



YOUTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Shape the Future



ALL PAKISTAN YOUTH CONFERENCE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

03	—————	Youth General Assembly
04	—————	Editor's Desk
05	—————	Wasted on the Young
07	—————	Law, Justice, Human Rights, and the Legal System in Pakistan
09	—————	The Pied Piper Syndrome
11	—————	Pakistan's Legal System: A Minefield for Women
13	—————	Women Entrepreneurship
14	—————	Should the Age of Voting be Lowered?
16	—————	A Step Toward Revolution
18	—————	YGA's Review
22	—————	Founder's Interview
25	—————	YGA's Endorsement

Youth General Assembly is an autonomous assembly that has been formed in order to provide a credible platform that instigates a true sense of policy & strategy making, equitable administration and non-customary legislative, public speaking and social issues by empowering enthusiasm in youth for being the future ambassadors and democrats. The aim is to inculcate convening and confronting qualities amongst the youth to expand their perspective and knowledge regarding true democracy and parliamentary politics.

Vision

We work to improve the socio-political system of Pakistan by developing passion in youth to observe and practice politics and governance in the environment where each social class has equal opportunities in becoming part of the political system of the country.

Belief

We believe that youth, as civil society activists, have the power to be significant agents of positive change. We wish to represent Pakistan as responsible global citizens.

We also believe that awareness of international issues and knowledge of global systems is the best way to learn and improve socio-political systems of governance in our own country.

Aim

YGA has always focused on providing youth with a platform where their intellectual skills can be utilised to draft policies and resolutions that are presented before legislative institutions. Youth General Assembly recognises the importance of enabling and empowering the youth to participate in socially beneficial and humanitarian activities. Our Assembly commits itself to continue working on promoting and developing projects which encourage youth to serve the society in the best manner.





YOUTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

EDITOR'S DESK

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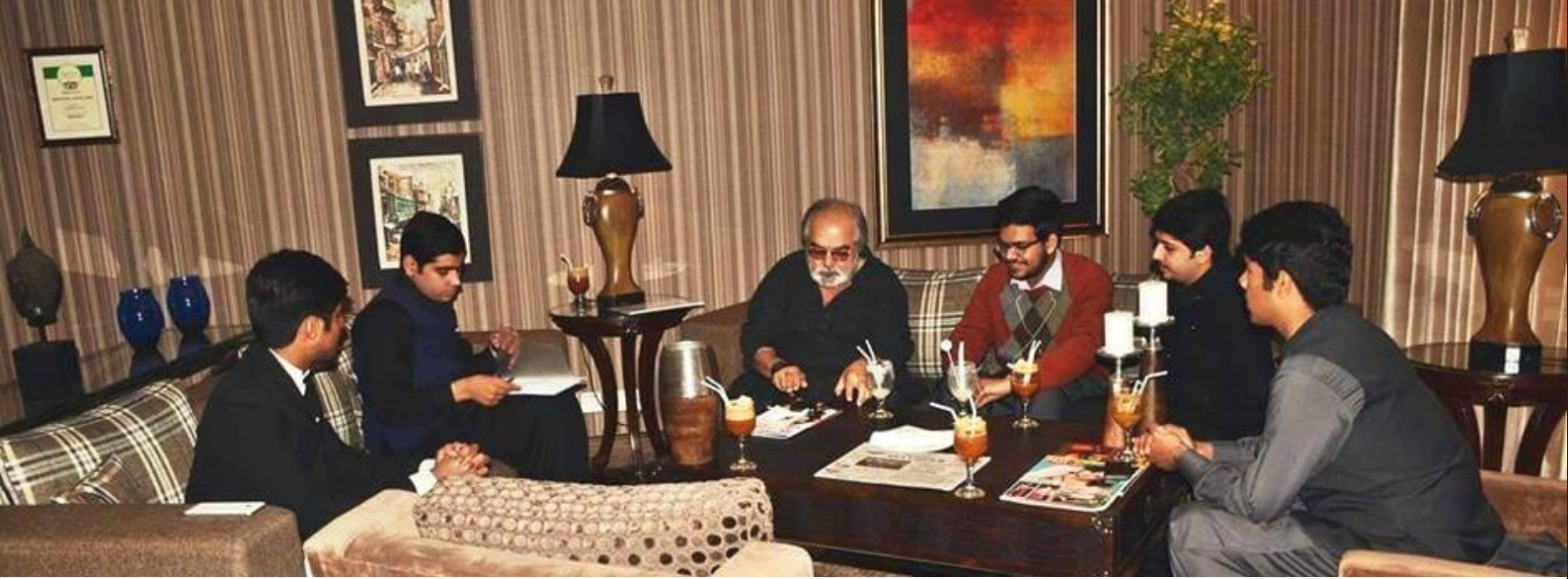


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Wasted on the Young

By Hassan Kamal Wattoo

Hello there, it's me again. We know each other, though it tends to slip out of your memory from time to time. That's alright though, because it never slipped out of mine. You know me by many names, some of them quite flattering. But to put it nicely, I've been seeing a disconnect between words and action. To put it bluntly, we need to talk.

Let me first get introductions out of the way. I'm the silent majority of one of the youngest nations on the planet. 63% of its population and barely a sliver of its political representation. Occasionally declared a tiger, regularly employed to fuel popular movements, consistently forgotten once those movements bear fruit. I am the *naujawaan*, the gen-Z, the vehemently neglected yet persistently hopeful future of this country- its youth.

And then, there is you- the reader of this paper. An unthinkable diverse consortium of anomalies, with notable inclusions. This country is run by men in high offices. In every office is a desk. And on every desk, every morning, is Dawn. You are the federal minister sipping his morning tea, the bureaucrat on her chauffeur-driven commute, the justice in between his judgments. But crucially, what you are not- is me. You are not the section of society devoting exponentially greater time to TikTok than op-eds. For whatever reason, my generation seems to have better things to do than read the paper.

Considering this, I'm cognizant of how unlikely it is that my words are reaching you here. Indeed, many who write for publications of this stature have been doing so for longer than I have been alive. And while that's nothing unnatural, it opens the question- where exactly do such disconnects stem from? Earlier pieces have laid out how an exaggerated emphasis on seniority above merit holds Pakistan back. With every seat at the table refused to the

new and reserved for the old, just how much of it is the former's inexperience? How much of it, the latter's unease?

Decisions made by senior leaders in realpolitik often had lasting effects on my generation's childhood. Consider Pakistan's role in the war on terror: in 3rd grade, a suicide bombing next door shattered my classroom windows and sent us all scrambling out into the courtyard. I wish I could say the experience solidified my faith in good old Pakistani bravery, but the truth is my Urdu teacher had made a run for it before any of us had a clue what was going on. Bless her heart, I don't blame her in the slightest, and the rest of us promptly made similar maneuvers for self-preservation. I retreated to the safety of my home with surety that the worst had passed. Then a month later an explosion shattered the windows there too.

I'll admit it feels strange- melodramatic even, to bring these instances up. After all, that was the world we all lived in. Life moved on. What worries me is what happens when the next generations open their eyes to a newer normal. When a world of filthy air, forever wars, and crumbling economies are all they have ever known, will they speak out, or will life move on for them too?

