

Determinants of Youth Development in Pakistan

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Abstract

Pakistan's youth¹ consists one-fifth (25 million) of its population and is one of the most valuable resources for its national growth and prosperity. An educated, skilled, and healthy youth, in other words a developed youth, would most certainly put Pakistan in the course of social and economic enrichment. Hence, it is imperative to determine where Pakistan's youth stands in terms of development characteristics and indicators.

The present study is based on a national survey "Pakistan's Youth: Transition to Adulthood: Education, Work and Marriage" undertaken in all four provinces by the Population Council in 2001-02, with a sample size of 8,074 youth and 6,812 households in 252 communities. The survey used three comprehensive questionnaires with various modules covering education, work, marriage, fertility, and living conditions of youth, their households and their communities. The survey also covered gender attitudes, norms, mobility, and safe places.

The present paper has used the data from the above-mentioned study to work out "Youth Development Index" (YDI). The YDI is a simple summary measurement, as other development indexes, of four dimensions of the youth development concept: educational attainment, employment, recreation and health seeking behaviour. The index has been analysed with other independent variables to ascertain the links of various agents and determinants affecting the development of youth in Pakistan. Then a regression model has been used to finally ascertain the factors that are most significant in a young person's life.

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¹ Youth belonging to the age group of 15-24 years.

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Introduction

Pakistan has a youthful population as more than half of its population is below the age of 20 years. Three out of four households have one or more young people (age 10 to 24 years). Furthermore, one out of every five persons in Pakistan is in the age group of 15 to 24 years (PCO, 2003). This huge young population enumerated 25 million in 1998 census, is one of the most valuable resources for Pakistan's social and economic growth and prosperity.

On the other hand, Pakistan apparently has to face dire consequences if this resource is not capitalised and allowed to remain uneducated, unhealthy and unskilled. The latest Census of 1998 reported that one-third of the boys and over half of the girls in the age group of 15-24 years are illiterate. Among those who are literate, 33% of the boys and 37% of the girls have only attained education levels of either primary or below primary. In the age group of 15-19 years, only 37% of the boys and 24% of the girls are currently attending any educational institution. About a third of young people have never attended school in Pakistan. Rural girls are most deprived in this regard, as 60% of them have never been enrolled in school. Of those young people who have ever attended school, on average they have attained about 8 years of schooling. The situation is grimmer in the rural population in almost all aspects as compared to the overall educational statistics (PCO 2003).

While Pakistan is striving to achieve universal primary education by the year 2015, there are still huge differences in educational attainment between urban and rural areas and the provinces and between boys and girls (MoE, 2003).

If we look at the labour market statistics, 41% and 42% of the total male and female labour force respectively consist of youth (15-24 years age). And 70% and 15% of total male and female population respectively in the age group of 15-24 years is part of the labour force. Overall 43% of young people (15-24 year olds) are part of the labour force of Pakistan. Among young boys, a less than two thirds of 15-19 years olds are involved in the labour force, whereas in the later years (20-24), most (87%) become economically active. For girls, the trend is not as dramatic. About 14% of all girls aged 15-19 are part of the Labour Force, which progress to 16% in the later years. The lower participation of females in the Labour Force is due to the fact that a vast majority of them spends as much as 8 hours per day on household work. Obviously these figures reveal the significance of the young population in our labour force strength. Unfortunately, a large proportion of

this young labour force is involved in unskilled or semiskilled activities (FBS, 2004).

These few national level statistics are the proverbial tip of the iceberg of the actual problem that persists among Pakistani youth. Therefore, it is absolutely imperative; first, to determine the current state of our youth in terms of development characteristics, mainly, of health, education and skill. Secondly, ascertain the determinants influencing or likely to influence youth development in Pakistan. Policies and plans concerning youth development can only be made afterwards, whether at the community, regional, district or national levels.

Hereafter, the paper is divided into five sections. The next section “Background” gives brief information about the data and the sources from where the data has been taken in this report for analysis. The section on “Methodology” describes the index and its usage. After limitations, the section on “Research Findings” discusses the analysis. On the basis of the analysis, in the last section of the report the authors conclude the paper.

