

Role of Community in Youth Development: An Investigation from Collegiate Youth from Lahore

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Abstract

The focus of the current study is to find out how different dimensions of community leads to the development of the youth. Four primary indicators were taken into account i.e., community participation, community support and empowerment, community boundaries and limitation and community competence and skill development. The study is quantitative in nature and used cross sectional survey design for the study. 1335 college students were selected by adopting multistage cluster sampling for the purpose of the study. Both male and female respondents were included for a more representative study. The findings of the study show that all the four dimensions of community are significantly related to the youth development. Moreover, for both the types of the respondent's community participation and community competence/skill development were important in youth development.

Keywords: Youth development, Community, Pakistan

Background

Youth is the most important segment of the society and require greater efforts to work for their development and progress in the society. There are multiple issues that the youth population in the world is confronting and among such problems is to find out patterns and mechanisms of youth development in the positive direction. Unemployment, acceptability in the society and multiple psychological issues are the main areas of concern for the youth all over the worldⁱ.

However, the nature and extent of youth problems in developing countries is very much higher. Developing countries have many other issues to tackle and therefore the issues of youth in developing countries are less observed by the political elite and policy making is not much appreciated in the developing countries. Youth in Pakistan is also facing multiple issues such as health issues, lack of academic opportunities and sustaining in the society for better recognition and youth developmentⁱⁱ.

Youth population is on rise all over the world and same is the issue with Pakistan as the population of the youth is continually rising in Pakistan. In Pakistan around 63% of total population is below the age of 25 years which illustrates that the population of youth is increasing and this chunk of population is very high. This rise in the population is effecting the overall social fabric of the society hence this chunk of

population and their problems needs to be addressed in a proper manner so that the smooth functioning of the society may not hurt.

So, it is quite evident that the youth population require substantial effort to be developed in the proper way and direction. Youth development has become one of the most important and significant area of concern for the policy makers so that youth population can be directed in the positive direction. There are multiple stakeholders that are significant in the development of the youth all over the world and in the context of Pakistan youth population is right in the center of development mechanism. Role of family, peer, community, schooling and media is very significant for their development. However, in the current study role of community in the development of the youth is considered.

Role of community in youth development

Community lies in the center of socialization of the individual and same is the case with the importance of the community in the development of the youth population. Community provides certain patterns and mechanisms that help the youth population in their positive development and right direction to achieve their goals and objectives in the life. Community provides conducive environment as well as community sets boundaries and expectation for the youth so that youth can trigger themselves keeping in line the community demands and expectationⁱⁱⁱ.

Role of community in developing the youth has different aspects related to it. Community participation and engaging youth in the activities of the community really gears up the development of the youth. Youth should participate in the community activities. Similarly, it is very important for the community to support the youth in different aspects related to their studies and leisure activities. If community members support and empower youth it would have positive impacts on the development of the youth^{iv}.

Neighborhood and community found to be an important factor in controlling the behavior of the youth and managing their activities. The researchers have found that if neighborhood and community watches the activities of the youth it is less likely to engage in the deviant behavior. This ultimately helps them in the positive development of the youth. In this modern world of extreme competition it is very important for youth to develop competencies and skills that would help them in shaping their abilities and availing the opportunities. Development of community competencies and skills is found to be an important dimension for youth development in this modern era^v.

Objectives of the study

The current study is designed to fulfill the only objective i.e.

- To examine the relationship between community and youth development among collegiate students.

Significance of the study

The current study is not a random selection of the topic rather it is very important in its scope and bringing out positive impact in the society. In the first place the findings of the current study will brought into light the roles, responsibility and issues of the youth population in the limelight. It will provide an evidence that youth and related issues must be understood in the academic research. In addition to that the findings of the study will provide stronger evidence and policy implication so that policies can be devised to strengthen the role of community in the youth development. By doing so an environment that suits the youth development can be devised in the Pakistani context.

Literature Review

Youth population having positive relations with the family members are found to be very important factor in youth development. The study was conducted with a focus of finding out the role of community and neighborhood in reducing the violence and youth radicalization^{vi}.

Family is considered the key institution, which shapes the basic traits of the personality among the children since their childhood. The early years of the children are more critical because during these crucial years the children need more attention of the parents^{vii}.

After family, the adults spend most of their time with peer group. Peer group is the collection of the social network where all of the members usually have same age, education and needs. For example, the classmates and the colleagues are the peer groups whose members have almost similar qualities. Peer group is also one of the major agents of socialization, which shapes the personality of the individual ^{viii}.

