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Human Security
Institute

ANNUAL BUDGET OF PAKISTAN (FY 2024-25): AN ASSESSMENT FROM HUMAN SECURITY PERSPECTIVE



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Table of Content

List of Tables.	
Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction.	3
Economic Security.	5
Food Security.	8
Community security.	11
Personal Security.	14
Political Security.....	16
Environmental Security.	19
Health Security.....	21
Educational Security.....	23
Conclusion.....	25
References.....	26

Executive Summary

The Budget Estimation is the key feature of Public Finance Management and a Constitutional obligation. The presentation of Budget not only portray a balance sheet of Revenue and Expenditures but also reflect Public Policy approaches, financial management, political commitment and national planning of Government in power. The Budget proposal in forms of Money Bill has to be mandatorily passed by the parliament for implementation. The budget proposals and estimation confront challenges for developing countries to maintain a balance between revenue collection and expenditures. This has further implications when developed in traditional state security paradigm which priorities state security over individuals' well-being and socio-economic Development. This report has been developed to gauge the public spending of Pakistan in Human Security perspective as to assess the adequacy of financial interventions against needs of socio-economic development. The report is expected to be a contribution on part of The Human Security Institute (THSI) in public policy formulation and national planning from the angle of human security so as to depart from orthodox concept of security. The concept of Human Security, though not novel, is an emerging concept and had been successfully applied by several countries including Canada, Norway and Japan in their national policy frameworks.

The report has focused on key dimensions of Human Security including, Economic Security, Food Security, Personal Security, Community Security, Political Security, Health Security, Environmental Security and Educational Security. The report attempted to discuss various aspects of these critical dimensions considering the budgetary estimates for financial year 2024-25 and analyzed the implication thereto.

Expenditure on economic affairs constitutes RS. 357,735 million, with an increase of about 36.73% recorded from previous financial year budget 2023-24: RS. 261,642 million.

The analysis and findings reflect the allocation for economic security in FY 2024-25 budget is a good initiative taken by the government as it promotes human security.

Total allocation for food security stands at RS. 77911 million compared to the outgoing fiscal year budget 2023-2024: RS. 54445 million. On packaged milk, a vital food item, 18 percent General Sales Tax (GST) has been imposed. The government should focus on this initiative as it is a basic need of the children and it would be an additional burden on household economy.

Budget estimates for the Public Order and Safety are RS. 283,051 million against current expenditure and Rs. 3,007 against Development expenditures, presenting an increase by 89.55 %, and 87.16% respectively as compared to the previous year budget.

The budget estimates for expenditure on community security is assigned as RS. 7919 million, with a surge of 23.43%, calculated from the previous budget 2023-24: RS. 6,414 million. By comparing the 2023-2024 budget: findings reflects that the Government of Pakistan has demonstrated a positive role in community security.

Budget allocation for political participation is RS. 4745 million reflecting a notable decrease in budget to 73.98%, compared to the outgoing fiscal year budget 2023-24: Rs. 18,264 million.

Budget analysis indicates that the political security receives lower funding, however, this drop in budget may raise many concerns on the political stability.

The budgetary allocation for health security stands at RS. 28171 million, reflecting a rise of 1.37% compared to the outgoing fiscal year budget 2023-24: Rs. 27,789 million. The analysis of budget 2024-25 indicates comparatively increased budget allocation.

Spending on environmental security is estimated at RS. 7252 million with an increase of about 535.03%, recorded from previous financial year budget 2023-24: Rs. 1,142 million. The analysis indicates that the budget 2024-25 prioritizes environmental security that encompasses extensive approach to human security. Therefore, it can be assessed that a budget of RS.7,252 million can help towards eradication of environmental degradation and provision of ecological balance.

In the budget 2024-25, the estimated expenditure on education stands at RS.123,804 million with an increase of about 19.81%, recorded from previous financial year budget 2023-24: RS. 103,684 million this will help in sustaining steady growth in terms of educational development. By comparing the 2023-2024, it is assessed that there is a room for improvement for out-of-school children: an appropriate budget should also be allocated for (OOSC).

Moreover, five new categories have been introduced in the budget 2024-25 for income tax exemption, including exemptions for the families of martyrs, government employees who pass away during service, war veterans, and serving and retired army officers. All these members are exempt from tax when selling a government-allotted plot. All these facilities, which were previously available to officials of federal government, will now be extended to provincial employees as well, including serving and retired officials. The government has presented a budget that has increased control of elite capture rather than reduced it, and the entire burden has fallen on the salaried class and on the poor. The budget target is significantly high with a 40% increase.

