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Brain Drain: Causes and Consequences

• OUTLINE :

1 Introduction :

1.1 Hook.

1.2 Background.

1.3 Thesis statement.

2 Main Body :

2.1 Causes of Brain Drain

2.1.1 Financial causes : Unemployment, Low salaries, less growth opportunities.

2.1.2 Social causes : Poor living standards, Terrorism, crime rates/insecure environment.

2.1.2 Political instability : Poor governance, corruption, lack of transparency and accountability, politics of vendetta.

2.1.4 Human Rights violation : Delayed Justice^③, Religious and gender based Persecution^④, ~~work-life balance~~^①, harassment^②.

2.1.5 Environmental causes : Extreme weather conditions, natural disasters. (Pollution, flood etc).

2.2 Consequences of Brain Drain

2.2.1 Economic loss : Reduced tax payment, Decrease in business enterprises, decrease in services industry.

2.2.2 Educational loss : Illiterate population, loss of good teachers.

2.2.3 Loss of technical experts : Engineers, scientists, medical experts.

2.2.4 Degradation of moral values :

2.2.5 Generation Gap :

3 Conclusion :

3.1 Summary of the essay.

3.2 Few recommendations.

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• THE ESSAY:

Brain drain was not considered a serious issue till 1980s when New Zealand's Prime Minister, Robert Muldoon, jokingly said that the exodus of kiwis to Australia raised the intelligence levels of both countries. However, the change in the discourse was evident when Prime Minister, John Key, in his speech for the 2008 elections campaign stressed on the brain drain from New Zealand and promised to stop and reverse the brain drain. Brain drain is a relatively recent trend in the globalized world.

However, it is rapidly prevailing, especially, in developing countries like Pakistan. Brain drain is defined as, the movement of highly skilled and qualified people from their home country to a developed country where they can work in better conditions and earn more money.

Many factors drive the process of brain drain from a country. The main causes of brain drain from a country are financial reasons, social and political instability, human rights violation and environmental factors, such as harsh climate. In Pakistan, many technical or other experts have left their countries and have settled abroad. This outflow of talent have serious repercussions for the country. It has resulted in ~~the~~ economic loss for Pakistan. It also effects the literacy rates of the country. Brain Drain may also lead to moral degradation of the

society. The intensity of these consequences is getting serious in Pakistan. The economy of Pakistan is already in turmoil and brain drain is further eroding it. Unless the issue of brain drain is addressed and resolved, the development of Pakistan is difficult to materialize. This issue is not descended from heavens but is man-made. So, serious efforts are required to solve this issue of brain drain in order to prevent its negative implications for a country. The purpose of this essay is to discuss the causes and consequences of brain drain.

First comes the causes behind brain drain. The primary cause among them is financial ones. Migrating to another country is not an easy task. Social displacement is against human nature. Yet financial reasons force the talented human resource to seek opportunities abroad. The major motivating factor for brain drain in third world countries like Pakistan is employment opportunities. Due to inadequate employment chances in Pakistan, the local professionals are moving abroad in search of better jobs. As per Pakistan Institute of Economics, around twenty-three percent of Pakistan's professionals have left the country to avail better employment opportunities offered in foreign countries. For instance, 5000 engineers have left the country in the first half of 2023. Another ^{financial} cause of brain drain is low salaries for the same profession. ~~The~~

better salaries are offered in developed countries than in developing. For instance, majority of students of medical sciences wants to relocate due to low salaries offered to them in Pakistan.

The final motivating factor behind brain drain is limited growth opportunities. In developing countries like Pakistan, the administrative structures are so designed that usually a qualified person is kept subordinate to people who are less qualified in that particular field. This demotivate experts, and hinder their professional growth. Many developed countries offer academically progressive environment thus attract professionals to settle in those countries. Many researchers have left Pakistan to avail good career opportunities in their particular fields. All these financial causes push educated people to leave their native countries. This has led to a significant brain drain, especially, in countries like Pakistan.

