**Beyond opportunities**

**There are several cascading effects of lifting the unemployed section of society**

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Karachi has been prey to nu merous issues, one of which has been the electricity short-- age. To address this prevailing problem, the electricity company operating in Karachi has expanded its operations and network to meet the ever-growing appetite of the city. For many businesses, growth signals success, and thriving businesses reflect citizens’ socio economic uplift. It creates new job opportunities, brings in more customers, and generates greater output and productivity. For instance, investments in power projects are long commitments involving millions of manhours of work. And the utility sector’s energy consumption rose from 75.2 percent (2001) to 99.65 percent (2019) in the last 18 years, reflecting almost a hundred percent energy consumption. Notably, with a rise of 0.8 percent from the previous year, the industrial growth in 2020 was 7.9 percent of the GDP, which implies a broader reliance of Pakistan’s industry on the energy sector. As the network of its power grid expanded from Bin Qasim to the KKI grid, so did its infrastructure, which has led to a massive improvement in the system’s stability and reliability for consumers to meet current and future demands. More than 300000 customers will benefit from the additional supply of this grid. It will help in the achievement of the plan to build more interconnections to channel 2050 MW, with several other advantages that branch out for the larger purpose, contributing to the macroeconomic indicators. The grid will contribute 1 percent, equivalent to $3 billion, to Pakistan’s GDP. The construction, standing at 40 acres of land, entails an enormous infrastructure that was required to meet the huge demand, resulting in numerous job opportunities for the labour force. It is known to have created more than 200 jobs in the city, for the creation and maintenance of the said grid. Unemployment has been a chronic issue that has riddled Karachi for a long and the organization’s plans for network expansion somewhat contribute to lowering the unemployment rate. On the completion of the grid, Karachi will have more electricity, which is a driver for any industrial growth. And the multiplier effect of utility sector growth is essential to developing the industrial sector and its sound economic growth. Business growth hence stands as a prerequisite for increasing productive employment and labour productivity—because there is usually a need to increase both the number of jobs and productivity, as the business and its network continue to grow. The decline in the unemployment rate explicitly translates into poverty reduction efforts which help to maximize the benefits for people and to ensure that growth is both sustainable and inclusive. The situation of the “working class” is a matter of grave concern, especially in cities like Karachi, which remains a hub of commerce, industry and employment. It is all the more important where the economy is struggling, and where the labour force is found plenty—often arduously and for long hours—but are simply unable to earn enough to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. So poverty-reducing impact has given rise to expansion plans, allowing them to access and earn a respectable, decent wage. There are several cascading effects of lifting the unemployed section of society. Firstly, the transformational role of employment can be experienced in terms of rising living standards. The purchasing power of the segments of society increases markedly, which means they are better able to spend on housing, education, and better nutrition. Secondly, their employment also brings greater social cohesion as they experience a feeling that they have a meaningful impact on society. Most importantly, this employed workforce then results in greater productivity for everyone in the value chain, from the organization to the economy. Apart from the benefits, there are many other factors, the absence of which is not felt but has an inordinate socio-economic impact. More employment opportunities mean that the city faces fewer street crime incidents, fewer instances of child and forced labour, and fewer beggars on the street, as people now have a decent wage and salary to earn, with skills development for present and future needs in the industry’s labour market, and integrating the most vulnerable groups. Fewer crime incidents will eventually stabilize the city’s law and order situation, rendering it a peaceful society that facilitates the transition to a formal economy, and perpetuates income opportunities in an economically struggling economy. Because of the strong link between business growth, employment, and poverty reduction activities in support of decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and affordable and clean energy (SDG 7) will also support the achievement of SDG 1 (poverty) and SDG 10 (equality). Ensuring access to affordable, reliable energy translates into the development of agriculture, business, communications, education, healthcare and transportation. The lack of the same will hinder economic and human development. So a clear direct and indirect impact can be witnessed as a result of business investment in the capacity-building efforts of KE. Karachi remains a hub of industrial and economic growth, and it makes sense for the private corporate sector to capitalize on this opportunity to undertake investment initiatives for a more economically independent population.