

Topic: Growing age population: Challenges and Remedies

1) Introduction

Growing age population has its peculiar problems associated with it. Old age people, besides their diminished capacity for work, also face social problems. However, the proper policymaking may solve the problem of growing age population.

2) How the growing age population poses the challenge that require remedies.

3) What are the challenges of growing age population?

- a) Growing age population disturbs the demographic equilibrium.
- b) Working age population decreases - outsourcing the labour burdens the economy
- c) More medical attention is required by old people
- d) Growing old age population need the care
- e) Old age benefit or pension disbursement may strain the economy
- f) Old age people resist the social changes
- g) Technical innovation becomes less due to less young population.

4) What are the benefits of old age population

- a) Experience of old people may be used as guidance
- b) Old age people promote the social cohesion.
- c) Old age people regulate the family
- d) Growing age people are the source of emotional support
- e) Old age people provide the cultural links between new and old generation
- f) Old people are providers of effective house care.

5) Way forward for the growing age population

- a) Birth control policies should be revised
- b) Effective use of old age population by putting

- c) them in age specific jobs
- d) providing facilities to the growing age population.
- e) By drawing the maximum benefit of their experience.

6) Conclusion

The proverbial school of pigeons, initially thinking the older pigeon a burden was soon trapped by the hunter. Unable to get rid of the trap, the exhausted pigeons left effort to escape, soon they were advised by an older fellow to unite and fly, while taking the net with them. The recipe did not really and the pigeons started realizing the experience of an old fellow. Going by this, the growing age population, despite being considered a burden are the blessing in disguise. There are some challenges associated with growing age population like demographic disequilibrium and consequent lessening of working age population, thereby facing the country to outsource the labor. Growing age population needs more medical attention and the cost at domestic and national levels. Old age benefit and pensions distributed amongst the old people may exert a huge toll on the national economy. Besides, old age people resist the social change and hinder the technical innovations. However, there are certain benefits associated with old age population, including their experience which can be used for guidance and they promote the social cohesion by regulating the family and serving as source of emotional support. These people serve as cultural links between the old and new generations apart from providing the know-how. But if planned wisely, the old age population can be turned into asset. Policies, like birth control should be revised to have the population mix of all ages and putting the old people into their age specific jobs may also be fruitful. By providing them the

facilities to draw the maximum benefit of the experience of this age group may prove fruitful.

Growing age population presents the challenge of not managed effectively. It may cause the financial problems, if the old age people are not utilized effectively. The disturbance of financial remuneration in the form of old age benefits and pension benefits may burden the national exchequer. It is due to the population policies that reduced the births, consequently causing the old age people to grow numerically as compared to the working age youths. There are certain remedies to cope with this challenge and the effective planning may help convert the growing age population into an asset. Therefore, the strategic planning, visionary foresight may offset the problems associated with the growing age population.

Among many problems, associated with growing age, one is that the demographic equilibrium is disturbed. People growing old, if more than the equal number of young people disturbs the demography of the society to its disadvantage. Demographic imbalance poses numerous social, economic and many other problems. For instance, the countries like highest growing age population, followed by Japan (15/1000). So, the demographic imbalance caused by growing age population has the problem associated with it, needing the due attention at an appropriate level.

Apart from demographic imbalance, posing other problems, reduces the the working age population. Old people, unable to carry out the physically demanding jobs cannot contribute to the nation building. To survive in the competition-free zone, nations opt to outsource the labor from other countries thereby causing

the financial outflow, to the disadvantage of the
developing country. A large sum of money goes in the
form of remittances due to the foreign workers
working in the country. It may have the desired
repercussions. For example, to quote Elon Musk, "Decreasing
young population can be more dangerous than the climate
change." (Elon Musk, CEO of Twitter). Therefore, outsourcing
the labor of the form of decreasing working population,
may provide temporary advantages but long term loss.

Another challenge associated with growing
age population is that this section of population
needs more medical attention. Older people, having
weak immune system are more prone to diseases as compared
to young population of the society. So, the old population
needing more health care prompt the nation and
society to invest in the health infrastructure. Consequently,
the paramedics, required to carry out the job are
depleted to be recruited. The ultimate appropriation
of funds for the establishment of health facilities,
prompt to trade off any other project of national
importance. Hence the old population requiring
more health care becomes challenging by trading
off the projects, otherwise important for the
nation building.

Moreover, the old age population demand
care as they are emotionally sensitive and psychologically
more prone to the emotional fits. They demand the
proper care from the children and also do they
expect the care from the state at national level.
Young people, in exercise of care giving to their
elders, most of the times find themselves in the
emotional quagmire. For instance, the people grown -
in eastern traditions become so attached to their
parents that they find it difficult to live without

them and strongly prefer to stay near their homes. It has been observed that young people, working abroad, sometimes leave their jobs because of their attachment with parents and elders of family. So, the care needed by the growing age people sometimes emotionally destabilizes their youngsters and they opt to stay with parents.

Another challenge posed by the growing age population is that huge sum of money is allocated for the procurement of pensions to old age people and in the social benefits given to them in the form of old age benefits, thereby straining the national economy. Old people having retired from public sector draw the constitutionally recognized benefits in the form of pensions, from the national exchequer. It sometimes, burdens the national economy, thereby prompting the government to adopt the policies of fiscal prudence, which sometimes work against the old age people. For example, the French President Emmanuel Macron has recently approved to increase the retirement age from current 62 years to 64 years, leading to social unrest (Times of India, 2023). So, the pensions and financial remuneration given to growing age people, poses the economic challenge.

