

Date: _____

10

IS HIGHLY COMPETITIVE
ENVIRONMENT GOOD OR BAD

OUTLINE

I- INTRODUCTION

II- HIGHLY COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT FULL OF DRAWBACKS (THESES)

1- Competition and Lack of Critical Abilities

i- case in point: KPPSC Judiciary
Interview results

2- Competition leads to Economic Burdens

i- costly standard resources

3- COMPETITION UNDERMINES SOCIAL SKILLS

i- Communication skills in civil servants
of Pakistan

4- LACK OF EFFICIENCY IN COMPETITION

Case study: politicians and their
inefficiency in Pakistan

Date: _____

(2)

5- HIGHLY COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

- i- Suicide Cases in Civil Servants

III HIGHLY COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT A NECESSARY EVIL (ANTITHESIS)

1- COMPETITIONS TESTS THE CRITICAL SKILLS

- i- Case in point: Civil Services of Pakistan

2- COMPETITION LEADS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

- i- Quality and Economic prosperity

3- SOCIAL SKILLS ARE OF SECONDARY CONSIDERATION

4- LACK OF EFFICIENCY HAS OTHER REASONS

- i- Structural Issues and work environment as cause of inefficiency

5- PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES HAVE OTHER ROOT CAUSES

IV - ~~THE~~ DRAWBACKS OF COMPETITION UNDERMINES ITS EFFECTIVENESS

Date: _____

(3)

i- TESTING CRITICAL SKILLS

DOES NOT GUARANTEE CRITICAL THINKERS

i- Critical ability tests can be manipulated

ii- ECONOMIC BENEFITS ARE NOT SIGNIFICANT

i- Case in point: Highly competitive political environment but IMF dependency

ii- Failure of FBR as case study

iii- SOCIAL SKILLS ARE MORE IMPORTANT IN 21ST CENTURY

iv - OTHER REASONS ARE LESS SIGNIFICANT RELATED TO PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

v- CONCLUSION

Date: _____

(4)

In 1789, Napoleonic France was getting defeats at all fronts. Though Napoleon had a great army, recruited through a rigorous scouting process, yet the army lost to British in famous Battle of pyramids. Then, Napoleon started the process of conscription, which led to decrease in competition. This decrease in competition changed the dynamics in battlefield and Napoleon started to win battles after battles. Napoleonic era reached at its zenith after the process of ~~conscription~~ conscription. This shows that competition has a significant relation with capabilities and performance. The debate about competition as a good or bad is not new but it holds more relevance in highly competitive environment of 21st century. Whether the competition is good or bad, there are two conflicting school of thoughts. One school of thought considers it as good as it provides quality over the quantity. Other school of thought considers highly competitive environment as a root cause of psychological issues and social alienation. The research based evidences suggest that highly competitive environment is a curse as having more disadvantages than advantages.

Date: _____

(5)

To begin with, one major problem with highly competitive environment is that it hampers the critical thinking abilities of an individual. In order to compete, individuals follow the norms set by society which hampers their abilities to think out of the box. Hence critical abilities of individuals are not nourished while focusing solely on pre-defined goals.

For example, In 2025, KPPSC conducted examination for civil Judges. out of 148 candidates who passed the highly competitive exams for civil judges, only 12 were able to clear the interview. Their failure was attributed to loss of critical thinking skills. Likewise, more than 30 students, who cleared PMS exam of 2022 in KP, were failed and got ~~1st~~ zero marks in interview. This was another manifestation of how highly competitive environment leads to loss of critical thinking skills. The ability of solving the real life problems ~~are~~ is hampered by focusing on other strengths associated with strict criteria of a vacancy.

