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Youth in Governance:
Exploring Dynamics of Youth Participation in Pakistan

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Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Chapter 3
Dynamics of Youth Participation: Data Analyses, Results and Discussion
32

Chapter 4
Contextualization: Youth Participation and the Government of Pakistan **52**

Chapter 5
Conclusions & Recommendations **60**

References **64**

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Pakistani Youth: A Population with Huge Potential, yet at Risk

With over 156 million people, Pakistan is one of the most populous countries in the world. At the same time, Pakistan is one of the poorest, with 66% of the total population living on less than US$2 a day[1]. It ranks 136 in the Human Development Index Ranking (UNDP, 2007-08). In 2005, the U.N. estimated that over 32 percent of the population of Pakistan, roughly 52 million young people, is between the age group of 10 to 24 (UN, 2003). This is the largest number of youth than ever before in the history of this country. Only 2.3% of the GDP is spent on education and the secondary school Net Enrollment Rate is 21% (UNESCO, 2007).

The youth of Pakistan presents the most promising resource and in huge quantity – a big reservoir of energy, which can play an important role in social, economic, culture and ideological revolution in the country and contribute significantly to economic growth and poverty alleviation. Indeed it is clear from the experience of many other countries that unless these assets and qualities are given the opportunity to be so applied, they can easily turn to negativism and disruption of the social order. The need, therefore, is to create increasing opportunities for them to develop their potentials, personalities, functional capabilities and to enable them to be productive and socially useful.

The sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of young people is of growing concern today. The Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo in 1994, stresses the importance of addressing adolescent sexual and reproductive health issues and promoting responsible sexual and reproductive behavior (UN, 1994). The reproductive health needs of adolescents have been largely ignored by the existing health services in Pakistan. Physical and sexual abuse, unsafe sex, early marriages and early pregnancies, drugs, abortion, HIV/AIDS, and sexually transmitted infections and diseases are some of the main SRHR concerns that Pakistani youth faces today. In addition, poverty, lack of education and current SRHR situation make Pakistani youth vulnerable segment of the society.

Due to the conservative nature of the society, sexual health is a tabooed topic in Pakistan. An important observation can be drawn from the current Youth Policy of Pakistan which does not address sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people. This clearly shows the nature of governance-related issues that may hinder youth participation particularly in projects and policies that are supposedly aimed at their sexual and reproductive health. This research will explore the dynamics of youth participation particularly in this context.

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[1] Population Reference Bureau, 2005

1.2 Objectives and Justification of the Research

This research is the first in its kind in the context of Pakistan. Theoretically and methodologically, it brings together different approaches to deal with quite an unexplored issue of youth governance. In general, it will serve as the first step towards understanding youth participation from different angles and highlighting the gaps and challenging areas. It will provide a basis for carrying out further research on youth. It may assist government, NGOs and donor bodies in understanding different dynamics of youth participation in Pakistan and designing their initiatives accordingly. The data in the research gathers majority of the viewpoints from young people living in urban setting, senior officials of the Ministry of Youth Affairs, and a focus group discussion with rural youth. Therefore, it is aimed at bringing forward voices from different perspectives in order to give all sides of the picture. In addition, it will help understanding the dynamics of civil society formation by taking the example of a struggling network of young volunteers; and highlighting the role of local and external actors.

1.3 Conceptualizing and Analyzing Youth in Governance: Dynamics of Youth Participation in Pakistan; the case of YAN

Youth Advocacy Network (YAN) is a youth-led network - aimed at creating a forum for dialogue, discussion, and cooperation about sexual & reproductive health, & rights of young people in Pakistan. YAN is funded by Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation through Dutch International NGOs – World Population Foundation (WPF) and CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality Foundation. The WPF Netherlands has a Field Office in Pakistan called WPF Pakistan, which is responsible for funds management and provision of technical and logistical assistance to YAN. With Provincial Management Committees in four provinces of Pakistan, YAN is involved in *advocacy for SRHR and youth participation* by building capacities of young people and empowering them. Founded in 2005, YAN is particularly selected for this research in order to understand dynamics of civil society formation at the grass root initiation level. However, the formation of YAN will be analyzed in the historical context of youth development in Pakistan.

The research is based on the hypothesis that *participation* of young people in *governance* of policies and programmes that directly or indirectly affect their lives, will lead to increased *citizenship* which is a major indicator of *democracy*. This research is therefore focused on understanding the *dynamics* that shape governance mechanisms related to youth participation.

Let's breakdown the different concepts (italicized) in this hypothesis. 'Governance' is used to highlight the 'participation' of young people by giving leading roles to young people in the decision making processes while designing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating projects, programmes and policies. This happens when youth work in partnership with adults to set the overall policy direction of

7

organizations, institutions and coalitions. Citizenship is the status traditionally reserved for adults. By contrast, the status of young people can best be described as "precarious". They may possess certain formal, legal rights such as the right to drive, to work and to vote, but are not generally regarded as *full citizens, but as "citizens-in-becoming"*. Being a citizen is defined as having the resources, capacity and opportunity to participate in the different areas of adult life (Beauvais and McKay, 2001). The level, scope and form of citizenship depend on factors that hinder or facilitate active youth participation and influence the decision-making processes.

Participation is… 'Democracy':

- Representation
- Being accountable/ensuring accountability
- Effective communication
- Information
- Having a role and knowing why you are participating
- Equal opportunities to participate
- Being able to set the agenda
- Being able to make mistakes
- Expressing ideas in the way you want.

Source: Faulkner and Nott (2001)

The context of this research is the institutional and structural setting at the government level that provides the policy framework to youth participation in Pakistan. The research revolves around different actors which include:

- Local Actors:
  - Young volunteers; Youth Advocacy Network (YAN);
  - World Population Foundation – Pakistan (YAN's Partner Organization and WPF Netherland's Field Office, which is responsible for channeling YAN's funding received from CHOICE; providing logistical and technical support; and space for YAN Coordinator);
  - Ministry of Youth Affairs, Government of Pakistan.

- External Actors:
  - CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality Foundation, Netherlands. CHOICE is an important actor as it has played a key role in the organizational development of YAN; its capacity building; and above all, providing funding to YAN.

1.4 Dynamics of Youth Participation

The research is aimed at exploring different governance-related dynamics of youth participation i.e. institutional and structural dynamics that promote or constraint youth participation; dynamics related to *decision making processes* while designing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating projects, programmes and policies that have an impact on their lives.

What are these dynamics that shape governance mechanisms in Pakistan? The respondents of the research are young volunteers of a network focusing on issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of young people. The questions and thus their answers revolve around capacity, power dynamics, spaces, roadblocks, and the structural setting set by different actors such as government, individuals, and organizations.

All these dynamics can act as can either facilitate or hinder the process of youth participation in governance. It is important to analyze each in the context of SRHR which involves cultural and religious values, norms and traditions.
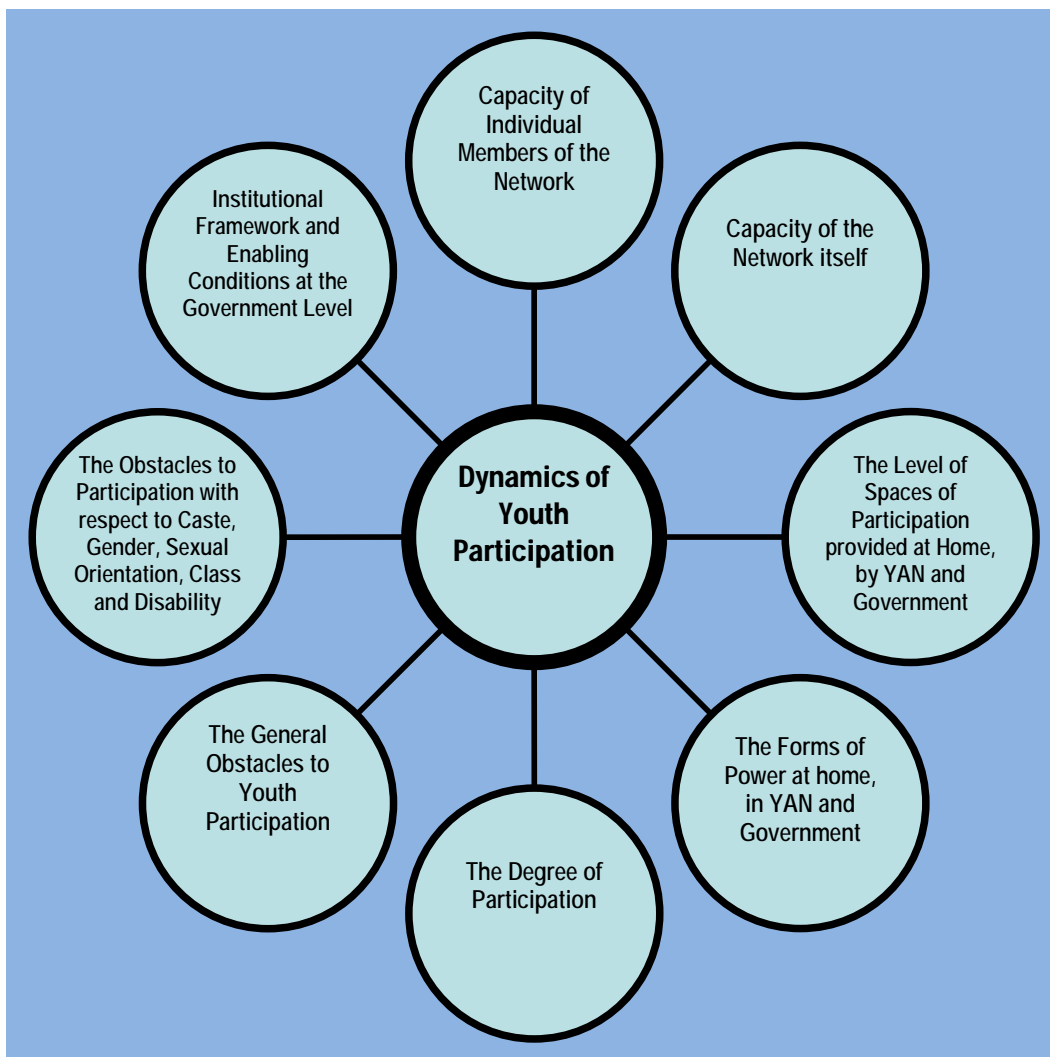
For each of these dynamics, general perceptions or misperceptions may exist in the society. For example, it is often said that youth cannot participate in projects and policies because they lack the necessary knowledge and skills; or corruption in the government is the main roadblock to youth participation etc. The research is also aimed at finding out whether these opinions hold ground on true foundations and whether they can be generalized.

1.5 Research Questions

The main question of the research is exploring the *dynamics of youth participation* in Pakistan. This question has following parts:

1. What is the respondent's individual capacity in terms of knowledge, skills, and traits?

   This question is aimed at identifying:
   - the level of knowledge of respondents in sexual and reproductive health and rights issues as this is the main area on which the network focuses;
   - the level of necessary skills required for carrying out different activities e.g. advocacy and fund-raising;
   - the level of personal traits e.g. self-confidence and compassion;
   - whether the lack of knowledge and skills given as a reason by adults for not involving youth in projects and policies holds true; and
   - what areas are weak and need more trainings.

2. What is YAN's organizational capacity to run and sustain itself?

   This question is aimed at identifying the level of organizational competency that YAN holds as an organization. This gives a clue of areas with which the members are not satisfied and also identifies weak points in YAN's organizational development. It is important because it leads to one of the major structural roadblocks that stop young people from forming a network in a more effective, efficient and sustainable manner.

3. What types of spaces of participation are provided to young people at home, by YAN and the government?

   In the context of power dynamics among different actors, this question will identify whether the spaces provided in three different settings are (a) closed, (b) invited, or (c) created. This question is aimed at exploring the level of opportunities, moments and channels where young people can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests.

4. What forms of power exist in homes, at YAN and government levels that effect youth participation?

   This question is targeted at exploring the power dynamics that exist in three different settings. A relation will be made between these power dynamics to the spaces of participation in Q3. The question will explore how (a) visible, (b) hidden, and (c) invisible types of power shape governance mechanisms in Pakistan.

5. What is the degree of participation in homes, at YAN and government levels?

   This question is aimed at identifying where the respondents place home, YAN and government levels from least participatory to most participatory levels. This question will lead to exploring who takes the leadership role, how decisions are made, and how transparent are the initiatives.

6. What are the obstacles to youth participation?

   This question is designed to explore the roadblocks or obstacles to youth participation in the views of both the young people and the senior officials at the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

7. What is the institutional and structural setting at the government level that provides the policy framework and context to youth participation in Pakistan?

   While analyzing the views from both young people and representatives of the government, this question is focused at doing a detailed analysis of:
   - young people's view of the government;
   - the reasons for the failure of having a National Youth Policy;
   - flaws in the policy making process of the policy;
   - flaws and gaps in the government's 'rules of business'; and
   - the obstacles to youth participation according to government representatives.

1.6 Methodology

Depending on the type of data and category of respondents, the data collection techniques of survey, focus group discussion and interviewing are used to collect data for this research. In addition, the questions related to spaces and power dynamics of participation are analyzed with the tool of Power Cube Analysis. As will be elaborated in Chapter 2, this tool offers ways to examine and analyze participatory action in development and changes in power relations by and/or on behalf of poor

and marginalized people. It does this by distinguishing participatory action along three dimensions:

- At three levels (or places): global, national and local;
- Across three types of (political) space: closed, invited and created;
- Different forms of power at place within the levels and spaces: visible (formal) power, hidden (behind the scenes) power, and invisible (internalized norms) power.

The degree of participation is analyzed with the tool of 'R. Hart's Ladder of Participation'. Spread through eight rungs, this tool helps analyzing the degree of participation from tokenism to meaningful participation. It will be elaborated further in Chapter 2.

The research is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The respondents and methods depend on the level of investigation. The researcher has prior experience of working closely with Youth Advocacy Network (YAN), its partner organization WPF

#	Research Question	Methodology		Tool	Data Obtained	Level
		Research Instrument	Respondents			
1	Capacity	Questionnaire	YAN members	N/A	- The individual capacity of young people in terms of knowledge, skills, and personal traits; - The organizational capacity of YAN.	a. Individual b. Org'l
2	Spaces of Participation	Questionnaire	YAN members	The Power Cube Analysis	- Level of Participation. - Opportunities, moments and channels where young people can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests. - Whether closed, invited or created spaces.	a. Home b. YAN c. Govt.
3	Forms of Power	Questionnaire	YAN members	The Power Cube Analysis	- Forms of power across spaces. - Whether visible, hidden or invisible power	a. Personal b. Home c. YAN d. Govt. e. WPF
4	Degree of Participation	Questionnaire	YAN members	Roger Hart's Ladder	- Whether the actions are initiated by young or adults. - The level of decision making. - The level of being part of an action (from 'just informed' to 'leading').	a. Home b. YAN c. Govt. d. WPF
5	Obstacles/ Facilitating Factors	Questionnaire	YAN members	N/A	- Factors that act as obstacles or roadblocks to youth participation. - Whether caste, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class and/or disability act as a hindrance to youth participation.	N/A
6	Conditions at Govt. Level	Interviews	Officials, Ministry of Youth Affairs	N/A	- Obstacles to youth participation according to these respondents. - The process of development of National Youth Policy. - Obstacles to finalization of youth policy. - Loopholes in govt.'s policies and strategies	a. Govt. b. Political
7	Case Study: Killi Sara Ghurai	Focus Group Discussion	Young people	N/A	- Obstacles to youth participation at village level.	a. Political b. Religious c. Govt.

Pakistan, and its funding bodies CHOICE and WPF Netherlands. This ensures an easy access to data and therefore, no obstacles to data collection are anticipated.

1.7 The Scope and Limitations of the Research

Like any other category, 'youth' is also not homogenous and it is practically impossible to find an equally representative sample of all young people in Pakistan. Although the respondents of this research share a number of commonalities, it is important to highlight that power dynamics, difference of opinions, and different perspectives on values also occur even in the same group. This depends greatly on the geographical location of members and their orientation to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Youth Advocacy Network (YAN) on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights is a volunteer-youth-led network that works for advocacy of youth participation in SRHR. The researcher has selected this sample of respondents as they share a number of commonalities. The majority of respondents (75 percent) are students of high school to tertiary school and work with YAN as volunteers. These include young people aged 15 to 25, and belong to urban areas – the provincial capitals of Pakistan where approximately all of them have been living since birth. Even those, who have migrated from other places, were living in cities before moving to the provincial capitals. This shows that they do not have an exposure to the rural environment which differs greatly from urban environment. Therefore, they represent a particular sub-category of urban youth which make 36 percent of the overall population of Pakistan (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2006). These provincial capitals include Karachi (Sindh Province), Lahore (Punjab Province), Peshawar (Northwest Frontier Province), Quetta (Baluchistan Province) and Islamabad (Federal Capital Territory).

