



NATIONAL SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY
National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP)

INTERNSHIP REPORT

6th Internship Batch

15 July 2026 – 15 September 2026



Particular	Detail
Total Interns	23
Supervised by	Ms. Ishrat Akhtar, Research Associate, NIPP
Dean, NIPP	Dr. Naveed Elahi
Rector, NSPP	Mr. Farhan Aziz Khawaja
Report Compiled by	Rehan Arif, Malaika Ghori

87-Shahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam, Lahore, Pakistan

1. Introduction and Rationale

The National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP), the research and policy analysis arm of the National School of Public Policy (NSPP), operates as one of Pakistan's premier centers for evidence-based governance research and continues to play a defining role in shaping the country's public policy discourse. Functioning under the broader mandate of NSPP, which is responsible for the three-tiered training of the country's civil servants, NIPP was established to conduct rigorous research on contemporary issues of economy, governance, law and order, and public administration, and to translate that research into actionable policy guidance for the Government of Pakistan. It is against this institutional backdrop that NIPP's Internship Programme was conceived: to extend the Institute's academic and research culture to a new generation of scholars and to cultivate, in a structured and mentored environment, the analytical rigor, institutional awareness, and professional discipline that effective policymaking demands.

The 6th Internship Batch of NIPP was launched on 15 July 2026 and concluded on 15 September 2026, spanning a two-month period of intensive academic and professional engagement. A total of twenty-three interns, drawn from diverse academic disciplines and regions of Pakistan, were selected to participate in the Programme, which was carried out under the overall supervision of Ms. Ishrat Akhtar, Research Associate, NIPP, and under the strategic guidance of Dean NIPP Dr. Naveed Elahi and Rector NSPP Mr. Farhan Aziz Khawaja. The Programme's design reflected NIPP's continuing commitment to bridging classroom learning with the institutional realities of public policy formulation, offering interns direct exposure to research methodology, policy writing, governance institutions, and the civic and administrative life of the country.

Selection for the 6th Internship Batch was highly competitive: the Institute received a total of 500+ applications from across the country. Candidates were evaluated against a structured “3Gs” criteria GPA, Gender, and Geography requiring a minimum GPA of 3.5 alongside a deliberate effort to ensure balanced regional and gender representation within the cohort. Following a rigorous round of interviews, twenty-three interns were finally selected, comprising twelve from Punjab, three from Balochistan, three from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, two from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and three Junior Interns, with the final batch made up of twelve female and eleven male interns.

Over the course of the internship, interns were immersed in a carefully sequenced schedule of institutional visits, expert-led lectures and training sessions, structured discussions, and sustained research work culminating in the preparation and formal presentation of full-length policy research papers. Interns were organized into seven collaborative research groups, each tasked with examining a pressing contemporary policy challenge confronting Pakistan, ranging from digital governance and regional security to public health, urban resilience, and political stability. Alongside this core research component, the Programme incorporated a wide range of complementary activities, including daily quotation and editorial sessions designed to build vocabulary and current-affairs awareness, cultural exchange presentations under the theme "Knowing Pakistan Through Me," mock policy discussions, a defense-day and independence-day observance, and a deputation to the Administrative Wing of NSPP and the Pakistan Administrative Staff College (PASC), all of which combined to give interns a well-rounded understanding of both the intellectual and administrative dimensions of a public policy institution.

This report presents a comprehensive and chronological account of the activities undertaken by the 6th Internship Batch, structured around the major categories of engagement that defined the Programme: institutional visits, lectures and training sessions, organized events, structured discussions, research work,

presentations, and other supplementary activities. It is intended both as a record of the Programme's substantive content and as a reflection of the learning outcomes achieved by the interns, and it is hoped that the structure and content of this report will serve as a useful reference for the design and continuous improvement of future NIPP internship batches.

2. Main Activities

2.1 Institutional Visits

A series of institutional and cultural visits formed a vital part of the internship Programme, offering interns direct exposure to the civic, historical, educational, and media institutions that together shape public life in Lahore and, more broadly, in Pakistan. These visits were designed to move learning beyond the classroom and the conference room, allowing interns to engage first-hand with the lived environments that policy research ultimately seeks to understand and improve.

I. Mera Apna School (HN Elahi Trust)

The batch undertook an official visit to Mera Apna School, an initiative of the HN Elahi Trust dedicated to providing free, quality education to underserved and out-of-school children. During the visit, interns spent meaningful time with the students, participated in games and interactive activities with them, and distributed snacks among the children. The visit exposed interns to grassroots, non-state model of educational service delivery and deepened their appreciation of the role civil society organizations play in addressing gaps left by the formal education system, while reinforcing the urgency of evidence-based education policy in Pakistan.