The report concludes that the current budget is a mix of imbalances in expenditure estimates neglecting the critical areas of human security including community development, strengthening local government institutions, political participation, and protection of human rights. The budget is overemphasized with the imposition of high taxes, setting tax revenue targets in isolation while keeping the other socio-economic factors constant. The sharp increase in taxation can be a stimulus for creating further unrest among sellers and buyers amid the situation where 40 % of people are living below the poverty line. The increase of GST on daily consumer products, electricity, and food items, and the increase in income tax on salaried class are likely to affect the purchasing power of the consumers. The structural reforms in tax regimes and SOEs including privatization, and public-private partnership have been priorities while the human development in perspective and contextual framework of human security and human rights seem neglected. The government needs to adopt people centric public policies with a balanced approach towards revenue generation and expenditure for development and human security.

Introduction

The concept of Human Security encompasses multifaceted aspects of human development, essential for well-being and economic sustainability. The concept evolved since 1982 after inception of 'Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues'. It departs from conventional discourse of State Security and extended it to the individuals embracing the well-being and dignity of human beings while mitigating insecurities linked with socio-economic and political conditions, food, health, and environmental, community and personal safety. The concept entered into policy discourse after formulation of Human Development Framework in wake of Human Development report by UNDP in 1994 and establishment of Commission on Human Security. Renowned Economist Mehboob ul Haq, from Pakistan and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen are considered among few who drew attention to the concept of Human Security.

This report provides an insight into the Annual Budget of Pakistan for Financial Year (FY) 2024-25 while comparing with previous budget i.e. FY 2023-24 and analyzes the impact of financial and fiscal policies on the eight dimensions of human security including environmental, economic, health, food, personal, community, political, and educational security. Although the budget document does not use the term 'human security' but the report has derived and aligned the budgetary allocations for social sectors and human development with the key dimensions of human security as envisaged by creators of the term human security.

On June 12, The Government of Pakistan, announcing the budget with an outlay of Rs.18.9 trillion, set targets for economic growth including tax reforms, control on public expenditure and circular debts, privatization of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), right and downsizing of ministries, winding up of redundant government departments, overcoming energy crises, mitigating effects of climate change and environmental degradation, controlling inflation, social safety and poverty alleviation programs, developing health and education sectors. The government has also attempted to align the targets for socio economic development with their political manifesto committed during election campaigns. The Government claims that current Budget has been prepared with a careful financial management and fiscal policy focusing on economic revival, addressing fiscal deficit, inflationary pressure and balance of payment. For social sector development, some key objectives include support for vulnerable population with pro poor initiatives, improved service delivery, skill development for youth, and integration of green and gender responsive budgeting.

The Budget reflects high targets of revenue collection through increased taxation, cut in recurring public expenditures, and adopting austerity measures for long term economic benefits. Some critics and financial analysts view such decisions as unending economic trap and IMF centric Budget with lower trickle-down effects for the middle and lower middle-income strata of the society. The growing population, unemployment, law and order situation, resurgence of terrorism, energy crises, political instability, climate change, poverty, food insecurity, education, health and gender disparity are real challenges to be overcome for socio economic development and human security amid the high targets of the current budget.

An estimated amount of Rs. 390,813 has been collectively allocated for interventions in the sectors of environment, health, food, education, security and political affairs while allocating Rs.1400 billion under Public Sector Development Programs (PSDP) focusing on Energy, water, and IT sectors as well as special areas of Newly merged Districts of erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB).

This report, by analyzing federal budget allocations and implications of public financial management vis a vis fiscal policy, layouts the effectiveness of fiscal policies for bringing improvements in overall dimensions of human security. The analysis is based on desk reviews of published documents. The findings point out the areas where fiscal policies are achieving its targets and where it needs improvements. The report also provides policy recommendations for achieving sustainable development to create a balanced and stable society.

The report is comprised of nine sections. First eight sections are based on each dimension of human security. Each section highlights the importance of particular dimension of human security and its link with human development, describes budgetary allocation having comparison with previous allocation and propounds experts' analysis.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

"Economic Security is the assurance of having stable income or resources to support a standard of living now and in the foreseeable future. It involves the protection of individuals and households against economic risks such as unemployment, poverty, and lack of access to essential resources, ensuring that they can meet their basic needs and maintain a decent quality of life."

The current budget allocation for economic security is on higher side as compared to previous year's allocation with an increase of 36.7% as shown in the table below.

Functional Area	Budget 2023-24 (In RS. Millions)	Budget 2024-25 (In RS. millions)	Percentage effect
Economic Affairs (Current&Development)	261,642 141,662	357,735(current) 305,820(Development)	36.73% 46.32%

Table 1

(Source: Budget Book 2024-25, Ministry of Finance)

Economic Security

Economic security is a vital component of human security providing a bedrock for socioeconomic growth, infrastructural development, entrepreneurial activities, social protection, work security, skill development, peacebuilding, and political stability within the country. Economic security not only provides an impetus for the personal growth of individuals but also society at large and helps in creating an enabling environment for businesses, cultural progression, attainment of educational goals, improved health conditions, and reducing uneven use of natural resources and environmental degradation like deforestation. The key postulates of the economic security framework include “basic social security, defined by access to basic needs infrastructure about health, education, dwelling, information, and social protection, as well as work-related security” (ILO). The view is further broadened while linking economic security with the State. The Economic Security of the State has “financial, social, demographic, innovative, investment, food, energy and technological” features (Golovko Vyladslav,2019).

