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Use of Digital Media by Millennial Social Entrepreneurs for Poverty Alleviation in Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

Youth makes almost two third of the total population in Pakistan (Ahmad, 2023). Currently, the country is facing the issue of unemployment among youth, the number of unemployed youths is expected to reach 8.6 million in 2020 (Pakistan Today, 2017). Many economists see this alarming situation of unemployment among millennials, those born after 1980 and the first generation to come of age in the new millennium would only bring poverty and worsen the current situation (Hill, 1980) whereas social entrepreneurs see it as an opportunity to arrest the causes, resultant in poverty. In Pakistan, almost 500,000 young social entrepreneurs are engaged in socioeconomic growth of the country (British Council; Pakistan, 2016). Entrepreneurship is excelling widely through social media as its accessibility is free and many benefits are associated with it like huge employment opportunities, wider service delivery, mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs and finally mutual support networks while campaigning for social causes (Afridi, 2023). Keeping in view these above premises, this research takes the case study as a qualitative research method to examine the social enterprises run by millennial social entrepreneurs who are using digital media (Social Media and Information Communication Technologies) to solve poverty-related issues in Punjab, Pakistan. While employing the purposive sampling technique the study opts for three social enterprises i.e., Geo Hospital, Quaid Public School, and lastly environment-friendly project Kitchen Gardening which is successfully using YouTube and Facebook with more than 1.13 million subscribers. The findings of these case studies reflect that these social enterprises are providing low-cost services to the community with the support of digital media; these ventures are a way forward for alleviating poverty through investment in education and health sectors; and are actively promoting social entrepreneurship among other young Pakistanis.

Key Words: *Digital Media, YouTube, Social Entrepreneurship, Millennial, Poverty Alleviation.*

Introduction:

In today's world, the digital technology is here to stay with us, and the opportunities associated with it are limitless (Relihan, 2023). According to MIT Sloan Review, new digital technologies such as social media, mobile applications and other digital platforms are rapidly growing on global landscape and these are considered quite significant in an organization's progress (Westerman, Bonnet, & Andrew, 2023).

The daily active users of digital media are 3.5 billion globally (Emarketer, 2020). Globally, 84% of people with access to the internet use digital media (Paige, 2020) and with 153 million internet users in Pakistan (Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, 2019) the importance of digital media cannot be denied.

Youth makes almost two third of the total population in Pakistan (Ahmad, 2023). Currently, the country is facing the issue of unemployment among youth, the number of unemployed youths is expected to reach 8.6 million in 2020 (Pakistan Today, 2017). Many economists see this alarming situation of unemployment among millennial, those born after 1980 and the first generation to come of age in the new millennium would only bring poverty and worsen the current situation (Hill, 1980) whereas social entrepreneurs see it as an opportunity to arrest the causes, resultant in poverty. So, to meet the challenge of alleviating poverty, social entrepreneurship can play an important role by providing self-employment opportunities as well as addressing societal issues like basic health, reach to pure drinking water, quality education, skill development and environmental protection (Ali, 2018).

In Pakistan almost 500,000 young social entrepreneurs are engaged for the socio-economic growth of the country (British Council; Pakistan, 2016). Entrepreneurship is excelling widely through social media as its accessibility is free and many benefits are associated with it like huge employment opportunities, wider service delivery, mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs and finally mutual support networks while campaigning for social causes (Afridi, 2023).

Mostly labelled as digital natives also, millennials are considered to use technology in such a way as none of the generations ever used innovation and technology due to growing in digital information era (DaCosta & Kinsell, 2011). According to Schwab Foundation, "Social entrepreneurship is an innovative and sustainable approach that is for the benefit of society. It helps marginalized section of society" (2012).

The few advantages of social media like the audience, vast reach and the potential of massive sharing of the content, are the main reasons of its usage by social entrepreneurs (Abi-Aad, 2023). Above mentioned statistics show the vast reach of digital media, and the importance can be highlighted by the percentage of recommendations after positive consumer experience i.e., 71% further sharing (Mohsin, 2020).

