

Coming of Age in Contemporary Pakistan: Influences of Gender and Poverty

MINHAJ UL HAQUE and MUNAWAR SULTANA

INTRODUCTION

Economic development is strongly connected to the longevity, growth and structure of country's population [Bloom and Canning (2003)]. Pakistan currently has the largest cohort of young people in its history (25 million aged 15–24, Census 1998) that has serious implications for the provision of schooling, health services and adequate jobs. Therefore the well being of these valuable young cohorts is profoundly important for the social and economic development and prosperity of Pakistan [Population Council (2003)]. This demographic lift can promote economic lift-off [Bloom and Canning (2003)]. In fact, Pakistan will face dire consequences if this resource is not capitalised and young people remain uneducated and unskilled [Faizunnisa and Ikram (2003)].

Work is one of the key transitions in the lives of young people. It is an important marker of adulthood, with strong implications for a country's social and economic development. Work depending on its nature and remuneration can be the most important factor shaping adult lives. Youth employment has many implications for the labour market, poorer households and for the youth themselves.

There has been relatively little or no opportunity to study the transition to adulthood in developing countries due to the lack of longitudinal data on youth. Most development research and programmes on adolescents and youth have focused on sexual and reproductive behaviour [Mensch and Greene (1998)]. However the participation of young people aged 15–24 in the labour force is emerging as an important development issue. Most of the studies, carried out on economic activities are primarily restricted to the empirical efforts to estimate the level of labour force participation. This is the area least explored in Pakistan and little is known regarding various dimensions of youth's involvement in labour force including the determinants pushing them towards work. Increased attention has been directed at understanding the factors that encourage and/or discourage their involvement in work. Durrant (2000), analysed the Pakistan Integrated Household Surveys 1991 and PIHS 1995-96, that highlighted various opportunities and constraints towards

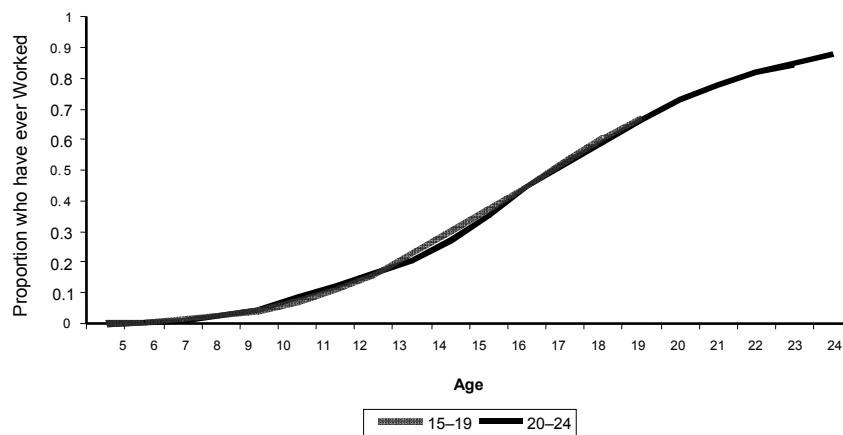
Minhaj ul Haque is Deputy Programme Manager, Population Council, Islamabad. Munawar Sultana is Programme Officer, Population Council, Islamabad.

making transition to adulthood. The analysis suggested that nature of work greatly varies by sex, and place of residence. Mostly youth work to ensure the survival of their families and themselves.

The Adolescents and Youth Survey in Pakistan (AYP) 2001-02 also supports Durrant's finding. Its analysis suggests that youth involvement in work varies considerably by socio-demographic characteristics including province, place of residence, sex, socio-economic status, and educational levels.

Using information from the Life Event Calendar,¹ the AYP 2001-02 found that 20 percent of males and 12 percent of females started working for the first time before the age of 15 (Figures 1 and 2). There is a rising likelihood of work among younger cohort of females. Considering this scenario, the paper will mainly focus on Work² and will report on this key aspect of the transition to adulthood of young men and women in Pakistan. The paper will highlight the young people who have experienced work, including those who started working before the age of 15, type and nature of work, their participation in the decision on getting involved in work, and their intentions to work if opportunities were available. Furthermore, the paper will scrutinise the determinants that influence or are likely to influence young people's involvement in work.

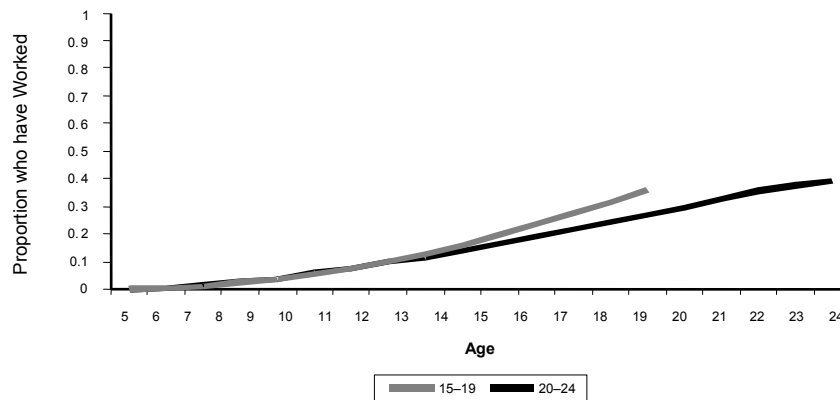
Fig. 1. Proportion of Males Who have Ever Worked by Age, by Age Cohort.



Source: "Adolescents and Youth in Pakistan 2001-02", Population Council, Islamabad.

¹The Life Event Calendar asked respondent to trace their life story backwards from the time of survey, locating key changes in status related to school enrolment, work status, living arrangements, marriage, and childbearing. The component of Life Event Calendar focusing on work intended to pick up the timing of both unpaid and paid work [Llyod, *et al.* (2003)].

²Work was defined in this survey as any activity undertaken for pay, profit, or family gain. The question to respondents was phrased as follows: "As you know, some people are involved in sowing, harvesting or picking crops, raising and selling livestock, selling dairy products, stitching/embroidery, or piece rate work to help their family (for livelihood). Some time this work is paid in cash or in kind or not paid at all. Have you ever done or currently doing any such activity for pay, profit, or family gain?"

Fig. 2. Proportion of Females Who have Ever Worked, by Age Cohort.

