**[Made in Pakistan](https://www.dawn.com/news/1826004/made-in-pakistan)**

[Syed Raza Hussain](https://www.dawn.com/authors/10977/syed-raza-hussain) Published April 6, 2024

‘BE Pakistani, buy Pakistani’ is a familiar slogan in our country, but it has not been adopted in letter and spirit, despite the benefits of its implementation to our national economy.

The idea behind this slogan is to promote Pakistani products to build an economy that relies on made-in-Pakistan brands or local products, thus reducing the influx of foreign and imported brands to ease the burden of import bills and save precious foreign exchange.

In every developed economy, the role of local brands is a crucial one. Local brands reflect the presence of strong industries and SMEs, which paves the way for self-sufficient and sustainable levels of production to meet the requirements of the local market and the country’s citizens. The creation of jobs, side businesses, wealth generation, income distribution, and tax revenues are the guaranteed benefits of localisation. Japan and Germany are considered model economies, but our neighbours, including China, India, and Bangladesh, are also a good example to follow.

The localisation of production also reduces dependency on global supply chains, mitigating risks associated with external shocks such as trade disputes, geopolitical tensions, or natural disasters. It also keeps inflation in check as the prices of commodities are unaffected by any variation in dollars or other foreign currencies, which is a most significant factor in mainly the food and healthcare sectors.

The campaign for the promotion of made-in-Pakistan brands has never been successful as a national cause. Yet, surprisingly, the religious cause to support our Muslim brothers in Gaza has worked effectively. Since October last year, Israel has conducted violent and inhuman attacks on the occupied Gaza Strip, leading to the martyrdom of tens of thousands of Palestinians, including women and children. However, the only option to support the Palestinians at a public level is to donate generously and boycott the foreign companies and their brands that have connections with the Jewish state.

The sales of several local brands have reached record numbers.

The trend of boycotting foreign brands has been effective in Pakistan over the last few months, thanks to awareness campaigns on social media platforms. Over recent months, a significant number of consumers have been maintaining their boycott of goods linked to Israel to show solidarity with the Palestinians. As a result, the sales of several local brands have reached record-high numbers, and their production has touched maximum capacity point. Even some companies that produce beverages and food items are set to expand their production. Various new brands are being introduced to counter the foreign products, which is improving the investment climate and generating employment at the local level.

Unfortunately, the number of local brands is not enough to cater to the requirements of the local market; hence, we have to produce more alternative brands to counter Western and foreign products.

There is no doubt that Pakistanis have the potential to produce makeup for local and foreign markets. Pakistani brands are not only good enough, they also have the potential to grow their export worldwide. For instance, we produce high-quality garments, sports items, surgical goods, and edible items and export them to different countries. Some of our companies have established well-known brands, whereas the majority of the companies produce their own goods for well-known global brands, mainly in the apparel sector.

However, the quality level of the products should be better for both the local and international markets. The use of te­­chnology, coming up with innovati­ve ideas, and collaboration among sta­keholders are key to growing faster.

The boycott mo­­vement is good for the economy, and should be suppo­rted by all stakeholders, including the government. In this regard, a long-term policy should be introduced for supporting local products, assuring support to local industrialists in terms of financing facilities and relaxation of duties on raw materials and import of machinery. At present, a number of industrial zones are wearing a deserted look, with no construction of new units, as can be seen in the Nooriabad, Dhabaji and SITE industrial areas. The government should come up with low-cost financial schemes to encourage local producers to expand their production to meet the local demand, as well as to set up plants for generating new production units. In this way, import substitution will be accomplished more effectively and quickly, which can ultimately save precious foreign exchange reserves.

The government, along with stakeholders, should develop a five-year localisation economic plan, with a roadmap for achieving self-sufficiency to transform an economy of $375 billion.

*The writer is an industrialist.*

[*srazahussain.fbati@gmail.com*](https://srazahussain.fbati@gmail.com)

*Published in Dawn, April 6th, 2024*