However, certain factors like lack of social and structural support for entrepreneurs in developing economies (Swetha & Rao, 2013), and trend of using digital media for leisure and entertainment only (Vivekananda, 2014) may be the major hurdles in the growth of social enterprises and use of digital technology by social entrepreneurs.

Keeping in view these above premises, researchers of this study intend to explore the potential of digital technology particularly digital media for social enterprises run by millennial social entrepreneurs to reduce poverty in Pakistan.

Literature Review

Several studies established a common argument regarding social entrepreneurship that it is a way to curb unemployment and serve communities (Mair & Marti, 2006) (Dobele, 2012) (Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009). Empirical data also showed that social entrepreneurship – an innovative, social value creating activity in business, non-profit, or government sectors – can alleviate poverty (Lateh, Hussain, Safizal, & Halim, 2018). Social enterprises have established a global trend of influencing societies by employing innovation-based approaches to deal with social issues (Zaefarian, Tasavori, & Ghauri, 2015).

Though, globally people are taking keen interest in connecting social and nonprofit enterprises to digital technology and communication, yet they know very less about how to do this even in developed countries (Ratten, 2018), therefore, this problem increases in developing economies like Pakistan.

Pakistan's statistics regarding poverty are horrible as 33% of its population are living below the poverty line (Jan, Eberle, Jan, & Ali, 2009). Thus, less privileged people in Pakistan cannot take sufficient advantage of digital technology for the growth of their business ventures (Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009).

On the other hand, certain studies also suggest that contrary to the conventional mainstream media, social media has emerged as a platform for economically marginalized group of people and has become their voice in sharing experiences. Thus, this phenomenon may lead towards long term sustainability in society to reduce poverty (Krejci, 2017).

Most of the internet users in Pakistan are either millennials or generation Z and 64 % population of Pakistan comprises on youth (Ijaz, 2018). They use various forms of social media platforms. There are many social media forms include: social networks

(Facebook, Myspace, and LinkedIn), micro-blogs (Twitter, WhatsApp and TikTok), video (YouTube and Vimeo) etc.

Conventionally, economic structures favour bigger firms; however, today's economy is eminent by relationships, social media network, and information, favouring some of the features of Social Entrepreneurs. Schools that made devoted computer services available to teachers and students reported that it leads to the higher use of high-quality and creative teaching resources in classrooms and new innovative thinking among students (Stack, 2008).

Micro entrepreneurs use online sources as well as rely on personal networks for awareness creation of their services. Researchers firmly believe that micro level organizations working on social causes are different from the large-scale business as these social organizations are usually informal and provide quick information through digital media. Social media bids a plenty of services on the internet. Since there are many forms of social media, this makes it difficult for firms to know which ones to use and how to use them. Social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter let consumers 'be friends' or 'follow' preferred brands and comment as a form of engagement. Furthermore, in schools' ICTs and digital media training is a huge success. ICT in classroom creates collaborative and self-managed learning environment (Suryani, 2010).

Social businesses use digital media in many ways including: monitor discussions about the business, reaction, customer service, promotions and deals, and build community among others (n.d, 2010).

Social enterprises if combined with innovation and technology then their contribution in society may be raised as their financial progress would be far better due to technology usage and it may decrease poverty ratio in economically vulnerable zones around the globe (Mead & Liedholm, 1998). From the literature it has been established by combining social, economic, and innovation/technology-based expertise, social entrepreneurs bring an amazing solution of socio-economic issues of a certain community while creating economic opportunities for the economically deprived people (Sijabat, 2015).

Objectives:

More specifically, this research study has following objectives:

- To comprehend the relationship of social entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation in digital media technology context.