But of course, none of these things are your fault. They are everyone's, and therefore, no one's. Mohsin Hamid wrote in 'The Reluctant Fundamentalist' of inequality and ambition- there are some people born outside of the candy store, and others born on its threshold, watching as the door closes shut. The volatility of Pakistan makes it feel like a revolving door, offering glimmers of hope and rude awakenings to reality. The youth of this country might be on the threshold of take-off, or the edge of a cliff.

“ It's said that youth is wasted on the young. If it were up to me, I'd give some of mine to you. But until I can, I look toward the next generations. If we can't give them a liveable planet, a stable economy, and freedom from perpetual conflict, the least we can give them is a chance. ”

As to who led us to those cliffs, I couldn't disparage those who came before me even if I tried. Because of course, that's how my elders raised me. What I can do, however, is solidify a pledge on these pages. In the decades to come, if I fail to contribute to the fight against climate change, if I succumb to the seductions of self-interest, if I find myself sacrificing merit on the altar of seniority, may the upcoming youth exercise their right to demand answers. And where I still fail, may they step in to make the decisions for themselves.

There is currently a youth election quota bill pending before Parliament. Spearheaded by researcher and youth activist Shaheera Jalil Albasit, it proposes a fair representation of youth not just in election tickets, but in party leadership as well. Much like those it aims to uplift, this bill could do wonders if taken seriously. But its fate comes down to you, dear reader. The opportunity is there to back up words of appreciation with meaningful representation. Are you going to capture it, or just let it slip?

It's said that youth is wasted on the young. If it were up to me, I'd give some of mine to you. But until I can, I look toward the next generations. If we can't give them a liveable planet, a stable economy, and freedom from perpetual conflict, the least we can give them is a chance.

The constraint of a tight word limit meant that the original version of this piece ended in the last paragraph. But to you, dear readers of this magazine, I'll admit I had more to say. Since the piece was published, it received an unexpected and overwhelming response from young people across the country. They expressed how much it meant to them, and shared examples of how the youth in Pakistan (despite being over 60% of the population) was uniquely deprived of the compliment of being taken seriously, let alone involved in governance.

But more interesting was the critique I received when discussing the piece with certain high-ranking government officials. 'This is easy', one of them said with a smirk. 'Whine about being ignored, but neglect

to do any real work. Look at young activists like Greta Thunberg in Sweden. Why don't we see any of that tangible work here?'

I responded that Pakistani students too are active in protesting for the causes they believe in. The difference is that they're vilified for the same things Swedish kids would be celebrated for. Condemned to overcome state violence, media blackouts, and threats of disappearance. Yet they still stand tall in the face of opposition.

What greater example could there be than a youth activist of global proportions and the world's youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize? And yet our very own Malala is still vilified by the same old men who dismiss every other successful youth. And this consistent pattern of dismissal unravels an uncomfortable truth- no matter what you do, in the eyes of those in power, you will always fall short.

You spoke too little, you spoke too much, your complaints were unnoticeable, and your protests were impolite. Catering to arbitrary purity tests on the quality of your grievances cedes power to those who hold no intention of solving them. Instead, what you need is focus. The youth election quota bill is still pending before the National Assembly. For 63% of the population's sake, speak up about it.

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Law, Justice, Human Rights, and the Legal System in Pakistan

By Barrister Benazir Jatoi

Pakistan's constitution is rooted in the principle that law reigns supreme. The constitution details an adversarial court system largely based on the British common law system. The law blends Islamic law with various aspects of civil and criminal law. Human rights are also enshrined in the constitution with important constitutional guarantees that iterate fundamental rights of freedom, assembly, expression, equality and non-Muslim Pakistanis to practice their religion. Pakistan's international commitments over the years toward protecting human rights for all its citizens are also impressive. Currently, Pakistan is a member of the EU GSP scheme which allows countries to trade concessions in return for ratification of 28 human and labor rights-related treaties. Conventions include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, Convention concerning Equal Remuneration of Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, among others.

Various national and provincial laws, particularly in the two last decades, have accelerated the gaps that were missing in the existing laws. Rape laws were strengthened in 2016, 'honor-based' crimes were recognized in the penal code and anti-women practices such as forced marriage are now part of a penal offence. Domestic violence has been recognized as a violation of human rights with legislation now in most provinces. Laws governing online spaces have also been introduced. There are of course still some important laws that require enactment, such as the forced disappearance bill and particularly in Sindh a forced conversion bill.

Overall, however, it would be safe to say that Pakistan has a strong body of laws.

Unfortunately, a strong body of laws does not always translate into ordinary courts to provide justice to ordinary citizens – the aim for which we should all be striving. The real gap that exists is that the legal system, which includes first responders such as the police, judges, lawyers and court staff have not caught up to the laws that exist. One of the reasons is obvious: the infrastructure is not equipped for the massive population growth. There are not enough judges to deal with the number of cases being filed in courts in Pakistan. This is particularly visible in the lower courts across the country. Police, who are often responders either to a crime scene or those first approached to begin the formal process of involving the legal system to resolve a dispute, or to seek protection and justice against a violation, are not financially or infra-structurally equipped to effectively deal with incidents and crimes. For example, in Quetta, a woman police station once informed me that they do not have a separate holding nor protection cell and have to share a bathroom and other facilities with women and children that may be in their temporary custody/protection.

Another obvious reason is that judicial academies are not equipping judges in case management. Despite the workload, judges must be skilled with effective case management skills, which translate into tangible and obvious financial and time-related relief for litigants. A land dispute that takes generations to resolve involves more proactive actions by

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higher judiciary monitoring lower courts, judicial academy training and tougher laws and rules on adjournments and delays.

Judges, police and court staff must also be imparted with gender-sensitive training and the importance of handling the most vulnerable litigants, including persecuted minorities, children, women and trans-people.

One stark barrier that has been at play is that the judicial system has not caught up to the fact that legislators, litigants and the general public have slowly shifted their expectations of the judiciary. The need to protect human rights has taken on an urgency among lawmakers, as recent laws enacted at the federal and provincial level show. Social media has caught the imagination of young users who are becoming more aware of their rights, with social media aiding the need to highlight violations and crimes. In an attempt to insulate the judiciary - and rightly to not have them be influenced by external or political factors - has led to the judiciary carrying on without taking into consideration newly recognized factors that society, in general, is adapting - the importance of how victims of violence are dealt with in court, the flawed everyday procedure that causes delays, litigants waiting years for relief and court language that is antiquated. In brief, the legal system needs to catch up with the demands and pace of modern-day life and the problems and challenges and issues faced by citizens.

Yet, the first step the judiciary must take to ensure justice and to guarantee the supremacy of rule of law, is that it must fiercely fight for its independence from political interference, fractured internal systems and the lack of judicial accountability – who is there to ask the lower court for unnecessarily longer trails causing hardship to often helpless litigants? It is not just constitutional rights, enactment of laws and international treaties that will guarantee that we live in a state where human rights are respected, it is all those things in motion through judicial professionalism, proactive judicial interference and

keeping at the forefront the importance of their role as keepers of the constitution and progressive interpreters of the law. At the heart of a fair and just state is a legal system, which proactively and effectively responds to aggrieved citizens. And without a reformed legal system, we will only debate constitutional guarantees and the importance of human rights in theory.

