

State of

SKILLS



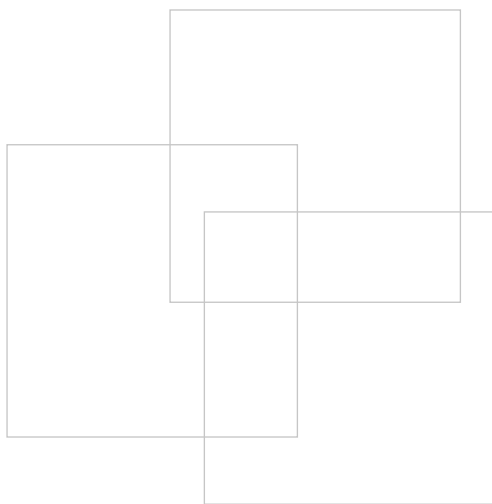
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Pakistan

State of

SKILLS



Pakistan

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The socio-economic context

Ranked as the sixth most populous country in the world, with over 200 million people, Pakistan stands at the crossroads on all fronts: social, economic and human development.

On the economic front, indicators such as income per capita demonstrate that Pakistan's economy has grown over the past decade, albeit at a slow and inconsistent pace. According to the Pakistan Economic Survey for 2017–18, undertaken by the Ministry of Finance, GDP growth had reached a low of 0.36 per cent in 2009, after which time it remained volatile, averaging 2.82 per cent between 2008 and 2013 (Ministry of Finance, 2018).

Economic growth picked up pace again to reach 5.8 per cent in 2017. The momentum for growth is largely fuelled by relatively strong performance in the agriculture, industry and services sectors, which have grown by 3.81 per cent, 5.80 per cent and 6.43 per cent, respectively. While income per capita has increased from \$724 in 2004 to \$1,640 in 2017, it has not been associated with a consistent rate of GDP growth.

The strongest growth in the agriculture sector during the past 13 years was achieved in the wake of initiatives undertaken to improve the sector, such as expansion in the level of credit available. Large-scale manufacturing recorded growth of 6.13 per cent, its highest rate in ten years, while growth in the industrial sector improved by 5.80 per cent, also representing a ten-year high. General manufacturing grew by 6.24 per cent, its highest rate in 11 years. The services sector has witnessed stable growth of 6.43 per cent over the past two years. The economic turnaround experienced during the past five years is largely the result of the successful implementation of a comprehensive programme of steps to secure economic revival and macroeconomic stability launched by the Government, underpinned by supportive macroeconomic supply and demand policies, and bolstered by renewed confidence in the private sector and fiscal discipline.

Table 1 details the share of employment for the economic sectors with the highest rates of growth in the country, captured over a ten-year period. The trend clearly shows a shift in share of employment from agriculture to industry and services over the past decade. While agriculture has historically held the largest share of employment in the country, growth in the other sectors has gradually caught up, with a particularly noticeable upward shift in the services sector.

The ten-year trend indicates that the combined employment share for both sexes in the agriculture sector has declined from 42 per cent in 2006–07 to 37.4 per cent in 2017–18. However, women continue to dominate the sector, currently comprising 66.1 per cent of the sector’s workforce compared to men’s share at 29.6 per cent. The employment share of industry also increased, rising from 21.4 per cent in 2006–07 to 24.0 per cent in 2017–18, with a significant increase for women from 12.6 per cent to 16.6 per cent. This increase presents both an opportunity and a challenge, since the growing population will have to be equipped with the skills demanded by rising employment in industry and services.

Table 1. Sector shares in total employment, 2006–18, by sex.

Indicator	2006–2007	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015	2017–2018
Share of agriculture in total employment									
Both sexes	42.0	42.8	43.3	43.4	43.5	42.2	42.2	41.0	37.4
Male	35.0	35.2	35.7	35.2	34.9	33.1	33.2	32.0	29.6
Female	71.4	73.8	72.7	73.9	74.2	74.9	72.9	71.8	66.1
Share of industry in total employment									
Both sexes	21.4	20.6	21.0	21.4	21.8	22.8	22.9	23.2	24.0
Male	23.5	22.7	23.1	24.1	24.6	26.2	25.8	25.7	26.0
Female	12.6	12.2	12.7	11.6	11.5	11.3	13.1	14.6	16.6
Share of services in total employment									
Both sexes	36.6	36.6	35.7	35.2	34.7	35.0	34.9	35.8	38.6
Male	41.5	42.2	41.2	40.7	40.5	40.7	41.0	42.3	44.4
Female	16.0	13.9	14.6	14.5	14.2	13.8	14.0	13.6	17.3

Source: Ministry of Statistics, 2018.

Noting the trajectory of the economic growth, the Pakistan Economic Survey 2017–18 also points out that, despite the current positive trends, a number of risks in the local and global economic contexts may affect growth outlook and eventually impact the country’s employment landscape. One major risk may arise from the adoption of tariffs and non-tariff protectionist policies in some countries, resulting in relocation of geographical trade flows. The adjustment costs and increased uncertainty related to these relocations may have a dampening effect on investment trends, especially in the manufacturing sectors. Reduced international trade expansion and investment expenditures may impact overall growth prospects, particularly for Pakistan, where export activity is highly correlated to imports in OECD countries and China.