Although 50 percent of members of YAN are female, only 17 percent made it to the venue for participating in the survey. This probably is an indicator of limited mobility of females in the Pakistani society, a social constraint to women development in general which includes access to education, health and anything that is outside the physical boundaries of house. In the later sections, it is reconfirmed as one of the obstacles to female participation in volunteerism by the female respondents of the research. This may also highlight a need to plan and implement strategies in YAN which are not gender blind. The less percentage of the respondents also made it difficult to do a comparative analysis on the basis of *gender*, which has limited the scope of the research.

An interesting finding of the research could have been the strategies or ways they opt in order to be successful in carrying out activities despite working on SRHR issues which are sensitive and tabooed in Pakistan. This could highlight the *agency* factor i.e. how they act as agents of change in the society. But almost 50 percent of the respondents were members of YAN for less than six months. These members have less experience of carrying out advocacy activities while working with YAN and are

not in the best position to highlight the strategies. In addition, for the same reason, this may have undesired results for some of the survey questions which require prior knowledge on the organizational capacity of YAN, its decision-making mechanisms and partnership with World Population Foundation.

A different language is spoken in each of the provinces from where the data for this research is collected. In addition to the researcher's skills of speaking these local languages, *Urdu* also helped in communicating with the respondents. The respondents were asked to fill-in the questionnaire in their local language. However, a challenge was the lack of skill to express opinions in 'writing' which is in general a weak point in the communication skills of Pakistani students. In order to make the respondents understand the questions, and give enough time to each question, 'administered' methodology was adopted in which respondents were explained each question and then given time to answer before moving to the next question.

1.8 Organization of the Research Paper

After the introductory chapter, the research is conceptualize and theorized after conducting an extensive literature. Based on this conceptualization, different tools are selected to operationalize the research. The collected data on dynamics of youth participation is then analyzed and discussed in Chapter 3. Youth participation is contextualized in the Government of Pakistan's policy framework in Chapter 4. The results are summarized and conclusion and recommendations are drawn in the final chapter of the research.

Chapter 2

Conceptualising, Theorising and (Methodology of) Researching the Dynamics of Youth Participation

2.0 Introduction

This chapter has three parts. The first part focuses on the conceptual and theoretical framework of the research. In the second part, different tools are discussed that can be used to analyze different theories and concepts discussed in the first part. The third part presents the operational framework or synthesis of the conceptual and the methodological approach of this research on the dynamics of youth participation in Pakistan.

In order to understand 'youth in governance', an effort is made to explain how youth and youth participation is defined and constructed. This understanding then leads to defining what *youth in governance* actually means, how is it linked to democracy, and how contemporary accelerated globalization has made governance a different ballgame altogether. In addition, it is explained how 'sexual and reproductive health and rights' make governance in this field more complicated than other development fields.

In order to analyze different dynamics of youth participation, the tools of 'power-cube analysis' and 'Hart's ladder' are used. The details of these tools are discussed in the second part. The third part brings the concepts and tools together and highlights how they are used in the carrying out the current research.

Part 1: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Youth

Definition

Many countries define youth/young people as the age at which a person is given equal treatment under the law: often referred to as the 'age of majority'. This age is often 18 in many countries, and once a person passes this age, they are considered to be an adult. However, the operational definition and nuances of the term 'youth' often vary from country to country, depending on specific socio-cultural, institutional, economic and political factors (Bessant, Sercombe, & Watts, 1998).

The United Nations defines 'youth' as:

> …a statistical artifact to refer specifically to those aged 15-24 years. Another meaning, used in discussion of the policy responses of Governments to the

particular problems faced by young people, is based on a sociological definition of youth as a transition stage between childhood and adulthood. More precisely, it comprises a series of transitions "from adolescence to adulthood, from dependence to independence, and from being recipients of society's services to becoming contributors to national economic, political, and cultural life" (UNDP, 2000, p.15).

'Youth is "a slippery concept" (Kenway, 1993, p. 10). When does it start and finish? Some would say that there is a fluidity that transcends demarcation. There are instances in any adult life where behaviour or attitudes could be construed as 'childish' and, in the same way, young people can display remarkably "adult-like" actions or perceptions' (Howard, Newman, Harris and Harcourt, 2002).

The 'Rules of Business' is a set of rules that provide the overall framework and acts as a backbone to Pakistan's Ministry of Youth Affairs. The Rules define youth as "non-student" youth between the ages of 15 and 29 years. The definition in such an important document leaves out a big percentage of youth that goes to schools, colleges and universities. These rules are critically analyzed in detail in Chapter 4.

Debate exists around the notion of a homogenous youth category; hence the definition of the term youth or young person is far from simple. With the current financial and time resources available for this research, it was practically impossible to isolate equally representative sample of the overall young population of Pakistan. Although differences exist among the individual respondents of the research, the sample still shares a number of commonalities, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 1 and 3.

Social Construction and Power Dynamics

There is a significant canon of literature regarding the emergence of the notion of youth, demonstrating some divergent views. Bessant, Sercombe and Watts (1998) explore the issue through an analysis of various theories of youth. The assumptions which people make about young people and the nature of 'adolescence' depends upon the theories which they hold about youth (1998, p.26). For instance, if adolescence is understood as a time of emotional and behavioural 'storm and stress' (G. S. Hall, 1904), then young people may be problematised. Conversely, if adolescence is perceived as another stage that all of the population travel through, then young people may be seen differently (Sercombe, 1992).

Foucault has much to say about the social construction of groups. He discusses this notion at length in works like *Madness and Civilization* (1988) and *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and refers to the phenomenon as "the constitution of the subject" (Rabinow, 1986, p. 6, p.9) or what Hacking (1986) labels "making up people" (p.6). The question is: how do human beings become 'subjects'? Furthermore, how do they become self-conscious, acting beings, acting out of their self-consciousness, and how are they subordinated by processes of domination and control (Rabinow, 1986, p.11)?

While human beings confined in institutions often do not have much control over what is happening to them, Foucault is interested in the work that subject populations do to cooperate with the discourses and institutions that define them (Foucault, 1977). Young people actively construct a self-identity around being young by the way they dress, the way they behave and the kinds of music they listen to (Brake, 1985; Wyn & White, 1997). So, 'youth' is not just something that is imposed on the young. It is about how young people constitute themselves as 'youth' or 'adolescents' under conditions of domination and subjection, how young people learn how to be 'teenagers', how they negotiate between the 'student' identity and the 'delinquent' identity at school for example (Foucault, 1988). The majority of respondents (75 percent) are students of high school to tertiary school and work with YAN as volunteers. These include young people aged 15 to 25, and belong to urban areas – the provincial capitals of Pakistan where approximately all of them have been living since birth. Even those, who have migrated from other places, were living in cities before moving to the provincial capitals. This shows that they do not have an exposure to the rural environment which differs greatly from urban environment.

The majority of the respondents of this research were born and raised in the urban environment of Pakistan. They are students of high school to tertiary school and work with YAN as volunteers. Although, they all come from provincial capitals, the social construction of youth in Pakistan may vary enormously in urban and rural environments. In addition, their geographical setting also contributes to developing different identities with different values, dress codes, language etc. The respondents of this research represent four different provinces of Pakistan which differ in their cultural and political settings. Baluchistan, and North-West Frontier Provinces can be considered more conservative and traditional. Therefore, the youth of these areas may have different values than those in other provinces.

It is very important to understand the social construction of youth in Pakistan from 'gender' perspective. According to UNESCO report on Gender Equality in Pakistan (2006), Pakistan ranks low in gender-related human development indicators, as compared to countries with similar levels of development. Females are discriminated against under Pakistani law as well as by the socio-cultural traditions and practices in the society, such as those related to marriage, political rights, and reproductive rights (Government of Pakistan. 2005). Gender disparities are pervasive: women are less educated than men; their health and nutritional status is lower; their mobility is strongly restricted; and their access to employment and income-generating activities is limited.

The UNESCO report (2006) says that Pakistani couples value boys higher than girls; bearing sons increases a women's status, whereas girls are considered a liability. Deeprooted cultural biases and institutional constraints restrict Pakistani women from playing an active role in public and private decision-making. The cultural biases toward women in general are exacerbated by their reference to young females.

'Girls and boys grow up and spend their time very differently in Pakistan. Young females of all socio-economic levels are restricted to a life that largely centres around home and chores. They have little time to go to school and little opportunity for recreation. In contrast, young males have much greater exposure to the outside world. School, waged work, and recreation are likely to take up most of their day (Sathar, Z. A., et al. 2003. P. 41). Clearly, young females in Pakistan lack the opportunities for schooling, work and recreation that are afforded to males. Young women in Pakistan hardly have any social network outside the family to draw upon for inspiration and support (Ibid: p. 36)' (UNESCO, 2006). Although 50 percent of members of YAN are female, only 17 percent made it to the venue for participating in the survey. This probably is an indicator of limited mobility of females in the Pakistani society, a social constraint to women development in general which includes access to education, health and anything that is outside the physical boundaries of house..

'Youth' as a Category

Discussions of the youth category come from a variety of theoretical positions, and approaches principally Marxist and Foucaultian. Other theoretical approaches that have contributed significantly to youth theory are the neo-Marxists and feminists (Bessant, Sercombe, & Watts, 1998; Rabinow, 1986).

Since the emergence of the youth category after the Industrial Revolution when children were separated out from adults and the ensuing attention that this category has received, much debate has emerged regarding the notion of young people's legitimate participation in society (Bessant, Sercombe, & Watts, 1998; R. White, 1990; Wyn & White, 1997).

> … in those societies in which the status of the adolescents and young adults (particularly the males) is high, change will tend to be slow … where their status is low, and their seniors can effectively block their access to adult statuses and impede their assumption of adult roles, then there is likely to be a predisposition to change, to social innovation and experimentation, to a ready response to the opportunities which may be offered by an alien, intrusive culture to follow alternative and quicker routes to power and importance (Musgrove, 1964, p.22).

The origin of adolescence is then, for Musgrove, not the rate of social change, but the practice of excluding young people from positions of power and importance. Often, the social force behind this, he argued, was demographic: decreasing mortality led to reduction in positions of political and economic power. The older generation, in order to protect their own positions, instituted controls of various kinds to artificially keep young people in economic and political dependence (Musgrove, 1964; Wyn & White, 1997).

At different times and within different cultures the relative significance of 'youth' as a signifier of status and identifier of behaviour in the public sphere changes (Musgrove, 1964). At some points it may be a useful category, at others it may mystify more than it informs. At this moment it is likely that the substantive changes in the social and economic structure, which have, for example, eliminated the 'youth labour market' in the space of a couple of decades, will have a similar impact to those that Musgrove (1964) wrote about (Wyn & White, 1997). Just as adolescence was created by social and economic changes wrought two centuries past, we might now be witnessing its demise. Comparative studies increasingly show changes in the sequence and pattern of transition to an extent that the rationale for its use is being rapidly eroded, however, dominant discourses still advocate for these convenient notions (Jeffs & Smith, 1998b). As du Bois-Reymond argues we are encountering a world in which:

> Status passages are no longer linear but synchronical and reversible. The life-course of modern young people does not necessarily follow the model of finishing school, completing professional training, getting engaged to be married, and then beginning an active sex life; instead a sex life may commence while still at school, and a trial marriage may take place rather than an engagement (1998, p.66).

There are major problems with 'youth' and these can be illustrated in relation to the three central traditions of the sociology of youth as first proposed by Hall in 1904 (G. S. Hall, 1904). These traditions are characterized by Wyn and White (1997) in a contemporary context as youth transitions, youth development and youth subcultures. These mirror a Marxist analysis of the youth category: young people are categorised and institutionalised to regulate their participation. Youth transitions examines the way in which youth is "constructed and structured through the institutions that 'process' the transitions to adulthood" (Wyn & White, 1997, p.5). The classic processes here involve schooling and the movement into further and higher education and the labour market. In the literature, youth development is often tied to a notion of 'troubled youth' and draws upon psychological understandings of youth. The focus is then on developmental stages, individual differences, moments of stress and risk-taking behaviour (Brake, 1985). In respect of youth subcultures there tends to be a defining interest in "the production and consumption of culture and the process of identity formation"(Wyn & White, 1997, p.82).

At this point we come to a central question: are the various social situations experienced by young people distinctive? If it is possible to establish that young people encounter a unique set of situations and social experiences, then there may be a case for treating youth (or adolescence) as a useful category on which to base explicit intervention (Hacking, 1986; Springhall, 1984). In part this takes us back to the discussion around transitions. Many of the activities associated with youth - taking part in education, entering the labour or housing markets, cohabiting and so on, occur across a wide age range (Fergusson, 2004; S. Hall, Jefferson, & Clarke, 1976). What is arguably unique is that these things may be encountered for the first time, and that as a result young people are more likely to engage in risky behavior e.g. early pregnancies, abortion, unsafe sex, HIV and AIDS etc. This is the tenuous thesis

on which much social policy development in relation to young people is based (Bessant, 1996; Irwin, 1995).

Governments continue to be concerned about 'troublesome youth' and require people to research into the topic. Bessant (2004) argues that the obsession with the governance of youth and the view that they are inherently difficult and require monitoring and regulation. Regardless of regular injections of research funding, youth as a meaningful category is likely to become increasingly irrelevant. This has consequences with regards to citizenship and young people: if 'youth' is becoming a meaningless term, then recognising young people as citizens is questionable. This has implications for young people and governance and more specifically youth participation. This will be explored more comprehensively in subsequent sections.

2.2 Young People, Governance and Democracy

Youth in Governance

Youth in decision-making, often also defined or explained as "youth governance," focuses on the ways young people are involved in decision making efforts at multiple levels of an initiative or organization (W.K.K.F., 2005). It can include advising the individuals or groups that hold the ultimate decision-making responsibility (Search Institute, 2005) as well as opportunities in which young people are the ultimate decision makers. Youth decisions may be administrative [for example, hiring staff, designing programs, or conducting a needs assessment] or operational - leading youth groups, training volunteers etc. (Zeldin et al., 2000). Some refer to "youth in decision-making" as "a variety of efforts to engage young people in any level of determining outcomes or decision-making. Decision-making can be related to an issue, a project, a program, a policy or an organization (Justinianno & Scherer, 2001).

According to Lori, Youth in governance refers to those situations where youth work in partnership with adults to set the overall policy direction of organizations, institutions and coalitions (Mantooth, 2005). Specifically, *governance* refers to the ability to lead and vote as a full, participating member in a board or governing structure. Young people may work on boards of directors, sanctioned committees, planning bodies and advisory groups. The youth are voting members and equal stakeholders in all decisions that come before the group, including such issues as budget, staff and strategic planning.

Youth in governance is also referred to as Youth on Boards or Youth as Decision makers. This includes a variety of efforts to engage young people in determining outcomes or decision making. Decision making can be related to an issue, a project, a program or an organization (Justinianno & Scherer, 2001).

Transformations in Governance in the context of Globalization

According to Scholte (2000), globalization has promoted a major growth of regional and transworld governance mechanisms. As a result of this multiplication of substate

and suprastate arrangements alongside regulation through states, contemporary governance has become considerably more decentralized and fragmented. Globalization has encouraged growth of regulatory activities through nonofficial bodies. As a result, governance has gained significant inputs from civic associations and firms.

The Youth Advocacy Network (YAN) is funded by Dutch Youth-led Network called CHOICE and technically supported with another Dutch International NGO called World Population Foundation (WPF). These two suprastate agencies have not only played an important part in creating the Network but also built capacity of its members in doing advocacy for youth participation in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). By organizing different activities, the Network is involved in pressurizing government in realizing rights of young people and allowing transparent and accountable decision-making mechanisms that promotes youth participation. It is an example of rise of supraterritoriality that has promoted moves towards multilayered governance, whereby regulatory competences are more dispersed across substate (YAN), state and suprastate agencies (CHOICE and WPF).

For both physical and ideational reasons, a state cannot in contemporary globalizing circumstances exercise ultimate, comprehensive, absolute and singular rule over a country and its foreign relations (Scholte, 2000). Citizens and governors alike have in general become increasingly ready to give values such as economic growth, human rights and ecological integrity – none of which is strictly bound to territory – a higher priority than sovereign statehood. However, sexual and reproductive health and rights is still a tabooed and sensitive topic in Pakistan. Many citizens have clung to the illusion of sovereignty because they associate the principle with their cultural identity and broader security. Western NGOs are considered to invade this identity with their 'hidden agendas'. Therefore, they face resistance at the local level.

The government and NGOs in Pakistan has taken heed of the priorities of transborder foundations and NGOs when designing and executing development projects and policies. This is not only because of global pressure to incorporate universal values, but also because a huge amount of conditional funds flow in from developing countries. In regard to official development assistance (ODA), donor states have since the mid-1980s increasingly transferred aid not to governments of the South, but to NGOs (Scholte, 2000).

