

Mock 5

TOPIC: Youth bulge in Pakistan:
an asset or a liability?

OUTLINE:

1. Introduction

The youth bulge in Pakistan ^{present} both an asset and a liability in its complex dynamic demographic, despite its significant liability is more of concern due to various factors leading youth bulge to social unrest. However Pakistan can navigate this critical juncture to ensure that its youth bulge becomes a valuable resource rather than a burden through present measures.

2. Correlation between Pakistani Youth:
as an asset or liability

3. How Pakistan's Youth is a liability

a) Overview of youth bulge as liability

4. Challenges afflicting due to youth bulge liability in Pakistan

a) Addressing Pakistan's Youth Unemployment Crisis

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c) Education Crisis becoming a Barrier to progress and Prosperity for its youth

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e) Pakistan's Independence Paradox: Celebrations amidst Youth Empowerment

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5. Impacts of Youth bulge liability on Pakistan

- a) Dependence of young people on old generation
- b) The Youth Bulge: A Double-Edged Sword for Pakistan's future
- c) Pakistan's Underutilized Youth and socio-economic impacts
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- a) Transforming Pakistani Higher Education Commission through HEC's Vision 2025
- b) Fostering Innovation and Economic Growth through Technology parks
- c) Empowering Pakistan's Youth's Entrepreneurship, Vocational Skills, and a path to Prosperity
- d) Addressing and suggesting education budget for out-of-school children
- e) Engagement by avenues for social and Political interaction

7. Conclusion

In the heart of Pakistan's demographic landscape, a ticking time bomb of youthful potential and societal challenges awaits. The youth bulge, with its dual nature as both an asset and a liability, stands at a crossroads, and its significance as a liability cannot be underestimated. In Pakistan a complex interplay of factors, this demographic phenomenon threatens to ignite social unrest. Pakistan where much percent youth exists. In this sunset period, the hope is entirely diminished to being this valuable stratum in the labour market which is proving itself to a liability for a nation. Pakistan has the opportunity to navigate this pivotal moment and transform its youth bulge into a beacon of development and stability. Therefore, there is a need to take several steps for dissecting and redirecting the youth bulge into right direction in the field of development and prosperity. In a nutshell, The youth bulge in Pakistan both an asset and a liability in its complex dynamic demographic, despite its significant liability is more of concern due to various factors leading

youth bulge to social unrest. However Pakistan can navigate this critical juncture to ensure that its youth bulge becomes a valuable resource rather than a burden to its development and stability.

Getting to the heart of matter, Pakistan's youth bulge, an asset or a liability, lies in the fact that Pakistan possesses an extraordinary asset in the form of a youth bulge, signifying that a substantial portion of its population comprises young individuals. Ranking as the second youngest country in South Asia, after Afghanistan, and one of the world's youngest nations, Pakistan holds immense potential for economic growth. However, this potential can only be realized if the youth are equipped with the skills demanded by a modern economy. When educated, trained and informed appropriately, the youth can achieve remarkable feats. The National Human Development Report by the United Nations of young people in its history, with 64% of the total population under the age of 30, and 28% aged between 15 and 29 years. Sadly, a survey

by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics indicates a stark reality: approximately 5.3 million children do not attend school, and a staggering 20 million are engaged in child labor. The fate of Pakistan's youth bulge, whether it becomes an asset or a liability, hinges on the nation's ability to harness this potential through effective policies and investments in education, employment, and social development. Failure to address these challenges promptly could jeopardize the prospects of a brighter future for Pakistan.

Now, let's consider, how is youth bulge a liability in Pakistan. Pakistan faces a significant demographic challenge as its population comprises a staggering 63% of youth aged between 15 and 38, many of whom have limited opportunities to realize their full potential. Unlike in other developing and developed nations where youth are viewed as engines of growth and progress, Pakistan's situation presents a stark contrast. The youth bulge here is often seen as a liability, mainly due to a confluence of socio-economic and political obstacles.

High youth unemployment rates are posing concern, contributing to economic inefficiency and social discontent. The strain on the education system, attempting to accommodate this large youth cohort, results in overcrowded classrooms and limited resources, undermining the quality of education. Consequently, many youth lack the skills and qualifications needed in today's job market, impeding their ability to secure employment in competitive industries. The global employment report on youth in 2021 further highlights the grim reality, revealing that 66% of young women and 12% of young men in Pakistan lack access to jobs, education, or training. Furthermore, nearly 49% of young girls face illiteracy and a lack of technical skills, which compounds the issue, turning Pakistan's potentially resourceful youth into a liability due to the dearth of economic opportunities.

