

STRATEGIC ROADMAP FOR PAKISTAN (2018–2025): POLITICAL STABILITY, GOVERNANCE, ECONOMIC RESILIENCE, AND SOCIAL EQUITY

Malaika Hamid¹, Dr. Dilawar Khan ^{*2}, Ishrat Zeeshan³

¹BS Scholar, International Relations Scholar, Abasyn University Peshawar, KPK

^{*2}Assistant Professor, Department of Governance, Politics, IR & Public, Abasyn University Peshawar, KPK

³M.Phil Political Sciences Scholar, Abasyn University Peshawar, KPK

¹Millish003@gmail.com, ^{*2}dilawar1983@gmail.com, ³ishratzeeshan79@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *

Received	Revised	Accepted	Published
25 November, 2024	25 December, 2024	10 January, 2025	17 January, 2025

ABSTRACT

This is a research article on strategic pathways to development in Pakistan for the period of 2018-2025, which shall focus on critical interplay among political stability, economic resilience, and social equity. The paper is going to tackle a few governance challenges: those inefficiencies of the judiciary and comprehensive law reforms, among many others, but including urgent handling of social issues, such as corruption, bribery, reviewing of old tactics and strategies, military involvement, rape cases and so on. The analysis goes further to reflect on the problems in the stability and development fronts of the country. The entire geopolitical context of the situation was discussed by hinting at the threat of World War III and vulnerability of Pakistan. This scenario based policy will indicate the policies that would bring about a revival and help to recreate new strategies, based on the response to immediate, short-term concerns and sketch out the strategies for a long-term, conflict-free growth. This is the place where pointing out the needed insights of the policymaker and the think tanks has to go ahead in the developing of a comprehensive strategy to ensure resilience and equity in the socio-economic structure of Pakistan.

Further this article also pointed out the potential of Pakistan and stated the reasons why Pakistan is facing greater influences. A sight of challenges related to national security, internal, and external factors are present. If policy-makers don't wake up now, they will only wake up when Afghanistan and India invade Pakistan, and no one will be able to offer help. As Jinnah said, "This land is the protector of your women and children. So wake up and take care of Pakistan." Allah does not change the condition of someone who does not want to change his condition. Be practical and facing the hurdles bravely is the basic need at this time. Otherwise the nation, policy-makers, and even the ISI will not be able to handle circumstances.

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is strategically located in the crossroads of Asia with China as its neighbour in the north, India in the east, and Iran and Afghanistan in the west. Thus its strategic location allows Pakistan to become an important trade, energy and transport corridor. Most importantly, Pakistan is a gateway to energy rich States of Central Asia, the Gulf States and far Eastern

countries. This unique feature of Pakistan's strategic location alone makes it a place of endless possibilities.

With regard to Pakistan's economy, it has shown tremendous resilience in response to various shocks emanated from both at external and internal fronts owing to international financial and economic meltdown, misaligned economic policies,

war against terrorism, energy shortfalls, natural calamities and bad governance. All these challenges have taken a major toll over the years on Pakistan's economic growth as it remained below its potential.

Pakistan is a primary challenge for the United States and the world. Pakistan is too important to neglect and too complicated for some new U.S grand strategy. Pakistan's rapidly growing population, nuclear arsenal, and relationships with China and India will continue to force it upon America's geostrategic map in new and important ways over the coming decades (Daniel S. Markey). US can't take an exit from Pakistan also because of startegical geopolitical landscape/importance, islamabad's influence over taliban as by Senior Foreign Policy Advisor in the German Parliament (a former Senior Strategist and Deputy Head of the Policy Planning Staff in the German Foreign Ministry) The American in Pakistan;military support and its secret services, the Inter-Service intelligence, or ISI, trained mujaheddin for their fight against the Soviet invaders in Afghanistan. Since then, Pakistan has wielded considerable influence over its western neighbour geographical proximity, militant groups and the increasing presence of China (Dr. Henrich Kreft).

According to the notion's founding father Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan is a constitutionally a democratic parliamentary republic state. But democracy in Pakistan is of the elite, for the elite, by the elite. Civilians and military have taken turns to rule Pakistan, by the system arguably has remained the same 'unscathed' by democracy (Touqir Hussain, 2023). Democracy is dynamic not static but the Pakistan democracy is stuck. The Pakistan problems are because of the lack of democratic system. Democracy without substance is just a hollow, having no soul. Pakistan at the same time is and isn't a democratic state. In Pakistan democracy just acted as a tool for the dominance of political groups to maintain their wealth and status. The living style of personals are as luxurious as of kings/queen but citizens even are unable to enjoy their inherited/basic rights according to the "Law Of Constitution Of Islamic Republic Of Pakistan".

Pakistan is at the threshold of its history in the face of unique challenges which are

threatening the nation to its unprecedented turmoil. The present government appears to lack the will for the much-needed reforms, and the people are fed up with endless suffering. This dire economic state, political chaos, widespread unemployment, bad governance, severe inflation, and the effects of climate catastrophes foretell a pretty dark future-like precursors of the Arab Spring.