Background

There has been virtually no national level survey conducted in Pakistan on youth, however, various small-scale regional studies have been carried out focusing on particular issues concerning the youth of Pakistan (Khan, 2000). Available information at the national-scale about Pakistani youth is limited and in most cases can only be found in the shape of main indicators in censuses or national surveys such as *Labour Force Survey* or *Pakistan Integrated Household Survey*. All these studies are carried out by either the Federal Bureau of Statistics or the Pakistan Census Organisation, both of the institutions which have been severely criticised for mis/underreporting of the data, especially in the case of women respondents (Shaheed and Mumtaz, 1990; MoL M&OP, 1989; Mumtaz and Shaheed, 1987).

This dearth of information about Pakistani youth has always demanded a comprehensive national scale survey to be carried out keeping in mind various cultural constraints prevalent in Pakistan. Recently, the Population Council conducted a national representative survey on youth in Pakistan in the year 2001-2002 and published its findings in 2003 (Population Council, 2003). This national survey has enabled researchers to carry out in-depth analysis on the data made available by this study.

In the initial phases of the Youth Survey, the Population Council and the Federal Bureau of Statistics jointly determined the sample design based on a sampling frame of the 1998 Census. It used the two-step stratified sampling technique to identify 254 primary sampling units. A total of 6,812 households were contacted in all the four provinces of Pakistan distributed in rural and urban localities. The survey used three different questionnaires for households, adolescents and youth and for the community profile. Data collection has covered a wide range of topics covering education, work, marriage, fertility, and living conditions of youth as well as characteristics concerning their households and their communities. The survey also covered attitudes, norms, and mobility pertaining to gender roles and status and responsibilities. One of the main characteristics of the survey was the usage of trained female surveyors for female respondents, which has enhanced the credibility and the reliability of the data gathered during the fieldwork.

Methodology

The present paper has worked out a “Youth Development Index” (YDI) by using the data from the above-mentioned study. The YDI is a simple summary measurement, typically used by other development indexes pertaining to various dimensions of youth development. For this index, we have intentionally selected educational attainment, employment, recreation and health seeking behaviour of youth. The index has been analysed with other independent variables to ascertain the linkages of various agents and determinants affecting the development of youth in Pakistan. A regression model was later employed to finally determine the most critical factors in a young person’s life and achievements. The selected explanatory variables include demographic and socio-economic characteristics of youth such as residence, age, sex, socio-economic class, parental education, etc.

The index, as explained above, has used selected variables to determine the values of YDI. For example, a person with “no education” is assigned value ‘0’ or if he/she had 8 years or more of schooling, the value ‘3’ is assigned, the maximum value to be assigned for education. In health, we used two indicators for health seeking behaviour. First, does a person consult a doctor for general health problems and secondly does a person consult a doctor for sensitive health issues? In both cases, we assigned value ‘1’ to a person who consults the doctor and ‘0’ who does not. Similarly, having any kind of recreational activity (such as reading, watching television, sports etc.) as an indicator of development in a young person’s life, we assigned a value ‘1’ to a person who reported at least one type of leisure activity. The last indicator of work had to be inter-linked with education. Because if a person is not currently working and is in school, he/she must be given the maximum value because of a trade-off between work and

education in which education is always preferable for youth. However, we assigned the maximum value to a person who had 10 years and more schooling and has worked (refer to Table 1 for detailed description of assigned values).

By summing up the values derived from these four indicators, we calculated YDI for each individual. Individuals falling in the range of 0 to 3 YDI score are refereed as least developed. Whereas if it falls in the range of 4 to 6, he/she is called moderately developed and finally a person falling in the range of 7 to 9 value is called developed.

Before moving further into research findings, it is necessary that we list some of the limitations of the methodology.

Limitations

Indicators such as of education, or health used to derive the values of YDI are given equal or more weightage from one and to the other, while *a priori* it is extremely difficult to justify that any set of weights to a particular variable is appropriate in relation to another or other variable(s) in the index (Kelly, 1991).

The YDI has used health-seeking behaviour of an individual as variables for health in the index. This is primarily a limitation of a research study because health indicators such as Body Mass Index or health history of an individual have not been asked in the survey and this would have given more significance to overall YDI.

Since the data is taken from a household survey, the age distribution of the respondents varies slightly by sex and region. For example, female and male respondents in the age group of 20-24 years in the urban areas are respectively 3.2% and 2% more in the overall sample than in the rural areas. Established in research findings, as persons belonging to a higher age group would yield higher YDI, this might have slightly influenced the overall value of YDI by region or sex.

