



## **DOES SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE POSSIBLE OR IMPOSSIBLE? A PUBLIC PERCEPTION ABOUT PAKISTAN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The aim of this study is to find out the general public perception of Pakistan about whether the current situation in Pakistan can change or not, or if things will remain as they are right now. The study discussed in detail about the need for change, the factors resisting change and how one can bring positive change in Pakistan. When talk about change, it relates to changing the current status of problems in the country and attaining a scenario of near-to-ideal environment where everyone can enjoy their proper rights, practice their beliefs and have equal opportunity to progress in their life. Pakistan was formed on these principles, but these objectives could not be fulfilled so far. The core of these problems is awful law and order situation, terrorism, energy crisis, huge capital outflow, wastage of vast natural resources and historical political instability and illiteracy. The external and internal imbalance, unemployment, hyper inflation is proclaimed as leading macroeconomic failures. Despite these prevailing social and economic disharmonies, the majority is still hopeful about the solution to these problems and believes that with positive intent and efforts a definite change can be brought here in Pakistan. Furthermore, this study suggests to solve these problems for long and stabilized development and success of the country.*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The overall social and economic conditions in Pakistan are becoming more horrific, as tensions rise while the government appears helpless to control it. In various ways, the state is trying to catch up as it tries to put out fires. This situation critically challenges the viability of the state. Moreover,

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political flux, poor planning, low level of investment, energy crisis, awful law and order situation and terrorism have led to slower growth in Pakistan. Although, huge capital outflow, wastage of vast natural resources, corruption and illiteracy are also the hurdles for stable growth (Isaac, 2007).

Alas, Pakistan's government always have not given the importance to education. (Afzal, 2010) and (Kakar, 2011) explored basic reason behind illiteracy is lack of importance. Literature suggests that lack of importance and not enough funds allocated for education by the public sector are major reasons behind the poor education system (Tsamadias and Prontzas, 2012). In Pakistan, corruption is the second major serious problem, no department or sector is free from this curse. It is present at all levels of authority at the workplace or political structures. The hierarchical structure of public institutions is not working properly, due to corruption and all sects of the society are directly or indirectly affected by it (Marie, 2008). The situation gets more intense with the loose law and order situation. The crime rate has been on the increase for more than a decade. Thousands of people throughout the country die every year, whether in target killings or bomb blasts etc. Pakistan's youth is demoralized due to lack of job opportunities even they have good qualifications and skills. Brain drain, professionals and youngsters those want to go abroad for their bright future is a very serious state of affair in Pakistan because within the country they have not the enough opportunities.

Many studies suggest for satiable growth and renaissance and change, city center employment, stable neighborhoods, multimodal transport, good communication facilities, building colleges and universities, better law and order situation and security, political stability, good cultural values and entertainment facilities will also facilitate to build new economic engines and hubs (Mallach and Brachman, 2013).

Lao Tzu, an ancient Chinese Philosopher of the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. once said:

*"If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading"*

It is time to change; otherwise we might end up worse condition and will bring severe implications for our future. Despite of all problems of Pakistan, we should believe in change and in the people who can and will bring change in Pakistan. Positive thinking with effort will yield in success for the country. An independent political system and every inclined individual have power to change the picture of Pakistan. Other countries might start to invest in Pakistan again, which will result strong economy and more job opportunities. The youth can contribute a lot in this change as having potential to cope with these challenges. This is the time when youth must bring revolution. They should stand up and gather for the strength, power, optimism and intelligence. Pakistan has 63 percent youth under 25 years (World Development Indicators, 2013). Which is great human capital of Pakistan as compared to Europeans and Americans countries in future Pakistan will have an advantage.

