

SOCIAL UNREST, VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT: A CASE STUDY OF YOUTH BULGE IN PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to explore the causes and effects of Youth bulge in Pakistan. Youth bulge is a part of population dividend which creates problem for the whole society. Youth bulge is a common phenomenon in many developing countries, and in particular, in the least developed countries. Youth often plays a prominent role to create unrest and political violence in a society and the existence of “youth bulge” has been associated with times of political crisis. The population pyramid of Pakistan represents a large youth proportion i.e. 61%, and our government does not provide them proper opportunities for development. This situation creates frustration in youth that leads them towards conflict, unrest and violence. This research paper focuses on the opportunity and motives of the youth bulge situation in Pakistan through the lens of youth bulge theories. The present research was conducted in the metropolitan entities of Punjab, Pakistan. A sample of 300 respondents was taken from three randomly selected metropolitan entities (Faisalabad, Lahore and Rawalpindi) of the Punjab Province of Pakistan. Information regarding demography, household, locality and other socio-cultural variables related to causes and effects of youth bulge in the state was collected through a well structured interview schedule. Multiple linear regression was also applied to measure the influence of various independent variables on the response variable. The regression coefficient proved that there is a highly significant association between the poor income generation opportunities and violent conflict in the state. On the basis of findings it was concluded that large unproductive youth cohorts in Pakistan creates problems for the society in the form of crime, militancy, lawlessness, unemployment and creation of sub cultural youth wings.

Key Words: Youth bulge, violence, conflict, social unrest, crime, metropolitan entities, mean, standard deviation, multiple linear regression

Introduction

Youth bulge is a demographic dividend frequently used to describe a population in which young people have completed their education and skill but they cannot get appropriate jobs in connection with their ability and adopt negative means to achieve their objectives. Researchers conclude that high unemployment rate is a risky behavior associated with youth population which has led youth toward youth bulge. This is not an asset for a society (Skogan, 1986; Urdal, 2006). According to the UN-associated Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN, agencies

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define youth bulge as large cohorts (in excess of 20%) between the ages of 15 and 24 in connection with total mature population. Other definitions expand the range to include 15 to 29 year age group (Imai et al., 2008). Researchers found that states with large number of young people have more chances of violence and conflict. Moreover, lack of jobs or development within a country may lead to the disenchantment of the youth and could possibly result in communal unrest. Moser and McIlwaine, (2006) observe that political and economic conditions are main determinants of conflict.

Youth bulge is a widespread phenomenon in many emergent states. It is frequently related to the stage of progress where a state succeeds in the reduction of child death rate and accompanying high birth rate. As a result the portion of children increases; they grow into young adults. After some time, these children convert into the youth of the future and they demand prosperity from the states in all fields of life. If desires are unmet, they create violence and social unrest in society. This continuation of “youth bulge” has been connected to the times of government crisis (Goldstone, 2001). The rapid growth rate of population also puts stress on food, water and economic systems resulting in instability in the state. This situation in the region creates a lush environment for the terrorist organizations and extremist groups to hire, prepare, and carry out terrorist activities. These groups cause a noteworthy and growing threat around the world and for that country (Zinni, 2000).

Pakistani developers, scholars and policy makers pay attention to youth bulge that is shown in the center of the population pyramid of Pakistan. This large youth proportion attracts the attention of the whole society and describes the proponent of high rate of birth and low rate of mortality or death. There was only 34 million population of Pakistan in 1951. High fertility rate in Pakistan is responsible for this youth bulge (Fuller, 2005). Due to high birth rate Pakistan is facing the population transition, it is estimated that Pakistan is standing on the sixth position in the major populated states that can develop and reach number four in 2040. The population of Pakistan doubled between 1975 and 2005, and United Nations estimates that 54 million people will be added in the next 15 years (Leahy et al., 2007; Huntington, 1996; Moller, 1968). US Bureau of Census analysed (2010) that 62 percent people fall in active

age group but only 30.1 percent of the total active age group take part in the development activities. This large proportion of young people is not intrinsically unsafe and violent by birth. It is the state and political elite that provide them jobs, skills and counselling for their expression of thought and capability that push them to the extremism, terrorism and crime (Alesina and Perotti, 1996; Østby, 2008; Stewart, 2001; Nafziger and Auvinen, 2002).