Research Findings²

The average age of 8,074 respondents interviewed was found to be 18.9 years and the mode value was 15 years. On average, the young persons

² The section on “Research Findings” is based on analysis of an age group of 15 to 24 years of males and females living in the urban and rural areas of Pakistan. Therefore the words “male” and “female” have been used synonymously to male youth and female youth of 15 to 24 years of age group or otherwise defined.

who have ever enrolled in school have mean educational attainment of 7.2 years while the maximum years of schooling is 16. The average age at the time of first work and marriage was found to be 14.2 and 17 years respectively. The average YDI score is 3.46, less than half of the total YDI value of 9 for Pakistani youth (refer to Table 2).

Table 3 presents the construct variables for Youth Development Index by value and its percentage distribution. In education more than one-third of the youth has no schooling and assigned a value of '0'. Also almost one-third of the youth has 8 or more years of schooling and assigned value '3', whereas the rest of the youth falling between these two groups has been assigned either value '1' or '2'. More than three-fourths of the youth surveyed do not consult a doctor either for sensitive or general health issues and have been given '0' value. However, an encouraging proportion is involved in recreational activities and four out of five persons interviewed have responded as being involved in at least one of the recreational activities probed during the interview. In work, a very small proportion (6.56%) of youth has 10 years or more schooling and has also "ever worked". About one-fifth of the youth has neither any schooling nor have they worked and are given '0' value.

Figures 1 and 2 present YDI score by region and sex respectively. It is evident from Figure 1 that the rural areas have scored less than the urban areas in respect of YDI value. If we move from the scale of 0 to 9 on figure 1, the urban region has a rising trend towards higher values and the rural areas have shown a declining trend. A similar pattern can also be observed in Figure 2 representing comparison of male and female with male having a rising trend towards higher YDI values. It is interesting to note that males living in the urban areas have an average YDI value of 21% higher than males living in rural areas and 136% higher than female, living in the rural areas. Whereas urban females have an average YDI value almost similar to rural male, however, 91% higher to rural female. The difference between the average YDI value of urban male and urban female is little less than 20%. These findings clearly illustrate that the youth living in urban areas is far more developed than those who are living in rural areas and male are more developed than their female counterparts. Moreover, the urban females are twice as developed as female living in rural areas and almost equally developed as male living in the rural areas.

Table 4 presents YDI score by development categories of "Least Developed", "Moderately Developed" and "Developed" by region and sex. Almost half the youth surveyed falls in the category of "least developed" and only 10% youth can be called "developed". In case of females, especially

those living in rural areas, almost three fourths are in the category of “least developed.” Male who are living in rural areas or urban areas have shown far better results than female. Both in rural and urban areas, more than half the male surveyed fall in the category of moderately developed. Also 14% and 20% male can be referred to as developed youth in the rural and the urban areas respectively.

Comparison of YDI by different socio-economic and demographic characteristics of youth has revealed some interesting findings presented here in Table 5. The province of Punjab has the highest mean score of 3.64 YDI as compared to other provinces of Pakistan. The Sindh province has closely fallen behind Punjab. Balochistan province has attained the least value. The urban region has a value of 4.5 YDI as compared to a value of 3.06 in the rural areas. Similar results were obtained when comparison was made between male and female. The age and YDI had a positive relationship and as the age of the respondent increases the YDI also increases. While comparing the socio-economic status, those who belong to a high socio-economic status have an average YDI of 4.77, maximum value attained while comparing any of the socio-economic or demographic characteristics of the respondents and more than twice as high as the value of youth belonging to low socio-economic status. Interestingly, respondents who are not yet married have a high YDI value as compared to those who are ever married. Furthermore, among married youth, those who are married before the age of 20 years have YDI value of just a little over half the value of those who are married in the age category of 20 or more. Exposure of visiting another city, going to school alone, and participation in decision making about own work or education have all shown a positive influence on YDI.

Table 6 shows results from the linear regression analysis. Model 1 is based on all young people surveyed, whereas the second model is for only rural areas and the third is for female youth only.

In the first model, the results show that young people who express their views regarding their education and are accepted by parents/guardians, have a greater score (0.798) than those who do not take part in the decision making. Moreover, as expected, being a male, urbanite, belonging to the highest socio-economic class, having been to another city etc., being able to go to school alone and having literate parents are all positively associated with higher YDI score. Among the provinces only Punjab was statistically significant and shows 0.219 higher score than Balochistan.

The second model shows a very strong association with ability to go to school alone and take part in educational decisions. Those young people have a 1.377 and 1.066 more score. Mother's education also has a positive impact on youth development, and those young people whose mothers are literate have 0.86 points added to their score. The trends are similar for the variables in the previous model. However, all provinces turned out to be non-significant in this model.