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The Pied Piper Syndrome

By Taimur K. Bandey

Nationalistic jingoism, emotional meltdowns, loud chest-thumping and rhetorical comments will surely attract attention, wins applause and echo chambers far and beyond. However, logical arguments, rationality, facts and reason can never be replaced to be the best possible way to engage, deliberate and even dissent.

Unfortunately, the present times exhibit much more of the former than the latter even in the best of educated, exposed and well-traveled women and men. We are dealing with a herd mentality where a large part of the population, especially the youth, is swayed by a pied piper into believing almost anything and everything. A close study of our private education system will reveal the circumstances that have led us to the current situation.

People have often criticized Pakistan's public sector and the madrassah system for poor content, low-quality teaching and missing resources and facilities for their students to compete with the rest of the world. The English-medium private sector has often been glorified as a spectacular example of quality education. While this may be true to a large extent, there lie a host of other benchmarks to see whether this is truly the case or not.

Private school systems have filled in a huge vacuum left by the government of Pakistan. The private sector has delivered where the state has failed us. One wonders what the state of education would have been had the private sector not jumped in to provide the missing education. But, while we are all indebted to their nation-building contribution, it is important to now question some of the established practices in many of our private schools that have now curtailed any form of critical thinking, analytical mind and logical thinking.

We live in a society where there is grade fixation amongst parents, schools and even students. The final grade is seen as the ultimate form of success or even failure. But, while grades are important as they become the basis of admissions in good universities within and outside Pakistan, they are not the end or the final word at all.

We are sitting in 2022 now and the world around us has not only evolved, but it has also broadened in terms of access to knowledge, and evolution and progress of knowledge – and that too at a very fast pace. This digital age has completely transformed the markets and has also revolutionized market demands. In fact, Google has even gone on to say that perhaps they don't need these fancy undergraduate degrees anymore and they will now take students and customize them according to their requirements.

This is food for thought for how far the world has moved on from traditional learning and teaching ideas. We need to see this as a necessity if we are to compete globally as global citizens. Hence the need to think out of the box in Pakistan as well and introspect on some of the nagging and decadent methods of educating our youth. Also important are the ramifications of not evolving with time in the shape of the current intolerant, myopic and less-read student of the day.

Our grade and content-fixated parents, schools and students rely more on teachers' notes to rote learn than books or research. They are dependent more on tuition/ after-school help than in-class teaching. They are expected to reproduce, not analyze, create or think out of the box in classrooms. Students, in general, are discouraged to ask questions or disagree in class as well as at home as questioning or

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engaging in arguments is seen as disrespectful instead of a probing mind. In light of such outdated classroom and home practices, we will surely produce a generation that will rely on and believe whatever comes their way without an iota of doubt or dissection. They will skim-read or just echo what they have heard, seen or have been told by others without trying to go beyond the obvious or questioning them. They will retweet/ post, believe and even argue based on WhatsApp forwards, drawing room chats, TV show content and their favorite politicians' words with zero scrutiny or thinking.

All this creates a generation of blocked minds who are walking and talking robots with no research, the study of facts/data or any sort of in-depth reading. We, thus, have all the right ingredients for a massive cult following of populist and fascist demagogues. In short, any pied piper will stand up and walk out and will be followed blindly by many who will buy that narrative easily and quickly due to their own ignorance and gullible minds devoid of knowledge, logic and rationality.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to move away from the traditional mode of education, learning and assessment that encourages and perhaps institutionalizes surface-level understanding, zero critical thinking and any form of research/ in-depth study. We need to make our students agents of change and allow them the space to explore, create and question. Research, presentations, thinking skills and open-ended questions should be compulsory components of the school curriculum. Sadly, today only the International Baccalaureate (IB) system is doing this as part of the academic framework from preschool till higher levels. Others seem too occupied and happy with the regular rote learning mechanism that we mocked the local public school system for.

Many in the Cambridge system have cracked the code and now know how to attain grades through tuition, last-minute past paper sessions and teacher's notes only. That is why when graduates coming out of such

systems reach good universities based on grades only, they struggle to cope with the demands of modern education. Many now draw analogies and state that those leaders that are popular, especially amongst the youth, are a reflection of the inherent intolerance, hate and bigotry that has always been there. While I agree with that assertion, I think what it also exhibits is our decaying and outdated education sector that breeds such a herd mentality that is more glorified today because of the political system that we have. This is a generation with no sense of history, no sense of probing and absolutely zero research skills. They buy fake news instantly and will never challenge D-grade journalism or media coverage just because it suits their narrative.

We are faced with an intolerant generation that is self-righteous, hates dissent and wants everyone to think one way – which is their way. In short, we are reaping the fruits of the seeds we had sown ourselves in our classrooms and society at large. Before it gets even worse, we should wake up from this slumber and stop this pied piper and work on our education system not to produce fodder for a future pied piper to mesmerize our young into delusions.

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Pakistan's Legal System: A Minefield for Women

By Aaminah Qadir

It is no surprise that women in Pakistan fail to occupy noticeable space within the legal fraternity; hostile work environments, long working hours and the thankless attitude of people around them work as barriers and discouragement. When entering into authoritative professions such as law, the female capability is viewed through the lens of structural and societal barriers (that are constructed by men) rather than through any transparent or fixed criteria. This article will look at the harsh realities of the Pakistan legal fraternity, a point which has been highlighted, but to no avail. The article will emphasize the actual changes that need to be made for solving this problem.

The problems women face in the legal profession in Pakistan are exacerbated by the attitude of their male counterparts. Men in this field do not afford women the same respect that they offer other men. Courtrooms are packed like sardines with men giving no space to women who need to pass through to reach the rostrum. Even the strongest woman's confidence wavers when she has to circumvent actual physical barriers to her entry, on a daily basis. Female lawyers also have to face condescending comments such as "*madam, what would you know?*" Consequently, they have to work harder and longer in comparison to their male colleagues to be reckoned with.

In May 2017, seven judges were nominated for appointment to the Lahore High Court justice. Erum Sajjad Gul – the only female nominee – had the highest case disposal rate. She had decided 10,000 cases in just two years and most of her judgements were upheld on appeal. Despite this, the Supreme Judicial Commission of Pakistan recommended only

six judges and rejected Ms. Erum Sajjad Gul's nomination. No answers were provided as to why her nomination was rejected despite her being the most qualified of all her peers.

Due to such high barriers to entry, few women have trailblazed their way into the legal profession in Pakistan. Even fewer have made it to the top brass. The first female justice was appointed to the High Court in 1994. Twenty-eight years later, no female justice was deemed capable enough to reach the Supreme Court by the decision-making "boys club." In 2022, Justice Ayesha Malik was the first female justice to be elevated to the apex court in Pakistan. There has still never been a female attorney general of Pakistan. Asma Jahangir is a rare example of a renowned female lawyer and human rights activist. Her male peers termed her as fierce and found her worthy of occupying the spaces that were previously occupied by only men. This notion is extremely problematic as it implies that only women who are fierce and show aggression are the ones that deserve a place in the system. It also ignores that it is their merit that has enabled them to succeed, completely.

