



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Poverty Eradication for Sustainable Development: Role of the State as a Partner, Catalyst, or Facilitator in Pakistan**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study examines Pakistan's efforts in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1) of eliminating poverty. Despite the government's commitment to SDGs in 2016, various challenges persist, including a growing population and the need for resilient public institutions. The research explores the role of public policymakers and government institutions in tackling poverty and analyzes the impact of social protection and poverty alleviation programs like the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Ehsaas Program and Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP). It also investigates government initiatives in microfinancing as an effective tool to reduce poverty. The study involves secondary data analysis from various sources including government websites, published papers, governmental reports, media publications, and policy documents. The paper aims to evaluate the role of the state as a partner, catalyst, or facilitator in poverty eradication policies and provides valuable strategies for policymakers and public managers to implement innovative solutions for poverty eradication

**KEYWORDS** Developmental State, Poverty Eradication, SDG 1, Sustainable Development, Pakistan

**Introduction**

Pakistan is a developing country hit severely by COVID-19, whereby poverty rose significantly. The healthcare crisis resulted in the reversal of decades of efforts undertaken to eliminate poverty in the country, which over 20 years declined from 64% to 24% in 2015. But with the spread of the virus and the slowdown in the economy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected an increase of 40% in the rate of poverty in Pakistan (Raza, 2020). The need to increase the provision of financial assistance under social protection and anti-poverty initiatives to protect families affected by COVID-19, specifically those earning daily wages was felt (Business Recorder, 2020). It is estimated that most of the population may face unemployment due to the COVID-19 crisis (Javed, 2020a). The recent floods of 2022 have set the country back even further. Under such precarious circumstances, focusing on rebuilding from scratch and working towards the UN Sustainable Developmental Goal 1, "eradicating poverty in all its forms," is paramount for the daily wagers of the country. Pakistan adopted the SDGs by incorporating them within its national development agenda. This initiative was taken under the unanimous National Assembly Resolution in 2016 while being the first country to espouse it. To monitor and evaluate SDGs the government of Pakistan established processes important to provide support in implementing the goals. These processes also encouraged coordination at both horizontal and vertical levels and enhanced effective collaboration

amongst various partners engaged in developmental tasks. These included civil society organizations think tanks, academia, and the private sector. Furthermore, parliamentary task forces also operate within national and provincial assemblies to supervise and monitor the progress of the SDGs. These task forces were formed to provide an enabling institutional environment for a sustainable implementation of the development goals. In this regard, a sub-committee of the National Economic Council (NEC) on SDGs has also been formed to review the progress of SDG1 and other goals (Cheema, 2021). To monitor the progress and oversee the implementation of SDGs, support units have been formed at federal and provincial levels with the Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives and Provincial Planning and Development Departments (United Nations, 2023).

In 2016, Pakistan proclaimed its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by affirming it to be a part of its national agenda. Despite nationwide efforts being undertaken at various levels of the government to accelerate the pace of successful implementation of sustainable goals, several challenges prevail, such as a rapidly growing population and the need to build resilient public institutions. What roles are public policymakers and government institutions currently playing in tackling poverty in Pakistan? What programs are in place to work towards SDG Goal 1? This study examines the state of poverty in Pakistan and aims to explore the role of the government in its pursuit to achieve the sustainable development goal of eliminating poverty while revealing the successes and challenges experienced on the path of becoming a developmental state, especially studying the effects of social protection and poverty alleviation programs such as *Benazir Income Support Program (BISP)*, *Ehsaas Program* and *Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP)*. Secondly, it intends to unveil the government's efforts in taking initiatives for microfinancing since it is a proven and effective tool for reducing poverty, especially in Pakistan's context.

The paper proceeds in five sections. After the introduction, it provides a literature review on the causes and consequences of poverty, the state of poverty in Pakistan with respect to SGD 1, and the collaborative governance perspective for the implementation of SGD 1. After that, methodology is discussed followed by the findings and conclusions.

