

# Population Situation of Pakistan and Its Impacts on Development

## OUTLINE

### 1) INTRODUCTION

Thesis Statement: Population situation in Pakistan is worst and it has dreadful impacts on Pakistan's social, political, and economic development.

### 2) CAUSES OF OVERPOPULATION

- a. Illiteracy
- b. High Fertility Rate
- c. Lack of Family Planning
- d. Cultural and Religious Beliefs
- e. Political Factors

### 3) Economic Impacts

- a. Unemployment and Poverty
- b. Inflation

### 4) Political Impacts

- a. Political Instability
- b. Foreign Aid/Loans
- c. Burden on State Institutions

## 5) Social Impacts

- a. Strain on Education and Health Sector
- b. Depletion of natural resources
- c. Environmental degradation
- d. Conflicts and crimes
- e. Unfavourable living conditions

In Billionium, a short story by J. G. Ballard, human population reaches to a billion. There is food shortage and housing crisis. People start living in wibicles and their survival is threatened by because the population is growing rapidly. As a result, they have become materialistic and their morals have collapsed. Resultantly, it is the loss of humanity. The shocking situation of population in Pakistan seems like that of Billionium. It is neither a new issue nor is it a fully settled one. Developed countries are dealing with it successfully; whereas, the underdeveloped are still struggling. Unfortunately, Pakistan is one of those underdeveloped countries where the economic impacts of overpopulation are unemployment and poverty, inflation, political impacts are political instability, Foreign Aid, Burden on State Institution. Moreover, the social impacts are strain on education and health sector, depletion of natural resources, environmental degradation, conflicts and crimes, and unfavourable

living conditions. Thus, population situation in Pakistan is worst and it has dreadful impacts on Pakistan's economic, political, and social development.

To begin with, the first cause of overpopulation is illiteracy. Majority of the population in Pakistan is illiterate especially those living in rural areas. According to Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the literacy rate of Pakistan is 62.3 which mean that an estimated population of 60 million is illiterate in the country. People who are poor and illiterate are less likely to have access to family planning services and may not have the knowledge to control their fertility. Thus, illiteracy contributes to overpopulation.

The second cause of overpopulation in Pakistan is high fertility rate. Despite the existence of a national family planning program that dates to 1965, Pakistan has not seen a reduction in the fertility rate. According to the

World Bank Open Data, the fertility rate for Pakistan in 2023 was 3.238 births per woman. Social and cultural beliefs in Pakistan discourage the use of birth control, which can contribute to high fertility rates. Consequently, high fertility imposes costly burden on a country's economy.

The third cause of overpopulation in Pakistan is lack of family planning. Family planning enables women and their families to avoid unintended pregnancies. According to Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Sindh Minister for Population and Health, Family planning is an integral aspect of sustainable development. "Family planning is not just a women's issue; it is also an economic issue and a development issue. We must invest in family planning for healthier and more productive populations, and more sustainable economic growth". Many people in Pakistan do not have access to family planning services, which makes it difficult for them to control the size of their families, thus resulting in overpopulation.

The fourth cause of overpopulation in Pakistan is cultural and religious beliefs. Some cultural and religious beliefs in Pakistan discourage the use of birth control, which can contribute to high fertility rates. The concept of large family planning in Pakistan is very common. <sup>Many</sup> Pakistanis consider large families a blessing and do not bother to think if they are able to adequately feed and support the children. Along with this, some religious interpretations of religious teachings emphasize the importance of procreation and view children as a blessing. In essence, these religious and cultural dogmas become the main cause behind the rapidly increasing population.

Lastly, there are also certain political factors contributing to overpopulation which are political instability, migration and Afghan wars. Political instability has adverse impacts on population welfare programs: family planning, child care, and counseling of mothers etc. The initiatives launched by

the previous government get disrupted by the <sup>incoming</sup> previous government, sometimes, leading to end without aims being accomplished. Next comes the migration.

Although migration took place on both sides of the ~~Indo~~-Pakistan border at the time of partition, the number of Muslim refugees coming to Pakistan outnumbered those leaving the country for India. Similarly, Pakistan saw a surge in its population when million of Afghan refugees flooded to Pakistan during America supported war against USSR and later War on Terror. Hence, certain political factors have also been responsible for the surge in the population of Pakistan.

stating the causes of overpopulation in Pakistan, this essay would now discuss the impacts of rapidly growing population on Pakistan's economic, political, and social development.

To begin with, the first economic impact of overpopulation is unemployment. Youth unemployment is <sup>and poverty. Unemployment and poverty go hand in hand</sup> unemployment is

15 The most pressing issue linked to the enormous population growth in Pakistan. Pakistan's already fragile economy does not have capacity to absorb the potential of growing population. As the number of people increases, the less opportunities and resources have left for a state.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan's unemployment rate for 2021 was 6.34%, while it was 6.42%.

in 2022, a 0.08% increase from 2021.

Thus, ~~the~~ as a result of <sup>unemployment</sup> poverty, people get subjected to poverty. Poverty and unemployment are linked with each

other. According to the World Bank

report (2023), the poverty rate in

Pakistan stands at 39.3%, with 22%

living below the poverty line. After more

than 75 years of independence, a

significant portion of society lives in

abject poverty. Thus, unemployment and

poverty emerging from overpopulation

poses significant challenges for

Pakistan's economic development.