Although the National Youth Policy is still a draft, it is shared with suprastate agencies for feedback and comments. A new politics has emerged over the past several decades whereby many civic groups channel an important part of their efforts to shape official policy through suprastate agencies as well as (or even instead of) through governments. However, neither the diffusion of public-sector authority nor the growth of private-sector regulation has displaced "bureaucracy" as the underlying principle of modern administration. Bureaucracy and political instability are highlighted as main reasons for a number of loopholes in the Ministry of Youth Affairs discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Governance in SRHR – What makes it different?

Issues around sex, sexuality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are taboo in Pakistan, and perceived stigma and embarrassment can lead to a reluctance to discuss and address sexual health and rights issues. Taboos are even more pronounced for people who do not conform to socially accepted norms of behaviour such as adolescents who have sex before marriage and men who have sex with men (MSM). Unmarried adolescent girls are routinely denied or have limited access to SRH services even though they are vulnerable to violence and sexual abuse, and the consequences of early sexual experiences including unwanted pregnancy, STIs and unsafe abortions.

The socio-cultural context in Pakistan constrains advocacy in the area of reproductive and sexual health of young people. Advocacy efforts are crucial in the context of adolescent reproductive and sexual health in Pakistan. Strict cultural and religious norms regulate the lives of young people, especially girls. Advocacy needs to be undertaken at all levels of the political, religious and social hierarchy, from advocating for human rights and against the discrimination of women by the law, to working toward equitable treatment of girls in the family (i.e. in relation to access to education and health care). Any strategy that addresses young women's unique needs should recognise that their activities are often controlled by others (i.e. parents and community leaders).

Sathar et al. (2003) highlight that many adults demonstrate a lack of trust in their children's ability to make decisions on important issues, so these decisions are made by adults on behalf of the children. This is particularly true for young women. Some parents, however, acknowledge that their sons, and to a much lesser extent their daughters, have the right to participate in those decisions. Only 17 per cent of adults in the AYP 2001-02 Survey believe young females have the right to participate in decisions regarding the choice of a husband, and even fewer adults (6 per cent) think a girl or young women should participate in this decision. Ten per cent of adults believe that young women should participate in decisions about work, and 7 per cent think females could participate in decisions regarding their education. Young males are accorded a slightly higher participation in decision-making; however, neither young men nor young women have much say in marriage decisions (Sathar, Z. A., et al. 2003).

Youth Participation, and Democracy and Citizenship

Established democracies face a conundrum that challenges their very legitimacy. The international literature is rich with exhortations of the vital importance for citizens to be engaged in modern, formal democracy (Crick, 2002, 2007; Dalton, 2004; Forbrig, 2005; Galston, 2004; Macedo, 2005; Power Inquiry, 2006; Print and Saha, 2006; Print, 2006). Such engagement, it is argued, is necessary to avoid weakening the legitimacy of elected governments as they struggle with falling election turnouts as well as to counter the rise of undemocratic political forces and the growth of 'quiet authoritarianism' and 'presidential' prime ministers within government(Print, 2007).

Yet these same democracies are now characterised by declining citizen participation of many forms. In reviewing the erosion of political support in advanced industrial democracies Dalton (2004, p. 1) reminds us that 'Contemporary democracies are facing a challenge today. This challenge does not come from enemies within or outside the nation. Instead, the challenge comes from democracy's own citizens, who have grown distrustful of politicians, skeptical about democratic institutions, and disillusioned about how the democratic process functions' (Print, 2007).

Democracy is well grounded in the concept of public participation in political matters. Indeed, citizen participation is the very raison d'etre of democracy. As Print (2007) cited Dalton (2004) who contends, 'Democracy is a process and a set of political expectations that elevate democracy above other political forms ... Otherwise, we should praise authoritarian regimes ... but we do not ...' (p. 10). Not surprisingly widespread support exists for the argument that participation of citizens is essential if democracies are to be viable, sustainable and healthy (Crick, 1998, 2002; International IDEA, 1999, 2002; Norris, 2002; Power, 2006; Putnam, 2000). Political, and more broadly civic, participation occurs when citizens become part of the body politic/polity as an engaged member (Print, 2007).

According to Print (2007), participation in a democracy may take many forms but it can be identified in terms of three sets of engagement indicators:

- Civic indicators – active membership of groups/associations; volunteering; fundraising for charities, community participation/problem solving.

- Electoral indicators – regular voting; persuading others; contributions to political parties; assisting candidates with campaigns.

- Political engagement indicators – contacting officials; contacting print and broadcast media; protest; written petitions; boycotting and boycotting activists, email petitions and internet engagement (CIRCLE, 2002 cited in Print, 2007).

Pakistan has been struggling in establishing democracy and rule of law after its independence in 1947. There have been constant military quos resulting in dictatorships and authoritarianism. Pakistan has political conflict with India over the issue of Jammu and Kashmir since 1947. The race for nuclear weapons between India and Pakistan has cost both countries high costs at the expense of development of people. A huge percentage of total GDP is allocated to military forces at the expense of health and education facilities to people.

Hardly any politically elected government succeeded in completing its tenure. On the other hand, the political parties are led by industrial and religious elites, and feudal lords. It is against their interest to empower people by promoting people's

participation and democracy. Therefore, those with power, hinder development by resisting education and awareness-raising. Instead, people are deliberately kept in vicious circle of poverty. Young people in the educational institutes are also exploited by these political leaders to serve their interests. Backed by funds, arms and weapons, the student unions of young people have indulged themselves in violent acts. With no sense of direction, unemployment and illiteracy, the young people of Pakistan are still struggling when it comes to any type of participation.

2.3 Youth Participation

Defined

Key notions in "governance" are 'involvement', 'consultation' and 'participation'. These words are sometimes used interchangeably and can have quite different meanings. Participation refers "to the process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives" (Hart, 1992, p. 5). According to Hart (1992), UNICEF describes that it is the fundamental right of citizenship and the means by which democracies should be measured (Howard, Newman, Harris and Harcourt, 2002).

'Wilson (2000) believes that participation can be classified into two main categories, the first being superficial or tokenistic, the other being "Deep" (Wilson, 2000, p. 26) participation or 'democratic play'. 'Deep' participation is an umbrella term encompassing "active (Holdsworth cited in Wilson, 2000, p.26)", "authentic (Cumming; Soliman cited in Wilson, 2000, p.26)" and "meaningful (Wilson, cited in Wilson, 2000, p.26)" participation. 'Deep' participation means young people experience elements of citizenship and democracy in their everyday lives, in real and holistic situations with meaningful outcomes or actions' (Howard, Newman, Harris and Harcourt, 2002).

Meaningful youth participation then, refers to the active engagement of young people in all phases of the development and implementation of policies, programs and services that affect their lives. This form of participation is essential to ensure the effectiveness of youth-focused policies and programs, because it is the only way to guarantee that youth perspectives sufficiently inform and direct them. Young people are in the best position to identify and articulate their specific needs, challenges and skills.

This research defines 'participation' as giving leading roles to young people in the *decision making processes* while designing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating projects, programmes and policies that have an impact on their lives. The respondents of the study are members of Youth Advocacy Network (YAN) who work for advocacy of youth participation in projects, programmes and policies focused on sexual and reproductive health and rights. These advocacy efforts include

workshops on advocacy skills in SRHR, and events on awareness raising and advocating SRHR.

Youth Participation in Development

According to White and Choudhury (2007) the ultimate reference points for discussions of child and youth participation are Articles 12–15 of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Article 12 states that a child should be able to speak on matters that affect him or herself, including in legal or administrative proceedings. Articles 13–15 confer on children rights to freedom of expression; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and freedom of association.

In international development the agenda for youth participation draws together a number of broader trends. Most obviously, there is the promotion of 'rights-based approaches' which have to some extent at least replaced an earlier orientation towards the welfare or needs of disadvantaged groups (Eyben, 2003 cited in White & Choudhury, 2007). The rights agenda entailed a shift from the earlier orientation of working for young people to work with or even by young people. Echoing the already well established lobby for participation in development, this in turn means a move from a primary preoccupation with outcomes ('development effectiveness') to giving attention also to processes – how outcomes are achieved – and (at its best) the power relations involved (White & Choudhury, 2007).

'A key theme in the participation agenda has always been the fact that means and ends, process and outcome are inextricably linked. The child rights community has taken up this importance of process, identifying 'child rights principles' which can be used to strengthen implementation of formal commitments (UNICEF, 2001: 95). While these principles are not spelt out precisely, two aspects are prominent. The first is the centrality of participation: that children should themselves be at the centre of development activities, no longer the passive targets of the good intentions of others. The second is to 'mainstream' children and child rights issues, bringing them from the margins to the centre of development activities and thinking. This marks a shift away from a focus on special children's programmes or concentration on specific sectors such as health and education. Instead, the challenge is to consider how children are affected by the whole range of development policies and trends and to develop a child-focused agenda in relation to these: from good governance to international trade to national budgeting. This has two rather different outcomes. On the one hand, the focus on children can be used to intensify claims for attention to the human side of development, such as the urgency of social welfare programmes to mitigate the suffering caused by economic adjustment programmes (Marcus, 2004). On the other hand, the agenda of 'mainstreaming' child rights has also meant the scope of child rights programmes has become ever more ambitious. The UNICEF Annual Report on participation, for example, expressed the need to 'deepen democracy' in the context of growing 'international terrorism', and that democracy begins with children (UNICEF, 2003: 11). What this really means, and how one reads it in the context of the highly partisan ways that notions of democracy are deployed in geopolitical discourse, is open to question. It is, however, reflected in a range of

programmes aimed at promoting children's citizenship and political participation'
(White & Choudhury, 2007).

Part 2: Tools to Analyze the Dynamics of Youth Participation

In this section, the tools used in this research to analyze the dynamics of youth
participation are elaborated. The level (spaces and power dynamics) of participation
are analyzed through Power Cube Analysis, and the degree of participation is
analyzed through Hart's Ladder.

2.4 Level of Participation - Power Cube Analysis

Around the world, new spaces and opportunities are emerging for citizen
engagement in policy processes, from local to global levels. Policy instruments, legal
frameworks and support programmes for promoting them abound. Yet, despite the
widespread rhetorical acceptance, it is also becoming clear that simply creating new
institutional arrangements will not necessarily result in greater inclusion or pro-poor
policy change. Rather, much depends on the nature of the power relations which
surround and imbue these new, potentially more democratic, spaces (Gaventa, 2006).

Figure: The Power Cube: the levels, spaces and forms of power.
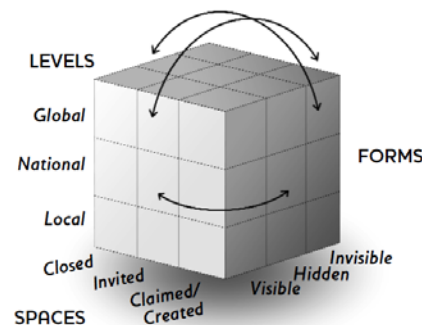
Source: Gaventa, 2006

Building on the 'three dimensions' of power developed by Steven Lukes (Lukes 1974;
Gaventa 1980 cited in Gaventa, 2006), Gaventa (2006) began to argue that Luke's
three forms of power must also be understood in relation to how spaces for
engagement are created, and the levels of power (from local to global), in which they
occur.

Understanding each of these – the spaces, levels and forms of power – as themselves
separate but interrelated dimensions, each of which had at least three components
within them, these dimensions could be visually linked together into a 'power cube'
(Figure). The application of this tool in the current research is elaborated in the last
part of this chapter.

The Spaces for Participation

According to Gaventa (2006), 'Spaces' are seen as opportunities, moments and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests. These spaces for participation are not neutral, but are themselves shaped by power relations, which both surround and enter them (Cornwall 2002 cited in Gaventa, 2006).

'Inherent also in the idea of spaces and places is also the imagery of "boundary". Power relations help to shape the boundaries of participatory spaces, what is possible within them, and who may enter, with which identities, discourses and interests. Using the idea of boundary from Foucault and others, Hayward suggests that we might understand power "as the network of social boundaries that delimit fields of possible action". Freedom, on the other hand, "is the capacity to participate effectively in shaping the social limits that define what is possible" (Hayward 1998: 2). In this sense, participation as freedom is not only the right to participate effectively in a given space, but the right to define and to shape that space. So one dynamic we must explore in examining the spaces for participation is to ask how they were created, and with whose interests and what terms of engagement. While there is much debate on the appropriate terminology for these spaces, the Power Cube Analysis suggests a continuum of spaces, which include:

Closed spaces: Though we want to focus on spaces and places as they open up possibilities for participation, we must realise that still many decision-making spaces are closed. That is, decisions are made by a set of actors behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion. Within the state, another way of conceiving these spaces is as "provided" spaces in the sense that elites (be they bureaucrats, experts or elected representatives) make decisions and provide services to "the people", without the need for broader consultation or involvement. Many civil society efforts focus on opening up such spaces through greater public involvement, transparency or accountability.

Invited spaces: As efforts are made to widen participation, to move from closed spaces to more "open" ones, new spaces are created which may be referred to as "invited" spaces, i.e. "those into which people (as users, citizens or beneficiaries) are invited to participate by various kinds of authorities, be they government, supranational agencies or non-governmental organizations" (Cornwall 2002). Invited spaces may be regularised, that is they are institutionalised ongoing, or more transient, through one-off forms of consultation. Increasingly with the rise of approaches to participatory governance, these spaces are seen at every level, from local government, to national policy and even in global policy forums.

Claimed/created spaces: Finally, there are the spaces which are claimed by less powerful actors from or against the power holders, or created more autonomously by them. Cornwall refers to these spaces as "organic" spaces which emerge "out of sets

27

of common concerns or identifications" and "may come into being as a result of popular mobilisation, such as around identity or issue based concerns, or may consist of spaces in which like-minded people join together in common pursuits" (Cornwall 2002). Other work talks of these spaces as "third spaces" where social actors reject hegemonic space and create spaces for themselves (Soja 1996). These spaces range from ones created by social movements and community associations, to those simply involving natural places where people gather to debate, discuss and resist, outside of the institutionalised policy arenas' (Gaventa, 2006).

The Forms and Visibility of Power across Spaces

Gaventa, (2006) adapts *Just Associates from VeneKlasen and Miller* (2002) to define the following three forms of power across spaces and places:

Visible power: observable decision making: This level includes the visible and definable aspects of political power – the formal rules, structures, authorities, institutions and procedures of decision making … Strategies that target this level are usually trying to change the '*who*, *how* and *what*' of policymaking so that the policy process is more democratic and accountable, and serves the needs and rights of people and the survival of the planet.

Hidden power: setting the political agenda: Certain powerful people and institutions maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda. These dynamics operate on many levels to exclude and devalue the concerns and representation of other less powerful groups … Empowering advocacy strategies that focus on strengthening organisations and movements of the poor can build the collective power of numbers and new leadership to influence the way the political agenda is shaped and increase the visibility and legitimacy of their issues, voice and demands.

Invisible power: shaping meaning and what is acceptable: Probably the most insidious of the three dimensions of power, invisible power shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation. Significant problems and issues are not only kept from the decision-making table, but also from the minds and consciousness of the different players involved, even those directly affected by the problem. By influencing how individuals think about their place in the world, this level of power shapes people's beliefs, sense of self and acceptance of the *status quo* – even their own superiority or inferiority. Processes of socialisation, culture and ideology perpetuate exclusion and inequality by defining what is normal, acceptable and safe. Change strategies in this area target social and political culture as well as individual consciousness to transform the way people perceive themselves and those around them, and how they envisage future possibilities and alternatives.
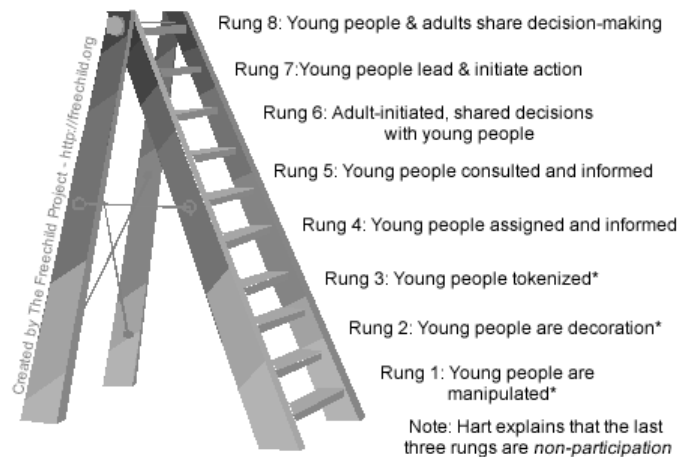
2.5 Degree of Participation

In 1969, Arnstein published a seminal article on citizen participation that included eight levels, symbolized by a 'ladder', representing the degree of control a citizen has

over an initiative (Arnstein, 1969). Arnstein has influenced numerous other developments of the 'ladder metaphor', to create different models of participation and empowerment, each with different goals, purposes and methods. The four most well-known models of participation and empowerment for young people have been constructed by Hart (1992), Westhorp (1987), Shier, (2001) and Rocha (1997).

