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Challenges of Parenting in Modern Times

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THE ESSAY

According to a report by Journal of Social Affairs, an annual journal published by German based public research firm, a rise in extremist tendencies in teenagers is observed compared to children of same age in last two decades of 20th century. The report attributes this surge in extreme behaviours to various technological developments in 21st century. This report provides a significant piece of evidence that parenting in modern times has become more vital and it faces modern challenges. Parenting, which was considered as a beautiful social responsibility, has become a burden in modern society due to new challenges associated with it in 21st century. The challenges faced by parents in modern times include economic issues, technological advancements, increasing competition, changing social dynamics, negative impacts associated with social media, increasing extremist tendencies in society, challenges of moral ills, screen addiction, surge in drug addiction and political intolerance in modern times.

To begin with, one major challenge faced by parents in modern times is economic crises. Due to rising inflation, parents have to focus on economic prosperity, hence the parenting is compromised. In case one parent is working extra hours, the child cannot get enough time and hence lack the social skills associated with his parents. Both mother and father have a lot to give to a child and both impact the personality of child. Hence absence of any ~~of~~ ^{one} parent will impact the overall mental health of a child. In case, both the partners are working, the challenges of parenting become worst. In absence of ~~the~~ mother and father, the child suffers a lot. Likewise, due to economic issues, the crime tendencies are also increasing. It becomes difficult for parents to cope with economic issues of children. This leads to increasing crime tendencies in children. Thus economic hurdles are among the major challenges to parents in modern times.

Another important challenge to parenting in modern world is surge in technological advancement. The developing of

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of modern technology with such a speed requires the adoption of technologies at the ends of parents with same pace, else they will remain behind. Firstly, if they lack behind, they will not be able to equip their children with cutting edge technologies and hence they ~~will~~ and their children will lack behind. Secondly, if the parents fail to match the speed of developing technology, they will not be able to monitor the activity of their children in a proper way. For example, according to a survey conducted by Lums researchers, 69% of the parents in rural area of south punjab were not able to understand the use of smart phone in its full capacity. This research suggest that matching pace of cutting edge technologies is a major challenge to societies like Pakistan.

Another important challenge ^{to parenting} in modern world is the increasing competition. As the population is surging, so is the competition. This leads to phenomenon of survival of fittest in which an individual having most appropriate skills outweighs the individuals

Lacking those skills. This leads to increase in competition, which poses another challenge to parenting in twenty first century. It becomes very difficult for parents to equip a child with multiple skills using limited resources. Increasing competition is also linked to increasing unemployment rates. For example, "average passing ratio of CSS is 2.5%, UPSC 1.71% and average passing ratio for general seats in Pakistan and India is 6.7% and 4.9% respectively" - Dawn-2021.

Thus enriching a child with life saving skills and providing the relevant expertises for economic survival is a major challenge to parenting in 21st century.

Likewise, rising threats to socio-cultural identity is another challenge of parenting in 21st century. Due to influence of media, the social norms are being challenged and many anti social practices are being normalized. This creates another hurdle in smooth parenting. For example, a Pakistan ^{based} Drama, 'parizad', justifies the money abuse contradicting the social norms of society. Similarly, the consumption of Alcohols in drama industry is normalized. Likewise, there is

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no censorship on smoking. The extra-marital and illegitimate affairs are normalized. For example, a drama, Nand, shows illegitimate affairs of brother in law with sister in law. In the same way, domestic violence and divorce are normalized. All these practices confront the existing norms of the society. As children cannot be kept away from television, this poses a greater challenge to parenting for conserving widely accepted yet challenged socio cultural norms in society.

In the same way, increasing use of social media is another challenge confronting parenting in modern world. Social media has its own advantages and drawbacks. Firstly, moral decline of society is one of such drawbacks associated with social media. The social media influencers, through videos on various social media applications, influence the teenagers. Any immoral practice on their side directly impacts the teenager followers. Use of smoking and weapons by influencers to increase followers is no more a secret. Secondly, the privacy issue associated with social media is another concern for parenting. The data in

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modern age worths more than any thing. Thus data security is one of most important responsibilities in twenty first century. But as most of parents ~~are~~ lack behind in digital literacy, the data security and cyber safety of children become another challenge to parents. This is evident from a number of incidents where data was used to get ^{economic} benefit and teenagers were trapped. The responsible use of social media for data and economic security is one of challenges confronting the parenting in modern age. For example, according to news report, more than 600 individuals including teenagers were trapped in ^{false} allegations of blasphamy. These individuals, due to lack of cyber security information and unawareness of cyber security protocols become victim of this trap. Thus show that cyber safety of children is an important challenge in modern age.

