Investigating the Impact of Corruption on Poverty in Pakistan

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| ARTICLE DETAILS | ABSTRACT |
|-----------------|----------|
| History         | **Purpose:** Corruption is one of the mega issues faced by developing countries like Pakistan. It not only erodes the macroeconomic performance of a country but also widens the gap between rich and poor by accelerating income inequality and poverty level. The present tries to examine the effects of corruption on poverty in Pakistan. |
| **Design/Methodology/Approach:** The present research based on the secondary data from the Transparency International and World Bank database, from the period 1997 to 2019. The study has applied the Johanson Cointegration and Vector Error Correction Method (VECM) as an econometric technique. |
| **Findings:** The empirical findings conclude that corruption and inflation are significantly and positively associated with poverty in Pakistan. However, the employed labor force shows a negative relationship with the poverty rate. |
| **Implications/Originality/Value:** Based on the results, the study suggested that for the reduction and eradication of corruption the present judiciary system should be improved. Supremacy of Law should be implemented. |

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**Introduction**  
Corruption is one of the major problems which creates hurdles in the path of gaining economic development and reduction of poverty. It also generates problems in the process of achieving social stability. Corruption rocks the foundation of the economy and it damages the base of the state badly. The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) was established in 2003. It was the first time in the world when an international document mapped out several anti-corruption measures along with a list of what are considered core corrupt acts. The list of corrupt acts includes bribery, embezzlement, illicit enrichment and laundering of proceeds of crime (United Nations, 2003). Corruption in the public sector is the hardest barrier in the way of strengthening the development process (U-Myint,2000). Most economics researchers have paid attention to corruption in the broader sense, tried to investigate and focus on the level of corruption and made efforts to find its grounds or causes. So, hence evils of corruption in the public sector along with the private sector have become prominent issues for social scientists and especially economists (Sandholtz & Koetzle, 2000). Corruption got a lot of importance in scholastic research...
during the 20th century and it became an admirable issue for researchers attached to different fields of the social sciences and history (Shabbir and Anwar 2007). Having realized the importance of these basic and key macroeconomic variables, the current study aims to explore and investigate the nature and level of the relationships among these variables in Pakistan.

Pakistan is not only facing the problem of transitory poverty but also confronting chronic poverty [Shah et al (2020)]. Chronic poverty means the poor lives in poverty forever and this poverty may further be inherited and aggravated by their children. Chronic poverty means the condition of beings always poor and usually poor (CPRC, 2004-2005). Transitory poverty means when a person is occasionally poor, who is poor for some period and for another period he is not poor. He can be called fluctuating poor. Chronic Poverty Research Centre (2004-2005) has estimated that 1.2 billion people are extremely poor earning less than 1 US$ per day in the world. The report also stated that between 0.30 to 0.42 billion people are victims of chronic poverty in the world, which is 25 to 35 percent of extreme poverty. The report also estimated that about one-third of the population in South Asia and 135 to 190 million people are victims of chronic poverty and it belongs to Bangladesh, India and Pakistan (Arif and Bilquees, 2006). The present study uses for research the simple kind of poverty which is extreme poverty at 1.25 US$ per day in Pakistan.

Every year the organization named Transparency International presents the ranking of the 180 countries according to their status of corruption respectively. For this purpose, a corruption perception index has been developed, a scale presenting scores between 100 (very clean) to 0 (highly corrupt) countries. To study the global corruption ranking in the world, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is the worldwide generally accepted index. Table 1 presents the scores of different countries like Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, from the year 2012-2019. In 2012, Pakistan scored 27 which gradually rose to 33 scores in 2018 and later decline to 32 scores during the year 2018. India was at 36 scores during the year 2012 which gradually to 40 scores during the years 2016 and 2017. Later during the years 2018 and 2019, it scores 41. Bangladesh was at 26 scores during the year 2012 and the score has raised to 28 during the year 2017 and later decline to 26 during the years 2018 and 2019. Table 2 presents the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. During the year 2012, Pakistan stood at 139 and gradually falls to 116 in the year 2016. During the year 2019, the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking of Pakistan stood at 120. During the year 2012, India stood at 94 and then its ranking moved to 76 in the year 2016. Later, During the years 2018 and 2019, the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking of India moved to 78 and 80 respectively. During the year 2012, Pakistan stood at 139 and gradually falls to 116 in the year 2016. During the year 2019, the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking of Pakistan stood at 120. During the year 2012, the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking of Bangladesh stood at 144 and later during the year 2016, Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking moved to 145. During the years 2018 and 2019, the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking stood at 149 and 146 respectively, in the world.

