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**How Pakistan's
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Climate
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Saudi Arabia: Woman Sentenced to 34 Years for Tweets

Repression Increases Following Easing of Diplomatic Isolation

A Saudi appeals court in early August 2022 dramatically increased the prison sentence of a Saudi doctoral student from 6 years to 34 years based solely on her Twitter activity. Human Rights Watch said today. The sentence is believed to be the longest ever imposed on a Saudi woman for her peaceful online expression.

In late 2021, the Special Criminal Court, the country's counterterrorism tribunal, sentenced Salma al-Shehab to six years in prison for her tweets. She appealed the sentence contending that she did not know that her Twitter activity amounted to a crime and that her following base of about 2,000 was too small to "disrupt the order and fabric of society." On August 9, 2022, the appeals court ruled, instead, to increase her sentence, finding that the original sentence failed to achieve "restraint and deterrence."

"Even for Saudi Arabia, the 34-year sentence imposed on al-Shehab for peaceful expression is preposterous," said Sarah Yager, Washington



women in particular. The United States, France, and other governments that have diplomatically embraced the kingdom should promptly and publicly condemn this ruling." Court documents reviewed by Human Rights Watch indicate that al-Shehab was sentenced

terrorism," 10 years for "providing support to those who seek to disrupt the public order, undermine the security of the society, and the stability of the state by following and retweeting," 5 years for "creating an online account to commit any of the acts outlawed by the counterterrorism law," and 5 years for "broadcasting false and malicious rumors."

The court sentenced her to another year in prison under the anti-cybercrime law for "creating an online presence that disrupts public order." The presiding judge also added a discretionary 5-year sentence. In addition to the combined 34-year-sentence, the court issued a subsequent travel ban for 34 years that would begin after her prison term, and an order to confiscate her devices and close her Twitter account. The authorities detained al-Shehab in January 2021 while she was visiting Saudi Arabia and a few days prior to her planned return to the United Kingdom, where she was a PhD candidate in her final year

at the School of Medicine at the University of Leeds studying new techniques in oral and dental medicine. Al-Shehab has two children, ages 6 and 4. The appeals court did not clarify which tweets prompted al-Shehab's arrest. Human Rights Watch reviewed al-Shehab's current Twitter account and found that most tweets over the past four years related to her family and women's rights issues in Saudi Arabia, none of which advocated or endorsed violence.

The Saudi government is notorious for repressing public dissent and has a well-established record of attempting to infiltrate technology platforms and use advanced cyber surveillance technology to spy on dissidents. Earlier in August, a court in California in the United States convicted a former Twitter employee of failing to register as an agent for Saudi Arabia alongside other charges relating to his accessing of users' private data. Given this context, Human Rights Watch previously has



director at Human Rights Watch. "Saudi authorities clearly feel empowered to crush any dissent and Saudi

under Saudi's counterterrorism law to 8 years in prison for "supporting those who incite

also called for Google to halt its decision to establish a new Cloud region in Saudi Arabia until it can clearly outline steps to mitigate adverse human rights abuses.

The Saudi government has also encouraged other citizens to engage in online surveillance through the Saudi phone app Kollona Amn (We Are All Security). The app is described as a tool for citizens to report any kind of criminal activity, including any online "attacks," "defamation," or "penetration of social media accounts." An article in The Guardian found that al-Shehab may have been reported on Kollona Amn, which may have prompted her arrest. In November 2020, she posted screenshots of her interactions with another Saudi account that claimed to have reported her on the app after she posted a mildly critical tweet about a new Saudi public transportation contract.

Human Rights Watch has long documented the Saudi government's flagrant abuse of the vague provisions in its counterterrorism law and anti-cybercrime law to silence dissent. The broad definition of terrorism allows for targeting

property, and seize assets without judicial oversight.

A statement by the University of Leeds expressed "deep concern" about the recent development in al-Shehab's case. Human rights groups expressed concern that govern-



peaceful criticism. Furthermore, the counterterrorism law undermines due process and fair trial rights because it grants the agencies of the Public Prosecution and the Presidency of State Security the authority to arrest and detain people, monitor their communications and financial data, search their

ments such as the US Biden administration and the government of President Emmanuel Macron in France have given Saudi Arabia a blank check to repress human rights. Members of Parliament in the United Kingdom tweeted in condemnation of the ruling and criticized the lack of UK government action to hold a

"friend and ally" accountable on human rights.

The US State Department spokesperson said that it is "studying" the case and commented in a news conference that "exercising the freedom of expression to advocate for rights of women should not be criminalized." However, President Joe Biden's trip to Saudi Arabia in July was seen by many as a victory for Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and a failure to secure a commitment to halt the clampdown on freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association.

In late July, President Macron hosted Mohammed bin Salman for a meeting at the Elysée Palace in Paris, another indication of the end of Saudi Arabia's diplomatic isolation for human rights violations.

"A 34-year prison term for a Saudi woman for a small social media presence is a clear indicator that the Saudi leadership is ramping up repression as it emerges from its diplomatic isolation. Al-Shehab's outrageous sentence signals that the Saudi authorities are now going full steam to crush any and all dissent," said Yager.

What can get you in trouble for anti-war speech in Russia?

After Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, Russian authorities ruthlessly escalated repression and censorship of free speech. They adopted new censorship laws which, among other things, criminalized "dissemination of deliberately false information about the use of Russian Armed Forces," and set out penalties ranging from fines to up to 15 years in prison.

By mid-July 2022, Russian human rights defenders reported that authorities had launched at least 70 criminal cases on such charges. The risk of criminal prosecutions forced the closure of what remained of independent media outlets in Russia, and the exile of numerous human

rights activists, independent journalists, and critics. New laws ban "public actions aimed at discrediting" the Russian

Armed Forces or other government agencies abroad. Hundreds of administrative cases have been opened, and



new administrative and criminal cases are being opened every day. Repeat offenses may trigger criminal prosecution and imprisonment.

Russian law enforcement has detained thousands of peaceful protesters on these charges. In May 2022, the first criminal case was opened against a "repeated offender" for social media posts. Russian authorities also use other laws to punish critical speech about the war.

Below are examples of the extremely broad range of legitimate, peaceful speech or actions that have triggered criminal charges and administrative penalties.

World of Silent People



Numerous people believe that Pakistan's offices are crowded with lewd bosses. Frequently, working females have stories regarding their distortions: the trivial ones contain a glance and a grope, an undesirable text message; the significant ones include offers for meeting outside the office, on dinner or lunch with, job protection, rewards, and professional reputations hanging on the line. In the competitively growing Pakistani workplace, countless females continue to be prey for men with authority. A culture of harassment is embedded in the foundations of societies worldwide. When women refuse to accept harassment culture silently, they increasingly suffer workplace harassment, gender discrimination and threats or use of violence all around the world. Harassment laws and their engagement with legal instruments, illustrate social differences and require the government to recognise societal power structures. While all disciplines are equal in the eyes of the law, progressive legislation such as those on harassment force the law's neutral language to recognise that society is, in reality,

unequal, and this understanding needs to be taken into consideration. Workplace harassment acknowledges that workplaces are unequal and hierarchical, and so people with authority have the potential to harass and intimidate. The aggregate of needs and wants displays; that divorced females, single mothers, the aged, and bachelor girls are especially susceptible to perse-

with degradation in front of coworkers and rejection of promotions. Coworkers, who are frequent witnesses, often remain silent in order to prevent a situation that could lead to retaliation and the loss of their own positions. As a result, sexual assault from bosses is frequently accompanied by isolation from coworkers who observe, withdraw, and witness. The harassed are

Defense "Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act of 2010", which would be ten years old, is a comprehensive piece of legislation. Harassment is defined by the Act as, "any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours or other verbal or written communication or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or sexually demeaning attitudes, causing interference with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, or the attempt to punish the complainant for refusal to comply with such a request or is made a condition for employment".