In the third model, only female young people were considered. Here, mother's literacy came out to be most directly affecting the female YDI score. Females having literate mothers have 0.916 more YDI score than those whose mothers are illiterate. Among other variables, being able to go to school alone and taking part in educational decisions make a significant positive difference in the score (0.654 and 0.915 higher).

For all three models the adjusted R-squares are quite strong and about 40% of the variation in the YDI can be explained through the variables used in our model.

Conclusion

The results show a positive overall picture as half the young people have more than 4 score in the YDI (ranging from 0 to 9). However, there are stark differences among young people of Pakistan across the provinces, sex and urban rural areas. Females are more likely to get a lower score than boys as their chances of getting education and taking part in the labour force are much lower than that of boys, especially in the rural areas. Hence, the scores for girls especially those residing in rural areas, belonging to lower socio-economic class and more restrictive home environment are much lower.

Table-1: The Construct Variables for Youth Development Index (YDI)

	Assigned Value
Education	
No schooling	0
Less than 5 years	1
5-7 years schooling	2
8 or more years of schooling	3
Talk to Doctor for General Health	
No	0
Yes	1
Talk to Doctor for Sensitive Health	
No	0
Yes	1
Recreation	
No	0
Yes	1
Work	
No schooling and no work	0
No schooling but ever worked	0.5
>5 years schooling and ever worked	1
5-9 years schooling and ever worked	2
10+ schooling and ever worked	3
Range	0 – 9

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

	Age of Respondents	Education Class completed	Age at first work	Age at marriage	YDI score
Mean	18.87	7.21	14.16	17	3.46
Median	19	8	14	17	4
Mode	15	5	15	16	5
Minimum	15	0	1	6	0
Maximum	24	16	24	24	9
N	8,074	5,176	3,803	2,338	8,073

**Table-3: The Construct Variables for Youth Development Index (YDI)
by % Value**

	Value	%	N
Education			
No schooling	0	38.16	3,080
Less than 5 years	1	10.69	863
5-7 years schooling	2	17.73	1,431
8 or more years of schooling	3	33.43	2,698
Talk to Doctor for General Health			
No	0	78.83	6,293
Yes	1	21.17	1,690
Talk to Doctor for Sensitive Health			
No	0	78.86	6,278
Yes	1	21.14	1,683
Recreation			
No	0	20.34	1,622
Yes	1	79.66	6,354
Work			
No schooling and no work	0	21.01	1,429
No schooling but ever worked	0.5	21.11	1,436
Some schooling and ever worked	1	38.09	2,591
5-9 years schooling and ever worked	2	13.24	900
10+ schooling and ever worked	3	6.56	446
Range	0 — 9		

Table-4: YDI Score by Development Groups, Sex and Region

	Male	Female	Total	N
YDI Score Rural				
0-3	30.3	73.9	56.7	3,269
4-6	55.8	23.9	36.5	2,106
7-9	14.0	2.2	6.8	394
Total N	2,279	3,491	5,769	
YDI Score Urban				
0-3	18.1	33.1	26.7	614
4-6	61.9	53.1	56.9	1,310
7-9	20.0	13.8	16.5	380
Total N	987	1,317	2,304	
YDI Score Overall				
0-3	26.6	62.7	48.1	3,884
4-6	57.6	31.9	42.3	3,416
7-9	15.8	5.4	9.6	774
Total N	3,266	4,807	8,073	

Least Developed	
Moderately Developed	
Developed	

Table-5: Mean YDI Score for Various Socio-economic and Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Mean
Province	
Punjab	3.64
Sindh	3.52
NWFP	2.99
Balochistan	2.55
Residence	
Rural	3.06
Urban	4.50
Gender	
Male	4.52
Female	2.75
Age-group	
15-17 years	3.21
18-20 years	3.59
21-24 years	3.64
Socio-economic status	
Low	2.21
Low-mid	2.81
High-mid	3.73
High	4.77
Ever Married	
No	3.92
Yes	2.38
Married before 20	
No	3.50
Yes	2.11
Exposure of visiting some other city etc.	
No	2.90
Yes	4.03
Can go to school alone	
No	2.44
Yes	4.30
Participated in decision about own work*	
No	3.18
Yes	3.77
Participated in decision about own education*	
No	2.72
Yes	4.64

*Those who gave an opinion and it was approved

Table-6: Linear Regression Models Predicting the Youth Development Index by various Explanatory Variables