II. GNN News Channel

The batch undertook an official visit to GNN News Channel, accompanied by Ms. Ishrat Akhtar. Interns were taken through the entire premises, from the Production Control Room (PCR) to the Master Control Room (MCR) server room and the main news studio, with the channel's anchorperson explaining the complete process of news broadcasting, from bulletin preparation to live, on-air transmission. The visit was facilitated throughout by the channel's Managing Director, Mr. Shabar Abbas, and concluded with Ms. Ishrat Akhtar presenting a commemorative shield to the Bureau Chief in recognition of the channel's hospitality.



III. Visit to Lahore Police Institutions

The batch undertook a comprehensive, multi-site official visit to various institutions of the Lahore Police, designed to expose interns to the operational, technological, and community-facing dimensions of contemporary policing. The visit comprised the following five components:

- Police Lines, Qila Gujjar Singh: interns visited the firing range, where they were given a hands-on familiarization and firing demonstration with the AK-47 rifle.
- Punjab Safe City Authority: the batch visited the Authority's main communication wing and received a detailed briefing on the new Emergency-15 helpline system, followed by sub-briefings on the Virtual Women Police Station, the Virtual Centre for Child Safety, the virtual blood bank, the e-Challan system, and the "Mera Pyara" and Next-Gen Safety mobile applications, along with the Authority's other public-safety initiatives.
- Police Station Gulberg: interns received a guided tour and briefing on the day-to-day functioning of a police station, followed by an interactive session with ASP Rajinder.
- Al-Khidmat Markaz, Liberty: the batch was briefed on the full range of welfare and community services provided by Al-Khidmat Foundation to the general public.
- DIG Operations Office, Lahore: interns sat in on the DIG's open court proceedings, followed by a detailed meeting with DIG Operations Mr. Faisal Kamran, who delivered a presentation on the progress made by Lahore Police. The visit concluded with Ms. Ishrat Akhtar presenting a commemorative shield to DIG Faisal Kamran and a group photograph.



IV. Lahore Museum

The batch, accompanied by Ms. Ishrat Akhtar, undertook an official visit to the Lahore Museum, one of the largest and oldest museums in Pakistan, housing an extensive collection of artefacts spanning the Gandhara civilization, the Mughal and Sikh periods, and the colonial and post-independence eras. Interns explored the museum's galleries under the guidance of an official museum guide, who explained the significance of the major exhibits and collections on display. The visit concluded with the presentation of a commemorative shield to the Director of Lahore Museum, Mr. Taseer Ahmad, followed by a group photograph, deepening interns' understanding of the country's civilizational history and reinforcing the broader theme, echoed throughout the internship, of the importance of cultural preservation as a component of national policy.



V. Akhuwat University

All interns went on an official visit to Akhuwat College University, Kasur (ACK), along with Mam Ishrat and Dean Dr. Naveed Elahi. Upon arrival, the group was received by Protocol Officer Muhammad Arif, followed by a lunch hosted in their honor. Muhammad Arif and Director Administration Maj. Azam then led the interns on a campus tour, during which they learned that ACK is a fee-free residential college providing quality education and hostel facilities to deserving students from across Pakistan, aiming to cultivate their talents and instill discipline, hard work, and volunteerism through modern amenities such as IT labs, hostel, mess, and sports facilities. This was followed by a presentation by Mishal Athar Shah, Head of Projects and Naufil Naseer Pro-Rector (Administration & Finance) offering the interns deeper insight into Akhuwat's mission and programs. The visit concluded with a shield presented by the Dean to the Pro-Rector, followed by closing remarks from the Dean, bringing the visit to a memorable end.



2.2 Meetings, Lectures, and Training Sessions

A structured programme of orientation meetings, expert lectures, and hands-on training sessions was arranged to build interns' theoretical grounding and practical skills across the domains most relevant to public policy practice. These sessions drew on the expertise of NIPP's senior research staff, NSPP's leadership, and external subject-matter specialists, and were sequenced from foundational orientation through to specialized technical training.

I. Orientation Session

The internship formally commenced with an orientation session conducted by Rector NSPP Mr. Farhan Aziz Khawaja along with other CSP officers including Ms. Bushra Bashir, Senior Research Associate, Ms. Saira Ali, Director Publications, and Ms. Ishrat Akhtar, Research Associate, for all twenty-three interns of the 6th Batch. The session introduced interns to the objectives, structure, and expectations of the Programme, familiarized them with institutional norms and codes of conduct, and provided insights into leadership and effective policy making. Drawing on their professional and institutional experience, the speakers highlighted the relationship between effective leadership and coherent, practical, and implementable public policy. The session set the tone for the two months of academic, professional, and institutional engagement that followed.