It continues to add that "the above is unacceptable behaviour in the organization and at the workplace, including in any interaction or situation that is linked to official work or official activity outside the office". All bosses are expected to exhibit the code of conduct on their grounds. The act was recognized as a success when it was passed in 2010. But its provisions would take time to influence the workplace ethos. Change is slow, but the act is the initial step; the elected rep-



cution. According to one single mother who experienced ten years of persecution, the pursuit is persistent, and any effort to resign is penalized

not only tortured but also humiliated and rejected by society. All of these acts are prohibited by law in Pakistan. The



representatives support the legislative committee which implies that the future path ahead will be distinct, in this case, one in which workplace harassment of women is prohibited.

Workplace harassment is not a new phenomenon; rather, it is a well-known issue throughout the world. Working women are more likely to experience inci-

to men and women, represents the former as the bread earner for the family. This division creates a number of issues for women in the workplace, harassment being one of them. The basic rights of women are exploited due to the patriarchal, which affects the women mentally and physically. Harassment also affects the productivity of working

major challenge that women in Pakistan confront when they leave their houses for various reasons is workplace harassment. Another survey of 200 women by agha khan university, reported that workplace harassment is a fundamental and unrecognized issue for females in Pakistan. The verbal type of harassment was mostly experienced by women

35% were instructed to be silent by their co-workers and managers.

Since then, not much has changed. Harassment in the workplace is still prevalent (because most workplaces slightly know about the code of conduct). Women keep reporting getting verbally harassed and even physically assaulted by their bosses, who calculate their necessity for a job, desire to advance, and helplessness to reject, unashamedly continue with such activities. Women in Pakistan continue to be alone in the face of unwelcome advances, unaware of where to pursue their complaints or how to protect themselves.

When the harassment issues came to light in the US, they introduced the harassment policy and ethics policy. And these policies proved a strong stance against harassment. As William says, "The message from us is not so much how you define it, but just the level of attention you would pay to it". As aforementioned that the Pakistan Workplace Act 2010 would be ten years old. Need to be revised according to the modern workplace requirements. Verbal harassment is



dences of harassment under male dominance. Gender roles have traditionally portrayed women as subordinates and sex objects for males everywhere. The dilemma of our social structure, which enforces male superiority while allocating gender roles

women due to the unhealthy working environment at the workplace. Sexual harassment, assault, and discrimination are pervasive in Pakistani workplaces, including universities, according to a survey of 300 women conducted by Dawn. One such

in organizations. Most of the time harassment was not reported to the administration. Because women were bound to remain silent about workplace harassment, 61% of respondents indicated that their employers did not coerce them to be silent but a significant

also a noticeable issue that is completely ignored in previous legislation. So, there is a need to do something for the number of man regarding this article, who feels it's okay to harass

Impact of women's health on economy in developing countries

In 1933 World Bank sponsored a survey and studies on global development. The findings were published in the report "Investing in Health". It was concluded that the importance of health lies not only in an individual's life but also crucial for the development of society at large. The workforce as a resource for human progress derives its strength from health status. In the case of women, the survey reports poorly on their health. It opines that their physical state does not allow them to contribute fully in this regard. The shortcoming thus noticed badly affects their social life, such as infringement of their human rights and unethical norms. Economically the women suffer as well as the society at large. The origin and transmission of these losses have not been unveiled. The article focuses on the importance of family planning, the effects of maternal health on subsequent generations, and the impact of nutritional deficiencies on women's work productivity. A fall in fertility would increase family and national welfare. This relationship has been termed the demographic dividend. When there is a decrease in mortality and fertility of a specific population, a concomitantly abrupt change in age structure occurs as fewer people die than there is a reduction in infertility. In case of providing a viable social atmosphere and employment opportunities, this "boom" of human resources can immensely add to the nation's economic prosperity by producing more and ultimately leading to more savings. It would also result in a reduced dependency ratio. To induce females to join the workforce in large numbers Indian government enforced Maternity

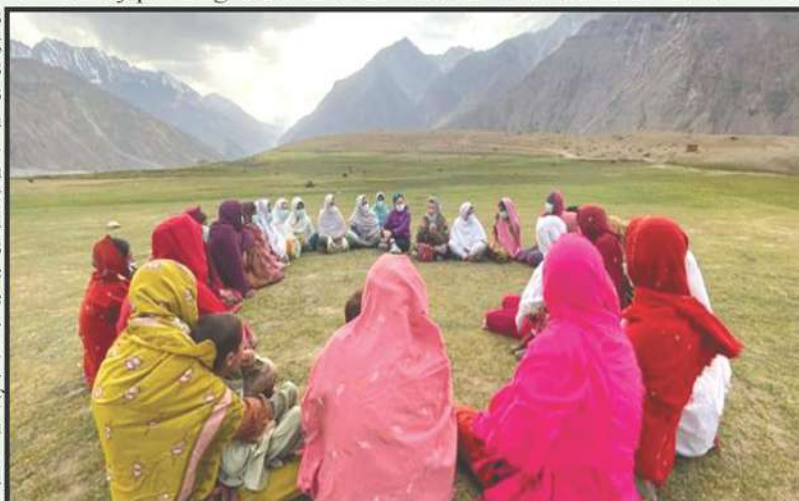
Amendment Bill in 2017. It increased paid maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks, but such legislation benefited the formal sector only. To encourage women to participate in economically gainful activities in rural areas, NERGA introduced childcare centers, but the facility remained nonfunctional.

It has been statistically observed that the possibility of going for higher education was 2-7% more for children born in families having facilities for family planning. Such children

with the adoption of measures for low fertility.