Predictors	Model 1: All Young People		Model 2: Rural Young People		Model 3: Females Only	
	Un- standardised Coefficients (B)	Sig.	Un- standardised Coefficients (B)	Sig.	Un- standardised Coefficients (B)	Sig.
(Constant)	3.893	0.000	2.232	0.000	2.639	0.000
Urban	0.145	0.013	N/A		0.330	0.000
Female	-0.840	0.000	N/A		N/A	
Province (Balochistan = reference)						
PUNJAB	0.219	0.023	0.090	0.392	0.368	0.002
SINDH	0.163	0.103	0.152	0.169	0.103	0.414
NWFP	-0.104	0.346	-0.170	0.156	-0.289	0.034
SES (High Socio-economic Status = reference)						
Low-SES	-1.556	0.000	-1.609	0.000	-1.933	0.000
Low Mid SES	-1.098	0.000	-1.098	0.000	-1.473	0.000
High Mid SES	-0.501	0.000	-0.432	0.000	-0.748	0.000
Exposure to other city etc.	0.411	0.000	0.652	0.000	0.286	0.000
Can go to school alone	0.761	0.000	1.377	0.000	0.654	0.000
Part in education decision	0.798	0.000	1.066	0.000	0.915	0.000
Part in work decision	0.266	0.000	0.250	0.000	0.212	0.000
Father is literate	0.594	0.000	N/A		N/A	0.000
Mother is literate	0.485	0.000	0.860	0.000	0.916	
Adjusted R²	0.43		0.389		0.418	

Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of YDI Score by Region, Pakistan

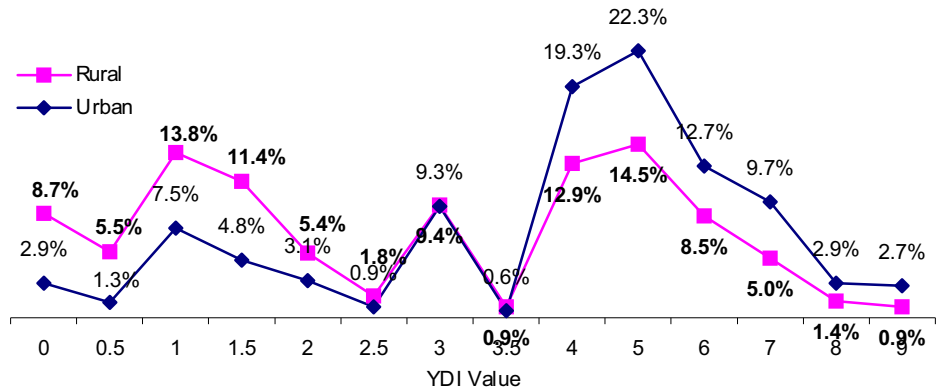
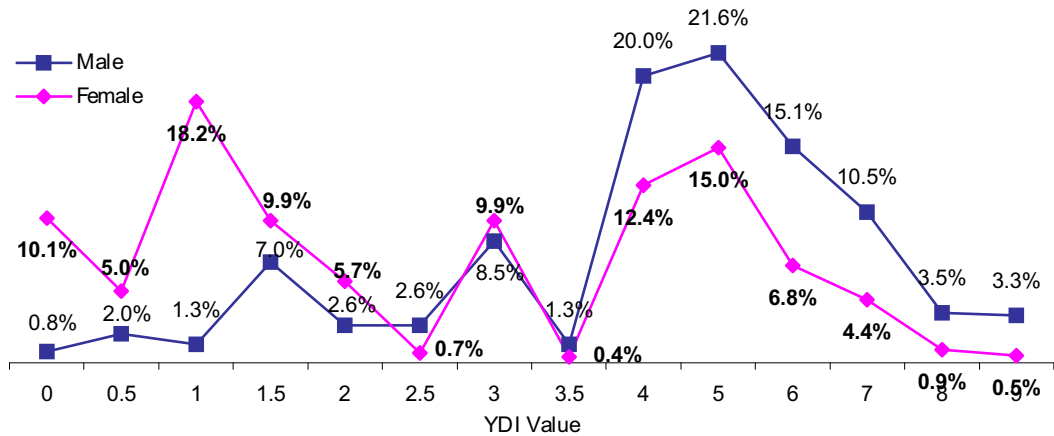


Figure 2: Percentage Distribution of YDI Score by Sex, Pakistan



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