The second cause of brain drain from developing countries is related to social issues. To begin with, developing countries have poor living standards which make life challenging. For example, Pakistan ranks 167 out of 193 countries in Human Development Index for the year 2023-2024. Due to such low living standards, people move abroad in the hope of better living for themselves and their families. Moreover,

social menace like terrorism also accounts for the phenomena of brain drain in developing countries. Many terrorist outfits are active in Pakistan, some of them entirely attacking professionals and intellectual class. Such an insecure environment is a substantial push factor for people to leave their country and settle down in a land where their lives and rights are protected from attacks by rogue non-state actors. Furthermore, the ever-increasing crime rates also contribute heavily to the rise of brain drain in developing countries. In Pakistan, the stories of snatching, extortion, kidnapping and rapes always make up the headlines. In 2022, Pakistan's ranking in Rule of Law and Order was 129 out of 140 countries. Such poor records with prevailing crime rates compel people to leave their homeland and live in foreign countries which cause the phenomena of brain drain to get worse. These and many other social factors are the major reason for brain drain in developing countries.

The third cause of brain drain especially in developing countries is due to political reasons. Firstly, the poor governance and lack of transparency in political matters diminishes the trust of public in the political instituti-

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Thirdly, political instability such as rapid regime change also effect the lives of people who then aspire to settle in other countries to lead a politically stable life. ↑

of the country. As a result of lack of accountability, people with opinion and understanding don't want to invest either their manpower or their finances in such a country. The improprieties given to criminals and frauds further discourage people to live in that country. For instance, Pakistan ranked 97 out of 140 countries in the criminal justice. Such conditions make it hard for people, with alternative choice, to chose Pakistan as their residential country.

Secondly, the corruption and misconduct in government institution also exacerbate the lack of trust of public in their government. According to Transparency International, Pakistan ranked 133 out of 180 countries in Global Corruption Perception Index in 2023. As a consequence people leave the country, adding up to the brain drain.

Lastly, the politics of vengeance in Pakistan also contributes to the brain drain. Party based persecution and harassment is a common phenomena in the country which cause people to leave the country. These political reasons have compelled many intellectuals and professionals to leave their country and settle abroad, where their are better prospects for a stable political career. This has caused substantial

brain drain from such countries.

The fourth cause of brain drain from developing countries is human rights violation. Many individuals including professionals are exposed to various kind harassment at workplace, based on their gender, race, religion or appearance. To further exacerbate the situation, workplace harassment laws are ineffective in developing countries. Those who attempt to restore their dignity, face delayed justice as there is mostly a disregard for human rights in such countries. As a result of such violations professionals prefer to move to developed countries where their rights and dignities are more secure at workplace. In addition, the threat of religious persecutions also significantly contributes to brain drain from developing nations. Even people of good repute are sometimes accused of blasphemy and without any trial persecuted by a mob. In 2011, the Governor of Punjab in Pakistan was assassinated by his own bodyguard on the alleged criticism of blasphemy law. Many have become the victims of religious persecutions such as Mashal Khan, a student of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan and more recently a tourist in Swat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who was set on

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by a mob on the allegations of blasphemy. These and many more cases of religious persecution has created an environment of insecurity. Resultantly, many people including many professionals had fled the country for the safety of their rights. This has led to significant increase in the phenomenon of brain drain in developing countries.

Lastly, environmental conditions such as extreme weather, ^{Pollution,} and natural disasters also influence the phenomenon of brain drain. Lahore ^{one of the} major city of Pakistan is the world most polluted country. In addition annual floods and extreme weather are common patterns in the country. These environmental factors influence the choices of people, particularly those who have the resources, regarding their settlements. Consequently, people choose an alternative residential option which leads to further brain drain from developing countries.

So far this essay has shed light on the causes of brain drain especially from developing countries like Pakistan. Now in the next part, this essay would give an account of the consequences that results from the phenomenon of brain drain.

