



E-NEWSLETTER

JUNE – DECEMBER 2021

OUR VISION

Social Protection Resource Centre (SPRC) was established as a premier think tank dedicated to promoting universalization of social protection at least at a minimum level in Pakistan, which includes the availability of legal frameworks and institutional arrangements, mandatory social contributions, workforce documentation, institutional infrastructure for public and private management of pension and funds and in-kind provisioning of essential services.

Message from Executive Director Dr. Razia Safdar



“Past policy choices and initiatives could not provide a minimum social protection to all the Pakistanis, which could reasonably withstand the vulnerability in any humanitarian crisis, economic shocks, and natural disasters. The relevant stakeholders need more holistic, critical debates which could help quickly improve protections to the most dis-advantaged as Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities, Long Term Unemployed, Informal Workers and extremely poor households in terms of financial, health and rights protections”.

June 24th, 2021

**PIDE & SPRC joint Conference on
Social Policy Orientation of Budget 2021-22 &**

**SPRC Launch Report on “One Year of Covid-19 Pandemic, Socioeconomic
Vulnerabilities and Social Protection”**

Sustainable economic development is impossible without inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable people of country. Pakistan has a patchy social protection system for these vulnerable groups. The use of the term Social Protection has evolved over the past few years, particularly in the countries, which have embraced donor driven/funded income transfer programs, christened as Social Protection. Social Protection Resource Centre (SPRC) and Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) jointly organized “One Day Conference on Social Policy Orientation of Budget 2021-22” on June 24, 2021. Renowned international speakers highlighted the importance of social policy inclusion in budget. SPRC report based on PBS national survey data is utilized to bring out impacts of COVID 19 and household coping mechanisms and stratified in different groups. Report titled “One Year of Covid-19 Pandemic, Socio Economic Vulnerabilities and Social Protection”.

Session 01: Social Policy Orientation of Budget 2021-22:

Dr. Nadeem ul Haq, VC PIDE moderated first session and appreciated the step of joint and timely conference on budget. In his inaugural remarks he highlighted the limitations of national social policy, and he is hopeful to draw some productive results from this collaboration of PIDE and SPRC. Conference basically highlights the policy priorities of Budget 2021-22 and the outlines of actual social policy being adopted by government and critically evaluate the impact of budget 2021-22 on social protection gaps exacerbated by Covid -19.



Mr. Nasim Baig is giving his insights on post budget one day conference

Dr. Penelope Hawkins, UNCTAD, Geneva presented international perspective on Budgeting for Debt or Austerity. There was a huge debate on debt sustainability and its proxies like External Solvency and External Liquidity. For developing countries debt sustainability is a major problem. Governments are responsible to cost-benefit analysis of debt. Responsibilities of lenders and borrowers was discussed in many dimensions like due authorization, transparency, disclosure and publication, binding agreements and avoid incidence of over-borrowing by evaluating costs and benefits when governments seeking sovereign loans.



Dr. Amna Khalifa Representative of OECD Paris highlighted the tax based social policy and social policy implications of a regressive tax policy regime. Fair and efficient tax systems are crucial to economic growth and sustainable development. Steps should be taken for coordinated mechanism between center and provincial government for tax collection, phasing out harmful subsidies and evaluation of benefits of tax relief. At state level such steps as digitalization of tax system, data integration and compliance risk management and improved tax system administration will help in future orientation of social policy.



Dr. Safdar as a Distinguished Fellow of SPRC, talked about the unmet social protection needs in the country and raised his concerns about the social security aspect of social protection which is less talked about among the policy circles and government itself. He emphasizes that social policy of any country is not a one-way traffic of flow from state to citizens, it should be both ways. Citizens should contribute to their own social security schemes and government should declare social security mandatory for every citizen. In this regard positive documentation of economy is necessary.



Session 02: SPRC Report: “One Year of Covid-19 Pandemic, Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities and Social Protection”

Objectives of the report launched in the conference by SPRC is to evaluate the impact of Covid-19 response strategies on the socio-economic status of the people and vulnerabilities caused by this deadly pandemic and response of social protection system in this situation.

Dr. Razia Safdar, Executive Director SPRC, presented the report highlights which give deep insights about the impact of Covid-19 on the economy of Pakistan at both micro and macro level, mitigation strategies adopted by households and their impacts during pandemic and then it covers the social protection policies and programs adopted by government. This report has utilized the microdata of PBS national survey on impacts of COVID 19, Food insecurity and Job loss was the main effects and stratifications was done to analyze different variables against different variables and detailed associations were analyzed with statistical significance especially Coping strategies. Report underlines the aggravated challenges faced by people such as



food insecurity and reduced health care services during lockdown. At household level report specifically highlights the types of coping strategies such as reduction in food expenditure, delayed payment of liabilities, spending of saving and loans and selling of property and assets during pandemic.