In its *Vision 2025* report, the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform notes that Pakistan is experiencing continuous population growth. By 2025, Pakistan’s population is projected to rise to over 227 million, with 63 per cent under the age of 30 (Planning Commission, 2014). The growing young population will continue to put a strain on health, education and training systems in the country.

Pakistan's largely young population faces major deficits in educational attainment.

This situation is clearly illustrated by the country's overall literacy rate of 58 per cent. The gender gap is significant, with female literacy standing at 48 per cent, compared to 70 per cent for male literacy (Ministry of Finance, 2018). Issues of restricted access to and poor quality of education further diminish the prospects for attaining higher education levels for the majority of young people. The current provision is dominated by primary level education. According to Shah et al. (2018), 47 per cent of the total number of educational institutes in the country consist of primary schools. Universities have the lowest share in the education system, at just 0.1%, with the total provision numbering just 185 institutions. A report by Alif Ailaan notes that, due to the skewed education provision, which is concentrated at the primary level in the country, only one in five children will get the opportunity to continue their education beyond primary school level (Alif Ailaan, 2017).

Enrolment trends noted by Shah et al. (2018) indicate that 19.3 million students are currently enrolled in primary schools in Pakistan (55 per cent boys and 45 per cent girls). The numbers drop significantly at secondary school level to 6.5 million, with boys comprising 57 per cent of enrolled students and girls 43 per cent. The drop in enrolment rates continues in the higher grades, plunging to 3.3 million by the tenth (or highest) grade, with boys comprising 58 per cent and girls 42 per cent of the students enrolled in high school.

With a meager 2 per cent share of educational institutions in the country, higher secondary level institutions enrol only 1.58 million students, of which 61 per cent are boys and 39 per cent girls (ibid.).

Total enrolment in universities, i.e., at undergraduate stage, is 1.463 million, of which 54 per cent are males and 46 per cent are females (ibid.).

The total enrolment in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions is just 0.315 million, of which 65 per cent are boys while girls constitute only 35 per cent of the total enrolment in TVET institutions, indicating that non-academic pathways to decent employment are also severely limited for many people (ibid.). A report by the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAV TTC) notes that less than 6 per cent of young people have acquired technical skills through the TVET system, and only 2.5 per cent have received any type of on-the-job training, while over 60 per cent of the country's labour force has primary level education or less (Shah and Khan, 2017). This means that young people aspiring to enter the labour market begin with a double handicap of low educational attainment and limited skill sets.

A snapshot of the current employment situation in the country captures this dilemma. According to Pakistan’s Bureau of Statistics, in 2017–18 the unemployment rate stood at 5.7 per cent for both sexes (4.9 per cent for men and 8.5 per cent for women) (Ministry of Statistics, 2018). Given the current trend in population growth, about 1.7 million new jobs will need to be created every year just to keep the unemployment rate at its current level (Ministry of Finance, 2017).

A ten-year comparison of labour force participation rates in the country presented in the Employment Trends Report notes a constant trend with labour force participation for both sexes hovering at around 50 per cent. Female labour force participation, however, continues to be low, recorded at just 22.8 per cent compared to 81.1 per cent for men in 2017–18 (see table 2).

Table 2. Labour force participation rate, 2006–18, by sex.

Indicator	2006–2007	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015	2017–2018
Labour force participation rate									
Both sexes	52.5	52.5	53.1	53.5	53.4	53.1	53.1	53.3	51.9
Male	83.1	82.4	82.0	81.7	81.9	81.1	81.0	81.4	81.1
Female	21.3	21.8	23.1	24.1	24.4	24.3	25.0	25.0	22.8

Source: Ministry of Statistics, 2018.

It is also worth noting the current composition of the economy in terms of formalization, as this factor has significant implications concerning vulnerability of employment and potential risks for the supply of decent work.

Currently, 71.4 per cent of the workforce is employed in the informal economy, with an almost equal breakdown between men and women (71.5 per cent and 70.7 per cent, respectively). Yet, due to growth in the industrial and services sector, the share of wage and salaried workers in total employment has also risen in the past decade, and currently stands at a combined rate of 42.9 per cent. However, for women, while the trend has been positive overall, the share in wage and salaried employment is still low, at only 29.0 per cent compared to 46.8 per cent for men. On the other hand, the share of men in own-account work has dipped slightly over the past decade, currently standing at 35.7 per cent while, for women, it has increased from 14.3 per cent in 2006–07 to 20.6 per cent in 2017–18 (Ministry of Statistics, 2018).

