

# Poverty alleviation through skills development

The current PTI govt of and its predecessors launched programmes to give loans to the youth to run their own business

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Poverty is major concern for all countries. The World Bank and other global institutions are working with many countries to eradicate poverty.

The United Nation's Millennium Development Goal 1 was to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger but unfortunately, with the exception of China, other countries are way behind in achieving it.

Along with other countries, the Government of Pakistan is also striving to eradicate poverty without much success.

I believe if the government is serious in eradicating poverty, it should derive a strategy for a massive skills enhancement programme across Pakistan.

The current PTI government of and its predecessors launched programmes to give loans to the youth to run their own business. However, these programmes that seemed appealing on paper failed to give the desired results, because people lacked the technical expertise to run their businesses.

The importance of possessing skills can be gauged from the fact that the unemployment rate in Sialkot due to Covid-19 is the lowest in the country. This is because Sialkot is the city of skilled workers. The business community of Sialkot is very different from that of other cities. They take ownership of their workers and city. Unfortunately, this gesture is missing in businessmen in the other parts of the country.

The government should try and emulate Sialkot's example and work actively to increase the number of institutions capable of providing vocational training.

Currently, numerous organisations are providing skills training but considering the huge youth population of Pakistan, their efforts are falling short.

I suggest the government in partnership with vocational training institutions implement the Technical Vocational Education & Training (TVET) model followed by Germany. Germany's vocational education and training system, also known as the dual training system, is highly recognised worldwide due to its combination of theory and training embedded in a real-life work environment.

The dual system is firmly established in the German education system. Its main characteristic is cooperation between small and medium sized companies and publicly funded vocational schools which is regulated by law. Trainees typically spend part of each week at a vocational school and the other part at a company, or they may spend longer periods at each place before alternating. Dual training usually lasts two to 3.5 years. In this system, trainees spend 70% of their time acquiring training and 30% of their time on theory.

If our rulers are serious about eradicating poverty and providing earning opportunities to the youth, they have to thoroughly study the German TVET system and implement it.

We focus on imparting conventional education but not much emphasis is given on TVET. This lack of focus can be gauged from the fact that only 6% youngsters acquired skill-based training.

The PTI government wants to introduce the Single National Curriculum but even in this not much importance is given to technical education. The lack of interest in technical education at the government level is hampering Pakistan's progress.

It's high time that organisations and the government joined hands to establish a network of TVET where organisations form a strategy to promote skills training and the government provide them legal cover and other support. The skill-based training strategy can help organisations find the right person for the job and save time and resources. In Germany, two-thirds of trainees are employed by the organisation which provides them training.

The PTI, in its election manifesto, mentioned that they would provide 10 million jobs. Although this figure is announced without any due diligence, I am optimistic that 20 to 30 million people can gain employment in the next three years if the government is able to implement a TVET strategy with support from organisations.

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