

## Economic Underdevelopment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Prospects and Challenges

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### Abstract

The KP Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa former NWFP (North West Frontier Province) remain economically lagged one since Firangi Raj (British Rule) till today. The inter-regional economic inequalities erupted during British period in part of India, forming present day Pakistan, in pre-independence period, kept continued after independence too. The inter-regional economic inequalities thus once born deepened with the passage of time. The Research Question arises, why KP he that time frontier districts could not share equally the economic development? Whether basic cause of its deprivation from developments was non-feasibility and inaccessibility of hilly terrain of the border province? Or anti-British stance of the dwellers of this province due to their bravery and Islamism, thwarted its economic development? This paper will try to sketch the backwardness whatever cause may be.

**Keywords:** Political, Religious, Pashtun, Economic, Cultural, Affiliations, Growth, NWFP, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Economic Underdevelopment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Economic Challenges Pakhtunkhwa, Challenges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

### Introduction

The province of KP former NWFP lies at the junction of three mountain ranges; Himalaya, Karakorum and Hindukush. Kashmir and Punjab are located to its east and Afghanistan to its west; Afghanistan also bounds the province on the north, Baluchistan and Dera Ghazi Khan District of the Punjab on the south.<sup>2</sup> It lies at the junction of three mountain ranges; Himalaya, Karakorum and Hindukush. Kashmir and Punjab are located to its east and Afghanistan to its west; Afghanistan also bounds the province on the north, Baluchistan and Dera Ghazi Khan District of the Punjab on the south. The province with three main geographical divisions namely (i) Cis-Indus division of Hazara (ii) The comparative narrow strip between Indus and the hills,

constituting the settled divisions of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and D.I.Khan. (iii) The rugged mountainous region located between these divisions and the border with Afghanistan (Durand line) known as tribal belt were the cradle of Gandahara and Hindushahi civilization. The province remained a corridor for countless invaders. Conquerors like Cyprus, Alexander the great; Tamerlain, Mahmood of Ghazni, Babur, Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali crossed the famous Khyber Pass. Several Muslim Pashtuns families like Lodhis and Duranis ruled over Indo-Pak Subcontinent<sup>1</sup>. The most valuable asset of the province is their unique cultural heritage that is thousands of years old. This province has a number of historical buildings, archeological monuments and cultural history that is enhanced by natural beauty of their varied landscape. The varied geology endows the province with enormous mineral wealth. The Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda and Swabi have fertile lands surrounded by hills, while as one moves further South to Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan, one can see expanses of barren areas.

### **Research Methodology**

In this research work historical as well as descriptive methods of research have been used. Historical method of research will try to explain the past events and the trends of past occurrences that may be helpful to explain the present events and anticipate the future events. While conducting study on the problem reference of developments occurred during 1880-1930 has been given because development during this period had a direct impact on lagging state of economy in the post-independence period. In historical method of research one does not have to gather data by administering instruments or individuals but he seeks out data that is already available.

### **Literature review**

Impact of political, religious, economic and cultural factors on perceived economic growth is visible. This study abridged the gap between knowledge in the current literature to address the specific problem of resolving the economic problems and bringing uplift to the economy of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by suggesting appropriate measures. Influence of economic slump but the situation in war torn areas like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is even worse. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan is one of those areas which are badly affected by the war-like situation and terrorism. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan, the KP Province is contributing 13 % to the GDP of the country as against a total population of 27 million which amounts to 14 % of the total population of Pakistan<sup>2</sup>. Majority of the people living in KP do not have access to formal financial system and are handicapped to be associated with informal financial services. According to official reports, the current annual economic growth in KP Province has been recorded at 4.5 %. Remittances from overseas Pakistanis amount to 5 % of

total GDP and it is interesting to note that every 4th overseas Pakistani belongs to KP Province. The major industries encompass Agriculture, Construction, Manufacturing, Livestock, Mining and Tourism. The poverty rate amounted to 39 % which makes it 2nd poorest province in Pakistan. The contribution made to the GDP by services sector is 67 % while Industry contributes 20 % and Agriculture contributes just 13 %<sup>3</sup>. While fighting the menace of terrorism, the businessmen living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan conceded heavy human and financial losses due to war against terror and it has resulted in stagnation of business activities due to lack of access to formal financial services and security situation. The cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are growing at an accelerated pace and the cultural scenario is also changing at a rapid pace. Greif (1994) opines that culture of a region and its historical development greatly influence economy of a country. Culture also defines economic development of a country. Culture is also a reference to society's attitude and values. Researchers believe that culture, politics and economic are the three pillars of a society and the society grow fast when there is a synergy among these factors (Xuewen, 1997). According to Sapienza<sup>4</sup> (2014) culture and economics move together. She was of the opinion that different cultures shape different habits and attitudes, which has different economic implications. Ekaterina, Elbakian, and Medvedk<sup>5</sup> (2003) discussed the linkage of religion and Economic activities since ages. He was of the opinion the religion has great impact on the behaviors of its believer's work attitude and economics and production of that particular economy. He further argued that religion plays a very important role in economic success of a society. Religion provides moral grounds, which shape work ethics norms for particular society. <sup>6</sup>Kuran (2009) concluded that religion greatly influences economic performance. impact of cultural, political, religious and economic factors on the perceived economic growth at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through formal and informal financial sector.

### **Background of Economy of KP**

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa former North West Frontier Province was part of Punjab during British period as frontier districts and was made a separate province of NWFP in 1901 by separating North Western frontier districts from Punjab. The newly created province of NWFP took away nearly 1/14<sup>th</sup> of the Punjab's total area, and 1/15<sup>th</sup> of its total revenue and a little more than 1/18<sup>th</sup> of its entire population<sup>7</sup>. The Colonel Harold became the first Chief Commissioner of the Province<sup>8</sup>. The province was excluded from the reforms introduced in 1909 and 1919 Acts. During 1930 and onward the pro-Congress Khudai Khidmatgar Movement under the leadership of Abdul Ghaffar Khan dominated over the politics of NWFP, who never compromised with the British raj. They were tilted more towards Indian

National Congress than All India Muslim League. A huge public investment in hilly as well as rain fed area was the need of time but in subcontinent the development strategy followed was in egalitarian. Growth Because of the distinctive character of this province, the imperialists treated it in a special way. Security considerations were given priority over socio-economic and political reforms. Unlike in other provinces of British India where reforms were introduced, the KP former NWFP was neglected and intentionally governed through 'Special Ordinances'. The main aim of the colonial government in impeding the pace of reforms was to discourage the local inhabitants to demand an equal status for their province. The more striking feature of the administration of the province was its frequent budget deficit. For the first decade the revenue and expenditures of the Province were wholly imperial. The revenue of the province increased steadily, but the expenditure of the administration too rose rapidly as a result budget of the newly created province was always a deficit one. The root cause of the excessive rise in expenditure was also on account of the expenses on the protection of India land frontier. The expenditure on matter relating to the tribal tract was more than the revenue of the province. Despite intensive efforts made to reduce the deficit of the province, by bringing into productive sphere the marginal land. The steady increase in population and food consumption, as well as periodic drought and floods; have kept the annual deficit at about the same level as previously. The government main expenditure laid in matter relating to the tribal tract, and boarder defense. The increase in these expenditures appearing necessarily under political and police heads that included the tribal allowances, maintenance of tribal levies and the boarder military police. Political and police expenditure were Rs 3.2 million, 4.8 million and 9.42 million in 1902, 1910 and 1920 respectively<sup>9</sup>. . As a result of communal award it was in April 1932 that NWFP status was raised from commissioner province to governor province and Sir Ralf Griffith became first governor of the province. After becoming Governor Province, it was realized that financially the province could not stand on its own feet without assistance extended by center. Hence under Australian' Otto Niemeyer Award of 1939, NWFP was given an annual subvention of Rs.10 million from the center that continued till 1947<sup>10</sup>.

**Table 1**

**Table showing the total revenue, expenditure and deficit of the province from 1901 to 1947 in million rupees**

YEAR	REVENUE	EXPENDITURE	DEFI CIT
1902-03	4.54	7.49	2.95
1910-11	4.66	9.94	5.27
1919-20	7.09	18.02	10.94

1929-30	8.54	34.08	25.54
1946-47	19.3	44.09	24.79

Source: The imperial gazetteer of India (Provincial Series NWFP) and D. C. Obhrai, The evolution

of Northwest Frontier Province. Lal Baha, NWFP administrations under British rule (1901-1919)

Before partition of Subcontinent it was the poorest province of India in respect of provincial revenue even poorer than the newly formed miniature province of Orissa. In the initial years after independence 70 percent of Pakistan's total trade was with India. NWFP was also earning foreign exchange of more than 2.5 million rupees through the export of fresh fruits to India<sup>11</sup>. The province yielded an income of Rs.18.34 million from provincial resources and received 0.93 million from central resources such as customs, railways, excise and income tax in 1947. As the population of province was 3.5 million so the income per head computed to be Rs.533 per annum<sup>12</sup>. The province was also receiving an annual subvention of Rs.10 million from the center. Under the Raisman award of 1951, the annual subvention from center to the Frontier province was increased from 10 million to Rs.12.5 million<sup>13</sup>. The province also received assistance in the form of foreign grants and loans for financing its annual development program. The share of Punjab and NWFP was 27 percent and 8 percent respectively in the total divisible income tax and central excise of the country in 1951.

**Table 5.1**

**Total revenue, expenditure and deficits of the province during 1947-1960 in millions rupees.**

Year	Revenue	Expenditure	Deficit
1946-47	19.3	44.09	24.79
1955-56	48.7	85.4	36.7
1959-60	51.4	93.0	41.6

Muhmmad Said Khan. *The voice of the Pakhtoon.*, (Lahore: Feroz Sons, 1972), p.120 and James. W. Spain, *The Pathan Borderland*, (Karachi: Indus Publications, 1963), p. 215

The province was a deficit one. The fluctuations occurred in revenue receipts and expenditures of the province during the period 1947-70. As showed by the table 5.1, the deficits were 124.5 percent of revenue in 1947, which fell to 78.85 percent in 1956 and rose to 81 percent in 1960.

**The total investment made by the Federal government in industrial sector in all the four provinces of Pakistan during 1947-75**

Province	Amount invested (million Rs)	Percent of total
Punjab	1313.9	52.6

Sind	1000.4	40.1
NWFP	110.9	4.4
Baluchistan	68.6	2.7

**Source; Government of Pakistan, *Report of the first National Finance Commission*, (Islamabad: Finance Division, 1975) , Annexure X to XI.**

It is evidence from the table that very small amount of 4 percent was invested in NWFP. Therefore the province emerged with thin industrial structure and the existing industrial units were mostly confined to sugar and tobacco industries.

To sum up, in 1969-70, the total number of large-scale industries in operation reached to 3,587 in West Pakistan. Out of these only 98 (2.7 percent) were located in NWFP, 2,052 (57.2 percent) in Punjab, 1,419 (39.6 percent) in Sind and 18 (0.52 percent) in Baluchistan<sup>14</sup>. Moreover in Sind and Punjab 48.6 percent and 47.9 percent of the total industrial establishment both small and large were situated. While in NWFP 2.7 percent of total industrial units of Pakistan were located in 1970, employing about 31,000 industrial labors<sup>15</sup>. The share of the Frontier province in the total value of industrial production was only 8 percent at the end of sixties<sup>16</sup>.

**Table 5.4**

**Investment by West Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (1962-72) in the four provinces of West Pakistan**

Province	No of projects	Investment in Million Rs.	Percent of total
Punjab	28	731.25	58.8
Sind	17	335.40	27.0
NWFP	12	82.88	6.7
Baluchistan	5	93.46	7.5

**Source: Government of Pakistan, *Pakistan Economic Survey 1973*, (Islamabad: Finance Division, 1973), p.7**

The table indicates that very little proportion 6.7 percent of the total was invested in NWF region by PIDC while very high proportion 58.8 percent of total was made in Punjab. During the One Unit period (1955-70) comparatively small amount was invested in NWF region. Even the remittance that came from abroad were not invested for the industrial or human resource development but were spent on real estates or building or houses or on marriages. As a consequence of the government's deliberate policy to encourage industrial concentration, by 1968, the 22 largest families controlled 66 percent of industrial assets, 70 percent of insurance funds and 80 percent of bank assets<sup>17</sup>. Three Pakhtun bourgeois families, the Hotis, the Khataks and Khanzadahs of the Frontier region could be counted among the top 30 capitalist families in Pakistan. The Hotis and Khanzadahs dominated the sugar



mills in the province<sup>18</sup>. Some agro-based industries installed in the Frontier province were mostly in the urban areas. Therefore inter regional disparity existed among the provinces and among the different regions with in the province. Most of the industries were concentrated in few areas of Frontier i.e. Peshawar, Swat, Mardan and Abbottabad<sup>19</sup>. It shows inter regional disparities with in the province. The gap between different income groups widened with the result that 60 percent rural peoples were earning less than \$300 per year and were living below the poverty line<sup>20</sup>.

### **Prospects**

The KP former North West Frontier Province is a mountainous region intermixed with fertile valley of Peshawar in the center and dry planes in the southern part of the province. It is unique from agriculture point of view because it possesses diversified agriculture. The diversity of the region is reflected through the agro-climatic map of Pakistan prepared by Agricultural Research Council, where 6 out of 10 regions were identified in KP. According to 1998 census, KP including FATA constitute 16 percent of the population of Pakistan and 48 percent of the total labor force of the province is engaged in agriculture and contribution of agriculture to the GDP of province stands 40 percent<sup>21</sup>. The economic potential of this province which includes but is not limited to 30,000 MW hydropower, 9 trillion cft gas, 500 million barrels of oil, 3 billion tons of marble, 8 trillion tons of limestone, besides also having an endowment of 60 per cent of Pakistan's total forest cover, 20 per cent of the country's overall mining and minerals production, and significant stocks of gemstones. There are also public and private sector studies which inform us of a high oil and gas drilling success rate with one in three drill activities lending good news. We also observe that ten exploration and production companies are already active in the province, including Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company. Total reported agricultural land in the province is 13.89 million acres. Out of which 22.23 percent is occupied by forest and 23.90 percent is under crop cultivation in addition to 22.49 percent cultivable land that is not utilized because of want of water<sup>22</sup>. About 3 million acres forestland is situated in Hazara, Dir, Swat, Chitral, and Kohistan. A minimum of 3.5 billion cubic feet of timber is obtained from it that accounts for more than 250 billion rupees.<sup>23</sup> It constitutes about 16 percent of the total contributions made by forestry in Pakistan. Wheat and maize are dominant food crops of the province. Tobacco, sugar cane and sugar beet are major cash crops. In NWFP about 71 percent of the total tobacco and 15 percent total sugarcane of Pakistan is produced. The province has potential to increase its tobacco production. Wide varieties of fruits are produced in NWFP and orchards spread over 74,130 acres in NWFP<sup>24</sup>. The climate and soil of NWFP is suitable for vegetables. Swat valley and the adjacent area of Hazara are the only sites in Pakistan where 2,00,000 acres land is suitable for cultivation of this crop.

Tea cultivation has been started and tea-reprocessing plants have been installed<sup>25</sup>. A crop yield per acre is low in the province. Yield of most of agriculture crops is far below than the achievable potential levels. The present yield level of the crops is only 23 percent of its potential due to a number of constraints faced by the farmers. Efficient management of the agricultural research and production system can achieve it<sup>26</sup>. More over the province has a vast grazing area along with the capacity to produce every kind of feed required by dairy animals. Besides small one Kabul, Swat, Chitral, Kunhar, Bara, Kurram, Touchi, Baran, Harroah and Siran are main rivers flowing through the province. Except Karak all districts in the province have easy excess to water of river passing nearby or flowing through it for irrigation purpose. Indus has gone for 200 miles in the province. A National Water Apportionment Accord 1991 has allocated 8.78 million acre-feet of water for North West Frontier Province. The accord also allowed 14 percent of the additional river water supply including flood flow and future storage.<sup>27</sup> Although near about 70 percent area of NWFP and FATA is mountainous and is not fit for efficient productive agriculture yet there are also unique opportunities. The province is blessed with some of the most exquisite areas in the world where the beauty of the natural environment, the abundance of scenic spots, and a host of recreational outlets attract an ever-increasing number of tourists. Also there is large number of colorful traditional handicrafts based on local raw materials. If the tourism industry is properly developed large number of foreign tourists could be attracted a year and revenue could be enhanced by million dollars.<sup>28</sup>

The varied geology provides enormous mineral wealth in the province but the exploration and development work in the field of mineral and mineral-based industries is very poor. Precious stones export holds tremendous potentials for growth in NWFP. The export of gemstones can be increased to \$50 million a year if proper modern technology is used. There are 2 billion tons' vast marble deposits in Swat and agencies of Bajaur, Mohmand, and Khyber. Among these the Mullaguri marble deposits are classified as one of the best in the world and can be ranked with Carrara in Italy and Makrana in India. Due to the use of primitive mining method 65 percent marble is wasted during extraction<sup>29</sup>. There is more than 40,000 MW electricity generating projects capacity in NWFP on River Indus alone. Similarly 20,000 MW potential is available on River Swat<sup>30</sup>. Cost of production of hydro-electricity in NWFP is quite low. In academic and policy publications, we are repeatedly reminded of the economic potential of this province which includes but is not limited to 30,000 MW hydropower, 9 trillion cft gas, 500 million barrels of oil, 3 billion tons of marble, 8 trillion tons of limestone, besides also having an endowment of 60 per cent of Pakistan's total forest cover, 20 per cent of the country's overall mining and minerals production, and significant stocks of gemstones<sup>31</sup>.



Also the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Corridor is reflected as the game-changer for the destiny of the whole concerned region in general and for the newly merged tribal districts in particular. Moreover, it wouldn't be wrong to call it the turning factor for enhancing the regional prosperity, additionally, it is the very project, which would truncate the distances between Pakistan, Afghanistan and CARS, which for sure, would increase the regional connectivity between the trading partners. As it has been mentioned earlier, because of its fastest and shortest route's structure between the concerned partners, the KPEC would amplify the volume of exports and imports between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics, which would not only change the economic fate of the partners positively, but also it would be supportive to the local industries of marble and horticulture around the proposed expressway, hence, it would pave the way for private-public partnership. As concerned to the local communities, the project has also great potential for the employment of local poverty affected women and youth. As soon as the KPEC is developed, it would provide plethora of economic opportunities for the local's youth of the region, which would not only contribute in the economic growth of the concerned landscape, rather it would keep the youth engaged in positive economic activities, hence, there would be no room for the warmongers as well as terrorists to exploit the poor class of the concerned terrain just because of the poverty factor of the affected communities. And, most importantly, when there would be regional opulence, successively, it would result in more trade and welcoming links among the concerned swapping partners. In short, the proposed project has also the capability to distance the mistrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which furthermore would accelerate the amiable socio-economic and political bonds between the two neighbors<sup>32</sup>.

### Challenges

Pashtuns in KP as well as in Afghanistan have had one fundamental weakness i.e. lack of exploitation of internal resources to generate revenue to pay for governance and defence, as a result no government has been able to survive without federal or foreign resources of revenue. The most important institutions Pashtuns have been tribe handled by Maliks or khans and Islamic community guided by Mullah, Sayyed, Pir and Sufi<sup>33</sup>.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan is one of those areas which are badly affected by the war-like situation and terrorism. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan, the KP Province is contributing 13 % to the GDP of the country as against a total population of 27 million which amounts to 14 % of the total population of Pakistan. Majority of the people living in KP Province do not have access to formal financial system and are handicapped to be associated with informal financial services. According to

official reports, the current annual economic growth in KP Province has been recorded at 4.5 %. Remittances from overseas Pakistanis amount to 5 % of total GDP and it is interesting to note that every 4th overseas Pakistani belongs to KP Province. The major industries encompass Agriculture, Construction, Manufacturing, Livestock, Mining and Tourism. The poverty rate amounted to 39 % which stands which makes it 2<sup>nd</sup> poorest province in Pakistan. The contribution made to the GDP by services sector is 67 % while Industry contributes 20 % and Agriculture contributes just 13 %<sup>34</sup>.

## Conclusion

The civil society organizations also highlight some gaps which include: development funding mostly channeled towards districts represented by treasury benches in the provincial parliament; need to raise a more capable and autonomous provincial civil service free from political interference; sluggish pace of implementation of laws that strengthen voice and accountability in the provinces.

Academics in the province reveal low quality of human resource as a key impediment to economic growth. According to them, proliferation of public sector universities in the province was not matched by higher incentives for more experienced faculty at these universities. As a result, we see several large university departments without a single full professor or equivalent. Even at the primary school level, flagship teachers' training program has been reported to be falling behind timelines due to mismanagement and coordination issues. The ongoing vocational training program face challenges which prevent scaling up to western and southern districts in the provinces.

There is dire need to expedite ongoing reforms to improve quality of public administration, transparency and accountability. This is most desired to mitigate the incidence of corruption, timely completion of development programs, managing existing infrastructure and social sectors in a cost-effective manner, and to be more suitable partners for China in implementation of CPEC portfolio in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The province has also witnessed frequent floods in recent past. It is worth noting that the perennial flow in most parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is untapped for the use of agriculture. This can be achieved by channeling streams of water from the main river flow towards the agricultural lands which will not only result in a sustainable agricultural sector but also mitigate the impact of flood risk. The provincial government needs to put in place a more structured public-private dialogue mechanism. Currently, the business community feels that their voice is not heard at the policy forums. Their proposals to the government are not scientifically evaluated. Therefore, a more appropriate way forward may be to put in place public private advisory councils at departments of finance, planning and

development, industries and agriculture. A quarterly follow-up meeting of such councils will not only ensure demand-side accountability, but also allow the provincial government to present their constraints and possibly engage the private sector towards collective solutions of complex policy issues.

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