

The Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE)

30th Annual General Meeting and Conference

December 2-4, 2014

POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Concept Note

“We were taught to take care of our GNP because it would take care of poverty. Let us reverse this and take care of poverty because it will take care of the GNP” wrote Mahbub ul Haq in 1971. Though the confidence in the ‘trickle down’ waned decades ago still, around the world, more than a billion languish at the bottom, without access to basic needs. The economic inequality that was once thought to promote growth is now a suspect cause of terrorism. Despite the popularity of Human Development Index the dreamed shift, from focus on the ‘rate of growth’ to the ‘content of growth’ remains elusive, at least in the developing world, including Pakistan. What poverty and inequality supposedly mean for crime, conflict and governance and what poverty means for environmental depletion, makes inclusivity as much the concern of the rich as it is of the poor.

Against this backdrop, the theme of the 30th AGM and conference of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists is “*Poverty, Inequality and Economic Growth*”. The conference aims to explore the inter linkages between poverty and inequality and what the two mean for growth as well as the society at large. The broader questions that the conference seeks to debate include but are not limited to; where the poor figure into the growth philosophy of a nation? How the majority may reap dividends of the growth process rather than live on doles from it.

The sub-themes for the 30th AGM and Conference are:

Inclusive Growth

A dynamic relationship between growth, egalitarianism and poverty alleviation though desirable may not be automatic. In this age of high-tech, with jobless growth being observed increasingly, papers may ask what constrains inclusivity, how non-inclusivity affects society and what policies are required to let the poor and the excluded groups enjoy the fruits of the growth process.

Inequality: A Constraint to Growth

The conventional wisdom that income inequality promotes growth has been challenged and now the focus is on the price that the society pays for inequality. While market forces play a role in constraining access to opportunity, it is the national/local politics and policies that shape those forces. Papers on different kinds of inequalities like income, educational, gender and social that constrain access to opportunity and affect growth are welcome.

Breaking out of Poverty: Micro-finance and Entrepreneurship

Growth and entrepreneurship go together and entrepreneurship holds great promise for the poor to prosper. Poverty and inequality limits the access of the poor to capital, perpetuating a vicious cycle. Micro-finance, a lending instrument especially tailored for the poor, is believed to have broken the cycle for many. Possible questions include; How to engage in commercially viable micro financing, while providing affordable finance to the poor. Why and how micro finance has registered wide-ranging success in some countries while the impact remains muted in others. We also welcome papers on pro-poor entrepreneurship in general.

Poverty, Conflict and Development

Multiple factors, including inequality, poverty, ethnicity, geography, unemployment and elite capture may cause conflicts in the society. Papers may dig into hypotheses like ‘greed’ or ‘grievance’ to explain various conflicts in Pakistan or more generally investigate the causes of conflicts and relate these with development.

Environment, Growth and Poverty

With increasing concern about sustainability, development policies in emerging economies target three major goals: economic growth, poverty alleviation and environmental protection. While these objectives are complementary in the long-run but in the short-run there are apparent trade-offs. The question is how to pursue growth while preserving environmental balance and also serving those at the lowest rung of income levels.

Household Vulnerability and Social Protection

Social protection enjoys huge importance in protecting the poor and the vulnerable from the adverse affects of poverty. Papers may address questions surrounding the design, outreach, financing and effectiveness of the social protection programs. Of special interest would be the papers on BISP – a major social protection program being implemented in Pakistan.

The PSDE invites papers for its 30thAGM & Conference based on the above theme and sub-themes. To show the intent of contributing a paper to the Conference, abstracts should be submitted to the PSDE Secretariat, on the prescribed form, latest by July 15, 2014. The last date for the receipt of full paper is September 30, 2014. Incomplete papers or those submitted after the due date would not be entertained by the PSDE Technical Committee. Authors of accepted papers would be notified by November 10, 2014.

A maximum of two submissions are permissible per author. Papers other than theme/sub-themes will be considered but papers on theme/sub-themes will enjoy preference. Each submission should clearly identify the Conference theme/sub-theme it is being sent for. Papers accepted to be presented at the Conference will be published in the proceedings volume of the Pakistan Development Review (PDR).

The paper presenters based in Pakistan will be provided financial support for travel and 3 nights stay. Presenters from foreign countries will be provided local hospitality.

Abstracts and papers should be mailed to: psde@pide.org.pk

Dates to Remember:

Deadline for submission of abstracts:	July 15, 2014
Deadline for submission of full papers:	September 30, 2014
Notification of accepted papers:	November 10, 2014
30thAGM & Conference:	December 2-4, 2014

All relevant information about the Conference is available from the PSDE Secretariat and at the PSDE’s website. Updates will be continually posted on the website.