
Impact of Covid-19 On Sustainable Development Goals of Pakistan

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Abstract: Humanity is threatened by COVID-19 since 2019 with severe impact on human economic, social and environmental activities. The spread of pandemic is responsible for creating uncertainty and challenges for developing countries like Pakistan to achieve united nations sustainable development goals. It has a severe impact on every sector of country like tourism, trade, production, health and supply. This study focuses on exploring the impact of COVID-19 on sustainable goals of Pakistan and strategies adopted to cope with this pandemic. SDGs provides guidelines, targets and implementation and financing strategies globally. By having systematic review of already published research articles from various databases were helpful in formulating recommendations to combat the impact of COVID-19 on attaining sustainable development goals. On the basis of available literature and systematic review it is concluded that Covid-19 pandemic has severely affected nations globally economically, socio economically emotionally and had severe impact on achieving sustainable development goals. Factors that create hurdles in achieving sustainable development goals in Pakistan are decline in international trade, decrease in remittances inflow, termination of daily wages jobs, labor immobility in lockdown, decline in production level, supply chain discontinuation, decline in exports and foreign direct investment, projects etc. Several measures were also suggested in light of literature to mitigate the economic impact. This study would be an initiative for future sustainable progress in Pakistan and helpful for developing and implementing strategies and policies so as to combat the severe intensity of COVID-19 that delays the attainment of sustainable development goals in Pakistan.

Keywords: Covid-19, Sustainable Development Goals, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Mankind had been under the illusion that we are masters of nature. In fact, the actual truth we realized is that we are not masters but are dependent on nature for our socioeconomic and spiritual growth. We are threatened by unfolding nature of climate changes and destruction of earth's physical environment. We realized that over exploitation of finite natural resources of Earth has its limits and catastrophic consequences for the people and the planet too. It has forced mankind to move away from the environment unfriendly development approach to sustainable development model in harmony with Nature. The UN defines the sustainable as "the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Sustainable development is a paradigm shift in global development concept and practice as it is premised on the need for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient future for planet and its inhabitants. This development idea seeks to synergies the three major interconnected factors: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. "When it comes to sustainable development...every country is a developing country," put by David Navarro, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Climate Change. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expired in 2015, the global community moved to build up on the MDGs by including new environmental and development areas especially sustainable consumption, climate change, economic inequality, innovation, peace and justice. On 25 September 2015, 193 countries of the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Development Agenda titled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Agenda 2030 comprises of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, 169 targets and 230 indicators that came into effect on January 1, 2016. Over the next fifteen years, these Global Goals will pursue to end poverty, fight inequalities, and confront climate changes. The SDGs required \$3 trillion a year for their implementation. As compared to the MDGs, the SDGs are much more comprehensive and include three dimensional focus on economic development, social well-being and environmental protection.

Being a member of the UN, Pakistan is under obligation to implement and achieve the goals under the framework of the Agenda 2030. On February 16, 2016, the Parliament consistently implemented the SDGs as the national development agenda. To institutionalize 2030 Agenda, Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform, Government of Pakistan, Planning & Development Departments of provincial governments with the support of UNDP has moved a five years' project of "National Initiative for Sustainable Development Goals". In order to synergies efforts and coordination among federal and provincial ministries and subsidiary organizations, a Federal SDGs Support Unit has been formed at the ministry.

According to UN survey 2018, Pakistan is ranked 150th among 189 countries on Human Development Index which is a measure of combining indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment and income. Poverty elimination is the primary goal among the SDGs. According to UNDP, 39 % of Pakistanis (4 out of 10) are convicted to suffered from multidimensional poverty, with the highest poverty which is prevalence in Baluchistan and earlier in FATA region. Pakistan Education Statistics 2016-17 showed that 22.84million out of the total 51.53 million children, are out of school.

Other multiple challenges like overemphasis on state security at cost of human security, governance issues and insufficient budgetary allocations for the achievement of SDGs have been a main obstacle to the SDGs in Pakistan. In budget 2019-20, the country has allocated insufficient amount of Rs24m that is insufficient to meet SDGs targets that require huge public funding. Appreciation of human security role in national security calculus, sustainable economic growth, adequate funding and the localization of the SDGs and good governance are some of the critical measures needed to materialize the SDGs that will potentially push the country in the league of the upper middle-class countries by 2030.

