



HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL OF THE YOUNG POPULATION

A PATH TO ECONOMIC SECURITY

Post Seminar Report



CENTRE for AEROSPACE & SECURITY STUDIES, LAHORE

PRESIDENT

Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd)

SEMINAR COORDINATOR

Dr Ghulam Mohey-ud-din

EDITOR

Hassan Arshad

MASTER OF CEREMONY

Nida Rehman Khattak

REPORT COMPILATION & RAPPORTEURS

Sabina Babar, Waqas Mahmood Dogar

CENTRE for AEROSPACE & SECURITY STUDIES

May 2023

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HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL OF THE YOUNG POPULATION A PATH TO ECONOMIC SECURITY

POST SEMINAR REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The world is witnessing unprecedented changes on multiple fronts. Recent technological advances in AI are shaping up to completely alter the workforce, means of production, and value creation. Developed countries are grappling with ageing and plummeting populations, while developing countries are dealing with issues arising from high population growth rates.

Pakistan is the world's fifth-most populous country, yet its share in global GDP is only 0.4 percent in nominal terms and 0.9 percent in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP). However, Pakistan ends up being ranked 177th in terms of GDP (PPP) per capita, leaving it lagging behind in global economic and productivity rankings.

Pakistan's low standing in global rankings is the result of a multitude of economic challenges threatening its economic and national security. Pakistan's National Security Policy (NSP) 2022 prioritised economic security as a crucial component of national security and outlined various policy options like building a globally competitive workforce and preparing for digital transformation.

In the current scenario, human capital development seems to be the most compelling intervention to place Pakistan on the path to economic security. Pakistan's population is primarily comprised of youth, with over 64 percent of the population under the age of thirty and 29 percent falling into the age group of 15–29. The key challenge is that this core segment of the population lacks the adequate skill training

and growth avenues to become productive members of society.

Similarly, almost 22.8 million children of school-going age are out of school in Pakistan. Additionally, labour force participation rates are low, with female participation in particular being minimal.

Pakistan can transform this vital segment of its population from a potential liability into a dividend by reimagining the education system and imparting globally competitive skills. By harnessing the potential of this burgeoning youth demographic, Pakistan can bolster its economic and national security.

Against this backdrop, a seminar on "*Harnessing the Potential of the Young Population: A Path to Economic Security*" was organised on May 17, 2023, at the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, to deliberate upon the various options for harnessing the potential of the young population in Pakistan.

The seminar was chaired by Air Marshal Asim Suleiman, President CASS Lahore. The master of ceremony was Ms. Nida Rehman Khattak, researcher at CASS. The introductory remarks were presented by Director of Economic Affairs, Dr Ghulam Mohey-ud-din.

The speakers included Former Finance Minister of Pakistan Dr Salman Shah, Chief Investment Officer Engro Corporation Mr Nadir Salar Qureshi, and CEO Tabadlab Mr Mosharraf Zaidi.

The seminar was attended by the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (Training) Air Marshal Zulfiqar Ahmad Qureshi, senior

Harnessing the Potential of the Young Population

serving and retired PAF officers, academicians from different universities, and representatives from local think tanks.

SPEAKERS WITH SUB-TOPICS OF THE SEMINAR

Sr. No.	Topic	Speaker
1	Leveraging the Human Potential of Pakistan for Economic Security	<i>Dr Salman Shah,</i> Former Finance Minister & Advisor to CM Punjab
2	Human Capital Formation: A Building Block for Pakistan's Economic Security	<i>Mr Nadir Salar Qureshi,</i> Chief Investment Officer, Engro Corporation; Ex-CEO Engro Fertilizers
3	Reimagining the Education System: Adapting to the Future	<i>Mr Mosharraf Zaidi,</i> Founder CEO, Tabadlab; Ex-CEO Alif Ailaan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pakistan as a nation and as a society is facing a large number of challenges, both external and internal. A fast-changing and rapidly digitising world poses serious questions regarding the role of Pakistan's future generations in that transformation. To analyse this scenario and explore Pakistan's options, the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, organised a seminar titled "***Harnessing the Potential of the Young Population: A Path to Economic Security***" on May 17, 2023.

Opening Remarks

While exploring the nexus of human capital, economic security, and national security in his introductory remarks, Dr Ghulam Mohey-ud-din pointed out that Pakistan has the fifth-largest population and sixth-largest workforce in the world. However, its human capital rating is very low. He set the premise for the deliberation of the speakers to explore how economic security can be achieved by leveraging the potential of the young population.

Dr Salman Shah

Highlighting the prevailing economic challenges in Pakistan, such as the high current account deficit and Pakistan's relationship with the IMF, Dr Salman Shah stressed that the real challenge lies at the micro level, where the ripple effects of mismanagement become evident at the macro level. He proposed transforming Pakistan into an outward-looking economy by fostering skills for competitiveness and productivity. He also highlighted the importance of strategic planning and reforms for human capital formation. Dr Shah also identified the need to develop and tap young people's potential by integrating them into the national economic

framework. He also discussed the ongoing structural transformation in Punjab, which has created both rural and urban economies. His proposed approach revolved around capitalising on the demographic dividend and harnessing pre-existing economic activities to become the next global factory.

Mr Nadir Salar Qureshi

The speaker discussed Pakistan's value in the global economy, highlighting the country's need to offer more to the world. Despite being the fifth most populous nation in the world, Pakistan only has a 0.4 percent share in global GDP.

To address this, Mr Qureshi proposed providing technical certification to just 20 percent of existing matriculates for overseas placement, which could generate an annual revenue of US \$8.6 billion. Similarly, he added that just by training 20 percent of existing university graduates in IT related skills could unlock the potential annual IT exports worth US \$9.5 billion. He further suggested increasing the inclusion of women in the workforce to boost the economy. He added that just doubling women's economic participation could potentially add US \$27 billion to the GDP.

He was of the view that by implementing these strategies, Pakistan can weather the current economic crisis, improve its global standing, and achieve economic growth.

Mr Mosharraf Zaidi

While discussing the challenges and opportunities faced by Pakistani youth in terms of economic input, Mr Mosharraf Zaidi emphasised the need for an output-oriented approach instead of traditional input-oriented approaches to problem-

solving and practical solutions. He pointed out that addressing stunting and malnutrition is critical, as they affect intellectual capacity and are part of a larger human capital crisis. He laid great emphasis on nutrition, literacy rates, survival rates to matriculation, and increasing female labour force participation simultaneously.

