



STUDY ON

CHALLENGES OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH IN PAKISTAN-PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE



The study presents statistically based empirical evidence & analysis of various indicators, followed by recommendations for constructing a road-map that can be used by the development practitioners for defining and devising various strategies to address the issues faced by the Christian Youth in Pakistan.



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CHALLENGES OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH IN PAKISTAN-PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE PROJECT TEAM

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FOREWORD



It's a great honor and pleasure for me to write the foreword for this study "Challenges of Christian Youth in Pakistan – People's Perspective" and for PPI and I to be a part of this important study. I am grateful to PED-C and their team who have put in a wholehearted effort in conducting this study and making it a reality. I am thankful to all our partners who were part of this study as it would not have been possible to reach so many places to interview people. Often we in Pakistan mentioned the challenges of the youth but did not have documented evidence to prove what we were saying; this study report will address that concern. It will also help institutions and people to understand the core challenges and develop strategies to address them.

One of the major findings of the report was that 61% of youth aged 18-29 were unemployed and the interesting part was that 62% of these youth were not even searching for an employment. How do we expect the Christian youth of Pakistan to contribute to the mainstream development of this country if they are not provided with an opportunity and encouragement to do so. Some of the reasons that the youth mentioned in relation to not getting employment was that they lack Education, Skills, Information, Resources and Equal opportunities. The youth felt that lack of proper livelihoods was a major factor in their low socio-economic status.

It is hoped that through the findings of this report a collective effort can be made to address some of the major challenges that youth is facing so that they can get proper livelihoods and improve their socio-economic status.

I pray that if you are reading this report, you will join the effort to address some of the challenges which have been highlighted in this report. May the 61% youth who feel neglected get the opportunity to feel valued and encouraged to do something beneficial in their lives.

God bless you all.

ASHRAF MALL

Chief Executive Officer
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ACRONYMS

CATCH	Community Awakening Through Churches
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICT	Islamabad Capital Territory
ILO	International Labor Organization
KII	Key Informant Interview
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LTS	Life Through Sports
MDTA	The Multan Diocesan Trust Association
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NEET	Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training
PED-C	Population, Environment & Development Centre
PMS	Pak Mission Society
PPI	Pakistan Partnership Initiative
SRD	Sustainable Relief Development
TCWS	The Call Welfare Society
UCC	United Council of Churches
YDI	Youth Development Index

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the contemporary world, the region Asia is the most densely populated, consisting 60 percent of the world's population. It is also considered to be the most deprived area of the world, especially in terms of human development with 40 percent estimated share of global poverty. In most of these developing countries, youth have remained largely invisible at the policy level. Admittedly, the issues of employment and education of youth are dealt with at some level, there continues to be a major gap in addressing the social and economic roles of youth.

The same is true for Pakistan. According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2018, Pakistan's approximately 60 percent of population is below the age of 24 years and this is forecasted to continue to increase until at least 2050. This youth bulge will critically impact Pakistan as a country if not dealt appropriately, depending on how the country invests in the youth by providing them with quality education, employment and meaningful engagement opportunities.

According to Pakistan's National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), 2017 census, the calculated percentage of minorities stands at 3.7 percent, approximately the same as that in 1998 census. The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees equal rights to all citizens without discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, caste, creed etc. The non-Muslims exist at all social strata of the Pakistani society, however, an overwhelming majority, especially of the Christians, are inextricably stuck at the lower rungs of the ladder; mostly working as sanitary workers, domestic helpers, farm workers, factory employees or inter alia - living in a vicious cycle daunted by poverty that is economic and social in nature.

The study aims to understand and decipher the key socio-economic and cultural factors that impact the Christian youth, both women and men, girls and boys, aged 15-29 years, in

Pakistan. It presents the statistically-based empirical evidence and analysis of various socio-economic and cultural indicators, followed by recommendations for constructing and designing a roadmap that can be used by the development practitioners for devising various strategies to address the issues faced by the Christian youth in Pakistan.