The UN in Pakistan is supporting Pakistan in various aspects of its attempt to realize the SDGs. Policy and technical supports feature prominently in UN's contribution to the achievement of SDGs in Pakistan. In 2018, the Government of Pakistan and the UN in Pakistan signed the UN Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF), also known as the Pakistan One United Nations Programme III (OP III) 2018-2022. This Framework is a medium-term strategic planning document with planned results focusing on ten key outcomes, which are identified through extensive consultation with multiple stakeholders and in alignment with Pakistan's development priorities. Under the guidance of the OP III 2018-2022, UN agencies in Pakistan have been working in close cooperation with the government in various thematic areas, thus contributing to the outputs specified in the document and eventually the pursuit of SDGs in Pakistan.

Pakistan affirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as its own national development agenda through a unanimous National Assembly Resolution in 2016. Since then, the country has made considerable progress by mainstreaming these goals in national policies and strategies and developing an institutional framework for SDGs implementation in Pakistan. SDG support units have been established at federal and provincial levels with the planning institutions (Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives and Provincial Planning and Development Departments) to guide SDGs implementation and monitoring its progress. In 2018, the Government designed and approved a National SDGs Framework that envisages a national vision to prioritize and localize SDGs. Localized provincial SDG Frameworks are being formulated. The focus of the government is on mainstreaming SDGs in planning processes, ensuring strong monitoring and reporting on SDGs, ensuring public financial allocations are aligned to SDGs and alternate financing modalities are being explored, and to benefit from use of technology to accelerate progress towards SDGs.

The novel coronavirus disease pandemic (COVID-19) will have severe negative impacts on most of the United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), according to a report that has tracked the progress of 166 countries since 2015.

The SDGs are a collection of 17 global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". There have been 10,662,536 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 516,209 deaths as on July 3, 2020. The subsequent socio-economic crisis has affected all countries, including high-income ones in Europe and North America. More than a third of the world's population was under lockdown in the middle of April this year. As a result, many economic activities were shut down, leading to massive losses to the economy and loss of jobs, with maximum impact on vulnerable groups. The report said COVID-19 had negatively affected several goals including:

- SDG 1 (no poverty)
- SDG 2 (zero hunger)
- SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing)
- SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth)
- SDG 10 (reduced inequalities)



Source:UN SGDs

At the same time, the pandemic had brought “immediate relief” in areas related to: SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 14 (life below water), SDG 15 (life on land). However, these gains will be short-term and will be reduced leading to negative overall impacts on ecosystems, the report said. Since 2015, the world had seen the most rapid progress towards SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities, the report said. Most of countries faced major challenges on SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDGs 12–15 on climate change mitigation and biodiversity protection and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Main objectives of this study is:

- To elaborate the impact of COVID-19 on sustainable development goals of Pakistan.
- Policies and strategies adopted by the government of Pakistan to combat the effect of covid-19 pandemic on sustainable development goals
- To elaborate the causes and consequences of COVID-19 in Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable development is a continuous process that aims at upgrading an individual satisfaction by way of economic, environmental and social progress. It is denoted by 3pcs people, profit and planet(UNESCO,2020). Agenda 2030 comprises of 17 SDGs with 69 targets. Objectives of sustainable developmental goals of UN are to provide guidelines and policy for funding for the next 15 years, to achieve historic pledge: to end poverty, achieve gender equality and ensure access to universal health and education. So, SDGs are the best vehicle to address poverty alleviation in Pakistan. Sustainable development is largely about people, their well-being and equity in their relationships with each other, in a context where nature society imbalances can threaten economic and social stability. Main principles of sustainable development are: conservation of ecosystem, development of sustainable society, conservation of bio diversity, control of population growth and development of human resources.

Pakistan is considered as the first country that accepted the SDGs 2030 agenda by united resolution of parliament. Government of Pakistan had discussion with stakeholders in order to attain goals of sustainable development and poverty elimination (Post Millennium Development Goals MDGs)(Khan, Jamshaid, & Ramzan, 2019) .SDGs monitoring and coordination unit was established at federal level in coordination with UNDP, and is working to serve as a national directing entity (Khan et al., 2019).