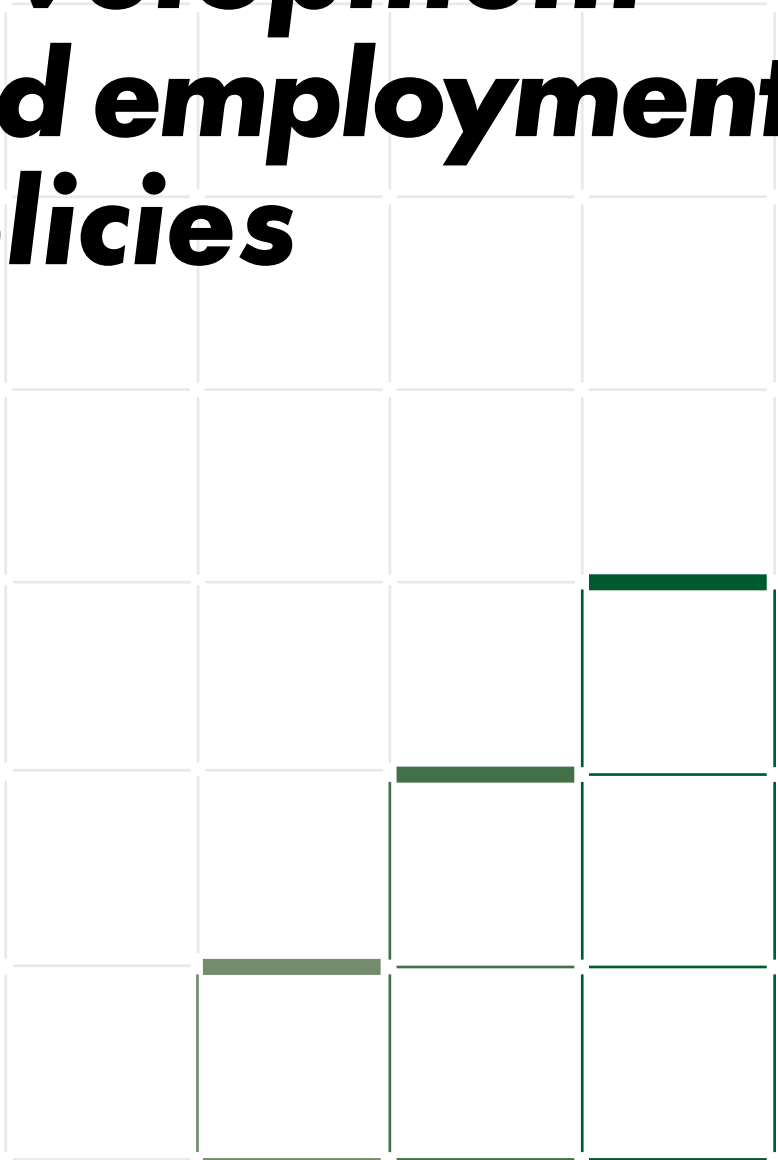
The employment landscape in Pakistan varies between the country's four provinces, as well as across the rural/urban divide. The statistics gleaned from the 2014–15 Labour Force Survey (see table 3), indicate significant variance in employment trends across these geographical divides. A majority of the working population of both genders is employed in the rural areas, primarily in the agriculture sector. The overall share of women employed in urban areas is miniscule – only 1.92 million out of the total 13.35 million employed in 2014–15. In addition to the limited employment opportunities in the cities in general, this figure also reflects gender-specific challenges to women's employment, including cultural barriers and mobility issues. Comparing statistics across regions, it is notable that Punjab fares better than the other provinces in terms of the share of employed men and women, while Balochistan has the lowest proportion of working men and women.

Table 3. Employed population, 2013–15.

Province/area	2013–14			2014–15		
	Millions					
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Pakistan	56.52	43.33	13.19	57.42	44.07	13.35
Rural	39.08	27.83	11.25	39.85	28.42	11.43
Urban	17.44	15.50	1.94	17.57	15.65	1.92
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	5.91	4.85	1.06	6.09	5.00	1.09
Rural	4.84	3.87	0.97	5.01	4.03	0.98
Urban	1.07	0.98	0.09	1.08	0.97	0.11
Punjab	34.46	24.59	9.87	34.6	24.79	9.81
Rural	24.66	16.2	8.46	24.82	16.4	8.42
Urban	9.8	8.39	1.41	9.78	8.39	1.39
Sindh	13.40	11.41	1.99	13.65	11.76	1.89
Rural	7.51	5.92	1.59	7.63	6.11	1.52
Urban	5.89	5.49	0.4	6.02	5.65	0.37
Balochistan	2.74	2.48	0.26	3.08	2.52	0.56
Rural	2.06	1.84	0.22	2.39	1.88	0.51
Urban	0.68	0.64	0.04	0.69	0.64	0.05

Source: Labour Force Survey 2014–15, derived from Statistical Tables 6 to 6.4 (Annex III).

Development and employment policies



In recent years, the concept of skills development has emerged as a priority area in the policy discourse on sustainable economic development, with TVET proposed as a viable pathway to achieving its implementation. This line of reasoning has received further support from the international agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹ At the national level, the Government’s mission statement Pakistan – Vision 2025 seeks to deliver “a society in which every citizen has the opportunity to transform their quality of life” (Planning Commission, 2014). It recognizes that investment in human and social capital will “allow the population to optimally contribute to and effectively benefit from economic growth” (ibid.). Of the seven pillars which form the foundation of Vision 2025, Pillar I, “Putting People First” rests on developing human and social capital. Vision 2025 considers skills building to be one of the most important pathways to human resource development and economic growth. The document details a number of initiatives, including flagship skills training programmes and schemes to foster entrepreneurship among youth through providing access to capital and markets, as well as provisions for internship and job counselling, which comprise some of the key features of the Government’s policy trajectory.

The present Government has included the creation of 10 million jobs within the next five years as one of the key areas in its reform and development agenda. The Government envisions skills development as a major element in the realization of its job-creation goals and plans to make significant investments in this area, focusing particularly on improving the quality of the training provision and aligning it with market demand, as well as incentivizing the private sector to play a more collaborative role in the TVET system.