Pakistan's political and economic indicators reflect the situation seen in Arab nations before the popular uprisings that gained momentum in 2010-2011. Pakistanis have always maintained hope, which acted as a barrier to completely disaffecting themselves from state institutions in the past. At present, hopes are being fast erased. Pakistan stands on the verge of widespread social unrest unless the ruling elite take urgent reforms to guide the nation toward stability and prosperity.

The overall politico-economic structure of Pakistan has begun to crumble under the weight of economic confusion, unusual political turmoil, dissatisfaction on an unimagined scale, record unemployment, poor governance, historic inflation, rising terrorism, and ever-increasing grievances against censorship and political dissent. All these factors come together to create a ticking time bomb of a possible uprising. Pakistan stands at a critical juncture in its history; the decade of 2018-2025 is going to be an extremely critical one in the overall trajectory of national development.

This paper will articulate the strategic steps needed for Pakistan along three interconnected strands: political stability, strategic resilience and social equity. These strands would be central to Pakistan's multifaceted challenge: economic instability, governance and social inequalities. Political stability is the (basic) foundation of any country's growth as it creates an atmosphere highly conducive to democratic governance and effective implementation of policy.

In recent times, Pakistan is facing political turmoil that has barred it from realizing its development potential. So, strengthening legislative reform and judicial independence must ensure political stability. Pakistan, therefore, must respond to pressures from the internal and external environment. Accelerating economic challenges stem from climate change and geopolitics.

Resilience would enhance the ability of the country to better withstand shocks and to avail opportunities for sustainable growth. Equally important is social equity, whereby all segments of society benefit through development initiatives. Unequal access to resources, education, and healthcare must be reduced to an absolute minimum to build an inclusive society wherein every citizen could contribute to, and share in, national prosperity.

As a consequence of critical analysis and a long-sighted approach, it becomes evident that all these issues and conflicts must be resolved because these increase the chance of Pakistan's vulnerability and possibly becoming a victim in the World War III scenario. This article is a journey down the strategic avenues to understand better how Pakistan could navigate its complicated landscape towards achieving its long-term vision of being one of the world's largest economies by 2047. Extensive analysis through these themes, we strive to enlighten the pathway forward for a more stable, resilient, and equitable Pakistan to overcome future risks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pakistan's strategic pathways from 2018 to 2025 are impacted by a complex interplay of political stability, strategic resilience, and social equity. Based on the literature, it is noted that the inability of state institutions to present peaceful mechanisms for redressing grievances has led to increased violence and extremism. According to Ashraf (2024), the country is marked with huge challenges, including a fragile economy and growing internal polarization, which were coupled with the recent climatic disasters and political incidents. The impacts of the 2022 floods not only heavily stressed the agricultural and health sectors but, more essentially, were defined as portents for vulnerability to climate change and weaknesses in governance in Pakistan.

Political stability is a must for the development process in Pakistan. Research shows that chronic political instability undermines effective governance, which results in inconsistent policies and public disillusionment with democratic processes (Khan, 2021). The change of government after the 2013 and 2018 elections did not

address the root governance issues; instead, the PDM government has been blamed for undermining constitutional authority and failing to uphold judicial independence (Ashraf, 2024). This reflects the larger problems of civil-military relations in Pakistan, in which political leaders are often keener to pursue personal gain rather than public service. Weak governance structures thus continue, which further leads to an abuse of power for the personal benefit of a few at the expense of social justice. In Pakistan, corruption and injustice have become deeply entrenched in the fabric of society, with everything seemingly available for sale—from government positions to personal integrity. This alarming trend reveals a system where power and money dictate outcomes, allowing individuals to buy influence, including judges and political seats. For example, provincial assembly seats can be bought for 60 crores and national assembly seats are sold at between 25 to 30 crores. This is because of the environment of impunity through which those who have money take advantage of the system.

Dr Aafia Siddiqui. She is often called the “Most Oppressed Muslim Woman in the World” and with good cause. There is no other woman who went through the full US Rendition to Torture program. There is no other example of a case where a woman was abducted by the CIA and their Pakistani co-conspirators along with her three small children. Aafia was herself taken to Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan where she endured five years of torture. Similarly, the case of Yaram Kazmi unmasks severe allegations of human trafficking, revealing how people can exploit legal loopholes and systemic weaknesses in their own self-interest. Human trafficking has been a significant issue in Pakistan, amplified by corrupt officials who usually turn blind eyes in exchange for bribes. (Aljazeera).

A combination of systemic issues prevails in the case of Pakistan, especially Balochistan—the situation is pretty complex with rampant corruption, widespread human rights abuse, and inefficiency in governance. The demands for greater autonomy and control over local resources form the basis for the ongoing insurgency in Balochistan, where violence and unrest are on a crescendo. It

has been reported that Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) took the responsibility for all attacks in which huge numbers of dead bodies including both civilians and security personnel came up. Enforced disappearances, torture by state machinery increased tension and an atmosphere of terror is prevalent. Who is in control of Pakistan? The policies of the government are so detached from the real issues of the people, especially in KPK and Balochistan. So many decades of war have seen so many sacrifices, but the response from the policymakers seems so meager. The kidnapping and torture of Balochis for their political views exemplify a more general trend of state repression that does not solve the problem at its roots. In fact, Shia-Sunni disputes in Parachinar indicate systemic failure of the Pakistani establishment, governmental bodies, and the judiciary. The situation in Kurram is like a “pressure cooker waiting to explode”, he cautioned at the time. “Parachinar feels like a graveyard; it is eerily quiet, and I fear that this tension could explode at any given moment” (Aljazeera).