In 1983,the secretary general of UN assigned a task to WCED, to reexamine environmental and developmental problems in the world and to formulate reliable solutions accordingly(sviluppo et al., 1987).Education for SD ESD(2005-2014) by UN was an attempt to re organize learning Practices and policies to deal with sustainability(Kopnina, 2012) .ESD enables individuals to cope with the challenges and motivate the decision makers for the betterment of world.

According to Khan et al. (2019) Pakistani government had laid foundation in 1990 to promote equitable and sustainable development and strategies at national level.in 1992,members from various countries signed an Agenda 21 on Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro(USA),as a part of SD Pakistan developed its National Conservation Strategy Goals.(NCG) which predicts environmental improvements agenda for Pakistan. Qais (2002) presented Pakistan I government reforms which were environment friendly initiatives, after that government of Pakistan has started national cleaner production program to facilitate environmental problems (Khan et al., 2019) .According to ESD ,Pakistan is required to create national plans for the improvement of their educational system (Unesco, 2002).Agenda 21 represented four actions in various aspects of education in

accomplishing sustainable development .1.To develop awareness. 2.To promote improvement in quality of education. 3.Re organize educational progress so as to address sustainability.4. To train various sectors of society in SD aspect.

Pakistan secured a score of 55.6 under SDGs global index against a far better regional average of 63.3 and is even lower than regional peers Bangladesh 56.2 and India’s 58.1.

Table 1: Impact of covid-19 on SDGs of Pakistan

Sustainable Development Goals	Impact of COVID-19
SDG 1:No Poverty	People lost their jobs
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	Low crop production, Less food availability
SDG 3:Good Health And Well Being	Degraded physical and mental health of people
SDG 4:Quality Education	Mostly students deprived of education.
SDG 5:Gender Equality	Women suffered from income risk.
SDG 6:Clean Water & Sanitation	Inadequate access to drinking water.
SDG 7: Affordable & Clean Energy	Hydropower & construction works delayed.
SDG 8:Decent Work And Economic Growth	Unemployment increased.
SDG 9:Industry ,Innovation & Infrastructure	Low supply of raw material, factories shut down.
SDG 10:Reduced Inequalities	Number of poor people increased.
SDG 11:Sustainable Cities And Communities	Number of positive cases of COVID-19 increased.
SDG 12:Responsible Consumption & Production	Consumer’s awareness on healthy diets needs attention.
SDG 13:Climate Action	Less focus on ecosystem and biodiversity.
SDG 14:Life Below Water	Less focus on this goal due to insufficient funds.
SDG 15:Life On Land	Conservation of ecosystem get less priority.
SDG 16:Peace ,Justice And Strong Institution	Onset of conflicts and civil unrest.
SDG 17:Partnerships For The Goals	Voices for anti-globalization ,calls for food self-sufficiency.

Source: UN SDGs and Asian Development Bank

COVID-19 has significant impact in almost every county in terms of economic and food security. A sharp decline in domestic consumption was realized in south Asian countries (Susantono, Sawada, & Park, 2020) . A decline in tourism and business travel accelerates decline in demand for other economies (Bank, 2020). Due to social mobility restriction, a sharp decline in tourist arrivals was observed in south Asian countries like Pakistan. Foreign employment has been seriously affected, millions of jobs losses, reduction in inflow of remittances into the country. There has been a sharp decline in government revenue collection. Furthermore, Pakistan has experienced a trade imbalance. Many evidences have been reported the negative impact of COVID-19 on SDGs (Malik & Rehmat, 2020).Pakistan Workers’ Federation documented on March 28, 2020, that almost half a million workers of textiles and garment industry had been dismissed in the Punjab province . It was a disaster in a country where 25 per cent of the population lives in extreme poverty, who often lack disposable cash or savings to access food whilst taking isolation measures. Women thus are another segment of population, who are affected as they work as home-based and/ or domestic workers, i.e. the informal economy. in May 2019, the rupee had depreciated 30% vis-a-vis the US dollar. Looking at the multidimensional poverty index score, which was publicly available in 2017/18 suggests that 38.3 per cent of the population (75.5 million) are multi-dimensionally poor while an additional 12.9 per cent (25.5 million) are classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty, i.e. totaling up to 51.2 per cent. A large-scale quarantine could consequently result in the poor dying from hunger and lack of health services. In health financing domain, the country spends only 0.4% (Rs 50 billion) on health against a global average of 10 per cent. A larger segment of the population (78%) pays out of their own pockets for medical treatments. (Malik & Rehmat, 2020) .Moreover, Pakistan is faced with shortage of labs, health infrastructure and trained health professionals, which amplifies pandemic risks. There is a shortage of testing kits, supplies of facemasks, gloves and ventilators. Studies show that people with low incomes suffering from other chronic diseases such as diabetes or heart diseases are more vulnerable to catch coronavirus. According to Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, people at the bottom of the socio-economic strata are 10 per cent more likely to have a chronic health condition. At a macro-level, the lockdown has already inflicted a loss of Rs 30 billion on the country’s economy and it is estimated that this figure might increase to Rs 1.3 trillion (Chu et al., 2020) . Expert’s estimate that from 12.3 million to 18.5 million people employed in a variety of sectors may face unemployment. To make matters worse, lack of labour