Turning the attention, towards, challenges will help more to delude this issue of youth bulge as liability whereas youth bulge being liability face serious problems. According to a report Pakistan has the 9th largest workforce globally, but the unemployment rate for 2021-22 was a worrying 9.56% and degree holders suffer an even higher rate of joblessness. (Sawana Naz, Dawn). This absence makes it difficult for education to meet job market demands, leaving many graduates unprepared for meaningful employment. What makes this worse is that graduates have unemployment rate three times higher than others. Adding to this, Pakistan lacks career counseling and aptitude assessments, even in universities. This makes it hard to connect education with job market needs and Pakistan's young people struggle to find work. Hence lack of support in education worsens this problem.

Another pressing challenge faces by Pakistan's youth is its struggle to involve its youth in civic and political activities, especially at the grassroots level. Despite having approximately 25

million young voters, political parties find it difficult to effectively engage them in mainstream politics. Promises of youth inclusion remain unfulfilled, leading to growing sense of disinterest and detachment among young people. Despite the launch of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme in 2013, which aimed to empower young people through initiatives like loans and involvement in policy-making, it has largely fallen short of its goals. The failure led to efforts of comprehensive strategies that genuinely engage and empower Pakistan's youth, ensuring their active participation. This shows Pakistan lacks effective ways to harness the energy and potential of its youth for a more vibrant and inclusive democracy.

Pakistan's faces significant challenges in its education system as well, hindering progress and economic stability. It grapples with one of the world's lowest literacy rates, impeding economic growth and denying basic human rights to citizens. Moreover, the education system lacks civic education, leaving young people

ill-prepared for active roles in democratic setup. Interviews with recruiters showing a common complaint that the local education system doesn't produce skilled, high-quality talent fit for the competitive job market. Besides, foreign publications also criticize Pakistan's focus on rote learning which hampers adaptability to modern job market's requirements. Urban Pakistani youth, in particular, experience high stress levels, likely due to intense competition and limited opportunities. Addressing these educational deficits is crucial to unleash Pakistan's youth potential.

Similarly, traditional values and social divides in Pakistan, young people have a tough time making choices about their studies, jobs, marriages, and other life decisions because of old-fashioned beliefs and social pressures. This problem gets worse because resources are not distributed fairly. This creates a big gap in society between the rich and the poor. The rich shows off their wealth and power, while poor struggle just to survive.

This big gap makes young people feel divided and unhappy. It's like there are two different worlds, and this makes the lives of Pakistan's youth more complicated. Trying to follow old traditions while also trying to have a better future is very hard for young people in Pakistan. Hence this leads to unhappiness and lack of motivation to grow further in youth of Pakistan.

Even though Pakistan celebrated its 75th Independence Day in Aug 2023, the focus on helping young people is still not strong enough. The amount of money spent on education in the country is only 7% of the total economy, which shows that education isn't getting enough attention. According to a report (Sharafat Ameen, 2018) Pakistan is ranked 150th out of 189 countries in terms of human development, what's concerning is that many young people in Pakistan can't find jobs. The unemployment rate for young people went up to 9.41% and data from the (Pakistan Institute of Development Economics) shows

that more than 31% of young people don't have jobs. Among them, 51% are females, and 16% are males, even though many of them have professional degrees. This leads to frustration and makes Pakistani youth far away from their goals and drives the country towards great depression with social and economic unrest.

Implementing youth policies in Pakistan presents several significant challenges. Despite the existence of national and provincial youth policies, the government often struggles to put these plans into action effectively. Political parties frequently include youth-focused promises in their election manifestos, but these commitments tend to fade into the background once they assume power, leaving many young people unaware of these policies. Resultantly, young people ^{are left out in} hopelessness and there seems no way out. In addition to this, policies named the "National Youth Policy" and similar ones in each province. But, the government, both at the national and provincial levels, has not been good at putting these policies into action.

Turning towards impacts open up Pakistan's youth bulge liability, put more of concern. In Pakistan, there's a big problem - 17 million young people don't have jobs, and this is a serious issue for the country. What makes it worse is that the unemployment rate among male and female graduates is over 21%, which means a lot of educated young people can't find work. This isn't just about money; it's also about wasting the talents and abilities of Pakistan's young people. Additionally, Pakistan has too many young people who rely on smaller group of working-age people to support them. This creates a big problem and hard to use the money for important things like building roads and schools when a lot of it has to go to support young people. So, the country struggles to invest in things that can make Pakistan better in long run.