Hart's ladder of participation has eight levels which reflect who drives the development initiative (Hart, 1992). The first three levels are classified as non-participatory. Hart argued they serve adult purposes in reality affording no real opportunity to participate, a point made also by Bessant (2004a). The top five rungs of the ladder represent increasing degrees of participation (Figure). The application of this tool in the current research is elaborated in the next section of this chapter.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation

Rung 8: Young people & adults share decision-making

Rung 7: Young people lead & initiate action

Rung 6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people

Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed

Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed

Rung 3: Young people tokenized*

Rung 2: Young people are decoration*

Rung 1: Young people are manipulated*

Note: Hart explains that the last three rungs are *non-participation*

Created by The Freechild Project - http://freechild.org

Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship.* Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Part 3: Operationalisation of Research

Building on the conceptual and theoretical framework discussed in the first part of this chapter, the dynamics of youth participation are divided into different categories (see Figure on Analytical Framework). The individual and organizational capacity of YAN members is addressed through different questions in the questionnaire. The data on obstacles to youth participation is gathered through open and closed-ended questions in the questionnaire; interviews; and focus group discussion. The following tools are used to analyze the rest of the dynamics.

Figure: Diagrammatic Presentation of Analytical Framework
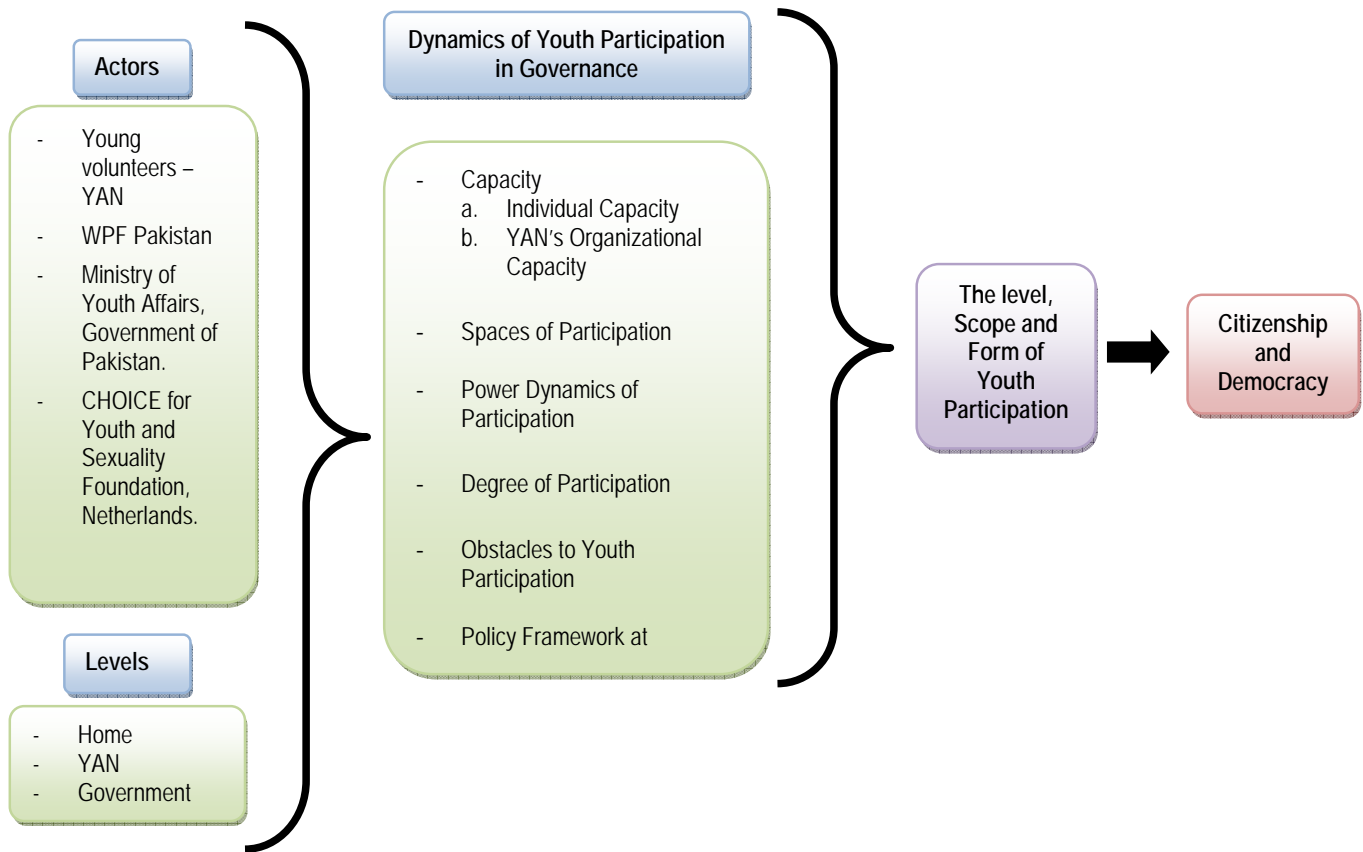
2.6 Use of Power Cube Analysis in this Research

The power dynamics play an important role in the whole process of making decisions. Using the Power Cube Analysis, these power dynamics will help understand the *level* of participation on which young people place themselves in homes, Youth Advocacy Network (YAN), and government projects and policies. It is aimed at identifying opportunities, moments and channels where young people can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests.

Different questions are designed in the questionnaire in order to get data using this tool. It is an important tool as the data obtained from it will help finding out whether the spaces of participation are closed, invited or created. In addition, the forms and visibility of power across different spaces are also analyzed. Invisible power shapes meaning and psychological and ideological boundaries of participation. The questions of this section were designed in order to shed light on the mindset of the respondents by highlighting general beliefs in the society which may clash with the

values of YAN and go against the rights based approach. Controversial statements were given and the respondents were to agree or disagree with them.

Though visually presented as a cube, it is important to think about each side as a dimension or set of relationships, not as a fixed or static set of categories (Gaventa, 2006). Therefore, during the analysis of data, the relationships between 'spaces' and 'forms' of power will be drawn in order to analyze the level of participation at home, YAN and government levels.

2.7 Use of Hart's Ladder in this Research

The degree of participation is analyzed using the Hart's ladder of participation (Hart, 1992). The respondents are given to choose from the eight levels of participation: the first three being non-participatory; and the rest as participatory. The degree of participation is analyzed at four levels: home, YAN and government. The questions address different actions initiated at these four levels and degree of participation of respondents on each level.

This tool will help identifying whether the actions are initiated by young or adults; the level of decision making; and the level of being part of an action (from 'just informed' to 'leading').

Chapter 3

Dynamics of Youth Participation: Data Analyses, Results and Discussion

3.0 Introduction

The data analyses of the dynamics of youth participation in governance in this chapter are carried out according to the sequence of research questions. The chapter starts with analyzing the capacity of individual members of YAN and that of YAN as an organization. This is followed by analyzing the spaces of participation and the power dynamics within these spaces. Hart's Ladder is then used to examine the degree of participation. In the end, a detailed account of obstacles to youth participation is carried out.
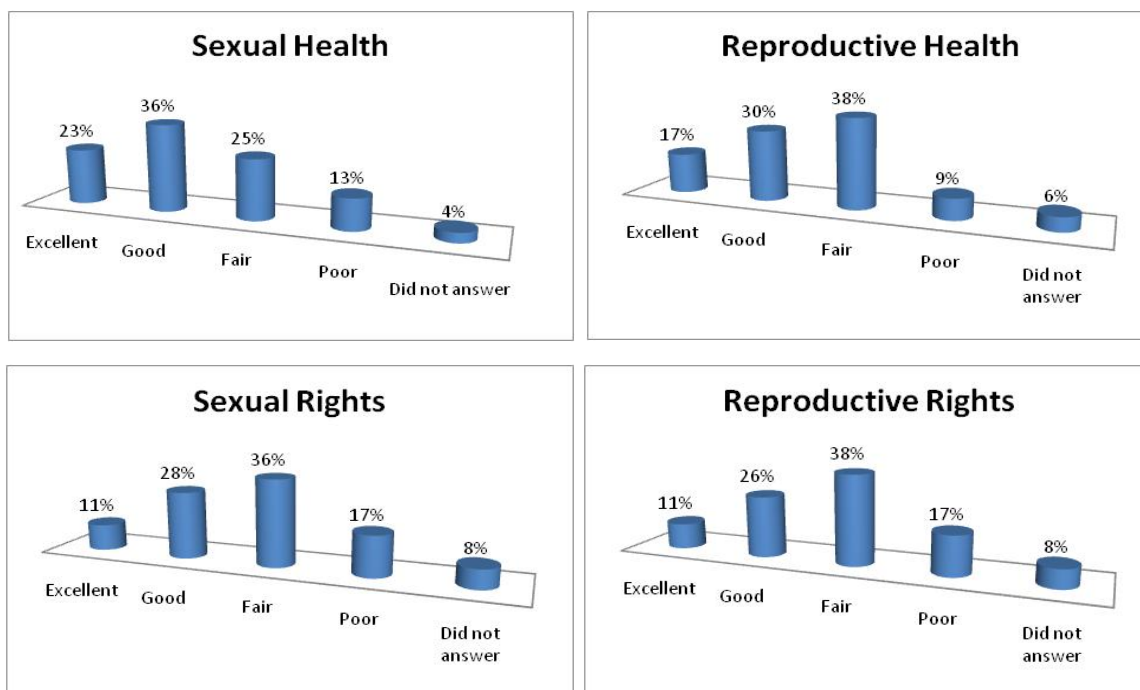
3.1 Young People's Capacity to Participate

YAN is aimed at promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of young people in Pakistan. This makes it not an ordinary network but a network working on highly sensitive and tabooed topics in the Pakistani society. These young people belong to the same society. They were born and are brought up in this society which, like any other citizen, has an impact on the way they think and look at the society. It is therefore important that they have sufficient knowledge on these issues and appropriate values to build their attitudes and behaviors for advocating SRHR of young people. These values of YAN members are accessed through power cube analysis in a separate section on 'invisible power'. However, the knowledge part is assessed in this section.

Knowledge

The respondents were asked to rate themselves from poor to excellent on their knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and rights. It is important to keep in view that the results are their own perception of their knowledge and not an evaluation of the researcher or a third party.

The respondents rated themselves high on their knowledge of sexual health. On sexual *rights,* however, there is relatively less confidence. On the other hand, they rate themselves fairly high on their knowledge of reproductive health and again, low on reproductive *rights.* This identifies an important gap in the capacity of the members as the main principle of YAN is that youth participation and awareness are the rights of young people and it is involved in doing advocacy for the same. Without having appropriate basic knowledge on the main issues that the network deals in, it would not be possible to change attitudes of members that are built on rights-based values. At the same time, they would not feel confident and comfortable in advocating for their own rights.

Sexual Health

Excellent 23%, Good 36%, Fair 25%, Poor 13%, Did not answer 4%

Reproductive Health

Excellent 17%, Good 30%, Fair 38%, Poor 9%, Did not answer 6%

Sexual Rights

Excellent 11%, Good 28%, Fair 36%, Poor 17%, Did not answer 8%

Reproductive Rights

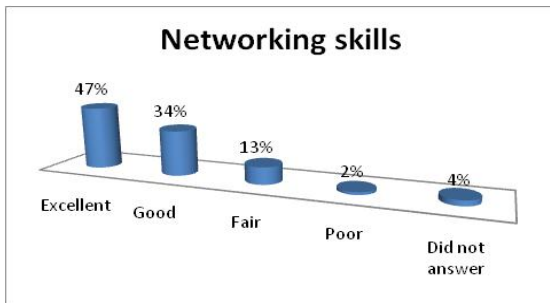Excellent 11%, Good 26%, Fair 38%, Poor 17%, Did not answer 8%

There could be many reasons for the respondents' lack of knowledge in sexual and reproductive rights. In a closed society like Pakistan's, there is a culture of silence and a communication gap between people particularly parents, teachers and students on topics such as SRHR. When there is not even any space to even talk on these issues, it is hard to imagine it considered and taken as a right. At the same time, as mentioned earlier, almost 50 percent of the respondents are members of YAN for less than six months and have not had a chance to attend any capacity-building training on SRHR. This might also be one the reasons for their lack of knowledge on the subject.

Skills

A general reason given by adults for not involving young people in projects and programmes is that they lack sufficient level of required skills and expertise. The respondents were asked to rate themselves on necessary technical skills needed for organizational management of a network. This question aims at finding out areas where they lack appropriate skills and areas where they are confident of themselves.

The respondents rated themselves high on communication, networking and leadership skills. Also, they rated themselves comparatively higher on developing work-plans and appropriate goals and strategies to advance organizational mission. Working as volunteers in YAN, preparing 6-monthly work-plans on regular basis, and taking leadership roles as focal, co focal points and members of board… are evidence of this claim. This goes against the general belief that young people cannot take leadership roles and lack communication skills.

Developing appropriate goals and strategies to advance organizational mission

Excellent 21%, Good 55%, Fair 15%, Poor 2%, Did not answer 8%

Leadership skills

Excellent 42%, Good 45%, Fair 9%, Poor 0%, Did not answer 4%

Networking skills

Excellent 47%, Good 34%, Fair 13%, Poor 2%, Did not answer 4%

Communication Skills

Excellent 43%, Good 40%, Fair 13%, Poor 0%, Did not answer 4%

On the other hand, the respondents rated themselves low in skills required for developing budgets and proposals. These are very important areas to ensure sustainability of any volunteer youth-led network. Developing proposals and budgets are needed for applying for funding and generating financial resources for an organization. The network has not been quite successful so far in generating 'sustainable' funds for project activities designed in 6-monthly plans. However, it has been successful in generating funds for certain events such as National and Provincial Youth Forums. The network depends primarily on the funding from CHOICE, a Dutch youth-led organization that played vital role in founding YAN. However, this funding is also limited and will finish in the near future. It is, therefore, very

Advocacy skills

Excellent 19%, Good 49%, Fair 28%, Poor 0%, Did not answer 4%

Developing budgets

Excellent 13%, Good 36%, Fair 36%, Poor 9%, Did not answer 6%
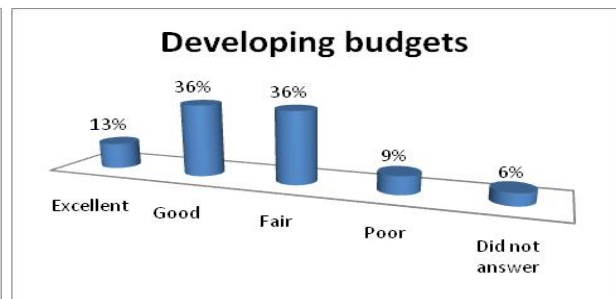
important that all or some members of YAN have the capacity to keep track of funding opportunities, write proposals and prepare budgets.

The above-mentioned finding highlights a critical weakness that youth-led networks face. Quite often, networks are formed and then disappear as they are unable to sustain themselves. Experience shows that there are numerous funding opportunities available especially from international organizations in the developing countries. In

addition, while carrying out this research, I found out that the Government of Pakistan's Ministry of Youth Affairs also has some funds available for youth-led organizations. Young people do not take advantage of these opportunities either because they lack information about them, or they do not have enough capacity to raise funds, write proposals and develop budgets.

Another weak area indentified by the respondents is their lack of advocacy skills. The work advocacy is in the very name of the network – Youth 'Advocacy' Network and if the members lack advocacy skills, the mission of the network cannot be achieved. As a matter of fact, the network was formed as a result of an advocacy training organized by CHOICE and World Population Foundation (WPF). The capacity building training not only included advocacy skills, but also values clarification exercises on sexual and reproductive health and rights – equally important for new members of the network.

Traits

Young people are associated with energy, vibrancy and enthusiasm that they bring with them. This is clear from their own assessment of confidence, self-esteem, compassion and self-responsibility – personal traits on which they rate themselves quite high. These traits, often taken for granted, are extremely important for the success of any organization. Although, they are as important for adults too, it is often considered as lost as they grow old. Therefore, these traits *can* play a facilitating role in promoting youth participation.

On one hand, this section on 'young people's capacity' proves wrong some of the myths associated with young people, and on the other hand, it highlights some important weak areas that act as roadblocks to youth participation. The conclusions drawn from this section are discussed in Chapter 5.