Source: “Adolescents and Youth in Pakistan 2001-02”. Population Council, Islamabad.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

An insight into the participation of adolescents and youth in work and related issues can be gained from the studies that address the work. The development phase between childhood and adulthood is labeled as adolescence. It involves the acquisition of human and social capital the consolidation of personal identity and the emergence of personal efficacy [Mensch, *et al.* (1998)]. It is the phase of life in which young people have many first time experiences, including paid work, engagement, marriage and childbearing. It is recognised by the International Convention on the Rights of Child (ICRC) as a phase of “Evolving capacities” requiring a balance of societal and familial protections, respect for rights and opportunity for voice.

Since working is an important means for young people to develop adult roles and responsibilities, unemployment obstructs the movement of young people from adolescence to adulthood [Population Council (1999)]. Durrant (2000) also argues that work participation of young people has significant implications for capacity building. Some young people develop valuable skills and gain early years of experience through work, thereby increasing their human capital. Others do not work or engage in activities that fail to foster skill development or to contribute to improved careers (i.e., house work or unskilled work) in which the experience or skills required do not enhance the wage demands of a worker [Durant (2000)]. Despite its significance, initiation of work has received little attention.

Pakistan has ratified the 1990, United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of the Child that defines individuals up to eighteen years as children. Thus younger adolescents fall clearly within the definitions of children where work is viewed as an

important impendent to a child's development and a violation of his/her rights. On the other hand, older adolescents at least males, are expected to begin work to contribute to household expenses, start careers, establish economic independence, and prepare for marriage and forming their own families [Ghayur (1996) in Durrant (2000)]. Moreover expectations and social perceptions about work are instrumental. Girls are expected not to work, at least in public sector due to norms of female seclusion.

The livelihood approach does not view adolescent's work negatively. Instead it provides a lens through which to view work as a way to foster skills development among adolescents, increase their knowledge through informal educational means and build self-esteem and confidence. Livelihoods encompass capabilities, resources, and opportunities that enable people to pursue individual and household economic goals. This approach considers work to be just one of a number of necessary components of an effective adolescent development process. It seeks to comprehensively link the social and economic factors affecting young lives. Work plays important role in generating income and self-development [Population Council (1999)].

Burki and Fasih (1998) attempted to identify the determinants of child labour in Punjab, using data from the Child Labour Survey, 1996 and they assumed that households maximise utility by making decision about time allocation for their children among different uses such as schooling only, part-time schooling with work, full time work and no work. The results obtained suggest a negative impact of mother's education on child's work.

In a comparative study of Pakistan and Peru, Ray (2000) found that for Pakistan, there exists a positive relationship between child labour and poverty, and a negative association between schooling and poverty. Poverty is not merely income deprivation. It is multidimensional concept, which encompasses economic, political, and social needs that are essential for a meaningful existence. The poor in Pakistan are not only deprived of financial resources, but also lack access to basic needs such as education, health, clean drinking water, and sanitation. Limited access to education, health, and nutrition, undermines their capabilities, limits their ability to secure gainful employment, and results in income poverty and social exclusion [Pakistan (2001)].

Durrant (2000) states that several factors influence the likelihood of youth to engage in market work activity including household and family characteristics. She further argues that it is quite possible that children are working because of lower availability of schools, because of dropping out from school due to dissatisfaction from education or because work offers them more valuable skills and experience than schooling. Therefore the paper will attempt exploring various attributes surrounding work and will scrutinise the underlying factors encouraging or discouraging young men and women from getting involved in the labour force.

DATA, MEASURES, AND METHODOLOGY

The analysis is based on the data set of Nationally representative survey of *Transitions to Adulthood: Education, Work and Marriage among Adolescents and Youth in Pakistan*, undertaken by Population Council from October 2001 to February 2002. The Survey gathered information on education, work, marriage, childbearing, mobility, communication, and migration.

Based on the sampling frame of the 1998 Census, the Population Council and Federal Bureau of Statistics employed two-staged stratified sampling and selected 254 communities from all provinces were selected, where 6812 households were contacted in rural and urban areas. In each community approximately 25 households were selected for the interview. In total, 8074 young people (3333 males and 4741 females) were successfully interviewed from 4530 households.

Three modules were administered in order to obtain information: household profile, standard questionnaire for young males and females aged 15-24, with slight changes for males and females as appropriate, and the community profile that provided information on the contextual variables about the communities including infrastructure, opportunities and facilities available to young people.

These data are appropriate for the present investigation for two reasons; first, the data provide detailed information about distinct features of work. Secondly, the data include questions about the socio-demographic characteristics such as region, residence, education, socio-economic background, parental characteristics, and living arrangements, therefore enable us to investigate the subject more thoroughly.

The AYP survey collected detailed information pertaining to various dimensions of work which effectively enabled us to explore variations of work at various levels. One of the interesting findings imply rising trend of ever work and intention to work (if opportunities were available) among younger women aged 15-17. But data provide no further information pertaining to the type of work they would like to take up, and their preferred place of work, and so on. The present analysis might have been richer if such information had been collected.

Analytical Framework

The analysis in this paper has been conducted at two levels; initially all selected variables were examined using bivariate cross tabulation that provided a general picture about the relationship between each socio-demographic factors and the key dependent variables. This has been followed by Logistic Regressions since the results from bivariate analysis suggested that the independent effect of each socio-demographic factor on the likelihood of ever been engaged in work is complex, and needs to be studied using multivariate methods. Therefore, Logistic Regressions have been employed to investigate the independent effect of various explanatory factors.

The probability of having ever been engaged is a binary choice and it assumes that individuals are faced with a choice of two alternatives, to work or not to work in this case. In this regard, two Logistic Regression models have been developed; and dependent variable for the first model is binary in Nature, where “Ever been engaged in any activity for pay, profit or family gain” has been selected and “Never worked” been omitted as the reference category. The second model uses receipt of remuneration as a dependent variable “whether the young person directly receives the payment of his/her work” or “it is the family member who gets paid for his/her work”. The set of predictors/explanatory variables consists of age, sex, schooling status, place of residence, socio economic status of the household, and mother’s literacy of the respondent.

For the estimation of two Logistic Regression Models, age was transformed into three groups. The first group “aged 15-17” was identified as reference category, whereas age groups “18-20” and “21-24” were entered in the regression model. To explore the influence of sex, males were placed in the model while considering the females as reference category. With regard to the place of residence, urban area was omitted for reference. Taking into account the influence of socio-economic background, another important variable SES³ (socio-economic status) was included in the model, while taking the highest SES as the reference category. Educational status of the respondents was collapsed into a binary variable, where the first category representing those who have never been to school was omitted as reference in the model, while the second category denotes those who ever attended school. A binary variable on maternal literacy had been the part of regression models, taking the illiterate mothers as the reference category.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Current Work

Initial bivariate analysis indicates that overall prevalence of work is greater among males than females in all age cohorts that is 57 percent for males compared with 27 percent for females. In the younger age group (15–17), 41 percent of males and 25 percent of females reported currently working, whereas for the middle age group (18–20) these figures are 61 percent and 28 percent, respectively. Examining the older age group (21–24 year), work prevalence is 73 and 28 percent for males and females respectively (Table 1). The experience of work does not rise significantly

³A key household variable in the analysis is a measure of the household’s wealth or socio-economic status. This SES index serve as a reliable proxy for a household’s socio-economic status [Filmer and Pritchett (1999)]. Using 29 questions from Household Profile that pertained to household possessions and amenities as the inputs to a Principal Component Analysis. The first component was scored that interpreted as a household’s socio-economic status, and divided into quartiles of approximately equal size [Lloyd, *et al.* (2003)].