II. Introduction to NIPP

Dean NIPP Dr. Naveed Elahi conducted a dedicated session introducing interns to the mandate, organizational structure, and research priorities of the National Institute of Public Policy. The session gave interns a clear understanding of NIPP's role within the broader NSPP framework and of the Institute's contribution to evidence-based policymaking in Pakistan, providing essential institutional context for the research and analytical work that followed over the course of the Programme.



III. How to Write a Policy Paper

Dr. Saif Ullah Khalid, Research Associate, conducted a focused technical session on the methodology and craft of policy paper writing. The session covered the structure of an effective policy paper, the formulation of a clear policy problem, the use of evidence and analytical frameworks, and the development of actionable, implementable recommendations. This session laid the technical foundation for the seven research groups' subsequent work on their respective policy papers.



IV. CPR Training

In collaboration with Rescue 1122, interns received hands-on, practical training in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). The session equipped interns with essential life-saving skills and reinforced the values of civic responsibility and emergency preparedness that are expected of individuals

entering public service, complementing the Programme's academic content with a tangible, transferable practical competency.



V. CSS Session

A dedicated orientation session on Pakistan's Central Superior Services (CSS) examination was delivered by Mr. Mairaj Anees Arif and Mr. Ahsan Tariq, and was attended by all interns as well as Dean NIPP Dr. Naveed Elahi. The mentors provided a comprehensive overview of the CSS examination process, preparation strategies, and the career pathways it opens into Pakistan's civil service, giving interns valuable guidance for their future professional planning.



VI. Role of Mass Media in Modern Times

A dedicated session on the "Role of Mass Media in Modern Times" was delivered by Mr. Amjad Hussain, Former Secretary Information and Director General Public Relations (DGPR), Punjab, Director Media of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), and Managing Director of the Punjab Education Foundation, who currently serves as Group Advisor, Corporate Communications, at JDW Group. Drawing on his extensive and varied career across government information management, sports communication, and corporate media relations, the resource person offered interns a wide-ranging perspective on the evolving role and responsibilities of mass media in shaping public opinion and policy discourse in the

contemporary era. At the conclusion of the session, Ms. Ishrat Akhtar presented a commemorative shield to Mr. Amjad Hussain in recognition of his contribution.



VII. PEMRA Session

A specialized session on the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) was arranged, with DG Finance PEMRA Mr. Muhammad Ikram Barkat, who brings twenty-seven years of expertise in electronic media regulation, regulatory governance, compliance, and policy development, serving as Chief Guest. The session was also attended by Ms. Ishrat Akhtar and Dean NIPP Dr. Naveed Elahi, and comprised a detailed lecture on PEMRA's regulatory mandate followed by an interactive question-and-answer session. The Chief Guest was presented with a commemorative shield at the conclusion of the session.



VIII. 1122 Fire Safety and Prevention Workshop

A workshop on 1122 Fire Safety and Prevention was arranged for the batch, attended by all CSP officers, members of the Executive Development Institute (EDI), supporting staff, security guards, and all interns, together with Dean NIPP Dr. Naveed Elahi. Dr. Syed Kamal Abid, Director (Fire and Rescue), Emergency Services Department, delivered a comprehensive, presentation-based briefing explaining fire safety measures and preventive protocols in detail. The session concluded with closing remarks by the Dean, who also presented a commemorative shield to Dr. Syed Kamal Abid in recognition of his contribution.



2.3 Events Organized

Interns played a leading role in the planning, organization, and execution of a number of national-day observances and institutional events, developing valuable skills in event management, coordination, and public presentation in the process.

I. Conference Organizing — 4th NSPP Public Policy Conference

Interns played an integral role in organizing the 4th NSPP Public Policy Conference, held on 17–18 August 2026 at NSPP on the theme "**Rare Earth Minerals in Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges.**" The two-day international conference brought together senior policymakers, industry leaders, and researchers, to examine Pakistan's rare earth mineral potential, global market trends, environmental considerations, and strategic policy options. All twenty-three interns of the batch were divided into seven working groups and assigned distinct organizational responsibilities across the two days of the conference, spanning registration and delegate coordination, session facilitation, hospitality, and logistical support, giving them invaluable practical exposure to the planning and execution of a major international policy event.