As mentioned in other reports, including the UNDP Report, 2017 that the three most important drivers for youth development include – Education, Employment and Engagement (the three Es).¹ The main focus of the current study, therefore, revolves around quality education, gainful employment and meaningful engagement, interlinking the three Es. Information on the socio-economic attributes is based on the data obtained from 474 youth, females (58 percent) and males (42 percent), married and unmarried aged 15-29 years, residing in urban or peri-urban areas in the selected districts of the four provinces of Pakistan. Accumulatively, a large 71.6 percent of the Christian Youth was under the age of 25 years. The results are well supported by the national figures which show, of the total population 64 percent is below the age of 30 (National Human Development Report (NHDR), UNDP, 2017).

In the current study, Christian youth and opinion makers highlighted the lack of opportunities to build skills, lack of motivation and self-confidence to upgrade their socio-economic status, while emphasizing that lack of an enabling environment does not allow them to pursue quality education nor obtain decent employment. Specifically, the main root causes identified by youth include:

- i. Lack of Quality Education
- ii. Lack of Decent Employment Opportunities (Formal Sector)
- iii. Lack of Marketable Skills leading to Livelihood Deprivation
- iv. Lack of Inclusiveness leading to Exclusion

The majority of the youth belong to poor families, living on a total household income ranging between (PKR) Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 30,000 per month. Low household income is a composite of the low paid jobs that the youth, and their family members, including the parents, are engaged in. The situation is further

exacerbated by lack of an enabling environment, that is, lack of motivation, counselling, guidance, leadership/role models, neither at the family nor at the Church or social levels. Encapsulating these determinants, most of the Christian families and youth are trapped in this vicious cycle of poverty, affecting distorted self-worth and daunting them to interact with the mainstream society. Experts/leaders opinions on the socio-economic situation of the Christian youth is in tandem and strongly substantiated by the findings of the research. Moreover, the challenge of the Christian youth growing to live out and grow in their faith is also complex with mixed convictions.

The findings suggest developing strategies at two levels. Firstly, to address the issues and the challenges that hamper their (the youth) growth for education, employment and social engagement, multiplying the opportunities that are present in the current scenario; Secondly, strengthen partnerships and collaborations with youth development initiatives both at the government, private and the NGO levels, especially involving the Christian organizations.

¹ <http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files//tables/POPULATION%20BY%20RELIGION.pdf>

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Young people embody the future and the continuation of humankind. If societies fail to give their youth opportunities, there will neither be sustainable economic growth nor a fair and equal society and political stability. Young people need adequate, meaningful and functional education and decent jobs, and they must develop the self-esteem to assume responsibilities. In the absence of these, where their own and other's expectations are not fulfilled, they become frustrated and are at more of a risk than a chance, and become destructive in intent and prone to extremist movements. Thus, isolation of youth, either intentionally or unintentionally, can lead them to drug abuse, illegal and criminal actions, depression and migration, while youngsters are the potential group and actors for structuring the future of a country.

Presently, the region Asia is the most densely populated, consisting 60 percent of the world's population. It is also considered to be the most deprived area of the world, especially in terms of human development. Its share of global poverty is estimated to be 40 percent. In most of these developing countries, youth have remained largely invisible at the policy level where the focus has been on the problems generated by this age group. Admittedly, the issues of employment and education of the youth are dealt with at some level, there continues to be a major gap in addressing the social and economic roles of youth. In other words, young people have diverse needs and requirements, which have not received the attention needed in terms of investing in human development. The same is true for Pakistan.

THE CONTEXT

According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2018, Pakistan's population in 2018 was estimated at 208 million, with approximately 60 percent of its population below the age of 24 years, while the youth population aged 15-29 years stood at 54 million, accounting for about 29 percent of its total population. Estimated figures show that Pakistan now has more young people than it has ever had, and this is forecasted to continue to increase until at least 2050. It is one of the youngest countries in the world and the second youngest in the South Asian region after Afghanistan. This youth bulge will critically impact Pakistan as a country, if not dealt appropriately depending on how the country invests in the youth by providing them with quality education, employment and meaningful engagement opportunities.