A study conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) titled "Gendered Career Expectations of Students: Perspectives from PISA 2006" concluded that boys and girls expect different careers for themselves from a young age. Careers favoured by girls included nursing, teaching, veterinary science and psychology often referred to as "nurturance-oriented" or caregiving careers.

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In contrast, boys chose professions like architecture, town and traffic planning, car mechanics, computing, engineering and law enforcement. The latter relate to power, decision-making, organisation and authority. There is an inherent bias that has been ingrained into girls from a young age that prevents them from choosing careers that relate to positions of authority and are pushed towards care-giving professions. The law in Pakistan is one such field that women are often not deemed suitable for. It requires frequent trips to the courts that are hostile and a high tolerance for misconduct. Women are thus discouraged from entering this profession. If they do, they are encouraged to take up “corporate work” that does not require regular court visits.

Forcing women to adapt to the arbitrary standards men set in place completely takes away from the different insight they bring to the legal profession. The female perspective is crucial to the evolution of the law, particularly in cases that relate to rape, harassment and sexual assault which are gender-based offences. Notably, it is not a mere coincidence that the violative two-finger virginity test that was carried out on rape victims - two fingers were inserted into their vagina to determine whether their hymen was broken and hence whether they were raped - was finally outlawed in 2020 by a female Justice, Ayesha Malik. Her perspective was critical in this case because it shed light on what a severe violation of dignity the test was for women while also noting that it has no basis in science.

Female representation is critical to ensure that our justice system safeguards the interests of 50% of the nation's population. There must be proper training on eradicating biases, to purposefully include women into dialogue, appointments and positions within the legal community. Proper criteria must also be developed and notified to ensure transparency in the appointments of legal officers and judges and to counter any discrimination.

The courts must also be made a gender-inclusive space. This can be promoted by employing appropriate complaint mechanisms and reserving certain seating or areas in courtrooms for females only. Any misbehavior should be reported through instituted and formal complaint procedures with severe penalties. Such measures will promote female inclusivity and will allow the much-needed diverse representation this system requires.

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Women Entrepreneurship

By Ambreen Khursheed

Entrepreneurship is known as a powerful strategy for resolving problems related to poverty and unemployment. Particularly women entrepreneurship comprises other key social aspects including gender equality, social inclusion, and women empowerment which also contribute to the welfare of society. Through the creation of new start-ups economic development of any country can be improved. As successful businesses not only provide job opportunities but also increase employment growth at regional levels.

In Pakistan, entrepreneurship is recognized as a crucial economic activity not only for men but also for women. In particular, women entrepreneurs are increasing and are very active in entrepreneurial activities. They independently involve, innovate, and manage their businesses which also helps in their domestic development. The trend of managing a sustainable business is also increasing day by day. These sustainable business practices improve business performance in the long term. Therefore, entrepreneurs in particular women entrepreneurs are working on their business models and aligning them with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In Pakistan, from the last decade, in all developing and developed nations, women entrepreneurship and its contribution to economic growth have gradually increased. The government is also promoting women entrepreneurship and this rising interest is because of few employment opportunities and an increase in household expenses. Consequently, several women have started their ventures. Moreover, the importance of women entrepreneurship has also been recently acknowledged by the corporate sector of Pakistan and now women entrepreneurship is considered one of the most important tools for increasing economic development.

Sustainable women-led start-ups are mostly based on innovative ideas and this, not only helps the whole economy but also helps them in improving their living standards. However, in order to achieve a sustainable business, one cannot ignore several aspects, especially

the start-up valuation. Thus, in order to promote women entrepreneurship and sustainable business practices, women entrepreneurs should learn methodologies to measure start-up performance including the most popular methods, score card, the cost to duplicate and risk factor summation methods.

In order to do this, private and government universities should also promote women entrepreneurial activities, particularly in rural areas. Because women managing start-ups in rural areas are exposed to considerably higher financial and cultural challenges which ultimately affect their entrepreneurial activities. Moreover, policymakers should also design a framework that can be used by all women to launch their start-ups under uncertain economic conditions. This will not only increase women-led startups but will also make a suitable environment for women entrepreneurs leading to alleviating poverty. Further, the incubation centers and accelerators of private and government universities of Pakistan should also provide free training to women entrepreneurs so that they can not only begin new businesses but also be able to run sustainable businesses.

As sustainable startups help in achieving sustainable development goals about decent work and economic growth. The policymakers should also highlight all those factors which restrict women from starting their ventures and the government should take necessary actions for facilitating women-led start-ups in order to enhance women entrepreneurship in Pakistan. Thus, the startup ecosystem will play a significant role in increasing innovation and start-up creation.

With that being said, in order to understand the true meaning of business, entrepreneurship and developing economics, it is important to understand the importance of sustainable women entrepreneurship and its challenges in Pakistan.

The writer is a member of YGA Council of Mentors and a Senior Lecturer.



Should the Age of Voting be Lowered?

By Abr E Rehmat

Every time when elections are around the corner, does your younger self think that you should also have a right to vote your desired personality? Do you think that while waiting to reach the age of 18 - the age of eligible voter - you miss a very important chance to elect the right person and this results in your dissatisfaction with the government for the next couple of years? The world is separated on the right age of voting and this, in turn, has a huge impact on democracy.

So, what will happen if a democratic country allows the youngster (preferably 16 and 17 years old) to vote for the government of the country? You make like the idea because it brightens your democratic spirit, or dislike the idea of not leaving the country into the hands of spoiled and biased children. An adequate opinion can be found from comprehensive studies and analysis. Jan Eichhorn and Johannes Bergh, in "Lowering the Voting Age to 16 in Practice: Processes and Outcomes Compared", by comparing American and European countries analyzed that giving young people a chance to vote when they are in high schools not only spurs higher rates of turnout among first-time voters but can lead to rising aggregate turnout levels as observed in Argentina, Ecuador and Australia.

So, it is found that voting earlier in life gives voters a chance to develop lifelong habits. Additionally, individuals who have experienced earlier enfranchisement have greater levels of pro-civic attitudes compared to their counterparts who were not. The youth between the age of 16-17 years not only shows greater support for democracy but also external political efficacy than other voters.

This argument seems inspiring and might excite a

young reader but it should be kept in mind that this policy requires a sufficient level of education for the youth regarding current affairs and national politics. Would you allow a young citizen to vote on the basis of how many followers a political personality has on social media? So the article mentioned above provides considerable outcome but lacks evidence such as the testimony of key stakeholders, including youth themselves which could prove the changed civic attitudes in this case.

As the youth below the age of 18 also pay tax indirectly, can this be the ground for the youth to claim the right of representation? This reasoning is proposed by the Parliament of Australia that since most 16 to 17 years old pay tax, with those under 18 generating almost \$51 million in direct income tax revenue annually, they should have equal rights to representation too. It was also argued that as young people engage in activities regulated by the government such as health and education, they should also have the capacity to influence these public policy decisions that affect them.

In Pakistan youth makes up 63% of the total population and the age of an average legislator is 52.39 years, as such legislators cannot be considered accurate representatives of what the youth wants in terms of legislation. This disparity in the ages between most lawmakers and most of the population would also suggest a problem of inadequate or faulty representation which isn't aligned with the tenets of democracy. If young people feel like their voices are not being heard in the political sphere it is possible that they lose faith in the system, which we are witnessing in this era.