Governments attempt to allocate sufficient funds for economic growth and development with fiscal policies to tap optimum benefits from allocated funds and utilize all available resources including human capital to strengthen the economy stretching out its trickle-down effects to boost the economic conditions of the masses. Economic security becomes more imperative in socialist and democratic regimes that promise their citizens to provide necessities of life and set them free from fear of economic insecurity. Pakistan being a democratic State has committed likewise promises in the Constitution. The Constitution of Pakistan envisages an egalitarian society where the fundamental rights of every citizen are protected without prejudice to sex, color, race, or religion and setting principles of policy that the State shall ensure well-being, extending the economic benefit to all while raising the standard of living, providing adequate livelihood, reducing disparity in the income and earnings, equity and preventing the concentration of wealth in hands of few.

Although there is a significant increase in the allocation of funds as compared to the previous year the question arises of whether it is proportionate to actual need and total outlay of the budget estimates. It tunes around 0.35 trillion against a total outlay of 18.9 trillion meaning thereby only 1.8 % of total funds are allocated for economic security which appears a meager amount against the actual needs as Pakistan has a population of 241.49 million with a growth rate of 2.55 %, highest in Asia. Such a huge population bulge and high growth rate require robust policies and hefty allocations of funds to gear up programs and interventions for economic development and ensure economic security. Economic security needs to be taken as a serious concern amid a low economic growth rate of 2.3 % with a high headline Consumer Price Index (CPI) national inflation rate of 29.2% as recorded in FY2023 whereas CPI Rural (Food) went up to 41.1 % (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2023-24). The slow pace of economic growth coupled with high inflation may further lead towards increased poverty in FY2024 and at present 40 % of people are living below the poverty line which is indicative that macroeconomic risks are still lurking besides heavy debt burden and lower Foreign Exchange Reserves (World Bank,2024). The national Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), consisting of three dimensions: health, education, and standard of living, shows that the poverty rate has increased over the past five years from 38.6 % in 2018 to 39.5 % in 2023 with the highest poverty rate of 70 % in province of Baluchistan (PIDE,2024). One of the key interventions for economic growth may be the increasing efficiency of the SOEs and involving private investments

. It is important to realize that economic security plays a vital role in alluring private investments and accelerating growth. A previous study conducted by IMF in 1998 identified 12 key factors affecting Economic Security including (i) Government leadership, (ii) External Conflict risk, (iii) Corruption, (iv) Rule of law, (v) Racial and Ethnic Tensions, (vi) Political Terrorism, (vii) Civil War Threats, (viii) Quality of the Bureaucracy, (ix) Risk of Repudiation of contracts, (x) Risk of Expropriation by government, (xi) Political Rights, and (xii) Civil Liberties. The study report asserts that the high ratings in all of these aspects arguably characterize economic security, that is, “an institutional framework that inspires the confidence of savers and investors and guarantees the physical security of individuals and the legal security of transactions”. In apropos to these key factors Pakistan has to go the extra mile to attain economic security because for decades Pakistan has been confronted with issues of terrorism, proxy wars, civil unrest, political instability, good governance, corruption, rule of law, and violation of human rights particularly rights of a vulnerable population. However, the present government has asserted taking necessary actions for reforms in the tax regime, civil service, ease of business, privatization and right-sizing of SOEs, Counter terrorism, women empowerment, and social safety nets. The finance minister, in his speech, has iterated for shifting from a ‘Government -determined Economy’ to a ‘Market-driven Economy’ while converting a ‘Consumption Economy’ into a ‘Savings and Investment Economy’ by introducing structural reforms for economic growth.

The government has announced a 27% increase in the allocation of funds for the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) allocating Rs.593 billion which is a positive initiative for economic security. It will transfer the cash directly to 10 million beneficiaries including educational scholarships for 10.4 million students and the inclusion of 0.5 million families under the nutrition (Nashonoma) program for halting the stunting among children caused by malnutrition.

FOOD SECURITY

"Food Security is the condition in which all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."

