

Youth Bulge in Pakistan: Dividend or Disaster?

Outline

(I) Introduction

(a) Pakistan has one of the largest youth populations in the world.

(b) This youth bulge is often called a demographic dividend, but in Pakistan's current situation, it is becoming a serious disaster.

(c) Thesis statement.

(II) Why is Youth Bulge Increasing in Pakistan?

(A) High fertility among poor families.

Poor households often have 5-6 children, seeing children as economic support rather than responsibility.

(B) Cultural and religious perceptions.

Common belief: "Every child is born with rizq; Allah will make waseela."

This mindset discourages family planning.

(C) Class-based family planning

Educated and wealthy families usually limit children to 1-2, while poor families lack awareness.

(D) Weak Population Governance

Population control exists in policy but not in practice.

(III) Why The Youth Bulge is a Disaster for Pakistan

(A) Economic Disaster: More Job Seekers Than Jobs

(1) Economy fails to absorb growing youth population.

(2) Education produces degrees, not skills.

Example: Youth unemployment remains significantly higher than overall unemployment (Labour Force Survey)

Outcome: Poverty, frustration, and economic stagnation.

(B) Political Instability: From Hope to Disorder

(1) Youth participation is emotional, not institutional.

(2) Political actors use youth as street power.

DATE: ___/___/___

DAY: ___/___/___

Example: Youth-led violent protest during recent political unrest.

Outcome: Polarization and weak democratic culture.

(C) Social Breakdown: Losing Human Capital.

Frustrated youth disengage from society.

Example: Over 800,000 Pakistanis migrated abroad in 2022, mostly young and skilled.

Outcome: Brain drain and social despair.

(D) Radicalization and Extremism: Security Threat.

Idle youth are vulnerable to extremist narratives.

Example: Past militant recruitment largely involved unemployed youth (NACTA).

Outcome: Threat to internal security.

(E) Governance Failure: The Core Problem.

No coordination between education, economy, ~~and~~ and population policies.

Example: Education spending remains far below global standards.

DATE: ___/___/___

DAY: ___/___/___

(IV) Counter - Arguments: Can Youth Bulge Still be a Demographic Dividend?

1. **Counter - Argument:** Youth bulge can increase economic growth by providing a large labor force.
e.g., (East Asian countries used youth for rapid growth)

Rebuttal: Pakistan lacks jobs and skills, so youth remain unemployed rather than productive.

2. **Counter - Argument:** Youth political participation can strengthen democracy.

e.g., High youth mobilization in recent elections.

Rebuttal: In Pakistan, youth politics is emotional and street-based, increasing instability, not democratic strength.

3. **Counter - Argument:** Youth can drive digital economy and innovation.

e.g., Pakistan is among top freelancing countries.

Rebuttal: Digital success is limited to a small urban class; most youth

lack skills and access.

4. **Counter-Argument:** Youth bulge can reduce dependency burden on the state.

e.g., Demographic dividend theory.

Rebuttal: Unemployed youth stay dependent, worsening economic pressure instead of reducing it.

V Way Forward: Preventing the Demographic Disaster

- a. Promote responsible family planning through awareness.
- b. Shift education from rote learning to skills.
- c. Create jobs before increasing expectations.
- d. Engage youth constructively in economy and governance.

(VI) Conclusion.