

Youth Bulge in Pakistan Demographic Asset or social disaster



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Pakistan stands at the defining moment in the demographic journey, with one of the largest youth populations in the world. Over 60 percent of its citizens are under the age of 30, presenting both a significant opportunity and daunting challenge.

This phenomenon is known as "youth bulge," a stage in a demographic transition where the country has a disproportionately large cohort of young people entering the workforce.

If effectively educated, skilled, and productively employed, this youth bulge can transform into a powerful demographic dividend, driving sustained economic growth, innovation, and social development. However, if neglected and left without adequate opportunities, it risks becoming a demographic disaster, manifesting in rising unemployment, social unrest, extremism, and political instability.

In Pakistan, a weak education system, stagnant job creation, and poor governance threaten to squander this historic opportunity—turning the youth from an asset into a liability. This essay examines the dual nature of the youth bulge in Pakistan, exploring its potential benefits and risks, identifying the structural barriers that hinder progress, and proposing pragmatic strategies to harness the energy and aspirations of young people for national development and prosperity.

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nations with nearly 63% of its population under the age of 30. This youth bulge is a great asset if it is given the right opportunities and direction. It has the potential to become an economic growth factor by being an efficient workforce and human capital. Similarly, it can foster national development by getting education in various subjects. Along with its information Technology (IT) and skill development of the youngster make them an asset for the country. The role of new generation in combating patriarchy, extremism and terrorism. make them youth bulge way and ignite the social disaster bomb. The high unemployment, illiteracy and unmonitored use of social media is corrupting the youth. Thus, the youth bulge in Pakistan is a demographic asset having potential for economic

social and political development of the country which has to be channelized by education, employment and monitorization. It is pertinent to have a brief overview of the youth bulge in Pakistan. According to the 2023 Census of Pakistan, the youth bulge is nearly 63% under the age of 30. Also 29% of the population is in the bracket of 15-29. This youth bulge mainly has mellenials, Generation-Z and Generation- α . The young minds are creative, enthusiastic and fresh with new perceptives of life. To begin with, the young and fresh workforce is an economic asset for the country. This workforce has energy, creativeness and diversity which are the key ingredients for any sector growth. According to the International Labor organization, Pakistan produced 3.5 million people as workforce anually in various fields. This include doctors, engineers, Labor workers and other professional workers.

It is the huge asset for the country to deploy the workers on the principle of right person for the right jobs as directed by Fredrick Winslow Tylor's scientific management principle. Thus the young workforce has the potential to be a driver of economic growth and prosperity of the country. As educated youth acts as a proponent of social change and national development. As it was rightly said by Nelson Mandella "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." The youth bulge of Pakistan with ethics and morals infused in them through education, will foster civic sense, justice and empathy which are vitals for social change and national development. Pakistan education system produced nearly 1.5 million graduates annually as per HEC. The youth acts as a force for positive change and development.

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Moreover, youngsters are the driving force for the political change and for holding the leaders accountable. The youth bulge in Pakistan makes the highest vote bank which makes them pivotal in choosing a leader for the nation. The enthusiasm of the youth where the youth championed democracy and transparency in election forces process through social media campaign. The student unions are vital for political awareness and change. Their role was seen during 2025 Bangladesh revolution headed by Gen Z. Pakistani youth also had the potential to demand accountability from the leaders which make them vital for the politics of the country. Similarly, youth have curious mind with better adaptability capacities which makes them a catalyst for technological and IT growth. The youth bulge of Pakistan has found its niche in the IT sector as it contributed

3.8 billion Rupees to the nation exchanger. The Gig sector and creative industry entrepreneur played the most vital role in this growth. Pakistan aims at tripling this profit by 2023 by enabling the youth. So the demographic asset in the form of youth is a great asset for technological and IT advancement. The youth bulge is a driver and vessel of research and development in the country. The youth in academia are devoting their years of youthfulness to research. There are nearly 32,000 phd scholars in Pakistan as per report by HEC. These young minds make new inventions, discoveries and innovate to solve problems of the world. The Agriculture University of Peshawar has made researches on land preservation and improved seed qualities which are vital for an agrarian country like

