

Youth Buldge in Pakistan: an asset or a liability.

Outline

1) Introduction

Pakistan's youth buldge is, indeed, an asset. It has potential to become the engine, which can drive Pakistan towards success and glory. Although country's meager resources are keeping it from harnessing full potential of its youth buldge; yet, proper planning and flawless execution of youth empowerment can help in improving the situation.

2) An Overview of Youth Buldge in Pakistan.

3) Factors which Make Youth Buldge an Asset.

a) Skilled and education youth buldge is essential for modernization and development of country.

b) Youth can promote Pakistan's soft image in global arena.

c) The enthusiasm of current youth buldge in Freelancing and Information Technology can boost country's economic prospects.

d) Contribution of youth buldge in welfare of the society

e) Youth's potential should be harnesssed in political arena and governance.

4) Situations which may transform youth buldge in to a liability.

a) Illiteracy and lack of skills make youth buldge a liability

b) Youth buldge is huge burden on a country which is already experiencing scarcity of resources.

c) Owing to unemployment and illiteracy young people may indulge in antisocial activities and crimes

s) Strategy to ^{get} benefits from youth budget.

a) Ensuring skill development and education among youth.

b) Provision of loans and funds to young people to establish small business enterprises

c) Inclusion of youth in social, political and democratic process.

e) Summation

f) Conclusion.

Of late, Pakistan's youth bulge has grabbed the attention of many. Although most of the people are feeling free to express their opinions on the huge chunk of young population; the opinions have been found to be conflicting. Some people suggest that youth in such enormous numbers is an asset for Pakistan; the young generation can help ^{the} country in improving its economic prospects along with playing crucial role in its modernization and progress. On the other hand, some people are of the opinion that such youth bulge is more of a liability than an asset. The higher unemployment and Pakistan's poor economic condition accused by such people as ~~seems~~ ^{bulge} for youth becoming a liability instead of an asset. However, in reality, Pakistan's youth bulge is, indeed, an asset. It has the potential to become the engine, which can drive Pakistan towards success and glory. Although, country's meagre resources are keeping

it from harnessing full potential of its youth bulge, yet, proper planning and flawless execution of youth empowerment can help in improving the situation.

The youth bulge, if utilized aptly, can change Pakistan's fortunes.

The youth bulge is an indication of huge number of people who are under the age of thirty. Such people are either in the beginning of their practical lives, or they are yet to enter in to the professional life. According to United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Survey 64% of the population of Pakistan is under the age of 30; 29% of the total population is between the age of 15 and 29. This indicates to the fact that Pakistan has humongous human resource to run the country for next three to five decades. This provides the country ^{with an opportunity} to ensure implementation

of its long term policies using its ample manpower unlike countries like Japan where ^{the} scarcity of young people has become a big concern. As of now there are many factors which are hindering Pakistan from utilizing its youth bulge in an optimal manner. However, even in such a crunch situation there are many manifestations of the fact that youth bulge is an asset of great importance.

There are many instances which substantiate the claim, that youth bulge is an asset of paramount importance for Pakistan. One such instance is the contribution in ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~sk~~ of skilled and educated youth in modernization and development of Pakistan. In recent times, the ^{professionals} ~~professionals~~ in science and technology and information technology have played very crucial role in modernization of countries. One such example is India, where millions of graduates from scientific background (STEM) have

played their part in the betterment of their country. A significant number among Pakistani youth is coming from science, engineering, technology and medical sciences (STEM) background. According to Higher Education Commission of Pakistan in 2021, 157,162 STEM graduates and 43000 Information Technology (IT) graduates passed out from Pakistani universities. Such huge number of professional can help Pakistan in modernization of its society and economy, if given ample opportunities. This modernization will lead to development. Thus, educated and qualified youth is imperative for the progress of Pakistan.

Along with indigenous development, youth can become a tool to promote Pakistan's goodwill at international level. Such people from the youth, who have gained expertise in certain discipline and project their country's soft power.

For example many professionals from subcontinent serving in foreign countries have won laurels for their homelands.

India's Sundar Pichai has become the Chief Executive Office of Google.

Similarly, Malala Yousafzai is considered an ambassador of peace. She has been giving the message to the world that Pakistan is a peace loving country. Thus, youth may serve as the ambassadors of Pakistan in foreign land and promote positive image of their country.

The youth buldge of a Pakistan can be very crucial in improving its economic prospects. It has been noticed that the majority of the people from youth are interested in freelancing and running online businesses. The data reported by Oxford Institute of online Labour Index Pakistan has become 4th best country among the freelance

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destination. Furthermore, a website that deals with statistics named Statista has revealed that 70% of Pakistani Freelancers are under the age of 30. According to Government of Pakistan Pakistani Freelancers earned 0.5 billion dollars in year 2017. The contribution of Pakistani youth in Freelancing and IT industry cannot be paralleled by the people from older age groups. So, youth bulge has shown its effectiveness for economy by its contribution in IT related exports.

Youth bulge can be used effectively for social welfare and the well being of the society. There are many youngsters who are jobless and looking for jobs. Government can use this huge human resource for plantation drive, maintenance of parks, to spread awareness among people about emerging problem and many other such activities. One such

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example is Franklin D Roosevelt's ~~use~~ ~~use~~ Army. During The Great Depression in USA unemployed youngsters were recruited for the purposes as mentioned earlier, as a result activities were carried out at lower costs, on the other hand youngsters were able to earn some livelihood and gain exposure. Therefore, youth bulge can be very crucial in betterment of society.