Table 1: Scores (2012-2019)

| Year | Pakistan | India | Bangladesh |
|------|---------|-------|------------|
| 2012 | 27      | 36    | 26         |
| 2013 | 28      | 36    | 27         |
| 2014 | 29      | 38    | 25         |
| 2015 | 30      | 38    | 25         |
| 2016 | 32      | 40    | 26         |
| 2017 | 32      | 40    | 28         |
| 2018 | 33      | 41    | 26         |
| 2019 | 32      | 41    | 26         |

Source: Transparency International

Table 2: Corruption Ranking

| Year | Pakistan | India | Bangladesh |
|------|---------|-------|------------|
| 2012 | 139     | 94    | 144        |
| 2013 | 127     | 94    | 136        |
| 2014 | 126     | 85    | 145        |
| 2015 | 117     | 76    | 139        |
Table 3: Least Corrupt Different Countries in World

| Country name | Rank |
|--------------|------|
| Denmark      | 1    |
| New Zealand  | 1    |
| Finland      | 2    |
| Sweden       | 3    |
| Switzerland  | 4    |
| India        | 79   |
| China        | 79   |
| Pakistan     | 116  |
| Afghanistan  | 169  |

Source: Transparency International Report 2016 www.transparency.org/cpi

Table 3 presents the least corrupt counties in the world, according to the report presented by Transparency International in 2016. Denmark and New Zealand ranked at the number 1 position in the world during the year 2016. Corruption is one of the most dangerous elements faced by Pakistan’s economy. Pakistan is the 116th least corrupt country out of 176 countries, according to the 2016 Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International Report, 2016).

Keeping in view the situation of corruption in Pakistan and its neighboring countries, which comprises South Asia. Pakistan is a developing country and struggling to achieve better economic performance. For the sake of economic progress and prospects, Pakistan must eradicate the issue of corruption in the country. As corruption further stimulates various issues like income inequality and poverty. Therefore the main focus of the study related to corruption and poverty in a developing country like Pakistan.

Literature Review

Karstedt (2001) examined the data on corruption and its impact on poverty and income distribution. The author collected data on corruption and income distribution in 35 countries and concluded that a high level of poverty has a high level of corruption. The countries that have a high level of income inequality possess a high level of corruption and vice versa. That study found a nonlinear relationship between corruption and income inequality. Corruption not only surge poverty but also adversely affect economic growth, and investment (foreign and domestic) and accelerate income inequality (Chetwynd et al. 2003).

Shabbir and Anwar (2007) examined the determinants of corruption in developing countries. The public sector and private sector were explained as dimensions of corruption. The study classified corruption determinants into two subdivisions. One was economic and the second was non-economic. The economic determinants consisted of literacy, an average level of income and economic freedom. The authors have examined 41 developing countries’ cross-sectional data for comparative analysis. The study collected the data on corruption from Transparency International which consisted of the Corruption Perceived Index. For multivariate analysis, economic and non-economic determinants equations were employed for empirical results. Breusch-Godfrey serial Correlation LM test was used by the study to verify the specification of the model and further estimation. The study concluded from the results that all economic determinants were oppositely associated with the professed level of dishonesty. Determinants of non-economic issues were not appreciably narrated as variations in the stage of corruption. The study recommended that government should focus on the economic aspects to curtail corruption and the role of democracy should be prominent for this purpose.

Mian Khalil (2010) investigated the causes and consequences of poverty in Pakistan. It was a theoretical study, but it highlighted the major causes and consequences of poverty in Pakistan. The poor situation of education, unemployment, corruption, unequal distribution of resources, poor governance and political instability are the
major cause of poverty. The study emphasized the major causes of poverty. The study examined that all these causes of poverty in Pakistan were interrelated to each other and created a high level of poverty in Pakistan. The study concluded that illiteracy was not only the chief cause of hunger, despite other social and economic factors like unequal distribution of resources, poor governance, unemployment and corruption. Over the last fifteen years, it has been observed that the incidence of poverty has grown from 1.3 percent to 2.5 percent. Literacy has grown up throughout this period. The study highlighted the fact that public spending on education is less than two percent of GDP in Pakistan. The study suggested that it should be increased to at least six to seven percent of GDP, like other South Asian countries.