He also highlighted the government's responsibility in revamping education system and the need of private sector involvement. He called for increased national cohesion, both institutionally and within the population, and consensus-driven leadership.

Concluding Remarks by President CASS

While concluding the seminar and extending the vote of thanks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President CASS Lahore, highlighted that the world's population currently stood at eight billion and is projected to reach 10 billion by 2100. He also pointed out that Pakistan is ranked 177th in terms of GDP per capita and 161st on the Human Development Index (HDI). He also observed that the demographic constitution of Pakistan resembled a pyramid with the ageing and the elderly on the narrow top and children and the young at the wide base. Whereas, in the middle of the pyramid are the youth and the middle-aged population, who are the earners and bear the burdens of the entire population.

The President CASS spoke about the need to equip youth with demand-driven skills to ensure human and economic security. He also emphasised on the importance of building a globally competitive workforce and preparing it for digital transformation to ensure human and economic security. He warned that failure to harness this resource could lead to

Harnessing the Potential of the Young Population

anarchy, with uneducated, unemployed, and dissatisfied youth roaming the streets.

Air Marshal Asim Suleiman stressed on utilising the demographic window by investing in education, skills development, and job opportunities. In conclusion, the President CASS stressed that investment in human capital should be a long-term strategic objective requiring collective effort.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Demographic Transition

- By 2100, the global population is projected to reach 10 billion with developed nations facing ageing populations and developing nations dealing with youth bulge.
- Despite being the 5th most-populous country, Pakistan's standing on global economic and productivity ladders is quite low with only a 0.4 percent share in global GDP.
- With over 60% of Pakistan's population under thirty, the demographic window of opportunity will remain open for 30–40 years and calls for action before it is lost.

Human Development Crisis

- Despite having the 6th largest workforce, Pakistan ranks 177th in terms of GDP per capita and 161st in the Human Development Index ranking.
- Pakistan's Human Capital Index value of 0.41 is lower than the South Asian average of 0.48, and closer to Sub-Saharan Africa's average of 0.40.
- Widespread stunting and malnutrition impair cognitive abilities and contribute to a broader human capital crisis.

Flawed Education System

- Nearly 23 million children are out of school.
- The current education and training ecosystem is unable to impart skills needed for a modern workforce.
- The input-driven monitoring system is unable to monitor and assess learning outcomes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Skill Mismatch

- Pakistan's largely illiterate and unskilled youth lack the competitiveness and productivity demanded by the global economy.
- The skill gap is broadening with every passing day as a result of technological breakthroughs, e.g., in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- The skill mismatch hinders foreign companies and yields an unemployable, unproductive workforce.

Disconnect from GVCs

- Pakistan's economy is inward-looking and lacks integration with global value chains (GVCs).
- Countries with large labour surpluses and low wages have a high potential for creating jobs through GVC integration.
- Long-term planning, governance reforms, and enhanced productivity are vital for human capital development and GVC integration.

Low Workforce Participation

- Pakistan's labour force participation stands at approximately 55%, with 74% women unable to work outside their homes, leaving a large portion of the workforce unutilised.
- Failure to harness the youth's potential can lead to social evils, unemployment, and involvement in criminal activities.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Micro-Level Focus for Economic Security

Address micro-level challenges to resolve macro-level imbalances, which will safeguard long-term economic security.

2 Outward Looking Economy

Transform Pakistan into an export-oriented economy by investing in education, skill development, and talent acquisition to cultivate a capable workforce that propels economic growth.

3 Competitiveness & Productivity

Promote competitiveness and productivity through investments in talent, technology, and skill development to achieve diversification and competitive advantages.

4 Reimagine the Education System

Transform Pakistan into an export-oriented economy by investing in education, skill development, and talent acquisition to cultivate a capable workforce that propels economic growth.

5 Address Stunting and Malnutrition

Unlock the potential of the demographic divided by addressing stunting and malnutrition in children for cognitive and physical development.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

6 Technological Innovation & Research

Prioritise technological innovation by focusing on research, engineering, intellectual capital, and international collaboration.

7 Women's Active Participation

Promote women's active participation in the economy to enhance their participation rate, which can have a US \$27 billion impact on Pakistan's GDP.

8 Certification for Overseas Placement

Provide technical training to matriculation graduates for overseas placements, which could generate potential remittances of up to US \$6.8 billion.

9 Re-skill University Graduates

Train and enhance the IT and coding skills of university graduates to boost IT exports and reduce the current account deficit by US \$9.5 billion.

10 Urban Clusters for Jobs

Emphasise upon city clusters as growth engines for job creation, knowledge, and the service economy as cities drive economic growth and foster agglomeration economies.

11 Character Building & Civic Training

Invest in the youth via education, skills, character building, and civic training.

DELIBERATIONS BY THE SPEAKERS

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Dr Ghulam Mohey-ud-din

Director Economic Affairs, CASS, Lahore

In his introductory remarks, Dr Ghulam Mohey-ud-din brought attention to the fact that although Pakistan has the fifth-largest population and sixth-largest workforce in the world, its Human Capital Index value is extremely low.

"According to the UNDP's National Human Development Report 2017, more than 64 percent of the population is under the age of 30."

However, this large pool of youth in Pakistan is mostly illiterate and unskilled. He further highlighted that, as per UNICEF, an astounding 22.8 million children are out of school in Pakistan. He also stressed that low labour force participation is another major issue that needs to be given attention to.

"Around three-quarters of working-age females are out of the workforce."

Harnessing Resources for Economic Security

Dr Mohey-ud-din was of the view that economic security and national security are closely linked. To ensure economic security, Pakistan must harness its existing resources and endowments, such as its people, land, and waterways. Of

these three, people are the most valuable and essential resource to be leveraged first.

Human Capital Formation and Reimagining Education System

The speaker was of the view that achieving economic security required leveraging the potential of the young population through human capital formation, imparting marketable skills, and improving women's participation in the workforce. He further added that Pakistan's education system also needed to be reimagined to focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and future technologies.

LEVERAGING THE HUMAN POTENTIAL OF PAKISTAN FOR ECONOMIC SECURITY

Dr Salman Shah

Former Finance Minister of Pakistan

The Micro Nature of Economic Challenges

Dr Salman Shah initiated his talk by shedding light on the prevailing economic challenges in Pakistan. He highlighted the predominant focus on macro level issues such as the current account deficit and Pakistan's relationship with the IMF. However, he emphasised that:

"The real challenge lies at the micro level, where the consequences of mismanagement become evident at the macro level."

