



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**The Dysfunctional Aspects of Skills Development in Balochistan: A Descriptive Study**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study explores the dysfunctional aspects of skills development in Balochistan. The study employs descriptive research design to illustrate thematically the dysfunctional nature and extent of skills development in the province of Balochistan. The desktop survey approach gets relevant information and data from existing literature, research studies, official reports, and monographs in the context of skills development. The observations in field visits of more than 20 skills development institutions for authentication of the reports are also incorporated in thematic analysis. The results show that the existing structure of skills development is intact partially and has many administrative, functional, skill gap, less competency, insufficient earnings, cascading nature of skills provision, and limited fundings for skills development in the province. The labor markets outcomes of skills development provision of the province may likely not bring decent work opportunities, sufficient earnings, and socioeconomic development for the provincial labor force. The results imply for non-seriousness of skills development departments and authorities via dysfunctionality mechanism on the part of stakeholders of skills provision in the province. The policy implications of serious policy and implementations strategies are required for effective skills development structure to skilling the provincial labor markets for demand driven occupations in the province.

**KEYWORDS** Dysfunctionality, Labor Market Outcomes, Skills Development, Socioeconomic Development

**Introduction**

Skills development plays an important role for human resource development, labor productivity, earning prospects, and employability of a country. The basic skills development are primary tasks the countries invest into and actively implement for ensuring human resource development for the needs of different economic sectors to perform well (Ananiadou et al, 2004). The studies of Blundell, Dearden and Meghir (1996) have strong implications that functional and effective training programs are basic determinants of socioeconomic development, prospects of labor markets outcomes, political and social benefits, and other societal fortunes accrued to both individuals and economics of different countries of the world.

Similarly, the human capital theory distinguishes between specific and general trainings of skills development for the overall socioeconomic benefits to both the labor markets and economics of different countries across the globe (Kuzminov, Sorokin & Froumin, 2019). In this context, the classical studies of Romer (2003) and Kenen (1970)

have strongly linked the importance of human capital formation through education and skills with growth and other comparative advantages in different economic sectors of economies.

The latest studies of Mellander and Florida (2021) and Ahmed and Shah (2022) have demonstrated the rise and identification of demand driven skills necessary for human capital, creation of innovations and inventions, employability, and regional socioeconomic development in many specific and broader contexts of development. These studies recognize the contributions of the insights of classical studies of human capital and skills development of Becker (1964, 1994), Mincer (1974), and Reder (1967) for enhancing the productivity skills of individuals in labor markets of different economic sectors.

Notwithstanding the importance of skills development for human capital formation, the case of Balochistan in terms of skills development is not in line with the recommendations of Burgess (2016) and Weisbrod (1962) for effectively functioning the provincial skills development sector for better labor market outcomes and socioeconomic development. That is why the provincial skills development faces dysfunctionality in terms of skills provisions and its overall structure (Ahmed et al, 2020; Ramazan & Mukhtar, 2003).

In the above-mentioned context, the study further presents research problem statement, objectives of the study, research methodology, thematic analysis of the results, and policy recommendations in the following.

### **Literature Review**

The national information skills system (NSIS) gives a snapshot of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) data about skills institutes, trades, accreditation of skills certificates and diplomas, and other aspects of skills diaspora of the country of Pakistan. The provincial data of skills development in Balochistan has very less information about all the NSIS information and may likely not reflect the dysfunctionality aspects of skills development in terms of true labor market demands, institutional framework, the distribution of skills across rural and urban labor market demands, and departmental issues of TVET allied departments of the province of Balochistan (Ahmed et al, 2020).

The integrative framework of social systems are studies by Beauchamp and Anderson (2010) and indicated many dysfunctional aspects. The study explores mediating roles of social skills necessary for the development of effective skills systems to work better. This study also implies for exploring other skills development for human and social capital formation.

The studies about the skills and educational programs for implementation and effectiveness of human capital through multidisciplinary social fields are compiled by Durlak (2016). It indicated that social, emotional and other types of skills are necessary to be explored for knowing the factors to be part of skills development policies. All these factors are necessary for social and emotional learnings to be integral ingredients of relevant policy guidelines to develop educational and learning skills across all educational levels.

It is necessary to know the issues and hindrances of the provincial skills development structure for ensuring the sector-wise economic aspects of TVET skills in Balochistan. Since, the policy insights depend upon the nature and extent of dysfunctionality as per the concerned literature on human capital formation demand for first diagnosing the weaknesses and challenges and then designing for skills development approaches to the targets of human capital formation (Ahmed et al, 2018; Pakistan-Vision-2025, 2015; Ivey, 1992; Preston & Green, 2003; Hawkins & Winter, 1995). In this context, the study put forth the following objectives.

### **Material and Methods**

The study employs descriptive research design to illustrate thematically the dysfunctional nature and extent of skills development in the province of Balochistan. The desktop survey approach is used to get relevant information and data from existing literature, research studies, official reports, and monographs in the context of skills development (Ahmed et al, 2020, 2021). The study encompasses to get data and relevant information from the officially available data of NAVTTC, Balochistan Technical and Vocational Training Authority (B-TEVTA), data from seven skills development departments of the Government of Balochistan, local and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, 10 relevant research studies, five reports, two books, and several existing literatures. The gathered information is thematically analyzed via NVIVO software for getting the objectives of this study. The themes are made on frequently available terminologies associated with "dysfunctionality" main word associated with meaningful text from the set of selected 25 documents cited in the study. The study follows the descriptive research design suggested for qualitative studies undertakings in the fields of social sciences and usage of NVIVO software for the purpose of this study (Andrew Edwards- Jones, 2014; Jackson, Bazeley & Bazeley, 2019; Wong, 2008; Zamawe, 2015). The observations in field visits of more than 20 skills development institutions for authentication of the reports are also incorporated in thematic analysis.

### **Results and Discussion**

The following themes are reflected from the analyzed information and data described in the research methodology from the texts of the selected documents. The dysfunctionality aspects are thematically described with intended efforts by the authors to proper arrangement of the themes to easily describe the objectives of the study as per the conventions recommended by the studies of Castleberry (2014), Constantinou, Georgiou and Perdikogianni. (2017), and Suzuki (2009) in the context of themes saturation and clarity for qualitative research protocols.

#### **Weak skills development structure**

The skills development in both the technical and vocational trainings are very weak for skilling the provincial labor force. The skills are irrelevant and do not fulfill the demands of industry, agriculture, and service sectors of the province. There are only a set of 43 skills in technical and vocational are disseminated by all the public and private sectors skills development departments, technical and vocational training centers, NGOs programs for skills development, and funded by NAVTTC and international organizations like, GIZ. The competency-based training of GIZ in different trades of skills provisions through different local skills institutes is likely a failure venture in terms of sustainable employment and earnings for individuals.

### **Non-implementation of relevant curricula**

The skills curricula in practical and workshop skills are not properly disseminated to make trainees equipped with demand-driven skills both in technical and vocational skills across 80% of the institutes in Balochistan. The students of different skills programs lack to understand proper theory, insufficient hands-on practical works, internships during and after the trainings, incomplete apprenticeships, absenteeism and irregularity, less enrollment in rural training center funded by NAVTTC and GIZ programs, somewhere only documentary but no classes for trainings, insufficient vigilance and improper accountability on the outcomes of these skills development programs, and many other aspects of non-implementations were reported by the observers.

### **Administrative issues among skills development departments**

The provincial departments that are mandated for skills development are observed to have many administrative issues for mandate and responsibilities of skills to the labor force of Balochistan. The B-TEVTA is dysfunctional as per its mandate describe in the Act-2011 of the skills development authority status. The Rules of Business (2011) of the Government of Balochistan has overlapping mandates and responsibilities for four provincial departments and none of these four departments recognize in practice the mandate of B- TEVTA. The administrative issues are also hindering the skills development programs and their funds allocation in the pursuance of skills development and its administrative decomposition in different areas of human capital formation.

### **Dysfunctional skills development programs and institutes**

There are many skills development institutes that are not functional properly for skills development. The skills development programs are not comprehensive and most of the programs are irrelevant to the needs of rural economies in the province. The skills development programs of NAVTTC and GIZ were observed one model fit for all segments of rural and urban labor force and very less focusing the male-female gender sensitivities of labor market demands. The information gained during field observations and present on the records of GIZ, NAVTTC and local NGOs like, BRSP, are not matched for skills development in terms of numbers of functional institutes, numbers of ongoing programs, enrollment statistics, and competency-based programs in most of the rural and some of the urban areas across the 25 districts of Balochistan.

### **Supply and demand skill gaps**

The text is evident of the fact that a very limited number of vocational and technical skills trades are disseminated by all the skills development structure of the province. The total number of all skills trades are less than 50 in supply from the TVET structure and more than 400 skills trades in both the category of vocational and technical skills are required by the provincial labor markets in Balochistan. There was no documentary proof found in the text to show investment in diversifying and increasing the number of skills trades to fill the existing supply-demand gaps in the context of annually less funds allocation from the provincial budgets.

