

TOPIC:- YOUTH BULGE IN PAKISTAN:- AN ASSET OR LIABILITY

OUTLINE:-

1. Introduction

Thesis statement:- Youth is considered as a boon for any country. As the young people are expected to become part of productive workforce by contributing towards economic development. However, youth can be a liability or asset, depending upon the role it is playing in the development of the country.

2. Youth bulge is a liability in Pakistan

3. Why youth bulge is a liability for Pakistan.

- a) Absence of employment opportunities for the youth.
- b) Lower standard of higher education in the country.
- c) Less participation of women in all spheres
- d) Increasing rate of illiteracy.

e) incapability to engage youth in potential activities.

4- Negative impacts of youth's liability gulping Pakistan.

- a) Brain Drain from the country: a threat to ailing economy.
- b) No proper exploitation of resources
- c) worst rank at human development index
- d) Rapid urbanization and slum development
- e) Destructive economy of the country.
- f) Youth indulging in useless activities to get money and fame.
- g) Dwindling and diminishing water and food resources.

5. Transition of youth's liability to youth as asset is possible with:

- a) UNDP's strategy of 3Es - quality education, gainful employment and meaningful engagement.
- b) Pakistan can follow the model of India's education policy-2020.
- c) HEC vision 2025 should be revised by adding youth empowering strategies

d) vocational and technical training
of youth bulge.

6- Conclusion.

Essay:-

"The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow" (Nelson Mandela). Youth of any country are of great importance. Every society and country's future is viewed through the lens of its youth. Because it is the youth that will be the leaders of tomorrow and will shape the future of the country. Pakistan is considered to be the fifth ^{most populous} ~~largest~~ country in the world, third ^{most populous} ~~largest~~ country in Asia and second most populous country in Islamic world. Youth of the country can prove to be an asset or a liability. ~~However,~~ youth in Pakistan is considered as liability due to the reasons like:- ~~A~~ absence of employment opportunities for the youth, lower standard of higher education in the country, increasing rate of illiteracy and so on. Youth being liability is gulping country with various negative impacts like: Brain drain from the country which is a serious setback to the economy, rapid urbanization and slum development, dwindling

water and food resources and worst rank of Pakistan at human development index. However, few suggestions like:- following UNDP's strategy of 3E's and Indian model of education policy 2020 can help the country to tackle the situation by transforming its youth into the assets. Youth is considered as boon for any country. As the young people are expected to become part of productive workforce by contributing towards economic development. Therefore, youth can be a liability or asset depending upon the role it is playing in the development of the country.

It is known over the years that the youth of a country may be a bane or a boon for the country. ~~Pak~~ Because it contributes to the development of the country. Pakistan ~~currently has the largest~~ There is no universally agreed international definition of youth age group. United Nations defines youth as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24

years. Pakistan currently has the largest number percentage of youth people ever recorded in history. 64% of the total population of Pakistan is below the age of 30 while 29 percent is between the ages of 15 and 29 (UNDP, Youth in Pakistan, 2023). But the youth in Pakistan is considered liability due to the disparities on socio-economic lines, their contribution in uplifting the development status of the country. This instrumental asset that should have fueled the country is actually burning the country.

There are various reasons for youth ^{becoming} ~~being~~ liability for Pakistan. ^{First,} The most important is the absence of employment opportunities for the youth. Pakistan has 9th largest labour force in the world, which is increasing every year. But this youth is witnessing no employment opportunities. Both literate and illiterate youth is facing the same issue. The unemployment rate for the year 2020-2021 has been estimated at 9.56 percent and the unemployment

rate of degree holders is breaking the records. (Labour force survey, 2023). So, the unemployment of the youth is the most startling figure to worry about the youth of the country which in spite of becoming asset for a country is becoming liability.

Secondly, the hurdle for youth being asset and proving liability is the lower standard of the higher education in the country. Over the years, people have been taught that education is key to success and it opens new opportunities. But the lower standard of higher education in Pakistan has raised many concerns. In the year 2021-2022 only Pakistan produce roughly 471,306 graduates. Still the unemployment rates of university graduates remains 31 percent and rate of employment for women remains 51 percent. (PIDE, 2022). This is due to the fact that degree program just focus on academic knowledge with a clear link with competent and practical

experience of job market. Therefore, low standard of higher education is contributing in youth's role as liability.

