

INTERNATIONAL

DAY FOR

THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

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POVERTY ALLEVIATION THROUGH FUTURE OF WORK



Start-ups: building blocks of the knowledge economy

By Yusuf Hussain
CEO, Ignite

IGNITE seeks to solve the most meaningful problems in Pakistan and avail global opportunities through innovation based on Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Innovation is the transformation of ideas or inventions into products or services that impact society. Over the last many decades, innovation around the world has been driven by start-ups, which are new companies with innovative business models and technology, seeking to transform industries. Ignite incubates start-ups, funds them, runs its own start-up, DigiSkills.pk and also funds university innovation. Following are some notable examples of Ignite achievements over the last one year:

Poverty alleviation: In new initiatives, Bakhbar Kissan was one of the eight start-ups that received total Ignite funding allocation of Rs 203 million. Employing precision agriculture, it will utilise satellite imagery and drones to dispense fertiliser and pesticides, doubling yield of small farms by Feb 2020.

Byoniks is developing patentable tech, which will provide non-intrusive and pain-free kidney dialysis at a fraction of the current cost by July 2020.

Ignite also worked with PM Advisor on Poverty Alleviation to introduce high impact tech measures in the national strategy. An electrical surgery instrument developed by NIC Peshawar incubatee, Aprus, has now performed around 100,000 surgeries across KPK at a fraction of the cost of imported equipment, making it affordable to the poor. NIC Lahore incubate, Fine Traders which has also acquired venture capital (VC) funding, provides essentials like cooking utensils and monthly rations to hawkers and daily labourers on daily and weekly instalments, with sales crossing Rs

15 million at healthy profitability.

Few other milestones in existing projects include the filing of nine nanotech USA patents by NIC Lahore incubate, Pak Vitae, which has developed a very low-cost quality drinking water filter. By the end of 2020, one million additional Pakistanis are expected to have access to clean drinking water on a regular basis.

By the end of 2021, 10 million Pakistanis, South Asians, and Africans are expected to have such access. Ignite funded Mera Maweshi was launched; it uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to provide cattle disease diagnostics to small farmers on their smart phones, drastically reducing death incidents of livestock that can turn a small farmer's life upside down. NIC Quetta incubatee, Smart Helmet, uses Internet of Things (IoT) for poisonous gas detection, location and environmental monitoring to guide illiterate miners to safety. Thousands currently loose life and limb annually in horrific mining accidents.

Job creation: Major milestones in existing projects include provision of training in marketable intermediate digital skills to over 312,000 enrolled trainees, many of whom are now self-employed and earning foreign exchange through freelancing across the country.

An estimated USD 14 million has been earned already. The NIC network created an additional 9000 jobs. NIC Islamabad incubate, Mauqa Online, obtained VC funding to expand its job creation and digital financial inclusion services for the illiterate across the country.

Environment: Pakistan is becoming water starved and over 80% of water is used for agriculture. In new initiatives, Aqua Agro, NIC Karachi incubatee, is now launching an AI and IoT-based water monitor that reduces consumption by 50%, at a cost affordable to small farmers i.e. Rs 30,000 for a 5-acre holding. Agri yield

increases by 30% as fertiliser and pesticide is not stripped away by excess water. NIC Peshawar incubatee, Smart Tubewell, is now managing water delivery far more intelligently at several locations in KPK. NIC Lahore incubate is designing a new jet engine, which eliminates contrails in jet engine exhausts, that cause up to 20% of global warming. NIC Karachi's Trashit converts organic waste to fertiliser and is daily handling two tons of waste in Karachi.

Other major initiatives and milestones: Ignite has partnered with Pakistan Aeronautical Complex, Kamra, to help build a local aeronautical components industry that can plug into global supply chains. Ignite has joined Agha Khan Medical University to bring latest medical innovations to Pakistani and global healthcare through incubation, funding, clinical trials, regulatory approvals and partnerships.

Facebook has set up an Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) Lab in NIC Lahore. AR/VR is expected to be a high growth area over the next decade with applications in education, training, maintenance, and gaming.

Ignite has partnered with Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) to bring Pakistani innovation to Japanese conglomerates operating in the country. Ignite has funded blockchain based international remittances and Know Your Customer (KYC), which are expected to launch in February 2020. Major milestones in existing initiatives include launch of Ignite funded Electrocare in two power distribution companies (DISCOS). Electrocare saves 90% of electricity transmission line losses and theft. Ignite funded Orbit, an AR based education has now expanded to over 60 schools in USA and Europe.