The mother's health contributes to long-term national development through the provision and transmission of good human traits as human capital. Women's health in Pakistan is generally poor and is assumed to be responsible for their relegation on a social level. The retrogression thus initiated, through the adoption of the structural adjustment program, has sped up. Depreciation of women's health in Pakistan is an indica-

deprived of school education through non-enrolment. This deprivation thus reduces the literacy rate and availability of skilled labour in the workforce. Additionally, cases in India, Pakistan, Brazil, and Bangladesh also suggest transmission of ill effects on children's health from disorders in the mental makeup of mothers. Micronutrient deficiencies entail a higher burden in women than in men. Females are more susceptible to the effects of economic deprivation than men. They are being



poorly fed results in the onset of more health problems. On the contrary, in patriarchal societies like Pakistan and India, men are traditionally taken care of better in the family and are less subjected to malnourishment. It has been reported that 64.4% of maternal deaths occur due to iron deficiency anemia. Medical redressal of these shortcomings would restore the failing health of a woman and her succeeding generation. Investment in healthcare for women afflicted with

have more chances to live in homes with better income sources. Availability of birth control measures may delay the first pregnancy before 22 years, thereby sparing more time for women to work in paid professions. Studies by Boom and colleagues in Kenya, Nigeria, and Senegal show that if each of the three countries complies with all criteria of contraception, enhancement in per capita income to the extent of 31-65% will occur. Similar progress is expected to take place in developing countries like Pakistan. Data gathered in Matlab, Bangladesh also verifies this concept of association of enhanced income of women

tor of the lack of easy access to medical facilities. This trend has stigmatized the gender with serious health issues. Practices such as teenage childbearing pose a risk to mother and child's health and entail economic losses in terms of productivity decline. It has been found that stunted children do not perform in class as well as their peers. Even in adulthood, they are not as efficient and productive. These physical and mental weaknesses call for a nutritionally rich diet for the mother. Studies from developing countries like Kenya, South Africa, and Indonesia show that children deprived of the patronage of a mother at an early age may be

such ailments would ultimately be compensated through dividends in the form of more productivity at the national level. In India, women involved in tea-picking were tested on how to feed them micronutrients on their productivity at work. The results showed positivity. Comparing anemic and non-anemic girls of adolescent age showed better performance concerning productivity, memory tests, and cognitive function. Healthy women are more likely to contribute toward meeting the demand for labor in the market and thus add a more significant share of development.

Is no hope for doing perfect research?

Farah Anwar

The only change is permanent in this world, therefore we keep on researching new things. Curiosity is in the blood of humans thus the process of continuous search and research is not going to end until the world ends. But is it worthwhile to research? Every day theories and laws are challenged with new proofs that are termed to be valid according to the ongoing scenario.

own atomic model. Dobernier found that when elements are arranged in ascending order with respect to their atomic masses, the mass would equal to an average of immediate subsequent and prior elements, this was proved inapplicable by the Modern Periodic Table for all of its 117 elements. From this, it can be deduced there is only momentary or instantaneous perfection. When Blasé Pascal invented

other factors to remain constant, which are truly non-constant. This discrepancy results in a short-term validity of the research. And we know humans are unpredictable so the factors they work on or the factors influencing them. There cannot be any hard and fast written rule applicable to all humans and the same goes for research. Research valid in America may not be valid in Europe. Well, we are all humans and to err is human,

progress under the indirect monetary policy regime. At the same time; followers of the direct monetary policy claim that monetary policy remains ineffective and is the sole cause of policy failure and unachievable monetary goals. Starting from classical, Keynesian, monetarist, neo-classical and post-Keynesians, theories of monetary economics changed rapidly with justified proofs of their findings.



In this scenario, is there any hope to do perfect research? For those who love to research the answer must be yes as the world is spending more on R&D. But in reality, with too much imperfection every single thought passed is outdated so the research. If one research suggests tea prevents cancer, another shows it causes cancer.

Thompson formed an atomic model which was later proved inappropriate by Bohr when he brought his

Abacus it was considered to be the best invention of that time while with the computer's arrival, Abacus is just a history.

Also, the laws and the theories on the basis of *ceteris paribus* cannot work in a rapidly changing environment. This world is the perfect Meta market where you should not ideally isolate one variable from the other. But, while doing research we limit our scope within certain boundaries and consider

no one is perfect and that's why we can't make anything exactly perfect then how come our research can be hundred per cent perfect?

Likewise, a number of economic researches have been conducted to prove the impact of effective monetary policies. The debate is between Direct Vs Indirect Monetary Policy. Take an example of Pakistan, central bank officials every year publish a number of research papers showing their

With this scenario, can you decide what is right or wrong? This research is an ongoing process and obviously, outcomes are unpredictable. It is the quest of the invisible, the advanced learner dictionary reveals Research as a process of careful investigation to search for new facts and findings. For us, it's a movement from unknown to known. Because the tragedy of life is that, 'x' is always unknown.

Social Media And Changing Political Dynamics

For over a decade now, we have been experiencing a revolution in social media. It has completely changed the game, allowing politicians of all schools of thought to convey their message and run their political campaigns to build a narrative of their voters and the general public against their opponents. Most of Pakistan's political parties and politicians individually have taken up social media, especially Facebook and Twitter, to convey their message to their voters without filtering by the media outlets. Political parties and individuals get extended support from using social media platforms. We can see from elections throughout the world that social media is levelling the playing field in politics, where access to official communication channels and financial resources are major obstacles for politicians.

If we look at the history of social media, we will find that from the popular movements in the Middle East, known as the Arab Spring, from the Syrian civil war to the so-called extremist organization, Islamic State's rise and fall, from allegations of Russian interference in the US elections to the Cambridge Analytica scandal, from PTI sit-ins against the government, from TLP protests to long marches, we have come to know about major events only through social media.

This change in the political scenario of Pakistan, which came through social media, is from 2010. Earlier, the political parties of Pakistan used traditional methods of newspapers or TV channels instead of social media, but social media has changed everything. Major political parties and state institutions have used social media for their purposes. Even small

political parties and groups who do not get space in print and electronic media are now using social media more and more to ensure that their voice reaches the masses.

Political campaigns today are not just limited to posters and banners; they are also replete with infomercials, adverts, blog entries, thousands of tweets, Instagram posts, and Facebook postings. Politicians can run their campaigns by

media platforms, but also used it to build a narrative and woo the public, especially the younger generation. Since the foundation of the PTI over 26 years ago, its chairman, Imran Khan, who was already a celebrity known and praised by everyone, especially the younger generation, who admire him, love him and consider him the last hope for the survival of the country.

The cricketer turned politician

campaign. The result of which was visible in the by-elections held in 20 constituencies of Punjab after the provincial assembly members were defeated by the ECP on the Supreme Court's orders after they voted for Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Hamza Shehbaz during the election for the Punjab Chief Minister slot.

However, besides the perks of using social media, one can not ignore the major issue of disinformation or fake news through these mediums because this propaganda led campaigns grow like mushrooms due to the rising role of social media platforms as news outlets, where content can be produced and relayed among users with no significant third-party filtering, fact-checking, or editorial judgment.

Fake news or disinformation finds fertile ground in a divided electorate that has clear in-groups and out-groups, where people are ready to accept any statement as long it is consistent with what they already believe. This recent shift in political dynamics has put an additional obligation on the youth of a country considered to be the fifth largest young nation in the world comprising 63pc of the total population because Social media platforms have gained "knowledge power" derived from the vast amounts of data that they have collected and marshaled. These platforms know more about a person than the government does which means their opinion, thinking, and support for any purposes could easily be manipulated. Young people have to think that they are the kingmakers now, and they should learn about the algorithms and working mechanisms of social media platforms to differentiate between real and fake narratives to save the country's fate.



viewing responses to their actions on social media platforms.

Social media is clearly having a greater impact on electoral outcomes over time as political campaigns have grown more expensive and the necessity to reach out to constituents has become more vital. Over the past five years, social media has assumed a greater role in society.

The impact of social media was first witnessed in the 2018 general elections, in which former cricketer turned politician Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) emerged victorious. The PTI, and especially Imran Khan, changed the country's politics with social media.

