

Q.No.5. "The population growth in Pakistan can erupt like an atomic bomb." Comment. (2019)

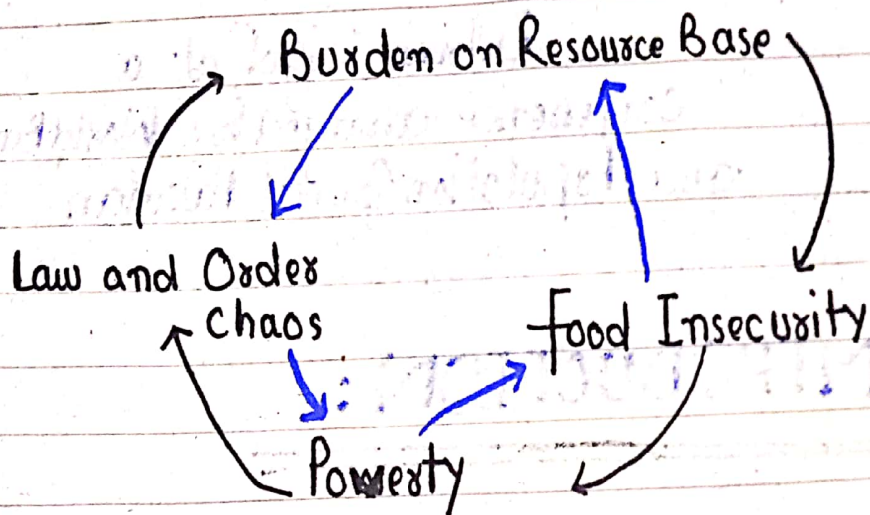
"From a demographic perspective; Pakistan's carrying capacity of people is 60 million; how can we expect then a smooth and sustainable state of affairs with a current population at its extreme?"

—Rubina Saigol at a conference arranged by World Bank and Population Council Pakistan

INTRODUCTION:

Modern day policy experts and population & resource management gurus promulgate narrative of sustainable use of resources for sustainable living. How can we expect efficient exploitation of resources in a country like Pakistan whose population growth is at 2% per annum? There is not a single cause that deserves criticism for such a increase in population in a country that is grappling with worse economic conditions in its history.

How It Can Erupt Like Atom Bomb:



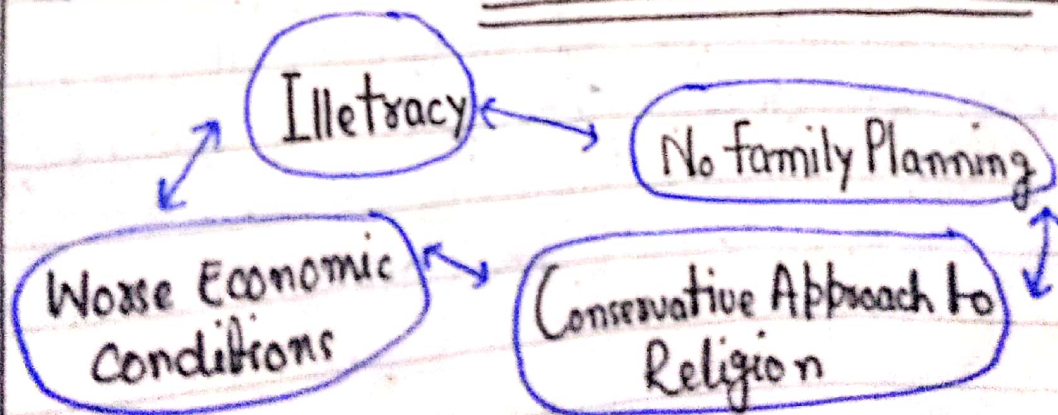
The statement that Pakistan's population bulge can erupt like an atom bomb can't be considered as vague and holds element of truth in it. As per Asian Development Bank, 2022, Pakistan carries highest fertility after Afghanistan in the South Asian region. The pace of increase is an alarm to authorities in power as it holds negative potential to disrupt the already rotten socio-economic fabric of the country.

Out of 80 million hectares of land in Pakistan, only 34 million are approx. cultivated to meet the demands of food. Combined with the imposition of taxes that tightens the country's fiscal resources. And still, Pakistan is grappling with food insecurity.

Reason, population bulge at an accelerating pace, nothing else.

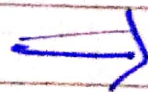
The causes and effects and making use of increasing population be discussed in the following commentary :

WHY OUR POPULATION HAS INCREASED AT SUCH A PACE:



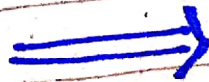
No Special Focus On Education Of Masses :

According to the report submitted by Haas Foundation to Smith High Court, almost ~~2.5 m~~ 25 million school going age children are out-of-school in the country - 2022. Just imagine if masses remain uneducated and once they massy, would they consider of pondering upon how many children women be impregnated with? No. Education acts as a medium to enlighten masses to understand the responsibility that children deserve from parents. Hence, such bulge of uneducated masses holds potential to disrupt like an atom bomb.



