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Pakistan's Youth Bulge: A liability or An Asset.

Outline

I. Introduction:

Although unemployment and brain drain make Pakistan's youth bulge as a liability, it can be ^{an} asset if these issues are resolved by taking some preventive measures.

II. Contextualizing the term 'Youth Bulge'

III. Counter-perspective: youth bulge as a liability

A. High ratio of unemployment

Case study: ILO, 2024 (only 11% are employed)

B. Immense number of brain drain

Example: Alone in 2023, 800,000 people left Pakistan.

IV. Pakistan's Youth bulge is facing numerous challenges because

A. Education Crisis

Case study: According to UNICEF, 22.8 million students are out of school

B. High ratio of dependency.

Eg: Unemployed youth is overly dependent on others.

C. Gender disparity

Example: Ishrat Hussain in his book 'Governing the Ungovernable'

D. Weak digital skills

Eg: Lack of resources makes a digital gap among the youth.

V. Way forwards to utilize and transform the country's youth in an asset.

A. Providing quality based knowledge

Case study: Countries, like Finland and Canada.

B. Boosting mini startups

Example: India has done the same thing.

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C. Involving youth in decision making process

D. Bridging the gender gap

Example: Ishrat Hussain in his

book 'Governing the Ungovernable'

E. Providing resources of modern technology

VI. Conclusion

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"In Pakistan, 63% of the population is under 30, making it one of the largest countries in the world in the youth bulge"

In aforementioned statistic, a researcher, Muhammad Farooq, depicted in his study 'Consequences of youth bulge in Pakistan.' In his research, he argued that the country's youth is one of the greatest blessings because they have potential to move the country in right direction. Apart from this, no other country has this type of an asset through which they can drive their countries economically, socially, and politically. However, he further explained that youth is extremely facing challenges due to lack of education, skills, and disparity. If these issues are not resolved, it is very much possible that the young people can indulge them in terrorist organization which ultimately poses a significant and expanding threat to the communities and the government. Is Pakistan's youth not lacking in education? Is it not possible to make youth as an

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asset if providing quality based knowledge?

Can the country's youth not be an asset if the gender disparity is finished? Can young people not be an asset if they are involved in decision making process? Although unemployment

and brain drain make Pakistan's youth

bulge as a liability, it can be an asset if these issues are resolved by taking some preventive measures.

It is important to understand the term 'Youth bulge'. It refers a population in which the ratio of young people is much higher than older age group.

It is the age range to 15-29. (Imai et al, 2008).

This phenomenon occurs due to high birth rate and lower mortality rate. While youth bulge can be considered as great driver for growth and progress, it can be source of destruction and chaos.

When the young people do not acquire any job and opportunity in the country, they involve them in illegal activities and violence which eventually affects the country. Thus, it is necessary

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to adopt some measures to control young people because youth bulge can possess both aspect positive and negative.

Some people argue that Pakistan's youth is a liability. The most striking proof of this is high ratio of unemployment. In the country, there are many young people who have a number of degrees in their hands, but they are still searching a job. According to International Labour Organization in 2024 that there are only 11% of the young people who are employed. This clearly indicates that a vast number of people are still dependent on the economy of the country because of lack of job opportunities. This happens when the students do not acquire quality based knowledge and relevant education that fit in the requirement of job. Hence, it is logically safe to assume that Pakistan's youth bulge is a liability.

Like high ratio of unemployment, immense number of brain drain is another

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sign which clearly demonstrate that youth of the country is a liability. Due to lack of opportunities, youth is leaving Pakistan in great numbers. For example, In 2023 alone, Pakistan has seen unprecedented brain drain, 800,000 people left the country due to lack of opportunities, with significant portion of doctors, nurses, engineers, IT experts, and accountants. This departure of young people has not only profound impacted loss of human capital, but also development of the country.

Opponents might have their own justification to call Pakistan's youth bulge as a liability, but there are various challenges which youth is facing persistently. One of them is education crisis. Education is considered as a powerful tool through which one can transform the society. However, in Pakistan, young people are often facing education crisis due to lack of opportunity, poverty, instability, and resources. According to UNICEF, there

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are 22.8 million students who are out of school, making it one of the highest countries where the ratio of illiterate youth is high. Due to illiteracy, young people are unable to contribute in the economy. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that without education, the country's youth cannot contribute in the economy.