contracts, insufficient legal protection and weak enforcement and abidance to laws escalate the problems for the poor during pandemics. Workers may not as result have paid sick leave, social security or health insurance. At a micro-level the hardest hit segment is that of daily wagers and self-employed, who have been pushed further into poverty. This has seriously curbed their means of feeding their families, inability to pay rent, bills, school fees or medical expenses. Along with labourers, farmers are also faced with despair as their crops are ready, but they cannot hire people for harvesting (Khatun, 2020) .Furthermore, farmer’s inability to export their produce to major cities has caused a massive decrease in prices. On the contrary, sugar and flour have seen surge in price due to hoarding and interprovincial transport

Table 2: Impact of covid-19 pandemic on sustainable development goals of South Asian Countries

Countries	Category	No. of cases	Impact of COVID-19
Afghanistan	LICs	1,86,58,255	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 30% of the population is in a state of a food crisis. • The number of people with insufficient food consumption is increased. • Number of registered COVID-19 cases are increased due to food insecurity. • A heavy blow to remittances of expatriate workers.
Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Sri lanka	LMICs		
Iran, Maldives	UMICs		

Classification of countries is defined by the World Bank.LICs: low income countries (GNI per capita \$1025 or less); LMICs: lower middle income countries (GNI per capita between \$ 1026 AND \$ 3995; UMICs: upper middle income countries (GNI per capita between \$3996 and \$ 12375). the number of cases in the table was at the end of 20 November ,2020 as reported by WHO.

METHODOLOGY

The Systematic review gives a clear and a comprehensive view of available literature on a selected topic. Systematic review was conducted in this research study and the most relevant research articles were downloaded from various databases: google scholars, Wiley, Emerald, Science Direct, Elsevier, JSTOR, Springer. Information regarding grey literature was retrieved from official websites of World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund(IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB). Total of 60 articles were downloaded from international recognized journals whereas 10 articles were downloaded from conference proceedings, blogs, presentations, etc. Of these total 70 articles downloaded, only 40 articles were included in the study, rest of the articles were excluded as they were not meeting inclusion criteria (Figure 1).

Search strategy and selection and inclusion criteria

Data Bases: Wiley, Emerald, Science Direct, Elsevier, JSTOR, Springer

Free Text Search Terms: Pakistan, COVID-19, Pandemic, UN sustainable development goals.