Dr. Shirin Gul, from VERSO Consultancy presented her critical review and highlights the important points discussed by SPRC report. She emphasized on transformative and inclusive social protection system. There is no concept of Unemployment benefit at government level so social security should be given to unemployed population of the country. She also pointed that informal sector is facing lack of coverage and shocks like Covid-19 creates new poor, so government must reach them through a comprehensive social protection system. Universal coverage and indexation of social assistance is inevitable for long term social protection.



Dr. Abid Sulehri, CEO SDPI / Member PM Economic Advisory Council commented on report and highlighted that food insecurity was one of the major threat due to Covid-19 but fortunately Pakistan did not face a food insecurity at scale as was seen globally. One major point he underlined is that food inflation was not due to Covid-19 and strategy of smart lockdown prevented the recession. He also commented on the main three pillars of food security which are important to focus to avoid any food crisis. These are:

- Physical availability of food.
- Socio-economic and cultural access to food.
- Food utilization.

He suggested to cope up with food insecurity was agriculture transformation and research such as improve seed varieties, farm mechanization and loan to small farmers is necessary to avoid food insecurity.



Policy Recommendations by panelists:

- Inclusive and transformative social protection system.
- Indexation of social protection system.
- Government should declare contribution based social security mandatory for everyone. Bringing informal labor force under some safety net.
- Universalization and life course social protection system, priority of vulnerable.

August 16th, 2021

Celebrating Independence Day with Bazeecha Trust, Islamabad 2021

Social Protection Resource Center (SPRC) and Bazeecha Trust have jointly celebrated Pakistan's 75th Independence Day in Lodges Park Islamabad. Bazeecha Trust has been engaged not only in providing safety and refuge to destitute women as well as a place where they may learn life skills, receive quality education, and acquire vocational training. Sunshine is also encouraging these girls to participate in the sports activities like table tennis etc. Moreover, they are taught life skills by different methodologies and interpersonal communication and harmonization.

Children of all age groups from Bazeecha trust (Islamabad branch) participated in various activities being organized by the management team. Competitions were held including essay writing, painting, debate, national song. Children sung their favorite national songs and the winners were awarded with prizes. SPRC hosted paraplegic girls from Sunshine Home (Westridge, Rawalpindi). SPRC team personally welcomed them into the event. There was a small plantation activity where all the girls planted a plant with a motive to make Pakistan clean and green. A small painting competition was held where all the girls were given a theme "**Green Pakistan**". They were given an open choice to paint whatever they want under this theme. The girls, while using their imagination and creativity, painted beautifully. The girls were awarded prizes in the painting competition while all the other girls were presented gratitude gifts from SPRC.



Some glimpses from the Event organized by SPRC

A small quiz competition was held in which the team had prepared a small quiz for to engage them. Dr. Razia Safdar from SPRC asked them various questions regarding Pakistan and it turned out to be quite healthy and interactive session. The team had also developed few interesting questions and small activities that the girls answered and performed in another activity “Pass the Basket”. The activity bought much joy among all of them.



November 9th, 2021

Lecture on Climate Change & Health 2021

Social Protection Resource Centre (SPRC) in collaboration with Iqra University organized an awareness lecture on “Climate Change & Health” on Tuesday, 9th November 2021 at Iqra University, Chak Shahzad Campus Islamabad. Executive Director of SPRC, Dr. Razia Safdar hosted the session.

Dr. Razia Safdar delivered introductory remarks on “Climate change, Extreme Events and Human Issues” in which she talked about the national context of climate change and health by discussing the climate hazards, exposures, and vulnerability factors. She highlighted that the annual temperature would increase to 5.10c by the end of the century if serious action is not taken by the world leaders to reduce Green House Gas Emissions (GHGEs). Pakistan’s contributions to GHG globally are only 0.8% but it is 8th most effected countries of the world by Climate Change. Moreover, she further added that as air pollution is one of the major causes of climate change, has taken 121,301 lives in Pakistan in 2016. Climate change impacts on Human health can be direct and indirect including non-Communicable diseases, vector borne diseases, Communicable Diseases, mental health, Injuries, food insecurity, malnutrition, everyone is affected, but children, elderly, women, pre-existing disease conditions, migrants, and Persons with Disability (PWDs) and people with no social protection are vulnerable to extreme events because of climate Change. Dr. Razia Safdar also highlighted the role of SPRC in protection of vulnerable population like children, women, elderly population and PWDs.



Honorable **Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan, VC Health Services Academy (HSA)** briefly talked about the “Climate Change and Health Issues” in the context of Pakistan. He focused on the vulnerabilities in the rural areas of Pakistan in terms of resources mobilization and allocation. Out-of-Pocket spending on health services is 89% in Pakistan which should be below 10%. Adding in that he said that in Pakistan 36% of deaths occur due to communicable diseases while 56% is due to noncommunicable diseases. He further discussed the lifestyle risks factors in Pakistan and presented a health field model for a sound and productive health system.



