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Day: Tuesday

Essay Task # 1

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Topic: Resources can be Rich only When Properly Utilized

Outline

(1) Introduction

Thesis statement: Pakistan has been unable to utilize its abundant resources due to various reasons. Consequently, it has been facing multiple security issues such as water crisis, energy crisis, and food insecurity. However, taking pragmatic measures to maximize the resource utilization can lead Pakistan towards prosperity.

(2) Proper Utilization of Resources Makes them Beneficial

(3) Reasons behind Poor Utilization of Resources in Pakistan

- (a) Apathy of successive governments towards exploring the resources
- (b) Disputes among federal and provincial governments regarding distribution of resources
- (c) Reluctance to spend initial cost required to install infrastructure
- (d) Culture of taking resources for granted

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(e) Lack of trained labour and competent professionals

(f) Poor infrastructure and lack of advanced technology

(4) Grave Impacts of Poor and Under Utilization of Resources

(a) Turning the youth into liability instead of assets

(b) Facing water scarcity due to poor management of immense abundant water resources

(c) Suffering from food insecurity despite having large fertile land

(d) Inability to achieve sustainable growth and development due to not utilizing

renewable resources

(e) Relatively lower GDP contribution by Tourism Sector in spite of great tourism potential

(f) Environmental degradation due to over exploitation of natural resources

(g) Facing cyber security threats despite having IT talent

(5) Pragmatic Measures to Bring the Resources under proper Utilization for Prosperous Future

(a) Identifying the potential of national resources and prioritizing them on the basis of demand

(b) Encouraging public-private partnership to bear the initial cost for infrastructure installation

(c) Investing to create skilled labour and competent professionals

(d) Spreading awareness about the sensible use of resources to prevent their wastage

(6) Conclusion

The Essay

The proverbial thirsty crow found a water pot in a garden, but he could not drink water due to lower water level.

Then, he saw few stones in the premises of the garden and started to put them

into the pot. Gradually, the water level rose due to volume of ^{the} stones. Finally, he

drank water and refreshed himself. He properly utilized the available stones to fulfill his need. (3)

This story has a lesson for Pakistan. It has been suffering from multiple crises just because of improper utilization of its abundant resources. Multiple factors are responsible for this situation including governments' apathy, conflicts on resource distribution, and immense cost for infrastructure installation. Moreover, lack of people's awareness, skilled labour, competent professionals, proper infrastructure, and advanced technology also contributes to the grave situation. Inability to leverage its resources has left Pakistan with human capital crisis, water crisis, and food insecurity. Poor sustainable development, lower GDP growth, and environmental degradation are far-reaching implications of under utilization of its resources.

Moreover, Pakistan has been unable to capitalize on ^{its} IT talent to curb the cyber security threats. However, by taking serious steps towards resource utilization, such as identifying and prioritizing the resources, encouraging public-private partnership, empowering work force with skills, and

spreading awareness, Pakistan can secure a prosperous future. Hence, Pakistan has been unable to utilize its abundant resources due to various reasons. Consequently, it has been facing multiple security issues such as water crisis, energy crisis, and food insecurity. However, taking pragmatic measures to maximize the resource utilization can lead Pakistan towards prosperity.

Pakistan is a highly rich country with a diversity of resources. According to UNDP report, Pakistan has the largest proportion of young population with 64% of its population below the age 30 (UNDP, Human Development Report, 2023). In Pakistan, there is the world's largest irrigation system and above 7000 glaciers more than any other country out of the polar region. The world's second largest salt mine is located in Pakistan. Its snow-capped mountainous region, deserts, coastal region, archeological sites, religious sites, and historical architecture sites make it an attractive tourist

destination. Moreover, there are immense renewable resources including solar, wind, hydel, biomass, and geothermal resources. Unfortunately, Pakistan has been grappling with a plethora of issues despite all these resources. It is the need of the hour to identify its reasons and find the practical solutions.

Lack of governments' interest is chief among various reasons behind poor resource utilization. The proper exploitation of resources is only possible by well-planned national-level projects organized by the government. Unluckily, due to lack of strategic vision, Pakistan's governments pay little to no attention towards resources. It is evident from the fact that, despite endowed with huge mineral reserves, Pakistan's first ever mineral summit named "Dust to Development" have held after 75 years since its inception. Moreover, the governments' mishandling of projects undertaken by foreign investors has proved to be a major setback

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for resource exploration. The Reko diq case shows how Pakistan has almost lost the huge mineral reserves of Reko diq mine - world's fifth largest copper and gold mine. In brief, Pakistan's natural resources are untapped yet due to governments' apathic behavior.