FILTERS: Year 2020,2021

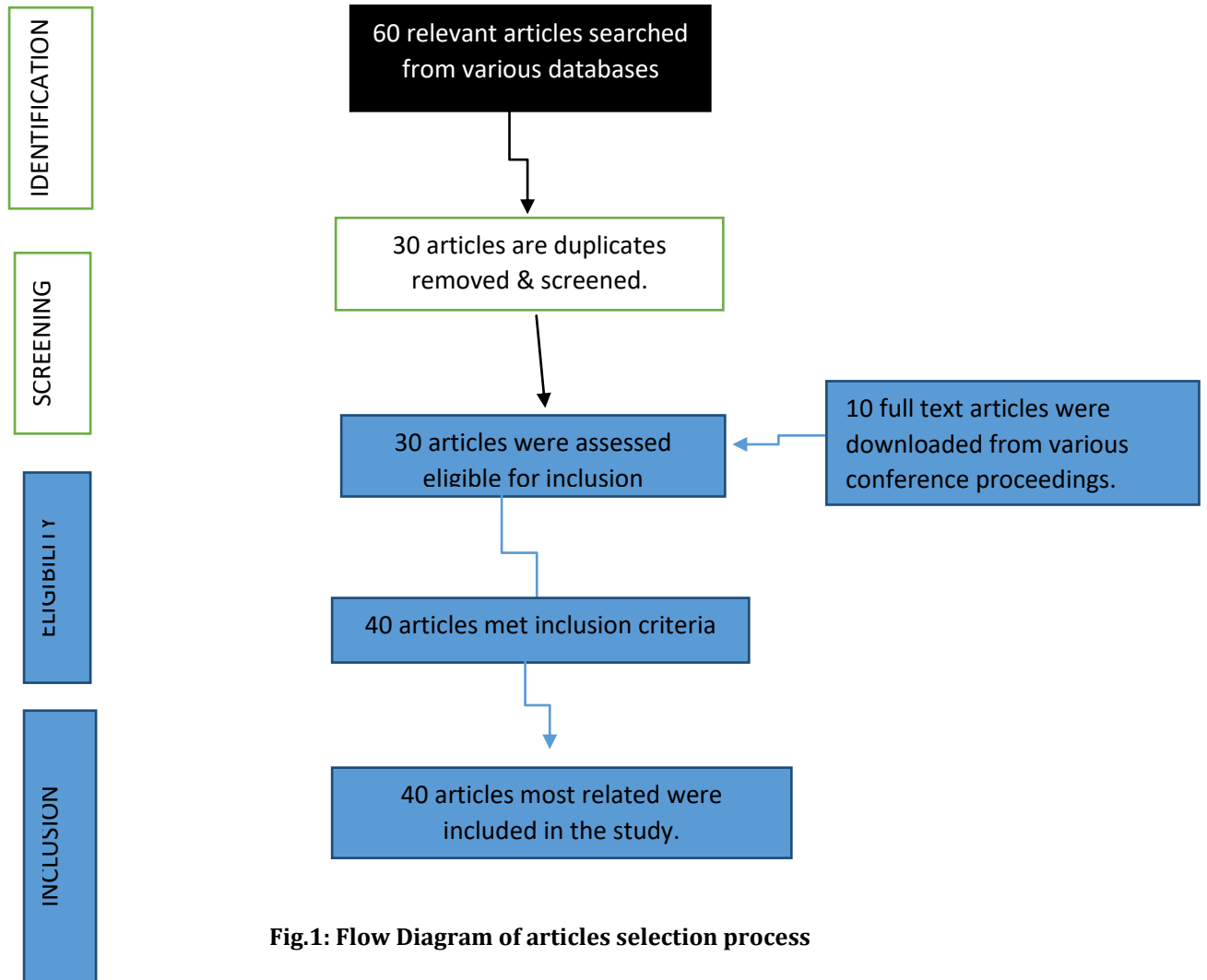


Fig.1: Flow Diagram of articles selection process

Table 3: SDGS, Annual available resources and total required resources

Sustainable Development Goals	Available resources (Annual)	Total Required Resources(Annual)	% of available resources
SDG 1 No Poverty	\$11,236,734	\$31,344,794	1.29%
SDG 2 Zero hunger	\$165,066,794	\$189,145,919	87.3%
SDG3 Good health and wellbeing.	\$367,681,069	\$401,613,806	91.6%
SDG4 Quality education	\$82,716,951	\$181,954,767	45.5%
SDG 5 Gender equality	\$25,667,978	\$27,038,184	94.9%
SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation	\$5,208,183	\$13,520,367	38.55
SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy	\$5,647,108	\$6,009,600	94.0%
SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth	\$8,594,658	\$12,095,141	71.1%
SDG 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure	\$6,075,294	\$9,861,349	61.6%
SDG10 Reduced inequalities	\$49,894,732	\$76,763,977	65.0%
SDG11 Sustainable cities and communities	\$4,761,138	\$17,388,967	27.4%

SDG12 Responsible consumption and production	\$412,010	---	---
SDG13 Climate action	\$27,285,803	\$27,229,217	100.2%
SDG14 life below water			
SDG15 life on land	\$25,857,62	\$8,782,322	294.4%
SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions.	\$67,896,859	\$139,771,796	48.6%
SDG 17partnerships for the goals.	\$15,075,824	\$17,032,479	88.5%

*The values indicated are preliminary and do not represent values from audited financial statements.