This most apparent slumbering attitude of the institutions in question raises doubts over the effectiveness of policy formulation within the think tanks and governmental agencies. Where is the critical approach? Where are the problem-solving skills that should lead to effective governance? Psychologically, it creates repressed aggression, oppression, and feelings of depression among the youths. The growing phenomenon of brain drain reflects growing disappointment with the system and lack of faith in the system's capability to provide security and opportunities. It is further fuelled by high rates of crime, including violence, contributing to the sense of instability and despair. It has all the problems on its head- historical grievances, contemporary mismanagement, and thus, without serious reforms and an honest commitment to these issues, the nation might spiral into chaos and unrest. The need for a comprehensive strategy that prioritizes human rights, equitable resource distribution, and effective governance has never been more crucial in ensuring stability and peace in Pakistan.

Strategic resilience is another critical area of concern as Pakistan navigates both internal

and external pressures. The literature highlights the requirement of a geo-economics strategy that balances national interests with global realities (Ahmed, 2022). With macroeconomic volatility and the impact of climate disasters, Pakistan's economic challenges are compounded by recurrent fiscal deficits and a heavy state presence in the economy (Ashraf, 2024). Over 80 percent of Pakistanis consistently report that their economic wellbeing has either deteriorated or remained the same. Only 20 percent, disproportionately concentrated in the very top of the distribution, feel that they are better off and similarly small numbers believe that economic conditions have improved for their locality (Ghazala Mansuri, 2016).

Five decades ago, Dr Mahbub ul Haq identified 22 families who controlled two-thirds of listed manufacturing and four-fifths of banking assets in Pakistan, showing an inordinate concentration of wealth. Today too we can identify as many families who control a high proportion of national wealth. Concentration of wealth is not unique to Pakistan: this happens globally, especially in the developing world. Trouble is that five decades after Dr Haq's identification, it's many of the same families who control the wealth. A successful economy keeps giving rise to new entrepreneurs, representing newly emerging industries and technologies, becoming its richest people. But not here in Pakistan where wealth, power and opportunities are strictly limited to an unchanging elite. Here almost every successful Pakistani owes his success to his father's position (Dawn,2022).

Institutional reforms in civil military are essential to streamline economic policies and be resilient to external shocks (Raza, 2020). In addition, the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy for 2023-2028 focuses on its climate-resilient economy and inclusive governance as the two pillars of the strategic resilience strategy (USAID, 2024). Social equity is one of the major challenges for achieving inclusive development. Literature reflects that resource access, education, and healthcare-related persistent inequalities are the main impediments to national progress (Government of Pakistan, 2018). The estimated lower-middle-income poverty rate

of 40.5% for FY24 underscores the urgent need to address these disparities (Ashraf, 2024). Effective governance will promote social equity through equal opportunities for all citizens. Analyses of history reveal that authoritarian regimes have hindered such developments, and therefore, a transition to more democratic governance structures is required that are based on social justice.

Thus, the strategic pathways for Pakistan from 2018 to 2025 would have complexities regarding interaction among political stability, strategic resilience, and social equity. Themes like these call for comprehensive policy frameworks to deal with immediate challenges and lay a foundation for sustainable development in the long term.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The roots of multifaceted problems can be traced to 1940. Pakistan in 1947, through the efforts, among others, of its future national poet Allama Iqbal and its founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Jinnah's Pakistan was based on unity and discipline among Muslims, but Jinnah died in 1948, hence leaving a critical leadership gap that remained unfilled (Wikipedia, 2024). The creation of Pakistan was catalyst to the largest demographic movement in recorded history. Since then, the country has experienced both civilian democratic and military rule, resulting in periods of significant economic and military growth as well as those of instability; significant during the latter, was the 1971 secession of East Pakistan as the new nation of Bangladesh (wikipedia).

Political instability and weak governance defined the early years of Pakistan. Murdered in 1951, the first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, further deteriorated the political condition of the country (TRT World, 2024). This period also saw the rise of military power in politics, which finally culminated in the first military coup in 1958. The decades that followed were marked by a cycle of civilian rule and military dictatorship with the important figures of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq. Zia overthrew Bhutto's government in a coup in 1977 and ended with the decade-long military rule after his

mysterious death in a plane crash in 1988 (UCA, 2024).

Political turbulence was to continue in Pakistan after the death of Zia. During the late 1980s and 1990s, the power kept swinging between Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. Both leaders were accused of corruption and other malpractices, which ultimately resulted in their dismissal from the office (BBC News, 2019). The military coup had occurred in Pakistan at the hour of crisis in the new millennium. Another tragic episode in Pakistan's political life was the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in 2007, and subsequent threats to political leaders (Asia Society, 2024).

