

Topic:- Brain Drain in Pakistan: A Temporary Advantage of Limitless Loss

OUTLINE

1- Introduction

Thesis Statement:- The number of Pakistanis leaving, or having the desire to leave, the country has increased drastically. The loss of talented and ~~productive~~^{hard working} people leaves behind a void. The temporary advantages that they provide cannot overcome the long-term loss until remedial measures are taken to provide them with the same benefits at home.

2- Brain Drain: An overview

~~3- How Brain Drain provides a temporary advantage to Pakistan~~

~~3~~³ Reasons for Escalated Brain Drain in Pakistan

- (a) Lack of effective job prospects
- (b) To improve the standards of living
- (c) To ~~get~~^{avail} better educational facilities
- (d) Due to the lack of adequate security
- (e) Due to constant threats and lack of preparedness for natural disasters

4- How brain drain provides a temporary advantage to Pakistan

5- Long-term impacts of Brain Drain in Pakistan

- (a) slowed economic growth in the country
- (b) outflow of human capital investment to foreign countries
- (c) Educational exile leading to a gap in the global standing of Pakistani universities

(d) Poor performance in Research and production

(e) Poor performance in Health Sector

(f) Constant threat of revoking citizenship of the migrants

(g) Unlawful treatment to migrants in foreign countries

5 - Ways to turn Brain Drain into Brain Gain

(a) create ~~of~~ youthful representation in politics

(b) Make people eligible for self-employment

(c) create opportunities for individuals to showcase their talents

(d) Enhance internal security in the country

7 - Conclusion

Essay

"Pakistan's brain drain is a talent crisis it cannot afford", says the headline of Nigar Ahmed's article published in Arab News. The people of Pakistan are leaving in search of better livelihoods, depriving the country of its much needed talent. Pakistan is facing many internal and external challenges nowadays, including political, economic and security threats. The active engagement of youth, which constitutes majority of the population, in the affairs of the state is the need of the day. At the same time, Pakistan needs the contribution of its elderly and experienced members too. ~~Although, these are some~~ The main causes for escalated brain drain in Pakistan includes, mainly, the lack of effective job prospects in the country. Moreover, they move abroad to improve their standards of living and avail themselves of better educational facilities. Furthermore, due to the lack of adequate security, and constant threats and lack of preparedness for natural disasters, people want to migrate to other countries. Although, ~~they are~~ brain drain is not advantageous for Pakistan, the people working abroad also provides some benefits in the form of remittances and promotion of Pakistani culture in foreign countries. However, it is a temporary advantage for the limitless loss. It badly impacts Pakistan resulting in its slowed economic growth, outflow of human capital investment, and poor performance in health and educational sector. Not only this, it

also provides loss to the migrants and their families as they have a constant fear that their citizenship can be revoked anytime or they can suffer unlawful treatment in the foreign country. To convert brain ~~gain~~ drain into brain gain, the government has to take initiative to increase youthful representation in politics, provide opportunities for individuals to showcase their talents and make them able for self-employment. Moreover, efforts must be taken to enhance the country's political and social climate. Therefore, the number of Pakistanis leaving, or having the desire to leave, the country has increased drastically. The loss of talented and hardworking people leaves behind a void. The temporary advantages that they provide cannot overcome the long-term loss until remedial measures are taken to provide them with the same benefits at home.

The term "brain drain" refers to the migration of ^{large scale of} skilled human capital to other countries. The term originated in the 1950s and 1960s when the British witnessed a flow of qualified scientists and technologists from Britain to the West, specifically the United States and Canada. The phenomenon emerged in Pakistan since its inception but the trend has drastically increased over the last decade. More than 10 million Pakistanis have reportedly moved abroad in search of better opportunities. According to the statistics by The Express Tribune, 225000 people left the country in 2021. The number trippled to 765000 in 2022. While in first three months of the year 2023, about 200,000 people left the country.

The figures are alarmingly high which require ^{attention} of the government.

The major cause of escalating brain drain in Pakistan is the lack of effective job prospects. For the search of employment opportunities, people migrate abroad. In Pakistan, about half of the population is unemployed. As per International Labour Organisation (ILO), Pakistan's employment to population ratio for 2023 is at historic low of 47.6%. Most of the unemployed individuals are ~~not~~ educated. According to the statistics published in Pakistan Today, annually, some 445,000 students graduate from different universities in Pakistan and some 31% of them with professional degrees are unemployed. This is a serious challenge for people which compels them to find employment in other countries.

Another factor that pushes people out of the country is the desire to improve their standards of living. It includes the overall quality of life, in terms of health, education and other facilities.

Pakistan, unfortunately, does not provide adequate facilities to its citizens in any sectors. As quoted by Martin Raiser, the vice president of World Bank, around 40% children in Pakistan suffer from stunted growth and about 78% are unable to read a simple text at the age of 10. This shows that Pakistan's performance is not satisfactory in terms of providing its people with the basic rights, urging them to find better opportunities for themselves and their family members.