On the other hand, the youth bulge in Pakistan holds the potential for positive transformation, provided the economy can absorb the influx of new labor force entrants into

Productive roles. otherwise, the nation faces the ominous prospect of idle, frustrated youth turning towards crime, violence, and extremist ideologies. Two recent incidents illustrate the impacts stemming from a burgeoning number of unemployed youth. First, on May, 5, 2023 widespread arson targeted government buildings and revered national symbols. Second, a tragic event unfolded as Pakistani youth embarked on hazardous journeys to Europe in search of better employment opportunities, resulting loss of hundreds of lives. Thus Pakistan lacks urgent proactive measures to address such mounting crisis and youth becomes victims of such accidents.

likewise, Pakistan faces significant socio-economic impacts linked to its underprivileged economic difficulties have made many young people vulnerable, pushing some towards terrorist group, sparking a cycle of violence and religious conflicts. That recent impacts can one again be seen as burning of churches by rioters in Jaranwala, Faisalabad in August 2023. Despite having educated and

skilled youths, leading to a rise in street crimes and social problems. This not only has moral consequences but also creates economic burdens for the country. The lack of educational and job opportunities pushes some young people into early marriages, substance abuse, and criminal activities due to lack of purpose. Failing to effectively engage this young population results in wasted talent and an increased risk of extremism and terrorism, posing a serious security threat to the nation.

Another impact that has great effects on youths' lives is the alarming trend of youth drug involvement in Pakistan. Pakistan is concerning rise in drug involvement among its youth. This worrisome trend has multifaceted consequences, affecting not only the individuals but also the broader society. Economic hardships, unemployment, and limited recreational opportunities have left many young people vulnerable to the allure of drugs. The lack of awareness and education about the dangers of substance abuse further exacerbates the problem. The conse-

of this involvement extend beyond health issues to include social and economic challenges. Families are torn apart, and communities suffer from increased crime rates. This shows that lacks comprehensive approach, including providing youth health awareness through seminars and offering them better alternatives for personal growth and well-being.

It's important to make plans to happen quality education in Pakistan with better techniques to connect with jobs and to fulfill job demands in the real world. In this regard The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan should make a plan to connect universities with industries, so students can learn about real-world problems. They also need to work on short, mid, and long term policies as a vision called planning initiatives Vision 2025. It must think about having a system like Germany, where students can choose between going to university or getting job training after high school, depending on what they are good at and what jobs are available.

As part of its forward-looking strategy, The Higher Education Commission (HEC) must plan the development of technology parks in Pakistan. These technology parks should be envisioned to create a conducive environment for young entrepreneurs to launch their tech-driven ventures and attract international business collaborations and funding opportunities.

Notably, one such project, in collaboration with the Malaysian government, has already received approval at National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST). In this project HEC aims to replicate this success by establishing seven similar technology parks across the country. These initiatives are poised to offer

enhanced employment prospects for Pakistan's youth. While the inclusion of tech parks in HEC's plan is a positive step, their diligent efforts is crucial to unlock the potential for innovation, economic growth, and job creation.

Another shift is worth mentioning as a remedies for Pakistan's youth budge to make it productive is the Consensus among experts is that the future of Pakistan's youth hinges on the promotion of entrepreneurship and tech-based education, enabling them to become self-employed. However, it's acknowledged that not everyone can be entrepreneurs. Therefore, it's imperative for Pakistan to encourage and inspire its youth to acquire vocational skills and consider low-profile professions like machinery operating, plumbing, electrical work, and nursing. In addition to their interest based jobs. Achieving this goal necessitates and the implementation of labor laws ensuring their respect and fair wages will lift the skilled workess in society -

Similarly, The state and government must adopt a comprehensive stands to address the pressing issue of out-of-school children in Pakistan, which currently seems at a staggering 25 million. To combat this challenge the government should reverse its recent decision to reduce the education budget and instead increase its allocation to education department. Pakistan currently

allocates approximately 1.4% of its GDP to education, falling far short of the international standards of four percent.

In this regard, Marc-Andre presented a great idea, he suggested avenues for social and political interaction can be key to maximizing the demographic dividend. Over the years, Pakistan has seen a dramatic shrinkage of public spaces together with opportunities for youth to meet and engage with different people by promoting sports and culture among them to learn how does life work - According to him by sharing boundaries and shaking hands youth can do wonders in all fields of life, specially can bring progress to the nation.

In summation, although youth bulge liability has posed significant challenges which, if left unaddressed, can transform this demographic advantage into a liability the country must urgently tackle issues through suggested remedies mentioned can surely turn Pakistan's youth bulge liability into its potential asset - By turning them into a driving force for economic growth and societal progress. The onus lies on both the government and society to ensure that this youth bulge becomes an asset rather than a burden, paving the way for a prosperous and stable future in Pakistan.

In this regard, given below the

Poetry lines are presented to capture
the whole scenario in a bucket;

In the realm of Pakistan's youth
So vast,

A demographic challenge, both present
and past.

With potential untapped, like a hidden
treasure chest,

Yet liabilities linger, putting them to test.

But fear not, for remedies have been
laid,

In education and employment, a brighter
path is paved.

Investments, reforms, and a vision so clear,
can transform this liability into an asset
we hold dear.

Let's join hands, government and society
unite,

To empower our youth, to kindle their
light -

For a prosperous future, let's make a
steadfast vow,

Turning the youth bulge into an asset,
starting now -