Many powerful political leaders have mysteriously or violently been killed during this tumultuous history, like Fatima Jinnah, Quid-e-Azam, Liaquat Ali Khan, Zia-ul-Haq and Benazir Bhutto. Their murders raised questions not only about the political motivations of their assassinations but also about powerful interests shaping Pakistan's governance. Such unresolved assassinations have created an atmosphere of fear and mistrust among politicians and the public alike. Pakistan is facing a difficult set of the last couple of years that it must bear to bring stability. Fiscal imbalances, inflation, and growing poverty levels are compounded by calamities such as the severe floods of 2022 (Ashraf, 2024).

Fighting among the provinces--as well as a deep-rooted conflict that led to a nuclear stand-off with India—prevented Pakistan from gaining real stability in the last five decades. It oscillates between military rule and democratically elected governments, between secular policies and financial backing as a "frontline" state during the Cold War and the war against terrorism. All of Pakistan's struggles underpin the dilemma they face in reconciling the goal of national integration with the imperatives of national security. Lessons from the past suggest a requirement for carefully constructed approaches focused on political stability, immunity to shocks from external disturbances, and social justice. This historical context portrays that these foundational issues, deeply rooted in Pakistan's past, and the present policies and nonprofessional behaviour with citizens are violently disrupting the mind-set of youth.

The play between historical grievances and contemporary challenges will be the most critical as Pakistan seeks to redefine its governance model and achieve sustainable development.

POLITICAL STABILITY

No Pakistani Prime Minister has ever completed the five-year long Government term, essentially this comes down to the fact that all Heads of Government have been dismissed due to charges of corruption. This is to demonstrate how corruption has proved to be an irreplaceable ingredient in the history of Pakistani democratic rule of law. Corruption in general has plagued the country and has infiltrated the socio-economic and political landscape. From Heads of State, to judiciary and to local police officers, corruption has found to be present in many areas of Pakistan's society. However, the paradox pertains that none of the Military Generals have ever faced a verdict for corrupt practices.

Corruption has long been a feature of Pakistan's political landscape, which is deeply entrenched in its governance structures. Its roots can be traced back to the inception of the country in 1947, where the inherited British legal framework and bureaucratic elite often prioritized personal gain over public service (EFSAS, 2024). To overcome such widespread corruption, the necessity for an effective monitoring system cannot be undermined. It may, through the institution of an independent body specifically constituted for monitoring and assessment of governmental performance and accountability, restore people's confidence. This should look not only into the higher echelons of corruption but also at the exploitation from which lower strata citizens suffer. For example, the CSS examinations, which are considered important for recruitment in Pakistan's civil service, have been criticized as being elitist. Officers aspiring for promotion seek vulnerable sections of society to demonstrate their authority or meet quotas and hence exploit the poor more intensively (EFSAS, 2024). This also brings out the need for a monitoring system to ensure that no discrimination is there across all societal strata.

The government needs to fulfil the aspirations of the middle class and stop exploitation of laws for high percentages to promote political stability. The middle class acts as a stabilizer of society. Strengthening the legal framework to protect citizens' interests without disproportionately targeting the lower-income groups by law enforcement is crucial (Khan, 2021). This would help address some of the grievances that fuel political instability. In addition, a separate branch can be set up with the charge of oversight of government actions and assessment of the implementation effectiveness of anti-corruption policies. This branch must be free from any military and political interference. Focusing on fair playing field for all classes in society and ensuring accountability at the institutional level of governance would bring stability and justice to Pakistani society.

Further, in forming Pakistan global image several steps should be taken as cultural diplomacy stands as a formidable instrument for Pakistan to enhance its global image and strengthen international relations. By actively promoting its rich culture and heritage, fostering collaboration across various sectors, and strategically leveraging media, education, tourism, and social media. Moreover upgrading infrastructure, prioritizing innovation, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders for sustainable development. To help democratic institutions be more responsive to citizens, govt should provide technical assistance to state institutions and efforts to empower local governments, along with helping relevant civil society actors advocate for greater inclusion of marginalized groups. Pakistan can contribute significantly to advancing mutual understanding and respect among nations. This collective effort aligns with the nation's interests on the global stage, ultimately contributing to a more interconnected and harmonious world.

GOVERNANCE

Governance factors indicate the rules and procedures for countries and corporations, and allow investors to screen for appropriate governance practices as they would for environmental and social factors. Judicial system plays a crucial role in creating peace

and harmony in the society. The history of legal system of Pakistan can be traced back in subcontinent from different episodes of Hindus, Muslim and English periods. Justice is a fundamental right of every citizen. An effective Judicial System is a must to combat corruption effectively, but judicial institutions are themselves cancerously corruptible. Pakistan's Judiciary is characterized by insufficient resources and staff, and corruption and political interference by powerful actor's further present obstacles to impartiality and fairness. Although the Supreme Court portrays itself as efficient, insufficient financial means and lack of personnel, coupled with a high-level of insecurity and high crime rates overburden local Courts and lead to negligent trials perceived as biased.