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Keeping in view the age limit often set to 18 in case of marriage and consent, it is observed that young people can be vulnerable to exploitation and brainwashing more easily and can be used as pawns by self-interested political parties. Mark Harper, a Member of the UK Parliament also notes that the legal age of voting should be set at the age when one transitions from a child to adult. But, very respectfully, this argument sounds a bit 'slippery slope'. It is not really a sound one since there is no empirical way to determine what this age is when a person transitions into an adult, it can very easily vary from person to person and any age limit can be called arbitrary so in the interest of greater representation - perhaps lowering it further in countries with greater sense of responsibility among youth sounds plausible. An obvious failing of these arguments though is that they are based on only the political situation in the UK, so we have realized that the voting age limit varies from country to country.

But one cannot entirely discredit the idea that young people aren't always ready to make informed decisions – an article for The News Record written by Samuel Olsen, mentions whether or not to reduce the age of voting to 16, argued against such a measure on the pretext that 16 year olds aren't well informed enough to make a decision that might affect the rest of the country because according to research from the Annenberg Public Policy Centre, 36% of all American adults could not name the 3 branches of government even though most of them were high school graduates suggesting that people of this age group were not adequately informed.

After considering evidence both for and against the issue, in my opinion, which is maybe your opinion too, lowering the age of voting might be exactly what we need, not only does this increase democratic legitimacy but as mentioned before can have substantial positive effects on voter turnouts as well as greater trust in democracy in people. While it is argued that young people might not have the mental capacity for making these decisions and are easy to sway, I don't think it is

a strong enough argument to ignore their voice in elections particularly when policies created today will affect them tomorrow.

While I was apprehensive of such a measure at first, now I feel somewhat comfortable with the idea that individuals my age be allowed to vote and it helps me make sense of the current political scenario in Pakistan where my friends and I have a lot of political opinions but limited means to impact actual politics of the country. I was always in favor of extended franchises but I am even more convinced now considering that several other countries have already introduced it and benefited from it.

The writer is a member of the Youth General Assembly.



A Step Toward Revolution

By Umme Khadija

Every morning while leaving for university or work, you might have witnessed people dressed up without any occasion. They are the lawyers of our society who without any care of thunder, rain, or sunlight, ensure their presence in His Lordship's court at 8:30 in the morning as an advocate for any victim against any notorious criminal or for any indigent old man fighting for his decade-long cases.

Why do people idealize superheroes with capes, when we actually need heroes who dawn the coat of justice, our fraternity of lawyers. A threat to a lawyer is a threat to the rule of law, resulting in the release of all those notorious criminals, whom the lawyer worked sleepless nights to put behind the bars, and the unsatisfied death of the indigent old man, who has spent his life fighting all those cases. Thus, the judicial system halts or itself becomes the victim of undue delays, as it is in Pakistan.

Dear Reader, very respectfully, you can never imagine the challenges, especially the dangers faced by a lawyer unless you, yourself, are a lawyer or belong to a legal fraternity. The main challenge for a lawyer in Pakistan is critical for being thugs or violent. But the truth is that you can only call Pakistan your motherland because of the heroic and brave efforts of a lawyer. Today, the question is about the dangers to the lives of the same fraternity of lawyers from which Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah arose and made independence a reality.

Pakistan's history is not unaware of the brutal murders, assaults and harassment of lawyers and their families only for taking up the cases. These instances are not only seen in high-profile cases such as the Dua Zehra case but are also

experienced by lawyers pleading everyday cases. This is not the country that our founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah dreamed of. Therefore, a legal instrument to protect the lawyers and enable them to work without fear is a need of an hour. A step toward revolution is taken by the Federal Government of Pakistan by proposing the Advocates (Protection) Bill, 2022, to eliminate threats and hindrances in the performance of their duties.

The safety of lawyers in Pakistan has been the most concerning issue in recent years. Protection in terms of their appointment was now imminent, but protection against violence has always been a great need, which is why this law should become a reality. Spurred by these exigencies, the Pakistan Bar Council is now emphasizing its early passage. A special law for the protection of advocates with specified punishments may prove beneficial for preventing targeted brutality against the advocates. However, it is a question of whether the law is free from any loopholes and guarantees compliance with it.

The purpose of the Advocates (Protection) Bill, 2022, is to curb acts of violence and grievous harm against the advocates, to ensure that those committing harassment, coercion, and assault on the advocates suffer rigorous punishment, to ensure police protection for advocates under threat, to prevent malicious prosecutions against them, and to lay down procedures for making rules to carry out the purposes of this Act. The meaning of the term "advocate" is the same as in Section 2(1)(a) of the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973.

“ A special law for the protection of advocates with specified punishments will be beneficial for preventing targeted brutality against the advocates. However, it is a question of whether the law is free from any loopholes and guarantees compliance with it. ”

There, the term "advocate" means an advocate entered in any role under the provisions of this Act. This law is to be applied in addition to other applicable laws.

The bill prohibits acts of violence against the advocates during and after the trial. Those acts that prevent the impartial process of litigation fall under this offence. The “acts of violence” include harassment, coercion, assault or threat to obstruct the work of advocates; grievous or simple harm or danger to the advocate in or outside the premises of the Court; coercion to disclose the confidential material; coercion to prevent the advocate from practicing his/her profession; damage to property of the advocate and use of derogatory language during the proceedings either judicial or quasi-judicial.

The penalty for committing any act of violence, other than grievous harm, is imprisonment for up to five years and a fine of up to one lakh rupees. The punishment for grievous harm and a second or subsequent offense is imprisonment for up to ten years and a fine of not less than two lakh rupees. A modification brought about by this bill in the penal law of Pakistan is that now compensation is not only available in cases of bodily injury but is also provided to the victim in any act of violence that falls under this bill.

Nonetheless, achieving the aims of preventing violence and ensuring the safety of advocates depends on the effectiveness and implementation of the law. While this bill demands speedy trials, the proper implementation of the law is important to prevent unnecessary cases from being brought under this act which can delay other pending cases.

The bill requires the courts to move cases expeditiously, failure to do so must be followed by an explanation from the judge. The reasons must also be given in cases where the trial has to be extended beyond this period, but these provisions

do not provide any remedy to the advocates for the delay in justice. While this provision apparently looks fruitful for reducing the duration of trials but, in view of the current trial processes and the number of pending cases, this may likely fail or may lead to introducing special courts unless the whole judicial system works toward achieving speedy justice. The bill has nevertheless recognized that in cases of violence against advocates, the work of an advocate is completely hindered until the trial is concluded, so it requires the case to be disposed of within one year. This should also be recognized by the judiciary.

The current draft bill mentions in Section 13 that the Central Government has the power to make rules “after consultation with the Bar Council of India.” This discloses that the law has been taken from the Advocates (Protection) Bill 2021 issued by the Bar Council of India, and the majority of the provisions are the same in both bills except for the provision of financial help to the advocates during catastrophes. The main issue is that such poor care in drafting the bill can result in many loopholes in the law. There is no harm in taking the law from another country but the lawmakers must inculcate the law in Pakistan by specifically keeping in view the judicial and executive systems of Pakistan. Therefore, the exigencies of this law must not deter lawmakers from its proper construction.