- To explore the potential of digital media technology, particularly social media platforms (YouTube and Facebook) and Information Communication technology (ICT) in the growth of social enterprises in Punjab province of Pakistan.
- To identify the role of millennial social entrepreneurs in creating awareness regarding social issues including health, education, food security and environment.
- To investigate the cases of social enterprises run by millennials in respect of their contributions for skill development through digital media technology usage among rural and semi urban people of Punjab, Pakistan.

Theoretical Framework:

Hoselitz's theory with an emphasis on marginal groups provides a suitable theoretical foundation for this study. Hoselitz highlighted the significance of socially and culturally marginal groups for promoting entrepreneurship in any society by having their own start-ups (Hofstede, 1993), these marginal groups can be minorities like religious and ethnic minority or even minority in power structure like youth, children or women (Sargsyan, 2017). These marginal groups crave to uplift their conditions and during this process they promote economic growth in that society like Jews of medieval Europe and Indians in Africa. Therefore, this research underpins this notion that Millennial generation of Punjab and Pakistan while being marginalized in power structure and treated as minority due to lack of equal opportunities in society having their own start-ups may benefit Pakistan's economy. These entrepreneurs may help in reducing poverty by providing economic opportunities to others while uplifting their own condition.

Hoselitz also opined that these marginal people 'make creative adjustments' (1994) like in today's world millennials may employ technology as an innovative adjustment for their employment.

Research Methodology:

To execute present research work, qualitative research was conducted while employing multiple case studies research methods. Stake described case study as a research methodology that can grasp the intricacies of understudied phenomenon (Stake, 2005), so while using this method data was extracted from multiple sources – interviews of social entrepreneurs and analysis of their enterprises' digital media platforms – as interviews and documents (in this study digital media platform's feeds of enterprise) may help in analysing cases (Yin, 2009). Interviews of Social entrepreneurs

of three social enterprises have been conducted (checklist of open-ended questions can be found in appendix I) whereas data for case studies has been extracted from the analysis of digital media platforms and ICT's courses of social enterprises (document analysis table can be found in appendix II). Analysing social enterprises from education, health and environment sectors provides the cross sectional comparison of diverse impact areas of social enterprises, this study can help in building a richer understanding of social enterprises landscapes in the convergent digital ecosystem. Eventually, it provides a holistic comparison within social enterprises.

Three business cases from three various sectors (Health, Education and Environment) are sampled through purposive sampling technique while keeping in view the role of these social enterprises in reducing poverty well determining role of millennial entrepreneurs as advocates of social welfare of society. This is represented as illustrative cases, which arrest the conditions and milieus of poverty by employing digital media to promote their ventures.

Purposive sampling enables researchers to focus on a small number of cases and conduct in-depth analysis, which is particularly beneficial when exploring complex phenomena or specific contexts. Further, the strategic selection criteria keep researchers align with the study's purposes. By selecting social enterprises based on criteria such as the study's objectives alignment, geographical location, scale of operation, and innovative use of digital media by the three types of social enterprises while drawing a comparative analysis contributes meaningfully to the study's findings. This type of qualitative sampling ensures that the chosen cases are representative of the phenomena under investigation and offer trustworthy insights.

Research Questions:

To conduct this research following research questions were devised:

- RQ1.** What is the role of digital media and technology (Facebook, YouTube, and ICTs) in social enterprises?
- RQ2.** Do social entrepreneurs play any role in awareness creation about social issues related to education, health, and environment?
- RQ3.** Are millennial social entrepreneurs developing skills through digital media among rural and semi urban population of Punjab, Pakistan?

Findings, Analysis and Discussion:

Summary of Cases:

Geo Hospital

The hospital is located in the suburbs of Lahore (a city with a population of more than 11 million) and is run by Dr. Amber a millennial entrepreneur and gynaecologist. The hospital provides services to hundreds of patients every day at subsidized rates that are affordable by low-income groups of society. This healthcare facility provides services to mostly semi urban and rural population since it is situated in the suburbs of Lahore. Major services are OPD, pharmacy, free medical camps, emergency, first aid and surgeries in a few departments. The hospital does not receive funds or charities and runs on its own earnings.