Table 2 presents the budget figures allocated to maintain food security(Kiani, 2024):

Functional Area	Budget 2023-24 (In RS. Millions)	Budget 2024-25 (In RS. millions)	Percentage effect
Agriculture, Food, Irrigation, Forestry and fishing	39,426(Current) 101,361(Development)	24,661(Current) 204,988 (Development)	-37% 49.44%
National Food Security and Research Division	5,019	41,250	721%
Subsidy to Food (PASSCO)	10,000	12,000	20%

Table 2
(Source: Budget Book 2024-25, Ministry of Finance)

Food Security

Food security is the basic component of human security. Access to quality food is essential to human growth and existence. It is the responsibility of the Government to take all necessary measures for ensuring food security as enunciated in Article 38 (d) of the Constitution of Pakistan that the State shall provide necessities of life including food. Although the aforementioned Article does not obligate the State as a provision of Fundamental Right but lays down responsibility upon the State as a Principle of Policy. The international community responding to food crises and famines in various parts of the World deliberated on how to ensure food supplies and availability to safeguard humanity from extinction for want of food. The Famine in Bangladesh in 1972 led to the convening of the first World Food Conference by the UN General Assembly in Rome in 1974. The Conference also adopted the Universal Declaration on Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition (UDEHM). The conference through the Declaration proclaimed, “Every man, woman, and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition to develop fully and maintain their physical and mental faculties”. Since then, the concept of Food Security evolved reaching a comprehensive definition, “Food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.

UDEHM under Article 3 urges the States to tackle the food problem “during the preparation and implementation of national plans and programmes for economic and social development”. Pakistan also adopted the Declaration. Secure access to food can produce a wide-ranging positive impact, including economic growth, poverty reduction, trade opportunities, improved global security and stability, and improved healthcare (Agriculture, n.d.). As it is a vital component, the government has a specific allocation of budget to maintain and cater to the demand for food security.

The Budget indicates a fall of about 37% in estimated current expenditure for FY 2024-25 for agriculture, food, irrigation, forestry & fishing, however, an increase of around 50 % Development side which is indicative that Government will take strict austerity measures on recurring budget including administrative expenditures by the Ministries, sub ordinate offices, statutory bodies, and attached departments whereas more allocations will be made on Public Sector Development Programs for Food and Agriculture and matters ancillary thereto including irrigation. It is expected that it will not only bring infrastructural development but also create job opportunities, social growth, and sustainable development. Food Security is also included in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under goal 2 i.e. Zero Hunger. The Government of Pakistan has already made the SDGs part of the National Agenda. The Federal Government provided a huge amount of budget to the Ministry of National Food Security and Research Division. There is an increase of about 721% in the budget of this Ministry. Apart from this, the Government provided subsidies for food to Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation (PASSCO) which is primarily responsible for the “Provision of food security at the national level, by maintaining strategic reserves of wheat and other specified commodities”. There is an increase of 20% in subsidies to PASSCO.

The Budget document reflects that Food Security is not included in key priorities of the Government, however, the finance minister in his budget scheme acknowledged the importance of the Agriculture sector as a key pillar of the Economy indicating that the Agriculture sector contributes 24 % in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 37 % in creating Job opportunities

The overall current budget does not seem encouraging for the Agriculture sector and consequently food security. It is ironic that on the one hand government has realized the issues of malnutrition, undergrowth, and stunting of children, on the other hand, increased the general sales tax even on food commodities such as packaged milk 18 percent GST has been imposed by the government (Hasnain, 2024). It is also proposed that an 18% tax would be imposed on pesticides and fertilizers, but this could not be finalized due to opposition by the major political coalition partner, Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The PPP cautioned that if the government imposes further taxes on medicines, food items and fertilizers, the PPP will not vote for the budget (Rana, Annual tax exemptions hit record Rs3.9tr, 2024). It is a positive gesture that the Government avoided taxation on fertilizers.

The food security situation, despite self-sufficiency in many crops, is bleak as 36.9 % of the households in Pakistan are labeled as "food insecure" and 18.3% face "severe" food insecurity (National Nutritional Survey 2018; Ministry of Health and UNESCO/ The State of Pakistan's Economy, Third Quarterly Report for FY19 by State Bank of Pakistan).In FY2023, the growth rate of the Agriculture sector witnessed a 1.6 % decrease due to lower water availability, floods, low availability of fertilizers on account of Gas shortage and high prices, and an increase in land rents. (Annual Report 2022-23, The State of Pakistan's Economy, State Bank of Pakistan,2023). However, the credit availability and a subsidy under the PM Kissan Package were an attempt to gear up the recovery. The production of rice significantly declined by 21.5 %, however, the other important crops like sugar cane, maize, and wheat showed an increasing trend in production. The post-flood situation in 2022 contributed to better wheat production. It would be sagacious that the Government may either continue the subsidies on fertilizers and essential machinery or bring an intensive package for maintaining a better output of the agriculture sector for food security. The credit availability at a minimal interest rate could be a meaningful intervention to enhance agricultural production and livestock development.

COMMUNITY SECURITY

"Community Security is the protection and assurance that individuals and groups within a community feel safe from violence, crime, and social instability. It involves fostering a sense of belonging, mutual support, and resilience against threats to the well-being and cohesion of the community, ensuring that everyone can live in a peaceful and supportive environment."