## **Literature Review**

### **Poverty, its Causes, and Consequences**

The term poverty means the incapability to be able to achieve the bare minimum standards of living. It is a multidimensional phenomenon, elicited by factors, such as limited income, deficient resources, limited access to educational and health services, lack of participation in economic and political activities, and highly susceptible to external catastrophes, etc. A holistic approach is required to mitigate poverty and its effects since it is a multifaceted and complex concept. A poverty alleviation programme aims to promote economic activity which would result in creating opportunities for the vulnerable population. The essential elements of a poverty alleviation program revolve around maintaining macroeconomic stability, better governance, devolving to the grass-roots level, and protecting the rights of the marginalized segments of the society (Planning Commission, 2013). The prevalence of widespread poverty is a reality that prevails globally, having both economic and social consequences. It is considered to have catastrophic effects on society, which can often cause violations of human rights. As per the definition of the World Bank, "poverty is a multi-facet phenomenon that is about insufficiency or lack of political, economic, cultural and social entitlements." In South Asian countries, an unequal distribution of public goods and services is considered to be one of the major causes of increasing poverty. Paul Krugman, an economist believed that the primary cause of persistent poverty is high inequality in society (Ahmed, 2021). Some other commonly stated factors attributing to an increase in poverty are political

instability, natural disasters, societal demographics like the size of a family unit, gender inequalities, and regional differences. Corruption is another significant contributor to poverty leading to socioeconomic disparities. Poverty negatively affects the mental and physical health of citizens, and limits their economic and social mobility, eventually leading to social isolation and powerlessness. In today's modern era of the 21st century, poverty reduction has become one of the major goals of developing countries where poverty has become a threat to human development (Tasos et al., 2020)

### **Poverty Eradication: A National Goal**

The need to eradicate poverty has compelled the governments of developing countries to devise mechanisms for the uplift of poor and underprivileged citizens. Various anti-poverty policies are formulated by the policymakers and the community members which aim at enhancing the self-reliance and confidence of vulnerable populations, by offering microfinance loans. Such interest-free microfinance loans are offered in pursuit of solving multiple social and financial issues eventually resulting in the economic development of the country (Tasos et al., 2020). Microfinance is an effective instrument to reduce the poverty ratio and increase the income level in any country (Chughtai et al., 2015).

Over the past many decades, the government in Pakistan has been introducing various poverty alleviation programs to reduce poverty in the country. A Social Security Programme for employees was launched in March 1967. In 1970, the government initiated the Workers' Welfare Fund Scheme and Workers' Children Education Ordinance. In 1976, the Employees Old Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) was established to support the retired and elderly, who could not continue to earn their living. In 1980, The Zakat and Ushr department was established to help the government of Punjab to reduce poverty in line with the injunctions of Islam. In 1962, the Government set up the Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) as an autonomous corporate body. The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) was founded in 1997 by the government and is currently working in collaboration with the World Bank to provide loans and financial support to deprived citizens. The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) was launched in 2008, as the country's flagship social protection initiative, specifically catering to poor women. In 2019, in reaction to COVID-19, the government launched a cash disbursement program to deliver to those facing economic hardships.

Microfinance is one of the mechanisms developed to fill in the gap existing in the credit market aimed to facilitate the poor community of a society enabling them to earn their livelihood. With this financial support, the poor are provided educational opportunities and get self-empowered. It is universally accepted to be an effective tool for human, social, economic, political, and national development. Apart from other anti-poverty initiatives taken by various developing countries to minimize poverty, microfinance has proved to be one of the most effective strategies for poverty reduction (Chughtai et al., 2015). Studies conducted in Pakistan also endorse and emphasize the need to localize and enhance the scope of microfinance institutions in the rural sector of the country (A. A. Khan et al., 2021). Pakistan also intends to work towards SDG 1 by working on social protection policies and initiatives while collaborating with the private sector and the third sector (NGOs) to enhance the level at which current measures are being adopted.

### **The State of Poverty in Pakistan: Perspective of SDG 1**

Poverty in the whole country of Pakistan is a palpable phenomenon (Khan, 2013). It is increasing with every passing day. About 24.3% (55 million) of the population in Pakistan live below the poverty line. According to the World Bank's poverty estimate, 39.2% population lives below the lower middle-income poverty line. This figure was

estimated to be 35.7 percent in the fiscal year 2019-20 (Ahmed, 2021). Poverty in some provinces of the country is attributed to a decade-long militancy, insurgency, and terrorism. Moreover, natural disasters, particularly earthquakes, and floods of 2010 and 2022 further aggravated the situation. Other factors that increased the level of poverty in the country are the influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the Tribal Areas, the presence of Afghan refugees, the impact of the global economic crisis of 2007-2009, and the ever-increasing government debt deficits. A weak and incapable system of governance further added to the grievances of the poor and destitute (Khan, 2013).

The rural sector of the country has a greater percentage of poor people as compared to the urban areas. This situation prevails because those living in rural areas are dependent on the agricultural sector for their livelihood, but unfortunately, they have limited access to basic amenities such as clean drinking water, sanitation, primary education, health services, energy needs, communication, and employability. Poverty is seen to be acting like a double edge razor, where on the one hand the poor are already earning bear minimum income and secondly they are also deprived of basic facilities of life (Tasos et al., 2020).

Pakistan has surrendered to the notions of ineffective and fallacious policy formulation and implementation to eradicate poverty. Weak institutional capacity is one of the dominant factors that hinders the formulation and implementation of effective poverty reduction strategies (Khan et al., 2015). The socioeconomic indicators of Pakistan present a very bleak picture also indicated by the increasing population and poverty. One of the core reasons responsible for this situation is the undue accumulation of wealth in the hands of feudal political and tribal elites. This elitist class always denied reform initiatives meant to execute social welfare policies and create an efficient system of governance inclined towards the masses' interests contrary to the self-interests of the political elites (Khan and Ali, 2019). The rural sector of the country presents a greater percentage of the poverty-ridden population as compared to the urban populace (Ashraf, 2017). Despite being a country having an abundance of natural and human resources, it still encounters problems of sustainability. Considering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Pakistan is ranked 122 out of 157 on the global index (Khan and Ali, 2019)

According to the guidelines set by the United Nations, earning a daily wage of more than 1.90 dollars equates to the international poverty line adopted by most poor countries. SDG 1 aims to eradicate extreme poverty in all its forms by 2030. However, recent forecasts suggest Pakistan is on track to achieve this goal; even before the spread of coronavirus and the subsequent international recession, an estimated 6% (500 million people) of the global population would still be under the poverty line by 2030 (World Bank 2018, 2020).

### **Implementation of SDGs: A Collaborative Approach**

The theoretical framework for this study adopts a collaborative governance perspective to examine Pakistan's efforts in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG1) of eliminating poverty. Collaborative governance emphasizes the importance of partnerships and cooperation among various stakeholders, including public policymakers, government institutions, private sector, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in addressing complex societal challenges (Emerson, et al., 2012). The study aims to explore the roles of public policymakers and government institutions in tackling poverty, with a specific focus on social protection and poverty alleviation programs like the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Ehsaas Program and Prime Minister's Youth Program. Additionally, it will investigate government initiatives in microfinancing as an effective tool to reduce poverty. Collaborative governance is a suitable perspective to analyze the role of the state as a Partner, Catalyst, or Facilitator in the implementation of poverty eradication policies

Collaborative governance emphasizes the importance of collaborative and cooperative approaches among multiple stakeholders to address complex social issues and policy challenges (Bryson, et al., 2014). It recognizes that many contemporary societal problems cannot be effectively solved by a single actor or sector. Instead, it advocates for the involvement of various actors, such as government agencies, private sector organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community groups, and citizens, in decision-making, policy formulation, and implementation processes. Collaborative governance fosters partnerships, shared responsibilities, and joint problem-solving, aiming to achieve more inclusive and effective outcomes.

The key characteristics of collaborative governance include Inclusivity, shared decision-making, flexibility, and trust (Wang & Ran, 2023). Inclusivity involves engaging diverse stakeholders, including those affected by the issues being addressed, to ensure a wide range of perspectives and expertise are considered. Shared decision-making promotes collective decision-making, where stakeholders participate in negotiations and reach agreements that reflect their interests and contributions. Flexibility recognizes that complex problems often require adaptive and flexible approaches that can evolve over time as new information and circumstances arise. Moreover, successful collaboration depends on establishing and maintaining trust among stakeholders, enabling open communication and cooperation. Collaborative governance is applied in various policy domains, including environmental management, urban planning, healthcare, and poverty alleviation. It is particularly relevant in contexts where issues are multifaceted and require concerted efforts from multiple actors to achieve sustainable and inclusive solutions.

The Government of Pakistan has pledged to reduce poverty by 6% by 2023 (Thelwell, 2020). It is believed that the basis of implementation of the SDG goals is to execute by forming alliances and partnerships and by adopting innovative financing and modern technology. Collaborative efforts by multiple stakeholders including the private sector and the third sector along with the support and guidance of the international community can plausibly lead to the achievement of the goals. The Government of Pakistan aims to achieve sustainable growth by structurally reforming its institutions and leveraging upon the capabilities of its youth (SDG Section, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms Government of Pakistan, 2019). Various collaborative arrangements have been seen in PMYP. These collaborations comprise intra-governmental departments such as TVET, HEC, and SMEDA whereas in the private sector Microsoft Certifications, edX Harvard, and Coursera are providing training programs. The government as a facilitator has brought their services under its umbrella.

## **Material and Methods**

This study is based on an in-depth analysis of initiatives taken in Pakistan to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG1) of eliminating poverty. For this purpose, the data was obtained from secondary sources, primarily, research articles, organizational websites, policy documents, government reports and media publications. Multiple search engines were accessed and systematically searched for this purpose. Google Scholar, electronic newspapers, official websites of private organizations, federal and provincial governments, and the third sector were searched to evaluate the measures adopted for poverty eradication by the government, private and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) either independently or in partnership with national and international actors.

## **Study Findings**

### **Key Initiatives for Poverty Alleviation**

The multi-sectoral poverty reduction strategy is the key to curtailing poverty in the country. Some key initiatives of the government sector include the introduction of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, the Zakat and Ushr programmes, the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution, the Workers Welfare Funds and Provincial Employees' Social Security Institutions. Microfinancing by the third sector and philanthropic activities of the private sector are some other non-state initiatives taken to reduce poverty in the country. The BISP also entails the Waseela-eTaleem programme to support primary education, under which 2.2 million children lying in the age group of 5-12 years belonging to some of the poorest families got enrolled in schools. Public sector spending on infrastructure development was also incurred to create employment opportunities in the infrastructure sector. The health insurance policy by the name of SehatInsaf Cards and Khidmat Cards was introduced to provide free-of-cost health coverage to more than 80 million people in the underprivileged community. Moreover, the provision of shelter homes for the poor segment under the Panahgah program is another intervention of the government. The youth business loan initiative is another successful scheme meant to revamp skills development and self-employment in the country. Youth skill development has been introduced under PM Youth Skill Development Program (PMYSDP) for greater employability both in domestic and in foreign markets, particularly in the Middle East. The generation and supply of energy were also embarked upon to ensure smooth operations of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and businesses, which would eventually increase employability in the private sector. Under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), multiple avenues have been created to enlarge its scope for socio-economic uplift, while embarking upon poverty alleviation and agriculture development

### **Social Protection Programs in Pakistan**

Social protection in developing countries has emerged as a key component of the development policy framework to financially support the poor and vulnerable while enabling them to move out of a poverty-stricken situation and live a dignified and stable life. Social protection policies significantly enhance employability which enables the poverty-ridden population to move financially upwards (Khan, 2013). Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 aims to end all forms of poverty. The United Nations also asserted that social protection is a strategy conducive to achieving SDG 1 through government interventions aimed at poverty reduction and the provision of a safety net to the marginalized community. To achieve this end, the government of Pakistan is pursuing various social safety net initiatives intended to eradicate poverty (Javed et al., 2021). Considering the proportion of the vulnerable population in the country and an increase in the number of people falling below the poverty line, the government is compelled to respond to the needs of these people by introducing various programs housed under social protection programmes. Such initiatives are meant to provide financial support to women, widows, children, disabled persons, and marginalized populations. The Federal Government of Pakistan has come up with different innovative solutions to deal with rising poverty and launched one of the leading cash transfer poverty reduction programs and South Asia's largest cash disbursement programme known as the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) in the year 2008. This scheme catered to 5.7 million ultra-poor families, providing women with unconditional cash transfers. It provided BISP debit cards to distressed women which made cash withdrawals convenient for them. Later in 2019, another social security program named Ehsaas Programme was initiated under the Benazir Income Support Programme, which houses around 134 projects under the umbrella of the Ehsaas programme. An asset transfer and vocational and skills training programme was also conducted under the Ehsaas Programme in different provinces of the country for poverty alleviation. This initiative of the government of Pakistan known as the Livelihood Enhancement and Protection (LEP) programme provided opportunities for poor households to earn and have a sustainable livelihood. The major constituents of the Ehsaas initiatives are asset