To begin with, the phenomena of brain drain results in economic loss for a country. The professional community, particularly in Pakistan, contributes profoundly to the economy of the country. Their contributions range from tax paying to services industry. The services sector is the largest contributor in the ↑ GDP of Pakistan with nearly 54% share in GDP. With increasing brain drain, more professionals leave the country leading to the deterioration of revenues. In addition, the departure of professionals also cause serious damage to service sector on which the country GDP heavily depends. Furthermore, the phenomenon of brain drain also cause substantial damage to business enterprises. Skilled labour leaving the country take with them the future prospects of enterprises. With the shortage of skilled labour no development in business enterprises can be evidenced. This also hurt the already existing enterprises by depriving them of human resource. Hence, the phenomenon of brain drain can bring economic ills of a country.

Apart from economic loss, brain drain also instigate educational losses in a country. Professionals

contribute remarkably to the education system of a country. They act as teachers, mentors, and professional trainers for a wide range of population.

No progress can be expected in any field of knowledge without their valuable insights. The professionals leaving the country as a result of brain drain leave a huge vacuum in the educational system. Resultantly, the literacy rates of a country might drop and a vast majority of its population might be left uneducated and unskilled.

In some departments of agriculture research institutes, over 30 percent of seats are due to the exodus of researchers from Pakistan. Consequently, the brain drain cause a country to suffer educational losses that have a profound impact on the overall standing of a country.

In addition to educational losses, brain drain also creates a shortage of technical experts. Such a vacuum could negatively impact the technological advancement of a country. Countries like Pakistan has suffered the exodus of thousands of experts including engineers, doctors, and scientists in the recent years. Such a loss create a gap in the research and

technical fields. This not only disrupts the future of scientific knowledge but also impedes the ongoing projects. Moreover, it also hampers the country's international collaboration in the technical field. It also reduces innovation in scientific field further hindering a country's development in any valuable field. Hence, brain drain negatively impacts the scientific research and technical advancement of a country.

Additionally, the massive departure of professionals and intellectuals from a country as a result of brain drain leads to the moral degradation of the society. Intellectuals and professionals with their vast theoretical and practical knowledge form the moral foundation of a society. They contribute to the elevation of society's moral standards through their words and actions. They inspire good qualities and create ideals for the masses who can follow on their footsteps. With mass exodus of such ideals, the morals of the society fall and the youth become corrupted. Hence, the phenomena of brain drain can cause the moral decadence of the society.

Lastly, the phenomena of brain drain increases the generation gap within a society. Most often, those leaving the country to settle abroad is younger generation. The vitality of youth for a country can not be understated. Youth is the primary driver of the country's economy and development. They sustain the balance of a society in all manners. With huge generational gap in a society this balance is disrupted, leading to a vicissitude of social, political and economic issues. It can lead to changes in family dynamics, conflicts in political policy and stagnation in economy. This can disrupt the social fabric of a society and increase class struggles and conflicts. Therefore, the phenomena of brain drain can result in the huge generational gap among country's population further disturbing its balance.

The issue of brain drain is relatively modern but has intensified in the last two decades. Countries like Pakistan which is already struggling with economic and political malaise is further crippled by the issue of brain drain. Many factors contributes to the exodus of

educated and professional community in Pakistan. These factors are influenced by social, political and economic conditions of the country. In addition to the push factors, many pull factors such as better life prospects is causing thousands to relocate. Although the phenomena of brain drain does not reflect an unatural tendencies, however; it has profound impact on the country's well-being. It negatively impact the country economy as well as its international standing. It also increases the conflicts in a society and disrupt social harmony among fellow countrymen. The issue has not deccuded from heaven and hence can be reverse. The government should provide incentives to the professional and intellectual community in order to make them stay in the country. The standards of life should be raised and security should be guaranteed. Stable political system can have a profound impact on the reversal of the phenomena of brain drain. The phenomena being detrimental to the country's development shall be taken into consideration by policy makers and stakeholders of the country.