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PRESIDENT XI'S POLICY FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION LESSONS FOR PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Poverty breeds malnutrition, deteriorates health, prevent access to health facilities and result in early death. Poverty is core problem for present day international community. Chinese premier Xi Jinping poverty alleviation strategy achieved United Nations (UN) 2030 agenda for sustainable development goal ten years ahead of schedule. World Bank (WB) acknowledges by 2017, poverty rate dropped from 81 percent in 1981 to 2.1 percent. Effective structural reforms helped in lifting 700 million Chinese out of arduous poverty. For completion of this study authors have applied qualitative explanatory method. Beijing allocated United States (US) \$ 13 billion, applied and relied on internal resources to lift millions of people out of poverty. Study proposes Xi poverty alleviation strategy/framework inherits lessons for Pakistan. Modified version of alleviation framework can be applied by Islamabad. It is execution of constructivism to avoid short comes and accrue benefits. Sino-Pakistan teamwork through institutional framework is implementation of theory of neo-liberalism. Paper identifies three types of poverty in Pakistan including systemic, socio-cultural and deliberately caused systemic poverty. Study concludes President Xi policy alone cannot deliver much in Pakistan. Largescale benefits can be achieved through amalgamation of President Xi and erstwhile Chinese Premier Deng Xiaoping poverty alleviation strategies. India state of Gujrat alone has seventeen operational major and minor ports in close proximity. Pakistan needs to draw lessons, develop and operationalize new ports to invest at grassroot level in human development. Parallel strategy of bottom-up and top-down approach is key to overcome economic crisis and alleviate poverty.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty is main concern for international community resulting in malnutrition, failure to have access to basic needs. It includes lack of food, shelter and clothing. Lack of access to health facilities is resulting in early deaths. Increased mortality rate is associated with poverty. Necessarily poverty is primary problem for present-day international community. Complete eradication of poverty is a difficult task to achieve. Global community allocated primary and secondary resources for poverty alleviation. According to World Bank definition people living on less than \$ 2 United States (US) dollar are living below poverty line. Poor people lack or deprived of basic/fundamental human necessities e.g. food, clean drinking water, shelter, education, sanitation and hygiene. The United Nation's Millennium Developmental Goals Sustainable Development Goals prioritize eradication of hunger and poverty.

This academic paper endeavors to bring into limelight Chinese Premier Xi Jinping's efforts to eradicate poverty in China. Understanding the definition of poverty from Beijing's lens is necessary. Earning less than United States (US) \$ 405 a year in 2015, US \$ 435 in 2016 a year is defined as poverty by Peoples Republic of China (PRC) (Lei, 2017). In the past 40 years various governments in China remained committed to eradicate poverty. Beijing has achieved significant achievement in global poverty reduction. Chinese governments' tireless efforts resulted in lifting 832 counties (Khaliq, 2020) and 850 million people out of extreme poverty (Xi Jinping's Poverty, n.d.). President Xi administration efforts from 2013 to 2016 managed to lift 55.64 million people out of poverty (Lei, 2017) in this struggle. President Xi launched largest campaign in Chinese history for poverty alleviation, to ensure better way of life and set course for prosperous society. Xi's efforts to completely eradicate poverty dates back to his 2015 speech (Xi Pledges to, 2015). Xi and his team pledged to completely eradicate poverty by lifting 700 million people out of poverty. Under the programme Chinese government allocated \$ 13 billion dollars for poverty alleviation. In 2020 Agriculture Development Bank of China provided 51 billion Euros in loans for poverty alleviation (China Ups Financial, 2020). Miracles of Chinese economy continue in various sectors including technology and science. Despite 1.4 million Chinese died of novel Covid-19 and another 60 million were affected Chinese economy embarked on the right track.

China's poverty rate is 0.6 percent as compared to US's 17.8 percent and Japan's 15.7 percent. On February 25, 2021 President Xi announced China eradicated poverty (Malindog-Uy, 2021). Triumph against extreme poverty is achieved by China within its borders through consolidated efforts. Incumbent administration is vigorously fighting against poverty, took considerable steps and it has made considerable achievements. However, the goal of complete eradication of poverty is yet to be achieved. This paper attempts to address questions e.g. has President Xi Jinping policy been successful in poverty alleviation? Has Xi administration taken appropriate measures to prevent people from falling back into extreme poverty in future? Can Chinese poverty alleviation model be applied elsewhere?