Negin et al. (2010) investigated corruption and poverty in developing countries. The authors have employed the GMM technique for empirical investigation. This study was based on the data of ninety-seven developing countries. The authors collected the data between the year 1997 to 2006. The study used causality-based variables such as corruption or poverty. It is used to form major control variables (z) as mediators between corruption and poverty including other independent variables. The results of the study concluded that corruption and poverty, exist side by side. The study suggested that it is necessary to develop an integrated strategy to reduce poverty and corruption. For this purpose, serious efforts should be attempted for reducing poverty and corruption and pro-poor and anti-corruption strategies should be applied.

Khan et al. (2012) investigated corruption and its causes in Pakistan. The study introduced the concept of economic rent, which was important in corruption. The study highlighted the historic view of corruption in Pakistan. It was a theoretical study that explained the reasons and forms of corruption in detail. The main factors which caused corruption were policies, programs and movements that were badly handled and run by public servants. The study explained that in post-independence Pakistan the major causes for corruption were property allotment, drug money and the informal structure of the national economy. The study also concluded that the following issues were the main causes of corruption in Pakistan public utilities, public sector banking, tax regime, public sector economy and the underground economy. The study also concluded that corruption was a universal curse that was the main hindrance in the path of economic prosperity that created poverty in society. The authorities should build up credibility by exhausting extremely visible corrupt officials. The study recommended that federal authorities should start special motives for the prevention of corruption in Pakistan. Aina (2014) examined corruption in Nigeria. The author contended that corruption is one of the major root causes of adverse economic conditions in Nigeria. The study suggested that adequate measures should be adopted to combat the challenge of corruption. Poverty can only be reduced by solving the issue of corruption in Nigeria.

During the period 2005-2009, Rahayu and Widodo (2013) examined the data on corruption in ASEAN countries. Based on the secondary data, employing the econometric techniques as the generalized method of moments/dynamic panel data in the study. The human development index HDI was employed as a proxy for capability poverty. The results from the study showed that the relationship between and corruption is unidirectional. This shows that poverty does not cause corruption but corruption causes poverty. The findings of the study suggested that serious efforts should be adopted to reduce corruption in these countries. Anti-corruption policies should be carefully designed and implemented to improve the macroeconomic condition of these countries and better provision for social needs such as health and education.

Lewis (2017) investigated the social impact of corruption in China, Italy, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Nepal and Africa. The study focused on the social and economic impacts of corruption on society. The study examined that corruption exists in all economies of the world but the degree of corruption varied from country to country and society to society. It is easy to understand the consequences of corruption, as corrupt practices do not willingly lend the countries to scientific analysis ultimately they have to face the problem of resilience and poverty. The study discussed the economic and social consequences of corruption, resulting fall in national income and a high level of poverty. The study concluded that some developing countries are the most corrupted economies. This further accelerates corruption in governance and commercial mismanagement. The study concluded that corruption increased poverty in the economies and deteriorated the social system. It will create discrimination and displacement, denying access to basic needs.
Data and Methodology
The main objective of this study is to analyze the impact of corruption on poverty in Pakistan. The secondary data has been collected from World Development Indicators (WDI) and Transparency international during the period 1997-2019.

Table 4: Description of Variables

| Variables          | Description                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dependent Variable |                                                                                                                                            |
| Poverty (POV)      | The headcount ratio is employed as a proxy for poverty. It is a dependent variable in the model.                                            |
| Independent Variables |                                                                                                                                            |
| Corruption (CORR) | The data on corruption has been obtained from Transparency international. data is available from the period between 1997 to 2019.                     |
| Employment rate (ELF) | It is obtained from the economic survey by the Government of Pakistan (various issues).                                               |
| Inflation Rate (INF) | Secondary data on the inflation rate obtained from WDI (1997 to 2019).                                                                      |

Justification of the Variables

Poverty
Poverty means the state of being extremely poor, it is the state of being inferior in quality or insufficient in amounts. A situation that may cause financial resource deficiency for an individual or community. The lack of resources necessary for enjoying a minimum living standard and well-being in society is called Poverty. Poverty bounds the masses from accessing rudimentary life requirements like food, shelter and clothing and creates a sense of deprivation among people (Chani et al.,2011).

Corruption
Corruption is like a cobweb in society. It damages society not only economically but also socially and morally. Corruption damages the principles of law, justice and equality. It reduces the chances for the poor to improve their position economically and socially. Due to corruption, the nation has to pay a huge price. In the United States, the cost of corruption is projected to be around about 400 million $ each year as reported by World Bank, (1997). It minimizes the provision of justice in society and ultimately it will increase poverty.