The bill protects advocates from violence and ensures swift justice, but there is still a need to ensure its proper execution. The provisions of the bill have been taken from Indian law, but the fact that it fails to replace “Bar Council of India” with “Bar Council of Pakistan” raises many ambiguities. Nevertheless, a step toward revolution can contribute in safeguarding the heroes of justice.

The writer is a member of Youth General Assembly.



Youth General Assembly Review

YGA has been working for the better future of the youth of Pakistan for many years. So it is worth mentioning the remarkable progress report because just like every other year 2022 has also been fruitful for the youth of Pakistan.

All Pakistan Youth Conference:

On 24th of October 2021, Youth General Assembly successfully conducted All Pakistan Youth conference in Faletti's hotel. President YGA Mr. Fahad Shehbaz presented the Charter of Demand at APYC, which included the establishment of a Youth committee at national and provincial levels. Moreover, the youth should be given chance at political representation by upto 30%.

The conference was chaired by Nawab Ghous Barazoi, former Chief Minister of Balochistan and member of YGA Advisory Board. Apart from that many renowned personalities like Justice ® Nasira Javed Iqbal, Mr. Rana Mashood Ahmed khan, Mr. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, Ms. Hina purvaiz Butt, Mr. Ameer Ul Azeem, Mr. Rana Asad Ullah Khan, Mr. Farukh Shehbaz Waraich, Ms. Nida Usman, Mr. Salman Abid, Mr. Sakhir Ali Qureshi. More than 50 organizations were represented by their representatives.

National Urdu Moot Court:

Youth General Assembly organized the first ever 'National Urdu Moot Court Competition' on January 15-16, 2022. The first yet challenging moot competition aimed to promote advocacy skills and national language in the youth. The event was conducted in a hybrid mode.

Teams from around every law college in Pakistan participated in the moot competition. Punjab University Law College stood first in the competition and team Indus Law College Hyderabad won Best Memorial for Petitioner. Leading names of the legal fraternity

adjudicated the moot competition.

Justice ® Rutam Malik, Justice ® Nasira Javed Iqbal, Barrister Salman Safdar, Barrister Haris Azmat, Barrister Amir Zafar Khan, Mr. Usama Malik, Mr. Rana Sajjad Ahmad, Mr. Naveed Abbas, Mr. Tahir Gondal, Barrister Fatima Shaheen, Barrister Khadija Siddiqi, Barrister Atir Rizvi, Mr. Azeem Farooqi, Barrister Ambreen Qureshi and many other renowned names of the legal fraternity adjudicated the competition.

The efforts of Mr. Fahad Shahbaz and YGA toward promoting advocacy skills in youth were highly appreciated.

National Women Moot Court Competition:

Youth General Assembly organized the first-ever National Women Moot Court Competition. It was organized with the dual aim of promoting advocacy skills and equal representation of women in the legal field. The moot court was adjudicated by the following well-known personalities:

Justice R. Nasira Javed Iqbal, Ms. Rabiya Bajwa, Barrister Khadija Siddiqui, Barrister Fatima Shaheen, Barrister Ambreen Qureshi, Ms. Sarah Tarar, Ms. Ramsha Khokhar, Barrister Maryam Hayat, Ms. Ramla Altaf, Ms. Ayesha Jawad, Ms. Samaviya Sajjad, Barrister Ramsha Chauhdry, Ms. Aiman Noman, Ms. Ghazal Ali Khan, Ms. Waiza Rafique, Ms. Mehwish Muhib Kakakhel, Ms. Rubab Saeed, Ms. Amna Adnan Khwaja, Ms. Shaza Kaleem Usmani and Ms. Maheen Fatima.

Regarding this competition, Mr. Fahad Shahbaz, President of YGA, expressed the importance of understanding the challenges female lawyers face and is committed to providing them a platform to hone their legal skills and advocate for equal representation in the field.

YGA Parliamentary Sessions:

Youth General Assembly plays its role by presenting proposals to the legislative institutions of Pakistan. In this respect, "A Shadow Cabinet" on the model of Parliament has been formulated, utilising the leadership skills of young individuals. The members of the Assembly, by holding assembly meetings on national interests, present "Alternative Policy, Resolution and Calling Attention Notice" with their intellectual expertise which are presented to the concerned stakeholders. The participants raised intriguing points while addressing these important issues and concluded with exceptional policy recommendations. The participants highly appreciated the initiative and were always looking forward to the next session as such platforms provide a sense of political participation to the youth, allowing them to share their valued opinion which is unfortunately seen rarely in Pakistan.

Annual Dinner 2022:

Upon the completion of 6 years of YGA, the assembly organized an Annual Dinner on April 1, 2022. Along with its members, several dignitaries attended the event.

On this occasion, the audience was addressed by the members of the assembly's leadership. They shared their experience working with the organization and how over these 6 years, YGA has been providing a productive platform to the youth and highlighting the importance of political participation and leadership development in youth.

Mr. Ahmad Awais (Advocate General Punjab), Mr. Azfar Zia (Secretary Local Government Board Punjab), Mr. Riffat Mukhtar Raja (Additional Inspector General Police), Ms. Sehar Tarar (Director YGA), Badar Khushnood (Former CEO P@sha), Barrister Taimur Malik (Patron YGA), Mr. Kamran Adil (Deputy Inspector General Police), Mr. Farrukh Shahbaz Warraich (Broadcast Journalist Urdu Point), Barrister Salman Naseer (Chairman PCB), Mr. Qasim Muhammad (MD Hush Puppies), Mr. Usama Maik (Legal Advisor Ministry of Law & Justice Pakistan) and many such renowned personalities graced the occasion with their presence.

Mr. Fahad Shahbaz, President YGA, addressed the guests and shared YGA's vision. He enlightened the audience about the future ambitions of YGA. The efforts of Youth General Assembly were highly appreciated.

UNLEASH Hacks Pakistan 2022:

Youth General Assembly organized UNLEASH Hacks 2022, virtually conducted during the period of two weeks from April 9-16, 2022.

UNLEASH is a global non-profit initiative addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by bringing together young global talents and equipping them with the tools to co-relate innovative solutions to achieve the SDGs. Local UNLEASH Hacks are organized to engage local communities to foster collaboration and innovation in solving pressing global challenges. UNLEASH Hacks Pakistan 2022 focused on SDG 16 and 17.

YGA has always advocated for sustainability and improving the state of Peace and Justice in the country and so brought another opportunity for the youth of Pakistan through UNLEASH Hacks. A total of six teams participated in the hacks consisting of 40-plus participants from within and outside the organization. The winning team was given a direct ticket to Unleash Plus.

The Hacks were judged by Mr. Fahad Shahbaz (President YGA), Ms. Sadaf Taimur (Chairperson YGA), Ms. Aya Yousef (Facilitator UNLEASH) Ms. Farrukh Awais (Youth Activist), Ms. Sehar Amir Tarar (Director YGA) and Mr. Mohammad Ali (Youth Activist & Lawyer).