Knowing the importance and value of social media, Imran Khan ensured not only his party's presence on social

used social media to build a narrative and convey his message to the general public and his followers, whom he referred to as "Tigers." PTI's social media campaign gained pace before the 2018 general elections in which Imran Khan-led PTI emerged victorious, giving the former Pakistan cricket team captain the opportunity to run and change the fate of the country. What the Imran Khan-led government did in its around 3-and-a-half year tenure is a separate discussion, but the party always kept its social media presence to share its performance throughout its tenure.

Over the past few months, or we can say since the toppling of PTI government, the party has run a rigorous social media campaign to build its narrative and to some extent the party remained successful in its

75 years of dependent independence

By Musuood Tanvir Arshad

To love your motherland is the natural phenomenon. Seed of independence is the drop of blood and it has been told in oral history that our forefathers never hesitated to sow it on a regular basis. Independence is all about liberty from the aristocracy-driven policies and rules and laws where no one is supe-

affairs? Archives can describe this in a better way where species' genealogy and phenology snatch the mask of dual approaches.

As a nation with a bruised body, we are entering into 76th year of independence. Everyone is cheering for Diamond Jubilee despite the fact we have already lost our one arm. This is again a quite

ed. Sayings of freedom fighters were rubbed to please the emerging world order and no one bothered to rescue thereafter. We are happy that geographical boundaries always make us relevant but the great concern is that independence, which is the most beautiful phenomenon and happens to a conscious society, how long will it remain relevant for pub-

In the new world game, Pakistan has a key role to play and regionally no one can deny our country's importance in regional peace. It's our own choice and no acclaimed world power can force Pakistan to work for its agenda. Now, this is the high time to throw the unannounced beggar's bowl and stand with our own people with our own agenda with a



rior. It is the journey from the slavish ethos to the colourful sovereign consciousness. In the battle of survival, to retrieve the cultural rainbow is the most beautiful aspect while celebrating existence. How independence glorifies a traitor as a hero that's the lesson for the societies.

Those even afraid of sniffing the truth ultimately lost the taste receptors for freedom. There are somehow certain situations where the acclaimed freedom acquired by societies cannot be articulated with the true definition. What are the factors behind such rotten

brave attitude but how long by beating drums and by playing flute we will ignore that we are burning. The privileged and beneficiaries of the system will keep shutting up the nation as a whole and will always play with our uncompromised sentiments about our motherland. Yes, indeed they too own this land but are they blind! Their inspired colonial syllabi cannot help the nation on the international horizon.

Tweezing the international relations without a rational approach costs us too much. Emphasizing on other matters didn't allow us to be clearhead-

ed at large.

Human beings have learnt that independence enables a society to survive with its cultural and civilised conditions. In Pakistan's case, independence, which is the fruit of generations' sacrifices after the demise of the Quaid, was snatched from people by the neo-colonial offsprings. We as a nation allowed them to abuse the Quaid's "Fati" and our own mother being the nation. This is not the ugly chapter which is only present in our history but fundamental hitmen also mutilated the face of other countries in the subcontinent.

better approach and nice relations, especially with the neighbours and the Muslim world.

The colonial laws, which again and again nourish and protect the anti-public ideology, have tarnished the cultured face of our society. Everyone is equal and everyone is important. We exist because Pakistan exists. Now, we have to dare to end the 75 years of dependence even after independence. As we love our independence, dependence is a curse for sovereign consciousness.

Pakistan's Climate Vulnerability

Ghana fatima
lobal warming is increasing at an accelerated speed, more than what climate scientists expected. The world already seems on verge of Climate crisis due to the rising heat. What

tion to human influence have increased in recent decades with observable and serious consequences for people and ecosystems in many mountain regions. Observed changes include increasing temperatures, changing seasonal

attacks may intensify in the coming years which may lead to food insecurity in Pakistan. Locusts attacking a Pakistani field . Photo : Pacific Press Agency

Just this year, the Gilgit Baltistan region of Pakistan was hit by glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) from Shishper Glacier. Environment expert Aamir Alamgir says prevailing heat wave and rising temperatures in northern areas are a cause of melting glaciers. He added incidents of glacier lake outburst flooding may increase in the next five years. A report available on the website of Ministry of Climate Change, Government of Pakistan states "Due to rising temperatures, gla-

weather conditions. It also warned of flash floods, landslides and gusty winds.

Shishper glacial lake outburst flood in Hunza damaged an important bridge on KKH at Hassanabad. Source Tourist Police GB

The Paris Agreement had set long-term goals in 2015 to guide all nations to substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to limit the global temperature increase in this century to 2 °C while pursuing efforts to limit the increase even further to 1.5 °C but according to the climate update issued by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) this year , there is a 50:50 chance of the annual average global temperature temporarily reaching 1.5 °C above the pre-industrial level for at least one of the next five years – and the likelihood is increasing with time.

According to Dr Zafar Iqbal former Chairman Department of Environmental Sciences at University of Karachi, green-



climate scientists estimated and forecasted in 2020 to happen in next 30 years happened in just a couple of years recently in UK when Temperature there exceeded 40 degrees Celsius for the first time. Despite the warnings by the climate scientists to cut on the greenhouse gases especially emitted from fossil fuels for electricity, heat and transportation, there is no much heed paid to it.

Pakistan is situated in the Hindu Kush Himalaya region with some of its western and north western parts directly home to the mighty mountain ranges while its eastern and south eastern parts lying in the Indus river basin which originates from these mountains.

Source: researchgate.net

The impact of Global warming in Himalaya Hindu Kush region is increasing. According to IPCC sixth assessment report of Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, "Mountains are highly significant regions in the context of climate change and sustainable development, at the intersection of accelerated warming and a large population depending directly or indirectly on them. Climate change impacts in mountains and their attribu-

weather patterns, reductions in snow cover extent and duration at low elevation, loss of glacier mass, increased permafrost thaw, and an increase in the number and size of glacier lakes".

Pakistan is already among the top ten countries affected by climate change. Recent IPCC reports have shown that the impacts of climate change can already be observed on natural and human systems .

Pakistan is experiencing unpredictable heavy rains. Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman informed earlier this month that rains in Balochistan and Sindh broke a 30 year record this year. The record breaking rains killed hundreds of people.

Pakistan experienced unprecedented locust attacks on its cultivated areas in 2019 and 2020 destroying up to 40 % of crops which led the government to declare a National Emergency on Locust. Experts attribute intensified locusts attacks to rising sea temperature and change in cyclonic patterns. Experts have warned that Locust

ciars in Pakistan's northern mountain ranges (the Hindu Kush, Himalayas and Karakorum) are melting rapidly and a total of 3,044 glacial



lakes have developed in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Of these, 33 glacial lakes have been assessed to be prone to hazardous glacial lake outburst flooding (GLOF)"

Later this week, The National disaster Management authority (NDMA) issued alert to the Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster management authority to stay vigilant of the further glacial lake outburst risks attributing to the

house gases emissions are responsible for a climate crisis around the world and changing weather patterns. Pakistan needs to cut on fossil fuel consumption and move towards fuel efficient systems. He said Pakistan has a capability of benefiting from its wind and solar energy, if we don't act today, our tomorrow will pay the price in the form of food insecurity and wave of fatal human diseases.