3.2 YAN's Organizational Capacity

The respondents were asked to rate different components of YAN's organizational structure. The aim of this section was to check the perception of its members on
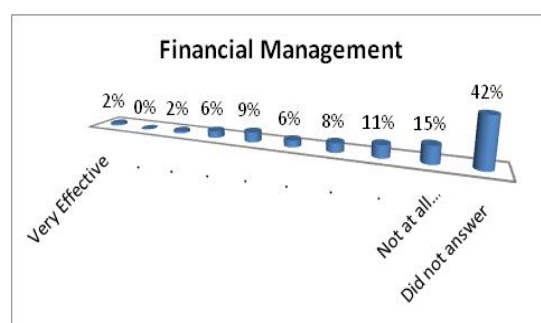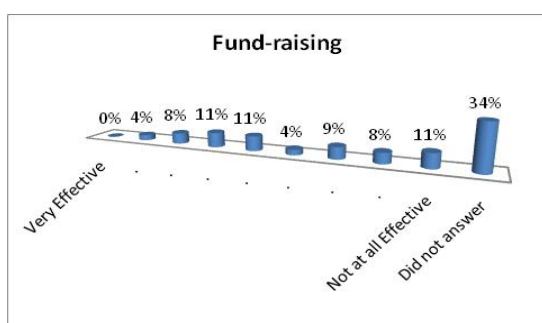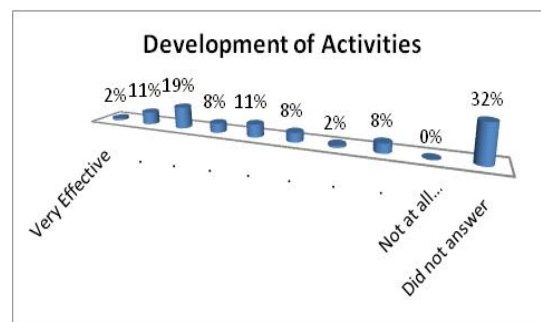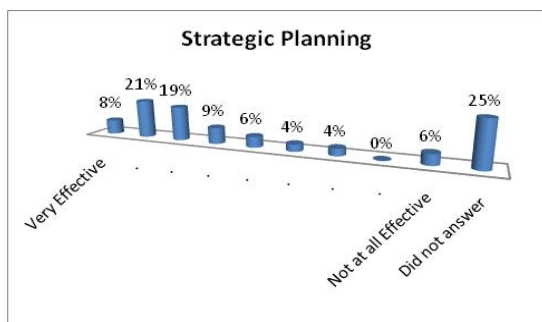
YAN's organizational capacity. After the Advocacy workshop in January 2005, the network was formed informally as a way for the participants to keep in contact. The organizational development of YAN has come a long way which includes two organizational development training workshops organized by CHOICE. As a result, the Network has a board with comparatively stronger systems in place.

At an average, 39 percent of the respondents did not answer this section. There could be two reasons for this: One that the respondents are new members of YAN (for less than six months) and are not in a position to rate its systems due to lack of knowledge; and second that the members are not given a space where they get the opportunity to know YAN as an organization. Most of the members shared that they are unaware of activities happening in other chapters of YAN and also don't know who are other members.

The respondents rated YAN high on strategic planning and development of activities. This is linked to the previous section on skills, where the same respondents rated themselves high on *developing work-plans and appropriate goals and strategies to advance organizational mission.* At the same time, the respondents YAN's organizational capacity high in 'public relations' which again links to the communication and networking skills in the previous section. This shows that the members link YAN's organizational capacity to their individual capacity.

On the other hand, they ranked the *financial management* and *fund-raising* as weak and ineffective areas of the organizational capacity of YAN. This also links to their low rating on developing budgets and proposals in the *skills* section. As described in detail earlier, this shows an important area for building capacity of YAN's members.

3.3 Level and Degree of Participation

In this part, the level and degree of participation are analyzed. Using Power Cube Analysis, the *level* of participation is analyzed in two sections:

- through (closed, invited or created) 'spaces' of participation which are the opportunities, moments and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests (Gaventa, 2006); and
- Power relations that shape these spaces, and surround and enter them.

Using the Hart's Ladder, the degree of participation is analyzed from least participatory to most participatory levels. This question will lead to exploring who takes the leadership role, how decisions are made, and how transparent are the initiatives.

Closed and Invited Spaces

Almost 76 percent of the respondents agree that often or always, major decisions are made behind closed doors at the Government level, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion. This clearly shows a lack of trust by young people in the government for promoting youth participation. It is also an indication of how power is retained to certain people who make decisions on their own. In the
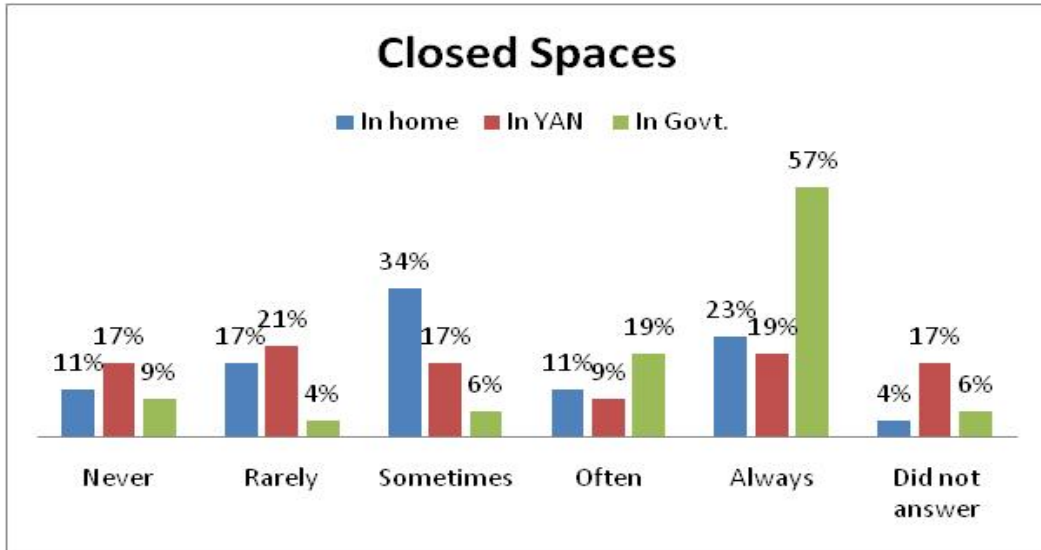
next chapter, the reasons given by the Government officials at the Ministry of Youth Affairs for this situation are given in detail in the context of development of Youth Policy. When asked whether they are invited to participate in decision making at Government level, it was clearly indicated by 84 percent of the respondents that they are not. This shows that there are no invited spaces provided by the Government.

Interestingly, around 62 percent of the respondents shared that in their homes, they are given spaces to be involved in major decisions. Two interpretations can be drawn from this: One, that this might be the reality; and two, that they felt uncomfortable bringing forward a bad image of their home (although writing their name on the questionnaire was optional, and confidentiality of data was ensured). It was also noticed that although the respondents were clearly instructed that writing their name is optional and in fact recommended not to write name, most of them still did. This again shows a mindset that we have nothing to hide or we are not afraid of sharing anything at the start of questionnaire, but at the same time, in reality, it might get difficult to answer certain questions especially when certain personal information is
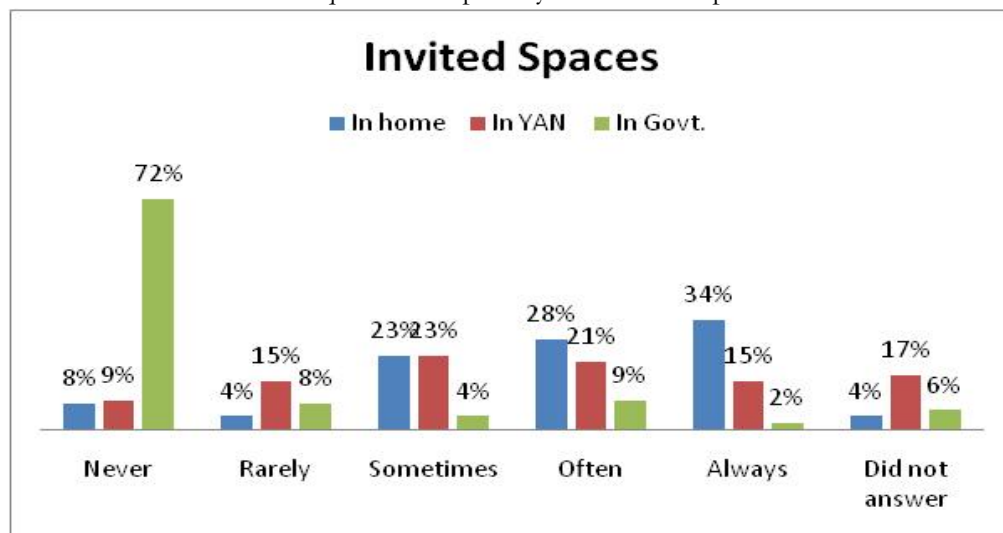
involved. Further questions down the line in the section on 'power' have proven this statement as correct.

Of the people who responded to the same question for YAN, almost 64% answered that major decisions are made behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion. The same was confirmed in the interviews with YAN's Provincial Focal Points. Although in another question, 46% of the respondents agreed that they are often or always invited to participate in decision-making in YAN, it came out that even certain people in the Board of YAN have more power to make decisions. In addition, it was added by the Focal Points that new orders were circulated the YAN Secretariat against the decisions made during the Board meetings. It, therefore, goes against the general belief that young people are homogenous and perfect i.e. no power dynamics, monopolization or exploitation exists among them.

In general, one can conclude that there are closed spaces of participation at YAN and Government levels. However, at home level, these spaces are not closed but open.

Created Spaces

This section is to analyze whether young people create spaces of their own against power holders when spaces for participation are not open or invited. This happens when like-minded young people join together in common pursuits to debate, discuss and resist. This is an important question as it addresses agency i.e. young people becoming the agent of change than just sitting back and doing nothing against the injustice happening to them.

The findings are quite interesting. Despite the fact that Government does not provide any spaces for youth participation and that major decisions are taken behind closed doors, 79 percent of YAN members are not doing anything against it and not creating their own spaces instead. The same holds true inside YAN where 61 percent of the members never, rarely or sometimes create their own spaces. There could be a number of reasons for this attitude, which represents a general attitude of Pakistanis to remain silent against any injustice that happens against them, whether it is constant inflation, bribery, corruption, poor governance, unaccountability or lack of
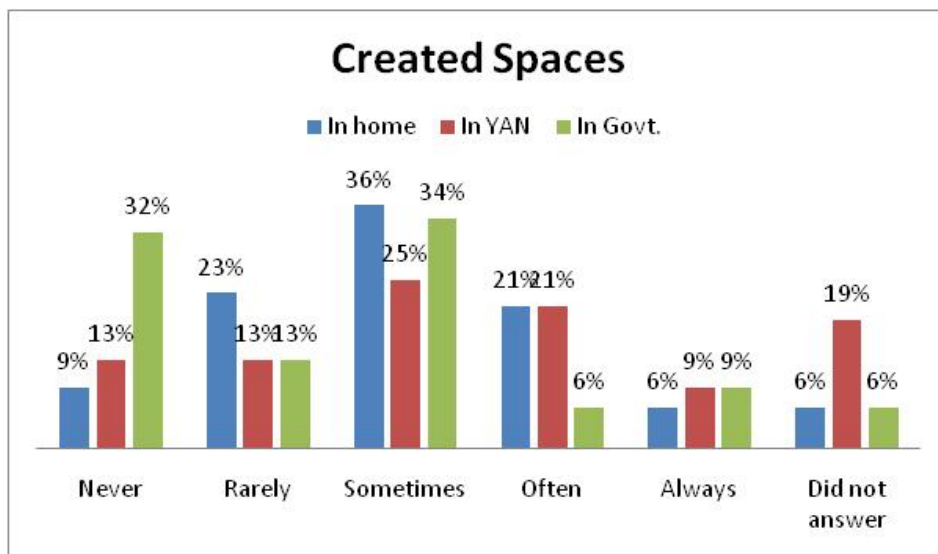
democracy. History has shown that the voices against power holders were shut and strongly oppressed with violence causing them great harm. This has resulted in disappointment and loss of hope in many young people – nothing has happened in past even if you raise your voices and nothing will happen in future, so why bother even trying. In addition, young people are usually discouraged in taking part in projects in general and decision making in particular for the reason that they lack experience and motivation to take the responsibility.

Awareness about the rights of young people and about importance of their participation in projects and polices that affect their lives thus becomes very important for young people. This is something that the young people have themselves identified as one of the obstacles to youth participation in the later section on 'obstacles to youth participation'. In addition, youth needs to be *empowered* through capacity-building workshops aimed not only at the skills for advocacy but also making them realize the importance of the effective role that young people can play in today's world.

The Forms and Visibility of Power

The forms and visibility of power across above-mentioned spaces may take different forms. Two forms of power are emphasized in the set of data obtained by the respondents: hidden power and invisible power.

Hidden Power

Hidden power is when certain powerful people maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda. These dynamics operate on many levels to exclude and devalue the concerns and representation of other less powerful groups. As expected, almost 87 percent of the respondents responded that this is the case at the Government level. This links to the earlier section on closed spaces where the percentage was also high. Therefore, on the power cube, Government falls in closed spaces with hidden power.

Interestingly, 58 percent of respondents agree that power lies in the hands of certain people at home level. This conflicts with the high percentage (approx. 62%) of them responding earlier that they are given spaces to be involved in major decisions in their homes. There is again a conflict of responses at YAN level. Of the respondents who responded to the question on hidden power, 62% do not agree that there is power in the hands of a few who decide what gets on the agenda and who should be on the decision making table. On the other hand, 64 percent of the same respondents in an earlier question had said that major decisions are made behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion.

Hidden Power

Chart with categories: In home, In YAN, In Govt. Legend: Yes (blue), No (red), Did not answer (green).

In home: Yes 58%, No 36%, Did not answer 6%
In YAN: Yes 28%, No 51%, Did not answer 21%
In Govt.: Yes 87%, No 9%, Did not answer 4%
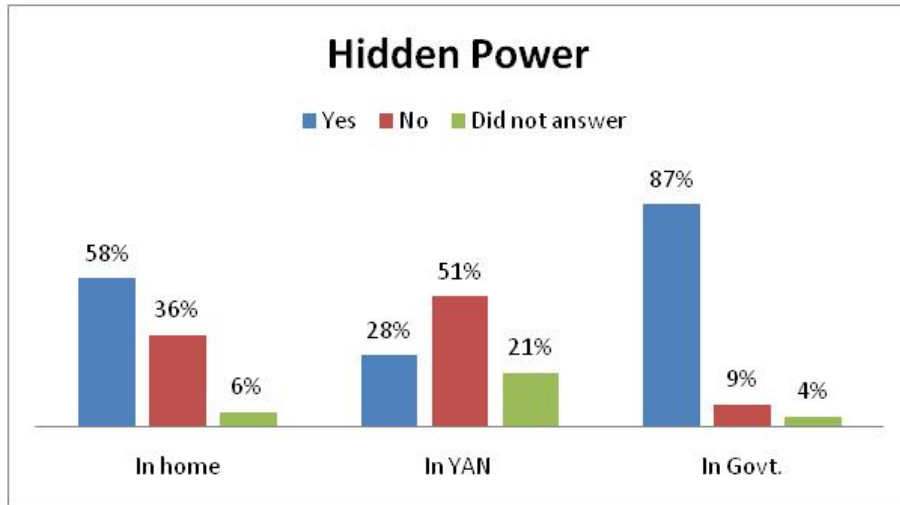
Invisible Power

Invisible power shapes meaning and psychological and ideological boundaries of participation. The minds and consciousness of the respondents are important indicators of what they think is normal, acceptable and safe in Pakistan's cultural and religious setting. This section holds extreme importance because the respondents are members of a network that is working on culturally-tabooed issues such as sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The questions of this section were designed in order to shed light on the mindset of the respondents by highlighting general beliefs in the society which may clash with the values of YAN and go against the rights based approach. Controversial statements were given and the respondents were to agree or disagree with them.

Sex education is a controversial topic in Pakistan. Sexuality and sex education cannot be divorced from the moral values of the societies within which we must negotiate our sexual identities and relationships. Almost 91 percent of the respondents agree that young people should be taught the right way to indulge in sex in order to avoid early pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and abortion. In another question on whether gays and lesbians have the right to choose his/her sexual orientation and identity, almost 40 percent of the respondents did not agree with the statement. This links to the very important finding of respondents' poor knowledge in sexual and reproductive rights. As majority of the respondents lack a values-clarification training on SRHR based on rights based principles, they look at sexual identity in the cultural and religious context – a phenomenon which is a sin. This goes against the basic principles and values of YAN.