Apart from this, high ratio of dependency is another issue. When the young people are illiterate, they will not contribute in the development of the country. Not only this, but they also rely on those who are employed. By depending on employed youth, it will create disharmony in the society because the country cannot afford too many young people when they are overly dependent on others. This indicates that high ratio of dependency is ~~one~~ one of the main challenges where they are overly relying on others.

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In addition to this, gender disparity also poses a significant and expanding threat to the development and progression of the country. In Pakistan, the rights of Women are being denied due to social and cultural norms. In the men dominated society, women shoulder a reproductive burden, caregiving, household responsibilities, and restrictions on mobility. These issues undermine the rights of women, including education and participation in the economy of the country. A renowned author of the book 'Governing the Ungovernable' Ishrat Hussain writes that there are only 22% of the Women at workplaces in contrast to 66% of the men. This shows that young women are facing issues in contribution of the country.

Moreover, weak digital skills is another challenge. Pakistan, despite having a great number of young minds, is facing issues in digital skills. This happens, for example, when there is

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lack of resources which ultimately enhances a digital gap among the youth. In the country, many young people are unable to operate modern technology due to lack of resources and education. When the young people do not acquire enough education about digital machines, it will enhance the gap which eventually affects the economic growth of the country. Hence, one cannot deny the fact that Pakistan's youth is weak and fragile in digital skills.

In order to transform Pakistan's youth bulge in an asset, it is pertinent to the government to adopt some preventive measures to make it as an asset. The most important solution of this is providing quality based knowledge. This plays a vital role in enhancing the economic growth of the country. When young people acquire quality based knowledge, they will ultimately become a tool of change in the society.

Countries, for instance, Finland and

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Canada are considered as most advanced and educated nations in the education because they primarily focus on quality based knowledge and education. By providing quality, it is very much possible that the youth of the country is likely to transform into an asset.

Like providing quality based knowledge, boosting mini startups is another solution to promote Pakistan's youth bulge in an asset. For this, it is necessary that the government should support mini startups. By promoting this, it is possible that they can grow and offer a vast number of job opportunities to unemployed youth. This will not only affect the well-being of individual, but also improving the economy of the country. For example, India is doing the same thing by supporting mini startups. As a result, it has become a leading player in economic growth. By applying the same model, it is logically safe to assume.

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that Pakistan's youth bulge is an asset.

Furthermore, involving youth in decision-making process is one of the important solutions. By allowing youth in the decision process, the government get many benefits, including social, economic, and political. Young people bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and a deep understanding of modern challenges. Additionally, establishing youth councils, engaging participation in local governance, incorporating their voices in national policies can enhance democratic values and social responsibility. Thus, a nation that empowers its youth in decision-making secures a brighter and more sustainable future.

In addition to this, bridging the gender gap is essential for achieving social and economic growth and progress. Gender inequalities limit opportunities for women and marginalized groups which ultimately hinder overall growth and development in the country. To address these issues,

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equal access to education, employment, and leadership roles must be ensured. As Ishrat Hussain writes in his book 'Governing the Ungovernable' that without giving equal opportunities, it is not possible for the government to improve its economy. Therefore, it is required to enhance gender parity in order to make youth as an asset.

Providing resources of modern technology also plays an important role in making youth as an asset. Access to modern technology is essential for progress in education, business, healthcare, and governance. By providing resources, such as high-speed internet, digital devices, and AI-driven tools, it can bridge the digital divide and empower individuals. For this, government and private sectors should invest in technology hubs, innovation centres, and e-learning programmes to ensure widespread access. By empowering youth with upgraded technology, it is possible that the government can transform

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young people into an asset.

In a nutshell, while some factors indicate that Pakistan's youth bulge is a liability, the youth of the country is facing ~~number~~ numerous challenges, including education crisis, high ratio of dependency, gender disparity, and weak digital skills. However, youth bulge of the country can be an asset by taking some important measures, like providing quality based knowledge, pushing mini startups, engaging youth in decision making process, filling the gap of gender inequalities, and providing resources of modern technology. By applying these measures, it is much possible that the youth bulge of the country can be an asset which eventually contributes in the development of the Pakistan. As Muhammad Idress, a well-known researcher, writes that youth bulge is a great blessing if it is utilized positively.