

The 35th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the
Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE)

23rd – 25th November 2021 | Peshawar

Call for Papers

Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) is pleased to host the 35th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the PSDE on “*Opportunities to Excel – Now and The Future*”. The conference will be held on **23 – 25 November 2021**. The PIDE will collaborate with IMSciences Peshawar, to hold the conference at their campus in Hayatabad, Peshawar.

Pakistan is experiencing youth bulge for over a decade now but has not been able to reap demographic dividend so far because young people lack the opportunity to let their talent flower – in business, art, sports, and academics to name a few. This year we want to focus on ‘Opportunity’ as widely as possible – we think of opportunity as more than making a career – as letting your talent blossom to the best of your ability. We want Pakistan to be a place that allows people to, identify, avail, and maximize opportunity – how this would happen – what is the role of the state, markets, and the society in identifying, allowing, and maximizing ‘opportunity’? This would be the focus of debate for the 35th AGM and conference of the PSDE. We also want to examine the society and economy in the context of the 4th Industrial revolution – what opportunities the revolution offers and what the society needs, to let people avail the opportunities and embrace the revolution.

We invite researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to recommend indigenous and contextual solutions for growth in Pakistan while positioning themselves within global conversations on a range of issues.

Papers are invited on several cross-cutting sub-themes listed below. Submissions of full papers must be made to psde@pide.org.pk. The sub-themes for this year’s conference are:

Theme 1: Nurturing Ideas and Accessing Opportunities

New ideas lead to opportunities – what environment facilitates the nurturing of ideas and putting these to practice. What role the state, society and markets play in nurturing ideas and otherwise identifying opportunities as well as facilitating access to these opportunities today? Moreover technology, supplemented by artificial intelligence is causing disruption. To prepare for and embrace the disruption underway, we must inquire into the opportunities thrown up by the disruption and the challenges posed by it. The potential sub-themes calling for research include:

- What environment allows people to identify opportunities and excel while reaping opportunities – what is the role of the state, markets, and society plays in the process.
- Evolution of jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities – jobs created, and jobs lost
- The kind of talent required to grow in a changing world – education for creativity and skills

- Internet for all: Benefits, costs, the role of the State, role of private sector
- E-Governance: Benefits, costs, the role of the State
- Technology-led Financial Inclusion
- Transaction settlements
- Agriculture technologies and food substitutes
- Climate change
- Post-pandemic world

Theme 2: State for the 21st Century

Economic growth requires enabling conditions for which the role of the State must be clearly articulated. Potential research under the theme include:

- The state of democracy in Pakistan: Dynastic and personality politics
- Electoral Reforms:
 - o Critique of electoral reform bill 2017 – Merits, demerits, constitutional issues & solutions
 - o Electoral system and its outcomes
 - o Rethinking electoral system
- Civil Service:
 - o Critique of reforms undertaken so far and the way forward
 - o Compensation: Monetized salary vs. Perks, plots & privileges
- Judiciary: Impact of delays on economy and society, and needed reforms
- Local government: How to influence the political will to sustain LGs?
- Resource distribution – Rethinking NFC?, Formulating PFCs?
- Regulatory system and its independence: Evaluate performance and laws governing Competition Commission, NEPRA, OGRA, PEMRA, CAA, etc.

Theme 3: Sludge – Frictions, that constrain Activities & Growth

Excessive or unjustified frictions, typically in seeking approvals from government agencies, makes it difficult to do things – like construct a high-rise building, launch a business, or get credit. The researchers may research to:

- Highlight the kinds of frictions faced by entrepreneurs and citizens in Pakistan while undertaking different tasks
- Estimate the magnitude of sludge in different activities and its cost to individuals and the economy
- Suggest pragmatic means of reducing sludge in different activities

Theme 4: Making Markets Work

Asymmetries in information and access, weak property rights, high transaction costs, excessive time consumed, and costs imposed in allowing certain activity impedes entrepreneurship and hence growth. Potential areas of research include:

- Agricultural markets: Land, input, output market, & forward market
- Auto market: Dynamics and magnitude of the premium

- Real Estate Market: Land market, high rise, houses, housing societies – regulations
- Banking industry
- Stock exchange
- Forex market
- Mortgage finance in Pakistan – potential & difficulties?
- The state of competition in different markets
- Creative cultural industry – Art and film

Theme 5: Inclusive Cities: People and Place

Modern cities are said to be the engine of economic growth. How to make Pakistani cities inclusive and pro-development should be the focus of research and debate. Sub-themes include:

- The economy of a city:
 - a. GDP, wealth, revenue sources
 - b. Does the city meet the needs of the citizens?
 - c. Constraints to; development, doing business
 - d. Investment rate & investment avenues
 - e. High rise construction: Benefits, NOCs
 - f. Zoning
 - g. Parking
- Urban development – Workability, survivability, and livability
- Unlocking dead capital: The prime land held by the government –unutilized or underutilized like; government housing, sports stadiums, etc. – how to better use this capital?
- Urban transport
- Real estate market:
 - a. Titles? Permissions? Transaction costs? Time to transact – sludge involved?
 - b. Why is the property in DHA valued more than elsewhere?
 - c. Evaluate construction industry – Is the industry meeting city needs?
 - d. Urban Sprawl – Causes and consequences
 - e. Real estate data – Availability, prices, and growth

Theme 6: Political Economy of Information

The internet and social media are changing the landscape of popular media and different groups are vying to either retain or wield influence over the popular media. The potential themes here include:

- Dynamics of media content delivered. How to make media deliver better content
- How to make news channels discuss important public policy issues?
- How to introduce competition in conducting media (TV Channel) ratings

Note: Each submission should identify the Conference theme/sub-theme it is being sent for. All relevant information about the Conference will be available from the PSDE Secretariat and the PSDE's website (www.pide.org.pk/psde).

The URL link for abstract submission is: <https://forms.gle/PaUunpzWHxWD4nAR6>

Travel and accommodation expenses for all presenters will be covered by the PSDE. Feel free to contact the organizers for queries by email at: psde@pide.org.pk.

Papers presented in the conference will be published by the PSDE in a special volume. The volume will have the following title:

**35th AGM and Conference of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists
Papers and Proceedings**

Best Paper Awards

Best papers presented at the Conference will be selected by experts and awarded the following prizes:

Best Paper of the Conference: PKR. 75,000/-

1st Runner-up: PKR. 50,000/-

2nd Runner-up: PKR. 25,000/-

Important Dates:

Deadline for Submission of Abstracts	15 th September, 2021
Deadline for Submission of Full Papers	5 th October, 2021
Notification of Accepted Papers	30 th October, 2021
35 th AGM and Conference	23 - 25 November, 2021

In case of queries and issues regarding abstract and paper submission, please email at: psde@pide.org.pk

NOTE: ONLY THE PERSONS VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19 WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE CONFERENCE