After the family, peer and schooling, the community is the major agent of socialization. It is the community, which provides the guidance regarding socially approved way of life. It is also community where the youth is trapped by the different pressure groups to involve them in different non-standard actions^{ix}.

The leisure time is spent in the surroundings of the home in a particular community. The environment of the community is very helpful in guiding the children and youth in a right direction if the people of the community are educated and well aware about

the consequences of the bad hobbies. The major task of the community is to keep an eye on the strangers especially on their business in the community²⁴.

Methodology

This section of the study presents the methods and materials that have been employed in the current study.

- In the first place the study is based on quantitative research inquiry to find out the role of community in the youth development. This topic and area of the study rightly suits the quantitative nature of inquiry.
- In addition to that study focused on explanatory research design to find out the predictive and causative relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Population and Sample Size

As the topic of the study suggest that population of the study comprises of the college students. The study area is the Lahore district and all the students were selected from eh Lahore district. In addition to that Determination of the sample size was an important task of the current study. For this purpose research advisor formula was used and a sample size of 1330 respondents was selected by maintain a 3.5% margin of error and 99% confidence interval. Hence, a sample size that is the representative of the entire population was selected.

Sampling Technique

Once the sample size is determined it was the task for the researcher to identify the respondents for the current study. And for that purpose researcher adopted multistage sampling technique.

In the first stage of the sampling technique researcher collected a list of all the colleges in the Lahore district with proper enrollment.

In the second phase or step of the sampling technique researcher distributed the sample size into two halves i.e. male students and female students. And this was done on the basis of colleges i.e. girls and boys colleges separately.

In the third and final stage simple random sampling was used after reaching at the each college. Researcher used to obtain a list of all the students and randomly selected the respondents for the purpose of data collection.

²⁴ Eccles, J. S., & Templeton, (2000). Community-based Programs for youth: Lessons learned from general developmental research and from experimental and quasi-experimental Evaluations (Urban Seminar Series, Urban Health Initiative). *Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.*

Measurement of independent variables

The role of community has been treated as independent variable in the current study. Following indicators were used to measure how community fosters the development of the youth. The selection of the following four major dimension or indicators were made based on literature and findings of the previous studies. Each indicator is mentioned with the relevant study.

- Community Participation (reference no.11)
- Community Support and Empowerment (reference no.9)
- Community Boundaries and Limitations (reference no.8)
- Community Competence and Skill Development (reference no.15)

Measurement of dependent variable

Youth development is being treated as the dependent variable in the current study. Youth development was measured by 5C model developed by Arnold, 2012. This model is widely used in the research community with reference of measuring youth development. Following are the main indicators that were used to measure youth development.

- Character
- Connection
- Caring
- Confidence
- Contribution

Data analysis

Quantitative data was collected and it was analyzed by using SPSS latest version. The data was not simply analyzed rather indexes were formed for each category of both the independent and dependent variables of the study.

In addition to that before applying the Generalized Methods of Moments researcher observed all the important assumptions for applying the said test. Normality of the data was checked along with autocorrelation and linearity of the data. Once it was established that the data is normally distributed the GMM model was applied and results were obtained⁸.

Results of the study

The literature shows that community is an important factor in promoting the youth development. Community Participation, Community support and empowerment, Community boundaries and limitations and community competence and skill development have been found to be important indicators of how community help and contribute in youth development.

Table 1 Role of community in YD for female Population

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	p-values
CP	0.454011	0.027613	12.74672	0.0000
CSE	0.103588	0.035327	10.05651	0.0000
CBL	0.121314	0.024686	2.063817	0.0000
CCS	0.475211	0.032697	2.658178	0.0000
R-squared	0.889748			
Adjusted R-squared	0.888729			

The above table shows the relationship between different indicators of community and youth development. R square value of 0.88 shows that all the included variables are explaining 88% of the dependent variables, which is quite high considering the nature of the study. This indicates that all included variables i.e. community participation, community support and empowerment, community boundaries and limitations and community competence and skill development account for 88% of the youth development for the female respondents of the study. In addition to that, following values show the actual contribution of each variable.

Furthermore, an important task of the study was to find out how each of the above categories contributes towards youth development, which is described and explained by the values of coefficients. Here one percent increase in the community participation level index will increase the youth development index by 0.45% on average. One percent increase in the community support and empowerment index will increase the youth development index by 0.10% on average. One percent increase in the community boundaries and expectations level index will increase the youth development index by 0.12% on average. One percent increase in the community competence and skill development index will increase the youth development index by 0.47% on average. Furthermore, the P values in the last column indicate that all these are significantly related to the dependent variable.