This paper has three segments. First briefly highlights relevant theoretical framework deemed appropriate for this study i.e. theory of liberalism and constructivism. Second segment of the study brings into limelight Chinese poverty alleviation stratagem. Different administrations have applied various policies for poverty alleviation subsequently leading to poverty eradication. However, notable economic frameworks capable of alleviating poverty are associated with former President Deng Xiaoping and incumbent President Xi Jinping. Third section briefly discusses application of Chinese stratagem in the light of constructivism and liberalism by Pakistan for poverty alleviation. Last segment concludes this paper.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

China is utilizing internal resources to overcome its internal problems e.g. to modernize PRC's society and alleviate poverty. Theory of internal balancing is deemed appropriate for completion of this academic research. Pakistan can observe President Xi's model, access it to overcome flaws in the poverty alleviation policy and sub-sequentially apply flawless policy for poverty alleviation. There are two theories that can be applied here first "**theory of constructivism.**" Theory asserts that learners not only receive/procure information they construct knowledge. In simple words derived information is analyzed to overcome inherited flaws and employ its better version for achieving substantial progress and sustainable development.

Sino-Pakistan cooperation at governmental level through institutional framework brings into play execution of neo-liberal institutionalism. Liberalism emphasizes to create conducive environment for the development of free market economy. It proposes political reforms, increased economic activities and institutional cooperation resulting in interdependence among states. Cooperation, interdependence and increased trade enables states to mutually benefit without going to war. Theory calls for emancipation of humans by providing them opportunities to become self-sufficient and escape poverty. However, neo-liberal approach to poverty eradication is confronted by as explains neo-classical theories of poverty (Davis & Sanchez-Martinez, 2015). Unseen forces beyond individual's control include barriers to education, poor health and barriers to employment. This study refers to it as deliberately caused systemic poverty.

Beijing introduced reforms essentially in the light of liberal agenda. Xi administration encouraged masses participation and empowered them by providing them required technical training, financial assistance and basic infrastructure to lift them out of poverty. Pakistan can learn from China's success story to reduce overall levels of poverty.

China's Poverty Alleviation Stratagem

Origins, experience and efforts to alleviate poverty in China is well documented in comprehensive paper released in April 2021 by the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China (Poverty Alleviation: China's, 2021). President Deng Xiaoping administration proposed three-pronged strategy in 13th Communist Party of China (CPC) National Congress; first to double the

Grass National Product (GNP) by the end of 20th century. Second significant step was to open China's coastal areas to the outside world. Further, subordinate interior areas of China to coastal areas. It was subsequently followed by major agriculture reforms to bring an end to stagnation in agriculture sector. Other reforms included development of township enterprises to increase income in rural areas, creation of poverty alleviation agencies, identification of key impoverished areas and agriculture development in three Western regions.

Public backing and political support various governments enjoyed in China was crucial element to lift millions of Chinese from poverty (Diallo, 2019). Chinese incumbent President well acknowledged significance of public support in eradication of poverty. Xi secured public support by personally visiting poverty hit-areas and issuing public statements to convince masses that government cares for them. His administration spent US \$ 246 billion on poverty eradication. Xi has asked masses particularly in rural areas to support government in its poverty alleviation policies (Malindog-Uy, 2021).

Wu Yusheng Gaibao's chief poverty alleviation official proposed idea to develop (Kwai) streaming/software application (Westcott & Wang, 2019) to circulate videos highlighting government's efforts to lift masses from poverty. Circulated videos brought into limelight developmental projects, government initiative, small industries created for individuals and self-employment opportunities created by government in rural areas. It realized masses significance of working in cooperation with government to reap benefits of poverty alleviation programme. Masses were encouraged to support government efforts in changing their ways of life. Consequentially, poverty was shaken off and millions of Chinese were lifted out of poverty.

