

Samra

Topic: Population Explosion: A Threat to Pakistan

OUTLINE

1. Introduction

Thesis Statement: Population explosion of Pakistan poses an alarming threat to economic development, social stability, and environmental sustainability. There are several causes behind this rapidly increasing population. However, Pakistan should adopt a multi-faceted approach to address this challenge for country's development.

2. Defining the term 'population explosion.'

3. How is population explosion a threat for Pakistan?

(i) Economic Consequences

(a) Unemployment and poverty

(b) Strain on resources

(water, food, energy)

(c) Decreased per capita

income of the country

(ii) Social Consequences

(a) Rise of crimes and lawlessness

(b) Impacts on gender equality and women empowerment

(c) Overcrowding and housing shortage

(iii) Environmental Consequences

(a) Increased pollution and urbanization challenges

(b) Deforestation and land degradation

(c) Water scarcity, air pollution and climate change

4. Cause behind population explosion in Pakistan

(a) High birth and fertility

(b) Lack of family planning and awareness

(c) Cultural and religious factors.

5. Solutions to tackle the problem of population explosion

a) Family planning and education

b) Ensure gender equality and women empowerment

c) Provision of job opportunities and employment.

6. Conclusion

In just over seven decades since its independence, Pakistan has transformed from a fledgling nation to one grappling with the challenges of a rapidly swelling population, which has surged from 30 million in 1947 to over 240 million today.

This explosive growth, fueled by cultural norms and economic pressures, poses one of the greatest threats to the country's future. Population explosion is neither a new issue nor it is a fully settled one. Developed countries are dealing with it successfully.

Whereas, underdeveloped countries are still struggling. Unfortunately, Pakistan is one of them.

The alarming consequences of this population surge are of economic, social and environmental.

Due to rapidly increasing population, Pakistan faces

severe consequences of it. The main causes behind population explosion are lack of awareness, poverty, high birth rate and fertility, Lack of family planning and cultural and religious factors. These cause are not new in nature but their intensity is far greater in Pakistan. Unless these causes are address properly, the issue of population explosion can not be solved. These problems are not decended from heaven but they are man-made. So, serious and honest efforts are needed to solve the issue of increasingly population.

Undoubtedly, population explosion of Pakistan poses an alarming threat to economy, society and environment. Seneral causes are behind this demographic boom. However, Pakistan should adopt a multi-faceted

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approach to address this challenge for country's development.

Population explosion refers to a rapid and significant increase in the number of people in a specific area or globally over a short period. This phenomenon typically occurs when the birth rate significantly exceeds the death rate due to improvements in healthcare, sanitation and nutrition, that lower mortality rates.

First comes the economic consequences in which unemployment and poverty stand prominent. Pakistan is a country which faces rise of unemployment and poverty partly due to excessive population growth. Due to unemployment and poverty, a country not only lags behind the developed countries but also its key partners or

neighbouring states. In Pakistan around 25.5% of the population lives below the national poverty line in 2023. (World Bank). Unemployment rate is of around 8.5%, with youth unemployment (ages 15-29) reported at approximately 15%. (Pakistan Labour Force Survey-2023). Rapid population explosion increases the labour supply often outpacing job creation and leading to higher unemployment which ultimately gives rise to poverty in the country. Simultaneously, it has affected the economy of the country very badly.

The second economic consequences of population explosion is depleted resources like water, food and energy. Pakistan is already passing through the shortage of water, food and energy.

Population explosion has overburdened the country. It exerts significant strain on vital resources. In Pakistan, per capita water availability has declined from 5000 cubic meters in the 1950, to about 1200 cubic meter in 2023. projected by (The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources).

Around 35% of the population faces food insecurity as in 2023 report by World Bank.

The Pakistan Energy Yearbook 2022 states that electricity demand has surged to over 30,000 MW but country is unable to fulfill that need.

Hence, increasingly population has put an unbearable pressure to the resources which results into economic instability in the country.

The third economic consequences of population surge is the

decreased per capita income of the country. The country like Pakistan in which there is already unemployment, it can not provide jobs to the excessive population. Resultantly it decreases the per capita income of the country. A larger population can result in a higher dependency ratio, meaning more non-working individuals rely on working individuals, reducing per capita income.