Fahad Shahbaz Foundation, Voicepk.net, Second Passport World, and Courting the Law were the official partners of YGA for Unleash Hacks 2022.

Workshop On Innovation Management:

Youth General Assembly in collaboration with Walled City Authority organized a short course certification workshop on 'Innovation Management: a case study on Pakistan's Tourism' on July 23, 2022 at Barood Khana, Lahore Fort. Innovation prepares minds to grow and give fierce competition. The workshop was another opportunity for the youth to learn how to enhance their functional and working skills and to learn effective innovation management strategies to remain ahead of current time and thinking.

Mr. Kamran Shakoor, Managing Director YGA, was the Instructor for Module 1; Mr. Muhammad Javed, Tourism Officer WCLA, was Module 2 Instructor and Mr. Tamure Hasan, Deputy Director, Tourism and Events WCLA, was the Instructor for Module 3 of the workshop.

Along with an interesting discussion on the Tourism Industry in Pakistan, the participants were given refreshments and a guided tour of the fort. Digital Certificates were presented to all the participants.

YGA through this program emphasized the importance of the role Youth can play in promoting tourism and aims to contribute to progressive developments for the Tourism of Pakistan through such initiatives in the future as well.

Roundtable On Investigation And Prosecution Of Gender Based Crimes:

Youth General Assembly organized a Round Table on 'Investigation and Prosecution of Gender Based Crimes,' on July 28, 2022.

The target audience was the police officials, lawyers and social activists who have been diligently campaigning for the issues regarding Gender Based violence. The Roundtable was chaired by Mr. Fahad Shahbaz. We were honored to have the following speakers:

Barrister Salman Safdar, Barrister Ambreen Qureshi, Barrister Muhammad Ahmad Pansota, Ms. Ayesha Taslim, Ms. Aqsa Javed, Mr. Imran Javed Qureshi, Ms. Valerie Khan, Mr. Zain Ali Qureshi, Ms. Ramma Altaf Baig, Ms. Zahra Hamad Naqvi, Ms. Alizeh Akbar Meer, Ms. Maheen Gul Malik, Ms. Fatima Razaq, Ms. Aminah Qadir, Ms. Ghazal Khan and police officers including Ms. Anam Rehmat (Incharge GBV City Division), Ms. Salma Bano (Incharge Anti Women Harassment and Violence Cell) and Ms. Farzana Mushtaq (Incharge GBV Iqbal Town).

The aim of the conference was to educate the youth about the complexities of handling gender-based crimes and to identify and address the inadequacy in our criminal justice system which leads to lower convictions in Gender Based Violence crimes.

The members of the conference got to understand and discussed the causes behind these issues in new dimensions. The conference concluded with speakers submitting their critically formulated recommendations to eliminate the factors stimulating gender-based violence in our society.

National Youth Debate:

International Youth Day 2022 was observed with the theme 'Intergenerational Solidarity' in light of which, Youth General Assembly organized the 'National Youth Debate' on August 11, 2022, on the motion: "This house believes that the previous generation is responsible for the current situation of Pakistan." Several esteemed policymakers, legislators, and activists participated in the debate to mark a memorable event. The debate aimed to initiate an inter-generational dialogue to bring shared ideas, create a mutual understanding, and to bridge the differences on political attitudes between the older and younger generations of Pakistan and it brought forward compelling intergenerational narratives.

Mr. Fahad Shahbaz, Dr. Ammar Ali Jan and Barrister Mehrunnisa Sajjad spoke in favor of the proposition that the older generation is responsible for the current state of national affairs. Whereas, Ms. Salman Akram Raja, Barrister Amir Hassan and Dr. Samia Raheel Qazi opposed the motion. The successful debate is proof of how 'intergenerational harmony is the way forward' for the world.

Beyond The Youth:

Beyond the Youth organized by Youth General Assembly was held on 4th December 2022 in the Ali Auditorium, Lahore. The conference started with an opening Statement given by Mrs. Justice Ayesha A. Malik – The First Female Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Politicians, policymakers, bureaucrats, lawyers and youth activists joined the conference to share their thoughts on many pertinent topics like climate policy, judicial activism, constitutional crisis, youth bulge and closing the gender gap.

Beyond The Youth is undoubtedly the biggest youth conference of the year 2022. BTY catered to more than 500 enthusiastic youth and provided them with a learning experience they hadn't experienced anywhere else. BTY was surely a fishing expedition for seekers and youngsters to ingrain a cluster of knowledge, confidence, and intellect for their future expedition in the name of amelioration. The stage was set with excellent speakers, partners, and mentors for youth to learn and grow. BTY invited youth from all around Pakistan to participate and be a part of this enlightening conference accompanied by giggles, learnings, performances and much more.

Justice Ayesha A. Malik (First Female Justice of the Supreme Court), Mr. Muhammad Makhdoom Javed Hashmi (Senior Politician), Mr. Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan (Representative PMLN), Mr. Syed Ali Musa Gillani (Elected President Young Parliamentarians Forum) and Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja (Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs) delivered their keynotes on various pertinent topics. Mr. Ahmad Rafay Alam, Barrister Amir Zafar Khan, and Barrister Aneesa Agha shared their thoughts on the topic of “Rethinking Pakistan's Climate Policy”. To discuss their thoughts on the topic of “Judicial Activism and its Overreaching Impacts”, we were joined by Mr. Hamid Khan, Justice @ Nasira Javed Iqbal, Senator Barrister Syed Ali Zafar, Mr. Ahmer Bilal Soofi and Barrister Muhammad Ahmed Pansota. Mr. Farrukh Shahbaz Warraich moderated the discussion on the topic of “Democracy and Constitutional Crisis in Pakistan” and we were joined by Barrister Aamir Hassan, Mr. Amir Ul Azim and

Barrister Muhammad Pansota to share their thoughts on the topic. To discuss a pertinent topic of “Closing the Gender Gap: Myth or Reality”, we were joined by Barrister Maleeka Bokhari, Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, Senator Zarqa Taimur, Dr. Samia Raheel Qazi, Ms. Nayyab Ali and Mr. Salman Abid. Lastly, we were joined by Mr. Hassan Kamal Wattoo, Ms. Alize Akbar Meer and Mr. Mohammad Ali to share their insights on the topic of “Policy Recommendations on Framework for National Youth Policy”.

Mr. Fahad Shahbaz and Mr. Kamran Shakoor addressed the audience and shared the vision of Youth General Assembly and shed light on the efforts of YGA to bring a positive change in the political, legal and social arenas of Pakistan.





Founder's Interview

Fahad Shahbaz

Here is the young leader, sitting before the team of Qiyadat in his plush office where the interview was conducted, occupying the high-backed leather chair, dressed in his signature, pristine black shalwar kameez, was Mr. Fahad Shahbaz. He looked perfectly at ease. With a professional demeanor, and his left ankle crossed over his right knee, speaking in his deep, confident voice, Mr. Shahbaz appeared much older than his twenty-five years. His mannerisms were impeccable.

Qiyadat: How would you like to introduce yourself to our readers?

I am a practicing lawyer and also hold a master's degree in media studies and is currently enrolled in UK's LLM program. Additionally, I have merit certifications in Public Policy Economics from the University of Oxford and in International Law from the esteemed Hague Academy of International Law.