Dr. Noreen Nishtar, National Program officer Nutrition, Focal Point Climate Change WHO talked about “Climate change & Nutrition, Food Security and Agriculture”. She emphasized on the adverse impacts of climate change on agriculture sector specifically on food security. Dr. Nishtar stated that climate change leads to droughts, tsunamis, floods, earthquakes, and storms. The climate change leading to drought and floods has resulted in food insecurity and malnutrition. To combat climate change, she focuses on the importance of “Paris Agreement” and highlighted that the “Paris Agreement” is a landmark commitment in responding to climate change and combating food insecurity and malnutrition.



Dean Academics Iqra University, COL (R) Dr Tahir Ijaz concluded the session and emphasized that climate change is a burning issue, and this should be addressed on the priority basis through collaboration of developing and developed countries. In the end he thanked all the speakers for such a fruitful session and emphasized that such events should be conducted frequently to create awareness among youth. Moreover, he appreciated the efforts of SPRC in sensitizing the youth timely on the crucial issue of climate change.



Honorable Guests

November 30th,2021

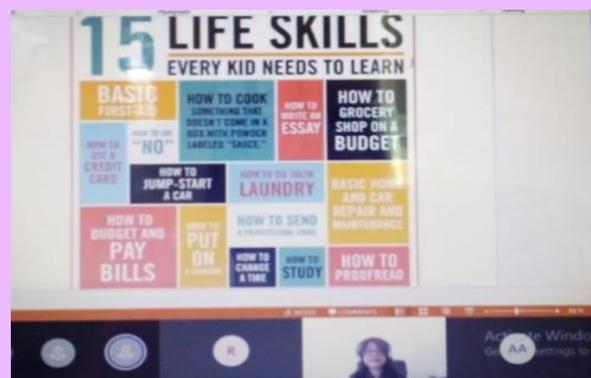
SPRC & Telecom Foundation Joint Webinar on Autism, ADHD & SLD Awareness

Social Protection Resource Centre (SPRC) joined hands with Telecom Foundation (TF) to mutually collaborate in arranging a Webinar on Autism and to create awareness among schoolteachers and parents. The focus of the discussion was school-going children having developmental disorders or falling in any category of autism. This is to mention that SPRC signed a memorandum of understanding in Dec 2020 to work towards capacity building of teachers at TF welfare schools.

The Executive Director of SPRC Dr. Razia Safdar moderated the session and highlighted the global and national magnitude of any form of disability and intellectual disability. In her remarks, she stressed upon the counting of children with intellectual disabilities like autism spectrum to do the needful interventions, she also appreciated the joint and timely webinar on Autism awareness. This timely awareness regarding autism-related issues is key to making these children useful members of society as future adults and she is hopeful to draw some productive results from this collaboration of SPRC and Telecom Foundation (TF).

Mr. Zomma Mohiuddin, Chief Guest President Telecom Foundation appreciated the efforts of SPRC and other participants in collaborating and organization of this webinar which will surely become a milestone in achieving the concept of inclusive schooling. He shared the progress of the Telecom Foundation. Foundation School System was formed in 1995 as part of its assigned welfare to provide quality education to the underprivileged and low-income households within its mandated sector. However, the operation of affordable subsidized Telecom Foundation Schools in 12 cities around the country, serving over 3000 children, benefits both the children of mandated subjects and the broader public. Mr. Zomma further committed to opening more schools based on inclusive education in which all the required facilities will be provided regarding special education till June 2022. Moreover, he also showed great interest in collaborating with SPRC for this cause in the domain of research, survey, and identification of relevant stakeholders to better cater to children with disabilities.

Dr. Rukhsana Shah, Executive Director Autism Spectrum Disorder Welfare Trust (ASDWT) gave a detailed overview of autism spectrum disorder. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder that has mild to severe functioning problems, language, socialization, and cognitive problems. These kinds of disorders often went unnoticed as only those teachers would be able to diagnose those who have a history of interaction with such students. It can also be diagnosed through neurological symptoms



and speech and language evaluation and multiple other ways. These children have repetitive behavioral patterns, and they have either hypersensitive or either hypo-sensitive or it can also be diagnosed through DSM-V Assessment. Autism symptoms may be observed in the early developmental period and these symptoms include poor eye contact from birth, not reacting to name and no social smile by age of 12 months, resistance to change and insistence on routine, relate to machines and objects, like few toys, sleep disorder, picky eaters and have chemical imbalances. In

addition, Differential diagnosis is also very important as Autism can occur with different comorbidities. The general interventions that can be adopted include, the structural environment like classes should be properly structured, conduct group activities, independent living skills, reduce the inappropriate behavior using different techniques, and sports and physical exercise and social stories (pictorial) to develop the theory of mind so that their potential to learn increases.