The conference was graced by a distinguished line-up of chief guests and guests of honour across its two days, including:

- Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives — Chief Guest, Day 1
- Mr. Masood Nabi, MD/CEO, Government Holdings (Private) Limited (GHPL) and Chairman, Pakistan Minerals (Private) Limited (PMPL) — Guest of Honour, Day 1
- Mr. Farhan Aziz Khawaja, Rector, National School of Public Policy
- Dr. Naveed Elahi, Dean, National Institute of Public Policy
- Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, Speaker, Punjab Assembly — Chief Guest, Day 2
- Mr. Muhammad Ismail Qureshi, Chairman, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) — Guest of Honour, Day 2
- Mr. Stetson Sanders, Consul General, U.S. Consulate General Lahore — Guest of Honour, Day 2



II. Yaum-e-Istehsal

To mark Yaum-e-Istehsal, observed in solidarity with the people of Indian-Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, interns organised a dedicated session in the NIPP conference room examining the Kashmir issue in general and the abrogation of Article 370 in particular. Rehan Arif hosted the session, Younas Khan and Naila Bashir led the organisation of the event, and Abdul Moeed and Maheem Fatima presented on the Kashmir issue and Article 370. Dean NIPP Dr. Naveed Elahi delivered closing remarks, and the session was attended by all CSP officers and interns at the Institute.



III. 14th August Independence Day Celebration

Interns independently planned and executed a full Independence Day celebration, incorporating speeches, patriotic songs (naghmas), flag displays, and balloon decorations. The event also featured a cake-cutting ceremony and was joined by Dean NIPP Dr. Naveed Elahi, Dr. Saif Ullah Khalid, Ms. Ishrat Akhtar, and Ms. Bushra Bashir, making it a memorable and spirited occasion that strengthened the sense of camaraderie within the batch while honoring the significance of the day.



IV. Defense Day Program

Interns organized a formal Defense Day Program at the NIPP conference hall, attended by members of the Executive Development Institute (EDI) and Dean NSPP Dr. Naveed Elahi, who attended as Chief Guest. The programme opened with recitation from the Holy Quran and the national anthem, followed by a minute of silence in honor of the martyrs of the 1965 war. A short documentary on Defense Day was screened, after which an intern delivered a speech paying tribute to the sacrifices and bravery of the armed forces. The Chief Guest delivered concluding remarks to close the proceedings.

V. Death Anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah

Interns organized a solemn commemorative event to mark the death anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The programme included recitation from the Holy Quran, singing of the national anthem, a documentary on the life and legacy of the Quaid, and a speech delivered by an intern reflecting on his contributions to the creation and consolidation of Pakistan, and concluded with a Dua (prayer) for the departed leader. The event was attended by all CSP officers at the Institute, with Dean NIPP Dr. Naveed Elahi delivering the closing remarks.



2.4 Discussions

A range of structured, recurring discussion formats was embedded into the daily and weekly rhythm of the internship, designed to build interns' vocabulary, confidence, current-affairs awareness, and capacity for structured argumentation.

I. Quotation Sessions

Every morning, all interns presented quotations to the batch, one in English and one in Urdu, as part of a sustained effort to build a shared "quotation library" among the cohort. Beyond vocabulary-building, the exercise was designed to help interns develop public-speaking confidence in a low-stakes, daily setting, gradually preparing them for the more demanding presentations and discussions that followed later in the Programme.

II. Editorial Discussions

On a daily basis, three interns presented editorial pieces drawn from Dawn newspaper to the rest of the batch. The purpose of the exercise was threefold: to keep interns up to date with current national and international affairs, to build their analytical vocabulary and command of formal written English, and to encourage brainstorming and critical discussion on the issues raised. Editorials discussed over the course of the Programme covered a wide range of subjects, including "Unmasking Stability" and the Indus Waters Treaty, the "Zero Dose Alert" on child immunization, the slow environmental decline of Manchar Lake, developments in Gilgit-Baltistan, and "Joint Prayers" as a diplomatic gesture, among numerous others.



III. National Finance Commission (NFC) Award Discussion

Interns undertook a detailed, group-based discussion of the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, Pakistan's constitutional mechanism under Article 160 for distributing federally collected revenues between the Centre and the provinces. The class was divided into four groups, each responsible for presenting a distinct phase in the history of the NFC Awards, from their constitutional origins through to the landmark 7th NFC Award of 2009. A summary of each group's presentation is set out below.

Group 1 — Introduction to the NFC and the 1st NFC Award

Faiza Javed opened the presentation with an overview of the constitutional basis of the NFC under Article 160 and its central role in federal-provincial financial relations. Nimra Hashim traced a timeline of all NFC Awards from the 1st to the most recent. Noor Fatima explained the background and objectives behind the 1st NFC Award, while Muhammad Sohail Hassan detailed its key features, including the composition of the divisible pool. Malaika Saleem explained the resource-distribution formula used in the 1st Award, and Ahmad Mustafa closed the group's presentation with an assessment of the Award's significance and its unresolved issues.

