
SUMMARY of the Article “Striving to Hope,” Dawn, August 14th, 2024

On this Independence Day, marked by the triumph of Arshad Nadeem at the Olympics, there is a slightly brighter outlook for Pakistan, a country often seen as an underdog. However, this optimism must be tempered with reflection on the future for the nation’s youth, who make up over 60% of the population. August 12, the UN’s International Youth Day, serves as a reminder of the challenges these young people face. Pakistan is experiencing a ‘youth bulge,’ with a significant portion of its population under 30. This demographic reality, often misinterpreted as a sign of potential power, is actually a warning. The resources required to support such a large young population—education, healthcare, employment—are insufficient, leading to widespread unemployment and associated mental health issues. The pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, leaving many young people in a state of uncertainty and prompting them to seek opportunities abroad. The societal and cultural environment also contributes to this crisis, with social media creating unrealistic standards of wealth and success, fueling anxiety and depression among the youth. Despite the celebration of underdog stories like that of Nadeem, the article argues that it is essential for older generations and policymakers to reduce the obstacles young people face. This includes controlling population growth, creating effective training and internship programs, and addressing the mental health impact of the digital world. Ultimately, while it is inspiring to see underdogs succeed, the goal should be to create conditions where the youth can become favorites in their endeavors, ensuring more consistent success.

Easy/Short SUMMARY:

This Independence Day feels a bit more hopeful, thanks to Arshad Nadeem’s Olympic victory. However, we need to think about the challenges our youth face. Pakistan has a very young population, but there aren’t enough resources like jobs

and education to support them. The pandemic made things worse, leaving many young people uncertain about their future. Social media also adds pressure by showing unrealistic lifestyles, causing anxiety. While it's great to see underdogs like Nadeem succeed, we must work to make things easier for our youth, like creating more jobs and understanding their mental health needs, so they can succeed more often.

SOLUTIONS to The Problem:

Population Control Measures

Implement comprehensive family planning programs to manage the population growth, ensuring that the resources available can adequately support the youth.

Enhanced Educational Opportunities

Expand educational infrastructure and improve the quality of education to better prepare young people for the job market, focusing on both academic and vocational training.

Development of Job and Internship Programs

Create government and private sector initiatives that offer training, internships, and job placements for graduates, reducing unemployment and helping young people gain experience.

Mental Health Support

Introduce widespread mental health services in schools and communities, providing counseling and support to help young people manage the pressures of social media and modern life.

Promotion of Entrepreneurial Skills

Encourage entrepreneurship among the youth by providing startup funds, training, and mentorship programs, enabling them to create their own job

opportunities.

Social Media Regulation and Awareness

Implement regulations on social media platforms to protect young users from harmful content, and launch awareness campaigns to educate them about the realities of online life versus real life.

Improvement in Healthcare Services

Enhance healthcare services specifically for the youth, focusing on both physical and mental health, to ensure a healthier, more productive young population.

Cultural and Social Reforms

Promote cultural and social reforms that reduce the stigma around mental health and encourage positive societal attitudes towards seeking help and supporting one another.

Youth Engagement in Policy Making

Involve young people in policymaking processes, ensuring that their voices are heard and that policies are tailored to meet their specific needs and challenges.

International Collaboration for Youth Programs

Partner with international organizations to bring successful youth programs from other countries to Pakistan, adapting them to local contexts to improve the lives of Pakistani youth.

IMPORTANT Facts and Figures Given in the Article:

- Over 60% of Pakistan's population is under the age of 30.
- Around 30% of the population is between 15 to 29 years old.
- Pakistan's fertility rate is approximately 3.5, the highest in South Asia

(excluding Afghanistan).

- The unemployment rate is highest among the 15-24 age group.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified issues like inflation and a constricted job market, impacting the youth.

MCQs from the Article:

1. What percentage of Pakistan's population is under the age of 30?

- A. 40%
- B. 50%
- C. 60%**
- D. 70%

2. When is International Youth Day commemorated?

- A. August 10
- B. August 12**
- C. August 14
- D. August 16

3. Which age group in Pakistan has the highest unemployment rate according to the article?

- A. 15-24 years**
- B. 25-34 years
- C. 35-44 years
- D. 45-54 years

4. What is Pakistan's fertility rate mentioned in the article?

- A. 2.5
- B. 3.5**
- C. 4.0
- D. 4.5

5. What major event is highlighted in the article as bringing hope on Independence Day?

- A. A new government policy
- B. An economic boom
- C. Arshad Nadeem's Olympic victory**
- D. A peace agreement

VOCABULARY:

1. **Grim** (□□□□): Very serious or gloomy.
2. **Underdog** (□□□□□): A competitor thought to have little chance of winning a contest.
3. **Euphemistically** (□□□ □□□□□ □□□): In a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt.
4. **Cohort** (□□□□): A group of people banded together or treated as a group.
5. **Fertility Rate** (□□□□□□ □□□): The average number of children a woman would have over her lifetime.
6. **Relegated** (□□□□□): Consigned or dismissed to an inferior rank or position.
7. **Constricted** (□□□ □□□□): Tightened or narrowed.
8. **Hospitable** (□□□□ □□□□□): Friendly and welcoming to strangers or guests.
9. **Emigrate** (□□□□ □□□□): Leave one's own country to settle permanently in another.
10. **Laudable** (□□□□□ □□□□): Deserving praise and commendation.
11. **Prevailing** (□□□□): Existing at a particular time; current.
12. **Incumbent** (□□□): Necessary for (someone) as a duty or responsibility.
13. **Trajectory** (□□□□□): The path followed by a projectile flying or an object moving under the action of given forces.
14. **Eviscerate** (□□□□ □□□□): To deprive something of its essential content.
15. **Stigma** (□□□): A mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person.
16. **Reforms** (□□□□□□□□): Changes made to improve a system, law, or organization.
17. **Advocate** (□□□□): A person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy.
18. **Burgeoning** (□□□□□□ □□□□□): Growing or expanding rapidly.
19. **Resilience** (□□□): The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties.

20. **Hurtle** (تسرع تسرعاً أو يتسرع): Move or cause to move at a great speed, typically in a wildly uncontrolled manner.

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[Striving to hope](#)

By Rafia Zakaria

TODAY is Independence Day. On the back of Arshad Nadeem's victory in the Olympics this one appears to be a bit less grim than the ones immediately preceding it. As many commentators have opined at length, the victory of an underdog for an underdog nation points to possibilities and in doing so charges the engine of hope. And yet, while the underdog's story is the material that will fuel the dreams of many millions, a moment must also be spent on reflecting on the world into which we are bringing future underdogs.

Aug 12 marked the annual UN commemoration of International Youth Day. As the world hurtles into ever greater paroxysms of chaos and turmoil, it is becoming increasingly difficult to take these regular commemorations seriously. In this case, however, in a country made up mostly of youth, taking a moment to consider the sort of world into which we are bringing even more young ones seems like a worthwhile use of time.

It is not news to anyone that Pakistan is experiencing what is euphemistically referred to as the 'youth bulge', an unusually large youth cohort — in Pakistan's over 60 per cent of the population is under the age of 30, and around 30pc in the 15- to 29-years bracket.

The problem, of course, is that when this topic or these figures are offered up, too many people succumb to the fallacy that more is always good. Instead of understanding that having a large population of youngsters virtually guarantees that there will be too few resources to give these young people a decent existence — be they educational opportunities, health facilities, employment or any of the basics of life — these people think that the 'bigger' we are in terms of population the greater we will be in terms of might.

Pakistani society must be transformed and be made more hospitable for young people.

Evidence of this lies in what people do, or rather what people do not do. Despite all sorts of campaigns since Pakistan's inception, the fertility rate in the country is around 3.5, which is the highest in South Asia (not counting Afghanistan which is also a part of Saarc). The 'youth bulge' is a topic of concern, so much so that it often figures in the civil service examinations that many of our youth try to pass in the hope of a better future. The story there is dismal; the vast majority will not pass the exam and will be relegated to the grim fate of searching for jobs that are simply not there. According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2023-2024, the age group between 15-24 years shows the highest unemployment rate in the country. Not only does this create severe and long-lasting economic impacts for the country, it also has a significant effect on the mental health of an entire generation.

Many young people came of age during the lockdowns of Covid-19 that created a general feeling of uncertainty regarding what the world holds for our youth. The pandemic passed on its longer-term effects in the form of inflation, a constricted job market and drying up opportunities to the youth, many of whom wish to emigrate to escape this environment of negativity. It is one thing to encourage the young population to have hope and to look at the victory of an Olympian as an example of being able to persevere against all odds, and it is quite another to hope for a better trajectory for them when very few policies are being implemented that guarantee a happier future.

In addition to these measures, the social and cultural environment of Pakistani society must be transformed and be made more hospitable for young people. Social media has made the lives of the very wealthy and famous accessible to even the poorest individual. Research has shown that apps like Instagram create an environment of constant comparison where young people report high levels of anxiety and depression because they feel pressured to match the consumption levels and lifestyle of wealthier people.

While a lot is said in the media about this, very little is done to help young people manage the mental health consequences of the new world. It is not enough to simply tell young people to put down their phones or to stop using them. This may make sense to older people who did not grow up in an environment where they were in constant possession of their phones, but is less likely to work for those who see it as an important navigation device for their entire lives.

Prevailing against the odds is a good thing and all examples of doing so are worthy ones to hold up before the young generation. However, it is incumbent upon the older adults in the country — the grown-ups so to speak — to also reduce the obstacles and odds that young people will have to face. This begins with implementing workable programmes to stop population growth so that we are not stacking the deck against those who are already living.

Secondly, efforts need to be made by the government to develop trainee and internship programmes so that those who emerge from educational institutions do not search aimlessly for jobs that are simply not there.

Finally, it is important for people to understand the particular mental and emotional stresses associated with inhabiting a virtual world that is both



SUMMARY of the Article Striving to Hope

necessary for social survival and cruel in terms of its ability to eviscerate the self-confidence of those who have not yet grown to adulthood. It is always fantastic and laudable when the underdog wins, but at some point, it is also necessary to aim to be the favourite in a competition. Favourites, after all, tend to win far more often.

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