Next generation of Pakistan will face these major problems i.e., education, food and other necessities of life, because 85 million new people will be added in the state in future decades. While, Pakistani universities have been producing over half a million graduates, including over 10,000 IT graduates, every year since 2010, according to HEC data. The number of university graduates in Pakistan increased from 380,773 in 2005-6 to 493,993 in 20014-15 (GOP, 2015). This part of demographic dividend cannot hunt proper job in the market. The policy makers now focus on youth bulge and want to take benefit from this in the coming years because if society does not have opportunity and development agenda for them, the result will be social unrest and disorder. In response to youth bulge in Pakistan, the problems and security concerns can be overcome by capacity building and empowering the youth (Blattman and Miguel, 2010; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). But unfortunately there is limited policy making for youth bulge in development, government and public policy in Pakistan. These basic needs are important for the young people but empowerment, capacity building and involvement in policy making increase the rate of youth welfare in Pakistan (Ostby, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

A large proportion of youth is not involved in healthy and creative activities because government does not provide them opportunities. Social structure theories emphasize poverty, lack of education, absence of marketable skills, and sub-cultural values as fundamental causes of crime. Three subtypes of social structure theories can be identified: social disorganization theory, strain theory, and culture conflict theory. These theories also examine various socio-cultural organization relationships and processes that influence the behavior of the youth. Theories related to this perspective attempt to explain the factors within any social setting and highlight involvement into

violence/conflict and criminal behavior. Strain theory of anomie explains that a large number of people who find themselves at disadvantages relative to legitimate economic activities. So, they adopt negative means to achieve their goal. This concept refers to inconsistencies between societal conditions and individual opportunities for growth fulfillments and productivity within a society. The term anomie for individual's mode of adaptation refers to those who have experienced personal frustration and alienation within a society and adopt negative means to achieve their goal (Shoemaker, 2000).

Objective of Study

To explore the causes and effects of youth Bulge on Pakistani society

Material and Methods

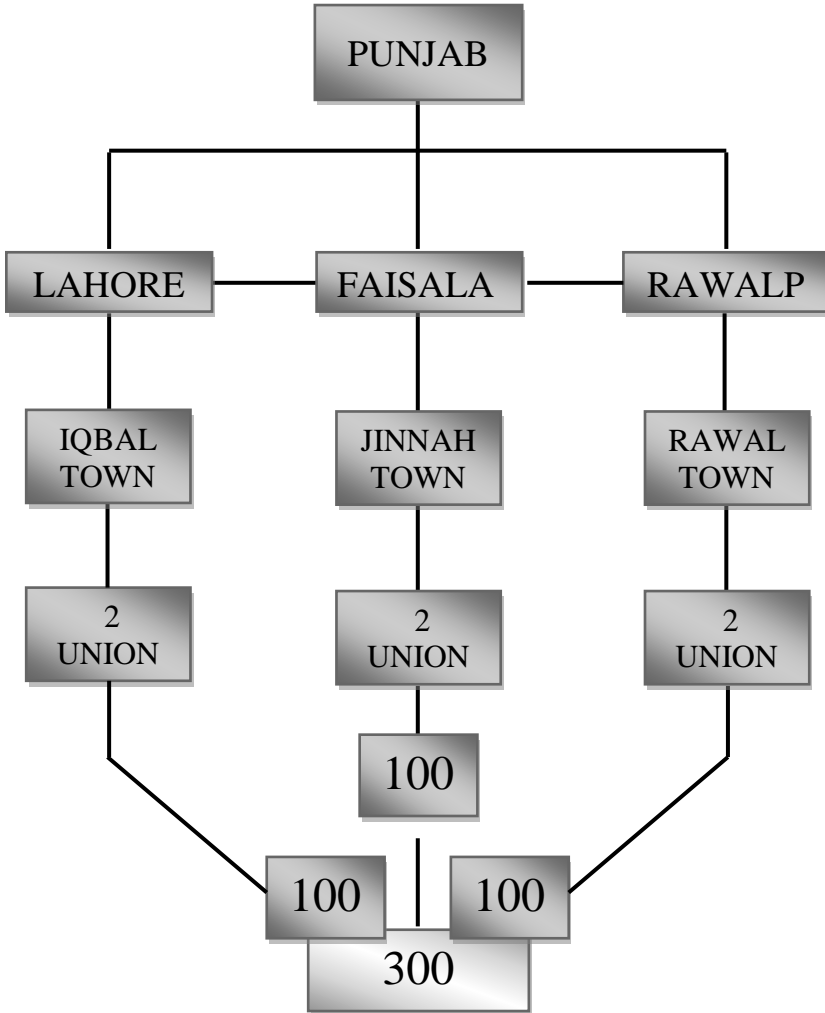
This research was conducted in the metropolitan entities of Punjab, Pakistan. A sample of 300 respondents was taken from three randomly selected metropolitan entities (Faisalabad, Lahore and Rawalpindi) of Punjab Province of Pakistan. Information regarding demography, household, locality and other socio-cultural variables related to causes and effects of youth bulge in the state was collected through a well-structured interview schedule. Multivariate analysis was done to check the relationship between explanatory and criterion variables. For this purpose multiple linear regression analysis was performed by using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). Regression was used to see the influence of the independent variable on dependent variable. Multiple regression models i.e. the models with more than one independent variable, can be expressed as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k + \epsilon \text{ (for population)}$$

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k + e \text{ (for sample)}$$

In these models β_0 refers to Y intercept; $\beta_1, \beta_2 \dots \beta_k$ refers to population regression coefficient; $b_1, b_2 \dots b_k$ are used for sample regression coefficient or estimates of population regression coefficient. Y is dependent variable and $X_1, X_2 \dots X_k$ refers to the independent variables.