Besides, the old age people often resist the social change. The elderly people having brought up in traditional family structures are uncomfortable for the innovation and social change act as retarder against the social change. They prefer the society, in which they were brought up, thereby opposing any change. Social change, in presence of growing

age people becomes the distant dream. For instance, in Pakistan, numerous outdated traditions are prevalent in the society and these can't be changed due to the clash of interest between the growing age old people and young spirits of the society.

In addition to these, the innovation and new ideas become less and less amidst the young population decreasing vis-a-vis growing age population. Change in technology in every age renders the already prevalent practices as redundant. But due to low proportion of young age population and growing ^{old} age population, more particularly at the position of decision making, the innovation and new ideas are discouraged. For instance, the recent rejection of the concept of "Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)" by the elder politicians has cost the Pakistanis dearly. This simple instance has barred the distant voters from their right to franchise, thereby reducing their political participation in their national democracy. So, the resistance to the technical innovation may trace its roots in the growing age population.

On the flip side, old age population has some benefits associated with it, one being the experience of old age population, which may be used as beacon of light by the young generation. Old age people, having armed with multiple experience of life may serve to guide the young people to plan pro-actively. According to the psychology, the emotional intelligence of the aged people is far better than the young people. Old people being pragmatic in their approach to the life, have foresightedness which is lacking in the young people. So, the

Practical experience of old age people may be termed as asset for the young people.

Among other things, the old age people promote the social cohesion. The social cohesion is the condition of having no discord either at individual, state or society level. Old age people rationally decide the conflict at domestic level and promote harmony. For example, in Eastern society like patri-patri society, the young ones pay high allegiance towards their elders, who decide their internal conflicts and the matters relating to family like marriage then, the growing age population, out of its wisdom, help resolving the individual issues and ultimately avoiding the litigation process, which at times could be lengthy in dispensation of justice.

Old age population is deemed as blessing in regulating the family. Family, the basic unit of the society can be maintained peacefully by harmony and internal cohesion. Old people do their service best. They may be termed as locomotive for the instigation of the society. Old age people decide the family matters wisely and integrate their children by their personal authority. It is so, because young people in the traditional family therefore attach the ultimate importance to the words of their elders. So, the old age people may rightly be termed as the engine of the family, who regulate the basic unit of the society - family - out of their wisdom and traditional authority.

Among the various blessings of the old age population, one is the substantial link

provided by the old age population, between the previous generation and the current generation. The current generation may inherit the traditions of older generations by their contact with the old population. These age old people transmit the traditions of their age to the young part population through the guidance provided to the young ones thereby promoting the cultural diversity. Filial piety, e.g., the value of old age has disappeared in the modern societies, but the western - born old population in their mix observe the said filial piety as incumbent upon them. So, the old age population serve as cultural links between their age and the current age.

In addition, the benefit of old age population is that they provide effective house care. In the patriarchal societies, when the males are considered the breadwinners for their families, leave for the job at early in morning and return late in the evening. In their absence, the old age family members provide the caring services for the women and children. It is finely said that Grandfather is the first friend of the grandson. This beautiful friendship finds the office when grandfathers accompany the young children to their schools. So, the old people are aptly termed as the free service providers for the care of the fam. by.

To offset the challenges posed by the growing age population, certain measures are supposed to be adopted like the reversal of the birth control policies. Some countries have

Place, the stringent birth control policies, which have the long term repercussions for them. For example, the Chinese policy of one child started showing its effects in different form. The current population having 6 years and more age in China is 75.2% of its total population, which is likely to reach to 40% in 2030 (Statista.com, 2023). Birth control policies should be so adjusted that the equilibrium in the demography of the country may not turn to its disadvantage.

The growing age population may be forced to the work by devising the policies to fit them to the work, which is compatible to their age. They should be encouraged to carry out the work, which besides their personal economic upliftment may serve to add to the national benefit. For instance, the vocational training must be imparted to them, so that they become compatible in running the domestic industries at individual level. In case

of Pakistan, ranking among the top cotton growing countries, the domestic textile products could be made by the growing age population for their personal benefit and national benefit. Therefore, the growing age population may effectively be utilized by putting them to their age specific jobs.

Among other remedies, the growing age population should be provided the facilities, so that they may be able to live a dignified life. Old age friendly policies should be made to make the old people feel valued section of the society. Lacking the friendly policies, the old people feel compelled to earn by other practices like begging etc. A glaring example

in the history could be found from the
case of Prophet Umar (r.a.) who in his reign
he inspired the law from the very maximum old
people to let them lead a dignified life. So,
the old age people should be facilitated in every
possible way.

To tap the benefit of old age
population, it is necessary to make their experience in
every experience of the life. As oft repeated phrase
"practice is better than theory" finds its applicability
in certain cases. The old ones, having lived their lives
attempt to guide the young ones according to
their experience. Following their advice, the errors
likely to be committed may be avoided before-hand.
Consultation with old age people has always
been beneficial. So, their experience should be
kept in mind, after consulting them. Hence the
old age people as a free guide can be termed as
an asset.

It may be concluded by the verse
of Holy Quran saying "And your lord has
not created anything in vain." The old age population
though posing certain challenges, dressed down, are
also the solution to many problems - be it individual
domestic or state level problems. In fact the
problem becomes challenging only when the practical
solution is not thought out. The effective utilization
of the resources at hand and strategic planning
has the solution to many challenges. It is
perceived that if the old age people are
physically unfit for the labor intensive jobs,
they should be put to their age compatible work
demanding less physical exertion and labor. To such

Islamic era, the women, old & the children
who were physically weak to participate in
the battles were asked to provide the
ammunition to the soldiers, like women drenching
the soldiers and children providing the services
and the old ones were entrusted to take care
of the military matters of office documentation
So, the rational thinking, liberal approach
and effective policies may turn the challenge
of old age population to the opportunity