The current budget proposed higher expenditures for FY 2024-25 as compared to previous year meeting the requirement of housing and community development as shown in Table 3 below;

Functional Area	Budget 2023-24 (In RS. Millions)	Budget 2024-25 (In RS. millions)	Percentage effect
Housing and Community Amenities	6,414(Current) 4,288(Development)	27,917(Current) 7,057(Development)	23.43%
Housing Development	536	1564	191%
Community Development	5878	26353	348%
Social Protection	480,267(Current) 564 (Development)	607,997(Current) 6,594 (Development)	
Recreation, Culture and Religion	18,252(Current) 4,501(Development)	18,466(Current) 4,725(Development)	

Table 3

(Source: Budget Book 2024-25, Ministry of Finance)

Community Security

Developing and securing the communities living in a State is an important dimension of human security. Community security encompasses settlement, safety, and socio-cultural development including community welfare, and recreational and religious activities. It emphasizes the development and protection of the communities and ensures the stability, safety, and well-being of the people. One of the key objectives of community security is to create an enabling environment making an individual safe and productive who contributes to national life and development. This can be achieved by formulating robust policies for engaging individuals, utilizing their potential for community services, providing necessary amenities, investing in community development, and strengthening local governments.

Pakistan is a heterogeneous society containing various social groups and communities with an average family size of 6.31 having 3.12 males and 3.19 females (Social Indicators of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2021). On Geo-ethnic bases, the People are clustered into four major groups; Baloch, Punjabi, Pashtuns, and Sindhi living in four federating units i.e. provinces Balochistan, Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh respectively with Muslims living in majority. The other major religious communities belonging to religious minorities include Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Kalash, and Ahmadi. The prominent ethnic minorities include Kashmiri, Balti, and Hazara. In the context of Community Security, the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees fundamental rights including "Freedom of trade, business or profession, freedom to profess religion and to manage religious institutions, Safeguards as to educational institutions in respect of religion, et, Protection of property right, Equality of citizens, Non-discrimination in respect of access to public places, Safeguard against discrimination in service, and Preservation of language, script and culture". Article 32 of the Constitution enunciates the promotion of local government institutions for community development and self-governance. The Principles of Policy under the Constitution of Pakistan provide that the State shall adopt appropriate measures for discouraging Parochial and other similar prejudices, ensuring full participation of women in national life, protecting families, protecting minorities, promoting social justice, and eradicating social evils, and promotion of social and economic well-being of the people. The provision of necessities of life including food, housing, and clothing is also ensured under Article 38 of the Constitution which are important postulate of community development and security.

By comparing 2023-2024 the Government of Pakistan increased the total community security budget by 23.43% while 191% expenditures to housing development and 348% allocated to community development that's a significant increase and a good initiative taken by them. The Government of Pakistan has demonstrated its role in community security by increasing the budget allocation for the community. It covers a wide range of activities like the construction and maintenance of community centers, and additionally, by investing in development and local safety, governments, and organizations can help to eradicate poverty and reduce unemployment.

The community development and strengthening of local government institutions remained a challenge since the inception of Pakistan mainly due to lack of political will and political instability. Nevertheless, the military regimes attempted to strengthen the local governments, although, with political motives otherwise in democratic governments, local governments have been traditionally the least priority.

The Current budget reflects that strengthening local government institutions is the least priority although it is a provincial subject the federal government under national planning and policy framework could play a vital role in strengthening the role of local governments for community development.

The socioeconomic integration of ethno-religious minorities into national life and development is a great challenge in terms of community security. The current budget appears to have less visibility to invest in the social integration of these minority groups which is otherwise an essential element of national development and community security.

The other serious challenges, other than financial and economic interventions, are climate change, violent extremism, and terrorism which impede and jeopardize the community development. The Community security situation was worst in 2023. Several minority communities were subject to violence, and terrorism including mob lynching, vandalization, and arsenal. On August 16, 2023, several hundred people attacked a Christian settlement (Watch, 2024). 9 attacks on Sunni religious leaders and 5 targeted attacks on the Shia community (PIPS, 2024). Apart from this, some women activists working for communities reported threats to their organizations.

PERSONAL SECURITY

"Personal Security refers to the protection of an individual's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being from threats such as violence, crime, harassment, and abuse, ensuring a safe and secure environment for living and personal development."

The estimated expenditure is on higher side in comparison of previous year as shown in Table 4 below;

Functional Area	Budget 2023-24 (In RS. Millions)	Budget 2024-25 (In RS. millions)	Percentage effect
Public Order and Safety Affairs	253,498 (Current) 2,621 (Development)	283,051 (Current) 3,007 (Development)	89.55% 87.16%

Table 4

(Source: Budget Book 2024-25, Ministry of Finance)

Personal Security

Personal security is a critical dimension in ensuring human security, it measures to protect individuals from physical violence, harm, crime, and other threats to their lives. Whether it is from other violent individuals, states, or from domestic abuse. Personal security ensures that citizens of a country can live their lives free from any fear and anxiety. For many people, the greatest source of anxiety is crime, particularly violent crime (Grinshteyn, Cunningham, Eisenman, Anderson, & Ettner, 2017). The right to life is a fundamental and inalienable right under the Constitution of Pakistan as well as International Human Rights Law. Article 9 of the Constitution guarantees the security of a person envisaging the right to life. Similarly, Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) ratified by Pakistan also enunciates the security of person.