¹ Under SDG 4, three of the seven targets focus specifically on skills development through technical education.

“The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such a manner as may be determined by law”.



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– Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Article. 25

The skills system in Pakistan



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TVET reform policies

Pakistan's first skills sector specific policy, the National Skills Strategy (NSS), was developed in 2009. It remains the governing policy framework for the TVET sector in the country to date and has been adopted by all four provinces. The policy proposes a paradigm shift from curricula-based education to competency-based training (CBT). It also envisions a shift from supply-led training to demand-driven skills development by promoting the role of industry in both the design and the delivery of TVET. Key reforms proposed by the NSS include the overhaul of the apprenticeship system, encouraging entrepreneurship, integrating informal economy workers into the formal sector, establishing a National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) and registering and accrediting TVET institutes. The provinces of Punjab and Sindh developed their respective skills strategies in 2015. Extending the policy agenda of the NSS, the first ever national-level TVET policy was developed in 2013 and approved by the cabinet in 2018. While it represents a major milestone for the TVET sector in the country, the policy is yet to be implemented by the roll-out of a nationwide plan.

A TVET sector reform programme was initiated by the Government in 2012, with the support of various donor agencies and development partners. The reform agenda primarily focused on strengthening TVET governance and improving the quality of and access to services provision. Since its introduction, the reform programme has invested in strengthening the organizational aspects and developing the human resource capacity of the public sector TVET institutions.

A shift in the remit of TVET sector institutions was brought about following the devolution of power in the country in 2010. With the institutional set-up and control reorganized, the greater part of planning and implementation in the TVET sector now falls within the purview of the provincial governments, relocating the locus of planning and implementation away from the federal level. In the reorganized institutional arrangement, the federal level institution, the NAVTTC, has taken on the role of the apex policy body and custodian of TVET policy as well as the NVQF. Policy planning at the provincial level follows the policy guidelines set out by the NAVTTC, with the NVQF serving as the overarching framework for training design and content.



Governance

A number of national and provincial bodies are involved in the governance and regulation of TVET provision in the country. At the federal level, the NAVTTC is responsible for regulating, facilitating and providing policy direction for skills development in the country, setting up national occupational skills standards, developing curricula, administering the NVQF, undertaking labour market information analysis, training of trainers and public–private partnerships and determining institutional standards for TVET providers. At the provincial level, Technical Education and Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTAs) have been set up in all four provinces. Established as autonomous entities, TEVTAs are governed by independent Boards, whose members represent both the public and private sector. TEVTAs operate and manage vocational and technical training institutes in their respective provinces. They are also engaged in developing training content and curricula for newly identified trades as well as updating the existing provision offered in their institutes. In addition to TEVTAs, each province has its own set of Qualifications Awarding Bodies (QABs) for technical education and vocational training. Courses for vocational trades are assessed and certified by Trade Testing Boards (TTBs), while certification for technical education diploma courses is carried out by the Board of Technical Education (BTE) in each province. Under the current arrangement, TTBs operate under their respective TEVTA while BTEs are autonomous bodies operating independently of TEVTAs.

Prior to the current institutional arrangement, the TVET provision in the public sector was fragmented, with several government departments, including Education, Industry and Commerce and Social Welfare, carrying out technical and vocational training at the provincial level. Punjab was the first province to unify TVET provision by establishing a single entity, Punjab TEVTA, entrusted with providing TVET services throughout the province. Other provinces have since followed suit. The reorganization of the role and remit of TVET institutions was mainly carried out as part of the devolution process, with the aim of strengthening the vocational education and training provision at the provincial level. However, transition to the new institutional arrangement, particularly regarding the roles of federal and provincial institutions, has not been without challenges. There are still issues of overlap in functions and the organizational interdependencies are not yet fully understood.

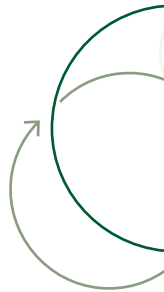
The private sector makes a sizable contribution to the TVET provision in the country. According to the National Skills Information System (NSIS)² maintained by the NAVTTC, out of the total of 3,740 institutes providing TVET services, 2,100 are operated by the private sector. Apart from service provision, the private sector has also been engaged recently in a strategic role, setting up three Sector Skills Councils, one each in the hospitality, renewable energy and construction sectors, as a mechanism to secure greater involvement of the private sector in the design and implementation of publicly funded training with a view to improving the quality and scale of training provision. Recently, the NAVTTC and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) launched the National Skills Forum (NSF) as a platform to promote strategic partnerships between industry and public-sector organizations delivering technical education and vocational training to balance inputs from the private and public sectors.

² See www.skillingpakistan.org for more details.

Social dialogue

While the private sector's representation in and meaningful engagement with the TVET sector is recognized as a critical factor in securing the successful provision of relevant and high-quality TVET services, with the exception of the few cases mentioned earlier, there has, historically, been little institutional collaboration or partnership between the public TVET institutions and the private sector. On the policy/strategic front, engagement with the private sector has been sporadic. The private sector has often been reluctant to engage with the Government due to perceptions of excessive bureaucracy and the slow pace at which government organizations work.