Quaid Public School

A secondary school run by a young women entrepreneur Ms. Shahida Chand, teaching rural area children especially kids from ethnic community "*mawatti*" comes to this school. The school serves more than 800 children on its campus. This huge facility is charging minimal fees from the students just to pay day to day expenses and teacher's salary and run without receiving any donations. Thus, is a great educational social enterprise in the eastern suburb of Lahore.

Kitchen Gardening

A millennial social media influencer, Mr. Izhar Ahmed runs a successful YouTube channel, and a small plantation nursery lives in Punjab, Pakistan. His work is about kitchen gardening, and he trains hundreds of thousands of people every day about growing their own food through his YouTube channel. Moreover, he has a small business of plants' nursery which is also promoting pesticides free environment and food security by selling kitchen gardening items.

Case 1. Geo Hospital:

The journey of starting a secondary care hospital for low-income people was itself a great challenge which a young lady doctor took more than a decade ago and established with the name of Geo Hospital. Dr. Amber Qureshie, the founder of the organization explained that she faced many obstacles when she started this project. She said, "My family was against of me to open a private hospital for low wage earners and they were continuously opposing me of my dream for running a business."

The CEO elaborated that since she was studying medicine, she planned to run her own healthcare facility for women and children. In Pakistan, healthcare services are one of the most neglected areas and major problem is of mother child health. Also, female mortality rate while delivering a child is quite high due to the unavailability of medical facilities in rural areas as well as lack of awareness. The core aim of working in this field is to solve problems mentioned above.

As per the response of the founder and entrepreneur there were many obstacles in relation to starting the social venture. She explained, "I was working in a famous private tertiary care hospital of the city and was earning a handsome salary, giving that away and spending my savings on building a hospital for workers and poor was not an easy decision". I was opposed by family, friends and senior colleagues as social businesses are not considered promising here in Pakistan". She added that a woman is mostly discouraged to work independently as an entrepreneur.

Social enterprises in health sector can not only serve the local community who cannot afford expensive medical treatments rather it can also provide employment opportunities to other doctors, para-medical staff and other skilled and semi-skilled administrative staff. Currently my hospital has 45 staff members in different departments and varied levels. Therefore, I firmly believe that social entrepreneurs like me can really help in poverty reduction by societal and structural support', said Dr Amber.

Despite the country's burgeoning entrepreneurial landscape, women face formidable barriers that hinder their social entrepreneurial aspirations and limit their access to essential resources and opportunities. Firstly, entrenched patriarchal norms and cultural biases perpetuate gender disparities in access to education, financial capital, and networks, constraining women's ability to engage in social entrepreneurial activities in the health sector. Moreover, institutional and policy frameworks often lack gender-sensitive provisions and fail to address the unique challenges faced by women social entrepreneurs in health sectors such as qualified women doctors, further exacerbating their marginalization within the entrepreneurial ecosystem is another major reason. Societal perceptions of women's roles and capabilities as primarily confined to domestic spheres undermine their credibility and potential as business leaders, discouraging investment and support for their ventures. The dearth of mentorship programmes, tailored training initiatives, and access to markets tailored to the needs of women exacerbates their isolation and limits their capacity to scale their social enterprises. Without concerted efforts to dismantle systemic barriers, empower women, and foster an enabling environment for female entrepreneurship, Pakistan risks squandering the untapped potential of its women social entrepreneurs and perpetuating socioeconomic inequalities. However, there is no support from governments or other state institutions, for educated Pakistanis to work as social entrepreneurs.

Also, most of the educated parents discourage their children from choosing a risky career and suggest them opt for a secure future in financial terms i.e., job, explained the hospital owner. However, this trend is changing as youngsters are more and more engaging in social work and solving real social issues instead of doing a nine to five job.

“The choice of becoming a social entrepreneur of millennials creates job not for themselves but also provide job opportunity for others”, while quoting her own example Dr. Amber again exemplifies from her own social ventures that it is now becoming a place for other doctors to practice using this platform.

The hospital under discussion is helping people to be more aware about their health by running health campaigns using digital media. As quoted by the owner of hospital, many people have now access to internet and mobile phones that is very helpful for the doctors to disseminate the information to their audience. Now almost every visitor at the hospital is encouraged to follow their social media platforms to be connected with the facility any time, to browse latest updates and to know about health problems without attending sessions physically. In contrast to those community hospitals having no digital media presence which fail to deliver information and awareness to community Geo Hospital is successfully disseminating information to its visitors like the success of recent medical camps about post-natal depression and children growth proved a great success due to Geo Hospital presence on Facebook which has almost 60 thousand followers. “We communicate the dates of free camps through Facebook and we also create awareness on natal health, run advocacy campaigns about polio”, said the head of social enterprise.

Dr. Amber felt accomplished after successfully implementing digital media technology in her organization. She said that they are teaching important skills and practices of healthy and hygienic living. She Firmly believed that they were transferring skills among rural and semi -urban community through the digital media platforms.

Table No. 1. Analysis of Digital Media Platforms and ICTs of Geo Hospital

Analytical category	Total
Subscribers/followers	57200
Frequency of Feeds per week	6
Frequency of awareness creation Feeds per week	4

ICT class per week	N/A
Frequency of Skill Development session (online or in-person)	N/A

Geo Hospital is reaching its target audience through Facebook and its Facebook page has 57200 followers. Analysis of use of social media platform by Geo Hospital during this study showed geo hospital is using this platform not only to disseminate information about its regular activities rather to create awareness among its patients and people of the local community about basic health issues of Pakistan also like polio campaign, malnourishment among kids, maternal health, family planning etc.

Findings clearly suggest that Facebook plays a crucial role in supporting health social enterprises by providing a platform for communication, community building, fundraising, advocacy, knowledge dissemination, and collaboration. By harnessing the power of Facebook, these enterprises can amplify their impact, reach a wider audience, and contribute to positive change in the health sector.

Thus, the strategic use of Facebook and ICT by social health enterprises in Pakistan has the potential to catalyse positive change in the healthcare sector by raising awareness, fostering dialogue, mobilizing resources, and amplifying advocacy efforts. By harnessing the power of social media, these enterprises can enhance their impact and contribute to building a healthier and more resilient society in Pakistan. The health social enterprise is also transferring the important life skills of healthy and hygienic living.

Case 2. Quaid Public School:

“My father started this venture to help the poor people of Mawati or Meo community (Muslims yet firmly follow Hindu caste system due to their ethnic structure and speak Mawati language, migrated from Mewat district of Haryana, India) for providing their children quality education in 1999 at Jallo, suburb area of Lahore just 7 Km away from Pakistan India boarder. I joined him in 2005 and revamped certain areas like I incorporated ICT skills training firstly for the teachers at our school along introducing regular computer classes for our students till class 8. Moreover, I also introduced refreshing courses of English language for the teachers to make them tech savvy as most of the technology is available in English language and better understanding of English language can help the teachers in teaching according to modern demands of today’s digital era. Now I am working as Director of the school”,

expressed Shahida Chand, the social entrepreneur, during the interview for the said case study research.

“I always felt that children of Meo community lag behind in economic circle due to lack of education and skills. Mostly Meo youth becomes part of the unskilled labour force around the suburbs of big cities like Lahore. So, when my father started this venture, I admired him a lot and wanted to join him, but few conservative members of my extended family were extremely against of my desire of working as an entrepreneur and serve community. For them I was transgressing the defined gender roles even though they called me a rebel, but I stood against all the odds. Now, as a director of my school I have provided employment to female teachers and encourage female students also. As I believe with equal participation of women in economic circle we can fight against poverty,” told Chand.

‘Social pressures and gender discrimination were the biggest challenges along lack of institutional support from government. Moreover, I faced bureaucratic hurdles from education department of Punjab and district government during various processes of school up-gradation,’ expressed the social entrepreneur during the interview for the said case study research.

Today, despite all the hurdles Quaid Public school has emerged as an eminent school in rural area of Lahore due to the usage of ICTs and digital technology as people call us as *computers wala school* (a school with computers), You see in rural area where people don’t use technology for constructive purposes it’s a big thing that children are using technology for their education, Shahida Chand explained.

While keeping in view the growing use of social media among Pakistanis Quaid Public School started its Facebook page almost three years ago along teaching and training ICTs in school. Initially, the main purpose of this Facebook page was to update parents of students about the activities in school but afterward we used this page to create awareness in the people of community and networking among teachers by inviting them for trainings during summer and winter vacations. Thus, our Facebook page is being followed and liked by students, parents, teachers at other schools, and community members, expressed the social entrepreneur during the interview for the said case study research.

I believe that we are striving to reduce poverty in two ways through this venture of social enterprise: by providing tech-oriented education to poor children of rural area

of Lahore and by providing employment opportunity to educated female teachers”, said Director of Quaid Public School.

At the end, she concluded government of Punjab must support social enterprises related to education and health because these two areas are most neglected areas in Pakistan. For sustainable growth of Pakistan, implementation of policies and structural changes are required. Findings reflect that it is a new way in which Facebook can be utilized by small and marginalized ethnic communities of Punjab province. This social enterprise school project is using Facebook for the dissemination of educational content and resources and communication with internal and external audiences. Similarly, other educational social enterprises can also regularly share informative posts, educational videos, and interactive learning materials on their Facebook page, providing students, parents, and community members with access to quality educational content beyond the confines of the classroom. By making learning resources more accessible and engaging, these schools can enhance educational outcomes and promote lifelong learning among their students.

Table No. 2. Analysis of Digital Media Platforms and ICTs of Quid Public School

Analytical category	Total
Subscribers/followers	15000
Frequency of Feeds per week	2
Frequency of awareness creation Feeds per week	1
ICT class per week	2
Frequency of Skill Development session Per annum (online or in-person)	14

Case study of Quaid Public School showed that this social enterprise has been using ICTs for 15 years and has not only trained all of its teachers about incorporation of ICTs in their teaching techniques along teaching students Information Technology or Computer Sciences from Class 01 till class 8 as an integral part of their syllabi (which is not a common practice in most of the private and public sectors schools in Pakistan). Now while utilizing the power of digital media, its presence on Facebook has built a network of teachers at various school as Quid Public School also facilitated them for tech oriented professional training courses. Moreover, Quid Public school also creates

awareness through its regular Facebook feeds. It created awareness regarding girls' education through its Facebook page among local community members.

Facebook represents a valuable tool for small ethnic community schools in Pakistan to drive social change and impact through education. By leveraging the platform of Facebook and ICT's use, educational outreach, community engagement, fundraising, and advocacy can help in promoting such educational social enterprises. Consequently, these educational social enterprises can enhance their effectiveness, expand their reach, and contribute to building a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape in Pakistan.

Case 3. Kitchen Gardening

"Well, I have been in retail nursery business from many years, but I had officially started my own social enterprise of kitchen gardening on digital media almost five years ago first on Facebook and then on my own YouTube channel. In early months the response was less but after few of the videos gone viral the business became famous. So far, I had posted daily updates and received tremendous compliments. My likes are increasing day by day," said Izhar, founder of Kitchen Gardening venture in interview for the research purposes.

Mr. Izhar the owner and founder of Kitchen Gardening explained that how he was challenged by society's so-called norms. He said that one day his maternal cousin met his father and asked that why your son is doing ladies' work. He had been tabooed for working for kitchen gardening as it seems sassy to all.

"In the beginning, I wanted sometimes to just hide. In most of the situations I felt low as my videos reached out to only a few people but in a period of a year it become famous, and many people started liking my channel and shared and subscribed many videos," narrated Izhar.

The owner of the organisation told that there were many challenges faced by him in initiating and running the company smoothly. While sharing his thoughts he said that the first challenge was the social pressure on him due to the word Kitchen in his venture as people said it's not your job to tell people how to grow vegetables at home but his passion of working for environment and food security helped him to pursue his dream to serve community through his work while inspiring up-coming generations about environment friendly social enterprise. "Urging people through my YouTube channel to grow their own vegetables and fruits at home is beneficial for community and future generations as it offers variety of benefits like environmental protection,

food security, organic vegetables without any dangerous pesticides' usage, self-sufficient economy, and sustainable economy. These factors may also help in curbing anthropogenic effects of climate change along poverty alleviation by introducing organic farming techniques at micro level," explained social entrepreneur.

In Pakistan, youth normally use internet and digital media for leisure and entertainment purposes and popularity of memes and mimicry explain it very well. However, by using digital media we can earn quite handsome amount. I passed just secondary school and never went to college but my interest in digital media helped me a lot. Today, I am not earning very handsome amount as an entrepreneur rather I am helping community and our future generations by getting involved in environment friendly enterprise, Izhar stressed during interview for the said case study.

"Through my videos, I am teaching basic gardening skills through my YouTube videos to rural and urban populations and how they can use land in villages or containers in cities or small space livings for growing vegetables and fruits and becoming self sufficient," said Izhar.

As a youtuber and a social entrepreneur I am completely dependent on digital media technology. Without digital media as an ordinary owner of plant nursery I could have less than 08 customers per day but today I enjoy 1.13 million subscribers' presence on my YouTube channel. Digital media has redefined my life and my passion. I feel proud on being a social media influencer. When people say that 'Izhar *bhai* (brother) you inspire us' I feel it's my biggest success to change people's lives through my work. He also continues to work as a digital media influencer to save environment. However, his learnt kitchen gardening skills are not only helping him to ensure the environment safety for community but brings an extra income as well. We never grew vegetables for our kitchen. We would buy these from the market. Now we grow vegetables for our consumption and surplus is sold", he further added.

He suggested that proper training to the vloggers can help them in their professional growth along helping them to have their own businesses with the support of technology and without any huge investment. In this regard, Information Technology University, Punjab Information technology board and agriculture ministry of Punjab must work. Because a significant number of men and women is associated with agriculture and livestock, but they are unable to use digital media technology for their economic growth despite having access to internet and smart phones. Moreover, Entrepreneurship and technology must be taught in schools and colleges.

“I upload videos in Urdu language, and people send comments in Urdu as it is easily understood by the masses,” said the environmental social entrepreneur. Analysis of YouTube feeds of kitchen gardening also showed that many subscribers are commenting in *Urdu* or raising questions in regional language (*Punjabi*) since the channel is completely in national language. This further shows that people subscribe to the channel are mostly less educated and thus fall in low to middle income group. Much can be taken from such projects as in many countries like India and China small local entrepreneurs are exporting their produce as organic food and contributing to economy. Such cases not only are helping poor to earn their livelihood but also important for developing an agrarian economy. By development of such social entrepreneurs Pakistan’s economy can also flourish and it can be a significant step in curbing poverty.

Table No. 3. Analysis of Digital Media Platforms Kitchen Gardening

Analytical category	Total
Subscribers/followers	1.13 million
Frequency of Feeds per week	7
Frequency of awareness creation Feeds per week	7
ICT class per week	N/A
Frequency of Skill Development session Per week (online or in-person)	7

Izhar as a successful social entrepreneur is reaching people through YouTube and Facebook and his YouTube channel has 1.13 million subscribers. Almost every day he updates his subscribers through his videos and almost all the videos create awareness among its subscribers.

Findings suggest that YouTube videos can offer guidance on selecting appropriate crops for different growing conditions, seasons, and purposes. Social entrepreneurs can create videos showcasing various vegetable, fruit, and herb species suitable for small-scale and backyard gardening, along with advice on crop rotation, companion planting, and garden layout.

Videos can highlight the benefits and methods of organic gardening, including composting, mulching, and natural pest management techniques. By promoting

environmentally friendly and sustainable gardening practices, social entrepreneurs can empower rural populations to cultivate healthy, chemical-free produce while minimizing their ecological footprint. For those with limited space or resources, YouTube videos can demonstrate container gardening techniques and creative solutions for maximizing garden productivity in small spaces. Social entrepreneurs can showcase innovative ideas for vertical gardening, balcony gardens, and container planting, enabling rural individuals to grow fresh produce even in urban and peri-urban settings.

Videos can also cover topics related to harvesting, post-harvest handling, and food preservation methods, such as canning, drying, and freezing.

Analysis of use of social media platform by Izhar of Kitchen Gardening during this study showed he is using this platform disseminates information creating a wide range of local biodiversity through community measures using Digital Media such as biodiversity farms, home farming kits and establishing community-based kitchen garden resource centres are vital lessons learned for a lower to middle income household. In addition to this, from Kitchen Gardening project three key areas are addressed by one initiative, these are firstly income earning opportunity for low to lower middle class, secondly availability of organic food (which is good for health) and finally safe environment as no usage of fertilizers or pesticides.

Social media platforms offer a versatile and accessible platform for teaching gardening skills to rural and semi-urban populations, empowering individuals to cultivate their food, improve nutrition, and enhance food self-sufficiency. By leveraging the power of digital media, social entrepreneurs can democratize access to gardening knowledge and promote sustainable agriculture practices, contributing to the resilience and well-being of rural communities.

Conclusion:

This study infers that social entrepreneurs of millennial generation can utilize the power of digital media technology and employ social media platforms for awareness creation about employment opportunities and inspire aspiring entrepreneurs while alleviating poverty in Pakistan. Use of social media by social entrepreneurs can teach skills such as enhancing digital literacy, health and hygiene practices and gardening skills. Based on case studies this research recommends strengthening the institutional and structural support with productive utilization of digital media for enterprises working for community. Moreover, incubation centres and financial investors must also focus for community development social ventures for poverty alleviation instead of just

profit-making businesses. Youth should be trained to use social media as a tool of economic progress instead of mere a leisure platform. Social entrepreneurship should be taught to university students as a part of curriculum.

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Appendix I. Interview Guide

Introduction: Thank you for participating in this research. We now have a few questions to ask about your experiences while using the digital media for your social enterprise that is helping your community. Again, your responses during this interview are confidential. Only summary data will be reported, and your names will be used only for research purposes.

1. How you started your social enterprise?
2. Why are you working in this area related to social problem?
3. What were the basic challenges you faced during this venture?
4. How entrepreneurs particularly social entrepreneurs of your age (Millennials) can help in fight against unemployment in Pakistan?
5. How digital media technology supported you in your organizational expansion and community reach?
6. How social enterprises can contribute more by using digital media technology in your particular sector as compared to those social enterprises which are not using digital media and ICTs?
7. Do you think that your digital media usage by your social enterprise is successful (in terms of its reach, preference and effect etc)
8. Who are your audience, subscribers and followers on social media?
9. How your contributions through social media are creating awareness about social issues among your audience?
10. Do you believe that digitally savvy social enterprises can reduce poverty in Pakistan?
11. Do you think that your social enterprise is helping people of your community in their social and economic problems? If yes, then How?
12. Are you developing any skill among your subscribers or audience through social media and ICTs? If yes, then how?
13. What are the possibilities of digital media technology for social enterprises to develop skills to curb unemployment and reduce poverty in Pakistan?

Appendix II.

Analysis of Digital Media Platforms and ICTs of Social Enterprises:

Analytical category	Total
Subscribers/followers	
Frequency of Feeds per week	

Frequency of
awareness creation Feeds
per week

ICT class per week

Frequency of Skill
Development session (online
or in-person)

Frequency of Skill Development session (online or in-person)