According to Transparency International Pakistan (TIP) the highest amounts of bribery in the country were spent on people affiliated with the Judiciary. In the 2011 survey, Sohail Muzaffar, TIP Chairman, with Syed Adil Gilani, Chairman, TIP Advisory Committee, referred to the delayed punitive action of State organs against the corrupt elements involved in corruption cases, such as Pakistan Steel, National Insurance Company Limited (NICL), Punjab Bank, Rental Power Plants, Karachi Electric Supply Corporation (KESC), Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Railway, and Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA). Articles 10 A & 25(1) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973 speaks about the 'right to fair trial' and 'equality of citizens'. 5th and 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution has settled rules regarding 'due process of law' which throws lights on judicial system.

Article 175(1) is about the establishment of higher judiciary as well as other lower courts constituted by law (Muhammad Irshad Ijaz). Pakistan's governance structure has been tested by corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability for long, especially in its legislative and judicial institutions. To deal with these problems, an all-round reform must be undertaken to improve the functioning of institutions. This paper will point out the reforms envisioned for legislation and the judiciary-an independent mechanism for evaluation and separate courts for different kinds of cases.

This Article speaks that "all existing laws shall be brought in conformity with the Injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Quran and Sunnah of Prophet (P.B.U.H), in this part referred to as the Injunctions of Islam, and no law shall be enacted which is repugnant to such Injunctions". In short, the Judicial System of Pakistan broadly may be divided into three classes, i.e. trichotomy of Judicial System of Pakistan is mentioned in the following lines:

(a) Superior judiciary comprising of Supreme Court, Federal Shariat Court and High Courts

(b) District judiciary comprising of Civil Courts and Criminal Courts created by acts working under the supervision and control of the respective High Courts under Article 203 of the Constitution

(c) The Administrative Courts, Tribunal and Special Courts created under different laws

As the people of United Kingdom are rightly proud of the traditions of their justice system. It is admired across the world and is the foundation of many other countries' justice systems. It is a cornerstone of a just, fair and safe society: a service on which victims and the public rely every day to protect them from harm and ensure that those who have offended against them face the consequences of their actions. The political system has historically favoured personal gain over public service, leading to a culture where bribery and favouritism are commonplace (EFSAS, 2024). This environment not only undermines public trust but also hampers effective governance. This, coupled with various shortcomings in these arenas, is enough justification for calling for reforms focused more on raising the standard of transparency and accountability at all levels in legislation and the judicial system.

Among these propositions, setting apart courts specifically designated to cater for various classes of cases. This would be an efficient case management approach, and the judicial system would reduce the backlog of cases it has today. Tailoring courts to specific legal areas would allow judges to specialize in those areas, thus making better-informed decisions and faster resolution (GSDRC, 2023). For example, family courts could focus more on domestic matters,

sexual exploitation will focus on rape cases and implementation of strict rules and assessment in case of doing favouritism and injustice, judges should be hanged to death along with rapist, commercial courts speed up business matters that are highly essential for growth in the economy. It should not be difficult to understand that the idea relating to a particular system is derived from the concept of end of human life by notions of right and wrong, good and evil, justice and injustice. In addition to the specialized courts, there should be an independent system of judicial performance review. This can be done through the establishment of a Judicial Performance Review Board, which will evaluate judges based on case disposal rates, adherence to legal standards, and litigant feedback. This would help ensure accountability of judges while ensuring that they remain focused on justice delivery rather than succumbing to external pressures or political influences (ISSRA Papers, 2023). Reforms must also cater to the interests of the middle class even as those enjoying a law advantage are reformed. In any societal setup, the middle class is always considered a stabilizer of society because when they are alienated, there will always be lawlessness in society. Ensuring legal protections are equitable across all socio-economic classes can help the government create a sense of justice and stability (Khan, 2021). Maintenance of social cohesion is going to require addressing these disparities through targeted legal reforms.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND STABILITY

A strategic shift in Pakistan toward long-term vision policies on economic security, regional cooperation, and internal cohesion will enhance national security and stability. By contributing to building trust by aligning relevant parts of the organisation's purpose to the broader societal safety and security agenda. The physical and institutional security of the state's territory and its administrative apparatus is the classical dimension of national security. It includes the defence forces and the intelligence and policing organisations. The focus is safeguarding borders, retaining orderly migration, defending against military threats (including espionage) and, where necessary,

projecting military power. It also means ensuring the physical security of critical infrastructure, which is often managed on a regional or municipal level. In recent years, it has extended to managing crises such as terrorist attacks and natural disasters, and protecting critical infrastructure such as the power grid, transportation networks and other utilities.

Governments, their agencies and other stakeholders need to be constantly vigilant to the risks that endanger the safety of their citizens. This means assessing the threat levels across the four intersecting domains of physical, digital, economic and social security. The NSP 2022-2026 outlines the integration of human prosperity into security thinking that goes beyond conventional military-centric concepts. Pakistan can develop its strategic position for economic prosperity by fostering positive relations with other neighbouring countries, and regional integration through the initiative of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. China is leading a bloc joined by Russia and Iran. Turkey and Malaysia are mobilizing too, and it will not be a surprise if they try to jump in as well. Pakistan, in such a situation, finds itself in a very favourable position both geopolitically and economically. If addressed well, this is arguably the most critical juncture in the country's history for Islamabad to take advantage of (CIGA, Istanbul).

