

Globalisation and Pakistan: Winners and Losers

Introduction

Globalisation refers to the growing interconnectedness of countries through trade, transport, communication, culture, and technology. In Pakistan, globalisation has expanded rapidly since the 1990s due to economic liberalisation, technological advancement, and integration into global markets. While globalisation has created new opportunities for growth and development, its benefits have not been equally shared. Some sectors and groups have gained significantly, while others have faced serious challenges. Therefore, it is important to assess whether globalisation has produced winners and losers in Pakistan.

International Transport Improvements in Pakistan

Globalisation has significantly improved Pakistan's international transport system. Developments in ports, airports, highways, and logistics networks have strengthened Pakistan's connection with global markets. Projects like Gwadar Port and the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have enhanced regional trade connectivity. Improved transport has reduced the cost and time of exporting and importing goods, helping Pakistani industries access raw materials and foreign consumers more easily. However, these benefits are concentrated mainly in urban and industrial regions, while rural and remote areas remain underdeveloped. Thus, transport improvements have promoted growth but also increased regional inequality.

Communication and Technology Advancements

Advances in communication technology have played a central role in globalisation's impact on Pakistan. The spread of the internet, mobile phones, and digital platforms has connected Pakistan to the global information economy. Businesses can now communicate instantly with international partners, boosting trade and investment. The IT sector and freelancing industry have created new income opportunities, especially for educated youth. Online education and global media have improved access to knowledge and awareness. Despite these gains, a digital divide still exists, as rural and low-income populations lack equal access to technology, limiting inclusive development.

Spread of Global Culture in Pakistan

Globalisation has led to the spread of global culture across Pakistan through media, entertainment, fashion, food, and language. Western lifestyles and consumer culture are increasingly visible, especially among urban youth. English has gained importance in education and professional life, enhancing global competitiveness. Cultural exchange has increased tolerance and exposure to new ideas. However, this cultural influence has also weakened traditional values, local languages, and indigenous customs. Many people fear cultural homogenisation and identity loss. As a result, globalisation has created tension between modern global culture and traditional Pakistani norms.

Winners of Globalisation in Pakistan

Several groups in Pakistan have benefited from globalisation. Export-oriented industries, such as textiles and IT services, gained access to international markets and advanced technologies. The urban middle and upper classes enjoyed better education, employment opportunities, and modern lifestyles. Freelancers and IT professionals earned foreign income through global digital platforms. Multinational corporations expanded their presence, generating profits and employment. Consumers benefited from a greater variety of goods and improved quality of services. Overall, globalisation has favored skilled, urban, and capital-rich segments of society.

Losers of Globalisation in Pakistan

Despite its benefits, globalisation has also created losers in Pakistan. Small local industries struggle to compete with cheaper imported goods, leading to business closures and unemployment. Rural farmers face unstable prices due to global market fluctuations. Low-skilled workers are vulnerable to job losses caused by automation and foreign competition. Income inequality has widened between urban and rural areas. Cultural traditions have weakened under strong global influences. Moreover, Pakistan's increased dependence on foreign markets and international institutions has limited economic sovereignty. These challenges highlight the uneven distribution of globalisation's benefits.

Conclusion

The impact of globalisation on Pakistan is mixed and complex. Improvements in international transport and communication have strengthened economic integration and created new opportunities. At the same time, the spread of global culture has brought both openness and identity challenges. While urban elites, skilled workers, and export sectors are clear winners, small industries, rural communities, and low-skilled workers often emerge as losers. Therefore, globalisation is neither entirely beneficial nor entirely harmful. To reduce inequality and maximize gains, Pakistan needs balanced policies focusing on inclusive growth, skill development, cultural preservation, and regional equity.