The government allocates specific funds to be incurred for Public Order and Safety Affairs to ensure this dimension of human security aiming to improve law and order including personal security through various sources like law enforcement, crime prevention, and social safety programs.

The current budget reflects a significant increase in allocations of funds which is indicative that Government has priorities the Public Order and Safety affairs. In the recent past, the resurgence of terrorism and political turmoil especially pre-election political scenario has affected the law-and-order situation in the country.

The reports highlighted a rise in crime rate like 645 murder incidents in 2023 compared to 593 in 2022 (Ali, 2024). This suggests an upward trend in the crime rate compared to the previous year. The 2024 and 2023 data are not published yet by Pakistan, but according to the survey of Numbeo.com Pakistan ranks at 84 in their 'Crime Index by Country 2024 Mid-Year' report (Numbeo, 2023). Terrorism is also a main threat to personal security. According to the eleventh edition of the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) terrorism increased by 22% (THSI, 2024). According to the numbeo.com Safety Index, the safety of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Karachi dropped from 70.7, 50.9, and 46.6 in 2022 to 68.8, 49.5, and 43.8 in 2024.

It could be wise that the Government as a short-term measure may continue extra spending to decelerate the law-and-order situation and terrorism. The increased spending may be appropriate but the Government is required to find political ways and community engagement for conflict resolutions to bring political stability so that hefty spending may be utilized on the development side and social protection instead of maintaining law and order. The concept of Human Security as envisaged by experts propounded a focus shift from conventional security measures and defense to "the protection of individuals from a wider range of threats to their well-being and security, and by a wider range of measures and policies, from the local and community levels to the national and international arenas. Human Development Report (HDR 1994) defined human security as including "...safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression, and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily lives, whether in homes, jobs or communities. "Security expenditures to human development". (The Human Security Framework and National Human Development Reports, NHDR Occasional Paper 5,2006)

POLITICAL SECURITY

"Political Security refers to the protection of individuals, groups, and institutions from political violence, oppression, and discrimination. It ensures the safeguarding of political rights and freedoms, enabling people to participate freely in the political process, express their opinions, and engage in civic activities without fear of coercion, intimidation, or harm"

A significant increase is reflected in budget estimates for the financial year 2024-25 as shown in Table 5 below;

Functional Area	Budget 2023-24 (In thousands)	Budget 2024-25 (In thousands)	Percentage effect
Election Commission of Pakistan	Rs. 6,714,240	Rs. 7,049,952	95.23 %

Table 5
(Source: Budget Book 2024-25, Ministry of Finance)

Political Security

Political security is a key dimension of human security. This dimension is crucial for ensuring the stability of a country and making a peaceful environment for its citizens. This report deviates from the traditional concept of Political Security (of State) rather focuses on political security from the perspective of Human Security as envisaged by the Human Security Commission (Sen-Ogata Commission) which refers to political security as the protection of human rights and democratization. The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees democracy and political participation including freedom of assembly, association, joining of political party, and freedom of speech. The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights also provides for the protection of political rights and civil liberties. Pakistan is also a party to the convention. Nevertheless, democratic practices such as free and fair elections and political participation have always been questionable in Pakistan. Pakistan has a long history of political struggle against dictatorial regimes. Therefore, Political security in Pakistan is a major concern at the national and international levels.

Despite the revival of Democracy in Pakistan since 2008, the political turmoil, interference of nonpolitical elements in politics, political violence, and persecution, especially less political participation of women remained a serious challenge. In the circumstantial context, it is imperative to analyze budgetary allocations for political security to assess the plans of the government for providing an enabling environment for nourishing the democratic norms and maximizing the political participation of the people of Pakistan without any duress. According to a survey by Amnesty, political repression, systematic torture, ill-treatment, or disappearance was still practiced in 110 countries (International, 2023). Political security also involves the protection of the citizens from political violence and malpractices. It also ensures a safe environment for groups or individuals who want to participate in political activities.

In 2023 a major issue of freedom of expression and attacks on civil society groups occurred, especially journalists are not safe, an increasing number of attacks on members of the Press indicates the freedom of speech in this country. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) ranked Pakistan as one of the deadliest countries for journalists (Borders, n.d.). The year 2024 is the worst in political security because the government itself threatens an attack on many groups and organizations who speak against them and many cases of disappearance. On 3rd May 2024, Pakistan dropped two places in the 2024 World Press Freedom Index (Borders, n.d.). Farmers protested against the unfair wheat policy, massive protests around the cost of living in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Blocked social media platform X, and many more. Now we know the reason for this massive drop in the budget in the years 2024-2025, Next year's result may be much worse than this. If this streak continues government can see a massive outrage in the anger of citizens. Political security is compromised on many levels and the Government need to improve this situation by addressing the issues one by one.