According to the **Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-2023**, per capita income was estimated at approximately **\$1500** but projections indicates that without effective measures to address population growth and economic challenges, this figure could stagnate or decline.

Thus, increasingly population results into the decline of per capita income of the

Country.

Next to economic consequences, there comes social consequences due to population explosion.

First of all, there is rise of crimes and lawlessness due to population growth spurt. In Pakistan, the main reason behind increasing crimes and lawlessness situation is ^{more} population.

People are unable to get jobs due to lack of job opportunities, ultimately they find an illegal way to fulfill their needs. Resultantly, it creates lawlessness situation

in the country. Data from the Punjab Police showed a notable increase in robbery and theft cases, with reported incidents rising by 20% in 2023 compared to previous years, correlating with population pressures in urban areas.

As a result, population explosion

leads the people towards crimes and creates lawlessness in the country.

Secondly, gender inequality and issues of women empowerment are the social consequences of increasingly population growth. Population explosion has very bad social consequences on gender equality. Due to a large number of workforce in the market, men are preferred for a particular jobs. Approximately 35% of women medical doctors in Pakistan are without jobs, according to a nationwide research jointly conducted by Gallup Pakistan and PRIDE (Pakistan Resource Improvement and Digital Effectiveness). A report states that women's labour force participation in Pakistan is around 22%, significantly lower than men's

participation, which is about 70% (ILO)
Population pressures can limit job creation and economic participation opportunities for women, hindering their empowerment. Consequently, this generate a bad consequence on society and more women dependence on men.

Thirdly, shortage of housing and overcrowding is another hallmark on the society contributing to the bad social consequence. In Pakistan, Urban areas like Lahore and Karachi are the most over-populated cities of Pakistan. Many families are forced to live in small house which ultimately results into the housing shortage and overcrowding in the cities. This is due to the increasingly population growth of the country. The World Bank estimates that

around 60% of Karachi's population lives in informal settlements or slums. Karachi has around 16 million of population, it faces a significant overcrowding. According to the Pakistan Housing Authority, Pakistan has an estimated housing shortage of about 10 million units as of 2023. Hence, Pakistan faces severe housing shortage and overcrowding issues, which have badly affected the society due to the ongoing population explosion.

In addition to social consequences, there are some environmental consequences mainly caused by population explosion. First of all, increase pollution and urbanization challenges is prominent in environmental consequences. Demographic change has very badly affected the

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environment. Increased population has created the issues of air and water pollution and urbanization challenges for the country. The World Bank estimates that urban areas in Pakistan generate about 20 million tons of solid annually, a figure expected to rise with increasing urbanization. The United

Nations estimates that Pakistan's urban population will reach 75 million by 2030, leading to overcrowded cities. Pakistan ranked among the top 10

Countries for air pollution by The World Air Quality Report 2022.

It is due to the increased number of vehicle emissions caused by population density. Therefore, population explosion has very severe effects on environment leading to pollution and urbanization.

Second, deforestation and land degradation is also due to the population density. As population increases, a large area of land is consumed. Agricultural lands and forestry area are used for housing and commercial purposes due to provision of employment to that increased population. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) noted that Pakistan has lost approximately 2 million hectares of forest over over the past two decades, largely due to urban expansion and agricultural conversion driven by population growth. Approximately 25% of Pakistan's land area is affected by land degradation, primarily due to over-exploitation of land resources driven by rapidly growing population reported

by The Pakistan National Action Plan to combat degradation. Thus, population explosion has caused ^{of} deforestation and land degradation in Pakistan.

Lasts environmental consequences ^{in form of} are water scarcity, air pollution and climate change. As population increases, the demand also increases, more water is used in agricultural crops to fulfill the needs of the people, resultantly it gives birth to water scarcity. Air pollution and climate change is also due to the population spike.

According to the **Pakistan Quality Report 2022**, over 50% of the water sources in Pakistan are contaminated due to various issues, worsening access to clean drinking water as population density increases.

