

The 36th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the
Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE)

November 22-24, 2022 | Quetta

Unleashing Tomorrow: Investment, Productivity and Employability

Call for Papers

Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) is pleased to host the 36th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE) on “*Unleashing Tomorrow: Investment, Productivity and Employability*”. The conference will be held on **22–24th November 2022**, in collaboration with Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (**BUIITEMS**), Quetta, Balochistan.

Pakistan has the lowest investment/GDP ratio (15.41%) in the region. We invite academia to devote urgent attention to this key challenge and develop ideas to address this situation. Investment depends upon enabling environment (policies and endowments), available skills set and labour productivity. Investment facilitates productivity by incrementing skills, resultantly raises return to work and thus supplements demand for labour. Investment brings technology and creates an ecosystem to produce, imitate and innovate, thus promote competitiveness, which in turn raises and rewards productivity.

Pakistan’s productivity growth too remains far lower than needed by our development needs. Why does our productivity growth remain so low? Is this true for all sectors? Are there any leading and lagging sectors in this area? What factors could help productivity increase? What type of policies are needed? What kind of behavioural changes do we need to address deeper issues? All these factors need special attention.

Employment and employability is the ultimate development objective. Haq and Nayab (2021)¹ has shown that employment in Pakistan remains in inadequate supply and is poor in quality. In Pakistan, large number of youth when unable to find jobs, become discouraged workers. Despite this, policy discussion revolves around education and the supply of jobs. Here we want to focus on the supply and demand for jobs as well as careers and social mobility.

PIDE has led the research on street vending as an important means of livelihood. In this conference self-employment and entrepreneurship should be an important topic as it seems a viable option in labour abundant economy like Pakistan. Similarly, anticipating the future, digitization is one of the most transformative drivers of work globally. This all need serious debate.

In the 35th PSDE conference held in Peshawar, the recurrent theme was that not only youth employability is low but opportunities to excel are also curtailed by asymmetrical

¹ Haque, N. and D. Nayab, (2021) “Pakistan Opportunity to Excel: Now and the Future”. PIDE Monograph Series No. 7. Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad

information, overregulation and lower enabling factors. This year, the conference theme is to probe deeper and articulate on how and why investment, productivity and employability are intrinsically related and what repercussions economy is subjected to if one of the three constructs remain at suboptimal level.

Based on the institutional strength and history of PSDE the conference aims to steer dialogue to prescribe academically informed, policy-laden and action-oriented research and fix the conundrum of low investment, low productivity and low employability.

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

Technical papers are invited on several cross-cutting sub-themes listed below. The sub-themes for this year's conference are:

Theme 1: Investment and the Role of the State

- The political, economic and socio-cultural ecosystem for creating investment opportunities
- The policy barriers in creating opportunities for foreign investment
 - o Critical analyses of investment policies (domestic and international)
 - o Regulatory regimes and business confidence
 - o Sludge: the Cost of over-regulations/documentation
 - o Institutions and Accountability
 - o Taxation policies for investment
- The role of State (government, regulatory authorities, judiciary, and institutions) in investment opportunities
- Internal security and investment
- Competing investing opportunities
- Investment and R&D
 - o Investment in skills set, productivity and ideas, innovation and development
- Entrepreneurship versus *Seth* culture: Identifying barriers to ideas, creativity and innovation
- Role of Financial Markets in investment growth
- Endowments, physical infrastructure and policy consistency
- Macroeconomic stability and security of economic returns
- Public Investment complementarity for private investment
- Accounting issues in investment measurement in Pakistan
- SOEs privatization as a potential source of private investment
 - o Markets for Foreign Investment

Theme 2: Productivity and Labor Market Efficiency

- Total factor productivity
 - o Knowledge economy and intellectual property rights
- The role and efficiency of TEVTA, NEVTEC, technical & vocational training centers, technical colleges, and tech universities
- Curricula for future; evaluation of skill creating institutions

- Opportunities to excel and become productive
- Role of formal educational systems in the context of productivity and entrepreneurship
- Academia-industry Linkages for R&D
- Cluster Development and Productivity enhancement
- Investigating disconnect - Policies versus Practice
- Agricultural productivity, food security, and climate change
- Productive land use
- Quality assurance, Pakistan Standards, and ISO certifications
- Market Structures and role of Competition for productivity

Theme 3: Employability: Identifying Market Asymmetries

- Role of cities in growth and employment
- Work attitude, work ethics and drive to excel
- Jobs and skills mismatch
- Automation, employment and productivity: The Future of work
- Labor force participation in Pakistan
- Youth employment versus youth employability
- Jobs availability or suitability for job: What to focus
- Self-employment and the role of State
- State and job creation
 - o Institutional protection, labor rights, and precarity
- Informational asymmetries, mismatch in educational systems, and unequal access to job opportunities in Pakistan
- Nature of work, professional ecosystems, and social power
- Informal Sector and economic returns (*Kokhas*, part-time services, freelancing)
- Business incubation centers
- Socio-cultural determinants of employment

Theme 4: Political Economy of Pakistan

- The political economy of investment and FDI in Pakistan
- The political economy of factor endowments
- Political economy of resource allocation in Pakistan
- Investment opportunity and elite capture
- International political economy: aid, economic transactions and foreign-induced conditionalities
- The issue of regulation, deregulation and overregulation
- International political conflicts and trade

Theme 5: Hybridization and the Future of Work

- Digital economy: The avenues for tomorrow
- Machine learning, artificial intelligence, and robotics
- E-Governance
- Technology-led financial inclusion
- Cultural economy and creative industries

- Social media and self-employment in digital platforms
- Hybridization and work from home: the efficiency
- Financial gateways and digital security
- Digital inclusion – issues of access and affordability
- Migration and employability

Theme 6: Networks, Corridors and Connectivity

- Creativity and knowledge corridor
- Ideas and Innovation: the economic returns
- Regional resources and energy corridors
- Graduating from CPEC to BRI
- Asian Economic Union
- Political economy of development and international relations
- Cost of regional conflicts

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).

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. 50,000/-

1st Runner-up: PKR. 25,000/-

2nd Runner-up: PKR. 15,000/-

Important Dates

Deadline for Submission of Abstracts	August 15, 2022
Deadline for Submission of Full Papers	October 02, 2022
Notification of Accepted Papers	October 20, 2022
36 th AGM and Conference	November 22-24, 2022

The URL link for abstract submission is: <https://forms.gle/xbVJBNTmXJNsi64FA>

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

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