NIC Islamabad's Deaftawk acquired foreign funding and is now offering its sign language and interpretation services to the deaf community across Pakistan and also overseas. ■

By Abdullah Khan
Manager Monitoring Technical, Ignite

IGNITE, National Technology Fund, launched a digital skills (DigiSkills.pk) training programme on August 1, 2018, to provide one million free of cost online trainings across the country over a period of two years.

The programme was structured into three projects outsourced to the best available institutions, selected after a competitive bidding process in Pakistan that have the required infrastructure, resources, vigour and passion to complete this mammoth target. The three components are: Training; Outreach; Monitoring and Evaluation.

The training project is being carried out by Virtual University which has ensured a state-of-the-art online learning management platform, where trainees can log in and view the training videos designed by the best trainers in Pakistan. The trainee learnings are frequently gauged during the course via quizzes and assignments. Coaches are key differentiator of this programme compared to any other global online training programme. A coach is tied with each trainee and their responsibility is to answer the trainee queries and guide them. Each coach's progress is monitored and analysed. Based upon the trainee behaviour analytics, coaches have been given additional tasks of making motivational calls to trainees, who are lagging in the course progress, and request them to login to LMS and make up for the missed lectures. A chatbot, Skilly, is also available on the web portal to answer the queries of the trainees 24/7.

Outreach Project executed by MCOM focusses on accessing target audiences and enabling registration of one million trainees on the DigiSkills Training Portal through cost-effective marketing campaigns digital, print (AD, press releases, posters), electronic (call centres, TVC, radio programme), and PR (launch events, influencers, roadshows, banners). MCOM manages all social media handlers and provides feedbacks to all the trainees on social media platforms 24/7.

The M&E project executed by Semiotics, in partnership with Information

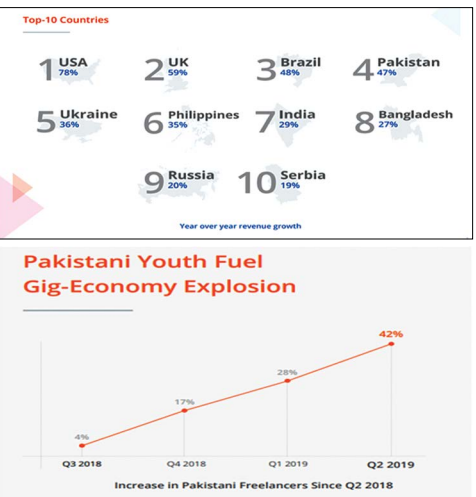
DigiSkills.pk: A myriad of freelancing opportunities

Architects, helps Ignite in monitoring and evaluating real-time progress of the programme and incorporating the findings and lessons learnt on an ongoing basis. An AI based software solution has been designed having real-time information and statistics on a dashboard from learning management system, campaign management tool, social media, interactive call responses, AI based chat bot, surveys, coaches, etc.

The overall trainings of one million will be delivered in seven batches. Currently the programme is in its fourth batch which commenced from August 1, 2019. A total of 312,524 trainings in the first three batches have been provided and another 220,000 enrolments have been done in the fourth batch making a total of 532,524 trainings so far.

This massive HRD programme has fully leveraged countries with decent ICT infrastructure and has given opportunity to hundreds of thousands of trainees, who can get free of cost, skill-based training, while sitting in the comfort of their homes. Although the programme is only half way through, but the impact of DigiSkills.pk is so evident that, in the domain of freelancing, Pakistan is now the fastest growing (revenue earned wise) country in Asia. This has been published by Payoneer, a cross-border payment platform in more than 200 countries, in their Global-Gig Economy index report.

The report has been compiled by using data from a sample of more than 300,000 freelancers, service providers and outsourcing professionals in the Payoneer



network. The reports shares insights into geographic and demographic trends, providing with a bird's-eye view of the state of freelancing economy.

The Q2 report on the Global Gig-Economy Index for 2019 showcases growth in the overall industry. Pakistan is ranked number four in the list of countries which posted the highest growth in yearly revenues. Q3 2018 (August 1, 2018) is the time when DigiSkills.pk training programme was launched and a major chunk of these statistics are associated with this programme. An estimated amount of \$14mn has been generated through this initiative so far.