Engagement of worker representative organizations is completely missing from the current scenario. There has not, to date, been any effort or initiative to bring workers' voices into the planning and management of the skills programmes in the country.



Financing

The total spending on the education sector in the country, which itself is a meager 2.2 per cent of Pakistan's GDP (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2018a). In all provincial TEVTAs, single line budgets are allocated to the organization by the Government's Finance Division. The budget is heavy weighted towards the non-development side, with the bulk of funding allocated to staff salaries. In Sindh and Punjab, few institutes are currently being run on public-private partnership model lines. TEVTAs in Sindh, Punjab and, to a lesser extent, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, receive technical and financial assistance through donors and development partners.



Skills anticipation

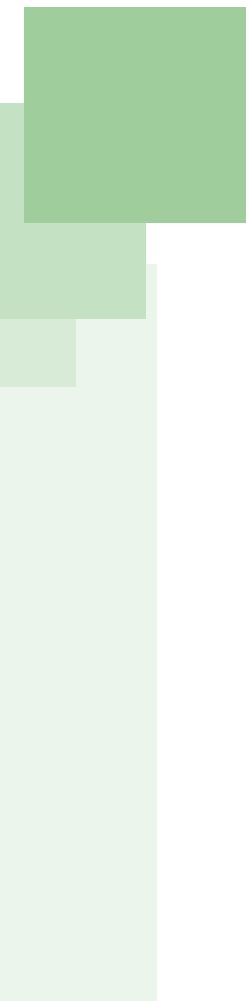
One of the weakest areas in the current TVET provision in the country is the lack of labour market intelligence for anticipating market demand for specific skills. Industry has a critical role to play in resolving the ongoing skills mismatch and collecting reliable labour market data, which will provide evidence to frame workforce development initiatives and tailor responses to specific sectoral needs. However, there is currently no systematic way to collect this vital data. The NSIS, set up by the NAVTTC, is supply driven.

The demand-side information is only collected sporadically and on a very limited scale. Another major challenge in the context of Pakistan is accessing and collecting reliable data on its disproportionately large informal economy, in which most of the country's TVET graduates eventually work. Compounding the lack of reliable data is the shortage of administrative proficiency in skills analysis, forecasting and anticipation. The present set of TVET institutions lack the capacity both to conduct market research and to analyse the results generated.



Skills development



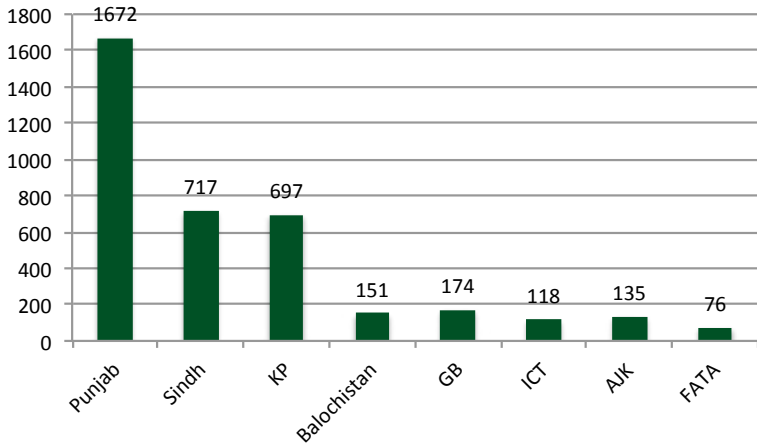


An examination of the current skills development provision reveals major deficits from a demand side point of view. The recent report outlining the NAVTTC's roadmap for skills development in the country notes that the estimated annual number of new labour market entrants alone, who require training, is close to 5 million (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, 2018b). Of this total, 1.8 million comprise new labour market entrants each year from the formal schooling system, while approximately 4.4 million youth represent those not captured in the formal schooling figures, but who nevertheless need to be trained if the country is to fully exploit its demographic dividend (ibid.). These estimates exclude the training needs of the existing labour force, so overall demand is actually much greater.

On the supply side, however, there are only total 437,000 registered training places available in a total of 3,740 training institutes with just 18,207 trained teachers in the formal TVET sector (ibid.). The same report observes that, if the entire cohort of more than 6 million youth were to be provided with skills training based on present methodology, it would require at least 45,000 further training institutes and 200,000 more TVET teachers to be inducted into the system.

The coverage of TVET provision also varies widely between the various provinces and regions in the country, with Balochistan province lagging behind the other provinces (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of institutes by province/region, 2018.



Source: Author, based on Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, 2018b.

Statistics from the same report note that the total enrolment in TVET institutes, both public and private sector, is around 433,237 (see table 4). Punjab province dominates, with an enrolment rate of 53 per cent of the total number of trainees, followed by Sindh with 19.8 per cent, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 14.3 per cent and Baluchistan with 4.1 per cent.

Table 4: Total enrolment in TVET institutes by region and sex, 2018.