Public support demands winning hearts and minds of the masses. Visits, rhetoric and social media application are part of public awareness campaign to bridge gap between PRC government and public. President Xi in an interview on February 25, 2021 (Xi Jinping Announces, 2021) emphasized that CPC made efforts since its foundation to eradicate poverty. Concentrated efforts are made to inform impoverished public about CPC's goal and Xi administration policies to provide better health facilities, education, electricity, fresh drinking water, housing and clothing to every Chinese citizen. A sense was created that successful poverty alleviation drive requires public support and day-to-day engagement. Xi administration substantial measures in the past five-years enabled Chinese people in rural areas to escape poverty at an average ratio of 37,000 people on daily basis. Poverty rate of 10.2 percent thus was reduced to 3.1 percent to 0.6 percent. President Xi claims that 832 national counties (Khaliq, 2020) and 128,000 villages (Krishnan, 2021) of China have been lifted out of poverty in past eight years.

Key takeaway gleaned from President Xi government poverty alleviation strategy is to focus on rural areas and particularly poor families/individuals. Miracle of poverty alleviation was achieved with financial support from state owned enterprises to eradicate poverty. In 2019, US\$ 4 billion was spent by state owned companies and various institution as a part of poverty relief programmes (China's SOEs Take, 2019). State Owned Enterprises have

established Government Relief Fund with US \$ 18.8 billion dedicated to eradicate poverty. PRC is providing vocational skills training to poor families and individuals instead of focusing on entire village (Islam, 2021). Millions of people have been lifted out of poverty. Secondly, special poverty alleviation monitoring teams have been formed. Primary task of specialized teams is to focus on poor families by providing vocational training and polishing their skills. Third, the focus of these teams has been expanded from individual families/units to counties, towns and districts. Poverty alleviation teams focuses on families/individuals to make sure they do not slip into the poverty. Targeted poverty alleviation strategy (Islam, 2021) focuses on industrial development, relocation, eco-compensation, education and social security. In addition, it observes every poor in pursuit to eradicate poverty.

Application of President Xi's Poverty Alleviation Model Elsewhere

Poverty eradication in neighboring China is an excellent example of success. Proposed solutions vary villagers are encouraged to establish small enterprises, engage in e-commerce and boost tourism across China. Xi has encouraged leaders around the globe to implement Chinese model for poverty alleviation. PRC provided US\$ 59 billion as of July, 2019 to 166 developing countries (Rogers, 2019) in attempt to alleviate poverty. Pakistan can cope with poverty, lift people from miserable poor conditions, decrease mortality rate and stabilize economy. His poverty eradication framework with several modification suggested by theory of constructivism can achieve this ambitious goal. Beside application of constructivism Sino-Pak cooperation brings into play application of **neo-liberalism or liberal institutionalism** for poverty eradication.

Xi's Poverty Eradication Framework,

Critical evaluation of President Xi's poverty eradication efforts brings into limelight fact that structural reforms and a cohesive approach achieved desired results. Targeted poverty alleviation strategy was focused particularly on rural areas. This academic paper has referred to Chinese strategy as Xi's poverty eradication framework. In the first phase identification of extreme poverty hit areas is foremost task, ensuring moderate prosperity. Linking rural areas with developed cities to prevent imbalance between rural and urban areas is significant aspect of this framework. Second phase is based on precise and targeted efforts by creating special task forces deployed in poverty hit areas to support poor and enforce government's poverty eradication efforts. In the third phase tasks forces deployed in poverty-hit areas provided technical assistance, vocational training to eight million Chinese, health facilities as per requirement of individuals and financial support in establishing businesses. Government enrolled 200,000 dropped students to resume their education. Employment opportunities created in rural areas prevented population influx in urban centers. In several cases individuals leaving their families behind in rural areas to work in megacities have returned as jobs were created at their doorsteps. Impoverished Chinese individuals have worked in collaboration with government to fight poverty improve their life standards. Finally, poverty alleviation efforts necessitate demand to continuously engage central leadership with poor through frequent visits of poverty hit areas to get firsthand

information about poverty alleviation efforts. Prolonged efforts, patience, public and government institution's support together will build the momentum to shake off poverty.

Applying Chinese Model for Poverty Alleviation in Pakistan.

Poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) could not produce progress on workings of poverty nor generate debate (Hussain, 2018). PRSP, SAP and other initiatives including Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) failed in Pakistan. It is unclear which type of poverty eradication strategy would be pursued to alleviate poverty, rebuild economy and lift people out of poverty. Data compiled by Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2015, overall 24.3 percent of population was living below poverty line. Data compiled in 2019 states 67/1000 babies born in Pakistan die before their 5th birthday. 1.3% of employed population lives below poverty line (Pakistan and ADB, n.d.). World Bank (WB) used US \$3.2 per day known as lower-middle- income poverty rate to compile report on Pakistan. The report covering 2020-21 is alarming. Level of poverty increased to 39.3 percent in 2020-21 and remain at 39.2 percent in 2021-22 (Haider, 2021). Poverty ratio in urban centers is lesser than Pakistani rural areas. In 2019-20 over two million people were living below poverty line (Poverty & Equity, 2021). Depreciation in currency is further increasing poverty. Economic inequalities are increasing, employment opportunities are shrinking, cost of education has been doubled and health facilities are beyond the reach of poor population. Increasing illiteracy rate and lack of vocational training would further push people below poverty line. Key takeaway gleaned from above passage is Pakistan is faced with multidimensional poverty. Types of poverty in Pakistan includes first systemic poverty caused by dysfunctional economic and educational systems. Second, social and cultural factors causing poverty. Third systemic poverty caused by elected members to deliberately keep remote areas underdeveloped. People are on purpose deprived of education and health facilities resulting in systemic poverty. Illiteracy makes it more difficult to escape poverty causing debt, economic-psychological stress, negative consequences for health, food and transportation. Illiteracy results in odd jobs with low income so cost of living increases. It prevents individuals to support family. Systemic poverty causes persistent poverty in comparison to those who are educated. Causes of systemic poverty are beyond control of humans and well explained by neoclassical theories (Davis & Sanchez-Martinez, 2015) of poverty.

Worrisome situation necessitates implementation of neoliberal framework for poverty alleviation, economic inequalities and to increase economic growth rate. Economic crisis is increasing poverty, depreciating Pakistani currency, inflation, fuel charges resulting in price hike of basic commodities. Poor population is at cusps of malnutrition leading towards deteriorating health. Costly health facilities prevent poor from receiving medical treatment. Consequentially, it will result in early deaths. Pakistani government under poverty alleviation strategy needs to provide soft loans, develop infrastructure, vocational institutions by applying Chinese poverty alleviation model. Sino-Pak cooperation for achieving abovementioned objectives through application of Xi's Poverty Alleviation Framework in the light of liberalism is seemingly

viable option. However, programme should be launched after consultative government procedure. Every strategy inherits flaws so successful execution Xi's framework in Pakistan requires slight amendments in the light of "**theory of constructivism.**" Modifications are essential as available literature on poverty alleviation programme in China has identified flaws. Secondly, social, cultural and societal norms in Pakistan are different than Chinese values.

The acquired plan necessitates amendments to employ improved version for achieving substantial progress in poverty eradication, sustainable economic growth and sustainable development. It necessitates President Deng Xiaoping's policy to link coastal areas with urban centers. Pakistan has two international ports including Karachi and Gawadar. Poverty alleviation efforts requires Pakistani authorities to employ Deng Xiaopeng and Xi Jinping's policies in parallel. It necessitates improving existing infrastructure at minor and minor ports i.e. Jewani, Pasni, and Ormara. Develop, operationalize and link additional medium ports with urban centers. Critics can oppose suggestion to develop additional ports on several grounds ranging from waste of financial resources to lack of need for development and operationalization of additional ports. Close proximity of seventeen Indian operational ports including Jakhau, Mandvi, Vadinar, Kandla, Navlakhi, Jamnagar, Sikka, Bedi, Bhavanagar, Dahej, MagdalaMundra, Salaya, Okha, Porbandar, Muldwarka, Veraval and Jafarabad (Port Information Services, n.d.) in Indian state of Gujrat on the West coast alone is befitting response to critics. Development of additional ports will provide employment opportunities to youth ranging from construction sector to information technology (IT), development of basic infrastructure, roads, highways, health centers, shipyards, airports, new housing societies, educational institutions and converting small towns into mega cities. Development of new ports is crucial to invest in human development. It is key to play pivotal role to alleviate poverty at gross root level, narrow gap of development through applying parallel strategy of top-down and bottom-up approach. Increase in purchase power of newly employed individuals will facilitate lifting hundreds of families out of extreme poverty. Development of new megacities will reduce concentration of population in already established metropolitans including Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Multan etc. Consequentially, problems related to housing, provision of safe drinking water, traffic, health issues and employment will be resolved. Learning from existing transportation problems new cities can be developed on lines to provide public transport facilities to masses. In 2016, PRC encouraged people to relocate near urban centers rising China's urbanization rate from 17.92% to 57.3% (Amodu, 2020). In 2015, alone Chinese authorities supported 200,000 shopkeepers and employ one million people through e-commerce. Learning from PRC e-commerce can be encouraged in new urban centers to create additional employment opportunities (Amodu, 2020).