The Election Commission of Pakistan, a constitutional body, is primarily responsible for conducting free and fair elections and implementation of election laws related to political participation and registration of political parties. The Election Commission in its performance indicators has also included Awareness Campaigns for advocacy of political participation to achieve the turnout targets of 65 % in the next general election.

Political security warrants political autonomy of individuals including members of political parties to contribute to political stability and the strengthening of Democracy. The culture of Dynastic politics and violent behaviors are detrimental to political security. A positive aspect of the current budget is that it has focused on Gender which will pave the road for women's empowerment and their increased political participation. It would be a positive intervention if special allocations were made for the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Studies Women Parliamentary Caucuses and Ministry of Human Rights for the promotion of Political Rights. It is awful that the current Budget has curtailed the allocations of funds contrary to demands made by the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR). Rs. 1,158,791(in thousands), with operating expenses of Rs. 285,708 (in thousands), have been allocated to MoHR for FY 2024-25 whereas, in the previous year, the estimates were Rs. 2,116,020(in thousands). The Ministry of Human Rights is mandated for the implementation of International Human Rights conventions including the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Social, Economic and Culture Rights (ICESR), International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), International Convention on Torture (CAT), and International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). All these conventions urge for the promotion and protection of Political Rights. It can be justified to conclude that Political security is not among the key priorities of the Government.

ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

"Environmental Security refers to the safeguarding of ecosystems, natural resources, and the environment from degradation, conflicts, and threats that can affect human health, well-being, and societal stability. It involves addressing issues such as pollution, climate change, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss to ensure a sustainable and resilient environment for current and future generations."

Table 6 provides a representation of the budget 2023-24 & 2024-25:

Functional Area	Budget 2023-24 (In thousands)	Budget 2024-25 (In thousands)	Percentage effect
Environmental Security	1,142	7,252	535.03%
Pollution Abatement	200	6,290	3045%
Research & Development Environment	220	-	
Administration of Environmental Protection (Waste Water Management)	722	962	33%

Table 6
(Source: Budget Book 2024-25, Ministry of Finance)

Environmental Security

Environment Security is one of the critical areas of sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are the blueprint for sustainable development, emphasize environmental protection under Goals,13,14 and 15. Likewise, environmental security is a key feature of Human Security. The climate change is one of the critical risks. The Global Climate Risk Index has ranked Pakistan as 5th most vulnerable country to climate change. It is pointed out that climate change mitigation could raise government expenditure which will cause a federal fiscal deficit (Kiani, Budget 2024-25: Economy not out of the woods yet, parliament told, 2024). and by the year 2025, Pakistan's GDP could bring down by 18-20% (Imran, 2024). This deteriorating climate crisis has added a new layer of pressure on the economy with external shocks of climate disasters, consequently, Pakistan has no other choice but to step to the fore to mitigate the emission of greenhouse gases (GHG) and adapt efforts to avoid critical climatic irrevocable repercussions. Therefore, there is a need to take a look at the main environmental issues faced by Pakistan (Igini, 2024).

Realizing the effects of climate change, the government of Pakistan has reserved a considerable amount for forestation initiatives, noticeably, "Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme," which endeavors to achieve environmental security by enhancing forest cover and ecological diversity (Division, 2024). Moreover, The Budget has also earmarked Renewable Energy Investments by establishing solar and wind energy projects to reduce, environmental risks such as carbon emission and dependence on fossil fuels, and pave the way for clean energy solutions. Significant funds have been allocated for climate resilience infrastructure to combat with natural disasters by improving flood defenses and drought-resistant ecological and agricultural practices (Division, 2024). Furthermore, the budget has also focused on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically those related to environmental security (Division, 2024).

A visible increase in expenditure estimates has been made for environmental security in the FY 2024-25 with the allocation of RS. 7212 million out of which the allocation for population abatement is 3045% and 33% for administration of environmental protection. However, the allocation for research and development has remained the same. Moreover, Targeted investment and initiatives are expected to yield long-term benefits in environmental security including improved public health, ecological balance, and economic sustainability.

HEALTH SECURITY

"Health security refers to the protection and preservation of the health of individuals, communities, and populations against health threats. This includes ensuring access to healthcare services, preventing and controlling diseases, managing health emergencies, and addressing factors that impact health like environmental hazards or biological threats."