Province/region	Male	Female
Punjab	152,708	76,116
Sindh	67,035	19,159
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	36,938	24,917
Balochistan	10,759	7,088
Gilgit Baltistan	4,049	9,166
AJK	6,334	4,141
FATA	4,267	4,650
ICT	3,336	2,574
Total enrolment	285,426	147,811

The quality of TVET provision is also variable across the country. TVET sector institutes in both the public and the private sector (with a few private sector exceptions) are characterized by outdated curricula, a mismatch between skills taught and those demanded by industry, inadequate quality assurance mechanisms, substandard physical and learning resources and low levels of private sector participation, which is crucial to bridging the skills–market gap. Technical and vocational training primarily takes place in time-constrained, theory-based, teacher-led classroom environments, isolated from industry applications. Attachments and links to industry are fragile, poorly planned and inadequately supervised. The low quality of training provision results in poor employment outcomes, and becomes a disincentive, diminishing the demand for TVET, particularly from young men and women aspiring to enter the labour market. Moreover, TVET in the country suffers from a lack of “brand” equity when compared to general education and has traditionally been seen as a back-up option for those students who drop out of the academic system. This perception, combined with the poor employment outcomes of TVET graduates, discourages young people from choosing vocational education and training as their preferred academic route.

There is growing recognition at the strategic policy level that strengthening the TVET system will require a shift away from conventional approaches to TVET delivery. The recent adoption of the competency based training (CBT) approach is a major milestone in quality improvements, particularly in terms of aligning the training content more closely with market needs. In recent years, the NAVTTC has taken the lead in designing CBT curricula to develop standards of occupational competency for various trades with the active participation of leading industry practitioners.

To date, over 150 vocational training courses for different levels of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) have been developed and gradually implemented in the TVET institutes throughout the country. Since the expansion of CBT from its initial pilot in 2016, the provincial TEVTAs have adopted various measures to strengthen the implementation of CBT in their respective institutes. In 2018, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa TEVTA issued a notification of its intention to convert its courses from the traditional model to the CBT methodology. The Punjab TEVTA has recently initiated an exercise to map the practical teaching elements of 31 trades prior to converting them to CBT courses.

Skills recognition and quality assurance

In terms of skills recognition and quality assurance, one of the major developments in Pakistan's TVET sector has been the launch of the country's first NVQF in March 2015 by the NAVTTC, designed to determine qualifications and set standards for the assessment of competences for TVET courses in consultation with the private sector. The framework seeks to define the skills set required for each qualification, determine equivalence, provide guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), assure quality of training and offer vertical and horizontal progression to trainees in the vocational stream. However, the NVQF is still a work in progress with qualifications standards determined for selected courses for the first four levels to date.

Apart from providing pathways for vertical and horizontal progression between the education streams, a key feature of the NVQF is the inclusion of RPL as a new approach, introduced in order to recognize and certify the competence and skills of the millions of skilled workers coming out of Pakistan's informal TVET sector. As noted above, a very small proportion of young people are enrolled in institutional training programmes. For the vast majority, vocational training takes place in informal settings following an "ustaad-shagird" model, the most commonly practised informal training method in Pakistan, which entails a one-to-one apprenticeship (shagird) with a mentor (ustaad) in the workplace.

Under the current arrangements, QABs, including the provincial TTBs and BTEs, have primary responsibility for skills recognition and certification. The recent initiatives to introduce the CBT approach in training delivery have also required the QABs to be strengthened to fulfil their role in assessment and certification of skills. Through the TVET Sector Support Programme, the NAVTTC has been conducting training of assessors and certifying assessors from QABs as well as those from private and public sector TVET institutes.

Among the notable quality assurance mechanisms introduced in recent years, the NAVTTC provides accreditation to TVET institutes with the aim of introducing minimum quality standards in institutional governance and management. Most of these quality assurance initiatives, however, are in their nascent stages and face considerable challenges before they can be widely implemented. The fact that the human resources available to the NAVTTC are extremely limited is seriously hindering the Commission's attempts to adequately cover present demand, given the thousands of institutions operating in the sector.

Social inclusion

Examining Pakistan’s TVET provision situation disaggregated by gender reveals a skewed picture: the numbers of institutes admitting men and women are currently disproportionate, with far fewer for women than for men (see table 5).

Table 5: TVET institutes by gender of students admitted, 2018

Public				Private				Total			
Male	Female	Co-ed	Total	Male	Female	Co-ed	Total	Male	Female	Co-ed	Total
902	570	52	1,524	1,030	553	530	2,113	2,035	1,123	582	3,740

Source: Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2018b.

The figures continue to reveal the endemic bias when enrolments of men and women in institutes are examined. Out of the total enrolment of 433,237 across all provinces, women constitute only about one-third, with 147,811 currently enrolled (2018). Examining the gender ratio of teachers currently employed in the TVET sector (combined for both private and public sectors), it is notable that, out of the total 18,207 teachers, only 4,304 are women, representing only 31 per cent (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2018b). These numbers present a major challenge to achieving equal access to quality TVET education for girls and women in the country.

There is a dearth of sex-disaggregated data and information on women's participation in the TVET sector on both the demand and the supply side, thus making it difficult to establish trends and to identify any shift in trends in terms of enrolment patterns, choice of trades in which to train and rate of transition into the workforce.



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Vocational education and training opportunities for women are currently limited to a narrow range of female-dominated fields that reinforce gender stereotypes. Girls and women usually dominate the “traditional female occupations” training programmes, such as tailoring and beauty therapy, while boys and men predominate in “traditional male occupations”, such as carpentry, motor mechanics and engineering. These gender-typical training pathways lead to low-income earning opportunities for women in comparison to men.