The second economic impact of overpopulation is inflation. Growing number of people is putting strain on already limited resources resulting in inflation. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, inflation rate in 2021-22 was 25.40%, while it was 27.55% in 2022-23. As the population increases, inflation rate keeps increasing as well, thus putting strain on economy. Overpopulation has impacts not only economic, but also political ones.

The first political impact of overpopulation is political instability. The increasing population puts strain on a government to provide basic services or facilities to them such as food, shelter, security, and so on. In case of deficiency of these basic services, if the government remains unable to meet these requirements, it then leads to public dissatisfaction and lack of trust on government. Due to this sort of social unrest, several

sectors. As the country has limited resources, the escalating population becomes the hurdle for education and health sectors in providing essential and equal appo services to all citizens. Pakistan already having less resources in its education and health sector cannot <sup>accomodate</sup> afford large number of people in schools and hospitals. In case of less availability of these services, inequality will emerge. As Richard M. Nixon, former US president (1913-1994) rightly said, "One of the most serious challenges to human destiny in the last third of this century will be the growth of the population." Thus, overpopulation becomes a daunting task for the state institutions to deal with.

The second <sup>social</sup> impact of overpopulation is depletion of natural resources. The more population means, the more mouths to be fulfilled. Pakistan already having limited resources like water, food, electricity, natural gas

and so on, overpopulation would further exacerbates the situation, causing immense strain on already limited natural reserves. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has placed Pakistan in the third position among the countries facing acute water shortages. <sup>similarly,</sup> Pakistan, despite being an agrarian country, is largely food insecure. Demands for these natural reserves have reached unprecedented levels, alarming difficult times ahead. In short, the more the population, the less availability of natural resources.

The third social impact of overpopulation is <sup>environmental</sup> urbanization degradation. Overpopulation exacerbates urbanization which in turn causes deforestation, poses threats to biodiversity and climate change. Larger number of people would move to cities, causing urbanization. Thus, more land would be required to facilitate them, resulting in deforestation. Due to deforestation and overcrowding, trends in climate

patterns will change, resulting in extreme weather events, erratic rainfall patterns, and rising temperatures.

According to Malcolm Potts, human reproductive scientist, "Population growth is at the center of many of the world's pressing environmental, economic and security problems?" In a nutshell, overpopulation is causing severe impacts on environment which ultimately would lead to environmental degradation.

The fourth social impact of overpopulation is conflicts and crimes. The fragile economy having been hit by overpopulation, creates unemployment and poverty which ultimately result in conflicts and crimes. Due to poverty and unemployment, conflicts inside and outside the families, start arising. Along with this, street crimes also start happening. As Warren <sup>someone</sup> Christopher said, "Hunger is the mother of all <sup>thus,</sup> curses." Owing to the economic issues arising from overpopulation, morality of the people starts degenerating,

causing severe impacts on a state.

Lastly, the insocial impact of overpopulation is unfavourable living conditions. Due to being in large numbers, it is more likely that people of a certain area would have to go through unfavourable living conditions like overcrowding, more traffic, noise pollution, sanitation and waste management issues. As Confucius, a philosopher, said, "Excessive (population) growth may reduce output per worker, repress levels of living for the masses and engender strife". In a nutshell, overpopulation causes worsens the living standards of a community, creating further implications for that community.

To conclude, the rapidly growing population of Pakistan poses drastic impacts on the country's development, mainly affecting economic, political, and sectors. In economic sector, its severe impacts are unemployment and poverty and inflation, while its impacts in political sector are political instability, foreign loans and burden on state institutions.

political governments have been thrown in past. As Issac Asimov said, Democracy cannot survive overpopulation. Thus, it becomes clear that demographic overpopulation poses significant challenges to democratic countries, causing further social and political unrest.

The next impact comes foreign loan or aid. Though governments take foreign loans or aid, it does not prove to be a panacea to all their problems. Owing to meet the demands of growing population, Pakistan has been relying on foreign loans since the early years after independence, causing severe debt. These debts then hinder the economic and political growth. For instance, Pakistan's total loan amount has been financed by the World Bank, the USA, China, and other Western and Arab countries. For the fiscal year FY21 and FY22, the total debt was PKR 44,336 billion, or 71% of GDP. Though governments take foreign

loans to overcoming the needs of their populace and in order to stabilize themselves and their economies, it does not yield considerable benefits.

Thus, foreign loans brings further challenges to political arena.

The third political impact of overpopulation lies on state institutions. These state institutions either they are judiciary, executive, bureaucracy or armed forces, face severe burden. Overpopulation poses significant challenges to these institutions. Growing number of people demands more services, thus putting pressure on these sectors and causing the situations further complicated. Consequently, overpopulation seems immense burden on state institutions. Besides economic and political impacts, there are also social impacts of overpopulation causing threat to the country.

The first social impact of overpopulation in Pakistan is health strain on education and education

Moreover, its impacts on social arena are strain on education and health sector, depletion of natural resources, environmental degradation, conflicts and crimes and unfavourable living conditions. Thus, the various impacts of overpopulation in different sectors prove to be a major hurdle in Pakistan's development.

Sir, kindly highlight my shortcomings as this is my first attempt at writing an essay. Also, if you know some authentic resources on this topic, do suggest me. I will be very thankful for this act.