Group 2 — 2nd and 3rd NFC Awards

Fasiha Fatima reintroduced the constitutional framework of the NFC. Paria Anjum Rajput presented the 2nd NFC Award of 1979, noting its retention of population as the sole distribution criterion under General Zia-ul-Haq's government, and Hayat Ullah Khan presented the 3rd NFC Award of 1985, which continued the same population-only formula. Rehan Arif then connected the shortcomings of these population-only awards to the long-standing grievances of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan regarding security costs, refugee burdens, and underdevelopment, tracing a direct line to the eventual multi-indicator formula adopted in 2009.

Group 3 — 4th and 5th NFC Awards

Naila Bashir explained the sixteen-year deadlock that preceded the 4th NFC Award and the eventual breakthrough achieved under Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz in 1991. Kinza Asif detailed the Award's 20:80 federal-provincial vertical split and its horizontal distribution based on the 1981 Census. Abdul Moeed highlighted the Award's significance as the first major step toward fiscal decentralisation since 1974. Hafsa Amjad then introduced the background to the 5th NFC Award of 1997, and Younus Khan explained its expansion of the divisible pool to include all federal taxes, while Maheem Fatima closed the group's presentation with an assessment of the Award's fiscal consequences and its limitations in addressing provincial fairness.

Group 4 — 6th and 7th NFC Awards

Syed Muhammad Shaheer and Alishba Kazim presented the 6th NFC Award of 2002, an interim arrangement introduced under President Pervez Musharraf that continued to rely on population-based shares. Muhammad Ali, Raheel Hussain, and Hafiza Maida then presented the landmark 7th NFC Award of 2009–2010, explaining its revised 42.5:57.5 vertical split and its introduction, for the first time, of a multi-indicator horizontal formula combining population, poverty, revenue generation, and inverse population density. The group concluded that the 7th NFC Award marked a genuine turning point in Pakistan's fiscal federalism, even as debates over federal fiscal space and provincial revenue generation persisted.

Taken together, the four presentations traced the complete evolution of Pakistan's fiscal federalism, from the 1st NFC Award's founding formula through decades of population-only awards, to the landmark multi-indicator reform of 2009, and reinforced interns' understanding of the enduring tension between the federation's revenue needs and the provinces' demand for a fair and representative distribution formula.

IV. Mock Discussion: Makkah Joint Defense Agreement

Interns organized a conference-style mock discussion on the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement, structured to simulate a formal policy discussion format. Maheem Shabir served as Chair, Rehan Arif and Hafsa Amjad presented as the lead speakers, and the remainder of the batch participated as discussants, engaging critically with the strategic, diplomatic, and security implications of the agreement for Pakistan.

V. Letter to the Editor: Discussion Session

A dedicated discussion session was held among interns to understand the conventions, tone, and structure of an effective letter to the editor. The session covered how to identify a compelling public-interest issue, frame it persuasively for a general newspaper readership, and adhere to the concise, disciplined format that op-ed and letters sections demand, laying the groundwork for interns' subsequent individual submissions to national newspapers.

2.5 Research Work

Research formed the intellectual core of the internship Programme. Interns were organized into seven collaborative research groups; each assigned a distinct contemporary policy challenge facing Pakistan. Over the course of the Programme, each group conducted a systematic literature review, gathered and analyzed primary and secondary data, and developed a full-length policy research paper culminating in evidence-based recommendations, which was formally presented to faculty and fellow interns on 3 September 2026.

Group 1: Digital Disorder: Legal Gaps in Governing Social Media Use and Abuse in Pakistan

Members: Hafsa Amjad, Raheel Hussain, Malaika Saleem Ghori, Syed Muhammad Shaheer

This group examined the regulatory vacuum surrounding social media governance in Pakistan, analysing the legal gaps that leave online abuse, misinformation, and digital harm inadequately addressed, and proposing a strengthened legislative and regulatory framework for the digital space.

The paper argues that Pakistan's principal digital-governance statute, the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016 and its 2025 amendment, rests on an individualistic legal model that focuses on establishing user intent and identifying human offenders, while remaining largely blind to algorithmic amplification, the process by which platform recommendation systems boost the visibility of content based on engagement rather than accuracy. Through a comparative audit of PECA's key provisions (Sections 2, 20, 26A, 37, and 38) against the European Union's Digital Services Act, the study identifies a structural gap: social media platforms are treated in Pakistani law as indirect hosts rather than active distributors of content. To close this gap, the paper proposes a three-tier Social Media Platform Regulatory Audit (SMPRA) Model, calibrated to Pakistan's existing statutory powers, built around transparency baselines, harm-mitigation duties for platforms, and an Independent Research Access Committee (IRAC) to enable academic scrutiny of algorithmic performance, offering a regulatory pathway that addresses digital harms without resorting to blanket internet shutdowns or social media bans.