Figure 2.1 Sampling Frame



Multiple Linear Regression Model

Table 2: Influence of various explanatory variables on response variable (Youth Bulge/Conflict/Deviance): A multiple linear regression analysis

Independent variable	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardize d Coefficients	t _{cal.}	Significance (P-Value)
	b _i	Std. Error	β _i		
(Constant)	0.841	0.408	_____	2.061	0.040*
Social Change (X ₁)	0.276	0.061	0.250	4.529	0.000**

Low Income Generation Opportunities (X_2)	0.296	0.068	0.230	4.341	0.000**
Blocked Socialization Process (X_3)	0.520	0.088	0.285	5.875	0.000**
Economic Recession (X_4)	0.280	0.054	0.263	5.176	0.000**
Poverty (X_5)	0.236	.051	0.213	4.629	0.000**
Un-equal Educational System (X_6)	0.173	0.051	0.168	3.432	0.001**
Inequalities in the Society (X_7)	0.136	0.047	0.127	2.891	0.004**
Sources of Learning Deviant Behaviour (X_8)	-0.228	0.096	-0.140	-2.368	0.019*
Trigger Events (X_9)	-0.178	0.085	-0.161	-2.099	0.037*
Strategies for Youth Development (X_{10})	-0.264	0.082	-0.252	-3.230	0.001**

Response Variable: Youth Bulge

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.835$

F = 152.648

P-Value

(Significance) = 0.000**

** = Highly Significant

* = Significant

The variable step wise description of regression model is given below:

The value of regression coefficient i.e. $b_i=0.276$ shows a highly significant relationship with $p\text{-value}=0.000$ for the variable “social change”. It indicated that any type of social change like urbanization, industrialization and immigration process caused 0.276 point increase in youth bulge and violent conflict in a society. The inference clearly indicates that social change had significant effect on youth bulge and violent conflict. Research Statistics coincide with Goldstone (2002) and Rodgers (2009) who found that ‘modernization’ i.e. urbanization and industrialization, create conditions ripe for social violence as traditional

social institutions break down and are gradually replaced by ‘modern’ (i.e. formal-legal) ones. More recently, scholars have suggested that rapid urban growth may create a volatile socio-political conducive atmosphere to violent confrontations between individuals and groups as they compete for scarce resources and confront social strains associated with the integration of rural migrants into city life. The highly significant P -value=0.000 for the regression coefficient $b_i=0.296$, for the variable “low income generation opportunities” that increase the risk of youth bulge and violent conflict had at least 0.296 points. The result shows that there is a highly significant association between low income generation opportunities and violent conflict in the state. Collier (2000) found that the willingness of young men to join a rebellion depends on their income-earning opportunities. If young people are left with no alternative but unemployment and poverty, they are likely to join a rebellion as an alternative way of generating income. The value of regression coefficient $b_i=0.520$ shows highly significant influence on criterion variable with p -value=0.000 for the variable “Blocked socialization process” that increases the 0.520 points in the response variable. The crime and conflict related to youth bulge increased 0.520 time more.

The highly significant p -value=0.000 with regression coefficient $b_i=0.280$ for the variable “economic recession” shows a strong relationship that increases the youth bulge and deviance 0.280. The inference describes that economic recession and youth bulge/unrest had highly significant association. Marcus and Gavrilovic (2010) concluded that the effects of the global economic crisis have been uneven. Very few countries have been unscathed by the immediate and knock-on effects of declining demand for exports, reduced remittances, reduced opportunities for migrants and declining aid budgets. The effects of these on employment, public sector revenues and services have been compounded by sharp rise in food and fuel prices, severely affecting poor people and pushing many millions more into poverty. This situation leads to social unrest, youth bulge and violence. Likewise, Ortiz and Cummins (2012) concluded that the global economic crisis hit many countries just as they were experiencing a youth bulge, a demographic trend where the proportion of persons aged 15-24 in the population increases significantly compared to other age groups. The youth bulge has severe implications for labor markets worldwide. The job crisis is