Pakistan's ongoing economic and security crisis makes foreign investors, such as Saudi Arabia, wary of investing. Historical religious linkages in the Saudi-Pakistan relationship are unlikely to retain their salience amidst changing foreign policy and economic outlooks in the region. The economic viability of the Pakistan-Saudi relationship is crucial to propel their partnership in the coming years. This overall strategy is to establish a stable environment that supports sustainable development and improves the well-being of the Pakistani populace. Reputation is central to ensuring contract performance in all societies. The impact of a well-functioning court system extends far beyond the number of cases it resolves. The more timely and predictable a court's decisions, the better able firms are to predict the outcome of any dispute. In Bangladesh and Pakistan the World Bank's

Investment Climate Surveys show that while firms with confidence in the courts make half their sales on credit, those with little confidence extend credit on only one-fourth of their sales (WDR,2005).

It is necessary to address other domestic issues including social cohesion, which will ultimately help in building trust among its citizens and check extremism. Improving new paradigms related to security also includes cyber security attacks, which, in turn, will ensure balanced defence against conventional and emerging security threats. Pakistan.

SOCIAL EQUITY

Social equity in Pakistan would require a holistic approach that addresses human rights (life, liberty, freedom), fair trial, right to freedom of speech, gender equity, supports the mental health of youth, educational reforms, counselling for higher education, racism, and rights to the marginalized ones like transgender. The situation concerning the treatment of civilians during the protest, most particularly those people associated with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, is seriously one of the matters of law and human rights. Following the detention of former Prime Minister Imran Khan in May 2023, protests had engulfed various parts of the country, where clashes between security forces and the protesters turned fatal. This military response has been criticized both under Pakistani law and international human rights standards.

It has been reported that during the PTI protests, the Pakistan Army was allowed to use lethal force against protesters which raises serious ethical and legal questions about the military's engagement with civilians. Such actions may amount to a violation of the right to life as guaranteed under Article 3 of UDHR and Article 6 of ICCPR. Many have characterized the judgment condemning civilians before military courts for crimes under Pakistan Army Act as inappropriate. Many international human rights bodies including Amnesty International have condemned this practice, which is abhorrent at international law. Therefore, it is unconstitutional under Articles 10-A of the Pakistani Constitution and Article 14 of the ICCPR. Ongoing civil

trials in military courts make things even more complex. This sets a strong motivation for reform inside the processes employed for the adjudication of the cases so that justice can be visually seen and the human rights sufficiently protected.

The rights of gender equality, i.e. Transgender people must be acknowledged and fought for. In this context, legal recognition along with protection against discrimination is of utmost importance to make transgender people an integral part of society. Through policies that focus on inclusion, transgender people can lead a quality life while also positively contributing to society. For the socio-economic aspects of Pakistan, there should be a literacy education program, employment opportunities for literate individuals, and scholarship grants for the students. Some examples of such programs are "Literate Pakistan for Sustained Development," which promotes literacy among depressed communities, "Pakistan Reading Project," which develops young readers and coaches trainers. Overall, collaborative efforts can definitely elevate the middle and poor classes of citizens significantly in the socio-economic status scale of the nation. Like, collaboration of stakeholders and NGO's. Through these measures, Pakistan would be able to become an inclusive society where every person would receive an equal opportunity to prosper and serve effectively in national development. This can lead not only to building the confidence level of youths but lay also a more beaming pathway of future generations' development within Pakistan. Awareness campaigns can also change the societal norms that promote gender discrimination, making it an environment where both genders have equal opportunities to succeed.

Most of the Pakistani community has been displaying exceptionally low morale due to the various problems that society is facing, like being exposed to disturbing content (leak videos). This all leads to hopelessness and frustration among the citizens. An average of 12 children per day or one every two hours were subjected to sexual abuse in Pakistan in 2023, a report by a nongovernmental organisation says. In its half-yearly report published on Thursday,

Islamabad-based NGO Sahil said a total of 2,227 cases of child sexual abuse were reported to the authorities between January and June this year. The NGO, which has been operating since 1996, compiles its data from newspaper reports as well as from cases directly reported to them. It said there were 1,207 girls and 1,020 boys in the cases it recorded in 2023. Imtiaz Ahmad Soomrah, the national legal aid coordinator for Sahil, told Al Jazeera that most of the abuse cases involved children between six and 15. "Over 47 percent of the cases were reported between this age group and among these, more boys were reported to be sexually abused (593) compared to girls (457)," he said. The NGO's report said in 912 of more than 2,200 cases they recorded this year, the accused were acquaintances of the child victim and in 2024 the number reached to 4000. (Aljazeera).