Group 2: From Mediator to Stakeholder: A Policy Framework for Converting Pakistan's Diplomatic Capital in the 2026 Iran War into Durable Strategic and Economic Advantage

Members: Alishba Kazim, Noor Fatima, Muhammad Ali

This group analyzed the spillover effects of the 2026 Iran conflict on Pakistan's security and diplomatic environment, and developed a policy framework for converting Pakistan's mediating role into lasting strategic and economic advantage.

Drawing on middle power theory, mediation theory, and hedging theory, this paper examines Pakistan's emergence in 2026 as the principal mediator between the United States and Iran, culminating in the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding. It argues that Pakistan's mediating role has generated genuine but fragile opportunities, including the activation of new transit corridors through Gwadar and Karachi, restored diplomatic access to Washington, and reinforced ties with China, set against accumulating risks such as alliance entrapment through the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement, domestic sectarian tensions, and acute exposure to Gulf-linked economic shocks. Weighing these opportunities against Pakistan's structural constraints, including its IMF programme conditionality and China's demonstrated reluctance to renegotiate CPEC-linked commercial terms, the paper proposes a sequenced policy framework spanning diplomatic institutionalization, border and defense security architecture, Gwadar investment diversification, and economic diversification, concluding that Pakistan's mediating role represents a genuine strategic opening whose ultimate value depends on deliberate policy action rather than the eventual outcome of the war itself.

Group 3: The Impact of Political Governance on Educational Development: A Case Study of District Peshawar (2024–2025)

Members: Aamir Ali, Nimra Hashim, Muhammad Rehan Arif

This group investigated the effects of governance challenges on socio-economic development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with a focused case study on how political governance shaped education outcomes in Peshawar.

Using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, this paper investigates why Peshawar, despite being Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's provincial capital and one of its best-resourced districts, ranked only 13th out of 34 districts on the 2023 Provincial Education Performance Index, largely on account of weak learning outcomes and the lowest public-financing score among the province's top-ranked districts. Drawing on secondary administrative data from the Annual Schools Statistical Report, provincial budget documents, and official policy reports, alongside qualitative questionnaire responses from principals and teachers, the study examines how political governance, measured through policy formulation, budget allocation, implementation capacity, and political interference, correlates with enrolment, retention, infrastructure, and learning outcomes. The findings are intended to provide empirical evidence on the governance-education linkage and to inform evidence-based recommendations for strengthening education governance and policy implementation across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Group 4: Media Narratives and Public Perceptions of the Jaffar Express Attack: A Comparative Study of Electronic Media and Perspectives from Baluchistan and Beyond

Members: Muhammad Younas Khan, Naila Bashir, Hafiza Maida

This group examined how digital and mainstream media narratives shaped public and youth perceptions of the Jaffar Express attack, situating the study within the broader governance and security challenges facing Baluchistan.

This mixed-methods study compares electronic media coverage of the 11 March 2025 Jaffar Express attack with the perceptions of a youth-dominated sample drawn primarily from Baluchistan. A qualitative content analysis of domestic outlets (ARY News, Dawn, Geo News) against international outlets (BBC, Al Jazeera, CNN) reveals a persistent gap: domestic coverage emphasized terrorism and external-blame frames while presenting victims largely in statistical terms, whereas international coverage foregrounded human-interest testimony and introduced Baloch-grievance and state-accountability frames largely absent from domestic reporting. A parallel survey of 35 respondents found that social media, not television, was the primary and most trusted information source, that official government and television statements were the least trusted, and that respondents attributed the attack more to political and socio-economic grievances and governance failures than to external or geopolitical causes, with open-ended responses converging on calls for unbiased reporting, verification, and the inclusion of local and diverse voices. The study concludes that public perception, particularly among youth, diverges significantly from dominant domestic media framing on questions of trust, causal attribution, and accountability.

Group 5: Closing the Gap: A Policy Framework for Reducing Infant Mortality in Pakistan

Members: Usman Fareed, Fasiha Fatima, Paria Anjum

This group examined the structural and institutional drivers of Pakistan's persistently high infant mortality rate and proposed policy pathways to strengthen maternal and child healthcare delivery.