Some people put a blind eye to the fact that abortion and homosexuality exist in Pakistan. Instead, they insist that it is a western phenomenon. According to Daily Times (2005), for every five children successfully delivered in Pakistan, one is aborted, states a study by Population Council. "An estimated 0.89 million induced

abortions occur in Pakistan," it said. This figure is for 2002. "The estimated abortion rate is 29 per 1,000 women (aged 15 to 49), meaning that if the rate persists, every Pakistani woman will have experienced an abortion in her lifetime. About 197,000 women are treated every year for complications resulting from unsafe abortions in public and private health facilities," said the report.

Almost 25 percent of the YAN's members agreed with the statement that homosexuality and abortion are western phenomena and do not exist in Pakistan. Although this percentage looks less compared to the ones who disagreed with the statement, still it is alarming as it comes from the members of a network whose principles and values are based on a totally opposite approach. This highlights an important need of capacity building of members in sexual and reproductive *rights*. On
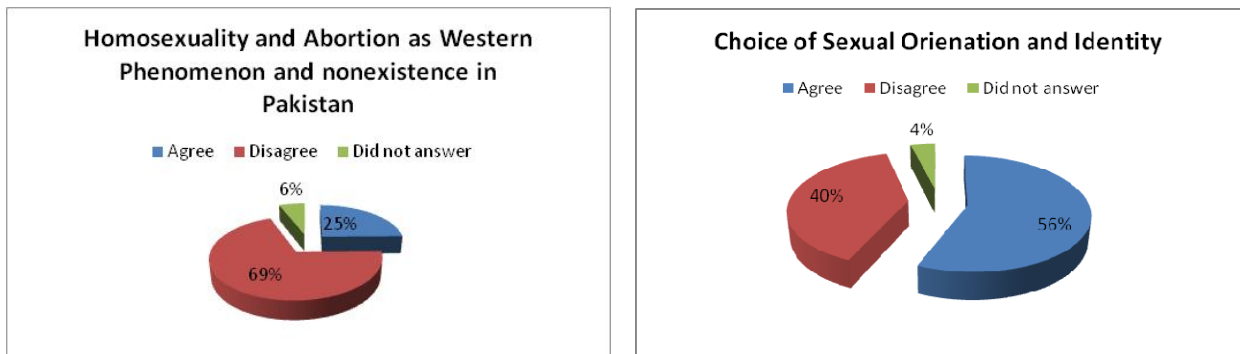
the other hand, it also identifies the myth that prevails in the general public about such issues.

The second part of invisible power that shapes the way people think is focused on the meaning of 'youth participation' and how young people perceive decision-making processes. There is no culture of saying 'no' to adults even if young people disagree to their decisions or thoughts. Speaking against the ideas of adults is considered disrespect for them. In addition, it is also perceived that adults always think better for the young ones and cannot make a bad decision. Above all, they are more experienced and skillful than young people. To check whether the respondents of this research think the same way, they were asked if they agreed to the above-mentioned statements. Around 40 percent of the respondents agreed to these statements. This is a clear evidence of how cultural values hinder young people from taking responsibility for their actions, getting involved in decision-making and having the strength to say no to what they is wrong.

As mentioned earlier, a culture of disappointment and frustration prevail among young people. This also makes them doubt their enormous strength and energy. 'Nothing is going to be changed no matter what you do' is a commonly-heard statement. Approximately 36 percent of YAN members believe that youth participation is merely a day dream in Pakistan, keeping in view enormous challenges that our country is facing.
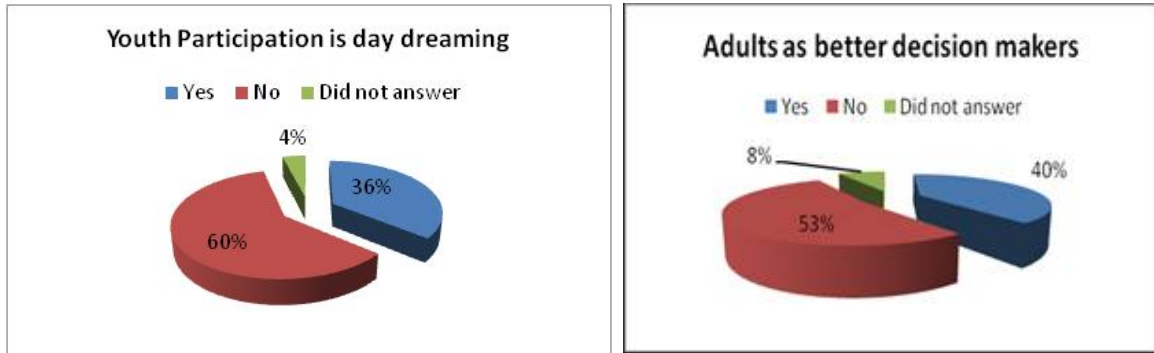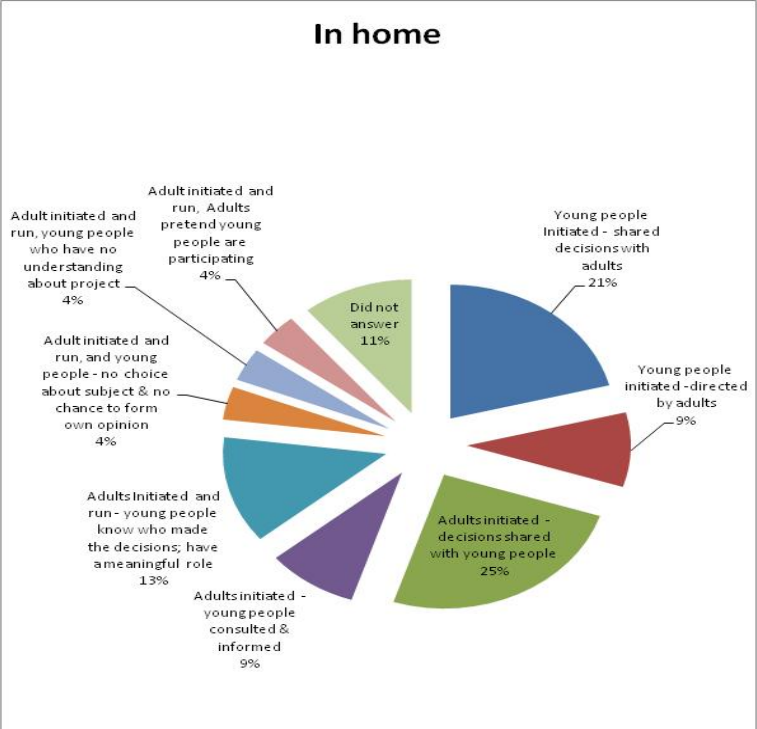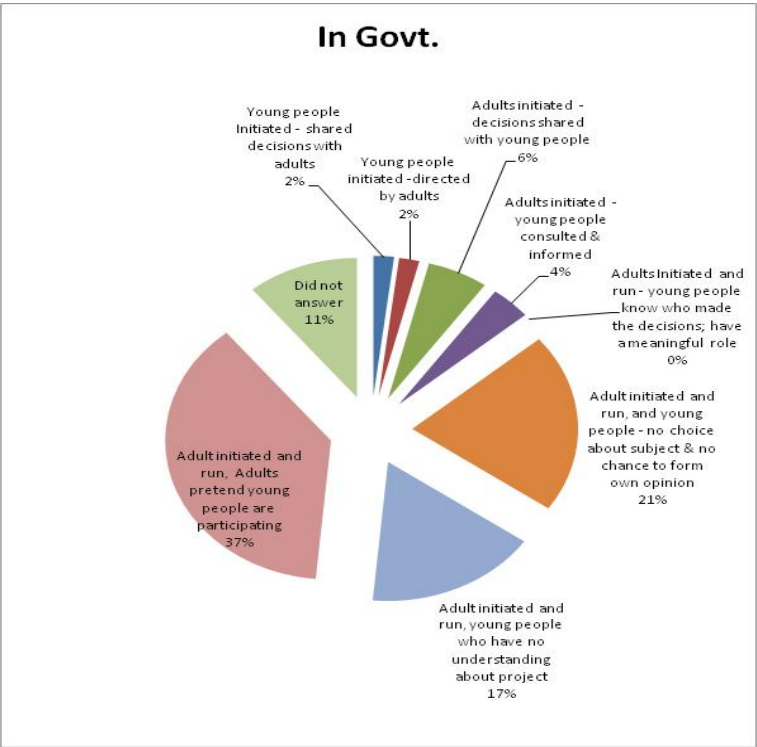
The above-mentioned forms of invisible power are linked to the attitudes of people. These attitudes take life time to build depending on a person's upbringing, childhood messages received from family, school and society at large. One of the ways to get over it is through awareness-raising, skills imparting, giving an opportunity to participate in decision-making, and leadership roles.

Degree of Participation

Hart's ladder of participation has eight levels which reflect who drives the development initiative (Hart, 1992). The first three levels are classified as non-participatory. They serve adult purposes in reality affording no real opportunity to participate. The top five rungs of the ladder represent increasing degrees of participation. The respondents were asked to put themselves on the Hart's ladder at three levels: home, YAN and Government.

Majority of respondents, almost 76 percent, rated Government in the first three rungs – the non-participatory levels. If we further divide this percentage, the maximum number of respondents place Government actions as adult initiated and run with young people having no understanding of issues and actions, or young people consulted but given no feedback, but adults pretend young people are participating. This is the lowest degree of participation on Hart's ladder. This sections links to the earlier sections on *spaces* and *power dynamics* of participation where the Government was rated poor on providing spaces of participation and major decisions taking place behind closed doors. At the Ministry of Youth Affairs, there is not a single young person employed. Main activities carried out so far involve international exchange programmes. There are clear question marks on the transparency of these activities (discussed in detail in Chapter 4). In addition, these activities may not have any impact on resolving issues of majority of the young people of Pakistan. Young people are not involved in planning these activities or the Youth National Policy itself which is still a draft and yet to be finalized and implemented.

In Govt.

Young people Initiated - shared decisions with adults
2%

Young people initiated - directed by adults
2%

Adults initiated - decisions shared with young people
6%

Adults initiated - young people consulted & informed
4%

Adults Initiated and run - young people know who made the decisions; have a meaningful role
0%

Did not answer
11%

Adult initiated and run, and young people - no choice about subject & no chance to form own opinion
21%

Adult initiated and run, Adults pretend young people are participating
37%

Adult initiated and run, young people who have no understanding about project
17%

In home

Adult initiated and run, young people who have no understanding about project
4%

Adult initiated and run, Adults pretend young people are participating
4%

Adult initiated and run, and young people - no choice about subject & no chance to form own opinion
4%

Adults Initiated and run - young people know who made the decisions; have a meaningful role
13%

Adults initiated - young people consulted & informed
9%

Did not answer
11%

Young people Initiated - shared decisions with adults
21%

Young people initiated - directed by adults
9%

Adults initiated - decisions shared with young people
25%

On the other hand, 77 percent place the degree of participation in decision making at

home in the participatory rungs. The decisions are shared whether actions are initiated by adults or young people themselves. This high degree of participation goes parallel with high rating by the respondents to open spaces provided by the adults in the home. Almost 65 percent of the respondents place YAN in the same rungs as at home level except that more rating is given to actions initiated by young people and directed by adults. This makes sense as the technical support for management of YAN comes from WPF. As YAN is a youth-led network, majority of respondents
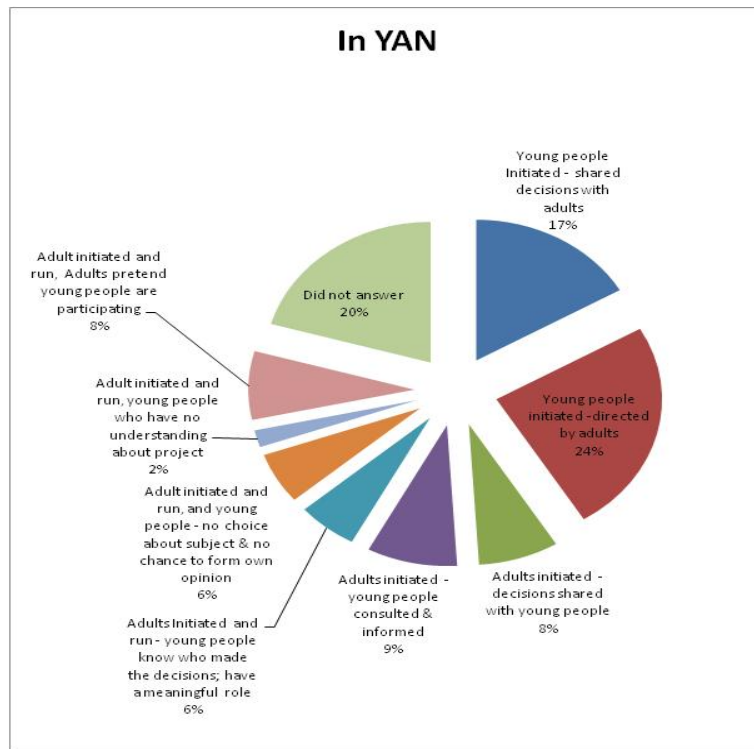
place it as a network where actions are initiated by young people.

The findings clearly show that young people place government at the lower degree of participation where there is no space for participation and certain powerful people maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda. Although, they rate their participation high at home level, the percentage may vary greatly between girls and boys. Although this cannot be verified by the current data due to limitation of the research to carry out gender-based analysis, yet other researches show that deeprooted cultural biases and institutional constraints restrict Pakistani women from playing an active role in public and private decision-making (UNESCO, 2006).

3.4 Obstacles to Youth Participation

Young people in Pakistan face a number of challenges to their participation in decision-making processes in projects, programmes and policies that have a direct or

indirect effect on their lives. There are three parts of the set of data collected on 'obstacles to youth participation'. In the first set, the respondents were asked to rate a number of given obstacles from most important to least important. In the second part, they were asked to jot down what they think are the most important roadblocks to youth participation in Pakistan. The third set of data comes from a Focus Group Discussion with young people of village *Killi Sara Ghurai* - a village of 700 families in the Baluchistan Province that borders Afghanistan and Iran. The participants in this discussion are not members of YAN.

Rating Obstacles

The highest rated obstacle according to the respondents is that even when young people take action, they usually lack the financial resources otherwise available to adults. There is a usually a weak area of youth-led networks. In addition, as observed in earlier sections, young people lack skills for fund-raising and financial management. However, this complete 'dependency' on financial resources is also not a healthy behavior as it may hinder young people from taking an initiative because of making financial resources as a precondition. Experience has shown that funds are secondary requirement and once initiated, young people find their way out to accomplish tasks and achieve goals. The resources in terms of time are usually more challenging for young volunteers who have to take time from their studies, household chores, social life and jobs (usually part-time), an obstacle rated fourth by the respondents.

The second obstacle identified by young people is the lack of effective youth policy and government support as major decisions are made behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion. This has been proved in the earlier sections as well where the respondents have placed government on the lowest rank of non-participation. The National Youth Policy of Pakistan has been changing from one draft to another for many years and still not finalized. Without a Policy in place, the Ministry continues to carry out projects which are non-participatory without any involvement of young people in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects. More on the environmental context of the government is explained in detail in the next chapter.

The third obstacle that the respondents think is important is the lack of capacity (knowledge and skills) of young people. In the initial sections of this chapter, we identified that the members of YAN lack *knowledge* of reproductive and sexual 'rights' and *skills* of advocacy, fund-raising and financial management. This is the capacity level of young people who are already part of a network and have comparatively more knowledge and skills than a regular young person from the same background. There, one can infer that the lack of awareness about youth participation and skills to become an advocate for it are main roadblocks for young people.

Challenges

The second set of data in this section comes from open-ended questions on what young people think are the challenges to youth participation. The respondents were

asked not only to highlight the obstacles but also suggest a strategy to overcome them (preferably from their own experience). This question was at first aimed at identifying the 'agency' factor i.e. what challenges this particular category of young people is facing, and *how* they're overcoming them especially because they are working on sensitive issues of sexual and reproductive health. However, as most of them are members of YAN for less than six months, they have not performed any major activities so far, which is why they cannot share their personal strategies because of comparatively less experience. Therefore, now this section only includes general recommendations from the respondents.

Majority of the respondents believe that 'lack of education' is the root cause of why young people in Pakistan are unable to contribute to the society as active citizens. This, according to the respondents, results in poverty as illiterate young people are unable to streamline themselves as competent citizens well-settled in their lives. Their whole life becomes a struggle to earn money and make ends meet. The only concern they have is how they'll arrange their next meal. Understandably, 'Poverty and Inflation' are therefore rated among one of the major obstacles to youth participation by the respondents. Some argue that this poverty is the main reason for why they cannot attain education. This then becomes a vicious circle where poverty generates poverty. In addition, they remain illiterate about their roles and responsibilities as young people as they lack awareness and skills about youth participation.