Resource conflicts among federal and provincial governments ~~are~~ also contribute to resource under-utilization. The coordination among all stakeholders is a pre-requisite for leveraging resources for inclusive prosperity.

The inequitable distribution of resources results to disputes which, in turn, hinder the progress of development projects. For instance, there is a recurring dispute on distribution of water. Sindh accused Punjab - the upper riparian province - of "water theft", while Balochistan blames Sindh for not giving its due share of water. It is evident from the failure of Kalabagh Dam project which was caused by ^{severe} opposition from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

and Sindh. Thus, Pakistan has been unable to use its resources in an effective way due to resource disputes.

Other than resource disputes, lack of investment in infrastructure installation hinders the efficient resource utilization. The exploitation of resources becomes easy and efficient with sophisticated infrastructure as the technology advances. But a heavy initial cost is pre-requisite to install an advanced ^{infrastructure} ~~country~~. Pakistan, being a developing country, is suffering from plethora of economic issues such as fiscal deficit and current account deficit. So, it has been unable to invest a large chunk of money. Shahid-ur-Rahman in his book Pakistan: The Reckoning Begins, while discussing the resource management, argues that Pakistan has 50,000 MW of hydropower potential only in Gilgit, Kashmir, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, the installation of power plants for hydro electricity generation was of ^{only} 8700 MW by 2020.

In sum, the poor utilization of resources is an outcome of inadequate investment for installing infrastructure.

Pakistani society takes the natural resources for granted which is another factor behind inefficient use of resources. At local and managerial level, the resources are senselessly used resulting in their wastage. Ultimately, this wastage leads to resource depletion.

Due to this ignorant behavior of Pakistani people, the country's resources such as water, minerals, and fossil fuels are depleting at a fast pace. ^{For instance,} Everyone prefers private conveyance over public transport, which causes the over consumption of fossil fuels.

Consequently, the fossil fuel reserves are depleting at alarming levels. It is evident from the fact that the nation has consumed about 81 percent of total oil reserves and above 69 percent of cumulative gas reserves (Hussain Ahmad, Running Out of Resources, August 2023). Hence, the inefficient, excessive usage of resources is serving as

unprecedented setback for Pakistan's development.

Lack of trained labour and competent professionals also contributes to the country's inability to tap its resources. Competent professionals help to explore the resources and skilled labour makes it possible to harvest the resources. Unfortunately, Pakistan has been unable to reproduce a productive workforce. This is mainly due to the inadequate investment on human capital and flawed education system of Pakistan. Absence of modern skills causes the lower productivity level. That is why, Pakistan's labour force cannot materialize the potential of ^{the its} resources. The crop yield analysis of Pakistan reveals that the National potential for total grain production is 100,933,000 kg/year, while the actual national grain production from 2015-2016 was 38,227,000 kg/year which is only 38 percent of its actual potential (Zarai Taraqati Bank, Crop Yield Gap Analysis, 2020). In brief, Pakistan resources remain untapped because of the labour's insufficient skillset.

Poor infrastructure and lack of technological advancement also hinders the ^{effective} resource utilization (effectively). Technology plays a key role in meeting the demands of growing population and protecting the environmental resources from depletion. An American fiction writer Ramez Naam emphasizes the importance of technology in resource exploitation. He says, "New technology lets you grow the resource pie, which is the only way for you can get out between that pincer of rising consumption (as we end poverty) and environmental and natural resources depletion (bigthink.com, Dialogues on the Environment, 2013). Sadly, Pakistan lags behind in ^{she} technological advancement. Resultantly, ~~she~~ ^{it} is unable to meet the rising population ^{demands of} and conserve the natural resource reserves. It is evident from that the fact that the country's population is facing acute water shortage, food crisis, energy power outages and about 40 percent population ^{is} living below the poverty line. Thus, the inability to

get benefit from resources is primarily because of technological backwardness.

