

2.3mIn Pakistani youth may be jobless this year due to pandemic

KARACHI: Up to 2.3 million Pakistani youth are at risk of going jobless this year due to the lockdown to contain COVID-19 outbreaks, a joint report of the Asian Development Bank and the International Labour Organization said.

The report titled 'Tackling the COVID-19 Youth Employment Crisis in Asia and the Pacific' released on August 18, warns against the creation of a doomed "lockdown generation".

The report is based on regional assessment of the "Global Survey on Youth and COVID-19" and arrived at estimates based on available unemployment data in different countries.

The projected rise in youth unemployment rates varies considerably across the 13 countries, but increases are expected for all countries.

In ... Pakistan youth unemployment rates are expected to reach at least double the 2019 estimates even in a scenario of short COVID-19 containment," the report said. ADB said the job losses among youth may reach 14.8 million in 2020 in the 13 countries under the 6-month containment scenario.

"A longer containment period will naturally result in higher job losses. For most countries, a 6-month period would reach into September because containment started near the beginning of April."

"In the 6-month scenario, job losses for youth may equal 6.1 million in India, followed by Pakistan with 2.3 million," it added

"Indonesia may see lower job losses (1.9 million) than Pakistan, despite the former having a larger youth workforce. This is likely the result of higher concentrations of youth in badly hit sectors and lower labour productivity in Pakistan."

The report said young people in the 13 countries may lose the equivalent of 9.9 million jobs in 2020 under the 3-month scenario.

"Naturally, the largest losses are expected in countries with the largest workforce, but the start date of serious containment measures and the severity of restrictions also have an important impact." In India, the equivalent of 4.1 million youth jobs may be lost, followed by Pakistan with 1.5 million.

"These countries not only have a larger population and workforce, but they also imposed stringent containment measures and did so early, in the latter half of March," it added.

As containment measures have continued to be in force after three months in many countries, despite some relaxation, the short containment results are best viewed as a lower bound of job losses.

The projected rise in youth unemployment rates varies considerably across the 13 countries, but increases are expected for all countries. In Cambodia, Fiji, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand, youth unemployment rates are expected to reach at least double the 2019 estimates even in a scenario of short COVID-19 containment.