Coping with problem of funds allocation for poverty eradication requires financial support from state enterprises in Pakistan in first phase. Fund raised will be utilized to setup vocational educational institutions/training centers particularly in urban areas. Illiteracy and unskilled population have proved to be a liability and burden on state economy. Vocational training will convert Pakistani youth into skilled workers providing employment opportunities in

various fields of life. This pragmatic approach will provide employments to youth at their doorsteps. Other options of self-employment include provision of toolkits, soft loans, farms animals and opportunities to seek jobs abroad as skilled labours. Government assistance in settling skilled labour abroad will result in acquiring foreign remittances. This strategy necessitates creation of mechanism to raise income of impoverished individuals and families. Further, monitoring teams a replica of Chinese assessment teams will ensure checks and balances to prevent people from plunging back into poverty and waste of resources. Framework can provide solution to unemployed youth in urban areas preventing influx of masses from rural areas to urban center. Utilizing potential of youth will prevent imbalance between rural and urban areas. It will address financial inequalities and increase masses purchase power resolving issues related to malnutrition, health facilities, education, housing, clothing and joblessness.

CONCLUSION

Poverty alleviation is a difficult task requires national leadership vision and support from general masses. First task of this academic research was to probe whether President Xi was successful in eradicating poverty? It is observed that President Xi continued his predecessors' policy of poverty alleviation and successfully achieved poverty eradication target set in UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development. This goal was achieved 10 years ahead of schedule. Xi issued guidelines for poverty alleviation. He personally monitors poverty alleviation schemes and programs by visiting faraway areas and villages of China. Ten million in 832 counties are lifted out of poverty. Chinese authorities have successfully eradicated extreme poverty. It helps the author to conclude that President Xi policies are successful. Verifiable data mentioned in the passage below further authenticates abovementioned claim.

Second question in this research was "What is appropriate theory for the completion of this research?" Chinese governments have focused on utilizing internal resources. Theory of internal balancing advocates on utilizing internal resources. It is safe to assert that by utilizing internal resources China is self-sufficient in every walk of life. Consequentially, above mentioned theory is considered appropriate for completion of this academic research and to explain Chinese poverty alleviation model. Third, question in this study was "has Chinese government taken appropriate measures to prevent people from falling back into extreme poverty in future?" A closer look at Xi's policies with verifiable figures to provide support to 200,000 shopkeepers, one million jobs in villages, development of new road, raising urbanization ratio to 57.3 percent in 2016 and lifting millions of Chinese out of extreme poverty is beginning of new era. Infrastructure laid by Xi administration will help prevent people from falling back into poverty. However, success of this claim requires wait and see policy. Fourth task in this paper was to attempts to probe whether Chinese model as President Xi claims can be applied elsewhere for poverty alleviation. It is in this background stated that Pakistani ruling elite can also apply Xi's approach to monitor and devise plans for poverty alleviation. Chinese approach to alleviate poverty is best suited practically proven and substantial strategy.

Poverty alleviation, improving standards of living, provision of food, shelter and basic health facilities are not primary responsibilities of socialist country. Lessons can be drawn; it can be generalized and universally applied. Pakistan can also apply Chinese model for alleviation of widespread poverty. However, deliberately caused systemic poverty remains fundamental hurdle in eradicating poverty particularly in remote/ rural areas. Lack of political support from political quarters for continuity of poverty eradication programmes is yet another major issue.

Development and deployment of specially trained poverty alleviation strategy implementation teams is prerequisite to alleviate and prevent return poverty. Efforts, policies and poverty alleviation programmes demands from Pakistani leadership to convene regular meetings to ensure efficacy and acquire desired results. Further, strength and weaknesses of poverty alleviation schemes will be assessed with an objective to improve and promote effective practices. South Asian state needs to identify and lend support to impoverished people, villages and regions without any discrimination. This step will be taken in the light of former President Deng Xiaoping and incumbent President Xi's policies.

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