LACK OF FAMILY PLANNING:

According to a report submitted by Pakistan Institute of Developing Economy to Ministry of Planning and Division, a survey of households in Urban divisions reflect that topic of family Planning is considered a Western Conspiracy or taboo in Pakistan. The point of concern is why do masses think like this? All because of inability to acknowledge modern day demands and fallacies that Pakistani society is challenged with. Lack of family planning in simple is an effect when education emergency is thought as mere preposition rather than a need of the hour.



CONSERVATIVE APPROACH TO RELIGION:

Role of religion in Pakistani society cannot be undermined. During - tumultuous political journey of the country, it has been an essential player in mobilizing masses towards social unity. However, the conservative approach held by religious authority has harmed more to population question than any benefit. Masses in Pakistan due to lack of modern education are inclined towards such authorities which claim that increase in population is a matter beyond human capacities and deny the shrinkage of resource base. It must be a duty upon clergy to propagate ideas of family planning or better say women's planning among masses. Hence, we are bound to erupt like a bomb sooner or later.

BAD ECONOMIC CONDITIONS:

As per Dr. Ishrat Hussain in his book *Governing the Ungovernable*, deprivated economic conditions among rural part of the country empowers people towards increased birth rate. Although the increased numbers won't be part of state's political process, they would act as bread-earners for their families.

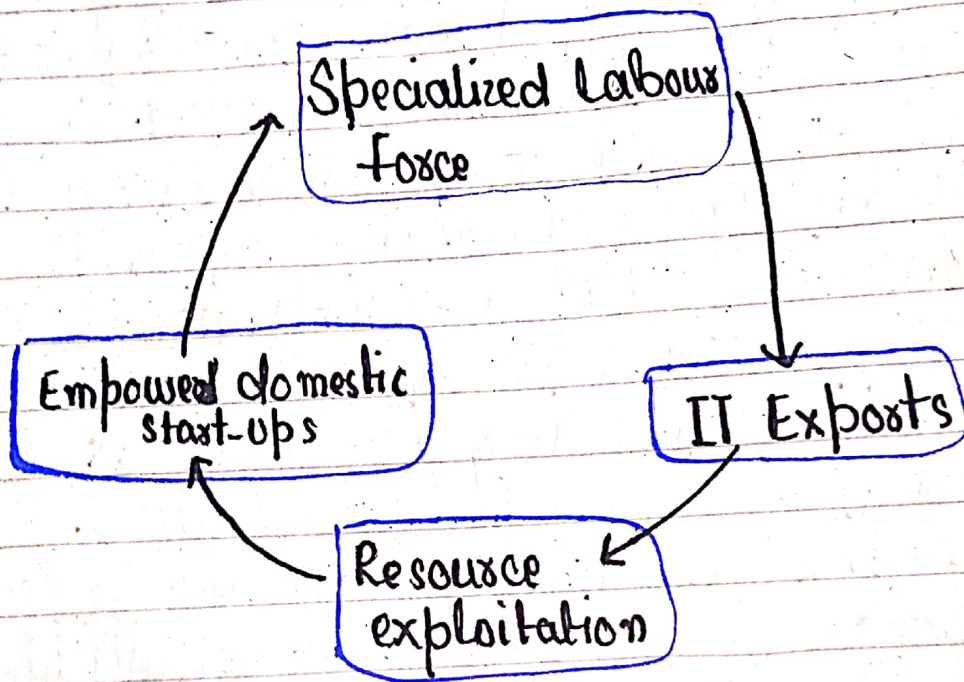
~~At~~ This in turn will increase child labour as well as crimes due to responsibilities towards families.

They would also try to move to Middle East for labour jobs and return their earnings to their homes.

Hence, economic conditions at their worst also accelerate population growth in Pakistan.



CAN PAKISTAN UTILIZE SUCH A MASSIVE POPULATION:



Management and utilization of almost 240 million people with dilapidated administration is a challenging task.


However, specialized approaches can somehow assist the political authorities.

As per Economic Survey of Pakistan, almost 6 million youth is unemployed.

These are with degrees. And more would be those who would not have completed their basic schooling. Those with no degrees must be specialized for certain skills of domestic and global demand. They hold potential to strengthen country's fiscal position.

On the other hand, those with Information Technology credentials must be exported to abroad which in turn can also sustain Pakistan's economy via their earnings in dollars. India has adopted such strategy and their export worth is around 100 billion dollars.

In the same vein, government should empower as well as ensure conducive business environment to those who desire to follow start-up culture in Pakistan.

Hence, these strategies can pave way for government to resist the eruption of population as an atom bomb. 

CONCLUSION:

To conclude on an optimistic note, if political authorities wish to prevent eruption of population bombs, policies with strategic vision must be adopted as soon as possible.

Recent wave of unemployment with desparation and frustration has caused nothing but harm. Illettracy, lack of family planning, religious conservatism, and tightened economic outlook must be dealt sustainably. On the other part, the youth or population bulge must be exploited for the country's benefit by measures like upskilling masses, resource exploitation by sustainable means and among others. Hence, pragmatic approaches towards population bulge can resist the maxaxative/symbolical association of eruption as an atom bomb.