Table 2 Role of community in Youth Development for male Population

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	p-values
CP	0.471974	0.016441	12.30534	0.0000
CSE	0.111816	0.025416	4.776517	0.0000
CBL	0.181320	0.017881	5.792490	0.0000
CCS	0.533297	0.024702	9.926897	0.0000

R-squared	0.924208
Adjusted R-squared	0.922893

The above table shows the variation in the dependent variable on account of the independent variable in the current study. The table further illustrates that 92% variation is being explained by the independent variable as the R-Square value is 0.92 which is very encouraging the strong. Such higher level of value of R-Square illustrates higher level of relationship between the independent variable i.e. community participation, community support, empowerment and boundaries on the youth development in the current study. In addition to that table illustrates that one percent increase in the community participation level index will increase the youth development index by 0.47% on average. One percent increase in the community support and empowerment level index will increase the youth development index by 0.11% on average. One percent increase in the community boundaries and limitation index will increase the youth development index by 0.18% on average. One percent increase in the community competence and skill development index will increase the youth development index by 0.53% on average. Furthermore, the P values in the last column indicate that all these are significantly related to the dependent variable. It then can be summarized that all the four indicators of community helps and promote youth development.

Discussion

Positive interaction with the society and community has been an important component for the development of the youth and same has also been found in the current study where stronger ties in the community has been an important aspect of youth development in the Pakistani context^{xi}.

^{xii}Formulated community educational programs and centers for study such as ICT and other form a stronger neighborhood that foster the youth development which has also been found in the current study where majority of the respondents attributed that while living in a community educational programs in the community and guidance help in establishing a stronger ties and positive youth attributes . Hence such findings of the study comply by the existing literature review. Existing literature also provide stronger evidences that neighborhood and community provides a mechanism of monitoring the behavior of the individual and specially youth. Youth sub culture formation is often observed and looked by the society and community. This attribute was also observed in the findings of the current study that community sets boundaries for the youth, youth gangs. Hence, where there is a stronger community watch there are stronger youth coherence and better youth^{xiii}.

Community spirituality and spiritual activities has also been an important area which foster and develop youth in the positive direction. This has also been observed in the context of the current study where stronger evidences are found to see that youth when engaged in the religious and spiritual activities are more likely to be in a right direction than other youth individual who are less involved in spiritual and religious activities^{xiv}.

Hence, the overall outlook and findings of the study align with the existing literature review along with providing certain areas of new dimension in line with the cultural context of the country^{xv}.

Conclusion

The study found a significant and distinctive relationship between community and youth development. Four important indicators of community were taken into consideration and results were found with respect to those four indicator for both male and female respondents of the study. For the female respondents of the study all the four indicators of community were significantly related to youth development. However, community participation (45%) and community competence/skill development (47%) were found to be more important for their development. on the other hand community support / empowerment (10%) and community boundaries/limitations (12%) were also significantly related but their values were on the lower side with respect to community participation and community competence and skill development in determining the youth development.

For the male respondents of the study all the four indicators were significantly related to youth development. However, community participation (47%) and community competence/skill development (53%) were more important and have higher values for youth development. similarly community support/ empowerment (11%) and community boundaries/limitations (18%) were also significantly related but on lower side.

It may be concluded that for the male and female respondents community participation and community competence/ skill development were more important in determining the youth development. However, the coefficients values were higher for male respondents than the female respondents.

Study implications

The findings of the study show that the role of community and neighborhood is very important for the development of the youth. Keeping in view the above findings the study implies that community programs and interventions should be initiated for the development of the youth). This can be done both at formal and informal level. At informal level, community should self-initiate programs that benefit the youth. However, at the formal level government and different organizations should start interventions and programs to inculcate positive youth attributes like community technology centers and community sports programs.

At community level, youth vulnerability can be counter by monitoring the activities of the youth. Family, peer and other stakeholders should watch the gatherings and groups of the youth. By watching their activities and handling their company, one can control their attributes and guide them in positive way.

Residents of community should organize and make physical improvements to their neighborhoods and develop safe recreational areas for youth. By improving the physical conditions of the community, one can get more opportunities for the development.

Pakistan is the country where most of the population is young hence, it is very important to make policies that could help in using the potential and capabilities of the youth for the overall development of the country and society.

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