Brain drain in Pakistan also occurs ~~due to~~ in order to avail themselves of better educational facilities. Pakistan lacks educational opportunities, both in terms of quality and quantity. On the other hand, developed nations give first priority to the education of ~~to~~ their citizens. European countries provide free and quality education to their citizens and at minimal expenditure to the foreigners. Germany, for example, provides a lot of growth opportunities and their educational fee is affordable as compared to any other decent university in Pakistan. Therefore, people in Pakistan strive to settle abroad, especially in European countries, to get ~~the~~ better educational facilities.

Due to the adequate security in the country, people are more ~~inclide~~ inclined towards developed nations that are more peaceful. Terrorism, sectarian violence, organized crime and political unrest are at peak. The terrorist attacks in the country has escalated at a very high pace in the year 2023. According to Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies, upto November 2023, 600 militant attacks have taken place, resulting in 900 fatalities. The year has observed 81% escalation in attacks as compared to 2022. The weak security, and internal instability in the country allows them to ~~be~~ settle in countries that are more peaceful.

Another factor that escalates brain drain in Pakistan is the constant threat of natural disasters and Pakistan's lack of preparedness for them. Pakistan is among the top ten nations that

are most vulnerable to natural disasters. What makes the matter worst is Pakistan's lack of effective management for them. The flood of 2022 is the most recent example. Pakistan, every year, faces destruction by floods but the flood of 2022 was the worst in its history. It damaged thousands of households, livestock and infrastructure, claiming lives of thousands of individuals. Moreover, those families have still not recovered from its destruction. Therefore, due to constant threat and lack of preparedness for natural disasters make people to move abroad.

The highly qualified and skilled people who live in foreign countries ~~also~~ are also advantageous for Pakistan. They send remittances, contributing to the country's economic development. According to the statistics released by State Bank of Pakistan, the inflow of overseas workers' remittances clocked in at \$2.5bn in October 2023, 11.5% higher on a month-on-month basis when compared to the \$2.2bn in September 2023. Therefore, the higher the overseas workers, the higher the remittances. They also bring technology, skills and new ideas back to the country. Additionally, they also promote Pakistan's culture in other countries as there are more than 10 million Pakistanis residing abroad, especially in Gulf countries. Hence, Pakistanis residing in other countries can also be beneficial for Pakistan.

Although the overseas Pakistanis provide some benefits to Pakistan but their loss to economy is limitless. The highly qualified and skilled people are

sending remittances, but it cannot compensate the loss of the country in terms of qualified people who are needed to participate in various sectors for the overall prosperity of the nation. Moreover, it can also result in reduction in income taxes. The government relies on income taxes to fund their social programs and infrastructure projects. The mass exodus leads to a drop in tax receipts which can stunt economic growth and development. Therefore, brain drain leaves long-term impact on Pakistan by slowing down its economic development.

Another impact of brain drain is the outflow of human capital investment to foreign countries. Brain drain is like zero sum game as the loss of one country benefits the other in the form of a large number of intellectuals. Pakistan has been at a losing end, in this regard, since many years. According to the statistics revealed in Pakistan Today, from 1971 till now, more than 29000 doctors, 11000 nurses, 5000 pharmacists, 87000 engineers, 66000 accountants and 230000 painters and artists have left the country. ~~The loss is huge~~ Therefore, Pakistan faces huge loss due to the outflow of human capital.

Another serious impact of brain drain in Pakistan is educational exile, which develops a gap in global standing of Pakistani universities. This is because university faculty flee from their universities and from the country. Science faculty not only migrate but also carry inventions and scientific prints with them. This is the reason that none of the Pakistani university managed

to achieve a place among the top ranked universities in the world. Although HEC, ~~was~~ Higher Education Commission, was established in 2002 and a lot of efforts were made and opportunities were provided to enhance the higher education system by foreign collaborations, but the important aspect of brain drain was not amply addressed. Hence, the condition of educational exile has escalated and the standards of Pakistan universities has deteriorated.

Brain drain also results in poor performance in research and productivity. This is because the qualified people are leaving the country and those left behind have least motivation to work. Pakistani students have produced dozens of research papers but none of those was significant work. In Pakistan, there a total of 380 HEC indexed journals in various disciplines, out of which only 11 (2.89%) achieved a place in the web of Science and quartile ranking. According to the 2022 report of the web of science, the rising trend of published articles in Pakistan decreased in 2022. ~~This shows the declining performance in research and~~ Furthermore, no investment in innovation in the form of research and development has been seen in Pakistan. According to the Global Innovation Index rankings of 2023, Pakistan ranked 99th out of 132 countries in 2021 with a score of 24.4. This shows the declining performance of Pakistan in research and development.

Another long-term impact of brain drain is the poor performance in health sector. This is due

to the lack of medical faculty. Due to ~~medical~~ inadequate facilities, medical graduates move to foreign countries. According to the research by Nadir et. al. (2023), one in three medical students intend to migrate abroad after graduation due to a lack of resources and mismanagement in Pakistan. This results in poor health facilities. Saluja and colleagues (2020) estimated an annual loss of \$15.86 bn due to mortality linked with physician migration. Thus, the overall performance in health sector is the long-term impact of brain drain.