"Air pollution in Pakistan is having a devastating impact on people's health," stated by (WHO). Pakistan is among the countries most vulnerable to climate changes. Increased population pressures exacerbate this vulnerability. Consequently, population explosion of Pakistan has driven the problem of water scarcity, air pollution, and climate change into more complexity.

There are also some causes behind this population explosion. Firstly, high birth and fertility rate is the most leading cause of population explosion. Pakistan is the second among South Asian countries having high fertility rate. Due to high birth rate and fertility, population in Pakistan is increasing drastically. According to the

7th National Population and Housing Census 2023, Pakistan's total fertility rate is 3.6 while world average is 2.2.

The World Bank reports that Pakistan's crude birth rate is about 22.9 birth per 1000 people as 2021. The ^{high} birth rate contributes to the rapid population growth observed in the country. Hence, high birth and fertility rate is the main reason behind population explosion in Pakistan.

Secondly, lack of family planning and awareness play their significant role in population spike. In Pakistan, it is considered odd to talk about family planning openly. In rural areas, people even do not have awareness about

it. They do not know about the drastic consequences of population boom. In Pakistan, first of all concept of early marriage is prevalent which is aligned with lack of family planning and awareness cause increase in population. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), approximately 25% of married women in Pakistan have an unmet need for family planning. It results into the population explosion in the country. Therefore, lack of family planning and awareness become a major cause of population spike in Pakistan.

Thirdly, cultural and religious factors become the cause of rapid population growth in the country. Cultural and

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religious factor have led the families to increase the members of their children.

Traditional values emphasize large families as a sign of prosperity, while patriarchal norms prioritize male heir, leading to more children. Additionally, some interpretations of Islamic teachings are misinterpreted. According to them, more children of a family are encouraged. There is no concept of family planning. Children are viewed as blessings and a source of wealth. This belief can lead to resistance against family planning. Concerns about religious condemnation for using contraceptives or limiting family size can deter couples from seeking family planning methods. Consequently, this

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leads to the rise of population in Pakistan.

Some solutions are recommended to tackle the problem of population explosion. To begin with, family planning and education is necessary to tackle down the problem of demographic change.

There is a dire need to ensure proper working of family planning sectors in this regard. Education can also play its crucial role to control the population. Family planning allow couples to access contraceptives to make informed choices about family size. Education enhances awareness about reproductive health and responsibilities of children. Dr. Adnan Khan and Dr. Ayesha's Khan's report suggests practical

Strategies to improve family planning services. Thus, family planning and education can play their important role in controlling of rapidly increasing population.

Next to family planning and education, there comes the strategies to ensure gender equality and women empowerment. Gender equality and women empowerment are critical components in controlling population explosion. Educated and economically independent women are more likely to have fewer children. When a women have a say in household decisions, they prioritize education and family planning. By ensuring gender equality and women empowerment, Pakistan can control high growth rate.

According to the WHO, an empowered women are more likely to utilize family planning services. The Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (2022) shows that contraceptive use among married women is around 34%.

Thus, increasing women's autonomy and decision-making power can enhance access to these services, thus lowering birth rates.

In addition to ensuring gender equality and women empowerment, provision of job opportunities and employment can control population explosion.

Provision of jobs can play its role in this essence that the thought about labour force will reduce among public. When people have stable

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employment, they are more likely to delay marriage and child bearing, and invest in their children's education and future, leading to a decline in population growth rates. Research from the **United Nations Population Fund** shows that women engaged in full-time employment tend to marry later and have fewer children. Hence, employment and creation of jobs can ensure their role in controlling of population explosion.

To conclude, it can be said that population explosion of Pakistan creates a significant threat to economic development, social stability and environmental sustainability. There are many factors behind population spike. However, Pakistan needs a

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Comprehensive approach to address this challenge for country's development. No doubt, population explosion has severe impacts on the country's economy, society, and environment. However, by addressing the causes behind the population bloom, Pakistan can be able to solve this issue. Empowering women and improving access to family planning services are crucial steps in reducing fertility rates and fostering informed reproductive choices. Pakistan can move forward towards the development and growth of the nation after addressing this bomb ticking problem. While the challenges of a growing population may seem daunting, every individual

is a potential source of innovation and change. Together, Pakistan can harness collective strength to create a sustainable future.