Women Remain As Vulnerable As Ever To Violence

Among the gravest violations of human rights, violence against women has been regarded the one engulfing the peaceful existence of women in the society. Its occurrence in public has acquired many forms that are jeopardizing the lives of women. Recently, a security guard was found beating a pregnant woman in Karachi's Jauhar area over a petty dispute that made the incident go viral. The security guard was arrested later on but the condition of the victim was found miserable after the reported tragedy.

Such an incident portrays how beating and thrashing a woman seems normal to the men of our society who appear uninterested in maintaining the dignity of a woman. The security guard, who is usually responsible to protect the lives of citizens and look after their well-being could not act wisely and deal with the matter holding sympathy for the woman. Rather, he took the opportunity in a convenient manner and decided to dissolve the matter by beating the pregnant woman, avoiding himself to act according to the law. Previously, a similar case was registered in KPK where five K-P policemen were found guilty for publicly beating up some three arrested women.

According to Pakistan Ministry of Human Rights which cited the country's Demographic and Health Survey (2017-2018), around 28 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 29 have experienced physical violence. It has been observed that certain cases registered and found with the police contain figures that are inaccurate and do not define the exact count of violent crimes committed against women in Pakistan. Analysts say that the violence

against women in Pakistan has become a problem that cannot be neglected due to it becoming a social norm in Pakistani household. There is a general acceptance of violence between men and women that harms the social environment and moral fabric of the society. For most men, raising a hand on a woman is a justified act against her gender as she is considered weak, requiring a stern oversight from her husband. Hitting a woman or exercising domestic violence is much prevalent in Pakistani households that men consider as a tool to control women. Right activists suggest that a

VAW in Pakistani society where the criminals get involved in illegitimate practices as society no longer puts sanctions on their unusual behavior. No legal action is stringent enough to inculcate the fear of sin in the hearts of offenders. Instead, the absence of any legal proceedings makes them consistent in carrying out such practices ruthlessly.

This year, the Human Rights Watch has revealed astonishing statistics in its Annual World Report 2022. It cited allegations of extensive rights abuses against women along with children in Pakistan

is still missing which not only contributes in the cases getting lingered on but also provide justifications for men to remain adherent to apathy and mistreat women around, violating the laws. Farzana Bari, a prominent women's rights activist, has opined that the reason for this surge in cases of violence against women in Pakistan is due to the lack of seriousness on the part of the government to launch strict implementation of laws and educate/empower women to suppress discriminatory attitudes against them.

"No government has ever tried to put an end to this mindset," she said.

"It can be done by educating women in rural areas, empowering them economically and raising their representation in the legislature," she explained further.

In order to control violence against women, all sections of society should play equal role in its complete eradication down from the rural areas. It should be treated as a serious subject that is making the lives of women vulnerable as Pakistan is regarded as sixth most danger-

ous country for women to live. Given the lack of implementation of laws and providing impunity to the offenders, the crime rates are surging that can only be suppressed if laws come into play in dealing with such matters. Women should be empowered against such practices so that they can be their own protectors in place. Lastly, a Comprehensive and All-Embracing Reformation Plan is needed that includes preventive measures and various reforms that can assist in removing this menace from the society.



woman in Pakistani society faces multiple threats because of her gender. She is seen being publicly harassed, raped, or killed in the name of honor by men who commit such crimes without having fear of being punished and charged guilty.

Experts maintain that the normalization of an act arises in a society when people practice it without being cautioned about its negative consequences. They embrace it peacefully as they believe it might bring them the social acceptance they need. Such is the matter of gender discrimination and

which ranks 167 out of 170 countries on the Global Women, Peace and Security Index.

"Violence against women and girls, including rape, murder, acid attacks, domestic violence, and forced marriage is endemic throughout Pakistan. Human Rights defenders estimate that roughly 1,000 women are killed in so-called honor killings every year," said the HRW report.

The legislation in Pakistan has been successful in passing laws to control violence against women. However, the implementation of these laws

Is It A Wrap For Globalization?

Sahar Gulzar
Growing up in the 90's, all we could hear were the virtues of the globalization: globalization got rid of inefficiencies of localized productions, it increased economic output, expanded the choices for consumers, and enhanced the overall welfare of the people; basically, it was the panacea for economic exchange. In the hindsight, it made perfect sense in the given global context: there was a newfound euphoria over the fall of communism, and for a while, it seemed that neoliberal policies would rule the world unchallenged. As more and more economies deregulated, international trade became ever more effortless, hence, there was no reason for capital to stay rooted inside the borders of any one

country and not seek higher returns around the globe, since all economies were converging to similar structures. But any debate on the merits of globalization today is likely to be much more hotly contested. While there had been disgruntlement in low-wage earners in the first world against the alleged export of their jobs for a long time, the issue didn't become a rallying political cry until the 2016 presidential election in the US; and even then, this was brushed aside as rightist propaganda and fear mongering. However, after one pandemic and the outbreak of war in Europe, the concern

against current global trade system is becoming more mainstream and President Biden's Trans-Pacific Partnership framework is a proof of this changing mindset. At the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak, China – the facto-

chips; there is copious amounts of research and reporting on its downstream effects in various industries, notably in car manufacturing. While the effects of the pandemic have still not dissipated, the war in Europe delivered another major blow to the

stances has become a moral imperative.

The question that arises here is: are these shifts in the global trade patterns a mere phase or will they alter the structure of world economy in a lasting manner? Would we witness the formation of a global trade



ry of the world – banned the export of Personal Protective Equipment, a move that was imitated by most countries, in a bid to meet their sky-rocketing domestic demand for such goods. The countries which mostly relied on import of such paraphernalia were, understandably, left outraged, as they scrambled to prop up local production. But the PPE shortages were just one portent for what was to come for global trade: as the supply chains choked under the pressure of lock-down measures, there were many more shortages to follow. The most high-profile, perhaps, being the semi-conductor

global trade. This time the commodities in questions are food and fuel: Pakistan itself imported grain from both Russia and Ukraine, but due to the on-going war, exporting grain to foreign countries might not be on the list of priorities for each of these countries, as one might expect. Again, many countries resorted to banning exports of food items to obviate any risk of domestic food shortages. Whereas Western European nations are under rising pressure to wean themselves off of Russian fuel, a suggestion which in the pre-war world would have sounded xenophobic but under current circum-

regime that is more segmented than homogenous?

The two-fold threat of war and disease could instill a lot more caution in trade relations among various countries and ideological bends of your trade partners could become increasingly important. However, as the generation, who has first-hand experienced these outbreaks, begins to age out of the working class, in 2 or 3 decades from now, this heightened vigilance would likely fade, and the future generations would hopefully write their rules anew, unencumbered by the fatigue of our memories.

Why Do Economic Recessions Happen?

A Zalghi Khan
CCORDING TO A
GROUP OF ECONO-
MISTS, THE UNITED
KINGDOM IS IN A RECES-

ic struck the globe, it caused
widespread supply-chain dis-
ruptions, trading disruptions
and other economic activities
leading to a recession.

the lack of purchases means
lack of profits for companies,
and less recruitment for busi-
ness employees. This increases
unemployment. Which is

ployment. The result is com-
plete economic destruction and
a recession that brings pain
and poverty.

