resource rules, as well as more administrative capacity, will be required to ensure their success (e.g. the improvement of endorsements regime and technology enabled solutions); and
- Longer-term: These are significant transformations that will very certainly need the removal of significant political and institutional obstacles (e.g. the devolution of power for better administration or refining inter-ministerial synchronization).

6. Conclusions

Social Safety Net Programmes (SNNPs) are designed and implemented by the government to lessen burden on marginalized households. Such

SSNPs curtail social gap, ensure an improved life and accelerate effort to ease shock of poverty. A study in connection with effectiveness of social safety net programmes befits a need to assess the programmes and recommends improved interventions to be executed in the prospect. Therefore, the present study investigates the effect and the efficacy of social safety net programmes on the income of poor households. There have been many consequences of this contradiction between deeds and words. The failure to establish an integrated social protection system, which is a fundamental feature of the welfare state, as well as underdevelopment, have long been highlighted as important hurdles by policymakers in the development of the welfare state. For the political authorities of Pakistan, the task of creating a more complete set of policies that are understandable, coherent, and comprehensive in order to encourage a persistent reduction in poverty presents major difficulties. These insurance policies should not only contain a "safety net," which provides for retirement or covers any loss in value as a result of risks or negative shocks, but they should also include other types of protection. In an ideal world, they would try to offer resources that would allow impoverished persons to escape the fate of living in chronic poverty by taking advantage of chances and accumulating financial resources. The social protection systems that are now in existence in Pakistan, on the other hand, are sporadic and limited in scope. The funding and administration of specific programmes, as well as social and human capital development initiatives, must be coordinated more effectively in order to maximize the effectiveness of social protection programmes.

With respect to social protection programmes and schemes, a multi-pronged approach may help improve the socioeconomic status of the impoverished people of the nation, particularly if you consider the interrelated nature

of the problems confronting the country. Short-term programmes such as cash transfers, along with the proper identification of vulnerable, poor, effective resource allocations, a simple and transparent delivery system and assured access to the needy will provide an example of this approach. The medium- to long-term efforts will include programmes that offer the underprivileged with long-term employment possibilities. A well-coordinated and well-designed system of social protection may certainly help Pakistan enhance the socioeconomic indicators of the nation. The government of Pakistan may take steps to enhance its people's social well-being, such as the National Social Protection Strategy.

Pakistan cannot afford to ignore the millions of its citizens who are now out of sight as a consequence of their handicap, but who might make huge contributions to the country as a whole if they had this chance. The following measures are not only for the government; collaboration and commitment from all actors, including the government, civil societies, businesses and persons with disabilities, are needed to succeed. A shift away from a culture of pity, from the highest governments to the ordinary citizens, which emphasizes dignity, empowerment and rights, is necessary. This change will need the empowerment of individuals with disabilities by providing excellent education; fair job opportunities and the capacity to live, study and work in a more extensive physical environment that will promote their mobility, learning and work requirements. Disability is not the same as disability; it is a type of diversity that needs to be included.

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