* Date: 2021-03-22 05:28 UTC

Retrieved from: Sustainable Development goals

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After having in-depth study of available literature it is concluded that objective of SDGs is to transform our world 2030 agenda for sustainable development. These goals are indivisible as well as transformative. Agenda of UN DPI Communication Campaign 2016 focuses at achieving key goals: popularizing SDGs, spur action and leverage and scale up partnerships. Sustainability can be achieved by following measures of technology, reduced, reuse and recycle approach and promoting environmental education and awareness, resource utilization as per carrying capacity, improving quality of life including social, cultural and economic dimensions. Furthermore, Sustainability can be achieved not only the government but also the administration of various departments in Pakistan are major agent of sustainability, majority of them are unaware of the concept of SDGs and their importance. various challenges and obstacles like lack of resources, lack of administrative and society support are responsible for delays in attaining SDGs. There is a need of hour that all related administrators in various departments and individuals should be determined and resourceful to perform their tasks so as to achieve SD in Pakistan. The main challenges to SD which are global in character include poverty exclusion, unemployment, climate change, conflict and humanitarian and building peaceful and inclusive societies, building strong institutions of governance and supporting the law.

Table 4: Recommendations for SDGs 1,2,3,5,7,8,9,10

SDGs	Sector	Recommendations
1,2,3,5,7,8,9,10	Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide inputs to farmers • Ensure mobility of labor in agriculture sector • Allow shipments of food from farms to markets and markets to retailers(Ullah, Pinglu, Ullah, Abbas, & Khan, 2020)
	Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide easy loans to manufacturing sector (Islam, Jannat, Al Rafi, & Aruga, 2020)
	Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide relief package to business sector so that they may retain their employees (Ullah, Pinglu, Ullah, Abbas, & Khan, 2021)
	Remittances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government must negotiate for pending payments to employees(Ranasinghe et al., 2020) • Government needs to care for the Pakistanis overseas community (Ullah et al., 2020)

After lockdown health, food security and livelihood are mostly affected by pandemic. Public fund emergency food can support the drivers of food and nutrition insecurity in these highly vulnerable populations. Maintain the monitor system of price regulatory measures to help and to discourage and control hoarding, price increase and speculation during the COVID-19 response, specifically for food, livestock and agriculture products and machinery(input), food markets in Pakistan. Adjust National Agriculture Emergency Program (NAEP) and Ehsaas 1 so that those vulnerable to COVID-19 (in terms of socio-economic status or health) can reached faster. Being an agricultural country, Pakistan’s food and agriculture system requires immediate support to maintain food supply, jobs and livelihoods. Make information regarding agriculture production, food supply and market sales easily available during the COVID-19 response period via suitable government portals and at the level of farm services centers in districts. Transparent dissemination of information will strengthen government management over the food market and supply chains and prevent food system failures such as excessive price

hikes, lack of supply of staple food items, and unbalanced, nutritionally inadequate diets. Strengthen the National Food and Nutrition Security Information System and continue to publish flagship knowledge products such as the Pakistan Overview of Food Security and Nutrition, Pakistan Food Forecast, and other ad hoc reports as needed to understand and respond to the impact of COVID-19 on the food system, including regular monitoring of food prices and transparently sharing them with the public.

Table 5: Measures to achieve SDGs

Measures	Strategies followed
1.Reduce, Reuse and Recycle approach..(3R Approach)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This 3R approach to minimize use of resources, using them again and again and recycling waste.
2.Promoting environmental education and awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Earth thinking” will gradually get incorporated in our thinking and action which will greatly help in transforming our life styles to sustainable ones.
3.Resource utilization as per carrying capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human beings not only need food to live, but need so many other things to maintain the quality of life. If the system has over exploitation of resources ,environmental degradation starts and continuous till it reaches a point of no return.
4.Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting local, eco-friendly, resource efficient and culturally suitable technology. Involve local resources as well as local labor. Indigenous, cost efficient technologies are more useful and sustainable. Follow design with nature approach as it use less resources and produce minimum waste.
5.Improving quality of life including social, cultural and economic dimensions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development should not be focused on already affluent people rather it includes sharing between rich, poor, tribal and ethnic people. Population growth should be stabilized.

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