

Pakistan State of Future Index

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Pakistan State of the Future Index (PK-SOFI) study was launched by Foresight Lab, a facilitative platform for communities of interest, comprising of 30 variables of which fifteen are global challenges, that indicate the state of the future. The report indicates potential growth and how to utilize technology as a core element in improving the well-being of people. It shows 30-year trends with each variable being forecasted based on the data of the last two decades which are then further assessed for the best and worst possible values in 10 years. The State of Future Index, developed by the Millennium Project, is an effort to calculate and forecast the transformation of the state in the distant future. The index shows the conditions of improvement and deterioration at global and national levels. The parameters are constructed in a way that key variables can be forecasted individually and at an aggregate level showing prospective trends.

Pakistan State of Future Index (PK-SOFI) was computed by classifying variables across STEEP (social, technological, economic, environmental and political) sphere and chosen based on their importance to the country's future and the historical data availability for the previous two decades. The data once collected was assessed by a collaborative effort which included global future professionals from the Millennium Project who coordinated with local experts through online questionnaire using a Real-Time Delphi (RTD) in which over a hundred Pakistanis participated. Real-Time Delphi (RTD) is an efficient way of collecting data and synthesizing expert opinions, conducted online where a numerical estimate of the priority of each item is rated in real time and weights are assigned to the variables. The participants comprised of people from all categories as well as from various provinces to ensure diversity. In order for the data to be reliable and transparent PK-SOFI created a baseline that consisted of think tank and academia and the focus group was the public however lack of revisitation by correspondents may alter results.

Pakistan State of Future Index (PK-SOFI) is the first step towards establishing a trend towards data-driven foresight oriented policymaking. It may provide incentive for future foreign investment as trends are easily identified and by aligning strategic intent, can lead Pakistan towards a better future.

The index captures important dimensions of sustainable human development. It provides an outlook for the future and enable decision-makers to make well informed appropriate policy choices and establish strategic narrative in support to achieve optimal results. It also provides insight on expert's perceptions with practical solutions that help avert threats and capitalize on opportunities. It also encourages decision makers to reflect on a long term plan about these variables as combination or independently may impact the overall assessment of the country's future.

The analysis based on the outcomes provides important information to policy makers in identifying some structural and policy changes that might improve the future outlook of Pakistan and ensure that the country's long-term vision is not dependent moreover adjust the course of action to keep the country on the preferred path. It is constructed with key indicators that are individually forecast and then aggregated to indicate the potential direction and intensity of change. It is not an estimate moreover tells about the untapped potential that could be achieved. Its role is solely to help understand the system, the relationships among the variables and assessing the impact and the interplay of the different potential developments affecting the future. It is necessary for coherent policymaking.

PK-SOFI shows the direction and intensity of change and helps identify the factors responsible. It shows the relationships among variables and their dependency on each other creating. It also assesses the positive/negative consequence of intended/unintended policies and the potential outcome.

The quantitative assessment represents trends and shows the ability of policymakers as well as the response of society depending on the situation they faced. History provides evidence that Pakistan lacks in major structures of geography, environment, mentality, and demography. These factors are interconnected and assert themselves regardless of our perceptions and are the cause of what we endure. An underdeveloped society can easily be infiltrated with problems from objective factors. Pakistan has a stagnant mentality of pre-enlightenment framework with little acceptance of scientific knowledge. They do not seek to internalize rationalism which disrupts the learning and knowledge which is reflected in part in Pakistan's poor performance in sectors including education, women empowerment and investment in scientific innovation.

With technological advancement and the digital era. Pakistan needs to restructure itself in order to compete with the speed of scientific breakthroughs and technological applications to improve the human condition.

As the developing world expands we cannot avoid major challenges unless changes occur. In order to address global challenges, coordination and collaboration across national, institutional, political, religious, and ideological boundaries is needed.

PK-SOFI can help us set our priorities, target key areas with specific policies and assess potential growth. There is means to avoid disasters and build a great future however decisions and cultural changes to improve our prospects are not being made.

Pakistan fails to focus itself for a future plan at tertiary level, we do not have a Futures Studies program at a higher level. This indicates the lack of open dialogue about the way forward.

There is a need to connect foresight to decision-making in government training programmes in a way that a network could be developed for quick environmental assessments to improve insights that will build the capacity. The Pakistan State of Future Index can contribute towards identifying policy gaps and can create a collective intelligence system.

Pakistan is poorly governed and is essentially trapped with its failing state and lack of drive from policy makers. PK-SOFI emphasizes the need for effective and efficient decision making based on statistical data that gives the future outlook. With the wave of Fourth Industrial Evolution, we ourselves need to evolve and broaden our mental capacity in terms of our cognitive abilities. Pakistan State of Future Index points out the significance of perspective building through synergies in diversity of opinions. There is a need to move away from the capitalist approach which fails to provide a holistic long term direction for society and institutions and restricts intelligence and evolution.

Pakistan does have potential for growth as indicated in the report and could minimize unforeseen disasters by identifying priorities for innovative actions. Engagement of wider expertise on human knowledge is required as well as introduce Futurology (Future Studies-study of possible, probable, and preferable futures, and of methods of foresight development for individuals, groups, and human society). PK-SOFI puts forth a way for Pakistan to align its vision, be more future based rather than being stuck in the past and moving towards a better tomorrow.