Asset Bubbles: When prices
of investments increase dispro-
portionately to the fundamen-
tals, a recession can happen
once the prices collapse as the
bubble bursts. The collapse of
the prices of investments
destroys confidence and peo-
ple stop spending money and
companies cut down, leading
to a recession.

Economists consider reces-
sions i.e., periods of economic
contractions to be a natural
part of the business cycle.
However, the duration of time
that a recession can last for is
unpredictable. Some reces-
sions can last for a few years
others for a shorter duration of
time. The Great Recession
lasted from December 2007 to
June 2009, but the dot-com
recession lasted from March
2001 to November 2001 and
the Gulf War Recession lasted
from July 1990 to March 1991.
The average post-World War II
recession lasts 11 months.
Recessions are temporary and
the markets just become pro-
ductive again, the causes



SION—THIS FACT WAS
REPORTED BY THE
GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER.

The fears of recession are
global, as economists and
bankers around the world are
ringing alarm bells of an eco-
nomic calamity, that will
destroy generations to
come, both psychologi-
cally and financially.

However, what is a
recession and what are
its causes?

According to the dictio-
nary of economics the
definition of a recession
“is a two consecutive
quarters of decline in a
country’s real gross
domestic product (real
GDP).”

The below is subject to
revision

In my years long study
on the economics of the
world, I have discovered
that there are 5 reasons
why recessions happen:

Economic shocks: These
are events that are unpre-
dictable but cause widespread
economic destruction like
earthquakes, tsunamis, terror-
ist attacks and viral outbreaks.
When the COVID-19 pandem-

Loss of consumer confidence:
If consumers stop spending
money and save all their earn-
ings, it can cause a recession.
This is because 70% of GDP
depends on consumer spend-
ing.

Deflation: Deflation is the
extreme oppo-
site of infla-
tion. Deflation is when product
and asset prices fall because of
a large drop in demand. When
demand falls, so do prices as
sellers try to attract buyers.
Consumers are rational actors
and see the downward trend



appear to be unpredictable.

The key thing to remember
is that economic growth
cannot continue forever,
and some interconnected
causes such as the five rea-
sons I referenced cause eco-
nomic recessions to put a
stop to economic expan-
sion.

The indicators of a real
recession include the fol-
lowing:

- Decline in real GDP
- Decline in real income
- Rise in unemployment
- Stagnation of industrial
production and retail sales
- Decline in consumer spend-
ing

CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, eco-
nomic recessions are caused
by economic shocks, loss of
consumer confidence, high
interest rates, deflation, and
asset bubbles.

High Interest Rates: As inter-
est rates increase, consumer
borrowing decreases to pur-
chase, homes, vehicles, and
other luxury products. This
reduces economic activity as

waiting even longer for prices
to fall, which depresses
demand even more. The down-
ward spiral results in twin ter-
rors of reduced economic
activity and increased unem-

Society And Intolerance

Raana Kanwal

Intolerance is growing at an alarming rate in our society. From homes to the halls of power, there is a serious crisis of tolerance. It has become normal to fight with each other over small things at homes. Families get separated from each other over trivial matters and do not like to see each other for years.

Similarly, if you look at the traffic conditions, there is also a lot of intolerance there. Where people create a lot of controversies even for the slightest breaking. A comic actor had said that 'in Pakistan, even two vehicles cause a traffic jam, if they come face to face in a street, both of them stand in opposition to each other and each keeps demanding the other to move the vehicle, like this. Traffic gets jammed'. If someone's car slightly collides with another's car, then the fight that takes place is noticeable. Each one tries to exonerate himself by putting all the blame on the other, thus the quarrel is prolonged. When trying to get a car or a bike into a tight space, the way they try to outdo each other is especially spectacular.

There is no example of intolerance in our politics. Politicians have promoted the culture of intolerance in politics to such an extent that people have stopped even talking to each other because of what the politicians are saying. Political differences have been brought to people's homes, causing rifts in relationships.

Social media has been made a political arena by political activists, which has created a state of civil war in society.



Look at any social media website and there is nothing but political bickering. Political workers abuse each other and

says something about their leaders, they fight back. Keep saying it.

Politicians in the assemblies have greatly promoted intolerance. There it seems that they have only sworn to oppose each other. Slandering each other, and criticizing others have become their habit. They don't even care to see opponents in assemblies, talking to each other and shaking hands is a far cry. There is also a tradition in our society of attacking opponents and torturing critics which is the worst example of intolerance. Then this culture of intolerance is being embedded in the society, which has had a very negative impact on the youth.

A culture of patience and tolerance has to be promoted for peace and order and peaceful life in society. For this, instead of looking toward the politi-

cians, the important sections of the society have to move forward themselves, in which the scholars and teachers can play the most important role. The scholars should teach the people good manners and patience from the pulpit and the teachers should teach the students morals and make them believe that the society cannot afford any kind of mischief and riots, so the words of any political leader should not be ignored. Don't come and spoil your relationship. Care should be taken in this that teachers and scholars should not mention the name of any political leader but should mention all of them on an equal level. In the same way, the educated youth of the society should also think a little and instead of following the words of the political leaders, they should carefully evaluate everything themselves and follow the facts, and not imitate any political leader to such an extent that they do everything. Even the wrong things started to seem right. In this way, the anxiety and intolerance found in society can be eliminated.



use very foul language against each other. Apart from social media, if you are sitting in a gathering or meeting, political discussions are also started there. No one has any information; they just keep arguing with each other based on what they hear from here and there. Then it also happens that they themselves keep saying bad things about the leaders of others, but when someone else

How Pakistan's healthcare is failing its female doctors

Dr Hiba Usmani

It is essential to rephrase the narrative regarding non-practicing female doctors in Pakistan and reconsider how we observe doctors' employability issues in the region. Loopholes in the healthcare system in Pakistan prevent female doctors from practicing

The cultural norms and socio-economic conditions in Pakistan make it hard for women to access and maintain their education, especially the expensive enrolment process that precedes medical universities. Once enrolled, they must overcome barriers such as conveyance, buying expensive

not rare to see doctors protesting in front of press clubs and government institutes.

Government officials and employers often dismiss these protests as a nuisance. They are a familiar but largely ineffective part of every doctor's career. Dr Wajiha M Ali is a

wish to marry and start a family.

"Post-graduation programs are costly and often a non-negotiable requirement to secure a promotion. Women who don't have the privilege of a support system or struggle financially can either excel in their career or raise kids due to lack of an inclusive work environment," she added.

The human resource department and management is an organisational factor that is entirely missing in Pakistan's healthcare sector. Dr Wajiha believes that "there is little to no attention to mental health screenings for doctors, and there is an absolute absence of family-friendly human resource policies". Women might feel more overworked than men in healthcare because house chores and family responsibilities are still gender-based in Pakistan.

"Women have to work long hours with little to no paid leaves or family time in healthcare; financial constraints cause them to avoid marrying, and a poor work-life balance can often result in broken marriages," added Dr Wajiha.

A narrative review titled *Doctor Brides*, published in the *Journal of Pakistan Medical Association*, highlighted that female trainees believed having children would be a barrier to their career progression due to time constraints. "Female doctors also thought that having children would also mean that other people may develop negative perceptions about them," confirms the paper.

