

Youth Migration and Brain Drain in Pakistan: Challenges for National Development

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ABSTRACT

The emigration of Pakistan's educated and skilled labour force, a trend that has a significant impact on the nation's economic progress, is examined in this study along with its intricate web of causes. Due to political, economic, and security concerns, Pakistan's educated youth are increasingly leaving the country, undermining vital national sectors and posing security risks. Using an exploratory qualitative methodology, this study examines the reasons behind youth migration and how it affects Pakistan's national security by examining policy papers, migration data, and current literature. Especially in fields like education, health care, research, and technology, Pakistan's educated young people are suffering from high unemployment, political unpredictability, dishonesty, and a lack of professional possibilities. strengthening economic opportunities, improve political instability, invest in higher education, boost national security, make effective policy for youth to reduce the migration level.

Key Words: Youth migration, Brain drain, National security, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

A time of transition, youth is responsive to opportunities and the future. However, for both migrants and non-migrants, it is currently occurring against a backdrop of continuing gender inequality, social exclusion, high unemployment, underemployment, labour flexibilization, governance failures, and growing concerns about climate change. Through pursuing school or career possibilities, international migration can provide young people with the chance to better their own and their families' lives and escape environments where they feel less safe as well as where their civic liberties aren't always respected. Low- and middle-income nations are where these patterns and occurrences are most common.

The "brain drain" is a serious issue that transcends national boundaries and affects people all around the world. It is a complicated issue brought on by the reality that highly educated and skilled individuals migrate abroad in quest of better employment prospects and a higher living standards One of the several countries struggling with this complex migratory trend is Pakistan. The contradiction of its own ability has trapped it. (Shah, Rana &, Ayoub, 2023) Located in the centre of South Asia, Pakistan boasts a diverse range of cultures, environments, and a rich history of inventiveness and intellectual people. However, it also loses a lot of its most creative citizens, which hinders the nation's progress.

This study aims to explore the youth migration and brain drain in Pakistan and their consequences on national development. Pakistan, a developing nation as well, ranks sixth globally in terms of human capital movement and third in South Asia (after Bangladesh and India). Developing nations like Pakistan, which substantially spend in the training and education of their young professionals, are becoming increasingly concerned about brain drain. Significant resources are lost when these people migrate, but the destination states gain directly from these migrations because they haven't had to pay for them. Because of their training, which entails not only material and time expenditures but also, and perhaps more importantly, missed chances, intellectuals are among the costliest assets of any nation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For many countries, including Pakistan, the "brain drain" problem is a serious and enduring concern. Because of Pakistan's terrible economic circumstances, many highly qualified Pakistanis feel compelled to leave their country in search of better chances outside. This makes it even more necessary to leave your country because of political unrest, poor leadership, or worries about your safety. Social and cultural elements, such as social norms and familial pressure, greatly influence emigration choices. The study looks at how government policies affect patterns of brain drain as well as how globalization and connectivity have increased access to opportunities abroad. (Sajjid, 2011)

Among economic, demographic, and socio-political variables, the latter is the most important in influencing foreign migration from Pakistan. Foreign migration presents substantial obstacles, particularly for emerging nations. Corruption and family obligations are important push factors, whereas access to good education and more pay are important pull factors. Pakistan needs to build confidence in its citizens and create an atmosphere with better labour market prospects if it wants to keep its young workforce. In order to ascertain which elements have the greatest impact, this study looks at the demographic, sociopolitical, and economic aspects that influence international migration, with a particular focus on Pakistan. (Harris & Mehmood, 2024)

In recent years, Pakistan has seen an increase in the number of experts leaving the nation, which has ultimately resulted in a brain drain. It is thought that Pakistani pharmacy students have a strong inclination towards migrating. Finding the elements impacting the trend, nation of choice, and migration motives. The study also examined the challenges that the students expected to face both during and after their move. (Naqvi, Zehra, Naqvi, Ahmed Usmani & Khan, 2017)

Hundreds of thousands of people have participated in a similar effort in Xinjiang, and 400,000 people have relocated to Guangxi's karst regions in order to farm and open up desolate hills. The underdeveloped regions of western China will eventually see the displacement of millions of people. However, significant social and ecological issues have also been brought about by the success of these migratory schemes over the last ten years. To ensure that the projects have a scientific basis and follow standard procedure, a theoretical model that considers the conditions in China concerning the technique, magnitude, settlement planning, effect evaluation, and leadership system of migration must be created. The notion of the push-pull mechanism in Western demography and the a push- Pull mechanism of China (Zhag, Zhag & Zhag, 1997)