Table 1

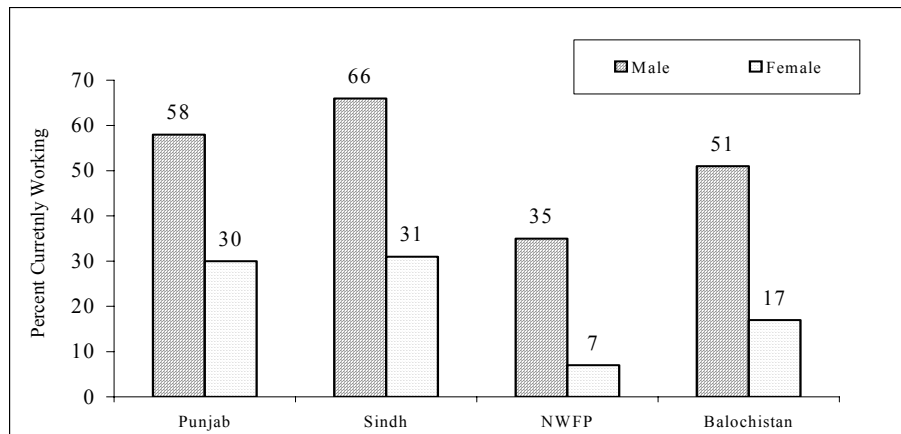
Percent of Young People Currently Working, by Background Statistics

Total	Male		Female		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Currently Working	57.16	1854	26.86	1284	39.10	8025
Current Age of Youth						
15–17 Years	40.78	482	24.61	420	31.23	2886
18–20 Years	61.33	704	28.09	443	42.09	2725
21–24 Years	73.08	668	28.11	421	45.15	2413
Province						
Punjab	57.85	1016	30.43	821	41.25	4454
Sindh	65.73	619	30.96	377	46.12	2159
NWFP	35.18	132	7.07	43	17.80	981
Balochistan	50.92	87	16.76	44	30.24	432
Place of Residence						
Rural	59.59	1349	29.41	1022	41.31	5738
Urban	51.54	505	20.07	262	33.55	2287
SES (Socio-economic Status)						
Low	73.47	490	38.04	402	51.75	1724
Low-mid	63.10	449	32.05	364	44.00	1848
High-mid	55.58	453	22.77	273	36.04	2015
High	42.03	381	15.92	190	27.17	2103
Educational Attainment						
Never	78.34	417	32.55	760	41.04	2867
0–4	76.21	339	30.69	184	50.07	1046
5–9	52.01	783	18.00	214	37.00	2696
10 and +	41.37	314	19.16	126	31.07	1417
Marital Status						
Ever Married	84.17	375	26.16	502	37.08	2365
Never Married	52.84	1478	27.33	782	39.94	5657

with age for females, while it keeps increasing for males. Largely the social role of males as “Providers” accounts for this rise, and once males reach the age 20, they are generally expected to make the transition into the workforce since this rise is strongly associated with the culturally defined role of man as a “Provider”.

Work prevalence significantly varies by the place of residence and more young people are likely to be currently working in rural areas than those residing in urban area (41 and 33 percent respectively) that may be attributed to the labour-intensive agricultural sector in rural areas (Table 1). It is interesting to note that much fewer (18 percent) young people in NWFP reported currently working in NWFP relative to other provinces, and this equally true both for males and females. In NWFP that is only 35 percent males and only 7 percent females reported currently been engaged in work, that reflects cultural restrictions for females. It also indicates that there are fewer avenues for agricultural and non-agricultural work for males as well. In contrast, percentages of current work are highest for females and males in Sindh. Two-thirds of males and a little less than one-third of females in Sindh reported currently been involved in some form of work (Figure 3).

Fig. 3. Percent of Young People Currently Working, by Province and Sex.



Ever Work

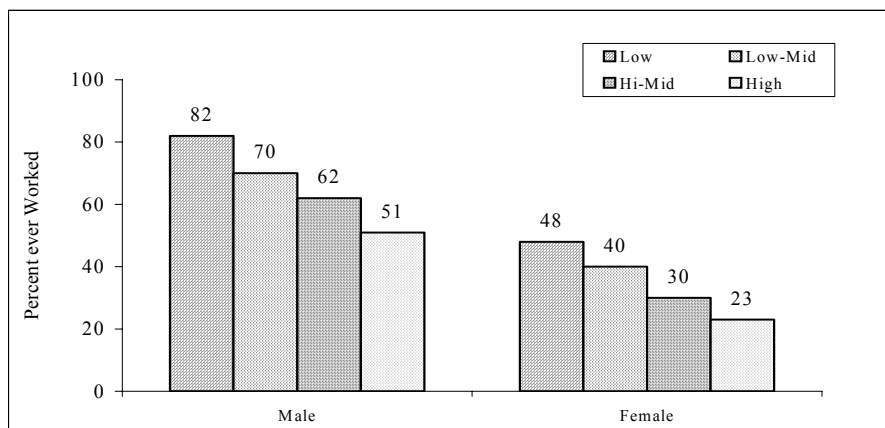
The data indicate that the propensity of having ever been engaged in some sort of activity *for pay, profit or family gain*, rises with age both for males and females particularly for males. More women in the older age cohort (21–24) tend to have had ever worked than do their counterparts in younger age cohort (40 and 30 percent respectively). This difference seems significant for males, as it is 46 percent for younger males (15–17), 70 percent for middle age group (18–20) and 84 percent for older age cohort (21–24) (Table 2).

