**Youth and despair**

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It is not a surprise that every group in the country is battling for basic rights enshrined in the constitution of the country. The late surge in the rights movement is owed to the increasing awareness of the youth and their dislike for the lack of freedom of speech, movement, and unions, made worse by poor social mobility.

The demographic dividend is talked about a lot and discussed to assess whether it will be a blessing or a curse. A whopping 65 percent of the population in Pakistan is under 30 years, which is a historical high that might see a decline in the coming decades. However, the current situation is all gloomy. The economy is tanking, inflation is all-time high, rampant unemployment, and most worrisome of all, hopelessness.

The youth surveys show that despair and desperation are widespread. The average age to get stable employment in Pakistan is 30, which is when you leave the youth bracket.

This is abhorrent given the majority of the population in Pakistan is under 30. The hopelessness has pushed young graduates to find other places where they can pursue their dreams. Given the big youth bulge, one thing the authorities can do is to provide assistance through training and consultancies to young graduates or skilled laborers to find employment opportunities abroad since our economy lacks the capacity to absorb all of them. Pakistan would get more in remittances and investment opportunities when it starts exporting skilled labour.

[AMAN-23 Exercise to pave way for more peaceful, secure region: PM](https://www.nation.com.pk/14-Feb-2023/aman-23-exercise-to-pave-way-for-more-peaceful-secure-region-pm)

Another discouraging factor in public offices and programmes is the rehiring of retired bureaucrats and army officers. Most public institutions have retired officers in their workforce and management which fuels further grievances in young passionate individuals and civil experts.

People who should be resting and relaxing instead are given charge of key portfolios which often results in poor performance and continuation of the status quo. Young graduates are not preferred because of their novel approaches and are considered a threat to the status quo which alienates young minds from key programs and projects. There might be some portfolios that perform well in the setup, but those are rare.

In addition, the lapses in the delivery of services are also pushing the youth to the fringe. They feel betrayed by the political leadership. In most areas, the youth are taking an active role in voicing concerns over the provision of basic rights and amenities. To add salt to the wounds, the majority of the underserved districts have been battered by the devastating floods last year. The recovery process is slow and painstaking which has left the youth with more despair. The horrible videos of people fighting over subsidised rations show the face of our failings.

[Everything's nothing but play for Imran Khan, says Sharjeel Memon](https://www.nation.com.pk/14-Feb-2023/everything-s-nothing-but-play-for-imran-khan-says-sharjeel-memon)

What can be done to make the situation better? The problems have been so overanalysed and explained that implementation fatigue has seeped in. People at the helm of affairs have been touched by the palpable despair and the idea that nothing can get better. The milieu is pictured as non-conducive to constructive discussion, planning, and formulation. Thought leaders, political leaders, and relevant institutions must put their heads together, and put differences aside, in a joint effort to bring hope and turn the youth bulge into channels of growth for the country.