In the same fashion, rise of extremist tendencies in society and susceptibility of teen ages to brain wash is another important challenge to 21st century parenting. According to a research, "the children between

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12-20 years are highly susceptible to brain wash. Use of children to carry out ~~the~~ suicidal attack in Pakistan and Afghanistan is reflection of such susceptibility. These children are like empty slates and anything can be engraved in these slates. They easily take the influence by their teachers, parents, friends, elders and social media influencers. According to a report published by New York Times, the number of teenagers who joined ISIS in 2011 was significantly greater (58%) than those having age above 30. This report reflects ~~that~~ on susceptibility of teen age to brain wash and hence increasing responsibility of parents in this regard.

Similarly, the increasing moral ills in the society also provides ^{more} challenges to parents in twenty first century. Increasing rape cases in the society are one among such ills. For example, ~~the~~ Zainab, a small child from Punjab, was raped and killed by his neighbour. Similarly, Farishta, a 8 year old girl from Mardan, KPK was raped and killed. This increase in pedophiles

poses greater responsibilities on the shoulders of parent. Proper sex education becomes an important responsibility in such scenarios. Providing sex education and safety measures to children in conservative societies like Pakistan, Afghanistan and other developing countries is a major challenge in modern world.

Similarly, the screen addiction is another important challenge confronting the parenting in 21st century. Screen addiction, whether in form of tablet, android phone, laptop or television, has negative impacts on both the physical health and mental well being of children. According to a research by John Hopkins research institute, screen time of 1 hour for thirty days significantly lowers the immune responses in infants. This makes children susceptible to various diseases. Another research by some institute suggest that visual effects of cartoons releases higher Dopamine levels, resulting in temporary happiness, but the next time, they will require higher Dopamine levels for such excitement, making them addict to screen. This means that higher screen

exposures will lead to psychological issues in children. Furthermore, research suggests that higher time on reels decreases the concentration on other long term works. Thus decreasing screen time in ~~long~~ busy schedule and engaging children in physical activities is major challenge in modern times.

The increasing drug use in modern times is another challenge to parenting in modern age. The easy availability of drugs and glamorization of drugs through social media and mass media attracts youth towards drug addiction. The access to drugs in schools, colleges and universities is another problem. This increases the responsibilities on shoulder of parents to keep their children away from drug abuse. But due to easy access and media influence, keeping children away from drug abuse becomes a bigger challenge.

Last comes the increasing trend of online gaming and a challenge to parenting. Use of online gaming has become popular in teen ages in modern era. The online games have a

a number of associated impacts. They hamper the study ~~level~~ and concentration levels of students. They also deteriorate the physical health of children. These games are also associated with extremist orientations in children. For example, Fire Fix, a game having truth or dare led to killing of 5 individuals in Ireland. This is not the ^{only} case. According to authorities, the boy who killed many Muslims in New Zealand, took his aspirations to kill from PUB-G. This shows that these games have unlimited negative impacts on children. But easy access and unawareness of cyber security ^{knowledge} at the end of parents is a major challenge of parenting in twenty first century.

A number of steps can be taken to decrease the parenting issues in modern world. These include the widespread campaigns and courses for parents to understand the cyber safety, working on human resources to improve the economic conditions, managing social media and mass media through strict regulatory policies, and stopping the

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day abuse at grass root levels.
To conclude, the twenty first century is the century of modernisation. Therefore it has many modern problems. ~~for~~ which poses significant challenges to parenting in modern times. Economic issues, increasing technological advancement, rise of social media and mass media, rising extremist tendencies and increasing moral ills are some of modern problems confronting the parenting in twenty first century. Modern problems require modern solution hence practical steps are required to tackle the challenges faced by parents in modern era.