Table 2
*Percent of Young People Ever Worked, of All Respondents,
 by Background Statistics*

Total	Male		Female		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Ever Worked	65.29	2118	35.00	1674	47.24	8025
Current Age of Youth						
15–17 years	45.79	541	30.24	516	36.60	2886
18–20 years	70.37	808	35.29	557	50.07	2725
21–24 years	84.11	769	40.11	601	56.78	2413
Province						
Punjab	64.82	1139	39.20	1057	49.31	4454
Sindh	74.37	700	41.55	506	55.86	2159
NWFP	45.48	170	8.11	49	22.37	981
Balochistan	63.43	108	23.69	62	39.38	432
Place of Residence						
Rural	67.12	1519	37.13	1290	48.96	5738
Urban	61.07	598	29.34	383	42.93	2287
SES (Socio-economic Status)						
Low	82.17	548	47.96	507	61.20	1724
Low-mid	70.23	499	40.32	459	51.83	1848
High-mid	62.99	514	30.50	366	43.64	2015
High	50.88	461	23.04	276	35.04	2103
Educational Attainment						
Never been to School	86.99	463	41.67	973	50.08	2867
0–4 Class	84.82	378	38.48	231	58.21	1046
5–9 Class	58.89	887	24.06	286	43.52	2696
10 and + Class	51.34	390	27.96	184	40.50	1417
Marital Status						
Ever Married	91.18	406	38.75	744	48.62	2365
Never Married	61.15	1710	32.50	930	46.66	8023
Total	100.00	3242	100.00	4781	100.00	11040

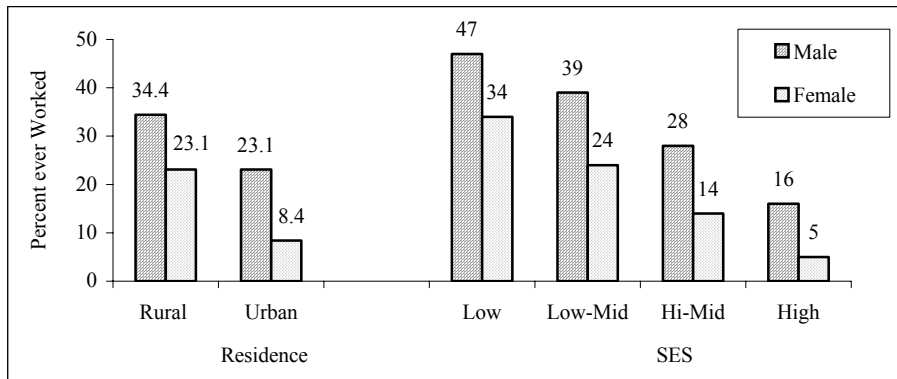
As expected, a higher proportion of young rural residents reported having ever been engaged in work than do their counterparts in urban area (Table 2). Figure 2 depicts that socio-economic status is negatively associated with work prevalence for both males and females. Overall, 61 percent of young people in the lowest SES reported having ever worked compared with 35 percent in high SES. More than 80 percent of males in the lowest SES have ever worked compared with 51 percent of males from high SES group. The same contrast is true for females as well. The females in the lowest SES are twice as likely than females in the highest SES to have been engaged in work: 48 percent for females from poorest households and 23 percent for females from the highest SES (Figure 4). This pattern largely reflects the positive association between SES and schooling. Young people in higher income groups have the opportunity to stay in school longer and are more likely to be in school than at work.

Fig. 4. Percent of Young People Ever Worked, by SES and Sex.



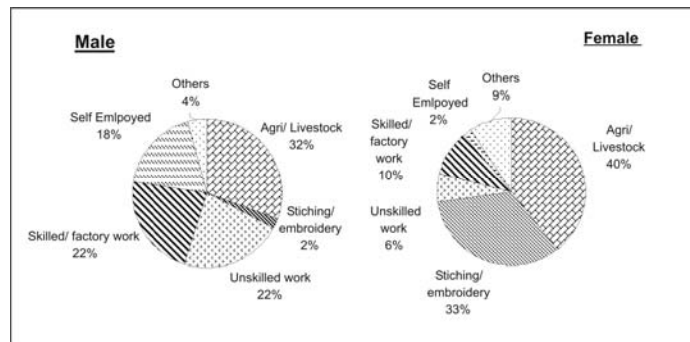
Work before Age 15

Of particular interest are those young people who report having engaged in work prior to the age of 15. Data show that this percentage is higher for younger men than for women. In total 31 percent of males and 19 percent of females had worked before the age of 15. Figure 5 depicts stark differences in work rates between rural and urban residents persist. Around 23 percent young people in rural areas reported that they initiated work before the age of 15, compared with only 8 percent in urban areas. These rates are inversely correlated with household income status ranging from 16 percent to 47 percent (from the highest to the lowest SES group) for males and from 6 percent to 34 percent for females. Rates for those who started work before the age of 15 are also inversely correlated with educational attainment.

Fig. 5. Percent Ever Worked before Age 15, by Residence, SES, and Sex.

Type of Work

Figure 6 presents the distribution of the most common type of work undertaken by the majority of young people in Pakistan. As expected, a different picture emerges for males than for females. For males, a significant proportion report working in agriculture (30 percent) and skilled/factory labour (22 percent), followed by unskilled labour (22 percent), and self-employment/business activities (18 percent). The pattern is similar for the females as they are heavily concentrated in agriculture (39 percent). About 33 percent of females reported having been engaged in “stitching, embroidery, and knitting”. Compared to males, female participation in skilled/factory work (10 percent) is quite low, unskilled labour (6 percent), and very few women have been found in business activities (2 percent). A significant proportion of young women heavily rely on agricultural labour, mainly concentrated in rural areas.

Fig. 6. Distribution of those who have ever Worked, by Type of Employment and Sex.

Seasonality and Intensity of Work

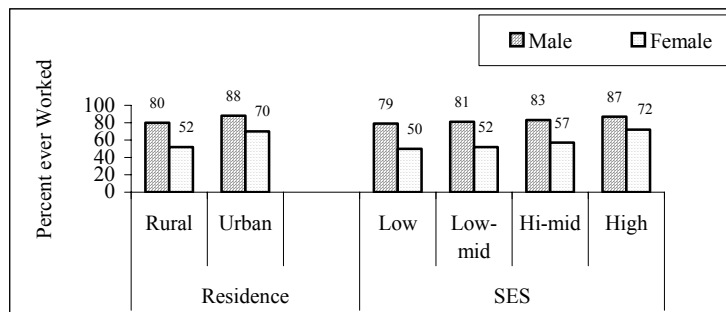
While examining work, it is of importance to assess the nature of employment whether it is permanent or temporary or seasonal. In this regard respondents were asked: "Do/did you do this work throughout the year or for some specific months or time? The results highlight the temporary nature of employment for females. A large percentage of males who have ever worked are employed throughout the year (approximately 82 percent), compared to only 56 percent of females. At the provincial level, more than 80 percent of young males and 49-59 percent of young females are employed throughout the year in Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan. In NWFP, however, far fewer males and females report stable work (59 percent for males and 38 percent for females) (Table 3). This may to a large extent reflect different agricultural patterns across provinces.