Officials often pinpoint early marriage as the cause behind a decline in working female doctors. In actuality, the reason is much more complex. According to Dr Zeerak Nadeem, a recent graduate with a bachelor's degree in dental surgery from Karachi Medical and Dental College:



medicine despite the many laws in the Constitution protecting women's right to employment and equal opportunity.

Like India and Bangladesh, Pakistan is a country where healthcare has a higher ratio of female graduates in the medical and dental fields. It is worrisome, however, that 70% of these graduates cannot practice what they learn in medical schools. Six out of 10 female post-graduates are unemployed in Pakistan, and according to a survey by the Labour Force, "compared to 64% males, only 18% females are employed". While most people express disappointment when referring to non-practicing women in the healthcare system, it is pertinent to remember that it is not a choice made willingly.

medical supplies such as books, examination equipment, and in my experience, dental materials, to graduate smoothly. Students receive little help and facilitation from parent institutes, especially in the public sector, due to the underfunded healthcare system in Pakistan.

A recent graduate, Dr Nada Ahmed, voiced her concerns, stating,

"I graduated in 2019, and after my house job, I worked in a private clinic where I did an unpaid internship for months. Eventually, they hired me on a meagre wage, but I still had to pay 150 rupees to and from the clinic out of my pocket for conveyance, leaving me with barely anything to spare."

Unpaid hiring is a real and prevalent problem in the healthcare community, so it is

graduate of DOW University and has served at Agha Khan University Hospital (AKUH) as Chief of Residents. It is one of the few hospitals that offer a daycare centre for employees to accommodate working mothers, and they are working at total capacity often with the help of waiting lists. Dr Wajiha says that the child care facility was "one of the main things that attracted her to AKUH". As a doctor with over 13 years of experience, she has identified an "absence of child care facilities, low wages, and lack of work-life balance as major distress factors amongst working female doctors".

Medical careers require doctors to continue their studies after completing a bachelor's degree, which can be very expensive and even impossible for women in Pakistan who

Will Pakistan be able to evade a fate like Sri Lanka's?

Beenish Fatima

Sri Lanka is facing serious political, social and economic crises and now the island country is being termed as a 'state in crises'. Certain factors are responsible for pushing the country into the abyss, but mismanagement on the part of the government tops the list of potential catalysts. It is being speculated that the political instability in Pakistan along with international crises is

Rajapaksa signed contracts for mega infrastructure projects and spent the country's reserves this way. The Russia-Ukraine crisis further deteriorated the condition as it led to inflation at an international level and the island nation was not prepared to face this chaos. In 2020, the country was downgraded to lower-middle income nations. This happened because the government did not take into account the loom-

ing a similar fate if it doesn't course-correct.

Turning towards Pakistan, Bloomberg's Sovereign Debt Vulnerability Ranking, ranked Pakistan fourth on its list of countries with the highest default risk in 2022. The inflation rate in Pakistan is 24.9% while the debt accounts for 71.3% of the total GDP, according to the statistics released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

These figures are quite close to those of Sri Lanka. Pakistan has a semi-industrial, agro-based economy with about half of employed labour force, and contributes to 24% of the total GDP, according to PBS. Despite this much dependence on the agriculture sector, Pakistan imports

often leads to rupee devaluation against the dollar, as country's imports surpass its exports and cause a hike in the dollar price. The Bloomberg report revealed that severe shortage of US dollar in Pakistan can make the country descend into economic crisis. Also, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves and the foreign currency reserves held by the central bank can only be helpful for two months of imports. During this state of affairs, the only way out for Pakistan is linked with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) disbursement of \$7 billion that is to be released in August after the international organisation's final approval. This will help Pakistan meet its 'foreign financing needs', according to Murtaza Syed, Acting Governor of State Bank of Pakistan.

The IMF bailout can provide ephemeral relief to the crippling economy of the country, but proper policy-making is required for long-term sustenance. In the case of Pakistan, the outcome of policy-making seldom meets the needs of the time because of severe political failures. In order to help Pakistan ease its worsening condition, it is important to pay attention to its policies. Moreover, the scourge of dynastic politics is inflicting the country for decades, and awareness of this plight among masses is necessary to root it out. Furthermore, Pakistan's youth bulge and women's participation in the labour force can help improve the country's economy to a great extent. However, flawed policies and socio-cultural fabric hinder this process which can enhance the human capital of the country. If Pakistan focuses on local production of commodities and works on its human resource, then it is unlikely for the country to become a victim of debt trap.



likely to make the country meet the fate of Sri Lanka. Taking a look back at Sri Lanka's growth trajectory reveals that the current scenario did not really emerge out of an unprecedented milieu. In July 2019, the country achieved the status of upper-middle income nations, from the World Bank, but its economy faced serious blows with the spread of the Covid pandemic since the country's economy is highly dependent on the tourism sector and the pandemic negatively impacted this sector. Then, in the August 2020 elections, the Rajapaksa dynasty took hold of important government offices, including those of the president and the prime minister. The

ing crises and resorted to populist moves to increase the vote bank. Lack of sound economic policies, such as cutting taxes without reducing spending led to fiscal deficit, a condition when government's expenditure surpasses its revenues in a year. The government also banned the import of chemical fertilizers – an ethnonationalist move – and this caused a serious decline in agricultural production. This poor management by the ruling party got Sri Lanka into debt default which gravely affected the situation of the country with no significant help from international community or other organisations because of economic uncertainty. And Pakistan seems to

wheat, which is the country's staple food. The recent Russia-Ukraine crisis as well as the climate change debacle caused spike in the prices of certain commodities, including wheat, which caused problems for Pakistani economy. In addition to this, certain populist moves also exacerbated the situation. For instance, when the whole world was facing inflation issues, the government of Pakistan decreased oil prices to give subsidy to citizens in order to win the support of masses, but Pakistan's economy was not in a position to bear the brunt of this decision. Pakistan's economy is dependent upon foreign loans and imports, instead of on locally produced items. This factor

The psychological aftermath of layoffs

Today, layoffs are rarely about an employee's personal incompetency and rather speaks more about the organisation.

Zaofishan Qureshi

Layoffs, unfortunately, are an inevitable part of corporate work. The phenomenon is particularly common for startups and is currently in the spotlight due to Airlift shutting down its operations in Pakistan, resulting in over 1,300 employees losing work overnight.

cost reduction and an overall economic slowdown.

However, back in the day, this wasn't the case. Layoffs were not very frequent, and the loss of work was seen as a personal failure or incompetency in the community. It practically meant the end of a professional journey for many people and

ents and their sympathy did little to offer him the sense of accomplishment that he used to get from solving problems at work. For him, it wasn't about solving problems, rather doing it for people who understood the rarity of his skill.

The list of intangible losses like the one X experienced are

overcome a stressful or crisis situation.

The problem-focused coping strategy is best suited for situations where laid off employees like X would experience a cathartic relief by just venting out their frustrations about the situation through whatever medium. They may find the relief in writing about it over social media or simply talking about the feeling of injustice and loss of control to a bunch of people. The solution focused coping strategy would be used when laid off employees need a way forward and need to reboot their overall skills and approach.

In this case, the stressors associated with the layoffs can be managed through a good strategy that may involve polishing the skill set, researching the market and networking with people.