Another important disadvantage of highly

Date: _____

(6)

competitive environment is that it leads to economic burden. Due to increasing competition, the resources required for high competition are exploited and used for business purpose by individuals or companies. This not only deepens the economic disparity but also leads to increasing gap ~~and~~ of opportunities between haves and have nots. The availability of standard books for entrance test of medical colleges and high cost coaching academies are examples that highlights how competition increases the discrimination in the society. millions of students are kicked out of the race of medical colleges due to lack of affordability for good resources and coachings and hence robbed of their future. Same holds true for coaching institutes for competitive examinations. In this way, highly competitive environment leads to economic disparity and deepens social divide.

Likewise, another drawback of highly competitive environment is ^{that} it leads to loss of socio-cultural norms in a society. Aristotle once remarked, "man is a social animal. Social

Date: _____

(7)

Beings have various social needs. To spend time with loved ones is one such need associated with social interaction in a society. Unfortunately, due to highly competitive environment, humans are unable to find the quality time with their family and loved ones. Hence, due to heavy load imposed on shoulders of individuals, they lack social interactions and therefore they do not have social skills required for well being of society. The society becomes unprosperous and unrest prevails in the society. Take the example of civil bureaucracy in Pakistan. Though civil servants are selected through rigorous recruiting process yet they lack the basic communication skills. This is because of more focus on skills required for high competition and ignorance of social interactions. So they are not able to solve the social issues pertaining to society.

Another way which makes highly competitive environment bad is the inefficiency caused by highly competition

Date: _____

(8)

environment. personal growth of individuals in body affected in urge to stand in higher ranks. Competition oriented efforts leads to less focus on interpersonal skills. Thus individuals are not able to deliver efficiently due to lack of these skills. For example, politics in Pakistan is highly competitive tasks. politicians strive to get tickets for seats of councils and district council. Even tougher competition waits them for the seat of MPA or MNA. After a long struggle and combating the inter and intra party competition, they become MPAs or MNAs. Then the struggle for ministries start. Once an MPA or MNA gets the ministry, now he has to deliver. But history of Pakistan is evident that only a fraction of ministers are able to deliver. Even after passing through the highly competitive process, their failure to deliver is a big question mark on process of high competition and competitive environment.

In the same way, the psychological problems associated with highly competitive environment is another issue. The highly competitive environment

Date: _____

(7)

causes a number of psychological problems in individuals like anger, anxiety and depression. These psychological impacts not only hampers the ability of individuals to deliver the quality services but may lead to fatal consequences for individuals. For example, suicides and suicidal attempts in civil servants of Pakistan and in officials of ~~individero~~ institution having highly competitive environment and selection criteria is a manifestation of disastrous impacts of highly competitive environment on individuals. According to a report by Pakistan psychological association, Karachi, the numbers of psychologists having more issues in personal domains is significantly higher in those psychologists who ~~are~~ working in government hospitals. The government hospitals offer significant competition for psychologists. This shows that highly competitive environment is associated with psychological disorders even in psychologists. Thus its impacts on non psychologists are likely to be higher.

There is another school of thought

Date: _____

(10)

which argues that competition is a good thing having a number of positive outcomes.

One argument presented by the school of thought advocating the competition is that competition provides automatically a check for critical abilities of an individual. Competing in environment full of challenges helps an individual to sharpen his critical skill. This is due to their critical skills that they ^{could} compete and hence selected. For example, in civil services of Pakistan, critical skills are checked at various levels. From unseen essay topics to group activities, critical skills of individuals are evaluated. Thus highly competitive environment nourishes the ability to think out of the box.

Similarly, the supporters of competition argues that competition helps in promoting economic prosperity. The competitive environment polishes the ability of an individual so that he can prosper economically in one or way. This indeed weighs the economic hurdles faced by individual during highly competitive environment. Secondly, the competitive environment promotes the

Date: _____

(11)

Quality over quantity. The quality leads to better economic prosperity of society. For example, the FBR officers selected through rigorous selection process promote the economic well being of society. Thus highly competitive environment helps in prosperity and well being of the society.