Table 3
*Percent of Young People Who Worked Throughout the Year,
of Those Who Have Ever Worked*

Total	Male		Female		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Worked Throughout Year	82.29	1728	56.09	930	70.73	2658
Worked Temporarily	17.71	372	43.91	728	29.27	1100
Current Age of Youth						
15–17 Years	79.83	430	50.81	259	65.73	688
18–20 Years	81.71	654	58.31	323	72.15	976
21–24 Years	84.64	644	58.54	349	73.18	993
Province						
Punjab	86.89	983	58.71	614	73.35	1598
Sindh	80.64	559	53.30	267	69.16	826
NWFP	59.07	100	37.49	18	54.28	118
Balochistan	80.96	86	48.79	30	69.19	115
Place of Residence						
Rural	79.96	1205	52.04	667	67.12	1872
Urban	88.22	523	69.93	262	81.13	785
SES (Socio-economic Status)						
Low	78.93	428	49.91	251	64.96	679
Low-mid	81.34	401	51.94	236	67.24	637
High-mid	82.96	424	57.35	210	72.28	634
High	87.13	401	72.29	195	81.65	596
Educational Attainment						
Never been to School	81.43	373	52.04	503	61.49	876
0–4 Class	82.28	309	55.83	128	72.25	437
5–9 Class	83.85	737	57.26	163	77.35	900
10 and + Class	79.77	309	76.63	136	78.79	445
Ever Married						
	84.86	339	54.79	404	65.36	744
Total	100.00	2098	100.00	1658	100.00	3756

Figure 7 suggests that socio-economic status is found to be strongly associated with nature of employment both for males and females and is more pronouncedly for females. Having ever been involved in full time employment substantially varies by the socio economic strata. Most of the women in stable jobs come from the highest SES. Of those who ever worked, only half of the women from poorest families reported ever been involved in a full time job, compared with approximately three fourth of women from highest socio-economic group. This disparity also persists across residence, particularly for females. About 70 percent of young females in urban areas have had full time employment compared with 52 percent of their counterparts in rural areas. This finding indicates that although more young people in rural areas have participated in labour force, the majority has been involved in temporary or seasonal work. Perhaps this is more so for agricultural intensive labour, and secondly it also suggests that there are fewer prospects for stable employment for young women residing in rural areas (Figure 7).

Fig. 7. Percent who Worked Throughout the Year by Residence, SES, and Sex (of those who ever Worked).



Receipt of Payment for Work

While exploring various dimensions of work, it is of importance to look at who receives the payment (cash or kind) as it is an indicator of economic empowerment. Results indicate that a larger percentage of males received the earnings by themselves compared to young females (68 and 56 percent respectively). It also reflects that young females are more likely to have a family member receive their earning (Table 4). Data also show that young urban residents are more likely than rural residents to receive the payment themselves. This is equally true both for males and females.

As expected, the educational attainment is associated with the likelihood of receiving the payment by young people and it is even starker for young women, since 88 percent of females with secondary education reported receiving the payment themselves comparing with only 53 percent of females who have never been to school (Table 4).

Table 4

*Percent of Young People Who Received Payment of Work
Themselves, by SES, Education, and Sex*

	Male	Female	N
Total	68	56	
N	2043	1418	3461
SES (Socio-economic Status)			
Low	56	50	846
Low-mid	67	48	747
Hi-mid	73	62	855
High	78	72	873
<i>N</i>	1953	1368	3321
Educational Attainment			
Never been to School	70	53	1152
0–4 Class	67	49	540
5–9 Class	64	56	1140
10 and + Class	74	88	629
<i>N</i>	2043	1418	3461

Intentions to Work

Young people who were not currently working were asked: “If work opportunities were available, would you like to work in the near future?” Of those who are not currently working, almost, 94 percent of males and 73 percent of females expressed the desire to work if opportunities were available. It is of interest to note that slightly higher percentage of younger women aged 15-17 would like to work than do older women aged 21-24 (76 and 69 percent respectively). Regardless of socio-economic background, educational attainment, province, or marital status, the desire to work among young people was high: 90 percent or higher among males and 70 percent or more among females (except for Balochistan) with 62 percent females expressed a desire to work if opportunities were provided (Table 5).

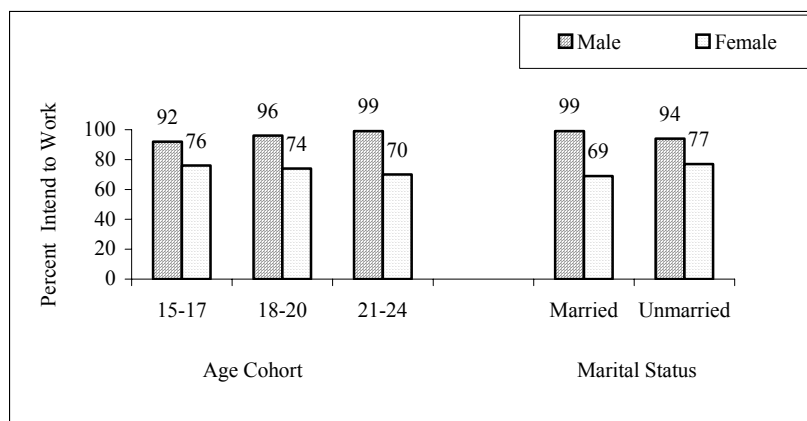
Another finding suggests that young unmarried women showed greater interest in taking up any employment than do married women. Figure 8 suggests that about 77 percent of unmarried women expressed a desire to work if opportunities were available comparing with 69 percent of married women who intend to work. On the contrary, the situation is reverse for males, since more married men (99 percent) want to work compared with unmarried men (94 percent) (Figure 8).