### 1.1. Historical Perspective

Pakistan was established and created on the principles of Islam, freedom of belief and speech, people knit with love and brotherhood (Ashraf, 2010), (Yasmin, 2008), (Peter, 1972) and (Peter, 1992). But now, it is completely converse of the ideals it was formed on. What are the reasons

behind? Where the problem got started from? The reasons behind the problems of the country and need to change the current situation. When Pakistan was appeared on the map of the world it was a beautiful land of natural recourses, devoted people who migrated in the search of land of peace. All kept on researching and thinking over the issue that where this all came from and finally came up with two basic dilemmas:

1. Feeble political structure
2. Inefficient and poor planning

Since 1947, the day of independence till today, we failed to exercise the democracy properly. Democracy, which was one of the principles of Pakistan remained in the books of law. From the beginning we had a loose structure of politics. In the 1st year of Pakistan we lost our founder Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, which was followed by the murder of Liaquat Ali Khan. These loses brought such a gap which was never filled in the history of Pakistan and that was the start of a shallow political structure. The long military rule (1977–1988) and (1999-2008), wipe out democratic norms, stifled democratic values, yet aspiration for democracy continues to persist. For almost (1988–1999) and (2008-2013) Pakistan has sustained a transition to parliamentary democracy. Furthermore, Pakistan is blessed with a great amount of coal, gas, oil and agriculture. But the lack of planning resulted not only loss of these resources but they became the subject of contrary and debate. Behind all the current problems in the study suggests two issues which have been playing a major role since the beginning.

## **1.2. Need for Change**

As mentioned before the anxiety in the public especially among the youth due to the existing situation of the motherland has prompted a definite need for change and call for social, political and economic reforms. But unluckily this need for change has been realized very late, in fact at the stage of crisis whereas this need should have been anticipated long ago among the social norms. Few hurdles are from the beginning of Pakistan. Whereas, the few additional problems convoluted the overall outlook of the Pakistan. These new additions are prolonging power outage, awful law and order situation, foreign interference especially the interests of super powers. Whatever, it may be that make you feel bad about Pakistan, there is a strong desire in the heart of every loving Pakistani to change all the negativity there is for good and make the homeland prosperous and recognized as one of the developed nations in the world.

## **2. FACTORS RESISTING CHANGE**

### **2.1. Fear of the Unknown**

The most common factor in opposing any change is the fear of the unknown. As soon as you talk to someone about the change, the negative thoughts that pop out from one's thoughts are:

- What will happen if this fails?
- What good it is for me?
- Will people accept me with this change?

- Will it damage reputation in the society?
- Will this earn me any financial benefit?

Those people who do not have all of these useless fears, usually they are the ones can initiate such change.

## **2.2. Technical Feasibility of the Change:**

Another important question anyone would ask you is the technical suitability and correctness of the change. Nobody wants to struggle in the wrong direction and lose the right path forever.

## **2.3. Lack of Trust in Change**

People have tried various ideas and various leaders over time, some of them have failed, some even succeeded. But these words seem unnecessary; there is always an uncertainty and lack of trust attached to any change that is attempted in a society.

## **2.4. How to Bring Change**

Generally great leaders use following techniques to bring change in the society or their area of concern:

## **2.5. Educate and Communicate**

Illiteracy is a curse greater than anyone you can imagine. If you want the shift the paradigm of the people, you need to aware them about what is right and what is wrong, what is in their interest and what is against them. Moreover, effective communication and interaction with the common man is necessary in bringing any positive change.

## **2.6. Participation and Involvement**

No drastic change can be brought based on individual performance and involvement. We would have to work collectively and participate in even the smallest of movements/resolutions that are pro-change. In developing participation interest among the people, a good leader shares all necessary information that is unbiased and true. Since they have been misguided by those who opposed the change and are in favor of maintaining the status quo.

## **2.7. Persuasion and Motivation**

It does not matter how difficult may be the task ahead or how many hardships are involved pursuing the desired goal if people are motivated and committed towards their objectives, nothing can stop them to change their luck and future. But someone is required to motivate them and persuade them to for one common shared objective.

## **2.8. Literacy**

Education is very crucial factor for a nation building, social and economic growth cannot be attained without education. It is a key to prosperity and progress. In Pakistan, education sector is monitored by the government through its ministry of education. The educational system of Pakistan is among the least-developed in the globe. The government of Pakistan spends a very small amount

of its GDP on education in the year 2013-14 Pakistan announces 2.3 percent of its GDP for education instead of 1.3 percent in 2011-12 ([Federal Budget, 2013-14](#)).

## 2.9. Political stability

The major problem that resists 'change' is the lack of political stability and will. The political uncertainty has meant that the education sector has never been governed by a consistent policy and its development process has been interrupted time and again. Include other factors which suffered due to lack of political stability i.e. Foreign policy ([Foreign Policy, 2013](#)), trade, fragile economy, economic dependency etc.