There is an increase of about 1.37% recorded from previous financial year budgetas shown in table 7 below:

Functional Area	Budget 2023-24 (In thousands)	Budget 2024-25 (In thousands)	Percentage effect
Health Affairs and Services	27,789	28,171	1.37%
Medical products, Appliances and Equipment	71	32	-54%
Hospital Services	20,069	21,683	8%
Public Health Services	4,618	1,110	-75%
Health Administration	3,031	5,364	76%

Table 7
(Source: Budget Book 2024-25, Ministry of Finance)

Health Security

In the 2024-2025 fiscal budget, total spending on health security stands at RS. 28171 million. The government of Pakistan has reserved significant funding for the health sector to address the healthcare crisis, and improve healthcare outcomes. Health initiative includes the Sehat Sahulat Program, which aims to facilitate financially disadvantaged households by providing health insurance coverage (White-Kaba, 2020). Moreover, the Budget has also earmarked an investment amount calculated as 58% for the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) and an estimated amount of Rs. 3.7 trillion has been reserved for infrastructure initiatives (Zulqarnain, 2024). Furthermore, moving towards a sustainable future, the government has raised funds for programs addressing communicable and Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), and initiatives to fight against diseases such as tuberculosis and hepatitis.

A major fall of about -54% is observed in the FY 2024-25 budget for medical products, appliances, and equipment, and -75% for Public Health Services, this can be considered as an alarming situation for the country. On the other hand, the government has allocated a huge amount for health administration there is an increase of about 76% in the budget. Apart from this, the government allocated only 8% for hospital services. Pakistan finds itself surrounded by a vicious circle of health crises that needs to be addressed by improving health facilities and providing equitable health care outcomes across the country.

The Global Health Security Summit 2024, hosted by Pakistan, aims to address and confront challenges that emerge from global health threats (Health, 2024). There is a need for a resilient health system that can detect, prevent, and respond to surfacing infectious disease threats, Moreover, without strengthening primary healthcare services, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) may not be achieved.

EDUCATIONAL SECURITY

"Educational security is the assurance that all students have access to a safe, equitable, and high-quality education. This includes protection from harm, equal opportunities for learning, and support for maintaining educational progress despite disruptions."

Functional Area	Budget 2023-24 (In RS. Millions)	Budget 2024-25 (In RS. Millions)	Percentage effect
Educational Security	103,684	123,804	19.81%

Table 8
(Source: Budget Book 2024-25, Ministry of Finance)

Educational Security

In the 2024-2025 budget, total spending on education stands at RS.123,804 million sustaining steady growth, The budget aims to maneuver economic growth by addressing the fiscal crisis and focusing on improving infrastructure, providing learning skills and opportunities, easy access to quality education by enhancing educational resources. Furthermore, Efficient management and targeted funding are expected to yield long-term benefits in educational security including improved employment-to-population ratio, economic sustainability, and educational development. There is an increase of about 19.81% recorded from the previous financial year.

By comparing the Budget for FY 2023-24, the government of Pakistan has increased the current budget for education by 19.8 percent. On the contrary, according to a UNICEF report, Pakistan has the world's second-highest number of out-of-school children (OOSC) with around 26.2 million children aged 5-16 not attending school, which represents 39 percent of the total population in this age group. Despite continued efforts to strengthen the rights to education (Hassan, 2024)The government has not allocated any financial expenditure for out-of-school children in the new FY budget 2024-25, which is an alarming situation and would become a burden on Pakistan's economy.

Conclusion

The current budget estimates are significantly high with a 40% increase. It appears that the revenue targets are set with high hopes ignoring the ground realities of the eco-political conditions of the country. The acceleration of tax revenue targets in isolation while keeping the other factors of the economy constant may further lead to unrest among sellers and buyers amid the situation where 40 % are living below the poverty line. The increase of GST on daily consumer products, electricity, and food items, and the increase in income tax on the salaried class are likely to affect the purchasing power of the consumers. The structural reforms in tax regimes and SOEs including privatization, and public-private partnership are overemphasized. Human development as envisaged in the human security framework has been ignored which otherwise urges for investing more to mitigate nonviolent causes of insecurities including hunger, unconducive work environment, gender inequalities and biases, unemployment, lack of adequate infrastructure, diseases, climate change, social evils, lack of good governance, political instability and violations of human rights. The hefty increase in spending over handling of security issues through traditional means of security apparatus is contrary to the modern concept of human security which argues for more spending for strengthening human capital through financial interventions in community development, skilled education, promotion of democracy, climate resilience, biodiversity, and sustainability for ensuring the well-being of people, dignity and utilizing the potential of creativity and innovation including benefits from scientific and technological advances. Human security seems least priority of the government as it is obvious from allocations of funds to the Ministry of Human Rights as its budget has been curtailed which is otherwise custodian for the protection of human rights as envisaged in the constitution of Pakistan and International human rights conventions, especially in a circumstance where Pakistan is confronting with challenges of human rights violations and continuity of GSP Plus status. It would be sagacious if policymakers adopt a balanced approach towards budgetary allocation that prioritize all dimensions of human security.

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