Table 5

*Percent of Young People Who Would Work If Given the Opportunity,
of Those Not Currently Working*

Total	Male		Female		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Who Intend to Work	94.35	1301	73.34	2559	79.29	4868
Current Age of Youth						
15–17 Years	91.74	640	75.87	973	81.46	1980
18–20 Years	96.00	422	74.00	840	80.14	1574
21–24 Years	98.87	240	69.63	746	75.02	1314
Province						
Punjab	94.45	695	75.39	1411	80.77	2608
Sindh	93.72	299	71.45	597	77.60	1155
NWFP	95.31	229	73.43	414	79.98	804
Balochistan	93.08	78	62.77	137	71.18	301
Place of Residence						
Rural	94.31	857	73.69	1805	79.27	3358
Urban	94.42	444	72.53	754	79.36	1509
SES (Socio-economic Status)						
Low	92.44	163	73.83	483	77.78	830
Low-mid	94.99	248	75.74	584	80.62	1032
High-mid	93.46	334	73.96	685	79.38	1283
High	94.98	496	71.00	712	79.21	1526
Educational Attainment						
Never Been to School	94.11	106	69.28	1090	70.93	1685
0–4 Class	96.06	100	72.49	301	77.20	520
5–9 Class	91.96	661	78.93	769	84.46	1692
10 and + Class	97.87	435	75.85	399	85.93	971
Marital Status						
Ever Married	98.93	69	68.68	972	70.11	1485
Never Married	94.10	1232	76.57	1587	83.36	3381
Total	100.00	1379	100.00	3488	100.00	8248

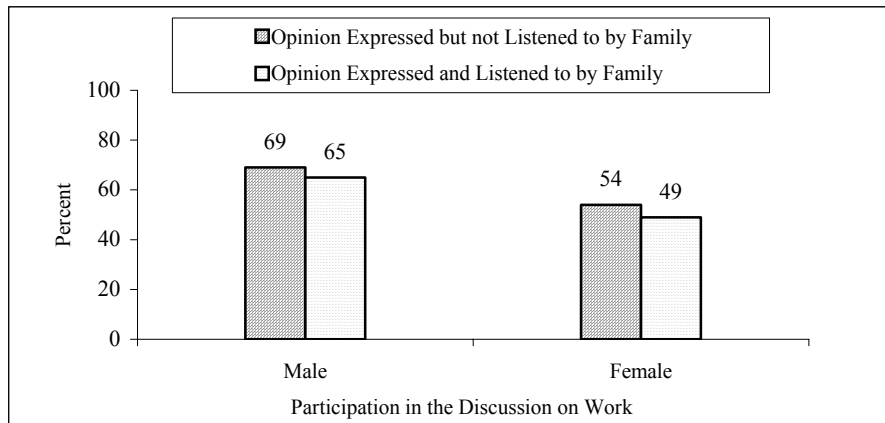
**Fig. 8. Percent of those who Want to Work, if Opportunities Available
(Not Currently Working), by Age Cohorts, Marital Status, and Sex.**



Work and Youth Agency

All young people whether they have had ever worked or not, were asked, if they expressed an opinion on the discussion at home pertaining to their own work. This is a proxy of youth agency based on their ability to express an opinion at home regarding their own work and if their opinion was listened to by the family, it signifies their ability to participate in decision-making at home. Results suggest that of all young people, about 70 percent males could express their opinion on own work compared with only 54 percent of female counterparts (Figure 9). In the majority of cases the family entertained the opinion, since 65 percent of males and 49 percent of females felt that their family listened to their opinion.

Fig. 9. Participation of Young People in the Discussion on their Own Work.



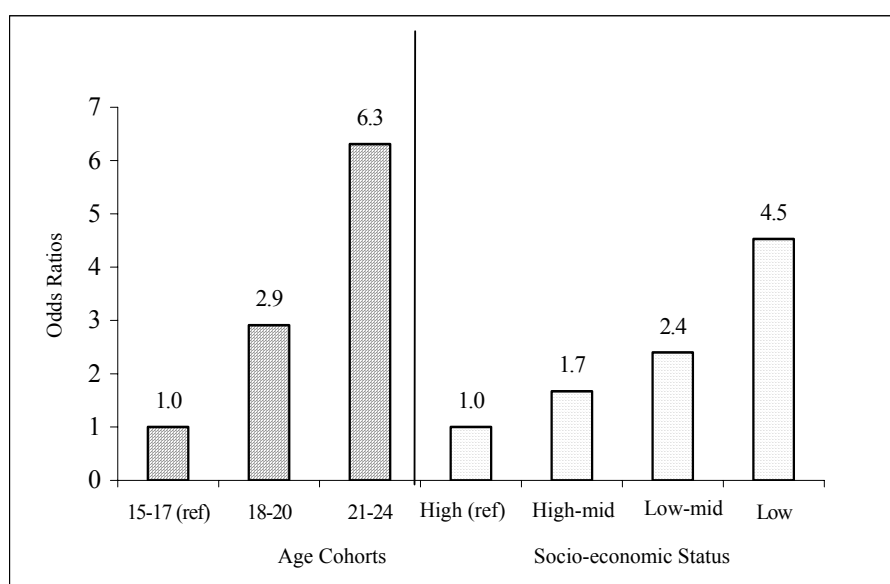
Multivariate Analysis

As mentioned earlier, logistic regressions were used to examine the independent effect of each predictor through two models. The first model examined the propensity of ever being engaged in work whereas the second model attempted to find out the likelihood of receiving the remuneration for their work directly rather than by any family member. Almost all independent variables appear to be significant in the first model. The odds ratios were calculated separately for males and females to examine variations by sex of respondents.

The leading explanation for youth's work in Pakistan is poverty. Poor families heavily rely on labour of individuals of working age to generate income and support the family [Burki and Fasih (1999)]. Whether using income, household consumption measure or parent's schooling (a widely used proxy for household's socio-economic status) the family's socio-economic status is consistently negatively related to children's work activity.

Examining the odds ratios for males supports a negative relationship between household's socio-economic status and involvement in work. The odds ratios imply that males in the highest income/economic quartile are less likely to work than those in lower and the lowest quartiles, who are 4 times more likely to have ever been engaged in work (Figure 10). Examining the results in detail indicate that males aged 18-20 are about three times more likely than do their counterparts in younger age cohort (15-17) to ever have had worked. This variation becomes even starker for older males aged 21-24 as their odds of ever been involved in work increases by six times to the odds of younger males. Furthermore, being ever married also amplifies the propensity of having ever been engaged in work (for males). (Figure 10). The social norms expect the males taking the role of provider with increasing age and this defined role even gets fortified after getting married.

Fig. 10. Odds Ratios of Ever Work, by Age and Socio-economic Status (for Males).



Parental literacy is instrumental in influencing the participation of young people's participation in work. Young males with literate mothers are much less likely to have had ever worked comparing with their counterparts with illiterate mothers. The odds of ever work decline by 2 times for males having literate mothers compared with those with illiterate mothers (Table 6). Investigating the influence of other factors show that having ever been to school and residing in urban locality are inversely associated with the propensity of ever work.