provision, vocational and skills training, and interest-free loans. (Javed et al., 2021). With the spread of COVID-19, the government reverted to the lockdown of businesses and employee layoffs occurred in the majority of industries which reduced the earnings of millions of daily wagers. This further aggravated the situation resulting in rising poverty. The government immediately responded to this wicked problem and implemented a new project called the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program. This initiative of the government provided digital access to receive financial assistance. Under this program, 12 million families all over the country received stipends of Rs.12000 each to meet their daily food needs (Raza, 2020) in the first phase. Later on, it was extended to reach a total of 17 million families, which is about 50% of the total population of Pakistan (Farooq, 2022). The 2018-19 household income and expenditure survey indicated that the Ehsaas program may have curtailed poverty by 2 percent.

Another program called the Kamyab Jawan targeting the youth of Pakistan was launched by the prime minister of the PTI government, Mr. Imran Khan, whose primary objective for this initiative was to provide financial assistance and resources to youth at a national level falling in the age group of 15-29. This program was meant to provide opportunities to avail youth empowerment programs and to acquire loans for startups, youth legislations, and youth councils, thus enabling them to be a part of civil institutions.

The launch of PM's Youth Business and Agricultural Loan Scheme (PMYB&ALS) has introduced three tiers for loans to youth and farmers. Tier 1 includes interest-free loans up to Rs. 0.5 million to be returned within a period of 3 years; tier 2, ranges from more than Rs. 0.5 million up to 1.5 million with a markup of 5%, to be returned in a maximum period of 8 years; while tier 3, ranges from more than Rs. 1.5 million to 7.5 million to be returned within a maximum time limit of 8 years with a 7% interest rate (SB Circular 2022). The government had assigned the Rs. 30 billion targets to financial institutions for loan disbursement till 30<sup>th</sup> June (Business recorder, 2020). The government is using collaboration with banks for the disbursement of the allocated budget every year for PMBY&ALS. The banks are to collect only the markup for the first 2 years, and markup and principal in the later 3 years

The current PDM government has brought several skills development programs, already working under Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) institutions spread all across the country, under one digital world to keep track of their progress. Under PMYP the Skill Development Program (SDP) has also introduced 70 new labs-cum-workshops in *Madrasaas*, and has aimed to establish 50 incubation centers all across the country to support new start-ups and generate successful business enterprises. These are besides the already functioning, 2000 TVET training institutes that have been targeted for national and international accreditation to improve the standard of education and training. The targets are set to include skill development of 50,000 youth for high-end technologies, apprenticeship training for 25,000 youth, and another 50,000 youth training in less developed areas. In the post-Covid-19 scenario, if such steps are materialized, they can result in greater employability, enhanced economic activity, and reduction of poverty. But at the moment it is too early to evaluate the impact of PMYP initiatives

To achieve SDG 1 (No Poverty), Pakistan requires significant policy support and higher, sustained, and more inclusive growth. There is a clear need for balanced development across provinces and regions, as well as greater access to credit to support livelihoods. Achieving Pakistan's target of social protection for at least 70 percent of the population is imperative. The routine measurement of child poverty should be integrated into existing national and provincial surveys to capture specific evidence needed to address child poverty in national and provincial development strategies. Government efforts to redistribute wealth are also important. The National Socio-Economic Registry

(NSER) is also being updated to target the poorest people in the country more effectively, to ensure that no one is left behind.