Likewise, the highly competitive environment has nothing to do with social issues. The competitive environment leads to improve the social communication by virtue to highly qualified individuals leading the society. Selection of fittest is manifested in nature as well. Nature never goes against the betterment of human race. And the scientific evidences suggesting the natural selection of fittest is an evidence is competition is a necessary evil for society. Take the example, if there would be no competition, the inefficient individuals may rule the society leading to ultimate disaster.

In the same way, competition is a key to efficiency. The highly competitive and deserving individuals are selected through the competition, which gives an almost guaranteed

Date: _____

(12)

of efficiency of those individuals. For example, Inter services selection board (ISSB) selects the individual for army ranks through high competition. Likewise, for promotion to higher ranks, a tougher competition waits the officers. Hence, after passing through a tough competitive environment, they are ultimately promoted. Thus higher competition in army is the reason Pakistan has a strong army as manifested in Binyan-ul-Massars. These evidences support that the competition in an institution promotes the efficiency.

In the same, this school of thought argues that that high competitive environment has to do nothing with psychological issues. Rather these are many other issues which ultimately translates to psychological problems like anxiety and anger. For example, according to a research study published by American psychological Association (PSA), more than 50% cases of psychological issues results as a consequence of child abuse. This study reflects that other reasons are those which does shadow the process of high competition' regarding the psychological issues.

Date: _____

(13)

The arguments of school of thought promoting highly competitive environment holds a number of fallacies, which are refuted by the solid evidences provided by school of thought promoting a least competitive environment.

First of all, the argument that competitive environment checks the critical thinking abilities is refuted on the ground that checking critical abilities does not guarantee that selected individuals will be having critical abilities. This is because, the critical ability evaluation mechanisms are faulty and hence these mechanisms can be cheated. For example, the unseen essay topics by civil service examination are predicted by many concerned academics. Likewise, the group tasks assigned are already taken from a predefined group task banks. The tasks are repeated again and again and hence can be cheated. This shows that highly competitive environment cannot stop the problem of ^{lack of} critical thinking abilities in individuals.

Similarly, regarding the economic benefits, the argument is refuted that

Date: _____

(16)

not all the individuals get the fruits from high competition. Even if the argument that highly competitive exam promote economic well being is accepted for the sake of argument, it is associated with many fallacies.

If there ~~are~~ is a fraction of individual getting incentives from qualifying highly competitive exams these are thousands who are going through economic crises due to ~~the~~ unaffordability arose as a consequence of high competition. Similarly, though there is high competition in politics yet benefits for Pakistan public are negligible. For example, the finance ministers and bureaucrats, who enjoy the privileges due to highly competitive selection, have failed to solve economic problems of Pakistan and to let it get rid of economic dependency. Same is the case of FBR, where officials selected after rigorous screening failed to increase tax ~~load~~ collection. Thus, high competition may cause economic benefits to few individuals, it significantly fails to overall well being of a society.

likewise, social skills still hold relevance in 21st century and hence their

importance cannot be undermined. The argument that social skills are no more relevant in modern days is ~~to~~ contradictory to research. Any course of historic evolution still cannot separate the social element from the individuals. This is because social affiliation lies in genes. According to a research by nature, evolution has strengthened the social association of individuals at genetic level. In era of post industrial revolution, social skills are important for individual and personal growth.

Last but not the least, the argument of scholars advocating highly competitive environment regarding other causes of psychological issues is also rejected by scholars on bases of evidences. Though there are other reasons of psychological problems yet ~~rept~~ the highly competitive environment outweighs all other factors. According to a research study by John Hopkins research institute, the child abuse related traumas can be healed provided a sound and relax environment. But the environment related to ~~highly~~ competition is neither sound nor relax. This shows that psychological

Date: _____

(16)

issues related to highly competitive environment are ~~more~~ real.

In a nutshell, both school of thought supports their view through valid arguments but the arguments provided by ~~and~~ supporters of highly competitive environment are refuted through research based evidences. Thus highly competitive environment by virtue of undermining critical abilities, deepening economic divide, hampering social skills, impeding efficiency and increasing psychological issues, holds more disadvantages than advantages.