In addition to the impact on Pakistan, it also affects the migrants themselves due to the constant threat of ~~revoking~~ their citizenships being revoked. About 70% of the 190 countries had some law could revoke citizenship. There are many instances in the history when citizenship of the migrants have been revoked. For example, in March 2023, in Nicaragua, about 300 people, mainly the opponents of President Daniel Ortega have been stripped of their citizenship. Similarly, Ukraine's president revoked citizenship of four lawyers he accused of treason or supporting Russia. Moreover, in November 2023, Israeli lawmaker proposed a bill that would revoke citizenship of those who showed support for Hamas. Therefore, it takes no time for today's good citizens to become tomorrow's bad citizens. Thus, the constant threat of revoking citizenship worries the migrants and their families.

Other than the threat of revoking citizenship, the migrants in foreign countries suffer from unlawful treatment. They are either illegally executed or incarcerated. Many countries retain death penalty for drug offenders, which is a violation of International human rights law. According to the investigation by Justice Project Pakistan (JPP), about 37000 executions took place in 19 countries for drug offences. Furthermore, according to the JPP report, more than 14000 Pakistani citizens are languishing in prisons worldwide. Therefore, the ~~to~~ unlawful treatment to migrants is a common practice worldwide.

In order to prevent the mass exodus, Pakistan needs to prioritise initiatives that not only bring skilled professionals back but also create an environment that encourages them to stay. One of such incentives include ~~also~~ increasing the youthful representation in Politics ^{to make them feel inclusive}. Youth comprises of majority of Pakistan's population but their representation in politics is minimal. The intellectuals and their participation is necessary to push a society towards progress, development and prosperity. Plato even went so far as to say that the society's ruling class must be of intellectuals. Hence, the inclusion of youth in politics is necessary.

Another initiative to be taken is to make people eligible for self-employment. Pakistani freelancers earned around \$400 million in the fiscal year 2021-22 as per the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication. Pakistanis are already

performing well in this sector. There is only the need to widen its scope and addressing their problems. This can be done by enhancing the performance of National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTC) and National Incubation Centre (NIC) — the platforms that provide digital and vocational training and skills to young people. Moreover, there is a need to address the problem ^{that} freelancers face while receiving dollar-based payments owing to the absence of many digital payment platforms that do not operate in Pakistan. By addressing such problems and enhancing skills of individuals, they can be made capable of self-employment while living in Pakistan.

The government should also create opportunities for youngsters to ~~make them~~ showcase their talents. Pakistan lags behind other countries in provision of sufficient platforms. That is why many talented people leave the country when they find more opportunities of career growth abroad. For example, 18-year-old Sumail Hassan Syed from Karachi made a history for Pakistan after moving to the US when he helped his team, Evil Geniuses, claim the Defence of the Ancient 2 (Dota 2) Asian championship in China. In Pakistan, he had found no platform to showcase his talent. Similarly, first Pakistani visual artist in Hollywood, Mugeen Khan, got a job at giant entertainment film company, Walt Disney Pictures. There was no Pakistani company offering ~~such~~ the same perks to Mugeem. Thus, it is important to create such opportunities to talented people of the country.

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Pakistan can ~~also~~ turn its brain drain into brain gain by enhancing the internal security in the country. It ~~affects~~ will improve the internal stability of the country, reducing political turmoil and social unrest in the country. Security is one of the primary needs of an individual. According to Abraham Maslow, a humanistic psychologist, security is the second most sought need, in his Hierarchy of Needs, after the physiological needs. When this need is provided to people, only then they can move upward on the hierarchy towards the achievement of the need of self-actualization and ultimately be made as fully functional persons. Therefore, the internal peace is necessary to be maintained to prevent the outflow of talented brains.

In a nutshell, brain drain has become a very serious problem for Pakistan. Lack of effective opportunities is the driving force behind it. High unemployment, low wages and limited career growth opportunities force them to find better economic prospects in the developed nations. Poor standards of living, ~~or~~ lack of quality education and inadequate disaster management in Pakistan further aggravates the problem. Although it provides some benefits to Pakistan, especially in the form of remittances, but these are only temporary advantages. The loss inflicted upon the nation

is limitless. The dearth of professional created by such a large scale of migration not only causes poor performance in education ^{and} health ~~and economic~~ sectors, but also slows down the economic growth of the country. On the other hand, it ~~is~~ also ^{badly} affects the migrants and their families. The only solution is to address the problem by creating more opportunities to individuals so that they can enhance their financial situation, showcase their talents and also contribute to the economic development of the country. At the same time, there is the need to enhance nation's political and social climate. The skilled human capital is much needed for the progress and prosperity of the country. As Prime Minister, Anwar-ul-Haq, called it as "the answer to several challenges." He further added, ~~that~~ "Brain drain can become a brain asset [in future]," ~~and this is~~ ~~a~~ ~~scope~~ and this can only be done when the problem is urgently addressed.