### **Role of the Third Sector in Poverty Alleviation**

Many third-sector organizations in Pakistan are involved in activities aimed at empowering the indigent population in Pakistan. Their vision is to have a poverty-free society, to achieve this objective they offer interest-free microfinance loans which would enable socially and economically marginalized people to live a sustainable life. In its pursuit to cater to the vulnerable, Akhuwat is an authorized and well-reputed non-profit microfinance organization in Pakistan supported by the federal and provincial governments of the country. The government of Pakistan has adopted the model of a public-private partnership, by engaging Akhuwat in the dispersal of loans (Akhuwat Islamic). One such program initiated in the province of Punjab by the Government of Punjab in collaboration with Akhuwat is the "Chief Minister's Self Employment Scheme". This was the largest interest-free loan scheme offered and managed jointly by a government department and a civil society entity. This scheme aims to reach out to the low-income class, support the needy, and prospective entrepreneurs to start-up new businesses and existing ones as well. It intends to improve the socio-economic conditions of the marginalized population through financial and social inclusion. A provincial-level department in Punjab, Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PISC) intends to join hands with the not-for-profit making entity and introduce an interest-free loan scheme. The government's department will acquire the services of Akhuwat for the disbursement and recovery of interest-free loans in the province (Akhuwat, 2020b).

Another key initiative of the government of Punjab is the introduction of an interest-free Agri E-Credit scheme named, "Empowerment of Kissan Through Financial and Digital Inclusion" for the well-being of small farmers. Its objective is to reduce the cost of production for poor farmers and to increase the outreach of formal and digital financial services to ensure financial inclusion (Akhuwat, 2020b).

Akhuwat has also collaborated with the Government of Punjab on the Public School Support Program project. This program was meant to reopen nonfunctioning schools and thus ensure equal access to education for all. To date, Akhuwat has adopted more than 350 public primary schools in six districts of Punjab with the intent to provide educational opportunities to all citizens along with improved academic facilities. Another joint project between the Government of Sindh and Akhuwat was the upgradation of Narain Jagannath Vaidya (NJV) High School which was the first public school established in the province of Sindh. As a result of this partnership, today this educational site is successfully providing academic services and training to the students (Akhuwat, 2020a).

### **Conclusion**

This study sheds light on Pakistan's efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG1) of eliminating poverty through a collaborative governance perspective. Despite the government's commitment to the SDGs in 2016, various challenges, such as a rapidly growing population and the need for resilient public institutions, persist. The research explores the roles of public policymakers and government institutions in tackling poverty and assesses the impact of social protection and poverty alleviation programs like the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Ehsaas program, and PMYP. Additionally, the study investigates government initiatives in microfinancing as an effective tool to reduce poverty.

Collaborative governance emerges as a critical lens to analyze the state's role as a partner, catalyst, or facilitator in implementing poverty eradication policies. This approach highlights the significance of engaging diverse stakeholders, including the



private sector, NGOs, and civil society, in addressing complex social issues like poverty. Collaborative governance fosters inclusivity, shared decision-making, flexibility, and trust among stakeholders, leading to more effective and sustainable solutions.

The findings of this study reveal the state of poverty in Pakistan and the efforts made towards SDG 1. Despite the challenges, the government has introduced various initiatives and programs to combat poverty, such as BISP and Ehsaas program, which provide financial assistance and social safety nets to vulnerable populations. PMBY&ALS loans are aimed at generating sustainability for the vulnerable population, instead of bare minimum financial support for survival, in true terms it is a poverty eradication initiative. Microfinancing has also emerged as a promising tool to uplift the rural sector and reduce poverty, aligning with the country's context.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic crisis, the government took swift action to provide financial aid to affected individuals through the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program, demonstrating its commitment to poverty alleviation during challenging times.

### **Recommendations**

To achieve SDG1 and eradicate poverty effectively, the study recommends continued collaboration among stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, to create inclusive and sustainable solutions. It emphasizes the importance of balanced regional development, increased access to credit, and targeted social protection efforts to ensure no one is left behind. Redistributing wealth and updating the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) to better target the poorest populations are also crucial steps towards achieving the SDG 1 target. In spite that there is still a lot more effort needed to achieve SDG1, with the involvement of different key stakeholders of the society, which comprises both government and non-governmental actors and organizations, poverty eradication and SDG1 may be achievable.

Overall, this study provides valuable insights for policymakers and public managers responsible for poverty eradication strategies. By embracing a collaborative governance perspective and implementing innovative solutions, Pakistan can progress towards becoming a developmental state and fulfilling its commitment to the SDGs, ultimately improving the well-being of its citizens and alleviating poverty across the country.

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