Sexual harassment and assaults of women are likely to remain prevalent in Pakistan. The authorities do not publish up-to-date or comprehensive data on this. But several studies over the past few years have shown that most women have experienced harassment in public places and at work. For instance, a March 2021 report by a local NGO shows that 85% of surveyed women in the Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan provinces had experienced sexual harassment in places such as parks or buses. Reported cases of violent crime against women seem to be rising, particularly in Punjab and Sindh province. According to a report by a local NGO published in March and citing local police data, there were 10,201 cases of violence against women reported in Punjab in 2023, including rape. This represents a 14.5% increase compared with 2022 (8,787 incidents) and is also the highest increase in this type of violence recorded in Pakistan for a province in 2023. (Dragonfly's Security Intelligence & Analysis Service (SIAS) on 12 August 2024). For these cases we should do fair trail according to Zina Ordinance, PPC section 375, 2016 amendments and actions according to the Islamic rule and law. Our constitutions and rules are so strong but no one follows them thus, there is no rule of law in Pakistan. To overcome these cases according to Islamic law and our constitution rapists should be hanged to death or the punishment of stoning or lashes

to death publically to broke the bone of this crime.

The educational institutions should include mental health resources such as counselling services and peer support groups to help the students deal with their issues properly. Easy access to psychological counselling should be made for the students from Class 1 to 12 to process their experiences and build up resilience. Creative writing classes may act as an effective therapeutic means of expression of the thoughts and emotions of the students while helping them develop their communication skills. Establishing a robust counselling system for O-level, college, and university students is essential for guiding them in their academic and career choices. Expert mentors can assist students in identifying their interests and aligning them with visionary job opportunities. This personalized guidance can enhance students' confidence in pursuing fields that resonate with their passions while addressing the skills gap in the job market.

Racism persists in Pakistan and couples with the fact that religious leaders in their second generation can misrepresent Islam, makes it a difficult task to handle. The Pakhtunites, Balochis, Panjabis, devobandis, barelvies, hanfi etc and so on comprise this nation. To this effect, an interpretive understanding of Islam should be encouraged with an emphasis on mercy, diversity, and inclusivity. Bringing into focus their contributions, a new perception that can be cultivated among the younger segments of society; Islam as not a regressive faith but forward to uphold equity and justice could be presented

Economic Growth and Sustainable Development

Pakistan is blessed with a lot of natural resources that have immense potential for economic growth and development. Of these, the country has huge mineral resources. The country's coal reserves are estimated to be around 186 billion tons and are mainly located in the Thar region. These coal reserves are crucial for energy production and can be pivotal in solving Pakistan's energy crisis.

Also, there are big copper and gold reserves in Pakistan, especially at Reko Diq and Saindak in Balochistan, and Indian Ocean

holding great potential for foreign investment and economic gains. The gem sector is another lucrative area as emeralds, rubies, and other precious stones abound in Gilgit-Baltistan. Pakistan has significant natural gas reserves, mainly from the Sui gas field, but still imports a lot to meet its rising oil demands. The agricultural sector remains the backbone of the economy, with major products such as wheat, rice, cotton, and sugarcane grown across vast arable lands. The country has significant industrial minerals like limestone and gypsum, in demand for construction and manufacturing sectors. Renewable energy potential in Pakistan is also high; solar and wind energy potential can be tapped highly in regions like the Thar Desert and coastal regions. Proper management of these resources with sustainable practices and infrastructure improvement will help Pakistan attract foreign investment into the mining and agriculture sectors. Pakistan needs to foster innovation to stay competitive in the global economy. To achieve this, the government can create incentives for research and development, and promote collaboration between universities, businesses, and research institutions. It can also establish technology parks and incubators to promote innovation and entrepreneurship. It is argued that the ability of Pakistan to pay back its debt and avoid default is impugned due to a current account deficit requiring external financing. Its exports, foreign direct investment, and remittances are presumed to be lower than its import bill and debt repayment pressure. To overcome this problem, the government of Pakistan must work on promoting exports by following several schemes that include branding and marketing initiatives, diversification in export products, product quality enhancement, competitiveness development, and increasing trade relations with other countries by signing free trade agreements. Pakistan has the potential to export a diverse range of products, including sports goods, pharmaceuticals, textiles, agriculture, leather goods, information technology, energy, and chemicals. By following case studies of other countries like India, Germany, Singapore, China, and Japan, Pakistan can dig into new sectors and compete effectively in the global market (Faryal Khan, 2023).

Pakistan's profitable extremity can be addressed by reducing the high cost of doing business in the country. By learning from successful countries, Pakistan can produce a more favourable business terrain, attract further investment, and eventually ameliorate its frugality. Pakistan can enhance its frugality through tourism, streamlining the visa process, selling the country as a sightseer destination, and furnishing training to those working in the tourism assiduity. Pakistan needs to strengthen its economic growth further through trade ties with neighbouring countries like Iran and the Arabian states. It can be achieved through the development of bilateral trade agreements, energy cooperation, infrastructure development for connectivity, and diversified trade partnerships. Pakistan can pave its way toward a prosperous future and ensure sustainable development for generations by utilizing its natural resources and building regional trade partnerships.

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

A structured implementation framework is very important in the proper utilization of varied natural resources in Pakistan and enhancing its economic growth. There should be sustainable resource management. This includes regulation for the sustainable exploitation of minerals and hydrocarbons, and it calls for stringent environmental regulations to maintain ecological integrity. Infrastructure development is the other main area of concern. Improvement of connectivity through development of roads, railways, and ports will open trade and economic activities. The CPEC can be optimized to cut logistical costs for trade with Iran and Arabian states. Public-private partnership in infrastructure development can also remove fiscal constraints from the execution side. Expansion of trade and regional cooperation is essential for economic growth. Strengthening the existing trade agreements with Iran and the GCC will ease trade flows, and opening new free trade agreements will also be able to expand market access for Pakistani products. STPF 2020-2025 would also be very important in terms of diversified exports across all sectors.