Due to my strong inclination towards social justice, economic advancement, stable governance and youth development, I continue to collaborate with the Federal and provincial governments of Pakistan on several platforms created especially for the benefit of Pakistan's youth.

I have the honour of representing Pakistan on numerous prestigious international summits and forums, where I have expressed concerns about the challenges Pakistan's youth bulge poses. Much of my celebrated work includes advocating and striving for legal reform in Pakistan. Constitutional and criminal law are my areas of expertise.

Qiyadat: To date what is your biggest achievement and how is that beneficial for your country?

Talking about my biggest achievement, I took the initiative of the Youth General Assembly (YGA) at an age when people only have limited goals. The motivation behind our initiative was that the problems which we were highlighting in our public speaking were not actually being implemented. So, our aim was to come up with a platform that promotes youth leaders and gives a better pathway to the next generation. Pakistan has around 64% youth population but unfortunately, this youth is lost in despair and young minds are not keen on the political and social issues of Pakistan. Therefore, the biggest achievement was to turn the idea of Youth General Assembly into a reality for the youth and to change Pakistan from what we saw in 2015 to what we will see in 2050.

Qiyadat: Now as YGA enters its 7th year of foundation what are the few milestones that you would like to share with our readers?

Before answering, I would like to tell you that YGA is not a static body being run by a couple of idealistic students. It has a proper hierarchy through which it operates. At the top is the advisory board, which comprises of experienced politicians like Mr. Makhdoom Javed Hashmi, Mr. Hamid Khan, Mr. SM Zafar, Justice @ Nasira Javed Iqbal, Ms. Shaista Malik, Mr. Nawab Ghous Bakhsh and others. Then comes the council of mentors that consists of prominent youth like barristers, and television anchor persons for the regular council,

after which comes the President, the Secretary-General, Managing Director and Joint Secretary. There are City Chapters for Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad that have structures of their own. Any resolution drafted by the members is carefully reviewed and checked by expert members of YGA whose council is essential in making the proposals practical.

Now talking about the collective accomplishments of the organization, YGA has successfully worked on the recognition of transgender as the third gender, working tirelessly towards giving them passports bearing their identity. It is not long before the implementation of this idea is done by the government.

Not only that, but YGA has also received acknowledgments upon sending drafted resolutions and proposals to the organizations of the United Nations. UN organizations like UNICEF and UNESCO have started to own the work done by YGA. Various students have represented YGA on international forums as well.

We introduced Shadow Cabinet for the first time in the history of Pakistan. Many countries have shadow ministers with a particular government minister who monitors their performance. In 2019 YGA, without any government support, conduct interviews and surveys. On this basis policy reports were prepared. It must be noted that people from the age of 18 to 22 years are giving far better recommendations than people in the Parliament who have more exposure. Our job is to take the first step and try to bring change, if these policies are not implemented or not taken seriously by the government so as citizens it is a question mark for us which people are we electing. But on the positive side, youth is now putting efforts for bring revolution. Further, I don't want to list down all the projects that we are doing because YGA and Legal Forum's every project, their viewership and its impact on the community is evident and in front of everyone. All in all, these projects like Shadow Cabinet and Beyond the Youth, where youth is empowered and policies are recommended, are milestones of the Youth General Assembly. We, at the Central Council, are coming up with new ideas and will strongly work on the better implementation of the law.

Qiyadat: What is your take on the stipends for young lawyers, as we see how young lawyers' efforts are exploited in the name of experience? Do you identify a problem and how do you address it?

Yes, absolutely we do think paying the budding lawyers is the need of the hour. We initially wrote a letter to the minister of law for starting the stipends for young lawyers. So, the lawyers, struggling to make their career, feel admired. And to secure the hope of people in these professions. Youth General Assembly legal forum have remarkably addressed these problems and is working on a better solution to them.

When we talk about the lack of female representation in different aspects, be it any profession, not just law. What do you think would be the way to this gender gap?

First of all, if we talk about the ratio of women in Pakistan it's 49%. And in the courts, all around Pakistan, we see that unfortunately, not even 5% of women are in the positions of the judiciary.

Even in the Bar council, women are present in only 2%. In order to fill the gap, bar councils have to create a proper quota system for women to ensure their equal representation. We have positions like assistant advocate general to the assistant attorney general on the federal side. Where women can be appointed and they can excel.

Secondly, the representation in the health sector, if we look back at the statistics, we realize that there was a lack of facilities and opportunities for women as compared to now. Now we see that so many women are making their mark here.

The most important thing is the role we lawyers have to play in order to create a safe environment for our female counterparts in the courts and other workplaces.

In so many criminal cases, and in litigation there are so many issues where the presence of women is necessary and without them, we are not able to reach a quality conclusion.

Qiyadat: Do you think young lawyers should participate in politics?

I anticipate that why are we even asking this question of whether young lawyers should participate in politics or not? I believe that this distinction should end between young lawyers or just lawyers.

When a 25-year-old is qualified enough to become a parliamentarian, then why they are restricted to participate in Bar politics?

There should be an amendment in the Pakistan Bar council regarding the restriction on the age of the participation of young lawyers in Bar politics.

With great power comes, great responsibility. And whoever is in the position of power, it's the utmost responsibility of that individual to work for the betterment of Pakistan.

Qiyadat: What would be your message to our readers and the youth of Pakistan?

Look it is very easy to give advice based on anyone's success but it is not easy when you become an example on your own by taking small steps. The basic problem in our youth is that we are always in a rush and want early results. So, you have to work patiently and with spirit, without patience and hard work, there is no probability of success. Secondly, you have to set your goals and aim high. You should be honest with yourself, meaning you should be sincere and certain about what you have to do in life. Lastly, respect your mentors and seniors and the people in your society. You should decide your goals now because when you keep your goals high you achieve them early.



Qiyadat Endorsement



SM. Zafar

Former Senator and Federal Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs

No segment of society can match the courage, enthusiasm, and mind of the youth. I must appreciate YGA for providing a stage for these young brains where they can explore their talents and skills.



Justice ® Nasira Javed Iqbal

Former Judge of Lahore High Court

Youth are the actors of change and progress they need to be valued. I applaud the platform that YGA has provided to the youth, I hope they find here the right directions needed at this age for a better future.



Makhdoom Javed Hashmi

Former Federal Minister for Health and Youth Affairs

Youth plays a crucial role in a country's development. They need the right education and opportunities, YGA is a great platform to fill the purpose.



Shaista Pervaiz Malik

Member of the National Assembly, Pakistan

Youth is a backbone of a country. A strong youth means a strong foundation of a country. Platforms like YGA are praiseworthy for their considerable contributions.



Nawab Ghous Bakhsh Barozai

Former Chief Minister of Balochistan

YGA can play a great role in shaping the youth into responsible citizens of Pakistan which is a road towards a better future.



Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan

Former Provincial Minister for Law, Higher Education, School Education, Tourism, Sports, Youth Affairs and Archaeology

Youth General Assembly is a platform that visions to break all boundaries for students to gain knowledge and experience about the practicalities of the legal, political and social system of Pakistan.



YOUTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY