

Current scenario

The idle mind is a devil's workshop. The unemployed people succumb to the economic pressure and indulge in all types of destructive and anti-state activities, in order to feed themselves and their families. The aggravating law and order situation presents a cogent proof. Umar Farooq Cheema hits the unemployment issue

In a welfare state, the government ought to ensure the achievements of certain goals within a specified time period by utilizing all the available resources to the maximum. Apart from economic goals, a set of basic human needs (like food, health, housing, clothing, education etc) has to be provided by the government. In this context, provision of adequate employment opportunities is the prime responsibility of every government. Because unemployment is an evil for any country as it is a waste of scarce human Capital.

Though unemployment is not a new problem and has been faced by the nation since independence, it has now assumed alarming dimensions and has become a menace due to its devastating impacts on the entire society. The unemployment situation has had devastating impacts on the society and has greatly contributed to the growth of crime, social evils and provoking hatred among the poor against the rich.

Symptoms of such evils started to emerge in our society as instances of suicides on account of unemployment have abnormally increased during the recent months. Car or motorcycle snatching in big cities, has become a common feature. Prostitution has become a profession and is being fostered among the lower middle class to extinguish the flames of hunger.

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old but the current hue and cry about unemployment is unprecedented. The burgeoning number of the unemployed proliferates from the various factors; the biggest among them being the galloping rate of population growth. Every year, thousands added to burden the country. Whereas the resources

to feed them remain the same. Over-population proves a double-edged menace. It heightens the pressure on the existing economic resources of the country and disproportionate growth of population also leads to certain other problems concerning education, nutrition and health care etc.

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Privatisation, the priority of the successive governments, has also multiplied the number of people. Because private employers are generally more concerned about their profits. They try to exact more work from the available manpower. The additional employees sent home quite unscrupulously, bringing about the idleness for them and their dependents.

Political instability has been another factor to obstruct the smooth flow of the policies drawn out to decrease the unemployment in the country. All the policies and programmes of one government aimed at effectuating the socio-economic development are thwarted by the succeeding rulers. Thus not only the targets were left untouched rather it also reduced the already meager resources of the country.

Child labour, itself a menace, creates difficulties for the adults to procure jobs. Employers prefer children to be recruited as workers for a number of reasons because they are easily available and can be subjected to over as well as heavy work without eliciting threats from them of leaving the job or going on strike. These inherent characteristics of the children minimise the chances of getting employed for the adults.

The successive governments' negligent policies towards agriculture have also played their role in keeping the high unemployment rate. This has been deemed tenable in spite of the fact that it is agriculture that accommodates a greater chunk of the employed labour force. In the rural areas, agriculture is more of a family occupation than mere a work. According to a survey report, agriculture is

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still the largest source of employment followed by finance and social services, trade, manufacturing and mining. Such a specious field has had to suffer at the hands of the governments keeping out put prices below world level, which discouraged the farmers — resulting in an enormous transfer of capital from agriculture to other fields. This does not have good omen in the light of prevailing rate of unemployment and the fact that 67.5 % of our population lives in the village, with agriculture as a major source of income.

The growing number of unemployed persons adversely affects the socio-economic sectors. One of its most serious repercussions is the wastage of manpower. The useful energies of 2.4 million people are dissipating, where as if applied to some constructive fields, they

must have contributed to the overall progress of the country. At present, they are adding to the problems and difficulties.

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Psychological effects of unemployment have horribly mushroomed. Unemployed person is taken as a social evil and targeted at with various taunts. This thing makes him permanently cynic and wooly-headed. Sometimes, he feels so dejected that he thinks of ending his life. The current wave of suicides and self-immolation substantiates the extent to which the society has

reached in frustration. The psychologists hold that the main reason behind the growing number of suicidal incidents, has been the economic problems.

Another set-back by unemployment and under-employment is the brain drain at the vast level. Many doctors, engineers, technicians and scientists, finding limited or no scope in the country, set out for abroad and apathetic attitude of the society towards the talent, deprive the country of the asset on whose build-up it lays out a lot of resources.

It is, therefore, imperative that those sitting at the helm of affairs take due attention to the prevalent situation before it is too late. For this purpose, government has to follow a strict policy of controlling the population growth, which would otherwise nullify any

economic benefits gained.

The education system too should be geared to provide the adequate and appropriate skills required for the job markets, rather than merely churn out tens of thousands of degree holders who are unable to find suitable jobs. Child labour should be promptly eliminated. No doubt, government has taken constructive steps in this regard but there is more room for betterment. Political stability is must for healthy economic activities. Only through such an integrated approach and sustained effort by the government we can hope to reduce the impact of Pakistan's unemployment problem. And if the problem is not handled seriously, it is apprehended that it may lead to a bloody revolution as experienced in France and Russia.