As per the human capital idea, people behave in ways that are likely to increase their future earnings and overall wellness. In addition to indirect costs like missed income while enrolled in school, these investments might also include direct costs like tuition and fees. Benefits are expected in the future from these initiatives. A higher pay is one example of benefits, but they might additionally involve anything the individual values, such as improved conditions at work or an extended lifespan. In line with human capital principle, which often models investment decisions similar to those resulting from optimisation processes, a human being will invest in these kinds of activities in order to optimise well-being over their

lifespan.. This study looks at the human capital hypothesis, which states that investing in training, instruction, and skill development can raise a person's economic value and productivity.(Edie & Showalter, 2010)

The development community has always had and still has serious concerns about migration and the role of youth in development. A number of issues that frequently lead young people in arid regions to move or face the possibility of lack of opportunity and suffering. These difficulties include land access, unemployment, and poverty. Success examples from around the world show that there are substantial chances to improve the lives of young people in dry-lands despite these and many other obstacles. The purpose of this study is to present a global overview of the problem, along with information on opportunities, challenges, and success stories related to youth migration (Touray, 2006)

Pakistan is considered to be the fifth largest country in the world by population. Approximately 63% of the population of the country is made up of youths around their ages of Fifteen and 33. The growing youth population in the state has presented significant issues for the social and political sectors. Pakistan's fast expanding youth bulge is threatening the nation's survival and seems more like a ticking time bomb than a demographic dividend. Insufficient both private and public initiatives, especially at the national level, are demonstrated by the low level of youth involvement in constructive sociocultural, political, educational, and economic endeavours. Finding the primary reasons for Pakistan's disengaged and disturbed young in the three key areas of politics, economic growth, and education is the aim of the current study.. (Hafeez & Fasih, 2018)

Development is seriously hampered by disparities in educational access. Some have stated that this is partly due to borrowing restrictions that prevent the poor from investing privately in human capital. Recent suggestions to expand international labour markets to enable the short-term economic migration of cheap labour from underdeveloped to industrial countries hold promise for the impoverished in terms of their ability to accumulate human capital. The significant remittance flows that migrants send back to their home communities highlight this feature of migration. Along with altering household dynamics and expectations for future work, migration can also have a separate impact on the private returns on investments made in human capital. This study examines how investing in children's education and temporary economic migration are related. (Mansuri, 2006)

Trends in Pakistani overseas mobility and pinpoint the reasons, networks of support, and migration patterns. Understanding of international migration, the professional categories of migrants, the involvement of private and public enterprises, the migration of Pakistani workers abroad, and suggestions for enhancing Pakistan's export of labour. Pakistan's unemployment rate, low pay, unfavourable working conditions, and lack of fundamental necessities have led to a migration of workers abroad. The study overall goal is to examine Pakistan's overseas force size worldwide. (Lakha & Aziz, 2011)

The process of development is one of the primary drivers of migration. The process of migration is "an integral as well as therefore inevitable part of bigger trends of economic development and social transformation" in civilizations that are undertaking "modernization." It is possible to view young migrants as a strain on a country's resources due to their dire socioeconomic surroundings. When the right policies and frameworks are in existence to welcome immigrants and make use of their skills, young migration can benefit a country's progress. It is possible to include youth migration into development plans in a way that will promote development. It transcends general references to migration of young people and development by emphasizing regional and sub-regional diversity.. This study examines that the connection between youth, employment, and development has been the subject of the majority of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators (Nicollo, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a exploratory qualitative method to explore the effects of brain drain and youth migration on Pakistan's national security. A thorough analysis of the body of current research, official immigration reports, security studies, and policy papers was used to gather data. The study uses thematic analysis to pinpoint key trends, attitudes, and outcomes associated with the exodus of young people with skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Migration can occur inside a state or near a global border, and it is the act of people relocating from their regular place of residence. Movement that takes place during the formative personal, familial, and societal changes that precede young people's transitions to adulthood is known as youth migration. This type of movement is typically believed to occur between the ages of 15 and 29. Migration may offer them special opportunities and difficulties as they grow up, which may affect their adult lives in the future.

Since 2010, there have been almost 3.7 million migrations from Pakistan. People are leaving Pakistan in search of work, but there are other reasons as well. Between 2014 and 2015, the rate of emigration from Pakistan rose by 20.84% and 25.80%, respectively. There are special opportunities and difficulties associated with this rise in out migration. Pakistan has a higher percentage of young people than ever before in its population. 31% of Pakistanis are between the ages of 15 and 29, while over 64% of the population is under 30 (Zafar, 2021).

Movement among young people in order to include scientific data on the reasons behind youth migration and the financial support provided by parents into current migration frameworks. It demonstrates that education is frequently the objective of migration rather than merely a factor that influences it. About 15% of young people move at least once in order to attend school, while about 25% of youth migration events are made specifically with the goal of attending school. The migrant's birth family frequently provides ongoing financial support in order to take advantage of these chances. Furthermore, even low-income families employ school migration as a way to increase their children's future economic production, demonstrating that this tactic is not just used by the nation's elite. This aligns with theoretical concepts put forth in non-representative studies. (Heckert, 2015)

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of migrants	225,213	312,623	832,339	862,625	727381

There have been 862,625 emigrations in 2023, up 3.6 percent from 2022, when there were 832,339 emigrations. In actuality, these numbers certainly demand a closer look at the patterns of movement that are occurring today. By 2020–2023, almost 96% of the Pakistani population handled was in the Persian Gulf, specifically Saudi Arabia as well as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), according to annual placement data. It only tells part of the tale because it does not include the many migratory movements brought about by immigration to other famous places such as the United States (US), Canada, Australia, Italy, Germany, Spain, Norway, and Ireland, among others. It only reports the data; it doesn't report information on famous places.. (Ahmed,2024)

The widespread movement of highly qualified and skilled young people from economically underdeveloped nations to wealthy and industrialized nations worldwide is known as "brain drain." The economy and society at large must make sacrifices in response to this socioeconomic trend of intellectual

migration, which delinks a tremendous asset and the cream of the nation of origin after one or two generations.

Migration of skilled young people is a scourge for developing countries since it results in a loss of investment in higher education and training when these individuals leave their home country and never return. As a result, the destination country gains from brain drain by having access to skilled and qualified labour that the receiving country would not have had. The brain drain also lowers the relative supply of human capital in the developing countries that are the source, which has a negative impact on these countries' long-term economic growth. As a result, there is a continuous discussion over what the primary draws are to the countries of destination and what reasons lead to highly educated and trained scientific and technical experts as well as highly qualified laborers leaving their home nations (Farooq and Ahmed, 2017).

There is also interest in examining the factors that led to the large-scale exodus of highly qualified and skilled laborers from Pakistan because of the fact that talented Pakistanis have relocated abroad, flourishing in practically every aspect of life and being able to develop their abilities for the good of their new countries.

International relations presents both benefits and problems for developing nations. A sizable segment of the people of working age looks overseas for better job, pay, healthcare, and educational prospects. The economic and social systems of the home nation are impacted by this migration of both skilled and unskilled labour. Although migrant remittances support economic growth, there are long-term repercussions, such as a diminished labour force and possible social and economic failures. There are over 7 million commercial workers in Pakistan who are employed overseas. Corruption and family obligations are push factors, whereas better incomes and access to high-quality education are important pull factors. Pakistan needs to build trust in its citizens and create an atmosphere with better labour market prospects if it wants to keep its young workforce.

One of the lowest GDP per capita rates throughout South Asia is found in Pakistan. As a consequence, there is currently less money available for economic initiatives like job development. Young people therefore have fewer career possibilities. Pakistan's youth unemployment rate rises as a result of young people having fewer employment possibilities. Lack of job opportunities in the unorganized sector is another major reason causing youth unemployment in Pakistan. There are few opportunities for decent labour in the mostly uncontrolled informal economy. This has left many young people without work and unable to find profitable employment.(Asif, Pasha & Mumtaz, 2023)

There is a severe shortage of good pay and job stability in Pakistan's labour market. Many young people have been compelled to accept low-paying, precarious employment as a result, which are frequently insufficient to adequately support themselves and their families. Another significant factor contributing to Pakistan's youth unemployment rate is the absence of suitable employment alternatives. The informal economy, which dominates the economy, does not give young people the required job prospects. Furthermore, many official job openings are restricted to specific occupations and geographic areas, making it difficult for many young people to find acceptable employment. Compared to other age groups, the young unemployment rate is higher.

Economic problems, understanding of culture, and the pursuit of better employment are just a few of the reasons why young people travel. Uncertain sociopolitical conditions, unemployment, poverty, and a lack of educational resources are the main reasons why young people migrate. Depending on the situation that prompted the choice to move, a group of individuals move according to their objectives and the current situation, starting with one individual and working their way up to the next. One phenomenon that affects people or families with specific social, economic, educational, and segmental features is migration.

The costs and benefits to the economies of the receiving countries are one of the main concerns about migration issues. Regarding the cost, inhabitants of receiving nations who lack the necessary skills for employment share the opinion that immigration lowers wages, especially for the receiving countries. Nonetheless, the benefits demonstrate that immigration does raise wages. According to a basic economic model, the nation's manufacturing technique and supply of manufacturing variables determine salaries. The approach is predicated on the idea that the receiving nations are using both labour as well as resources to produce a single item.

Progress and the nation's sustainable development can be accomplished with the aid of human capital. However, there will be circumstances and chances for growth and self-realization as long as she gets the chance to acquire high-quality education and knowledge. Young people are forced to leave their country in quest of better living conditions when these conditions are lacking or insufficient. Realizing that they live in a time of globalization and perpetual change, young people depart in pursuit of political stability on the one hand, and better economic prospects and a better life on the other, including to avoid conflict, violence, and discrimination, as well as rising temperatures and natural disasters.

In Pakistan, resource accessibility is a significant problem. Many young people lack access to the tools that would enable them to obtain profitable jobs, including mentors, technology, and cash. Employment prospects have also been hampered by the government's lack of spending on both the agricultural and industrial sectors. As a result, the private sector has less motivation to generate work, which has increased the youth unemployment rate. An estimated 32% of the population lives below the poverty line. This indicates that a large number of young people cannot afford the tools required to find employment. (Asif, Pasha & Mumtaz, 2023)

The establishment of political parties is directly impacted by political stability, which is essential for achieving nation-building goals including political progress and national integration. States are modernizing or modernizing as a result of differing levels of political stability. "It can be considered crucial to preserve peace, harmony, long-term constitutional contentment, government institution maintenance, and civic order."

Achieving nation-building objectives like political advancement and national integration depends on political stability, which has a direct effect on the formation of political parties. With varying degrees of political stability, states are either modernizing or just modernizing as a result. "Maintenance of government institutions, civic order, peace, harmony, and long-term constitutional contentment can all be regarded as essential." Pakistan's current political turmoil has made the nation's internal and exterior social and political issues worse. Especially in both the economic and political domains, Pakistan is facing formidable challenges. The whole community is helping and supporting Pakistan, but because of the nation's unstable political climate and corrupt leadership, the enormous amount of foreign aid is not having any positive effects. As a result, young people in Pakistan began to go abroad in search of better prospects and higher living conditions. (Memon, memon, sheikh & memon, 2011)

Higher educational ambitions among working and middle-class families in Pakistan demonstrate the widespread belief that education is a valuable tool for improving people's lives and that it is the most effective means of achieving upward social mobility. However, less fortunate families' prospects of realizing their goals for their children's futures are limited by unequal educational opportunities. According to the information above, even the 77% of kids who attend institute might not have an equal chance to improve their situations because of inadequate instruction. Children obtain poor quality education in underfunded urban and rural public institute as well as Low Cost Private (LCP) schools when underprivileged parents from both rural and urban areas choose to send their kids to institute. Youth migrate to another country for better educational facilities and for better career (Ashraf, 2019)

The market controls the alternatives for even the most basic schooling in Pakistan, a developing nation with a market-based economy. This highlights economic considerations over social ones as the driving forces behind social justifications for parents' decisions about their children's education and their foreign migration for better facilities. Basic education includes a public-good component since its advantages to the community as a whole outweigh the benefits that each student receives from attending school; therefore, the state must effectively provide these services in order for them to reach as many people as possible. He argues that the advantages of basic education for society can promote social change and advance economic development.

Brain drain affects not only the loss of professionals but also the workforce and the general productivity of the economy. Because skilled professionals are often at the forefront of research, development, and information sharing in their firms, their emigration hinders technological advancement and innovation. Pakistan and other countries are unable to fully utilize their human resources due to the flight of educated individuals. The quality of public services might also suffer from a shortage of qualified personnel, which will ultimately hinder social and economic progress by lowering their efficacy. For example, the school system suffers when qualified professors and instructors leave the country, which lowers the quality of education overall and reduces the competitiveness of the job market. (khan, 2024)

Because of its long-term effects on a nation's stability and growth, brain drain is regarded as a non-traditional national security concern. While military and defence issues are the main focus of traditional national security threats, brain drain presents particular difficulties that jeopardize a country's human capital and economic development.