## 2.10. Security Situation

The involvement of foreign factors made the situation more instable and the peace of the whole region is at stake. Through 2001, Pakistan continued to face the brunt of the extremism and terrorism. According to partial data compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), the country recorded a total of at least 6,211 terrorism-related fatalities, including 3,007 civilians, 2,472 militants and 732 Security Forces (SF) personnel in 2012 as against 6,303 fatalities, including 2,738 civilians, 2,800 militants and 765 SF personnel in 2011. [Since media access is heavily restricted in the most disturbed areas of Pakistan, and there is only fitful release of information by Government agencies and media reportage, the actual figures could be much higher]. The first 69 days of 2013, have already witnessed 1,537 fatalities, including 882 civilians, 116 SF personnel and 539 militants ([The South Asia Terrorism Portal](#)). Pakistan has already recorded 882 civilian fatalities in 2013, significantly higher than the combined fatalities (655) of SF personnel and terrorists.

Also, Pakistan's port – Karachi is suffering continuous casualties in terms of target killing, suicide bombing & unpleasant living environment throughout the last decade particularly in the last democratic government of Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP). These circumstances and law and order situation keep the 'change' away from the country.

## 2.11. Power Crisis

Power Shortage and Load shedding have been one of the core issues of the country and it is no secret that the middle and lower classes in Pakistan are widely affected. Everyone needs a long-term solution for it but another problem which is directly linked to it is the improper utilization and wastage of valuable natural resources (like oil, gas, coal etc.) That requires to generate power. Although there have been various efforts from the government in the form of new power plants but that has not helped significantly to solve the power crisis in Pakistan.

The nation's total requirement for electric power is approximately 14500 Megawatts and the country has the total generation capacity of 19000 Megawatts (this includes Hydel Power Plants (HPP), Independent Power Plants (IPPs), WAPDA and KESC and the electricity being imported from across the border.). This shows that Pakistan has more than capable of fulfilling power needs but due to the incompetence of government the power plants have been deprived of their respective fuels and as a result most of them remain shut off for the major part of the year.

## 2.12. Utilization of Resources

As stated about an efficient utilization of resources. Almost everything is included in the resources. The money the state holds within its vicinity, the oil & gas reservoirs, the coal mines, the agricultural fields and not to forget the most important resource of all the people of the country. If we change habits to waste all of these resources through proper management and governance a definite and long lasting change can be brought for a prosperous Pakistan.

## 2.13. Corruption

It is obvious in a transitional society such as Pakistan where industrialization started but imperfect and partial. Corruption, robbery and plunder have become a part of society and have almost destroyed the social and economic structure of society and cultural values (Wordpress, 2010). Every concerned Pakistani is witnessing a social unrest and it's his considered opinion now that his forefathers, he, his children and perhaps his posterity would not see a socio-economically stronger and better Pakistan because the acute unfair distribution of wealth and huge disparities in class system has compelled 60 percent people live below poverty level life (Transparency International). (World Development Indicators, 2013) reported the international poverty line is two dollars a day. The report also says that 21 percent of Pakistan's public lives below \$1.25 per day. Therefore, there is need to take drastic measures and formulate such short and long term policies that can bring about a "change" in the scenario politically and economically. Is it possible to bring a change in the event of rampant corruption? Perhaps not and thus is it possible to eradicate the menace of corruption? A change can only usher in when lower and middle class of Pakistan is elected by the people and controls the corridors of power. This can only happen when the affected people, the overwhelming majority of the country launch a movement against the handful few. In Pakistan corruption has crept into all the areas of public activity. You need to bribe for lodging or avoiding Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), making an entry in the revenue records, obtaining permission to build a house or resolving your tax matters. "Hafta" and "Wasooli" are the words known to every Indian as in Pakistan "Chai-Pani", "Bhata" and "Parchi" is known to all.

## 2.14. Contribution of Youth in Bringing Change

Since people are the most important resources for any nation and among people youth is generally more energetic, enthusiastic and innovative, which need for any drastic change. But youth has been far less interested in the political or non political matters of the country due to improper guidance. The majority of them do not realize the importance of good education and global competitiveness as a result they have developed an inferiority complex within themselves. However, much is still expected of them and they are the ones who can really turn this nation on its head and bring a new era of development and progress in Pakistan.

Youth has the potential to bring change in the society if they were allowed to contribute in the past, but the time is now to unite them on one platform and allow them to play their part in the future of Pakistan. Unfortunately in Pakistan there is no such organization or political party representing the rights and interests for youth which could motivate future generation in such positive way that can bring change in society.

### **2.15. Research Objective**

The primary research objective of the study is to find out the self perceived assumptions and the thinking of the common man working in different organizations and few graduate level students regarding the possibilities for the change of the current situation in Pakistan.

### **2.16. Primary Research Question/ Purpose Statement**

The proposed statement or the primary research question is; “Does social and economic change possible or impossible”.

### **2.17. Population/Sample**

This study belongs to office employees and business professionals/managers in the private sector, educated class and people from the modern school of thought. The study worked on the samples which were collected under a cluster sampling method and randomly selected employees from a private sector, educated people living in the locality and students of universities. The study selected total hundred individuals/samples for analysis, specifically the sample belonged to the people of Karachi.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

On the basis of quantitative research tool. A questionnaire was used as the research tool that consisted of 14 questions whose results are quantified and analyzed using basic statistical and mathematical techniques. Below is the list of other research questions that are directly related to primary research questions:

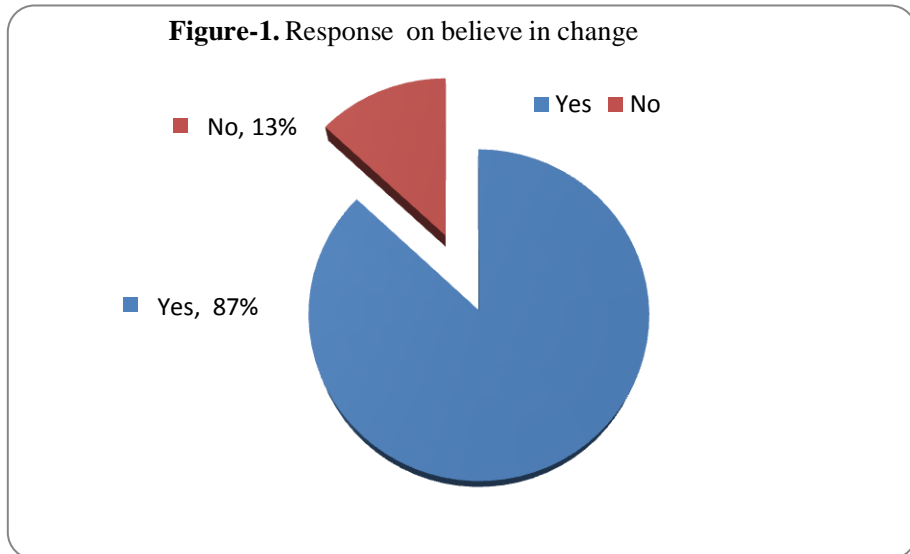
- Do you think can change be brought by improving the literacy rate in Pakistan?
- To what extent do you think the power shortage problem in the country can be resolved?
- Will law and order situation get better in Pakistan?
- Do you believe that youth can play major role in bringing change?
- Do you believe that Pakistan can solve its major problems by efficient and proper utilization of its resources?
- Can Pakistan be freed from corruption and all its forms?
- Do you believe that the elections 2013 will have a major impact on Pakistan’s future?

The idea for change, the factors resisting change and the problems have been facing since long in Pakistan. The problems of power shortage, illiteracy, unemployment, poor law and order situation, unnecessary wastage of resources and corruption at various levels of authority all have played an important part in diminishing Pakistan’s image worldwide thereby affecting the economy of the country as a whole and creating a sense of anxiety among the people of Pakistan.

In this study, the focus is to try and find out the general public perception regarding the possibilities and impossibilities that there will be change in Pakistan in the near future. A designed questionnaire used by employing different survey techniques such as interviewing general public, students, professionals and local businessmen and also through social media. 100 questionnaires were distributed. The distribution was as follows, in general public 25 flats from Ghulsan-e-Iqbal, students of Federal Urdu University, professional included from Orent Power, Lucky Cement and

Automobile Corporation of Pakistan and local businessmen also included from a Cottage Industry (garment industry, shopkeepers). So, the data of total hundred questionnaires were selected for analysis. The survey was self-administered, in which questionnaires were distributed to different individuals. The questionnaires were filled with the population sample according to their fondness.

### 3.1. Public perception regarding the change



**Source:** Calculated and compiled by authors.

The basic idea in this study was to know about the internal feeling of the general public of Pakistan about believing in change. After collecting data and analyzed, it is found that 87 percent of Pakistan’s public has believed on change which is a positive sign and shows that still there is hope.

**Table-1.** Following is the summary of response to questions in percentage

Q	Response					Total
Q 1. Do you believe in change?						
	Yes	No				100%
	87%	13%				
Q2. Do you believe that there will be a positive change in Pakistan in the near future?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	100%
	17%	26%	39%	12%	6%	
Q 3: What is your qualification?	Graduate	Undergraduate	Metric	Primary	Illiterate	100%
	67%	28%	5%			
Q 4: In your opinion, can change be brought by improving the literacy rate in Pakistan?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	100%
	53%	26%	9%	5%	7%	
Q 5: To what extent do you think the power shortage problem in the country can be resolved?	More Required	Completely	Partially	Remain	Get Worst	100%
	10%	36%	36%	15%	3%	
Q 6: Will law and order situation get better in Pakistan?						1553



Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	100%
2%	36%	32%	20%	10%	
Q 7: Do you think, there will be better job opportunities as a result of this change?					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	100%
15%	55%	18%	6%	6%	
Q 8: Can Pakistan be freed from corruption and all its forms?					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	100%
1%	27%	38%	22%	12%	
Q 9: Do you believe that youth can play major role in bringing change?					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	100%
51%	29%	9%	9%	2%	
Q 10: Do you believe that democracy will bring change in Pakistan?					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	100%
16%	31%	25%	19%	9%	
Q 11: Do you think, the new political leadership can bring change in Pakistan?					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	100%
14%	25%	31%	20%	10%	
Q 12: Do you believe that Pakistan can solve its major problems by efficient utilization of its natural resources?					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	100%
46%	14%	16%	5%	19%	
Q 13: Will Pakistan's foreign status and reputation improve in the near future?					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	100%
8%	30%	34%	20%	8%	
Q 14: Provided a better opportunity abroad, will you leave Pakistan for good?					
Yes	No				100%
69%	31%				

**Source:** Calculated and compiled by authors.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study focused on a very crucial topic about Pakistan and tried to wrap all the necessary aspects of change to reflect the thinking of Pakistan. The designed questionnaire is used in this research. The initial query was about believed in change that more than 87 percent people have believed in change. The second question was, "Does social and economic change possible or impossible?" That analyzed that approximately 55 percent people have not believed that Pakistan will change in the near future which is not a good sign and shows that public perception is not good. The survey proved that more than 60 percent people are not happy if consider the 39 percent of not sure and 12 percent are disagree they all have the same response. Whereas, in remaining questions have different aspects that are affecting indirect or directly to this type of result or such unhappiness with the country. Few questions are about literacy, power shortage, law and order condition, democracy, new politicians and party leadership, election 2013, the role of youth, role of corruption and relations of Pakistan with other countries in the future and found that most of people were disappointed due to all these things. All these major facilities make the hopeless but there are some people who think that Pakistan will overcome its difficulties if the leadership utilizes all the recourses. Even they think that by using their coal, gas and oil in Baluchistan, minerals in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, agriculture of Punjab and Sind and the most important hard working and loving nation of Pakistan. According to them they have believed in change and hope that Almighty Allah will recover Pakistan and give the way to success.

Furthermore, I had very disappointing result that still having hope and believe in Allah and in Pakistan about 69 percent people want to leave the Pakistan for better living and only 31 percent thought that they never leave their country alone. They thought that Pakistan gave them a lot and when Pakistan is in difficulty why they leave the country alone. They thought it is a duty of every Pakistan's rich or poor, educated or uneducated, politician or scholar to help Pakistan and to stand along with Pakistan and make Pakistan world's best nation and the country.

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