This paper addresses Pakistan's persistently high infant mortality rate, standing at 48 infant deaths and 36 neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births as of UNICEF's 2024 country estimates, arguing that the problem is not a shortage of proven interventions such as skilled birth attendance, essential newborn care, and immunization, but a persistent challenge of implementation, access, quality, equity, financing, and accountability. Weighing three policy alternatives, incremental strengthening of existing programmes, a hospital-centered approach, and an integrated primary-care-focused approach, against criteria of effectiveness, equity, fiscal sustainability, feasibility, and long-term accountability, the paper recommends the integrated approach as best able to overcome Pakistan's fragmented health-delivery system with minimal duplication. It proposes a National Infant and Newborn Survival Initiative (2026–2030) targeting high-burden districts through strengthened primary health care, improved quality of care at birth, functional referral and emergency transport systems, and district-level performance accountability, with an indicative goal of reducing the infant and neonatal mortality rates to below 30 and 20 per 1,000 live births respectively by 2030.

Group 6: Drowning in Neglect: Institutional Preparedness for Urban Flooding in Lahore

Members: Kinza Asif, Faiza Javaid, Muhammad Sohail Hassan

This group assessed institutional preparedness for urban flooding in Lahore's most affected areas, identifying gaps in drainage infrastructure, inter-agency coordination, and early-warning systems, and recommending measures to strengthen urban flood resilience.

Applying a Disaster Risk Governance framework, this qualitative policy analysis reframes urban flooding in the Lahore Division not as a consequence of unusual rainfall or global warming alone, but as a fundamental failure of public administration and institutional readiness. Through a systematic review of official master plans, legislative mandates, and secondary literature, the study finds deliberate institutional fragmentation between the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), the Lahore Development Authority (LDA), the Traffic Engineering and Transport Planning Agency (TEPA), and the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), which together undermine the city's natural drainage capacity through regulatory non-compliance in private housing, uncoordinated road engineering, and an outdated combined sewerage system, and which leave the state reliant on reactive, post-disaster relief that shifts environmental costs onto the poorest communities. The paper recommends consolidating fragmented mandates under a single Metropolitan Infrastructure Authority, mandating Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) for all new real-estate development, and shifting disaster governance from reactive crisis response toward preventative, structural mitigation.

Group 7: Political Turmoil in Azad Jammu and Kashmir: Diagnosing the Crisis and Charting a Way Forward

Members: Maheem Fatima, Ahmad Mustafa, Hayyat Ullah Khan, Abdul Moeed

This group diagnosed the roots of recent political turmoil in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and proposed a policy roadmap to address the underlying governance and constitutional grievances driving instability in the region.

This paper examines the twelve directly elected refugee constituencies reserved for Kashmiri refugees in the 53-member Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly under the Interim Constitution Act of 1974, an arrangement that became the central flashpoint of AJ&K's most serious governance crisis in recent history when, in 2026, the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) escalated economic grievances into demands for the seats' abolition, triggering protests that resulted in 89 verified civilian deaths and 26 security personnel martyred. Through qualitative content analysis of primary legal texts, court opinions, and government documents, the paper argues that the refugee seats have outlived their founding political justification and now function primarily as a mechanism of federal-party control over AJ&K's government formation. It advances five recommendations: retaining the refugee seats while restricting their role in government formation, strengthening electoral accountability through biometric verification and mandatory asset disclosure, establishing an inclusive constitutional reform commission under Article 33, lifting the proscription of JAAC and restoring civil liberties, and fully implementing the Muzaffarabad Agreement to address outstanding economic grievances.

2.6 Presentations: "Knowing Pakistan Through Me"

As a dedicated cultural-exchange exercise, every intern delivered an individual presentation titled "Knowing Pakistan Through Me," introducing fellow interns to their respective hometowns, regions, and cultural backgrounds. Each presentation covered the intern's personal background, the history, geography, and demographic profile of their hometown, its local customs, traditions, and cuisine, its historical landmarks and heritage sites, and its notable personalities. The exercise was designed to foster genuine cultural exchange within the cohort, giving interns from different corners of Pakistan, from Punjab to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Baluchistan, and beyond, a first-hand appreciation of the country's remarkable regional and cultural diversity.

2.7 Other Activities

Beyond the core academic and research components, the internship Programme incorporated a diverse set of supplementary activities designed to build practical skills, institutional exposure, and creative and organizational competencies among interns.

I. Movie Screening — T-34

Interns collectively viewed the film T-34, selected for its powerful portrayal of patience, inner strength, undying spirit, courage, determination, and strategic thinking under extreme adversity. The screening was followed by informal reflection among interns on how these qualities, particularly resilience and strategic clarity in the face of crisis, translate into effective leadership and decision-making within institutional and policy contexts.



II. Library Visit

Interns were sent to the NIPP library in pairs, on a rotational basis, to explore the Institute's research holdings and reference materials. The exercise gave every intern dedicated, hands-on time to familiarize themselves with the library's resources and to develop independent research and literature-review skills that supported their ongoing policy paper work.