The streamlining of agriculture by innovation is imperative for higher productivity. Research and development on high-yield crop varieties and training programs will help modernize the agricultural practices. Irrigation infrastructure needs to be upgraded to reduce water use inefficiency in arid regions of this country, dependent on river systems such as the Indus River. Institutional capacity building is essential to effect governance. Strengthening local government institutions involved in economic planning and resource management will help ensure better alignment of local development priorities with national goals. Robust monitoring frameworks will be designed to track the progress of economic initiatives, thus making it accountable and transparent. Community engagement is vital for inclusive development. Empowering the community by providing participatory rights to matters of resource management will ensure equitable benefit distribution. Promotion of cultural exchange programs with Iran and other Arabian states would increase confidence levels and thus the trade relationships.

This all-embracing framework covers sustainable resource management, infrastructural development, increasing trade, agricultural innovation, strong institutions, and community engagement. All these strategies, once initiated, can empower Pakistan to properly exploit its natural resources for developing a cooperative regional climate to advance economic growth and development.

Conclusion

This research article discusses strategic pathways for Pakistan from 2018 to 2025. This article will cover three critical dimensions: political stability, strategic resilience, and social equity. The findings have indicated that Vision 2025 aims to make Pakistan one of the ten largest economies by 2047 through inclusive economic growth, good governance, and sustainable development. The end. However, it has huge challenges in terms of low economic growth with high inflation rates, political instability, and social inequalities, further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change and recent natural disasters.

The analysis shows that a robust governance structure should be responsive to the dynamic changes in geopolitical configurations, while highlighting the integration of gender equity and social inclusion in development policies.

FINDINGS

1. Strengthening democratic institutions and policy continuity to ensure long-term stability.
2. Enhancing transparency, accountability, and institutional efficiency for effective public administration.
3. Implementing structural reforms to promote sustainable growth, investment, and fiscal stability.
4. Reducing socio-economic disparities through inclusive policies, education, and healthcare improvements.

Recommendations

1. Reforms that improve the efficiency and legitimacy of electoral institutions must be put into place in order to fortify political stability and governance. In political systems, encouraging citizen-responsive government will increase accountability and confidence.
2. A comprehensive economic strategy emphasizing climate-resilient growth in the energy, infrastructure, and agriculture sectors is necessary for economic resilience. To lessen reliance on fossil fuels, investments in renewable energy should be increased. Healthcare, as well as economic involvement for women and underprivileged groups.
3. Investing in the health and education systems with improved service delivery, high-quality educational access, and vocational training programs that meet market demands would be necessary to improve human capital development.
4. Strong regional cooperation through improved trade ties with nearby nations.

REFERENCES

- World Bank. (2022). Pakistan Development Update. Retrieved from [World Bank](<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/pakistan/publication/pakistan-development-update>).

- UNDP. (2023). Human Development Report 2023: Pakistan. Retrieved from [UNDP](<https://www.pk.undp.org/content/pakistan/en/home.html>).
- Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Statistical Yearbook. Retrieved from [PBS](<http://www.pbs.gov.pk/>).
- Henrichkrefth "A Country Caught By The Threat Of Talaibanistan And The Return To Democracy"
- Ali, S. (2021). "Economic Challenges in Pakistan: A Review of Current Policies." *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 14(2), 45-67.
- Khan, M. A., & Qureshi, M. I. (2020). *Development Challenges in South Asia: A Comparative Perspective*. Routledge.
- Asian Development Bank. (2022). *Pakistan: Economic Outlook*. Retrieved from [ADB](<https://www.adb.org/countries/pakistan/main>).
- Raza, H., & Khan, N. (2020). "Foreign Aid and Economic Growth in Pakistan: A Time Series Analysis." *Journal of Economic Cooperation and Development*, 41(2), 1-20
- Khattak, S., & Khan, M. (2018). "The Role of Education in Economic Development of Pakistan." *International Journal of Educational Management*. 32(4), 532-548
- Malik, K., & Hussain, S. (2021). "Poverty Alleviation Strategies in Pakistan: A Review." *Social Indicators Research*, 156(2), 457-47
- Government of Pakistan. (2023). *Vision 2025: Accelerating Economic Growth and Sustainable Development*. Islamabad: Planning Commission.
- Shahbaz, M., & Rahman, M. (2019). "Energy Consumption and Economic Growth in Pakistan: Evidence from ARDL Approach." *Energy Economics*, 81, 1-10.
- Muhammad irshad ijaz (2018) " International Journal Of Scientific And engineering Research Volume 9, Issue 2 ISSN 2229-5518"
- Zubair, S., & Ali, F. (2019). "The Role of Microfinance in Poverty Alleviation in Pakistan." *Journal of Financial Services Marketing*, 24(3), 215-.216.
- Daniel S. Markey. (2013) "No Exit From Pakistan".