Access issues within the TVET environment also have a gendered dimension. Mobility remains a key challenge to women’s participation in institutional training, with women experiencing a “distance penalty” in terms of their ability to access training facilities due to social and cultural constraints.

In some cases, particularly for enrolment in technical trades courses, girls face entry barriers as admission requirements include minimum academic qualifications beyond primary level.

In most rural areas, girls drop out of school after the primary level (fifth grade) due to access issues in general education as well as cultural barriers. The current minimum educational qualification criteria for technical training therefore lead to their exclusion from those trades with higher income-earning potential.

In the absence of data, it is difficult to assess how the TVET sector is currently addressing these issues of inclusion, particularly with regard to reaching out to people with disabilities and other marginalized groups. A review of the current programmes does reveal several one-off projects in which specific marginalized groups have been targeted by different institutions. Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTTC), for example, designed a training programme³ on industrial stitching targeting the transgender community in a district in Punjab province. However, most programmes appear to be one-off initiatives rather than forming part of targeted long-term training plans focusing on inclusivity.

³ See <http://www.pvtc.gop.pk/Collaborations.aspx>.

Key challenges

1 **Poor “brand” equity.**

One persistent issue for TVET and skills development in Pakistan is the population’s overall response to the concept of vocational education. Despite the growing demand for more and better skills training, TVET has poor “brand” equity in comparison to general education and has traditionally been seen as a back-up option for students who drop out of the academic system. This perception has hindered the development of skills training as a credible alternative to traditional academic routes. Since the 1980s, TVET has existed as a separate track, disconnected from the general education system in the country with no clear pathways between the two systems.

2 **Overlaps in institutional arrangement, role and remit.**

Examining the various challenges at the point of TVET delivery, it is noticeable that there is some overlap in roles between the NAVTTC at the centre and the TEVTAs at the provincial level, following the reorganization of remits and roles after devolution. The duplication in roles appears to be the result of institutions at both federal and provincial level not fully transitioning to the new institutional arrangements. There are some overlaps at both the strategic level in policy formulation and the operational level in implementation of TVET services. These interdependencies are often not clear and complementarity of the roles between the two levels is not currently being fully exploited. While reform efforts in the past have focused on this issue as part of improving governance, there is still a clear need to develop synergies between the various TVET institutions.

3

Private sector collaboration.

One of the markers of a close collaboration with the private sector is its inclusion in the governance structures of the TEVTAs. Currently, the degree of inclusion varies widely between the four provinces, with limited private sector representation in their respective Boards. For example, institutional linkages with Chambers of Trade and Commerce and other employers' bodies, such as the Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP), are non-existent or ad hoc at best. These linkages are particularly important in the context of apprenticeship and adoption of a dual training approach, as well as for job placement in industry. In addition, local level engagement with the private sector, particularly in the delivery system, continues to be virtually non-existent. As market relevance is highly contextualized and localized, it is critical to engage with local employers in order to ensure that TVET provision aligns with market demand. Private sector participation diminishes further at the institute level in the current scenario. While the local level management structures, such as Institute Management Committees, are, in principle, constituted in a way that ensures the inclusion of the private sector, in most cases these structures are not fully functional. Decision-making remains centralized with local structures having minimal autonomy to function independently.

4 **Narrow approach to skills development.**

While, in recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need to enhance the employability of young people through imparting a broader skills set, comprising both technical and transferrable core skills, the TVET sector currently lacks a coherent and systematic approach to addressing the issue. There is no common definition or consensus regarding what constitutes the critical skills that are particularly relevant to successful employment transition. There are no nationally consistent standards or qualifications that define and address these skills. In the absence of a commonly agreed core skills framework for the TVET sector, the process of integrating core skills into the training curriculum remains piecemeal and unstructured.

5 Lack of market research.

The current provision of TVET is highly supply driven, with most training programmes designed without any market research being undertaken. Compounding the lack of reliable data is the shortage of administrative proficiency in skills analysis and forecasting of market needs experienced by most TVET service providers. The lack of localized market research in the sector continues to create skills mismatches, leading to poor employment outcomes.

6 Wage and salaried employment centric approach.

Most of the current TVET programmes are designed to prepare people for paid employment and many focus on employment in large enterprises with little to offer in terms of entrepreneurship development. Moreover, when it is offered, entrepreneurship education is rudimentary, focusing only on imparting knowledge on enterprise development, rather than imparting the skills and attitudes which form an essential aspect of enterprise development.