Thirdly, Pakistan has witnessed less participation of women in the development of the country. Pakistan is a country where half of its population are women. Pakistan shows lowest female labour participation in South Asia. Female financial inclusion rates in Pakistan are the lowest in the region. According to the recent data approximately 8 out of 10 women do not have access to bank account (WB, why is female financial inclusion important, 2023). Along with this women are not given chance to show their capabilities in various fields. Gender parity index is lowest for Pakistan. Hence, this attitude of the society to restrict women to fewer fields is causing burden on the economy whose half population is women and only equal participation can ensure youth bulge to be as asset.

Fourthly, the country is witnessing an increasing rate of

illiteracy. Pakistan has ^{the} most out of school children in the world, 23 million children in Pakistan do not receive school education (Minister of Federal education and training, ~~A~~ Rana Tanveer Hussain). Most of the children are out of school because of gender gap. 45% of rural girls are less enrolled as compared to boys. Along with this Pakistan spend lowest of GDP for education in South Asian region. All these factors are contributing to the increasing illiteracy rate for the youth of Pakistan. Therefore, this poor participation in education is making youth incapable to serve the country for its development which is only possible with some skill or education.

Fifthly, the government has yet remained incapable to engage youth in potential activities. There is no strategy that systematically engages youth in civic and potential activities at the grass root level. Political parties are unable to engage 25 million youth voters in political mainstream.

(Election commission of Pakistan, 2022).

This lead to apathy and political detachment. Along with this the ~~the~~ Prime Minister youth program initiated in the year 2013 failed to provide youth opportunities to engage in potential activities, so, the government policies are important for youth development which can not be ensured ~~by~~ just by distributing laptops. Although, it is a good steps but policies for youth development is a dire need of the hour.

As the above paragraphs are discussing the reasons why youth is becoming liability for Pakistan, Next seven paragraphs ^{along with this} are based on the negative impacts of the youth's liability on the country. To begin with, brain drain from the country which is a threat to the ailing economy of Pakistan. Lower employment opportunities and wages have forced the citizens to find green pastures for their survival. During last 3 years 104 million people left the country for better job prospect (Pakistan Bureau of emigration and overseas employment,

2023). out of which doctors migrated are 5000. In alone 2022, 800,000 Pakistanis went abroad for better economic ~~opportunities~~ prospects (Bureau of immigration and over seas employment, 2023). Along with this there are uncountable illegal immigrations every years. This brain drain is due to poor employment opportunities in the country and is giving set back to the development of Pakistan.

Another negative impact of this liability is that there is no proper exploitation of resources. Pakistan is a country with plenty of natural resources. It ~~has~~ world's largest salt producer, still rank 20th for salt export due to unskilled labours who are not able to exploit the resources to get maximum benefit from it (timesofislamabad.com, Pakistan ranks 20th for salt export, 2022).

Along with this country has 1046 km long coastline which gives potential of 4000 mw of electricity generation and the vast land of Balochistan can be utilized for solar electricity

generation. But all these resources have been poorly remained unattended due to the lack of labour force, which has moved abroad or the ones present here is not skilled and trained, resulting in the poor management of resources inspite of 1/3 youth bulge.

Further more, Pakistan witnessing worst rank at human development model is another negative impact on the country. Study by world bank shows that Pakistan human capital Index (HCI) of 0.41 is low both in ~~terms~~ absolute and relative terms. This means that baby born in Pakistan would be only 4% as productive as if they could be if they enjoy complete education and full health facilities. Pakistan's budget for education is estimated at 1.7 percent for the fiscal year 2022-2023 which is lowest in the region. This figure is clearly supporting Pakistan's rank of 154th out of 189 countries in Human development index, (UNDP, 2022). Hence, the poor rank of in terms of human development index is a negative impact witnessing youth as liability

but not as an asset.

Moreover, rapid urbanization and slum development is also a negative impact of youth's liability. Urbanization is causing urban sprawl and slum development in major cities of the country. Masses are migrating for education and employment opportunities. Urban population of Pakistan has increased to 38.82 percent, (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023). This increase in urbanization is causing industrialization. Dennis Meadows in his book "The Limits to Growth", has mentioned urbanization and industrialization as a twin global challenge. Hence, the urbanization is causing negative impact on the country, contributing to the industrialization, carbon emission and a challenge to the aesthetic looks of the cities.