### **Less competency in training skills**

The provincial capital city Quetta and the Hub city of Lasbela districts are comparatively higher economic and industrial zones of the province. The industry in these two cities demands qualified and competent skills labor force and the reports show that the industries face lack of local and provincial skilled labor force. It was reported that technical and skilled labor force in most of the technical sides of these industries are out of the province labor force. The industry in Hub industrial zones prefers to hire skilled labor of Karachi and other parts of the province of Sindh and is likely to prefer less the unskilled provincial labor force of Balochistan. Similarly, the industrial firms in Quetta and other major cities of Balochistan are reported to employ more labor in technical sides of production from Punjab and Pakhtunkhwa provinces. The industrial firm managers have reported that the local skilled labor force of Balochistan are less skilled in having the same levels or qualification of either the technical and vocational skills as compared to those of skilled labor from Punjab, Pakhtunkhwa or Sindh.

### **Insufficient earnings**

The earnings of skilled labor force of Balochistan are reported less as compared to the skilled labor force of other provinces of Pakistan in the provincial labor force of Balochistan. It was also reported in the studies and reports that most of masons, building and concrete experts, barbers, cooks, managers, clerks, IT experts, office management, and in other technical and vocational fields belong to other than Balochistan provinces of Pakistan. The earnings of local labor force are almost 10% to a 25% less in local currency as compared to the skilled labor wages reported in other provinces of Pakistan.

### **Cascading nature of skills provision**

The skills in technical and vocational trades are not market oriented. The skills development provision is skewed to just three major cities of Balochistan. It was reported that 70% of the fundings and skills programs are confined to just three cities of Quetta, Sibi, and Hub areas of Balochistan. The rest of the 30 plus districts get less than 30% of the fundings for skills programs. Most of the private and NGO based skills development institutes are functional in times of available funding and behaving a rent seeking behavior in skills development funding seasons. It was also reported that some of the officials and associates of NGOs and international funding agencies have strong and implicit collusion with private skills development organizations and they implicitly are involved with corrupt practices to funds hunting, funds theft, commission gaining, and many other malpractices. All these personal and organizational behavior in the provincial skills development diaspora has contaminated the provincial structure of skills development and squeezed the provincial TVET structure to the stage of dysfunctionality levels for skills development in the province of Balochistan.

### **Limited funding for kills development**

The provincial skills development funding schemes are very less reported, and it is estimated that only less than 10% of the educational funds are allocated annually in the provincial budgets for skills development. The NAVTTC funding is also reported to be less than 5% of its total annual budgets at national levels for the province of Balochistan. The industry and other private sectors have no incentives for on-the-job training of the provincial labor force in Balochistan.

### **Less human capital formation**

The reports and documentary texts have also revealed that human capital formation through general education and basic skills are scarce in the province. There are around 44% illiteracy reported for the general male labor force of the province. The basic skills of numeracy and reading are also rare in the unskilled labor force that's why they are reported to have difficulties in getting skills and up-skilling as per the labor markets demands. The female of segment of the labor force are only 5% literate. The female labor force may not compete in skills acquisitions in most of the male-segment oriented skills and male-segment oriented labor market jobs in most of the economic sectors of the province. The overall human capital formation statistics of the labor markets are not promising for labor force to get more and relevant technical and vocational skills in the province.

### **Conclusion**

The study has pinpointed many administrative, legal, economic, social, technical, structural, financial, capacity limited, and other aspects of the existing skill development infrastructure of Balochistan. The skill development structure is not complete to provide necessary and relevant skills in technical and vocational trades to enhance skills levels of the provincial labor force. The descriptive analysis, through many skills relevant themes, has reviewed the available information on skills development of Balochistan. The field visits with the available literature on provincial skills development system illustrated many aspects of dysfunctional through thematic analysis derived from the available information and authenticated by observations. It is necessary to decrease the dysfunctional aspects of skills development structure of Balochistan for achieving the NAVTTC goals and Pakistan-Vision 2025 for social infrastructure development and human capital formation in Balochistan.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations may be put forth for policy implications to make the provincial skills development functional for human capital formation of the labor force.

1. The administrative issues of TVET allied departments must be solved as per the mandate of B-TEVTA described in the Rules of Business of Government of Balochistan.
2. There must be a minimum of 25% funds allocation for skills development in the provincial educational budget of the province.
3. There must be proper funding to the provincial universities that may work better for relevant and advance human capital formation through their advance departments and center of excellence in the technical and vocational fields of science and technology in the province.
4. The skills development programs of NAVTTC and national and international NGOs must be liaison with the skills demands in all the provincial economic sectors and their programs must not be designed as models of one size fit for all.
5. There must be an inclusive skills development strategy devised and implemented collaboratively from all the stakeholders of skills development to

enhance human capital formation of the provincial labor force in Balochistan.

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