The way forward





1 Reinforce the involvement of the private sector.

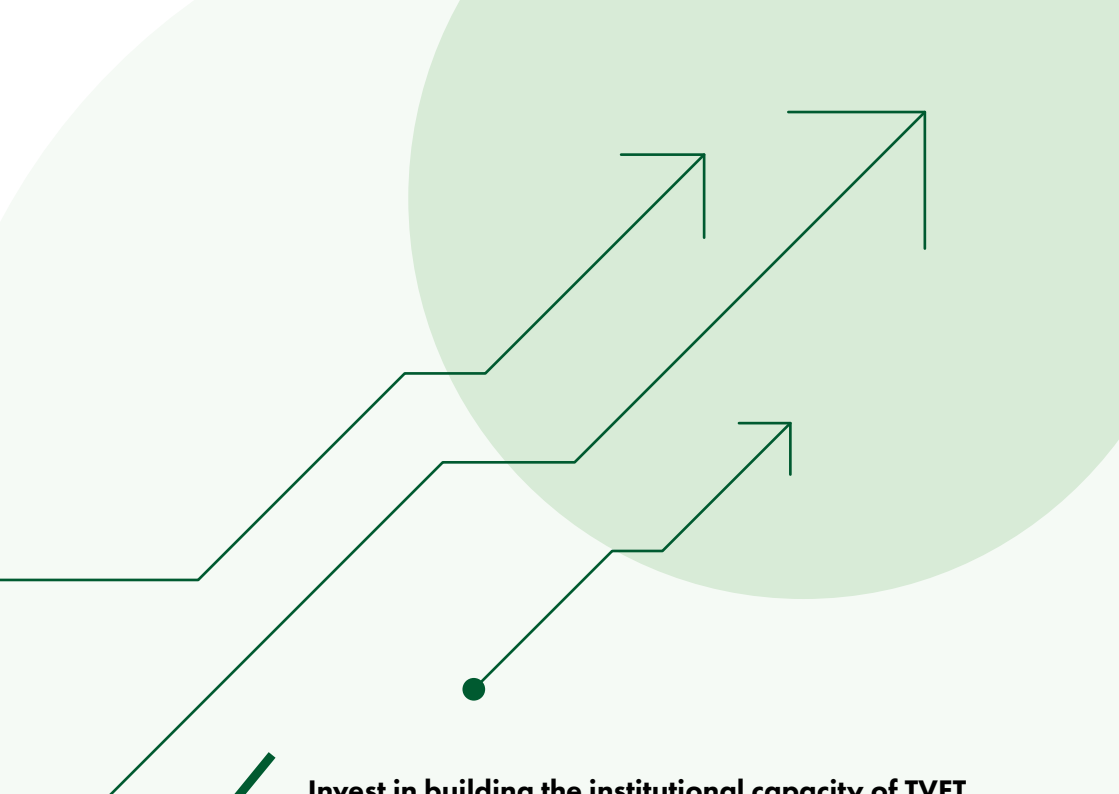
The present coverage of the TVET delivery system is very low. Reliance on public sector provision alone will not yield the required results. A gradual shift in the current delivery system is necessary, with the private sector undertaking the bulk of the service provision and taking action to strengthen the regulatory role of public sector institutions in setting and monitoring standards. A key entry point for engagement, therefore, would be the institutional capacity development of public sector TVET actors to assume a regulatory role. Another strand for capacity development could focus on building the institutional capacity to develop and manage public–private partnership models for TVET delivery.

2 Integrate sustainable development and environmental issues into existing qualifications.

TVET is increasingly regarded as the strategic entry point for promoting sustainable development. Increased scope for TVET is recognized in “sustainability industries”, such as environmental conservation and renewable energy production. Skills development responses need to focus on integrating sustainable development and environmental issues into existing qualifications and capturing new and emerging skill needs to promote the transition to evolving labour market requirements and assist in greening workplaces. A potential entry point could focus on bridging the market information gap through carrying out research to map the potential of green jobs and to establish recommendations for expanding training programmes in line with market demand.

3 Incorporating core skills element in education programming is crucial to increase the relevance and impact of TVET.

Employment outcomes can be greatly enhanced by coupling technical skills with universal, transferrable employability skills. This step will require multi-stakeholder consensus and, subsequently, development of a framework for life skills education.



4 Invest in building the institutional capacity of TVET providers to carry out focused work on gender.

Evidence from research clearly demonstrates that women's labour market participation as a result of skills training programmes offers transformative potential as an entry point to achieve gender equality. There is a need, therefore, to invest in building the institutional capacity of TVET providers to carry out focused work on gender. This should include expanding the menu of training offerings for women to include market-based skills as well as promoting traditionally male-dominated professions and trades for uptake by women. Measures should be implemented to increase the capacity of TVET providers to conduct periodic assessments and gender-differentiated analysis of the skills programmes on offer.

5 Improve workers' representation.

The current skills anticipation and provision systems lack workers' voices and participation. Both mechanisms need to be inclusive of workers' representation.

6 Strengthen the labour market information system in terms of both improving the quality of data collection and encouraging the use of information for evidence-based planning.

The current gap can be bridged by setting up Labour Market Observatories in collaboration with industry stakeholders to validate, analyse and identify trends within the available data and supplement them with additional sectoral knowledge in order to determine the best response for training design and delivery.

7

Challenge the current urban and wage and salaried employment centric perception of TVET.

Given the context, entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development should be encouraged and promoted through engagement with the wider entrepreneurship ecosystem, including business support organizations, financial institutions for establishing incubation centres, accelerators and business challenge platforms and by expanding the business development services market.

8

Establish a monitoring strategy for TEVTA graduates.

Once their training is complete, it is crucial not to lose sight of graduates, as vital information on the number of trainees who have secured jobs or started their own businesses is currently being lost. To inform policy implementation on an ongoing basis, it would be ideal if graduates' progress could be tracked over, say, a five-year period. Evidence of the practical benefits to be gleaned from following the technical education route would be influential in boosting the image of TVET and promoting its uptake as a path of first choice.

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