

- The Islamabad administration, Ehsaas, and PIDE have worked together and launched a project for the betterment of the street vendors. The Prime Minister of Pakistan later suggested extending it to other parts of the country. So far, the project has covered approximately 375 vendors in Islamabad and about 160 of them have the newly designed efficient carts. The key message from the street vending project is that poverty has nothing to do with money - poverty results from disempowerment.

Disruptions: The Future of Work

Panelists:

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Curiosity and Creativity: There could not be two opinions that we need creative individuals and that education is the key to creativity. We need to impart an education that fosters curiosity, critical thinking, and hence creativity. A large segment of the population is illiterate, and a lot many do not go to school. To begin, we should focus on imparting education to all and sundry. The next issue to focus upon is, ensuring quality education.

Passion and Creativity are to be supplemented by research: passion and creativity are a must to carve or identify an opportunity and grab it. But carving a new opportunity or identifying an existing one does not happen in a vacuum – strong research is required to explore where opportunities exist and what are the feasible ways to make good use of opportunities.

Applied Research: whatever little bit of research is happening is being undertaken for the sake of personal career development – the focus is on quantity and reinventing the wheel—problem-solving is not the focus of research. To identify opportunities, applied

research and its adequate dissemination to the stakeholders are important—this would happen only if researchers were able to explain their findings in plain terms to professionals/practitioners.

Emphasis on Social Science: No doubt, research in natural science must be encouraged, however, the emphasis on natural science in Pakistan, has come at the cost of neglect of social science. The knowledge generated through social science research impinges upon decisions of wide-ranging importance. For example, without research in social science, we would not know how a person—consumer and producer, etc. typically behaves in certain situations—lacking such knowledge can lead to poor decisions and policy failures.

Freelancing: Pakistan is a major country for the supply of freelancers. We should be looking at freelancing with a pinch of salt. Yes! It provides employment to the educated youth and is earning valuable foreign exchange for the country, but there is a downside to it as well—the growth of freelancing implies that good enough jobs are not available in the country for the educated youth—our graduates should be worth much more than \$8 a day that freelancing typically pays. Secondly, the conventional job’s payoff not only monetarily but yield the benefits typically attached to socialisation and teamwork in addition to the discipline and professionalism that office work teaches. All these things are absent in freelancing.

Vibrant Financial System: Availing financially remunerative opportunities, among other things, call for a vibrant financial system. Many people who can identify opportunities do not have the financial resources to pursue these opportunities. A vibrant financial system can put the resources required at the disposal of people who apparently have viable ideas to pursue.

Appropriate ecosystem: A suitable ecosystem that would allow the stakeholder to put their ideas to practice is essential to availing opportunities—this would require a certain kind of environment, including conducive regulation and minimal government intervention to say the least.

Teamwork: To disrupt teamwork is often required—this is best captured in the words of a janitor who, when asked by the then president of United States, John F. Kennedy, while on a visit to NASA, ‘what you do here’ responded ‘I am putting a man on the moon.’

Little government: Disruption entails entering uncharted arenas—systems may not be in place for such a journey. Regulations may look at it as a non-permissible activity therefore, disruptions best happen in an environment of lesser regulations and an enabling government.