The reasons of this situation, the respondents argue, are deeply rooted in the educational system of Pakistan. Two types of schools exist: Private English medium where the mode of instruction is English. They are comparatively better schools than Urdu medium schools with better teachers, infrastructure, and curriculum. The second type is Urdu medium schools. These are mostly government schools with high drop-out rates. Even if the students make it to the tenth grade, the whole educational system suddenly turns to English medium and they become unfit… unable to compete with those who have studied in English-medium schools – usually belonging to better off families.

In addition, the respondents identified that the education system is not good quality. Education is limited only to information and not knowledge that can practically be used in daily lives to act as responsible citizens. Also, the type of knowledge attained in school has not practical implementation in one's career. In the end, the value of a certificate or degree reduces to a piece of paper only.

The respondents suggested that education should be free to start with. Then, there needs to be only one type of educational system – equal for all without any discrimination on the basis of poverty. However, is it too ambitious? Is it a usual standard answer to all problems that people are asked? Who have the power to change this? Who wants the situation to remain the same? How powerful are they? What practical steps can young people take keeping the ambitious recommendations in view? These are some important questions in my view that this research directly and indirectly touches upon by studying different dynamics of youth participation.

46

Youth Participation at the Village Level

In the context of above mentioned questions, we'll discuss the third set of data that comes from a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with young people of village *Killi Sara Ghurai* a village of 700 families in the Baluchistan Province that borders Afghanistan and Iran. The discussants openly shared that the *Sardars* (local elites) hold power to make decisions. Usually *Mullas* (religious leaders) are the local elites who also hold political positions of the village. They are usually against the development of the village. Why? Let us try to find answers through some examples that the discussants shared during the FGD. 500 acres of land was allocated by the Government for educational and health services. However, it is being used by the local elites for their own use. The Government allocated 35,000 Rupees (approximately 300 Euros) for the development of a Cricket team in the village to promote healthy activities for young people of the village. However, the Union Council *Nazim* made a deal a team which was unregistered, not the best team on merit, and the one that did not represent the village. According to the Law of Land Reforms, it is illegal for one person to have more than 10 acres of land. Ministers and other political elites are the first ones that hinder the implementation of this Law as they own many acres of land. These are only a few examples of the power dynamics at the local level.

'Lack of awareness' is identified as one of the major obstacles by the respondents. They argue that young people are unaware of their rights, their goals in life, their responsibilities, and activities/projects in which they can participate. In addition, they are unaware of their own needs and issues where their participation is needed. The situation is even worse for girls, and for young dwellers of rural area. Also, there is a general perception that they cannot and do not take any steps to take some action to change the negative situations around them. However, this perception(s) was proven wrong in the FGD conducted with the young people of a *Killi Sara Ghurai* – a remote village of Pakistan. They were not only well-aware of their issues but were also active in taking action. For example, although the bus route ends in the village, the bus drivers turned their buses back to the city before reaching the village, with the reason that they don't find enough passengers for the village. The young people of the village protested in a group by blocking the road. They succeeded in activating the complete bus route by pressurizing the authorities. The advocacy skills may be unhealthy and destructive as some would argue, but the awareness level is surely high unlike how it is usually perceived.

One of the respondents was working as *Male Mobilizer* in Family Planning Association of Pakistan, one of the oldest NGOs working for family planning, which links to SRHR. He shared that the *Mullas* (religious leaders of the mosque) are the main stakeholders whose voices are valued in the society. They are usually against family planning, and NGOs. The respondent added that he is well-aware that the *Mulla* of their mosque is himself practicing family planning but would preach otherwise in general public. Also, he passes sarcastic remarks on him for working in the NGO. This highlights an important aspect of keeping a *culture of silence* on SRHR, which helps in maintaining *izzat* (prestige) or a better status of individuals in the society. This, as highlighted, may be in complete contrast to reality. In addition, it highlights

the fact that the word NGO itself is stigmatized by key stakeholders. This puts a great challenge to international and local NGOs and youth-led networks that work in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Limited Scope to Address the Challenges

In the previous section on 'created spaces', we found out that despite the fact that Government does not provide any spaces for youth participation and that major decisions are taken behind closed doors, 79 percent of YAN members are not doing anything against it and not creating their own spaces instead. Linked to this, the respondents identified there's an environment of hopelessness among youth due to the lack of self-confidence and self-esteem which leads to an inferiority complex in them. Three reasons are mentioned by the respondents for this situation: One that young people lack awareness, knowledge and skills; second that they are never given an opportunity to take responsibilities; and third that they lack motivation as they are usually not acknowledged and appreciated. The respondents suggest that motivational trainings and courses should be organized for young people. They should be acknowledged through certificates of appreciation, and above all they should be given leading role and freedom to make decisions.

Considerably large number of respondents also mentioned that parents can cause hindrance to youth in participating in volunteer work. They consider this as wasting time and do not permit young people. The female respondents mentioned that parents restrict their movement other than going to and coming back from school or college. It might also be reason for only 17 percent females made it to the venue for participating in the survey, although 50 percent of the YAN members are female. The respondents also shared that there exists a big communication gap between parents and children especially boys and fathers. This has cultural reasons as young people mostly cannot share their opinion and express their thoughts comfortably and openly in front of adults. This is labeled as being 'respectful' to elders. The respondents argued that parents also restrict their children especially girls from going to school. This pehonomen is more common in the rural areas. As mentioned above, this leads to lack awareness, self esteem and confidence, and a sense of deprivation and hopelessness.

In the above-mentioned scenario, I believe that the skills based education becomes very important. Important skills such as communication, refusal, decision making, and negotiation skills help improving relationships between parents and children. Activity-based participatory learning gives them a platform to practice learnt skills in real-life situations. This identifies gaps in the quality of education as poor curriculum, ineffective teaching methodologies, and untrained teachers impart only knowledge which has not practical use in reality. In addition, the respondents suggested that awareness-raising for parents about the importance of social issues and youth participation in solving these issues is required.

Discrimination as an Obstacle

The YAN members from Baluchistan Province highlighted 'castes' as main cause of discrimination which acts as an obstacle to youth participation. *Baluch* and *Pakhtoon* are the two castes that exist in this province. The respondents shared that discrimination exists when applying for jobs and from teachers in schools - depending on which caste the 'person in power' belongs to.

'Gender' becomes another ground on the basis of which young people are discriminated. Girls are discriminated against in their homes where boys are given more importance. One of the female respondents shared that although she is the eldest among her siblings, she is given least respect and importance. They are also not involved in decision-making especially in major decisions such as choosing a life partner or when to get married. The restrictions on mobility not only prohibits them from going to school but also from going to another city or town to work or field research. On the other hand, young male members of the society are also discriminated against especially by the NGOs. They are often not involved in projects and programmes that focus mainly on women. The word 'gender' is usually perceived synonymous with the word 'women'. A gender-blind strategy that leaves out any sex fails to see the issue from all perspectives and can never be successful.

There was a question in the survey asking the respondents to mention if they themselves or someone they know of, has faced discrimination on the basis of 'sexual orientation'. Almost no one answered this question. This is because heterosexuality is the only acceptable and 'normal' way of sexual orientation accepted in the Pakistani society. Homosexuality is not only illegal by Law but also a sin accordingly to the Islam – religion of majority of Pakistanis. This is why people do not feel at ease when sharing their sexual orientation. However, for this category of the respondents, one could expect some answers as they are working on the issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights. This is probably due to their poor knowledge on sexual and reproductive *rights* (as proven in the earlier sections).

3.5 Facilitating Factors for Youth Participation

There are many factors that facilitate initiatives that promote youth participation. In this context, the main factor identified by the respondents is that young people are advanced in their awareness of the community issues and their own needs. Any project, programme or policy in which the direct beneficiaries are not involved from the very planning stage, can never be successful. One, because the beneficiaries, for whom it is designed, do not feel part of the project and lack the sense of ownership. Second, because there are high chances of the initiative being ineffective as the needs identified and issues addressed may not be relevant. It is also observed that young people feel inspired by, listen carefully to, and feel comfortable with their peers than adults. It therefore becomes equally important to involve them in implementation of initiatives.

The second most important factor identified by the respondents is that young people bring activeness, energy and new perspectives to solutions of problems. Young people have more capacity to think outside the box unlike adults who are used to looking at different issues with the same perspective. In addition, young people are ready to unconditionally volunteer for good causes if they are motivated and encouraged. This provides a platform to streamline their energies and activeness in the positive direction. The respondents also highlighted the role of schools, universities and other educational institutes in promoting volunteerism. They suggested that 'volunteering' should be a mandatory requirement at the college or university level. They added that youth-led networks and NGOs can play a vital role in presenting the real needs and issues of young people.
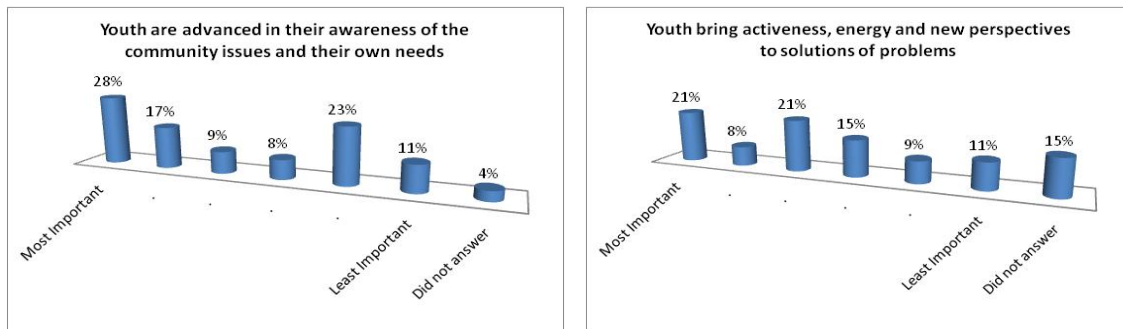
Adults with special commitment to youth participation, who recognize youth as resources, act as allies with young people. This is another facilitating factor identified by the respondents. Usually adults are perceived as not cooperative and insensitive towards young people. At the same time, youth is "a slippery concept". When does it start and finish? Some would say that there is a fluidity that transcends demarcation. There are instances in any adult life where behaviour or attitudes could be construed as 'childish' and, in the same way, young people can display remarkably 'adult-like' actions or perceptions. How about YAN members who cross 29 (the official membership age of YAN)? Will they become inactive, insensitive, less cooperative to young people despite being active volunteers just a few years ago? These questions open doors for more flexibility and positive approach to the concept of 'adulthood'. It is also in their interest to promote youth participation and work with young people as partners in development. The task is to raise awareness of this fact, the responsibility of which lies both on the shoulders of young people and those of adults.

3.6 Conclusion

The level, scope and form of youth participation were investigated in this chapter by analyzing different dynamics of youth participation in governance. These dynamics included the individual and organizational capacity of YAN; the spaces and power dynamics; degree of participation; and obstacles and facilitating factors to youth participation. These dynamics were analyzed at three different levels of home, YAN and government. One of the major obstacles identified by the respondents is their inability to generate funds both at individual and organizational level to sustain the

network. From the data, one can conclude that the overall level of youth participation is low in decision-making processes particularly at the government level. This is due to the lack of available spaces to participate, and power dynamics that surround these spaces. From this, one can conclude that low level and degree of participation can contribute to poor governance which ultimately leads to lower levels of citizenship and democracy. As Government of Pakistan plays an important role in contextualizing youth participation, its role has been elaborated in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Contextualization: Youth Participation and the Government of Pakistan

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is aimed at analyzing the institutional and structural setting at the government level that provides the policy framework and context to youth participation in Pakistan. It brings together views from both young people and representatives of the government to consider issues from different perspectives. In addition, I have carried my own analysis on the basis of primary and secondary data. The chapter focuses the functions of the Ministry of Youth Affairs particularly in context of the National Youth Policy.

Ministry of Youth Affairs in Pakistan is has not been a separate body in past. Youth Affairs Division was established on June 12, 1989. As an economy measure, it was merged with Ministry of Women Development on October 9, 1993. It was again made a separate Division on August 18, 1996 and was again merged with the *Ministry of Minorities, Culture, Sports, Tourism and Youth Affairs* on November 19, 1996 as a Wing. The very amalgamation of youth with 'minorities' reflects stereotyping of government's perception about youth, and more importantly their marginalization as a community. It is never mentioned in the mainstream agenda of government. Ministry is largely concerned and mandated with organizing of youth camps, youth exchange programmes, and sometimes seminars. Hence, at least thins Ministry has no say as far status of key youth development indicators are concerned.

The previous Government has again raised the status of the Youth Affairs Wing to a full-fledged Ministry on November 11, 2005 under the charge of Federal Minister.

If budgets are reliable indicators of state priorities, youth community stands at the abysmal low. Although youth issues are addressed by social sector spending in the areas of education and health, there are no significant outlays for youth community at large. Youth Affairs Division in the federal government, representative of youth in the state structure, has been receiving Rs. 1.1 million per annum as a matter of routine for last few years now. This amounts to tokenism and means that the state does not have enough funds or desirable understanding of the importance of youth in general. However, the federal budget allocated Rs. 20 million to Youth Affairs Division in fiscal year 2005-06, which is indeed a good sign.

One major activity organized by the government for youth recently was holding of a National Youth Convention in July 2005. Youth comprised nominees of districts and *nazims*/administrators from across the country. The President of Pakistan inaugurated the forum and students deliberated on a range of issues including role of youth in national development, terrorism and extremism, and religious tolerance.

Activities under Ministry of Youth Affairs include celebration of International Youth Day, Youth Exchange Programmes, and See Pakistan Youth Camps.

According to official figures in last few years, 194 Pakistani youth have participated in national level exchange programme. 219 youth have visited other countries and 25 youth have visited Pakistan from other countries mostly from China. In addition, 89 vocational training centres, 9 small play grounds projects, 2 youth development centres, and 102 small projects were financed through the Ministry. However, the critical question remains: Are these projects catering the real needs and issues of the majority of the young people of Pakistan? What is their impact? Are there any evaluation mechanisms in place?

4.1 The Government's Approach to Youth

In the earlier chapter, majority of the respondents showed their lack of trust in government. They placed government in closed spaces of participation with almost 76 percent agreeing that often or always, major decisions are made behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion. At the same time, 87 percent of the respondents mentioned that certain powerful people in the Government maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda.

At Hart's ladder of degree of participation, the majority of respondents, almost 76 percent, rated Government in the first three rungs – the non-participatory levels.

One of the obstacles to youth participation as identified by majority of the respondents is lack of interest of government in playing a leading role for young people. This is obvious from less allocation of budget for youth, failure to formulate the National Youth Policy, and lack of proper Ministry, in terms of size and being independent, for almost 30 percent of the overall population of Pakistan.

Government providing institutional mechanisms that promote youth participation was rated as one of the high importance facilitating factors to promote youth participation. The respondents suggested that we need to make use of effective advocacy strategies to put pressure on government in realizing the importance of youth participation. They emphasized that meetings need to be organized with Member of National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies in order for them to raise voices of the youth in the Assemblies. The youth of Pakistan is in a better position to exert pressure on politicians as they now have the right to cast vote from the age of 18.

The latest draft of National Youth Policy provides no spaces for political participation of young people. Youth is usually mentioned when age for casting votes is described. A popular form of youth organization is youth of 'student wing' of mainstream political and religio-political parties. As there is a legal ban on *student*

political unions in educational institutions throughout the country, these youth organizations mostly take up to streets and sometimes resort to violent means.

According to Gulmina (2005), 'another glaring contradiction flows from the very vision of the National Youth Policy that begins:

A future for all youth Pakistanis which is free from any type of discriminations in promoting a democratic, enlightened and prosperous Islamic Republic of Pakistan, where young women and men can enjoy a full, abundant, free and safe life enabling them to become active participants in all those activities which fulfil their potential, hopes, dreams and ambitions leading to full integration in economic, social, cultural and the spiritual life of society.

This vision is supposed to be translated through various action plans and key strategic areas involving various departments and civil society actors, but what's missing from it is the political participation and growth of youth. The vision talks about the youth's "full integration in economic, social, cultural and spiritual life of society" but not political life. If this is a deliberate omission, it suggests that 55 million Pakistani are being facilitated to integrate in all sectors but politics. A particularly surprising view, considering it is drafted by a government that reduced the voting age to 18.

Perhaps it is an oversight rather than a deliberate omission, as the Key Strategies areas (the framework for the action plan) clearly mentions political participation of the youth as a key strategic area. However, the policy is silent on how these areas would actually be focused on, particularly political participation. The Policy talks about setting up cultural assemblies but fails to identify political participation as a key need for young people.

This ambiguity is further exacerbated by the declaration that the youth policy is being formulated because, "Pakistan is experiencing multiple upswings in its economy, politics, governance, media and civil society... Examples are of the last several years of the economic track record and neo-democratisation since 2002. This scenario calls for investment in young people."

What "neo-democratisation" means is not clear, but if it means investment in democratic political processes then the policy has to be clear on how to involve young people in these processes' (Gulmina, 2005).