Ignite is continuously striving hard to improve the opportunity that is already being provided to the people of Pakistan and it's high time that we all as a nation rise to the occasion and grab this excellent opportunity to help bring revenue to Pakistan to eventually help ourselves and our families. ■

DigiSkills.pk

Sara Jahan Hamara

CROSSING THE

EDGE OF POVERTY

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PUNJAB POPULATION INNOVATION FUND

Empowering Communities, Enabling Change

Introducing *Innovative Model For Improving Access to Family Planning Services for the Marginalized*

FOR BENAZIR INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES IN RAHIM YAR KHAN

Message by
Sardar Usman Buzdar
Chief Minister, Punjab
on International
Day for the
Eradication of Poverty

As you know, poverty is a social phenomenon that assaults all aspects of social to economic rights such as the right to health, education, food and clean drinking water. It further impinges upon human dignity as it erodes the well-being, increases vulnerability and reduces choices required for reasonable standard of living and other fundamental civil and socio-political rights. There exists a critical complexity between poverty, population growth and sustainable development. This recognition serves as the basis for all initiatives aiming to improve the Human Development Index and achieve Sustainable Development Goals. Pakistan is the sixth largest contributor to the world population. This burgeoning populace has direct consequences towards resource allocation and government efforts towards poverty alleviation. Punjab houses half of Pakistan's population and the current growth rate compounds economic deprivation and makes the challenge of social uplift more urgent and acute.

As the world observes International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and we reflect back on the significant strides made to reduce multidimensional poverty in Pakistan, so we renew our resolve to continue our efforts as there is still far we have to go. My government is committed to the allocation of maximum financial resources to realize the dream of the population planning in letter and spirit. The family planning is high on national agendas as evident from the constitution of Task Force on Population Chaired by the Prime Minister. I would like to share the recently-launched Innovative Model for Improving Access to Family Planning Services for the Marginalized which is a ground-breaking initiative synergizing human development through Family Planning in the remote and poverty-hit tehsils of district Rahim Yar Khan. The present government understands the problems posed by poverty to the common man and is consistently working towards the eradication of poverty by prioritizing the welfare of the masses. My Government is committed to accelerating efforts to ensure population stabilization to achieve the vision of Naya Pakistan where all citizens have equal opportunity and contribute to national development.

BACKGROUND:

Unwanted fertility is more common among poor, rural, and globally uneducated women than among their well off, urban, and educated counterparts, although this disparity is much smaller in countries with strong family planning programs. Evidence suggests that dependency ratio and household size have a statistically significant effect on poverty status while contraceptive use has the greatest impact on fertility and dependency ratio in Pakistan (FP2020 goals, Age Structural Changes and Poverty Reduction Strategies in Pakistan, 2014). According to the Punjab MICS survey, wealth is directly related to fertility rate; fertility for the lowest wealth quintile is 5.0 births per woman as compared to 2.9 for the highest while the unmet need figures for the lowest wealth quintile is up to 20%. Moreover, poor and rural residents with unmet need are faced with lack of local providers who have sufficient contraceptive information

and choices. Despite the existence of affordable government family planning facilities, it is difficult to ensure that quality services are affordable and people can choose, obtain, and use contraceptives

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND PPIF:

Since 1993, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is observed annually, marking the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 47/196 to increase awareness for "ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions." Fighting global destitution is also one of the primary Millennium Development Goals and at the forefront of the development of the post-2015 global development agenda. Poverty Eradication is among the eight Sustainable Development Goals targets under the new development framework, designed to replace and carry forward the aims of the Millennium Development Goals. This year, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is being observed following the formal adoption of the Sustainable



Development Goals by the United Nations General Assembly in the historic World Summit of 2015. Punjab Population Innovation Fund embraces the United Nation's Goals 2030 and Punjab Population campaign for 2019, "Acting Together to Empower Children, Families and Communities to End Poverty." PPIF envisions to be a market maker with the immediate goal of accelerating a rise in contraceptive

enhanced provider motivation, and wider provision of quality family planning services. Recognizing the need for increasing both acceptability and availability simultaneously, the Fund supports interventions in areas of high poverty and high unmet need for family planning in all thirty-six districts of Punjab.

INTERVENTION:

To further realize this vision, Punjab Population Innovation Fund launched Innovative Model for Family Planning Service Delivery for the Marginalized on 16th September 2019 in all four Tehsils of district Rahim Yar Khan. This model is a collaboration between Population Council, with the support of UNFPA, and Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) to enable female BISP beneficiaries from the most underprivileged strata in Rahim Yar Khan to avail family planning services to avoid mistimed pregnancies and births to improve maternal and child health outcomes in their communities. The project will mitigate cost and information related barriers

by financing the uptake of family planning services for around 80,000 BISP beneficiaries that are married women of reproductive age (MWRA 15-49) and create community-based information channels for an additional 0.5 Million BISP beneficiaries through BISP Beneficiaries Committee's (BBC)/ BISP Mother Ambassadors (MAs), social mobilizers and LHWs. The intervention will be based in all four Tehsils of Rahim Yar Khan for a duration of 18 months. A quality assured network of upto 60 private health service providers as well as public sector will be developed. The intervention will have a digitized voucher management system based on a mobile application for verification and disbursement of funds to beneficiaries and providers. The transportation costs to the nearest health facilities will also be reimbursed to the BISP beneficiaries for efficient improved access to service.