Another way in which youth bulge becomes very important asset is its participation in democratic political process. As in coming 2 to 5 decades the youths of these days will be running the day to day affairs of Pakistan, their participation in democratic political process is a must. Participation of youth in politics will result in some of the participants emerging as leaders and statesmen in future. Moreover, youth makes the biggest

chunk of the country's population, it is imperative to include youth in political process. Furthermore, owing to globalization young people are better acquainted with the changing world; inclusion of such people in ^{process} democratic people can help Pakistan to adapt according to rapidly changing world. So, it can be stated that youth bulge is an asset of great importance even in politics.

Although one cannot refute the fact that country's youth bulge has huge potential to be an asset of great importance. Many people are of the opinion that asset has turned in to a liability due to poor human resource development in Pakistan.

A big chunk of youth bulge is either unskilled or un-educated. According to UNESCO around 22 million children between the age

of school going are out of schools. This will transform the asset of youth into a liability. As without appropriate skill and education such young men and women will not be able to fulfill their needs; the poverty will increase; standard of living will diminish all these will lead to youth bulge becoming a liability.

Such a huge number of young men and women also adds huge stress on the already scarce resources of Pakistan. To accommodate such large number of people loads of resources are required while Pakistan has only the fraction of such resources. For instance universities, schools and colleges are primarily established for the training and education of youth; which accounts for 60% of the total population.

In order to accommodate 60% of population in education, government will have to spend hefty amount of money, which a poor country like Pakistan can hardly spend. Thus, making the youth bulge a liability for Pakistan.

The government's inability to cater the youth bulge has led to unemployment and illiteracy among the young people. Both the illiteracy and unemployment has made youth to indulge in antisocial and criminal activities. According to Express Tribune many youngsters ^{between 16 and 24} are involved in street crimes and other criminal activities. Lack of education, poor living standard and scarcity of parks and other such installations have exposed the younger generations to many evils. Youngsters being recruited

by terrorist organizations is horrific. Some may indulge in street crimes and many may resort to intoxicating agents which are also known as contrabands. Youth's indulgence in the above mentioned can create havoc in the society. In such scenarios one may argue that youth bulge is a liability.

Despite having concerns about country's youth bulge; it is inappropriate to term it a liability. Youth bulge is just like any resource in its raw form.

Sound policies by government can, however, transform it into a finished product.

The first step in this direction is to promote skill development and quality education among youth, so, a young man and woman may become a productive and responsible citizen of the state. Government has already taken some steps. One such step is

IGNITE. Under this programme young

ones are being taught contemporary skills like programming, computer designing etc., while sitting in the comforts of home. This has resulted in improved performance of Pakistani youth in the global freelancing market. Therefore, youth bulge is an asset and requires training.

The skill development and training will be very helpful for the young people to earn a ^{respectable} ~~respectful~~ livelihood. Besides this, government can provide loans to youth to start small businesses. This will not only address unemployment but also create more job opportunities for other people as well. These small business organizations can also result in flourishing of the country's economy; this will translate into ^{an} improved living standard of a common man. One such step taken by government is Kamyab Naujawan Youth Loan scheme to help youth in establishing small scale

business enterprises. But, the bigger issue is of consistent policy is not being implemented. Government should run schemes while keeping bigger picture in mind. Therefore, providing such help to youth according to long term policy making will help in boosting the potential of youth bulge to become an asset of great importance.

Along with material and financial support, moral support is also required to the youth bulge. That moral support can be provided by an inclusion; such inclusion in which youngsters are allowed to discuss problems faced by society, the kind of society in which they want to live. Additionally, they must be included in political and democratic process. Their role must not be restricted to that of a spectator. Instead youngsters must be encouraged to participate in political

process in their desired role. Whether that role be of a polling agent, or of the roles of National Assembly, this will provide them chance to voice their grievances, prove their mettle and groom them. So, this will result in emergence of leaders from the youth bulge.

Having considered the thoughts from two opposing sides, one can decide on this matter on the basis of validity of thoughts from both sides. In this scenario, the arguments suggest that youth bulge is indeed an asset for Pakistan. Future leaders, doctors, entrepreneurs and engineers are going to emerge from this youth bulge. Pakistani youth is already showing its capabilities in IT sectors. On the other hand, those ^{who} count youth as bulge as a liability are oblivious of the fact ^{that} it is not the youth that has failed; it is the system that has failed to deliver. This

Failure of system has made them think of youth bulge as a failure. However, in reality youth bulge of Pakistan is an asset whose potential is unparalleled.

In the end, one should be cognizant of the fact that, although youth bulge is an asset for Pakistan, still it will require enormous effort by the people in high ^{positions} to reap the benefits of this asset. Pakistani youth is deprived of many basic facilities. The education system is obsolete; unemployment is at all time high; opportunities for youth are limited. In order to utilize youth bulge in its favour Pakistan will ^{be} required to divert huge resources to this youth bulge. Once youth bulge transformed in to a congregation of professionals, intellectuals and leaders, Pakistan's road to success and glory will become smooth.