The Employment Rate (employed labor force)
An upsurge in the level of employment rate means a decrease in the level of unemployment. Unemployment and poverty live side by side in the same place. There is a direct effect of employment on poverty. An increase in the level of employment will decrease poverty. So, if of employment rate increases, it will decrease the poverty of the households. Employment level and rate of return from education have a positive affiliation (Faridi et al.,2010). Theoretically, the employment rate shows a negative impact on poverty.

Inflation Rate
Inflation causes a reduction in purchasing power of people living in developing countries. Ultimately it will become the cause of poverty. Inflation decreases the value of the medium of exchange. An increase in the inflation rate will create poverty in a country directly.

Model Specification
The econometric model is as follows;

\[ Pov = f(\text{CORR}, \text{ELF}, \text{INF}) \]

\[ \text{Poverty} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 \text{ (Corruption)} + \beta_3 \text{ (Employment Rate)} + \beta_4 \text{ (Inflation Rate)} + \mu_i \]

Results and Interpretation
ADF Unit Root Test
The present study uses the ADF test for observing the presence of unit root at a level and first difference. This test is applied to all variables one by one which is present in the model. The test of the ADF Unit root suggests that all variables are not stationary at level.

Table 5: ADF Unit Root Test

| Level | Variable   | Test statistic | 1% Critical value | 5% Critical value | 10% Critical value | P-value | Decision |
|-------|------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------|----------|
|       | Poverty    | -1.58          | -3.68             | -2.97              | -2.61             | 0.491   | -        |
|       | Employed Labour Force | 1.21         | -3.68             | -2.97              | -2.61             | 0.996   | -        |
|       | Corruption | -0.14          | -3.75             | -3.00              | -2.63             | 0.944   | -        |
|       | Inflation  | -2.49          | -3.68             | -2.97              | -2.61             | 0.117   | -        |

Source: Author’s calculations

If ADF unit root statistics, the P-value of the variable should be smaller than the significance level, then the null hypothesis of containing unit root is rejected and it concludes that the series is stationary.

Table 6: ADF Unit Root Test Results

| First Difference | Variable   | Test statistic | 1% Critical value | 5% Critical value | 10% Critical value | P-value | Decision |
|------------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------|----------|
|                  | Poverty    | -5.35          | -3.73*            | -2.99              | -2.62             | 0.000   | I(d)     |
|                  | Employed Labour Force | -5.87        | -3.69*            | -2.97              | -2.62             | 0.000   | I(d)     |
|                  | Corruption | -4.39          | -3.75*            | -3.00              | -2.63             | 0.0003  | I(d)     |
|                  | Inflation  | -7.05          | -3.69*            | -2.97              | -2.62             | 0.000   | I(d)     |

Source: Author’s calculations

Table 7: Lag-order selection criterion

| Lag | LL   | LR   | df | p    | FPE  | AIC  | HQIC | SBIC |
|-----|------|------|----|------|------|------|------|------|
| 0   | -243.91 |      |    |      |      |      |      |      |
| 1   | -163.97 | 141.87 | 16 | 0.000 | 3182.65 | 19.36 | 19.53 | 20.36 |
| 2   | -141.14 | 45.66  | 216| 0.000 | 2047.57 | 18.64 | 18.94 | 20.4364 |
| 3   | -97.25  | 87.77* | 16 | 0.000 | 265.61  | 15.71*| 16.14*| 18.2961* |
| 4   | -1.6e-28 | -    | 16 | -    | -     | -    | -    | -    |

Source: Author’s calculations

Table 8: Results of Cointegration Tests

| Sample: 1997 - 2019 |
|---------------------|------------------|
| maximum             | eigenvalue       | trace   | critical 5% |
| rank                | statistic        | value   |            |
| 0                   | 72.64            | 47.21   |
| 1                   | 0.84             | 33.73   | 29.68     |
| 2                   | 0.69             | 8.58*   | 15.41     |
| 3                   | 0.33             | 0.13    | 3.76      |
| 4                   | -                | -       | -         |
| 5                   | 0.006            | 0.007   |

Source: Author’s calculations

Table 8 shows that after testing, H: r=1 is not rejected at 5% level (8.58* < 15.41). It shows that series are cointegrating among the variables. Hence, the study will estimate the VECM model.