Ms. Farah Amanat, Senior Clinical Psychologist ASDWT discusses the concept of Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication- Handicapped Children (TEACCH). The physical organization is the first step in TEACCH, which focuses on the visual to direct the students to an activity and to make the environment organized and predictable. The second step in the TEACCH is a daily schedule that includes the schedules made up of pictures and words to organize routine. The third step is a working system that includes person-centered learning techniques. The next step in TEACCH is Task organization to reduce the need for verbal instruction and to increase independence. She also discussed ADHD, a neuro-developmental disorder related to attention deficit and hyperactive behavior.

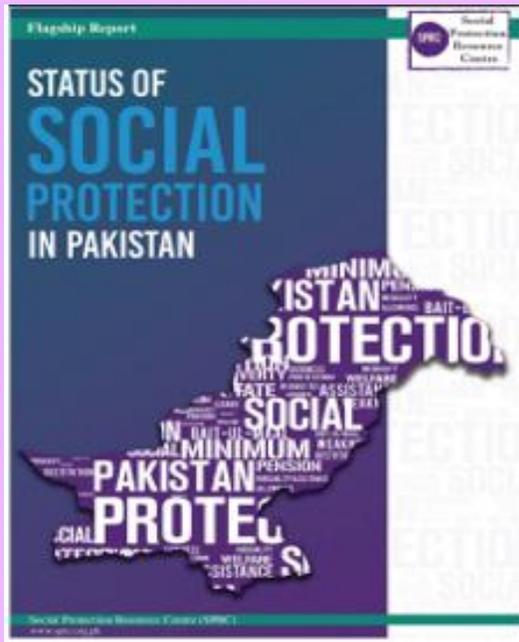


Ms. Ayesha Tariq, Child Psychologist discussed Healthy Childhood Development. This term focused on the optimal performance in four domains i.e., behavior, Cognitive, Social and Emotional Domains. There are primarily three people that can help a child who is suffering from Autism. These are Physiatrist, Parents, and Teachers. She also discusses the inclusive schooling concepts and seven principles related to it. These seven principles include teaching all students, exploring multiple identities, Preventing Prejudice, Promoting Social Justice, Choosing Appropriate Materials, Teaching and Learning about cultures and religions, Adapting and Integrating Lessons Appropriately.

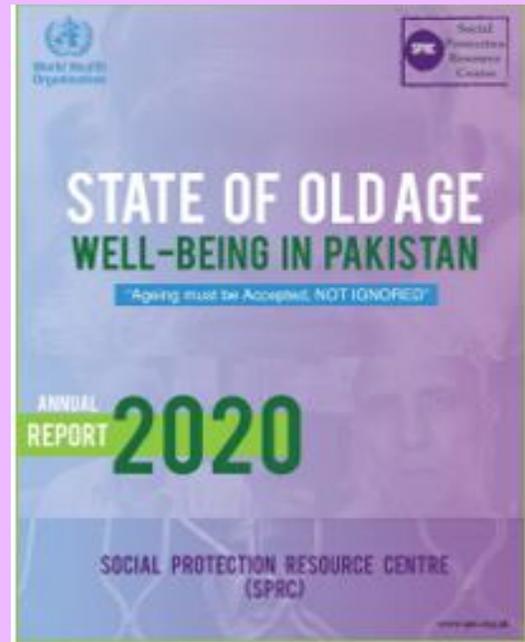


Executive Director Dr. Razia Safdar concluded the session and thanked all the speakers for talking on the most ignored spectrum.

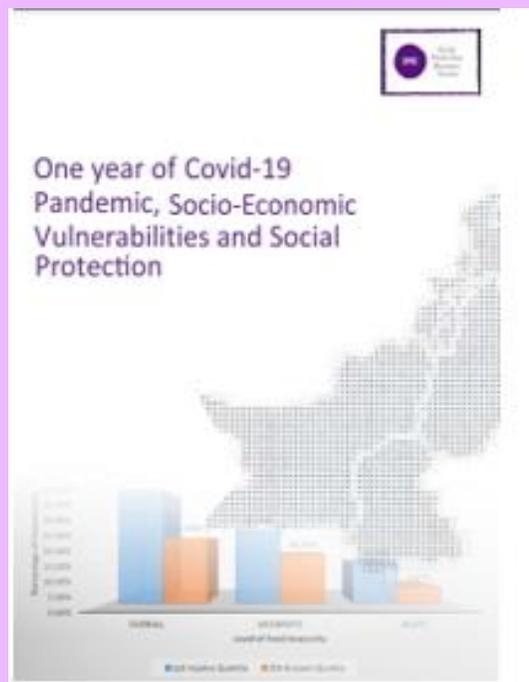
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