For instance, the laid off employees from Airlift may find hope in emailing the founders of Seed, Series A&B companies globally with low tax on income as a motivating factor for remote international work. They may improve copywriting skills for cold emailing and research at least 70 to 100 early stage companies that raised in last three to five months and are expected to hire.

The emotion-focused coping strategy is often ignored the most. People who have been laid off usually have so much to deal in practical life that they find the emotions to be compartmentalised at best. However, it would actually benefit them to deal with their emotions and resiliently work towards a more positive and strong mindset.

The aforementioned coping strategies prove to be useful for managing the stress associated with layoffs and increase the chances of growth in the future. These strategies also enable an individual to develop resilience for such situations going forward.



This year saw a tumultuous beginning for startups – ranging from crypto to healthcare to enterprises like SaaS (Software as a Service). To keep up with automation and even harder global competition, strategies like episodic restructuring and routine layoffs are not uncommon in the corporate industry. However, the massive damage to the employees is a factor that cannot be ignored, and there have been laws in place to cover this.

In current times, layoffs are rarely about an employee's personal incompetency and rather speaks more about the organisation. It's much better understood today in terms of

companies were not very keen on hiring people who were laid off.

The challenges for the mental health of an unemployed employee today are internal or individual. It's not much about the stigma associated with loss of a job being correlated to one's competency. The aftermath of a layoff can best be understood in terms of loss. In current times, it's the loss of an arena to expertise your competencies and feel better or productive in a capitalist society.

For instance, X, who had been laid off during the first wave of Covid-19, talks about the loss of motivation to get out of bed. His family or friends did not understand his exceptional tal-

countless for several employees. Some may feel a sense of uselessness after they are no longer able to provide for their family. For some employees, financial stability ensures emotional stability and in a lot of cases it offers a sense of protection, particularly for women.

Apart from the feelings of grief and loss, for many the hope gets lost and they or their families misinterpret the layoff as a personal failure. This effects overall confidence and initiative to apply for further work. The way forward for laid off employees lies in the usage of coping strategies. Coping strategies are techniques that are employed to

Is Pakistan ready for online therapy?

The ground realities in Pakistan provide a sufficient basis for online counselling to be a viable, convenient solution

Zaofishan Qureshi

People have a hard time making a decision when it comes to seeking online versus in-person therapy. Hence, the question of online counselling as opposed to in-person counselling is one which most psychotherapists, including myself, are faced with quite regularly. The core principle of psychotherapy is beneficence and non-maleficence, which simply means minimising the harm and maximising the benefit for the clients. Going by this rule, online counselling may prove to be more convenient in various instances than in-person counselling, especially in less economically developed countries where mental health is often regarded as a taboo subject.

A lot of professionals and common people hold the idea that face-to-face counselling is superior to online counselling. In all honesty, the notion that online mental health practice should be looked down upon is not an informed one and comes from a place of privilege, especially when it comes to the ground realities of developing countries. The ground realities in Pakistan, for instance, provide a sufficient basis for online counselling to be a viable solution. The other day, I was browsing through my socials and came across a women-only group. The content and personal stories shared in the group only affirmed my stance on tele-mental health/online counselling.

I've seen victims of violence and injustices being supported in online groups in Pakistan. A lot of women in our country are stuck in an oppressive situation and don't have the opportunity or strength to escape their perpetrator(s) in order to seek out in-person counselling for their ongoing trauma. Thus, online counselling provides them the

opportunity to not only process the trauma but also to do so in a safe space. This often leads them to having enough coping mechanisms to eventually stand up to the oppressor and leave their respective toxic situation. Unfortunately, these women aren't the exception, like they would be in more economically developed countries. These women are the norm in Pakistan.

Advocacy of online mental health is also important for situations where the client cannot trust the mental health practitioner due to a taboo being

standing at affordable rates.

Moreover, there are various instances where physical disability becomes a hurdle for in-person sessions due to poor infrastructure for differently-abled adults in our country. It minimises the feeling of dependency on a caregiver that needs to accompany the person for in-person sessions since no infrastructure is in place for them to travel alone in the country.

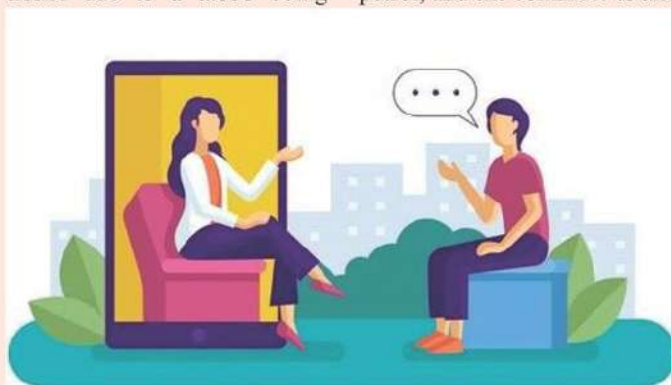
Additionally, Pakistanis have been severely impacted by the recent hikes in the price of petrol, and the commute to and

handled and observed in the best manner in a face-to-face mental health setup. Generally, for adults, psychological assessment is something that would be difficult to incorporate in an online setup. So it would make sense to have a visit or two for this purpose.

Another inconvenience that mental health practitioners experience is the lack of understanding in clients when it comes to logistics of online sessions. For instance, it's difficult for an average Pakistani client to understand that an internet dysfunction at their end wouldn't qualify for a refund. Compliance to session timings and slots is another issue when it comes to online appointments. Power cuts and load-shedding in Pakistan are important inconveniences for anyone attempting to offer or use online mental health services.

The discourse around online therapy is more rooted in a preference for old school notions of counselling and a resistance towards online therapy, particularly amongst the older generation. In Pakistan, it's an extension of the already existing taboo around mental health. This is further added to by an alarming trend of unqualified 'therapists' giving clients misleading counselling. However, according to the American Psychological Association, online therapy is the future, and no amount of resistance can change that. Hence, the few bad apples engaging in malpractice under the guise of therapy must be rooted out.

It is imperative that we equip Pakistani mental health professionals and young therapists with the tools needed to address the blind spots associated with online mental health therapy. We must also help them acquire better skill sets in order to tackle this growing frontier.



associated with the client's sexual orientation and/or gender. There is a general lack of ethical practitioners in Pakistan who are aware of the sensitivities of dealing with LGBTQI+ clients and their families. A lot has been written about therapists that outed their own clients without their consent or caused other damage due to their unethical practices.

Hence, in countries like ours, online counselling guarantees a sense of safety, autonomy and anonymity for clients that identify with vulnerable and minority groups. Furthermore, online counselling is a common preference for overseas Pakistanis facing economic difficulties. In such a scenario, mental health practitioners from Pakistan provide quality service with a cultural under-

standing from the counselling session would cost half of the session fee for anyone driving around for in-person counselling. Online counselling in such cases is not only viable for clients but also for mental health practitioners.

On a global level too, a cyber lifestyle is taking over, particularly after Covid-19. People have started preferring accessing mental health services in the safety of their own home. For those who lead a nomadic lifestyle, it's the only option to ensure they are regular with their mental health regime.

However, an important con of online therapy is its inability to incorporate those with severe symptoms, and inpatient care is the only viable option for such individuals. Also, children with neurodevelopment and other issues can only be