Table 9: Vector Error Correction Model (Long-Run)

| Variables      | Cof. | Std.Err. | z     | p>| z   | (95% conf. Interval) |
|----------------|------|----------|-------|------|------|----------------------|
| Corruption     | 0.471| .19      | 2.39  | 0.017| .085 | -.85                 |
| Employed LF    | -0.81| .24      | -3.36 | 0.001| -1.29| -.34                 |

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Vector Error Correction (Long-Run)
Cointegration among variables presents a long-run relationship among them. The long-run relationship between poverty, corruption, employed labor force and inflation for one cointegrating vector is shown below with standard errors parenthesis.

\[
\text{Poverty} = -5.88 + 0.47 \text{ (Corruption)} - 0.81 \text{ (Employed Labor Force)} + 1.71 \text{ (Inflation)} \quad (a)
\]

Accordingly, when variables are logarithms and one cointegration vector is estimated, the coefficients can also be interpreted in long-run elasticities (Asari et al; 2011). The value of the corruption coefficient is 0.47. It states that if one percent increases in corruption so poverty will increase by 0.47 percent and vice versa. This result is in line with the findings of Chetwynd et al. (2003) and Negin et al. (2010). The value of the employed labor force is -0.81, which states that ceteris paribus, if one percent increases in the employed labor force, so, poverty will decrease by 0.81 percent and vice versa. Lastly, inflation has a positive value and the value of the inflation coefficient is 1.17. It means that if one percent of rate of inflation surges, poverty will rise by 1.17 percent and vice versa. This result supported the findings of Chani et al., (2011) and Pervez and Rizvi (2014). The sign of all variables of Model 1 is according to expectation.

Vector Error Correction (Short Run)

| Variables                  | Coefficient | z   | P-value |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----|---------|
| Poverty                   | -0.57       | -0.39 | 0.693   |
| Corruption                | -0.69       | -0.37 | 0.710   |
| Employed Labour Force     | -0.009      | -0.26 | 0.797   |
| Inflation                 | -0.37       | -3.43 | 0.001   |

The results of the model show that the results are more reliable in the long run in the present study.

Impulse Response Function for Model
Impulse Response Function (IRF) concept is suggested by Sims in 1980. As an additional check of the cointegration, it is another way to see a variable’s significant effect on other variables. The Impulse Response Function (IRF) shows the outcome responds to the shock in the independent variables. The recursive structure assumes that variables appearing first contemporaneously influence the latter variables but not vice versa. Moreover, this Impulse Response Function (IRF) test also shows if shock in the dependent variable has a transitory or permanent effect on the outcome variables. Impulse Response Function (IRF) is shown in Figure 1.

According to Figure 1, the employed labor force has a stronger positive relationship with poverty. The effect of shock in figure 1 is significant, positive and permanent.

Figure 1: Impulse Response Function
Roots of the Companion Matrix of Model
The study undergoes a diagnostic test to check the fitness of the model. Therefore in the present study the Roots of Companion Matrix has been adopted. This diagnostic test is feasible as it is based on Vector Error Correction (VECM) model estimations. Figure 2 presents the fitness of the data and stability of the model.

Figure 2: Roots of Companion Matrix
Figure 2 presents that the dot is present within the circle, which portrays the stability of the model. This shows the fitness of the model. It also shows that the co-integrating vector is appropriately specified.

Conclusion and Policy Implication
Pakistan’s economic development and growth have been falling prey to corruption both in the public and private sectors. It is a dire need to follow a fair and transparent system. The corrupt actions of public and private sectors contribute significantly to the continuation of poverty. Corruption significantly impedes the efficiency of the economy and hence economic growth. Corruption also increases the gap between the rich and poor segments of societies in both developed and developing economies. It slows down economic growth with wastage of national potential and ultimately increases inequality in society. It creates poverty and causes the birth of many social evils in society. It reduces the national efficiency, economic potential and growth of the economy. Corruption is like a curse that spreads all over the world and especially exists in developing countries. Pakistan simultaneously faces several challenges including corruption. It involves Financial and political corruption, misuse of authority and nepotism are examples of corruption.

The present study has attempted to investigate the impact of corruption in Pakistan. Based on secondary data, from the year 1997-2019, using Johanson Cointegration and VECM techniques methodological technique for empirical investigations The empirical findings show that a surge in corruption and inflation will increase the level of poverty in Pakistan. Whereas, the variable employed labor force shows a negative relationship with poverty level in Pakistan. From a policy perspective, to handle corruption Government should take all necessary steps to eliminate corruption. For a corruption-free society in Pakistan, the government should design adequate rules and regulations to mitigate the root cause of corruption in the society. Corrupt practices affect public and private resources. Pakistan should promulgate laws to protect the national resources. It is a dire need to follow a fair and transparent system of justice.

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