Pakistan has turned its young population, perhaps the most precious resource, into a liability. Youth acts like a double-edge sword. If the state succeeds in developing its development, it leads the nation towards prosperity. Despite being the largest section of the population, the governments paid a little attention towards socio-economic issues faced by young people. The state has failed to provide them with standard education, healthcare, jobs, and especially a peaceful environment. ^{for} ~~from~~ growing and nurturing. The result is visible in the country's poor ranking in human development index. According to a UNDP report, Pakistan ranks 164th in HDI with low ^{human} development status. ~~Con~~ (UNDP, Human Development Report, ^{either} 2024). Consequently, they have been involving in social evils such as street crimes, militant activities, beggary, and drug abuse or leaving the country. The youth's hopelessness is evident

from the rising rate of people leaving Pakistan. Briefly, the youth, instead of being largest asset, has become the largest liability due to poor human development.

Poor management of the country's immense water resources has resulted in acute water scarcity. Water is the most essential resource in the world; there is no life on earth without water. But the people of Pakistan has been senselessly wasting and polluting this resource. The practices such as wasting water in households and pouring industrial sewage in fresh water bodies and inability of the governments to build dams for storage of water are responsible of water shortage. Pakistan ranks 14th out of 17 high water risk countries. According to Dr. Ishrat Hussain, "We do not have water crisis; we have a failure of governance with regard to water issues (PIDE, Manifestations of water crisis, 2022)." Hence, the prevalent water shortage is due to the bad governance and

management of water resources.

The improper usage of fertile crop land is leading towards barrenness and food insecurity in Pakistan. It was once major exporter of wheat, cotton, and other crops, now it is compelled to import them for meeting the population demand. It is because of the traditional agricultural methods, inavailability of quality seeds, lack of advanced technology, and inadequate research in agricultural realm. Moreover, the agricultural yield is badly impacted by climate-related disasters thanks to government's inability to make the agriculture climate smart. Resultantly, the population has been facing severe food shortage resulting in malnutrition and health-related issues. As per an analysis, approximately 8.6 million people in Pakistan are facing high levels of acute food shortage between March to June 2024 (ipcinfo.org, Pakistan: Acute Food Insecurity situation, June 2024). In sum, people are facing serious existential threat due to

improper utilization of agricultural resources.

Sustainable development and growth in Pakistan seems impossible in the foreseeable future despite presence of abundant renewable resources. God has gifted Pakistan with abundance of diverse renewable resources: solar, wind, hydel, biomass, and geothermal resources. Due to incompetency and negligence of successive governments, these resources has not been utilized for sustainable future. In result, Pakistan is facing the socio-economic crisis and bearing the brunt of climate crisis also due to unsustainable practices. The 2022 floods present the horrific view of climate related disasters; they affected 33 million people, killed almost 1700 including children, and swept the standing crops in Sindh and Punjab. In summation, sustainability has not achieved yet due to under utilization of renewable resources.

Apart from natural resources, the tourism potential has not been materialized to increase gross domestic product (GDP) indicating poor economic growth. Tourism is one of the largest contributors to global economy. Pakistan's tourism potential is immense with religious, historical, archeological, and architectural sites and diverse landscape. The largest setback for its economy is its failure to leverage the tourism potential to enhance GDP. The major reasons behind this are depletion of infrastructure, security issues, poor hospitality sector, social behavior towards tourists, and inadequate branding of Pakistan as a tourism destination. Resultantly, Tourism sector's contribution in GDP is meager. This failure is evident as Pakistan ranks 101st out of 119 countries in World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Development Index (WEF, Travel and Tourism Development Index, 2024). In this way, Pakistan is wasting its tourism potential which could be a source of economic growth, otherwise.

Excessive exploitation of natural resources causes environmental degradation which is a burning issue of Pakistan. Natural resources such as forests, glaciers, minerals, wild and marine life are being over utilized for personal economic interests at the expense of environmental health and sustainability. Some mafias are reported to stealing glacier ice resulting in devastating impacts on water cycle. Moreover, Pakistan's already insufficient forest cover is undergoing deforestation at alarming rates. Due to reducing forest cover, global warming is increasing, and resultant climate crisis leads to further environmental devastation. According to a study, Pakistan loses 27000 hectares of forest cover ^{per} year (Jamil Ahmad, Green Shields, 2024).^{July} It shows that over usage of resources is disrupting the environmental balance in Pakistan.

In the digital landscape, Pakistan is facing cyber security threat, perhaps the most dangerous

security threat, in spite of having IT talent. These threats are from the rival countries and violent non-state actors. Pakistan's tech savvy population could play a significant role in securing digital protection. A cyber security ^{event} named "Black Hat" held in Saudi Arabia has revealed Pakistan's IT talent. The event was held in November 2023 in which 250 teams all across the world participated. Pakistani teams secured notable positions: Airflow secured 27th position, Sudoers claimed 32nd, and Gryffens attained 33rd (Arabnews.pk, Black Hat MEA, Nov 2023). Unfortunately, a little has been done to polish the IT talent in Pakistan. Due to this negligence, this talent could not be utilized for assuring cyber safety. Resultantly, the cyber crimes are increasing at alarming rate as spyware attacks in Pakistan surge in the first quarter of 2024, escalating by a staggering 300% compared to 2023 (tribune.com, Spyware attacks increased, May 2024). Thus, inefficient utilisation of IT talent has paved way for increased cyber

security threats.

The first and foremost step towards efficient and effective utilization of resources is the identification and prioritization of indigenous resources. Pakistan's a lot of resources remains untapped due to the absence of resource identification and prioritization policy. The countries performing well in this domain ensure the ^{resource} ~~new~~ identification and upgrading of resource list as well as prioritization on the basis of global demand.

It is recommended to enlist all the natural resources on the priority basis, their potential, and ongoing projects along with their success.

This documentation would help in future planning regarding resource utilization in efficient, effective, and sustainable manner.

For instance, copper should be given topmost priority among other minerals because it is integral to solar panels, 5G^G technology, robotics, cryogenics, energy-efficient machines and biodegradable batteries. Thus, it is essential to prioritize the native resources for effective usage.

Public-private partnership is the solution of almost all financial constraints regarding resource utilization. Investment is required for infrastructure installation, technological advancements, research and development, and the country's economy is suffering from various economic issues resulting in meager budget allocation for resource exploration. By engaging private sector, financial investment can be secured for such projects. The transition of energy sector from non-renewable to renewable resources is an attractive bid for private companies. Thus, involving private sector will help in cost-effective green energy production. According to a study, Pakistan requires \$101 billion for energy sector transition by 2030 to reduce the greenhouse gases emissions (sdpi, Pakistan Require ~~too~~ \$101 bn for Energy Transition, Dec 2030). Hence, public-private partnership is a lucrative solution to meet financial demands for resource exploitation.

It is imperative to invest in human capital development to instil ^{competent} skillset in labour and professionals. Pakistan lags behind in producing skillful workforce. The government should invest to improve higher education sector ^{making} enabling the graduates suitable for economic contribution. Moreover, arranging vocational training programs in different sectors will help to enrich the unskilled labour with advanced methodologies and technological skills. The government should collaborate with developed and fast developing countries for technical assistance. For instance, in order to technologically advance the agriculture sector, Pakistan can cooperate with China. China is also looking for fertile lands for agricultural investment to meet the nutritional demands of ^{its} growing large population. This is how, Pakistan can achieve the required skillful workforce to ensure sustainable resource exploitation.

Raising resource awareness through campaigns is the need of the hour. Public should

be aware of the importance of resources and ^{their} limited quantity as well. It would help to raise consciousness regarding sensible usage of resources. They must be utilized effectively, efficiently, and sustainably conserving them for the use of future generations as well. Theodore Roosevelt, an American president, once said, "The nation behaves well if it treats its natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the generation increased, and not impaired, in value." Thus, spreading awareness among population will help to protect and conserve the natural resources for future use all well.

In a nutshell, Pakistan has not succeeded in utilizing its indigenous resources due to many issues, chief among them is governance failure. As a result, it has been suffering from a bunch of issues such as shortage of essential commodities: food, ^{drinkable} water, clean air to breath, and electricity. Moreover, stunted economic growth

Day: _____ Date: _____
environmental degradation, and lack of sustainable development are far-reaching implications of improper exploitation of native resources. However, Pakistan could overcome these issues by taking pragmatic measures.

The practical steps including documentation of resources, instilling labour with advanced skillset, encouraging public-private partnership, and spreading awareness of resources' importance can help Pakistan to get rid of multiple crises it is facing. This document shows the necessity of sustainable usage of resources for the country's bright future and how Pakistan can achieve this state of sustainability. As the Quran states: "O children of Adam! ... Eat and drink but do not waste. Surely, He does not like the wasteful." (7:31)