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Pakistan where 23% GDP is linked with agriculture. Thus, the youth in research and development plays a vital role for the progress of the country and hence a demographic asset. In addition to it, a technically skilled youth is an asset for the country as well as international country. The world is going through a demographic winter where the youth in certain nation is low in number and the elderly young require assistance. The birth rate in South Korea was 0.8. The Japanese population has highest elderly residents. In this case the Technical Education and Vocational Training Association (TEVTA) has opportunity to train the its youth bulge and benefits in the form of remittance and brain circulation. Thus, the youth is a demographic asset.

Furthermore, the new generation is breaking the curse of deeprooted patriarchy by standing for the rights of the women. They are demanding justice and equality for the women. The "He for she Movement" on the social media to support women displays the change of mindset. The young men are also spotted at women marches holding the placards and raising slogans for the women rights. This generation takes stands for education, employment and martial rights of the women. Thus, the youth are the assets of the country. The youth are the vessels of creativity and innovativeness in arts and science. The youth bulge has potential to become a driving force of the nation's advancement. The land of Pakistan is very innovative as it breeds geniuses such as Arfa Kareem the youngest at Microsoft and Abdus Salam the

Nobel prize winner physicist. The youth bulge has all the qualities to be rendered as a "demographic asset" for Pakistan in the field of science. This generation has seen a period of turmoil in the form of terrorism in the last three decades. They are embroiled patriotism and courage and act as a wall against enemy is displayed by the youth in the Pakistan-India War in May 2025. They supported the Armed Forces on ground and on the social media through digital-meme war. Thus the youth bulge in Pakistan is a demographic asset. However, the youth bulge can also be a disaster if neglected. They will become a social danger if left undirected and unsupervised. Martin L. in his theory of social strain. He delineater that the youth gets corrupt

and indulge in criminal activities if their means do not justify their needs. Pakistan with 7.1% unemployment rate make the perfect breeding group for extremism and violence at the hands of the youth. Similarly, the social media exposure of the youth which has no filters expose the youth to various vices. It leads to immorality, obscenity and extremism in the society. Furthermore, the radicalization of the youth by use of social media is also a common place. The major issues related to the youth bulge and social media are Hysteria, Tiktok, Instagram, Brainrot. It is impacting the cognitive thinking and critical thinking. Thus the youth bulge can cause social disasters. The literacy rate in Pakistan is merely 63%. The education ratio among males and females

is 73.4% and 51.9% respectively. The illiterate youth becomes a burden for the government as their contribution is lowered in the form of human capital. These individuals increase the welfare costs and resource consumption with bare-minimum addition to productivity. Thus the youth bulge becomes a disaster when the mouths feeding are more than hands working. In

conclusion, the youth bulge in Pakistan making nearly 63% of the population is a demographic asset for Pakistan when it has a proper direction and lucrative opportunities. It has potential to improve the economic growth, political culture and social dynamics. They have a vital role in academics, technological and innovative advancement in country. The young minds and sprightly ambitious of the youth bulge are the demographic asset for Pakistan. However, the youth bulge if neglected can bring a social

disaster in the form of crime indulgence and burden on the already unstabilized governance structure. Nevertheless, the potential and the spirit of the youth overrider the issues and make the youth bulge of Pakistan a demographic asset.

"the path forward demands sustained commitment" from all sectors of stakeholders—government, private sector, civil society, international partners and youth themselves. investment in quality education, job creation, inclusive governance, social equity are essential to "unlock the promise of this demographic moment."

As history has shown in other nations, the youth bulge is a time-bound window of opportunity that cannot be squandered to waste (something valuable carelessly). As Nelson Mandela aptly said, "The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow." Pakistan must act decisively and collectively to empower its young generation and secure a stable, prosperous and sustainable future.