Table 6

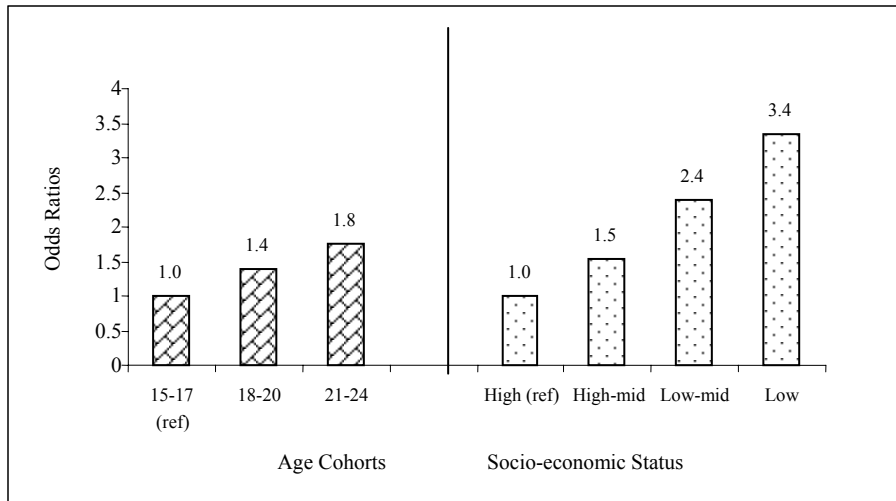
*Odds Ratios from Logistic Regression Analysis of Ever Work, by
Socio-economic and Demographic Characteristics*

Predictors	Model 1				Model 2			
	Ever or Never Worked				Ever Work: Family-paid or Self-paid			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	Sig	Exp(B)	Sig	Exp(B)	Sig	Exp(B)	Sig	Exp(B)
Age in Years								
Age 15–17 (Ref)	Na	1	Na	1	Na	1	Na	1
Age 18–20	0.000	2.908	0.000	1.382	0.0018	1.4709	0.4133	1.1158
Age 21–24	0.000	6.308	0.000	1.7621	0	2.1532	0.0015	1.5918
Schooling Status								
Never Attended School (Ref)	Na	1	Na	1	Na	1	Na	1
Ever Attended School	0.000	0.398	0.01	0.8187	0.0052	0.6956	0.1229	1.2188
Place of Residence								
Urban (Ref)	Na	1	Na	1	Na	1	Na	1
Rural	0.0000	0.512	0.000	0.6979	0	0.3342	0.8921	0.9769
Socio-economic Status								
Low SES	0.000	4.533	0.000	3.3527	0.0169	0.6474	0.0000	0.4056
Low-mid SES	0.000	2.402	0.000	2.403	0.9815	0.9958	0.0001	0.4214
High-mid SES	0.000	1.669	0.000	1.5403	0.5748	1.0994	0.0572	0.6877
High SES (Ref)	Na	1	Na	1	Na	1	Na	1
Marital Status								
Never Married (Ref)	Na	1	Na	1	Na	1	Na	1
Ever Married	0.0000	2.512	0.01	0.8105	0.0331	1.353	0.0000	2.2355
Maternal Literacy								
Illiterate Mother (Ref)	Na	1	Na	1	Na	1	Na	1
Literate Mother	0.000	0.367	0.000	0.583	0.9105	0.9752	0.3204	1.2928
	Chi-sq	742.241	Chi-sq	260.995	Chi-sq	173.363	Chi-sq	137.307
	Df:	9	Df:	9	Df:	9	Df:	9
	Sig	.0000	Sig	.0000	Sig	.0000	Sig	.0000

Sig= P<0.05 (significant at 95% confidence level), ref= reference category, omitted for comparison,
Exp (B)= Odd ratios , Na= Not applicable , Chi-sq =Chi-square, Df= Degree of freedom.

Females present almost a similar picture, where all independent variables are significant in the first model. Increase in age and living in the lowest socio-economic families magnifies their propensity of ever been engaged in work. Young women from the poorest families appear to be 3 time more likely to ever have had worked than do their peers in the highest economic group (Figure 11). Unlike males, the likelihood of ever work appears to be reduced for married women, since ever married women are 20 percent less likely than unmarried peers to have had worked for pay, profit or family gain. Similarly having ever attended school and having literate mothers affects the likelihood of having ever worked for females inversely (Table 6).

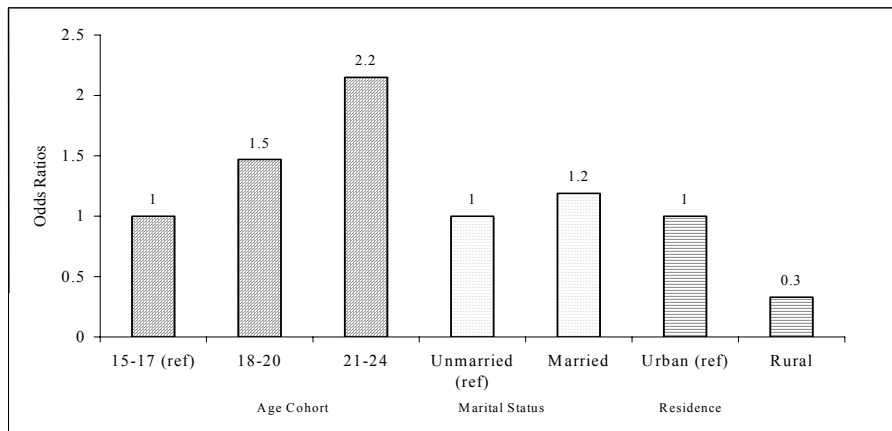
Fig. 11. Odds Ratios of Ever Work, by Age and Socio-economic Status (for Females).