also severely threatening children and poor households worldwide through higher incidences of hunger and malnutrition, illness, child labor, lower educational outcomes, children being left alone and even abandoned, vulnerability to ongoing and future shocks, domestic violence and social unrest. The value of $b_i=0.236$ with $p\text{-value}=0.000$ for the variable "Poverty" increased in poverty in the state and caused 0.236 point increase in conflict and crime like lawlessness and militancy. Results coincide with Pratt and Cullen (2005) who find strong support for hypothesized associations between youth poverty, inequality and criminality across a variety of geographic units. However, there is general recognition that poverty and inequality have differential effects. Generally speaking, poverty is associated with higher levels of less violent crimes (such as property crimes) while inequality is more strongly associated with violent crimes, such as assault and homicide.

The value of $b_i=0.173$ with $p\text{-value} 0.001$ for the variable "unequal educational system" caused an increase of 0.173 unit in the dependent variable. The result shows that un-equal educational system and youth bulge had a highly significant relationship. Results coincide with Ladbury and Hussein (2008) who argue that in Pakistan the style of education (in madrassas and state schools) leaves young people vulnerable to extremist narratives as it relies on rote learning and unquestioning acceptance of authority. Moreover, they highlight the importance of the power of the messengers (religious teachers, preachers and militant organizations) in influencing young people to get involved in violent extremism. This is an area for further research. Sambanis (2002) also suggested that large young male bulges are more likely to increase the risk of conflict in societies where male secondary education is low with unequal educational facilities. This suggests that the availability of large cohorts of poorly educated youth can support conflict. The $p\text{-value} 0.004$ with regression coefficient $b_i=0.136$ for the variable "inequalities in the state" causes increase 0.136 point in response variable. The inference shows that there is a strong relationship between both variables. The research results coincide with Moser and Rodgers (2005) who argue that there is a link between violence and unequal access to employment, education, health and basic physical infrastructure. They argue that situations of widespread, severe inequality heighten the potential for alienated, frustrated and excluded populations

(particularly younger men) to engage in different forms of violence, including economic gang violence, politically motivated identity conflict and domestic violence. Research results match with Frances (2008) who argues that horizontal inequalities (defined as inequalities in economic, social or political dimensions or cultural status between culturally defined groups) are an important cause of violent conflict.

The value of regression coefficient $b_i = -0.228$ with $p\text{-value} = 0.019$ for the variable "sources of learning criminal behaviour" caused the decrease in 0.019 point in response variable i.e. youth bulge and violence. Research statistics match with Leon and Weinburg (2010) who concluded that young people are more likely attached to and influenced by social and electronic media. Social and electronic media make them aware of the world situation like economic recession, trigger events etc. and hence they feel relative deprivation and become frustrated as to why they have not enough opportunities for them in the state. Moreover, they learn the aggressive and criminal behavior from the media sources and information about the rebellion groups and join them for their economic benefits and learn about new types of committing crime as compared to mature population. The effects of trigger event on youth bulge and conflict also shows a significant influence on the youth bulge and violence the value of $b_i = 0.178$ with $p\text{-value} = 0.037$ explains the significant associations between predictor and predictand. Same results were found by EDC (2008) that reported that trigger events enhance the chances of conflict. Given a latent situation of conflict and tensions, trigger factors such as elections, political events, abuses by security forces, sudden economic crisis, policy changes and personal loss and trauma, can activate violence. The coefficient of regression $b_i = -0.264$ with $p\text{-value} = 0.001$ shows a highly significant relationship between youth bulge and strategies to overcome this issue. The result depicts that by providing skills and job opportunity to youth we can overcome the problem of youth violence/unrest. The value of regression coefficient -0.264 points caused decrease in youth bulge and violence. Results match with USAID (2010) that pointed out that youth bulges did not lead inexorably to conflict; rather, large numbers of young people create special challenges and opportunities for societies. The role they play depends on a host of factors related to society's structure and context and the state's legitimacy and effectiveness. Similarly, research

statistics also coincide with Sheikh (2011) who concluded that youth in Pakistan is experiencing unemployment because they do not have technical skills and most of the graduates do not meet the skill demand of different jobs. Existing technical and vocational institutes should be equipped with the latest courses and technology to cater to the need of different industries. Their need for persons who can operate and install machines, look after their accounts and who have the managerial skills should be met.

Conclusion

It is concluded that present youth bulge in Pakistan is the result of high birth rate in the past. This large youth cohort does not find any prestigious/suitable place in society that leads them towards conflict. The results drawn from multiple linear regression model suggest that unemployment, poverty, un-equal education, trigger events, economic crisis, political instability and inequality in the state are the reasons of youth's involvement in unrest, violence, crime and conflict.

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