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‘DS View’, an academic activity in which students, researchers and faculty are encouraged to write short academic essays on the Development discourse, aims to generate discussion on issues concurrent to the times we are living in. The topical range may include academic debates on issues such as poverty, inequality, gender, conflict and human security. The essay for DS View can be expository, argumentative, persuasive or analytical.

The topic of eleventh DS View is **‘The Need of Industrial Engagement in Skill Development of Unemployed Youth’** authored by Ramsha Masood Ahmed.

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The Need of Industrial Engagement in Skill Development of Unemployed Youth

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Technical and vocational training can play a pivotal role in creating employment opportunities for Pakistani youth thereby boosting economic growth of Pakistan. Presently, around 60 per cent of our population is below the age of 30, which constitutes about 65 million strong youth bulge (DAWN, 2018). However, only 35 per cent of the children are getting enrolled in middle school after finishing the primary school education (Khan, 2018). Resultantly, we are left with about 42 million young boys and girls having primary education or below when they reach the minimum working age (16) in Pakistan (Khan, 2019). In addition to it, 23 per cent of the ones likely to drop out before matriculation in Pakistan (Khan, 2018). Hence a staggering number of 57 million of our working age youth is in the labor market vying for employment opportunities having formal education up to matric (Khan, 2018). This statistical data underscores the enormity of the issue and warrants serious consideration of the academia and the policy makers. Needless to emphasize, if this huge youth bulge is not provided ample employment opportunities, they will end up being directionless. Both government and private sector are required to shoulder responsibility of turning this youth bulge into an asset. Quality training imparted through the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutes coupled with proactive indulgence of industry may lead to mutually rewarding dispensation. It will benefit the youth in securing livelihood and will concurrently facilitate industrial sector to become more productive, and efficient.

Skill enrichment enables the young trainees to explore opportunities of employment not merely in the domestic labour markets, but also in the international job market. Export of skilled workforce is contingent upon a vibrant, demand-driven TVET system. Overseas employment of skilled workforce leads to economic progress of the nation and socio-economic well-being of individuals. It also has discernible positive implications towards poverty alleviation and women empowerment. In addition, it is also an effective medium of transferring new skills to labor exporting countries as the skilled expatriates bring back knowledge and skills when they decide to return to their homelands. The remittances received from abroad not only augment economic well-being of families but also reinforce foreign exchange reserves thereby supplementing balance of payment at macro level.

Countries in our region including India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have recently made significant strides in terms of modernizing their TVET systems in collaboration with industry. They have moved from the outdated supply-led mode to demand-oriented training system (*National “Skills for All” Strategy*, 2018). The demand-driven system takes into account the actual labor needs of the industry and

then accordingly ensures quality training in view of the specific human resource needs of. The system in these countries has spurred the industry to maximize strengths and optimize productivity.

In Pakistan, there is a greater recognition within the industry now that skilled workforce is a key factor in optimising productivity and hence a meaningful partnership with TVET institutes is of a critical significance (*National “Skills for All” Strategy*, 2018). Yet there is hardly any tangible contribution being made by the industry in this regard. Employers/ industries are therefore urged to invest adequately into vocational training through extending apprenticeship opportunities and on the job training for the young men and women.

References:

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Pakistan currently has largest percentage of young people in its history: report (2018, May 03), *DAWN*. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1405197>

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