He stressed that the chaos created at the micro level is manifesting in macroeconomic imbalances, highlighting the crucial need to address micro level challenges for long-term economic security of the nation.

Transformation to an Outward-looking Economy

Dr Shah posed a crucial question as to what goals should be set for the economy. A situational analysis of the economy presented by him made clear that:

"Pakistan's economy is inward-looking and lacks productive linkages with the global value chains."

He highlighted that local production primarily caters to domestic consumption, while a heavy reliance on imports,

including energy, technology, and raw materials further exacerbates the issue. This unsustainable dependence on imports, coupled with an inward-looking economic approach, has severely compromised Pakistan's economic position. The outcome is that Pakistan has become extremely dependent upon external support for survival, which always comes with strings attached. Dr Shah made the point that the economic reality of Pakistan can only be changed by focusing on strengthening the country's economy as an outward-looking nation.

"The proposed solution lies in transforming Pakistan into an export-oriented, outward-looking economy."

Fostering Skills for Competitiveness and Productivity

The speaker pointed out that the transformation process begins with fostering a culture of global competitiveness, which entails a high level of productivity and efficiency. Dr Shah emphasised the importance of competing on a global scale in terms of costs, productivity, and export diversification.

"Achieving diversification requires considering geographical locations and leveraging the micro level factors within them."

Pakistan's economy has fallen behind similar emerging and developing nations on a variety of global transformation indexes. These elements include talent, technology, skills, and competitive advantages. Dr Shah emphasised that the economic security framework is contingent upon the capacities and participation of individuals at the grassroots level.

Strategic Planning and Reforms for Human Capital Formation

Dr Shah highlighted the Punjab Spatial Strategy, which was designed in 2017 with World Bank technical assistance, as a case study and business plan for Punjab. This focus of the plan was to:

"Utilise young people's potential and integrate them into the national economic framework."

The initiative's goals included resource optimisation, long-term strategic planning, identifying economic growth corridors, hubs, and gateways, improving resource efficiency, deregulation, governance changes, and increasing productivity and competitiveness. Dr Shah stressed upon structurally aligning economic activity to catch up with nations with similar economic origins, such as South Korea and China. He also underlined the importance of Pakistan's water economy, especially in Punjab, where irrigation is a transformational engine.

Structural Transformation

The structure and development of Pakistan's economy were discussed in detail by the speaker. The speaker shared data which showed a slight transition in the economy towards the urbanisation economy, but agriculture still maintained its dominance. Dr Shah highlighted the ongoing structural transformation in Punjab, with certain locations transitioning from agrarian to industrialised sectors. This division created both rural and urban economies, but our economy could not carry out a structural transformation, as China's economy did.

"In the past, Pakistan's per capita income was US \$470, and China's was US \$490. In twenty years, China's per capita income multiplied 17 times to reach US \$8,260. In the same period, Pakistan's per capita income multiplied by three times only to reach US \$1,510, because we could not transform."

Capitalising on Youth to Become a Global Factory

Dr Shah emphasised the importance of factors such as demography, geography, and technology in attaining competitive advantages through improved governance, investment, and institutional frameworks.

"Pakistan needs to capitalise on the youth bulge, considering the population's role in creating job opportunities."

Additionally, he raised the question of whether Pakistan can become the next factory of the world, akin to China. A key theme of his talk revolved around highlighting the importance of channelling economic activity and the demographic dividend to join global value chains.

Conclusion

Dr Shah emphasised the need to develop human capital by investing in comprehensive education and skill development programs. The speaker shared his insight that meaningful transition would need to incorporate location-based development strategies by identifying economic growth corridors and nodes along with governance, and regulatory reforms.

Key Takeaways

- a) Micro-level challenges must be addressed for long-term economic security. The consequences of mismanagement at the micro-level becomes evident at the macro-level.
- b) Transformation towards an outward-looking economy is essential. Pakistan's economy is currently inward-looking and lacks productive links with the rest of the world.
- c) Fostering skills for competitiveness and productivity is crucial. To compete globally, Pakistan must focus on enhancing productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness. It requires investment in talent, technology, skills development, and leveraging micro-level factors to achieve diversification and geographic advantages.
- d) Strategic planning and reforms are needed for human capital formation. Long-term strategic planning, resource optimisation, governance reforms, and productivity improvement are essential for human capital development.
- e) Capitalising on the youth population can make Pakistan the factory of the world. Effectively utilising economic opportunities and the demographic dividend will be crucial for Pakistan's future growth and development.

**HUMAN CAPITAL FORMATION: A BUILDING
BLOCK FOR PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY**

Mr Nadir Salar Qureshi

Chief Investment Officer, Engro Corporation

Pakistan's Global Standing

Mr Nadir Salar Qureshi pointed out that Pakistan is the fifth largest country in terms of population, but its share in global GDP is merely 0.4 percent. He emphasised the need to think about what Pakistan can offer to the world. The challenge that lies ahead is the conversion of its youth bulge into a youth dividend to bring about economic discipline.

"We stand nowhere in the global economy; the important question to think about is what we can offer to the world."

The Potential of the Agriculture & Textile Sectors

Mr Qureshi questioned the possibility of making Pakistan the factory of the world in the short-term due to the immense capital required. He acknowledged that agriculture is a sector where there is a level of inherent advantage. However, despite having a vast irrigation network and fertile land, Pakistan's agricultural productivity is still low compared to the rest of the world. He indicated that Pakistan's strategic advantage within the context of global competition can also be developed on the basis of its geographic advantage in terms of agricultural production and its potential to achieve a surplus beyond domestic consumption for export.

"Punjab used to be the granary of Asia, and it used to feed Asia during the British rule."

He stressed that there is tremendous headroom for improvement. Pakistan's per acre yields are on average very low and improving yields to the level of neighbouring country's current average could garner several billion dollars' worth of exports.

According to Mr Qureshi, the textile sector's importance is perhaps over-estimated. He stressed that the Pakistan textile industry contributes less than two percent of total global exports which makes it almost irrelevant in the global context despite the very significant government support the sector gets. The industry needs to make significant progress and should be incentivised to be far more value-added than it is today.

Women Inclusion in the Labour Force

Mr Qureshi pointed out that the integration of women into the workforce offers a meaningful solution to Pakistan's economic woes. According to the speaker, with the population divided almost evenly, females should have proportional representation in employment.