Critical sectors are weakened and innovation is decreased when highly skilled workers leave. Consequently, this impacts a nation's capacity to tackle socioeconomic inequalities and its competitiveness in the international market. Additionally, brain drains result in a large loss of funding for research and education, which impedes the advancement of the country. Talented professionals leaving can prolong a cycle of underdevelopment and poverty and worsen social inequality. Nation's long-term viability, economic success, and general stability, brain drain poses an unconventional national security concern.

The lack of job prospects and slow economic growth in the country deter talented workers from remaining. High unemployment rates and restricted work chances create a climate in which skilled individuals feel obliged to seek greener pastures elsewhere. The absence of financing and support for innovation and technological growth drives brilliant individuals to seek out better platforms to develop their skills and ideas.

The country's productivity and competitiveness in the international market will be seriously harmed. Pakistan would find it difficult to compete globally as long as skilled professionals continue to leave the country. This will limit the nation's influence internationally and impede economic growth.

Pakistan's growing reliance on outside knowledge threatens its independence. The nation is highly dependent on foreign talent due to a lack of qualified specialists in its own country. This restricts the nation's capacity to use its own intellectual capital for national growth in addition to making it more dependent on outside sources. The cycle of underdevelopment and poverty is sustained in part by brain drain.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings revealed that the High unemployment, political unpredictability, corruption, and a lack of opportunity for career advancement are the main causes of Pakistan's educated and skilled youth's notable exodus. Important sectors including healthcare, education, research, and technology are

negatively impacted by the brain drain, which reduces national capacity and creates a skills shortage. Apart from generating strategic vulnerabilities, the depletion of human capital has hindered defence capabilities, innovation, and governance. The discontent of young adults who remain behind, socially alienated and jobless, also increases the risk of becoming garbage and makes them more susceptible to extremist impacts, which directly compromises internal security, even though better living conditions and job opportunities abroad serve as potent cons.

Because of poor policy administration and a lack of strategic planning, government efforts to stop brain drain and young mobility have mostly failed. Despite the existence of numerous programs to engage the diaspora, they are dispersed and underutilized, losing the chance to turn brain outflow into brain gain. Youth from urban areas migrate at higher rates than their rural counterparts, indicating that regional inequities also affect migration trends. All things considered, the results highlight how urgently comprehensive, youth-centered measures that address Pakistan's brain drain's security and economic aspects are needed. (Sayad, Raja & Mehak, 2024)

CONCLUSION

The moment has come for a concerted and all-encompassing campaign to stop Pakistan's talented people from leaving the country. A nation may be able to keep its skilled workers by creating an environment that values education, supports innovation and research, improves working conditions, and creates economic opportunities. Equally important are maintaining political stability, encouraging entrepreneurship, and recognizing and rewarding professional achievements.

Pakistan's imminent brain drain problem demands immediate attention and response. The progress and prosperity of the country suffer greatly when highly qualified people leave. Pakistan needs to address the root drivers of brain drain and put strategic plans in place to draw in and keep talent if it hopes to achieve a better future. Pakistan may lessen the brain drain issue by expanding employment prospects, increasing R&D spending, fortifying its institutions, and putting laws in place to draw and keep qualified workers. Pakistan can only enhance its intellectual capital, promote national growth, and build a sustainable future for its people by working together and taking bold action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Strengthen economic opportunities:** Increase Youth Economic Opportunities By assisting businesses, promoting entrepreneurship, and offering skill-development initiatives that are in line with market demands, the government must place a high priority on generating good job possibilities.
- **Improve political stability:** Boost Governing and Political Stability To deter emigration and restore youth confidence in national institutions, it is imperative to provide political stability, accountability, and a reduction in corruption.
- **Invest in Research and Higher Education:** Talented young people can be retained by raising the standard of higher education, funding innovation and research, and offering competitive domestic options.
- **Encourage Young People to Participate in Policymaking:** By including young people in national decision-making processes, policies can better address their needs and promote their active involvement in the advancement of the country.
- **Invest in More Boost National Security by Developing Human Capital:** To lessen the strategic vulnerabilities brought on by brain drain, human resource development should be given priority in vital industries including technology, healthcare, and defence.

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