TRI-PARTITE RELATIONSHIP:

PPIF and Population Council have

co-designed the intervention. PPIF, being the innovation arm of the provincial government, is ; 1) funding the intervention 2) ensuring quality field implementation including provision of services and community mobilization and 3) electronic funds disbursements against the vouchers utilized. Population Council, with the support of UNFPA, is developing a mobile application based voucher management system to be utilized for disbursement of funds to BISP beneficiaries and private health service providers. The Population Council will also conduct the impact assessment of the intervention. Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), being the premier safety net institution in Pakistan, is responsible for sharing data for the poor women beneficiaries in the district and providing access to a wide network of BISP beneficiary committees and BISP mother ambassadors, to be utilized for community mobilization.

“Education is the Best Contraceptive”

Col (R) Muhammad Hashim Dogar
Minister Population Welfare Punjab

How is the rapid population growth affecting human development in Punjab?

With a figure of 110m, Punjab houses half of Pakistan's population, that has now surpassed 200m and set to reach 280 million in 2030. It would definitely have consequences on human security of the citizens and availability of necessities of daily life, including food, water, shelter, health and education. Meeting an ever-increasing demand given the resources of the government will prove a relentless battle against the mushrooming multitude and impact its developmental targets unless the general public is sensitized to this alarming growth. Population development is high on the agenda of the current administration as is evident from the statements made by the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Task Force on Population has made a comprehensive set of recommendations and we are following through on progress

against each of these. These include implementation of an effective communication campaigns to evince public support for the issue.

How is your government ensuring not repeating the failures of the past and make significant gains towards population development?

My government is striving hard to make reproductive health and family planning services available to every household in the Punjab. Chief Minister has allocated ample financial resources to realize the dream of the population planning, in letter and spirit. The Government has established PPIF as a technical hub to pilot innovative, scalable and also sustainable family planning interventions to achieve the desired results. It is working on the innovative model for improving access to family planning services for marginalized. It is a ground-breaking pilot intervention extending access to family

planning services for marginalized. It is a ground-breaking pilot intervention extending access to family planning services to the Benazir Income Support Programme beneficiaries by reducing information and cost-related barriers. Transportation cost will also be reimbursed to these women, thereby eliminating the financial barriers for poor women in uptake of family planning services.

What further role do you envisage for the PPIF to pioneer innovations for Family Planning?

I believe, the people of Pakistan must be made cognizant through all platforms including PPIF, of the threat that unplanned population growth poses for the future of the country by severely depleting its resources. Communities must be sensitized to the benefits of planned parenthood through innovative mass communication campaigns in Bazaars, Cinemas and mass transit service can be utilized for such purposes.

“ PPIF specializes in designing and piloting interventions that can supplement public sector efforts for improving family planning information and services. I am extremely optimistic that successful implementation of this pilot would pave the way for scaling up this model across the province of the Punjab. ”

Another novel way to engage the masses would be, by drawing the link between overpopulation and crimes. We are working on towards nation-building that engaging 721 Police Stations in Punjab to diffuse IEC material for family size and debunking responsible parenting and benefits of family planning. I am also of the opinion that provision of emergency contraceptives must be made easily available.

What measures can the Government of Punjab undertake to help stabilize the growth rate?

Punjab being the most populated province, housing more than half of the national population is among top priorities of the government. Unlike the past governments who had relegated it to the back burner, we are focused on population management than population control. To this end, our policies will focus on young people under 29, who account for more than 60% of the total population as per the Human

Development Index 2017, UNDP. It is thus imperative to make them aware of their responsibilities Minister Population, whenever I include informed decisions on population growth, I have not encountered opposition even from religious quarters. We have constituted a committee of the religious scholars named Ittehad-e-Baynul Muslimeen under the leadership of CM Punjab. We will use this platform to engage and sensitize the ulemas to debunk misperceptions associated with Family Planning.

Our government will curtail urbanization pressures by establishing eight Education Cities in Punjab. These would include academic institutions like medical colleges and engineering universities and formal educational institutions. It would create ample choices for citizens for better education and employment beyond big cities. They will be issued a certificate to

FAMILY PLANNING: PATHWAY TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION

OCTOBER 17: INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY



LAUNCHING
Innovative Model for Improving Access to Family Planning Services for the Marginalized

VOUCHERS
For Free Family Planning Services

4 TEHSILS
of District Rahim Yar Khan

80,000
Poorest Beneficiaries Served

500,000
Sensitized with Family Planning Messages

2 MILLION
Potential BISP Beneficiaries for Scale-up

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES
ENABLING CHANGE