As stated by the speaker, currently, the total potential female workforce stands at 79 million, with only 17 million currently employed. There is a requirement of doubling women's employment to around 34 million to reap the economic benefits. He stressed that a social shift towards an efficient and effective work ethic is necessary to ensure a valuable contribution to the economy and address the gaping current account deficit (CAD).

"Achieving an incremental target of US \$1400 per working woman can lead to annual GDP growth of US \$27 billion."

He cited the unprecedented social transformation that has occurred in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which was historically far more conservative than Pakistan. It is now rapidly transforming with women actively participating in every walk of professional life.

Technical Certification for Matriculates

The speaker shared dismal statistics on the literacy rate. Out of 124 million school-going age children, only 52 million are enrolled. The remaining 72 million are out-of-school.

"Pakistan can further enhance its dollarized revenues by US \$8.6 billion by providing technical training to just 20% of its matriculates, enabling them to secure placements abroad."

He stated that 4.40 million students are enrolled annually, but 75 percent, amounting to 3.30 million, pass the exam. If only 20 percent of these can be trained with certification for in-demand technical skills e.g., forklift driver, plumber, or electrician, enabling them to earn AED 4,000 per month job in the Gulf, annual revenue per technical professional can reach USD \$13,000. This will register an increment of US \$8.6 billion in potential annual dollar remittance.

Tapping the Potential of the IT Sector

Mr Qureshi added that the services industry, particularly IT-related sectors, is under-invested in terms of export-oriented potential and catering to the youth. To address this,

investment and training must be imparted, and the vast human resource potential can be tapped with the right policy focus. A case study of a neighbouring country shows that their major source of export earnings is IT-related services.

"Pakistan can solve its current account deficit (CAD) by simply training 20 percent of our university graduates to become IT professionals."

He mentioned that currently 1.25 million students are enrolled in universities. Of these, 0.94 million students graduate every year, assuming a 75 percent pass rate. He recommended that if 20 percent, i.e., 0.19 million, are provided with IT coding skills, they can generate US \$9.5 billion in annual incremental IT export potential.

His proposed approach was to take commerce and arts graduates, enable them to utilise free online training tools available from the best universities in the world to self-train and get basic programming and coding skills to be able to earn up to US \$50,000 per year while sitting in Pakistan.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Mr Qureshi pointed out that Pakistan has the potential to enhance its global standing and economic growth by harnessing its young population, focusing on skills related to IT and coding, promoting women's inclusion in the labour force, and providing technical certification to matriculates. Mr. Qureshi was of the view that the adoption of these strategies can help address the challenge of current account deficit in Pakistan.

Key Takeaways

- a) Pakistan's population is the 5th largest globally, but its share in global GDP is only 0.4 percent, highlighting the need to determine what Pakistan can offer to the world.
- b) Utilising the young population is crucial to economic development and enhancing the relevance of Pakistan in the global economy.
- c) Agriculture and value-added textile sectors have some potential for growth and present an opportunity for Pakistan to gain a major share in exports.
- d) Inclusion of women in the labour force can significantly impact Pakistan's economy; just doubling the women's participation rate can add US \$27 billion to the GDP.
- e) Providing technical training to matriculates can generate significant revenues of US\$ 6.8 billion by enabling their placements abroad.
- f) Training a portion of university graduates in IT coding skills can help address Pakistan's current account deficit and generate substantial IT export potential of around US \$9.5 billion.

REIMAGINING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM: ADAPTING TO THE FUTURE

Mr Mosharraf Zaidi

Chief Executive Officer, Tabadlab

Youth as an Opportunity and a Challenge

Mr Mosharraf Zaidi emphatically stated that Pakistan is in the throes of a severe human capital crisis which is generating a plethora of new issues and worsening existing ones. In his view, Pakistan's economic woes were intertwined with its demographic challenges, mismanagement, lack of adequate policymaking, and failing to address deep structural issues prevalent in Pakistani society.

He provided a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities that the youth face in the country. He emphasised the need for adopting a problem-solving approach by adopting structural changes. He emphasised:

"Focus on nurturing and developing the potential of the youth to ensure a prosperous future and addressing the crises of stunting, malnutrition, and cognitive development to unlock the demographic dividend."

Long-term Planning for Holistic Solutions

Mr Zaidi shared his concerns about the state of the nation and stressed the urgency of taking action. He stated that the state cannot afford to overlook the complex, overlapping issues it is facing. However, the speaker urged, it is also

crucial to recognise that transformative change does not occur overnight.

"There is a need to realise that quick fixes can only solve surface-level issues, but for deep-rooted problems, they are not a cure. Especially in the case of Pakistan, which is a diverse and complex society,"

He quoted the example of Saudi Arabia, saying that Pakistan can draw inspiration from the gradual evolution of Saudi Arabia. It seemed as if the country seemingly transformed in a short span of three years, yet the process was a long one. The challenges Pakistan encounters now are part of the growing pains of becoming a great nation. He was optimistic in his view when he stated that by embracing these difficulties, the state can lay the foundation to become a hub of economic growth and human capital by 2047.

He highlighted the country's potential to become a demographic unicorn due to its large proportion of young people. He was of the view that in terms of an abundance of youth, Nigeria was among the few countries that can compete with Pakistan.

Stunting and Malnutrition: A Neglected Dimension

"The state needs to realise that 40% of the population is suffering from a cognitive impairment called stunting, which affects intellectual capacity."

The speaker emphasised the importance of consistent policies across multiple governments and a clear understanding of the pressing concerns related to human

capital. Pakistan's massive human capital crisis extends far beyond illiteracy and out-of-school children. It is not the only issue at hand but rather part of multiple, interconnected crises that require urgent attention.

Data-driven decision-making and accountability

The speaker also highlighted issues with the education system, citing the lack of data on learning outcomes in an input-oriented system. He emphasised the government's responsibility in addressing these challenges and questioned the effectiveness of private sector involvement.

"The negative impact of political intervention in the education system, particularly in terms of incentivising the hiring of low-educated teachers, is one of the many factors that cannot be ignored."

Conclusion

Overall, the speaker provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities that Pakistani youth face. He highlighted that Pakistan is going through a severe human capital crisis. He further added that the problem of stunted and malnourished children is crucial since it affects the intellectual capacity of the child and is closely linked with broader human development crisis. Mr. Zaidi asked an outcome focussed, and data-driven education monitoring mechanism instead of existing input driven system.

Key Takeaways

- a) Adopt a problem-solving approach and focus on practical solutions for the challenges and opportunities faced by the youth. Long-term planning is necessary for transformative change, and quick fixes only address surface-level issues.
- b) Nurturing and developing the potential of the youth is essential for a prosperous future and unlocking the demographic dividend.
- c) Pakistan has the potential to become a demographic unicorn with its young population. Embrace the growing pains of becoming a great nation and lay the foundation for economic growth and human capital development by 2047.
- d) Addressing stunting and malnutrition is critical, as they affect intellectual capacity and are part of a wider human capital crisis.
- e) Consistent policies, data-driven decision-making, and accountability are essential to addressing the education system's challenges and improving outcomes.
- f) Political intervention in the education system and the hiring of low-educated teachers have negative impacts and should be addressed.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd)

President, CASS, Lahore

Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President CASS Lahore, who chaired the seminar, started his discussion by quoting the Greek philosopher, Aristotle:

"The state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life."

Growing Youth Bulge: Global and National Perspective

The President CASS pointed out that the world's population is currently eight billion and is projected to reach 10 billion by 2100.

"As the population began to grow exponentially, many countries began to examine the impact of population size on overall development."

Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd) outlined that many developed countries have completed their demographic transition from high birth rates and high death rates to lower birth and death rates, but many developing countries are in a situation where mortality is declining but fertility still remains high, leading to a large, growing population and all its consequences. Pakistan falls in this latter category. He further highlighted that life expectancy in the country has

increased from 45 years in 1960 to 66 years in 2020, leading to an exponential growth in population.

High Fertility Rates and Low Human Development

Air Marshal Asim Suleiman emphasised that even if replacement level fertility is achieved today, population growth momentum will ensure that the numbers will keep growing for another two decades. A high number of young people in our country right now will go through childbearing years. The result of this huge population is evident, and no quantity of resources is ever going to be enough.

"Pakistan is ranked 177th in terms of GDP per capita in purchasing power parity (PPP) and 161st on the Human Development Index (HDI)."

As per 2022 data, Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two south Asian countries in the low human development categories; all others are now in the medium development category.

Youth Bulge and Need of Demand-driven Skills

The President CASS also observed that the population pyramid of Pakistan is like an equilateral triangle with a wide base representing children and a narrow top representing the elderly. He emphasised that in the middle of the age pyramid are the youth and the middle-aged, who are the earning class, and 50 percent of them are females.

"Most women are not involved in any money-earning activity; 74 percent of them don't work outside their home."

The developed world has opened up its immigration programmes for skilled youth, but there is a lack of skills that are in-demand in foreign countries. This skill mismatch is also a barrier for foreign companies trying to expand their operations in developing countries as they struggle to locate qualified workers. As technology takes hold, it also means traditional job losses due to automation, which could lead to widespread unemployment. He also highlighted that Pakistan's National Security Policy (NSP) 2022 identifies human and economic security as the key pillars of national security.

Digital Transformation for a Global Competitiveness

The President CASS pointed out the need to focus on building a globally competitive workforce and preparing it for digital transformation to ensure human and economic security. He emphasised aiming for technological innovation by focusing on research, science, engineering, intellectual capital, and international research collaboration. He cautioned that failure to harness this resource can lead to anarchy, with huge numbers of uneducated, unemployed, and dissatisfied youth with no hope for a better life.

"It is the duty of every government to harness the great potential that our youth holds, keeping in mind that the demographic window of opportunity only opens for 30–40 years."

Conclusion

Air Marshal Asim Suleiman concluded that Pakistan needs to focus on human capital development, education, and skills development to create job opportunities for the youth.

Harnessing the Potential of the Young Population

Technological innovation, research, and international collaboration are also needed to keep up with the changing labour market. He highlighted that Pakistan's youth have immense potential but lack the skills demanded globally. This skill mismatch is a barrier for foreign companies and can lead to widespread unemployment. He was of the view that Pakistan must act timely to utilise the opportunity of transforming youth bulge into youth dividend.

In conclusion, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman emphasised that investment in human capital should be a long-term strategic objective requiring collective efforts.

Key Takeaways

- a) The world's population is growing exponentially, with projected growth from eight billion to 10 billion by 2100. Developed economies prioritise human capital development in their overall strategies, but developing countries face challenges due to high fertility rates.
- b) Despite having a large labour force, Pakistan ranks low in terms of GDP per capita and in its standing on the Human Development Index.
- c) Pakistan's youth have immense potential but lack the necessary skills demanded abroad. Skill mismatch is a barrier for foreign companies and can lead to widespread unemployment.
- d) It is crucial to invest in youth through education, skills, job opportunities, character building, and civic training, as highlighted by the National Security Policy 2022.
- e) Failure to harness the youth's potential can lead to social evils, unemployment, and involvement in criminal activities.
- f) The demographic window of opportunity, where the proportion of the working-age population is prominent, is open for 30–40 years and should be harnessed through investment in human capital.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SESSION

Question: The economic ratings of Korea, China, and Pakistan differ significantly when compared. What factors have contributed to Pakistan's current low position, and what measures can be taken to enhance its economic standing?

Ans: Dr Salman Shah responded that Pakistan's journey has encountered three inflexion points that have shaped the current state of affairs.

The first inflexion point occurred after the separation of East Pakistan, when the decision to nationalise industries led to the demise of producers and the erosion of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This move placed the national productive system in the hands of the bureaucracy, which lacked the necessary training for such a role. Furthermore, even in the agricultural sector, where private enterprise could have thrived, the bureaucracy remained intact, impeding progress. The second turning point emerged with the collapse of the USSR and the advent of a new world order, which emphasised market forces as drivers of economic growth.

However, Pakistan's participation in this globalised environment was limited, and the crucial step of deregulation was overlooked. Consequently, the state regained control over the economy, hindering its advancement.

The third inflexion point is Pakistan's involvement in external conflicts without considering long-term repercussions, which diverted attention from essential

domestic reforms. Focusing on serving external interests, such as the conflict with the USSR and the war on terror took precedence over addressing internal structural issues. This lack of focus on crucial reforms, including effective privatisation, market liberalisation, and deregulation, has impeded economic progress. Reliance on temporary IMF support without addressing fundamental challenges is an unsustainable approach.

While summarising his response, Dr Shah argued that poor energy policy choices in the early 1990s and the bureaucracy's involvement in economic management have contributed to the current situation. He stressed that to improve the situation, a reassessment of priorities and strategic decision-making is necessary, including implementing effective privatisation plans, dismantling bureaucratic barriers, promoting deregulation, and prioritising energy independence.

Question: The Devolution Plan under Musharraf Government brought a revolution and led to the advancement in terms of building proper sanitation, clean water provision facilities, paved roads as well as high schools and colleges in villages. However, since inception, we have consistently witnessed governance issues. Article 32 and 140A directs us to establish Local Governments (LGs). Will the existence of LGs solve our issues, problems, and challenges?

Ans: Dr Salman Shah, while responding to the query, acknowledged the significance of local governance as it plays a crucial role in decision-making at the grassroots level. He acknowledged that although General Musharraf's

devolution plan was ambitious, there was still room for further improvement. The planning process remained centralised, and issues regarding tax rates and collection were not addressed properly. The provision and management of essential services such as the water supply and sanitation were still pending due to the issues in the local government system. Nonetheless, it is essential to focus on local-level development, considering Punjab's 36 districts, each of which has the potential to contribute to economic growth.

Dr Shah added that the residents of these districts can provide valuable insights into issues impacting them due to their closer proximity of those issues. He further described that during the examination of export-oriented production at the local level, Wazirabad's exports were valued at US \$150 million. The Gujranwala Division had significant exports of swords used in Hollywood movies, in addition to cutlery. However, certain issues were raised during the face-to-face meetings in Wazirabad, such as the lack of ISO certifications and challenges related to district management, and facilitation for visits by foreign investors.

Dr Shah emphasised that such tasks cannot be accomplished from a remote location like Lahore. It is crucial to establish an effective system, ensure quality control, and implement a monitoring mechanism.

Mr Mosharraf Zaidi also responded to the question and mentioned his involvement with various LGs as part of his assignment with the National Reconstruction Bureau. He was of the view that in terms of planning, the design of the LG system was satisfactory, but finance and planning still required further discussions.

He stated that the current Secretary of Finance remained as Executive District Officer (EDO) Finance and Planning (F&P), and the Secretary of Education also remained as EDO (F&P), which positively impacted the functioning of the province where they were posted. During General Musharraf's era, new politicians, including industrial families, who were not very politically active 25 years ago, also became part of the political fabric. New individuals entered the field of politics, bringing fresh perspectives.

Mr Zaidi highlighted that the central government treated provinces in a manner that allowed the allies of the centre to influence financial decisions. Within the bureaucracy, competent officers received training as non-dissenting PAS officers during their postings as EDOs or DCOs. Magistrates and DCs used to holding significant power had to share that responsibility with mayors. Mr Zaidi described Shah Mahmood Qureshi's tenure as mayor as one example. This experience prepared civil servants to deal with politicians when they assumed the role of provincial secretaries. He stressed that the local government needs to be connected with local administration and other stakeholders.

Question: Education is a fundamental aspect that Pakistan as a society lacks, and had it been addressed years ago, it would have contributed to the country's strength today. Considering the significance of educational institutions, why is madrassah education ignored and this facility not fully utilised?

Ans: Dr Salman Shah, responding to the query, stated that Pakistan's challenge extends beyond basic education, and

the main issue lies in a dysfunctional system which has evolved without a clear vision or goal. It needs to change its organisational structure to achieve the desired outcomes but has yet to tackle the question of providing meaningful output. He emphasised that the system lacks focus and effective entities to deliver quality education. To emerge from this predicament, the state must establish a clear system that encompasses both the worst and the best educational institutions. Referring to successful cases, Dr Shah stated that China was able to achieve massive transformation in just 30 years, demonstrating the importance of having a clear roadmap and capable individuals to manage inputs and outputs.

Mr Mosharraf Zaidi responded to the question by highlighting that the state only engages with certain elements of society when they become issues. He continued by emphasising the need for a social contract between the elite and non-elite, where the elite should not perceive the non-elite as a threat but actively engage with them. When it comes to *madrassahs*, the state should approach them not through a problematic lens but as potential instruments for societal development, where science can play a role. Over the last few decades, *madrassahs* have learned to adapt, and we should view them as opportunities rather than problems.

Mr Nadir Salar said that education is important but not the root cause of all problems. Quoting the example of Sri Lanka, he said that even though Sri Lanka had a very high literacy rate, the country still defaulted and would take generations to recover. He added that he agreed with other panellists that the education and literacy rates are vital for

long-term health, longevity, productivity, and competitiveness of a nation. He emphasised that literacy is necessary but not a sufficient condition for economic development. Other than education, well-designed systems, long-term planning, strategic management, and capable people and institutions are needed to achieve results.

Question: War is too serious business to be left to Generals; similarly, the economy is too serious to be left to economists only. In terms of economic, societal, and cultural transformation, we are operating in a vacuum. How will transformation happen? Will visionary leadership emerge? Where do you see us in the next 25 years?

Ans: Dr Salman Shah responded to the question and stated that powerful leadership with clear ideas can still go wrong. In China, the organisational system underwent a complete revamp and things improved after Deng Xiaoping. He emphasised that managing the transformation from a rural to an urban economy is crucial to avoiding chaos and social problems.

Dr Shah cited the example of the Punjab Government establishing Working Women's Hostels (WWHs), as a lack of proper accommodation makes it difficult for women to migrate and travel. Cultural changes occur with facilitation, and both public-private partnership (PPP) and the private sector must invest in this aspect. In many cases, women are not able to participate due to cultural factors, such as the placement of industrial zones outside cities. He further added that in Dhaka, there are garment factories in every building. Cultural values encompass infrastructure, effective management, and focus.

Dr Shah highlighted that transformation requires careful planning and facilitation. The ordinary citizen should participate as a stakeholder, which is why local government management is essential. Innovation is possible everywhere and at all levels, but barriers such as governance, infrastructure, and cultural issues can be overcome.

Mr Nadir Salar Qureshi mentioned that “leadership matters” and gave the example of Saudi Arabia. According to Mr Salar, a leader establishes policies and ensures their enforcement. Bangladesh is not less corrupt or more competent and has also experienced martial law and weak institutions. Yet, they have witnessed an IT revolution and boosted exports. Mr Qureshi highlighted that in the case of Bangladesh, the implemented policy framework maintained continuity. Administrative preferences change only with changes in policy.

He further added that policies for IT and textile support in Bangladesh were not altered. The focus was on consistency of policy despite political volatility. Frequent regime changes which bring policy changes can have an adverse impact.

However, the question remains: Why is there so little investment? The idea is to invest money where it yields the best returns. Exploring the reasons of economic stagnation despite a concerned leadership, he gave the example of the real estate sector. It attracts enormous investment because it offers very attractive returns with taxation loopholes, discouraging investment in other sectors. Mr Qureshi pointed out that it is a flawed policy that results in the largest misallocation of funds in the entire investment space in Pakistan.

Similarly, the energy sector policy is flawed and relies on imported fuel. Over the past 30 years, successive governments have built an edifice without correcting these issues. Every textile group is involved in the power business to avoid blockades or disruptions in factories which negatively impact foreign buyers and exports. They are also given sovereign guarantees of dollar-denominated ROI (Return on Investment). It is the simplest business in the world, but it suffers from bad policy. Why aren't textile spinning companies conglomerates like Engro? Long-term planning, execution, and investment can help mitigate the repercussions of bad policies.

Summing up his argument, Mr Qureshi emphasised that good policies established beyond political spectrums have endurance and guide us in the right direction. Political parties should come together to decide and formulate a charter for the economy, regardless of the election outcome. Investment slows down one year before an election and takes six months to two years to regain momentum. Policy certainty enables the business community to invest as they are assured that regardless of changes in political leadership, national priorities will remain constant, and the investments will continue to grow regardless of the government in power.

Dr Salman Shah further added that the problem lies in the political crisis that corrodes the economy. The fact that a bond worth 100 dollars equals 34 rupees and is still not being purchased reflects an undesirable economic reality. Ultimately, it's not just the economic data but also the political uncertainty that worsens the investment climate.

ANNEXURES

I - PROFILES OF SPEAKERS

Dr. Salman Shah

Former Finance Minister

Dr Salman Shah is the former Finance Minister of Pakistan. He has also served as an advisor to the Chief Minister of Punjab on Economic Affairs and Planning & Development.

He is a Lahore-based economist and holds a PhD in finance and economics from Indiana University. He has 16 years of teaching experience at institutions such as the University of Michigan, Indiana University, the University of Toronto, and Lahore University



of Management Sciences. During his time in charge of Pakistan's finance ministry (2004–2008), Pakistan's economy registered an average of 7 percent GDP growth per annum, among the highest in the world.

Dr Shah has served in various positions, such as an economic consultant to different Pakistani governments and Chairman of the Privatisation Commission during the tenure of the caretaker government. He has served as a member of the Board of Directors at Pakistan International Airlines, Central Board of Directors at the State Bank of Pakistan.

Mr Nadir Salar Qureshi

Chief investment officer, Engro Corporation

Mr Nadir Salar Qureshi is the Chief Investment Officer of Engro Corporation. He joined Engro as Chief Strategy Officer in March 2017, and subsequently stewarded the group's flagship listed enterprise, Engro Fertilizers, from 2019 to 2022 as CEO.



He has completed his MBA from Harvard Business School and his bachelor's and master's degrees in nuclear engineering from MIT. Mr Qureshi brings with him expertise in multiple sectors across the GCC, Turkey, Australia, India, ASEAN, and the EU. He is also experienced in consulting, private equity, and finance.

Mr Qureshi began his career with Engro Chemical Pakistan Limited as a business analyst and then moved on to organisations such as Hub Power Company, Bain & Company, Carrier Corporation, Abraaj Capital, and Makara Capital in Singapore.

He is a director on the boards of Engro Energy Limited, Engro Polymer & Chemicals Limited, and Chairman Engro Vopak Terminal Limited.

Mr Mosharraf Zaidi

Chief Executive Officer, Tabadlab

Mr Mosharraf Zaidi is the co-founder and CEO of Tabadlab, which is a think tank and policy advisory firm that helps leaders in the public, private, and non-profit sectors identify and solve problems related to economics, politics, and society.

Mr Zaidi has over two decades of experience in analysing and shaping policy in complex political environments. He has spearheaded research, analysis, and delivery for a wide array of reform interventions in Pakistan and



Afghanistan, as well as in the South Asia region. His work intersects with political economy, strategic communications, and change management.

Mr Zaidi was Governance Adviser for the UK Government's FCDO from 2004 through 2008, and improved public financial management in the Punjab province.

He served as principal policy advisor at Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2011 to 2013, where he worked in crisis diplomacy and established the Public Diplomacy division. From 2013 through 2018, he led the Alif Ailaan campaign for education in Pakistan. Mr Zaidi joined Albright Stonebridge as a senior adviser in March 2021.

Air Marshal Asim Suleiman

President, CASS Lahore

Air Marshal Asim Suleiman graduated from the PAF Academy in 1978 and has flown a wide assortment of fighter aircraft from the PAF's inventory during his flying career.

Air Marshal Asim Suleiman is a graduate of the National Defence University, Islamabad, and the Defence Services and Staff College, Dhaka. He holds a master's degree in defence and strategic studies from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.



He has been a part of several operational and training squadrons, including the coveted Combat Commanders' School, as an instructor. His command assignments include command of a combat squadron and an operational base.

He served as an air adviser at the Pakistan High Commission in India. His numerous staff appointments include serving as Staff Officer in different capacities for three Chiefs of the Air Staff: DG, Air Intelligence, DCAS (Support), and DCAS (Administration). After retirement, he served as DG, Civil Aviation Authority of Pakistan. He was also nominated as Chairman of the PIA. Air Marshal Asim Suleiman is a recipient of the HIM and SIM, SBt and the Imtiaz Sanad.

Dr Ghulam Mohey-ud-din

Director Economic Affairs, CASS Lahore

Dr Mohey-ud-din has a doctorate in Economics from Government College University, Lahore.

His diverse experience encompasses working with academia as well as the public and private sectors including the Government of Pakistan, the Government of Punjab, The Urban Unit, Meinhardt Group, and Bahria University Lahore, among others.



Throughout his career, Dr Mohey-ud-din has been part of various projects with the World Bank, UNDP, GIZ, and FCDO in various capacities. He has published one book, 15 peer-reviewed journal articles, 10 technical reports, and three conference papers.

II – PRESS RELEASE

The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, is a specialist think tank focused on aerospace and security matters and issues of significance for Pakistan. On May 17, a seminar on “Harnessing the Potential of Young Population: A Path to Economic Security” was hosted at CASS Lahore.

The event featured a diverse panel of speakers with substantial experience across the public, private, development, and corporate sectors.



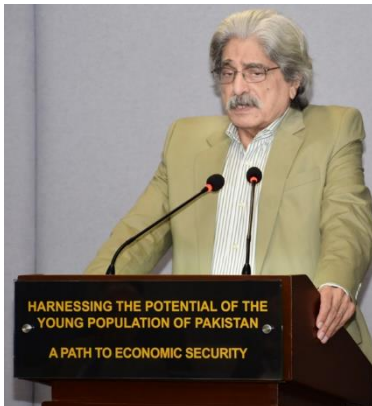
From Left to Right: Dr Ghulam Mohey-ud-din, Mr Mosharraf Zaidi, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (Training) Air Marshal Zulfiqar Ahmad Qureshi, President CASS Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), Dr Salman Shah, and Mr Nadir Salar Qureshi.

The panel of speakers included Dr Salman Shah, former Finance Minister of Pakistan; Mr Nadir Salar Quershi, Chief Investment Officer, Engro Corporation; and Mr Mosharraf Zaidi, Chief Executive Officer, Tabadlab.

In his opening remarks, **Dr Ghulam Mohey-ud-din** pointed out that despite being among the most populous nations of the world, Pakistan's human capital rating needs much improvement. He rounded off his opening remarks by stating that leveraging the power of the young population via human capital formation, marketable skills, and increased women's participation in the workforce may help secure economic security.



Dr Salman Shah emphasised that the main difficulty in Pakistan lies at the micro level, where the effects of mismanagement become apparent at the macro level. This is evident from the current account deficit and Pakistan's relationship with the IMF and other lenders.



He recommended transitioning the economic dynamic of Pakistan to an outward-looking one. This could be done by boosting competitiveness, productivity, skills, implementing strategic planning, and human capital creation reforms. He stressed upon the need to capitalise on the youth bulge and harness economic activities and the demographic dividend to become the next global factory.

Mr Nadir Salar Qureshi addressed the issue of Pakistan's global position, acknowledging its low share in global GDP

Post Seminar Report

despite being the fifth-largest country by population. He stressed the need to identify Pakistan's value offerings to the world and tap into its young population. Sectors like agriculture, textiles, and IT were highlighted as having significant potential for growth and export expansion.

Mr Qureshi emphasised the positive impact of women's inclusion in the labour force and proposed technical training for matriculation and university graduates to generate substantial revenue, address the current account deficit, and boost Pakistan's global standing. These strategies, if implemented, can lead to economic growth in Pakistan.



Discussing the challenges and opportunities faced by Pakistani youth in terms of economic input, **Mr Mosharraf Zaidi** He pointed out that addressing stunting and malnutrition is critical, as they affect intellectual capacity and are part of a larger human capital crisis. He was of the view that structural changes in the education system fall within the government's ambit, but private sector participation can also be very helpful. He urged national pride, as well as the political and military leadership to prioritise these concerns.



Harnessing the Potential of the Young Population

While concluding the seminar and extending the vote of thanks, **President CASS Lahore, Air Marshal Asim**



Suleiman (Retd), stated that the world's population is now eight billion and is expected to reach 10 billion by 2100. He said, "It is important for our policy makers to realise that time and tide wait for no one. They must realise the importance of this Demographic Window." He further added,

"Investment in human capital can transform our economy. It must be taken as a long term national strategic objective which should be achieved by the collective efforts of key stakeholders."

The President CASS also emphasised on the importance of building a globally competitive workforce and preparing it for digital transformation to ensure human and economic security. The President CASS concluded his remarks with a vote of thanks for the panel of speakers and the participants.

The seminar was attended by people from all walks of life, including the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, Training (DCAS-T) Air Marshal Zulfiqar Ahmad Qureshi, senior serving and retired PAF officers, academicians from different universities, and representatives from local think tanks.

III – MEDIA COVERAGE



Speakers call for harnessing potential of young population

Dr Salman Shah, a prominent economist and former Finance Minister, emphasised on harnessing human potential through enhancing productivity and competitiveness.

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, conducted a seminar on harnessing the vast untapped potential of Pakistan's young population. The event featured a diverse panel of speakers with substantial experience across the public, private, development, and corporate sectors.



Dr Salman Shah, a prominent economist and former Finance Minister, emphasised on harnessing human potential through enhancing productivity and competitiveness. He shared an insightful analysis linking the low productivity of the workforce with stunting due to malnutrition and low literacy. In his concluding remarks, President CASS Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (ret'd) expressed, "It is important for our policymakers to realise that time and tide wait for no one. They must realise the importance of this Demographic Window." He further added, "Investment in human capital can transform our economy."

CASS seminar on harnessing the potential of the young population: a path to economic security

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HOME / EDUCATION / HARNESSING POTENTIAL OF YOUNG POPULATION

Harnessing potential of young population

May 17, 2023 TOI News Service



LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, Friday conducted a seminar on harnessing the vast untapped potential of Pakistan's young population. The event featured a diverse panel of speakers with substantial experience across the public, private, development, and corporate sectors.

Seminar on harnessing potential of youth

By Our Correspondent May 18, 2023

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Mosharraf Zaidi, a policy expert and CEO of Tabadlab, shared an insightful analysis linking the low productivity of the workforce with stunting due to malnutrition and low literacy. In his concluding remarks, President CASS Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (ret'd) expressed, "It is important for our policymakers to realise that time and tide wait for none. They must realise the importance of this Demographic Window."



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Untapped youth potential key to revitalise country's economic development, say experts

The event featured a diverse panel of speakers with substantial experience across the public, private, development, and corporate sectors

IV – GALLERY



Harnessing the Potential of the Young Population



Post Seminar Report



Harnessing the Potential of the Young Population

“The success of an outward-looking economy hinges upon developing human capital. Pakistan must invest in education, skills training, and talent acquisition to foster a skilled workforce that can drive economic growth.”

Dr. Salman Shah, Former Finance Minister

“Doubling women's participation in the workforce, providing technical certification to matriculation graduates and training university graduates in IT skills can resolve the problem of Pakistan's Current Account Deficit.”

Mr. Nadir Salar Qureshi, CIO, Engro Corporation

“Focus on nurturing and developing the potential of the youth to ensure a prosperous future and addressing the crises of stunting, malnutrition, and cognitive development to unlock the demographic dividend.”

Mr. Mosharraf Zaidi, CEO TabalDlab

“The demographic window of opportunity only opens for 30-40 years. Once it closes, the opportunity is lost. In Pakistan, the window has already been open for many years. We need to act soon, before it closes.”

Air Mshl Asim Suleiman (Retd), President CASS Lahore



Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies

69, Abid Majeed Road, Lahore Cantt

✉ info@casslhr.com / 🌐 www.casslhr.com / ☎ **042-36669692**