Adding more to it, destructive economy of the country is the notable negative impact of its youth's liability. Youth plays a great role in the development of any country or nation. It is

youth that make or break the nation. As it is the quote of Oliver Tambo that if the children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future. Pakistan is blessed with most youngest nation of the world yet the economic condition of the country is deplorable because the youth is not engaged in the development of the country. They are not provided with means to serve themselves with productive activities ^{hence} proving youth as a bane for the country.

Like wise, another reason of the negative impact of youth's liability is the indulgence of youth in useless activities to get money and fame. This is rotting Pakistan day by day. The youth which can be a game changer in technology, medical, engineering is wasting itself in creating useless content on facebook, youtube and tiktok. with the latest data published in January 2023, and

growth rate of 1.19%, there is now around 25.2 million tiktok users in Pakistan (oosga.com, Social media in Pakistan, 2023). Due to idleness and unemployment youth has adopted this mean to earn money and get fame. They are no more interested in getting jobs as there are no policies by the government or any strategy to empower them.

Last but not the least dwindling and diminishing water and food resources is also a negative impact which is challenging the survival of the youth. The National nutritional survey revealed shocking realities. Nearly 40 percent of Pakistani children were stunted, 29% were underweight and 18% suffered from wasting. This is due to the more demand and less supply process. As the production is low due to non-participation of youth there is fewer production but the bulging population has high demand for food and water. water resources are also diminishing day by day

instead of having world's largest irrigation system. Hence this increasing population due to less production and more demand is posing threats for the economy as well as for the survival of the nation.

However, every problem has solution. The situation can be controlled and the youth can be transformed into liability by following UNDP's strategy of 3e's, which is quality education, gainful employment and meaningful management. It includes the policies in education sector where private and government sector higher institutes focus on creating competent individuals, gainful employment which can be ensured by raising the standard of job as well as education along with an average salary of above 50,000 Rupees. The third e is meaningful management of the youth which can be ensured by various policies and programmes through schools, universities and NGOs. By implementing 3e's policy of UNDP, country can easily turn youth liability into asset.

Another solution is to adopt India's ^{model} policy of education policy - 2022. In this policy the main aim of India is to allocate six percent of its GDP to education to make it cheaper and accessible for all strata of the society. Pakistan spends only 1.4 percent of its GDP on education which is much lower as compared to international standard that is four percent. Pakistan needs to follow India's model of education policy because by investing more in education it would be able to provide education to all and can bring quality over quantity. This would help in arranging more workshops for practical knowledge and can also help in hiring competent teachers who can help the individual to face the required demand of market.

~~Another ^{solution} alternative is to~~
Along with this, HEC vision-2025 should be revised by adding youth empowering strategies like ^{e.g.} emphasizing academia-industry linkages, encouraging projects revolving around real-life

issues, field exposure and internship programs for the students and faculty as well local university students should be encouraged to initiate their startup projects. The professionals should also be sent to attend workshops to adopt the changes in the technology and teaching methods. By following ~~and~~ upon these recommendations and implementing this model ^{for} HEC vision 2025 policy revision ~~can be~~ proved ~~for~~ to be fruitful for the youth of the country.

• Lastly, by introducing vocational and technical training for youth bulge, the liability can be transformed into asset. Government need to shift focus towards initiating skill development programmes for the young cohort of the nation. Skill development programs include both technical and vocational training so that the more number of trained individuals can help in socio-economic development of the nation. These programs helps in strengthening the economic status of the weak

segment of society by giving them decent learning opportunities.

This can also be done by providing more technical and vocational training programs by through prime minister skill development programs and technical and vocational centres as well.

In a summation, it can be said that, A youth bulge can either become a demographic dividend or a time bomb, depending on how young population is engaged in productive activities. The youth in Pakistan has proved to be liability due to the incapability of government to engage youth for ~~in~~ the development of the country. This is due to reasons like: increasing rate of illiteracy in the country, less female participation. These inadequacies are leaving Pakistan with various negative impacts like: No proper exploitation of resources, destructive economy of the country and youth indulging in useless activities to get money

and fame. Although, the solutions like such as: reversing HEC vision 2020 to by adding policies like academia-industry linkages, encouraging projects revolving real life examples and by introducing vocational and technical training to provide decent learning opportunities can be used to transform these liabilities into assets, that will surely help in the development of the country.

If we continue on this trajectory, there is no doubt that together we can witness Pakistan as a inclusive and prosperous country. As the quote follows:

"The incentive that you give to your country is going to be the make-or-break future of the country (Abdullah JJ)