4.2 National Youth Policy in the making

The process of compiling a national youth policy for the development of youth began in 1989. The first draft was prepared in 1993. The revised draft came up in 2002 which was presented before the Cabinet in the same year. However, the Cabinet pointed out some gaps and asked the relevant officials to make amends. The matter then remained pending for a considerable time.

Another draft was uploaded on the Ministry's website in August 2007 to seek opinion of people. Finally in the end of 2007, the ministry that had recently acquired a separate status, was able to come up with another revised version which was submitted, along with people's recommendations, to the Cabinet Division during the tenure of interim government. The Policy remained with the Cabinet Division but failed to be an agenda item.

In April 2008, new elected Government came into power and a new Minister was appointed to the Ministry of Youth Affairs. On gaining power, the Minister ordered to stop the Cabinet process for the approval of the Policy, and to resend it again to *all* stakeholders from universities to NGOs for their feedback. 'More than 1000 letters are sent in this regard,' informed the Deputy Secretary (Youth Affairs). The Policy was therefore again looking forward to a revised draft.

The Minister belonged to Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz Group), the party with second highest number of seats. As the political negotiation with other parties did not work out, all Ministers who belonged to this party resigned in May 2008 as a protest. On May 13, 2008 when Senior Officials of the Ministry were interviewed for this research, the Ministry had no Minister in function, and the officials at the Ministry awaited new orders from the next Minister.

This situation since 1989 highlights to some serious issues at the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Government of Pakistan, which were double-checked with and further emphasized by the Senior Officials of the Ministry, the respondents of this study. These included the Senior Joint Secretary, Deputy Secretary (Youth Affairs), Deputy Secretary (Admin), and Senior Research Officer. The Ministry lacks systems that ensure a smooth continuity of its functions and activities from one government's era to the next one. The political instability of the country has led to pending matters in Cabinet or by the Minister of the Ministry. A reliance on the Minister's personal preferences overlooks all efforts made in past and start the whole process from the scratch. At the same time, youth is not placed high in the priority list during discussions in Cabinet, National and Provincial Assemblies, and Senate.

4.3 Flaws in the Policy-making Process

From 1989 to 2007, at least three drafts of the National Youth Policy were developed. However, there are no clear indications whether public in general, and young people in particular were given platforms to participate in the planning, designing and developing the policy. For the first time, in August 2007, the last draft of the Youth Policy was placed on the Ministry's website, in addition to organizing four workshops with UNICEF to discuss the Policy. Critical questions are: With no advertisements in newspapers or other media, were all young people aware that the draft National Youth Policy in on the Ministry's website for feedback? What percentage of young people knows how to use computer, and have access to

55

internet? How their feedback was incorporated in the draft, and what was their feedback?

The senior officials at the Ministry were unable to provide hardcore data to support their claim that the recommendations of young people were surely incorporated in the draft.

For the latest draft of the policy, the Ministry has sent out more than 1000 letters to seek feedback from different stakeholders. These stakeholders, according to the Deputy Secretary (Youth Affairs), include departments of Youth Ministry in the Provincial Governments, Chamber of Commerce, Media, NGOs, Universities, Parliamentarians, and Members of National and Provincial Assemblies etc. NGOs working on youth, such as All Pakistan Youth Federation, are considered representatives of young people to give comments and feedback on the draft policy. However critical questions remain unanswered. Are these NGOs true representative of young people of Pakistan? Is sending letters to stakeholders the best method for collecting feedback, especially from young people? Or, there could be alternatives like Focus Group Discussions, seminars etc. especially in the rural areas which constitute 64 percent of the youth in Pakistan?

According to the Senior Joint Secretary of the Ministry, a foreign expert from the US was hired for the development of the Policy. This news has usually been kept as classified as the result of this consultancy is obviously in front of everyone. At the same time, can a foreign consultancy worth thousands of dollars be more effective compared to local knowledge and expertise?

Senior Research Officer at the Ministry shared that reproductive health is a sensitive and tabooed topic in Pakistan. Therefore, keeping the cultural constraints in view, we cannot openly mention it in the policies and projects of the Ministry. It is therefore used under the cover of Life Skills.

4.4 Flaws and Gaps in the Government's 'Rules of Business'

The Rules of Business is a set of rules that provide the overall framework and acts as a backbone to the Ministry of Youth Affairs. There are some major flaws in this document. The Rules define youth as "non-student" youth between the ages of 15 and 29 years. The definition in such an important document leaves out a big percentage of youth that goes to schools, colleges and universities. The Ministry goes on to explain its assigned functions building on the same definition and explicitly mentions functions 'excluding students'. Do school-going youth have no needs? Are they less important than out-of-school youth? The document does not provide answers to these questions or any explanation to choosing *only* out-of-school youth.

On the contrary, there exists a huge gap between the youth catered by the Ministry according to its definition, and the activities organized by the Ministry. The function

ix of the Rules of Business in the Ministry's Year Book 2005-06 describes one of the functions as 'Youth International Exchange Programme (excluding students)'. These are Exchange Programmes in which Pakistani youth travels to other countries and it provides them an 'opportunity to see land, culture and economic development and also to exchange ideas of mutual interest with each other during exchange of youth delegations', as the document mentions. According to official figures, 219 young people have visited other countries so far in this programme. The question is: If only out-of-school youth is catered by the Ministry, how can they represent Pakistan on international level when they don't even have any schooling, and when they cannot even speak English? The same question was asked to high officials of the Ministry during this research. They said, of course, we send brilliant, school-going youth for such Programmes because it's the matter of *pride* of our country, and we cannot embarrass ourselves in front of other nations. Thus, there is a huge gap between how sympathetically Rules of Buisness are designed for out-of-school children and understandably so, because they are more deprived than school-going children; and its implementation. On the other hand, the latest draft of the Youth Policy is designed primary for educated youth and lacks any mention of street youth and/or out-of-school youth.

At the same time, there are question marks on who represents Pakistani youth on these international forums. What is their selection process? Why it is never advertised in the newspapers etc.

The Deputy Secretary (Youth Affairs) came up with an interesting explanation for defining youth as 'non-student' for the Ministry's functions. The reasons are bureaucratic in nature. The Ministry of Education is responsible for school-going youth. If the Ministry of Youth Affairs initiates projects for school-going youth, other Ministries, who have their own interests, especially in terms of allocation of budget, will consider this as intervening in their affairs.

4.5 The Ministry Officials' View of Obstacles to Youth Participation

The interviewed officials of the Ministry highlighted a number of obstacles to youth participation. These can be categorized into three heads: One, which are general in nature, more on a mega level; Two, more on micro level; and three, related to the Ministry itself.

The respondents are mostly bureaucrats belonging to a bureaucracy which rates high on the corruption index and has not played a positive role in the development of the country. The major obstacles highlighted by them at the high level include poor governance. While sharing their personal experiences, one of the respondents shared that he joined the Government sector with a zeal and fervor to change the negatives in the system and play active role in the development of the country. However, the environment is so unhealthy and corrupt that he had to become part of it in order to survive. The respondents added that three corrupt institutions have existed in Pakistan ever since its creation. These include feudal system; corrupt religious leaders;

and corrupt army. These institutions have weakened the foundations of the country, due to which democracy has always struggled in prevailing. Unemployment, poverty, inflation and lack of foreign direct investment were other factors identified by the respondents as main roadblocks to the development of the country in general and of young people in particular.

On a micro level, these senior officials at the Ministry highlighted that youth belonging to the poor stratum of the society lack any vision. They lack any awareness of what's happening in the world, what is their worth and what they can do to improve their own and other's livelihoods. Young people in general and poor youth in particular lack any sense of direction and motivation. They added that the focus of higher education is mostly on engineering, medical, business administration and IT. There is a lack of focus on social sciences. Successful policies depend on social sciences and Pakistan lacks experts in social sciences who could help in developing sustainable and people-centered policies. The respondents argued that the first thing needed for young people of Pakistan is their 'character building'. Media, according to them, is playing a negative role in building a healthy character of young people. They are involved in drugs, risk-taking behaviours and less volunteerism in humanitarian causes.

The third level of responses is related to the Ministry of Youth Affairs itself. While highlighting the challenges, the Deputy Secretary (Admin) highlighted that the Ministry highlighted that the Ministry is very new as it was established in 2005. It is small in size and not properly equipped. These make it difficult for it to cater to the huge population of young people in Pakistan. The Senior Joint Secretary, mentioned, that there is less focus by the government on youth. Women development, on the other hand, is more the centre of attention, and funds. Youth division has always been merged with women, culture, and sports departments.

The Senior Joint Secretary assured that the Ministry is ready to play facilitating role for the youth-led networks and activities. He informed that the Ministry has allocated a budget for such activities to promote youth leadership and development.

4.6 Conclusion

As 'youth affairs' is not on government's priority list, it has always been allocated less budget in comparison to the current demands, and has always been a part of other ministries. Moreover, the government has failed to finalize and implement a National Youth Policy. The reasons, as highlighted by the senior government officials, are political instability and bureaucratic inefficiency. Lack of proper systems to follow-up and build on work that has already been done in past has resulted in starting everything from the scratch every time a new Minister takes charge. In addition, the projects initiated by the Ministry leave a number of questions marks on their effectiveness. This lack of good governance has resulted in lower levels of youth participation as also confirmed by the young respondents in different parts of this research. Democracy is all about representation, being accountable and ensuring

accountability, equal opportunities to participate, and being able to set the agenda. With all these factors missing, it is verified that Pakistan stands low in the citizenship and democracy paradigm.

Chapter 5

Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Summary and Conclusions

The research is based on the hypothesis that *participation* of young people in *governance* of policies and programmes that directly or indirectly affect their lives, will lead to increased *citizenship* which is a major indicator of *democracy*. This research therefore focused on understanding the *dynamics* that shape governance mechanisms related to youth participation.

The respondents rated themselves high on their knowledge of sexual health. On sexual *rights,* however, there is relatively less confidence. On the other hand, they rate themselves fairly high on their knowledge of reproductive health and again, low on reproductive *rights*. This finding linked with question on 'invisible power' that shapes meaning and psychological and ideological boundaries of participation. In this question, respondents were asked whether gays and lesbians have the right to choose his/her sexual orientation and identity, almost 40 percent of the respondents did not agree with the statement. This links to the very important finding of respondents' poor knowledge in sexual and reproductive rights.

The respondents rated themselves high on communication, networking and leadership skills. Also, they rated themselves comparatively higher on developing work-plans and appropriate goals and strategies to advance organizational mission. Young people are associated with energy, vibrancy and enthusiasm that they bring with them. This is clear from their own assessment of confidence, self-esteem, compassion and self-responsibility – personal traits on which they rate themselves quite high. On the other hand, they rated themselves low in skills required for developing budgets and proposals. These are very important areas to ensure sustainability of any volunteer youth-led network. Another weak area indentified by the respondents is their lack of advocacy skills.

Almost 76 percent of the respondents agree that often or always, major decisions are made behind closed doors at the Government level, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion. In addition, almost 87 percent of the respondents responded certain powerful people maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda at the Government level. Also, almost 76 percent, rated Government in the first three rungs – the non-participatory levels. However, despite this fact, 79 percent of YAN members are not doing anything against it and not creating their own spaces instead. The same holds true inside YAN where 61 percent of the members never, rarely or sometimes create their own spaces. Approximately 36 percent of YAN members believe that youth participation is merely a day dream in Pakistan, keeping in view enormous challenges that our country is facing. Linked to this, the respondents identified there's an environment of hopelessness among youth due to the lack of

self-confidence and self-esteem which leads to an inferiority complex in them. Three reasons are mentioned by the respondents for this situation: One that young people lack awareness, knowledge and skills; second that they are never given an opportunity to take responsibilities; and third that they lack motivation as they are usually not acknowledged and appreciated. On the other hand, the reasons for failure of government to have a properly funded Ministry for Youth Affairs, as highlighted by the senior government officials, are political instability and bureaucratic inefficiency.

The highest rated obstacle according to the respondents is that even when young people take action, they usually lack the financial resources otherwise available to adults. The second obstacle identified by young people is the lack of effective youth policy and government support as major decisions are made behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion. The third obstacle that the respondents think is important is the lack of capacity (knowledge and skills) of young people.

5.2 Final Reflections and Recommendations regarding the Scope of Good Governance through Youth Participation

Policies fail on a number of accounts. A conventional explanation of failure enlists lack of political will, political inconsistency, lack of resources, and insincere leadership. This is all easily understandable and 'easy-to-sell'. However, implication of this explanation is that problem is set at such a gigantic scale that it becomes impossible to even address it. Solution is skirted, flirted and evaded and 'can't help it' thinking plagues. After all, who on earth can ensure political consistency, because intervention has become a norm? Who can provide sincere leadership, because corruption is so rampant? These are gigantic, depressive, and in fact oppressive questions. We need to anchor our understanding at the level of problem, about which we could do something ourselves. We need a new set of questions. We need to understand something, which is not so obvious, yet so real, immediate and imminent that we can't see it.

Yet, as beneficial as youth participation in decision-making is to both policymaking and youth development, it is not always effectively practised. Effective youth participation requires changes in how societies perceive young people. These changes need to be reflected in appropriate funding, in innovative ways to spread information, in training to facilitate intergenerational collaboration and in organizational structures that welcome new voices. Levels of effective youth engagement range from manipulation and tokenism at one end, to full-fledged youth-designed and implemented programmatic responses at the other. Effective strategies for youth participation must move away from ad hoc activity-based approaches to inclusion in core aspects of social structures, institutions and processes. Efforts should be undertaken to foster intergenerational relationships and support the capacity of young people to participate meaningfully in programmes and activities that affect them. Efforts should be made to ensure that as many young people as possible have the opportunity to represent their age group. Girls and young women in particular

may need additional support to overcome social, cultural, and economic barriers to their full participation.

Meaningful youth participation is essential to ensure that programmes, policies and services sufficiently address the needs of young people

Effective programming must reflect the needs of young people and can only do so through full participation of young people at all levels of program development. Thus, young people must be fully and meaningfully involved at all levels in the planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, policies and services related to youth issues and aimed at youth. Including young people in meaningful, substantive, decision-making roles in policy development will result in more effective programs, policies and services.

Youth Participation is a Right

Several provisions in the Convention on the Rights of the Child reflect children's right to participation. Participation is one of the guiding principles of the Convention, as well as one of its basic challenges. Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to participate in decision-making processes that may be relevant in their lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard—within the family, the school or the community. The principle affirms that children are full-fledged persons who have the right to express their views in all matters affecting them and requires that those views be heard and given due weight in accordance with the child's age and maturity.

Young people have a valuable contribution to make to society and must be given opportunities for their voices to be heard, recognized, respected and integrated in all policy and decision-making processes

Young people are in the best position to identify, assess and articulate their needs and realities. As such, it is important that young people occupy an equitable seat at decision-making tables to represent their perspectives. In addition, youth voices should be included beyond their capacity for identifying and talking about youth-specific needs, since youth perspectives bring important value to such discussions. It is important for young people's perspectives to receive equal consideration as those of others.

A commitment to training and building capacities of young people is essential for effective youth participation

Young people generally have less experience in decision-making processes, especially in higher-level decision-making venues. Therefore, it is vital for young people to have access to training and capacity-building opportunities to develop the necessary skills and knowledge for effective participation in decision-making processes. Support from older allies is a key element for these capacity building opportunities.

Youth leadership development programs can be an effective and more beneficial way of creating capacity building opportunities for young people. Such types of programs

emphasize developing leadership amongst young people rather than focusing on already accomplished young leaders. This not only provides capacity building opportunities for more young people but also gives space for their participation to be less tokenistic and representative.

Youth-led initiatives should be supported

Youth-led initiatives such as YAN are the most effective at conveying genuine youth perspectives. As such, they should be supported, encouraged and integrated into broader decision-making processes. Strategies should be developed and implemented to strengthen partnerships between *youth-led* initiatives and *youth-focused*.

Meaningful youth participation requires a serious commitment by all actors in a decision-making body

In order to meaningfully integrate young people into decision-making processes in a sustainable manner, decision-making bodies must examine the organizational structure in which they work so as to reduce or eliminate the barriers to meaningful youth participation. This will often require certain changes to the structure or working methods of the decision-making body. All actors particularly the Government must commit to adopting the necessary changes in order to facilitate youth participation.

In summary, the following actions are proposed:

- Improving access to information in order to enable young people to make better use of their opportunities to participate in decision-making;

- Developing and/or strengthening opportunities for young people to learn their rights and responsibilities, promoting their social, political, developmental and environmental participation, removing obstacles that affect their full contribution to society and respecting, inter alia, freedom of association;

- Encouraging and promoting youth associations through financial, educational and technical support and promotion of their activities;

- Taking into account the contribution of youth in designing, implementing and evaluating national policies and plans affecting their concerns; and

- Encouraging increased national, regional and international cooperation and exchange between youth organizations.

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