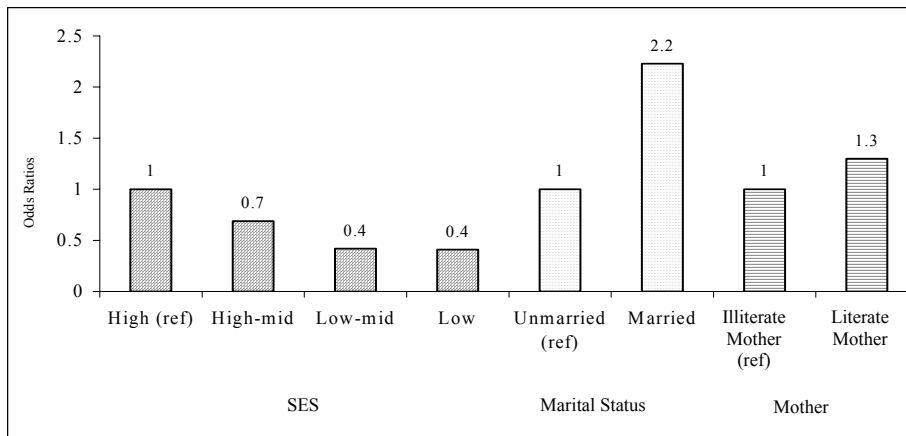
Ever Work and Receipt of Payment

The second Logistic Regression model is based on the question “*Who receives the payment of work*”, as the dependent variable while keeping the same independent variables from the first model. This Model is restricted to the sample of persons reported having engaged in work. The respondents were asked a series of questions on who receives the payment of their work, whether in cash or kind. The response categories were collapsed into binary dummies to fit in the logistic regression model. The first category denotes payment made to family while the second category indicates that respondents themselves received the remuneration for their work. The analysis here focuses on investigating the attributes of those who were directly paid for their labour since it is an important indicator of youth agency. Separate odds ratios were calculated for males and females in the second model as well.

The multivariate results for males indicate that age, school attendance, place of residence and marital status are significant in the model, whereas socio-economic status and maternal literacy have become insignificant in the second model. Figure 12 shows that increase in the age is positively associated with the direct payment to the males, since males aged 21-24 are two times more likely than their younger counterparts aged 15-17 to get paid directly. Similarly the odds of getting paid increases with a rise in socio-economic status. Ever married men or males from the highest SES group have greater odds of receiving payment for their work. (Table 6).

Fig. 12. Odds Ratios of being Paid Directly for the Work (for Males).

For females, increasing age, being ever married and coming from the poorest families, appear to be significant in the model, whereas the rest of the predictors became insignificant. For married women the odds of having direct payment for the work are two times greater than for unmarried women. Similarly, the odds of getting paid for work increases if the respondent had a literate mother (Odds ratios 1.29). As expected women in high SES have greater likelihood to receive the payment for their work (Figure 13). Comparing with all other socio-economic groups, the women from the poorest families appear least likely to receive the payment for their work, and in most cases, it is their family that receives the pay or profit for their work activity.

Fig. 13. Odds Ratios of being Paid Directly for Work (for Females).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The transition to work plays out distinctly for young men and women in Pakistan. Dramatic differences between young men and women persist in levels and type of work. Gender apparently has a huge influence on work outcomes of young people. Overall, youth from the poorest households are the most likely to ever have had worked and even before the age of fifteen. Although most young men make eventually transition into the paid labour force, less than 40 percent of women have entered the workforce by the age of 24. Poverty leads young women in most cases towards work or seeking work. Most young people, especially younger unmarried females want to work if opportunities are available.

Among young people who work, the most common type of employment is in the agriculture sector both for males and females. Other domains of employment are segregated by gender, with many young women engaged in stitching, embroidery, and knitting, while young men work in factories, self-employment or skill labour. Of those ever worked, majority of males have been working throughout the year with only 56 percent of young women doing the same, reflecting the disadvantageous opportunity available to young women. Considerable proportions of youth, especially women are engaged in temporary employment that also reflects the vulnerability of youth as well as availability of fewer work opportunities for women. One of the key points is the value and skills the young people acquire through the work activity. Specifically with regard to women, the majority appears to be involved in conventional economic activities (mostly farm labour) that do not necessarily equip them with the essential life skills required to make the use of their potential more effectively. These findings suggest more skills and trainings are needed for young women.

It is important to mention that a substantial proportion of youth participated in the decision-making about own work. A sizeable proportion of young males could express their opinion pertaining to their work and in most of the cases their family entertained their opinion. Likewise about half of the young women were able to give their opinion and in most cases, family listened to their opinion. This indicates their participation in family and signifies the youth agency in work. It also reflects that in most cases it is poverty that leads young women towards work or seeking work, and perhaps the family listened to their opinion regarding work, when it was mostly driven by poverty and they had no option except listening to these opinions. Most young people who were currently not working or never been involved in any sort of activity for *pay, profit or family gain*, express a desire to work in the future if opportunities given, and this is particularly more pronounced among unmarried younger women aged (15-17).

Although the findings suggest that the participation of youth in the formal sector is increasing but their number and age limit their influence on workplace policies. First of all, it should be noted that youth in Pakistan is a diverse group therefore; diverse initiatives are required to improve the conditions of youth, in each

realm of lives. Public policy must set an agenda for young people that are organised around the distinctive features of their lives.

Taking into account the vulnerable situation of young people who are involved in unskilled and temporary work, and particularly, the activities the young women are involved in, also depict that they lack skills and training that is essential to enter into labour market. There is a growing need to review the existing trainings and skills to create more avenues for vocational training to enhance the capacity of young people that equips them with skills that are marketable within their country's current economy.

Generally the policy should develop equitable distribution framework for employment opportunities for young people in Pakistan, while expanding the economic options. Younger women should be a priority, since including younger girls in economic programmes such as micro enterprise, savings and credit scheme programmes may help in improving their lives. While fostering programs for young women in Pakistan, examples from livelihood programmes for adolescent girls in India (emphasising vocational and skills training) may useful to be considered.

Most of the work activities in Pakistan are segregated by gender, therefore in order to address gender related issues, more awareness should be created so young women can enter into work other than traditional ones i.e., farm and unskilled labour. In this regard media should play a role to project positive images of women's roles outside the home.

The results suggest that a healthy and growing economy is essential for the creation of adequate paid employment for young people. Bloom and Canning (2003) analysed the changing demography in Egypt and concluded that a combination of demographic change and policy reforms could promote higher economic growth. Combined with effective policy reforms demographic gift could thus promote an economic lift-off [Bloom and Canning (2003)]. Benefiting from their recommendation, the policy in Pakistan, should utilise the demographic lift (of youth bulge) into economic lift-off. In this regard open economies with high quality of institutions are relatively better able to realise the growth potential created by demographic bonus. A combination of openness and good governance might facilitate the absorption of large working age cohorts into productive employment.

There is an urgent need to institutionalise youth employment within the tiers of government to enhance chances of poor to achieve better access over input and output markets, increase their productivity and income on a sustainable basis. Indeed, civil society organisations can provide new insights and approaches to tackling both the causes and effects of poverty in our society. They can provide social, cultural; and political resources and processes and make valuable contributions to policy formation. They can create livelihoods and economic opportunities as well as promote human rights. Civil society should play an effective role in promoting education, empowerment, and equity for young women.

Non-Governmental organisations and private sector initiatives can certainly catalyse and supplement Governmental activity. There can be however no substitute for a public commitment to young girls and boys.

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