III. Deputation to the NSPP Administrative Wing and Directing Staff (PASC)

As directed vide letter No. NIPP/6th Internship/2026 dated 20 July 2026, interns were deputed on a fortnightly rotational basis to the disposal of the faculty members of the Pakistan Administrative Staff College (PASC), including two interns placed with the Directing Staff (Training and Coordination). This deputation gave interns hands-on exposure to the administrative and training functions of PASC, complementing the research-oriented focus of the internship with a grounded understanding of institutional administration. The full placement schedule was as follows:

Faculty Member (PASC)	Designation	Intern(s) Assigned
Mr. Sahibzada Mohammad Shahzad Sultan	CI / Dean, PASC	Kinza Asif
Ms. Ambreen Raza	DG (P&D / Admin)	Fasiha Fatima
Dr. Naila Zafar	DS (T&C)	Muhammad Ali, Noor Fatima
Capt. (R) Muhammad Usman	DS	Muhammad Rehan Arif
Mrs. Sijal Tauseef Khan	DS	Muhammad Sohail Hassan
Ms. Irum Bukhari	DS	Abdul Moeed

IV. Policy Pulse Contribution

Interns Hafsa Amjad, Malaika Ghori and Ahmad Mustafa assisted NIPP's research team in the writing and compilation of the Institute's Policy Pulse publication, gaining practical experience in policy communication, editorial drafting, and the process of translating research analysis into a concise, publication-ready format for a policy-literate readership.

V. EDI Report and Training Support

Interns Muhammad Sohail Hassan and Maheem Fatima supported the Executive Development Institute (EDI) of NSPP in the preparation of reports and the organization of training sessions, gaining exposure to the coordination and documentation processes involved in delivering executive-level training programmes for public-sector officials.

VI. Documentary Preparation

Interns Aamir Ali, Muhammad Younas Khan, and other members of the batch produced a visual documentary chronicling the full internship experience, conducting interviews with Dean NIPP Dr. Naveed Elahi, Ms. Ishrat Akhtar, and fellow interns, and compiling the footage into a polished audiovisual record of the Programme. The exercise developed interns' skills in visual storytelling, interview technique, and collaborative video production, while producing a lasting institutional record of the 6th Internship Batch's journey.



3. Learning Outcomes and Conclusion

The 6th Internship Batch at NIPP proved to be a rigorous, immersive, and intellectually enriching experience that successfully bridged theoretical classroom learning with the practical realities of public policy research and institutional life. Through sustained engagement with structured lectures, hands-on training sessions, and a demanding programme of policy research culminating in seven substantive research papers, interns developed strong analytical and academic writing skills alongside a far deeper understanding of the governance challenges confronting Pakistan across sectors as varied as digital regulation, public health, urban resilience, regional security, and political stability.

The Programme's daily quotation and editorial sessions steadily built interns' vocabulary, current-affairs literacy, and public-speaking confidence, while structured discussions on subjects such as the National Finance Commission Award and the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement sharpened their capacity for evidence-based argumentation and policy debate. Institutional visits to Mera Apna School and the Lahore Museum, together with cultural-exchange presentations under "Knowing Pakistan Through Me," broadened interns' appreciation of Pakistan's civic, historical, and cultural landscape, reinforcing the conviction that effective policymaking must be rooted in a genuine understanding of the society it serves.

The deputation to the Administrative Wing of NSPP and the Pakistan Administrative Staff College gave interns direct, practical exposure to institutional administration, while their central role in organizing the 4th NSPP Public Policy Conference, an international event convening senior government officials, industry leaders, and academics, offered an unparalleled opportunity to apply the coordination, communication, and event-management skills developed throughout the Programme in a high-stakes, real-world setting. Taken together with the production of an internship documentary, contributions to the

Institute's Policy Pulse, and the submission of individual letters to the editor, these activities gave interns a genuinely well-rounded professional grounding that extended well beyond research and writing alone.

Under the continuous supervision of Ms. Ishrat Akhtar and the strategic guidance of Dean NIPP Dr. Naveed Elahi and Rector NSPP Mr. Farhan Aziz Khawaja, the 6th Internship Batch successfully fulfilled the Programme's core objectives of cultivating policy-oriented thinking, research rigor, and professional discipline among twenty-three interns drawn from across Pakistan. The structured design and comprehensive scope of this batch's internship, spanning research, institutional exposure, event organization, and cultural exchange, stand as a testament to NIPP's continued investment in developing the next generation of Pakistan's policy researchers, analysts, and public sector leaders, and offer a valuable and well-documented reference point for the design of future internship batches at the Institute.