As the current situation stands, Pakistan's unemployment rate is higher than other South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Unemployment between the ages of 15 and 24², estimated for Pakistan for the year 2018, stood at 10.8 percent, according to the modelled ILO estimates, notwithstanding that almost 4 million youth attain employment age every year in the country. The latest Global Youth Development Index (YDI) report places Pakistan at 154 amongst 183 countries with a score of 0.470, as the only non-African country amongst the ten lowest-ranked Commonwealth countries.³

Deeper analysis on the youth shows that the situation of the young people in the country is not uniform, with deteriorating conditions for religious minorities, in particular. During the consultations with the youth carried out in all the four provinces and Gilgit-Baltistan by UNDP, 2017, the youth highlighted that there was a need to focus on religious tolerance and harmony, and that the minorities should be treated as equal Pakistanis without being considered as non-patriotic.⁴

² Pakistan - Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate); <https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/pakistan/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS>

³ Pakistan National Human Development Report-Harnessing the Potential of a Young Pakistan, UNDP, 2017.

⁴ Pakistan National Human Development Report-Harnessing the Potential of a Young Pakistan, UNDP, 2017.

According to Pakistan's National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), 2017, the percentage of the minorities in Pakistan is estimated at 3.7 percent, approximately the same as reported in the 1998 census. Figures show that of the total minorities, 1.6 percent are Christians, 1.6 percent Hindus, 0.22 percent Ahmadi, Scheduled Castes 0.25 percent and others an estimated 0.07 percent.⁵

The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees equal rights to all citizens without discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, caste, creed etc. The non-Muslims exist at all social strata of the Pakistani society, however, an overwhelming majority of them, especially Christians, are inextricably stuck at the lower rungs of the ladder. Most are sanitary workers, domestic helpers, farm workers, or factory employees, primarily due to a disparity in the available opportunities for education and employment.

Christian youth of Pakistan is vulnerable, and will remain at stake, in the absence of meaningful and effective initiatives, geared towards the Christian youth, their socioeconomic future and Christian identity. In other words, the Christian youth potential, like with the entire youth, if properly harnessed can bring a radical socio-economic change, meaningfully contributing to the rebuilding of the nation. On the contrary, if youth issues, perceptions, ideas, are not assessed and subsequently addressed in a timely manner, it may turn into a 'nightmare on the street to prosperity.' The aforesaid scenarios have implications for Christian leadership, which is considered important not only in the context of growing security challenges for minorities in the country, but also in the realm of global knowledge-based economies. All over the world, youth is being given prime importance in future policy making due to the rapidly evolving knowledge base; new and emerging technologies; ever growing potential of social and economic networking in modern times, and livelihoods.

Pakistan Partnership Initiative (PPI) has strategically prioritized Youth Development as one of its strategic areas of intervention, with the objective of empowering Christian youth of Pakistan to have access to education, training and better and decent employment. Through this research project, it is intended to have greater clarity on the strategies and activities required to maximize the potential of Christian Youth, while ensuring that their specific needs and challenges in the majority environment and their own minority communities are given due attention.

The current study is an attempt to identify the challenges and unmet needs of the Christian Youth aged 15-29 years. It aims to present statistically-based empirical evidence and analysis of various socio-economic and cultural indicators, followed by recommendations for constructing and designing a roadmap that can be used by the development practitioners for devising various strategies to address the issues faced by the Christian youth.

⁵ <http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/tables/POPULATION%20BY%20RELIGION.pdf>

CHAPTER 2

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the main objectives of this study, categorized in terms of specific and general objectives:

I. OVERALL OBJECTIVE

To identify, understand and decipher the key socio-economic and cultural factors that impact the Christian youth, both women and men, girls and boys, aged 15-29 years, in Pakistan.

II. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To identify the human development challenges and opportunities from the perspective of Christian Youth in Pakistan.
- To assess the missing links for engaging with key development initiatives for partnerships and coordination.
- To come up with concrete recommendations on how to improve human development outcomes by empowering Christian youth, addressing the root causes of the obstacles they face and by proposing innovative ways to overcome these challenges.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in the selected districts of all the four provinces of Pakistan, including the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) to make it nationally representative. A total of 12 major districts were selected. From within each district, those localities were chosen which comprised majority Christian population in urban and peri-urban areas. The highest number of districts included in the study were from the Punjab (7 districts) considering that the Punjab province houses the largest Christian population of the country (as given in the 2017 Census). From the other 3 provinces: district Peshawar of province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; district Karachi and Mirpurkhas in the Sindh province, district Quetta in Baluchistan province and Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, were selected for the purpose of this study. Data collection took place in between the period April-August, 2019.

SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Those districts and localities were chosen where the PPI Partners had their organizations. Other districts, without the PPI partners, were chosen based on the population density and the criticality of their inclusion in the survey. The surveys in the non-PPI partner districts were conducted by the Population, Environment & Development Centre (PED-C) team.
2. Urban and peri-urban areas were selected, due to the accessibility of the areas and financial limitations.
3. The survey was limited to the Christian youth aged 15-29 years who were residents of the selected localities.
4. Controlling for the economic factor, selection of the areas and communities was limited to those belonging to the low income strata.

CHAPTER 3

STUDY APPROACH

A mixed methodology design was adopted to collect both quantitative data through surveys and qualitative data through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The mix of sources—“triangulating” information from different approaches—helped in assessing different facets of on ground situation: demographics, social and economic statuses, perceptions and preferences, and institutional policy yielding greater validity than from one source alone.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sample size calculations were based on the Christian Population figures given in the 2017 Census. Using the following statistical technique (generally employed by social scientists), a confidence level of 95 % and a margin of error of 5 % were used for determining the sample size, data representation, i.e. generalizing the results for the entire survey population, and for reliability.

Following the use of this technique, a total sample size of 474 respondents was determined for conducting the quantitative survey. For equal representation, cluster random sampling technique was employed in each chosen locality. By this technique, each area was divided into clusters, subject to the number of households. From these clusters every 3rd or 5th household was selected, depending on the size of the cluster.

STUDY DESIGN

As stated above, a mixed methodology was adopted to collect data in order to achieve the study objectives. The following data collection methods and survey tools were used to approach different target audience.

- **Quantitative Surveys:** conducted with unmarried and married youth, both females and males, aged between 15-29 years. A total of 474 females and males, girls and boys within age bracket of 15-29 years were included in the quantitative survey.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** conducted with groups of unmarried and married youth, both females and males, aged between 15-29 years. A total of 24 FGDs were conducted separately for females and males.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** A total of 11 KIIs were conducted with key representatives of the Church, Civil Society Representatives/NGOs, government representatives, educationists and social workers.

The data collection from different methods is described in detail in the following sections:

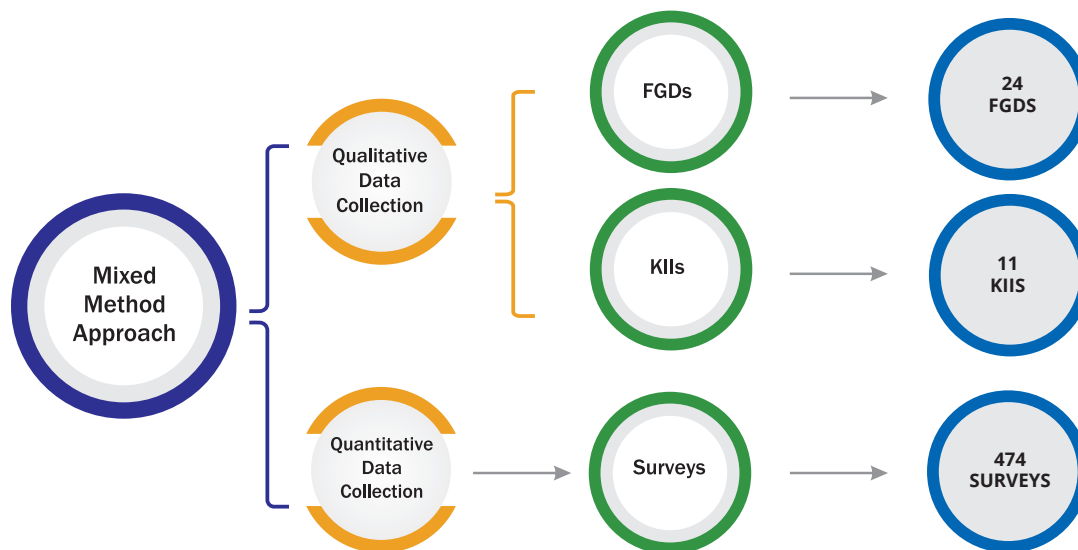


Figure 3.1: Study Design

POSSIBLE BIAS /METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

1. "No response bias." The fact that household interviews were conducted from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. meant that some of the members (eligible females/ males) of households were away during the survey and thus were not included in the study.
2. Despite the high number of surveys that have taken place in the targeted areas, "refusal to participate bias" was not observed in all visited communities and the enumerators were generally well received. This demonstrated the will of the population to work closely with the team during future programs.
3. "Translation bias." Interpretation of questions may be different in the local language compared to the original question in English. Accordingly, during the training session, the survey teams took sufficient time to understand the translated questionnaire and the enumerators were asked to use the local dialect for some of the words.
4. "Enumerator bias." The opinions of the enumerators and their supervisors can skew the results. For example, when enumerators show verbal or non-verbal responses to what is "correct" during the interview. The team tried to minimize this bias, during training, through role playing.
5. "Respondent bias." Respondents may have an interest in providing incorrect answers because they may think that they can benefit later, especially in the event that their responses lead to support from donors. In each household, the enumerators explained the objectives of the study to avoid this bias.
6. "Privacy bias." In order to ensure the respondent's confidentiality, the enumerators were advised to make certain that crowds are not present during the interview.
7. To reduce the risks of bias, the survey coordinator:
 - Dedicated the time and effort to continuously liaise with enumerators.
 - Started with a pre-survey (pilot test).
 - Verified the completed questionnaires each day and provided feedback to the enumerators before conducting fieldwork the next day.

CHAPTER 4 MAJOR FINDINGS

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH

The three most important drivers for youth development include-Education, Employment and Engagement (the three Es), as mentioned in other reports, including the UNDP Report, 2017.⁶ The main focus of the current study, therefore, revolves around quality education, gainful employment and meaningful engagement, interlinking the three Es. Youth employment patterns originate from educational developments, which in turn depend on the household demographics and regional norms. Educational & employment patterns then impact the youth’s interaction in the society, including decision making, and becoming productive citizens.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Socio-Demographic, cultural and economic attributes of respondents such as their sex, age, and educational level are necessary attributes to assess what influences they have on their employment, income, self-perceptions of their work-readiness skills & their knowledge, their access to employment/ entrepreneurial resources, major opportunities and the issues/ challenges they face.

Information on the socio-economic attributes is based on the data obtained from 474 youth, males and females, married and unmarried aged 15-29 years, residing in urban or peri-urban areas in the selected districts of the four provinces of Pakistan as indicated above. Of the total number of 474 respondents, 275 (58%) were males and 199 (42%) females(Figure 4.1).

Disaggregation of the data by age groups shows that 16.3 percent of the youth were aged 15-17 years, a sizeable percentage of the respondents (30.3%) were in the age group of 18-20 years, followed by 25 percent and 28.4 percent aged between 21-24 years and 25-29 years respectively (Figure 4.3).

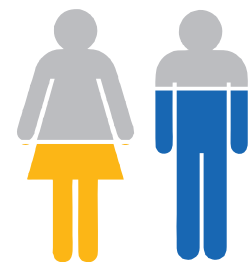
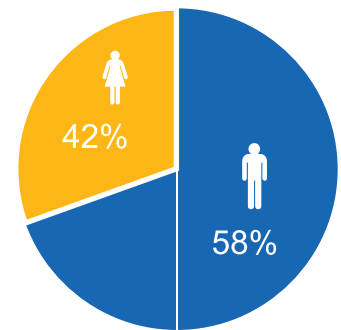


Figure 4.1:

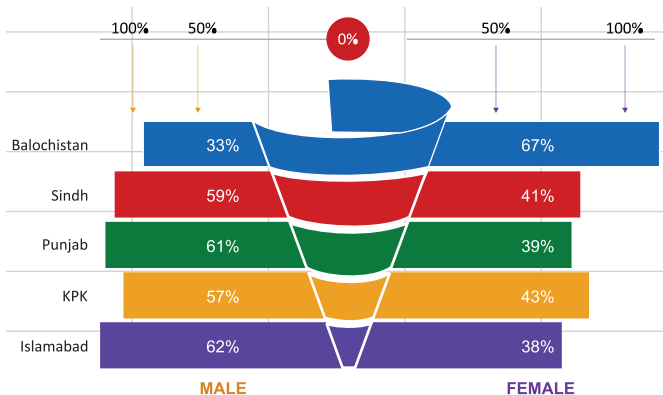


Figure 4.2: Sample Size Distribution by Gender

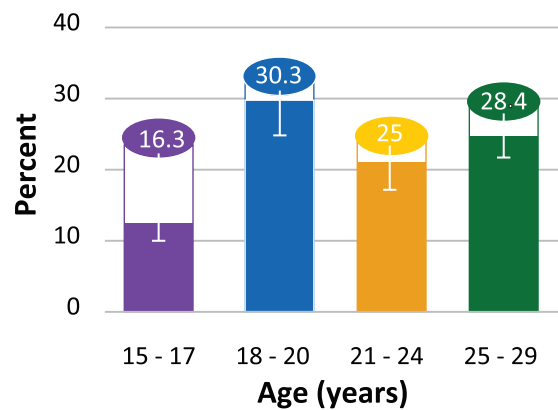


Figure 4.3: Distribution By Age Group (%)

⁶ <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/pakistan/docs/HDR/PK-NHDR.pdf>

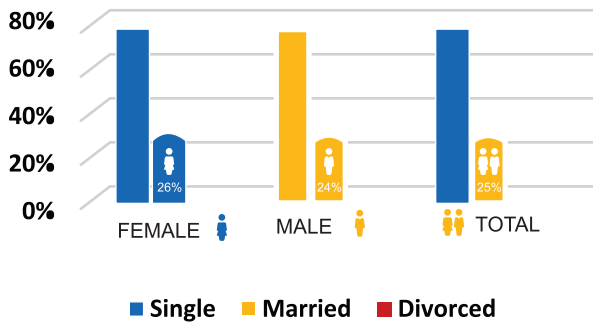


Figure 4.4: Distribution by Marital Status (%)

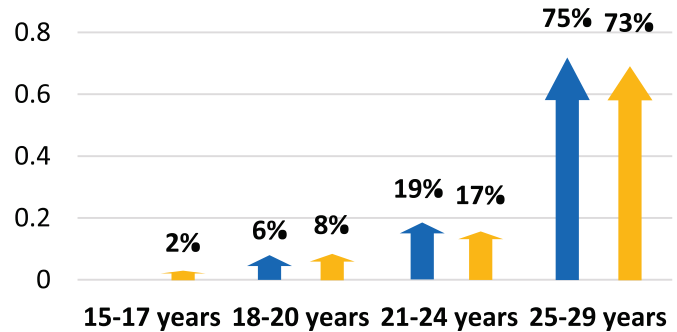


Figure 4.5: Marital Status based on Age Groups (%)

The results are well supported by the national figures which show of the total population, 64 percent is below the age of 30 - National Human Development Report (NHDR), UNDP, 2017.

Accumulatively, a large 71.6 percent of the Christian Youth was under the age of 25 years. The results are well supported by the national figures which show of the total population, 64 percent is below the age 30 - National Human Development Report (NHDR) , UNDP, 2017 (Figure 4.3) .

Distribution of the youth by marital status shows that a large majority 354 (75%) were single, with a marginal difference by gender (73% females and 76% males) while the married comprised a total of 119 (25%) percent of the total. Of the married, 22 percent did not have any children, 54 percent had 1-2 children and 22 percent were raising 3-4 offspring (Figure 4.4).

The household size and the household income has a direct effect on the financial stability and the socio-economic status of the community. Data shows that more than half (51 %) of the total youth had 3 or 4 siblings followed by 27 percent with 6-7 brothers and sisters. Of the total, both married and

unmarried a large majority comprising 87 percent were living in a joint family system, including the parents and siblings (married and unmarried both), and/or grandparents, uncles and aunts, as revealed in the survey and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Most of the respondents 340 (72 %) shared that they were living in a cemented house, followed by 91 (19 %) in a mixed/partially cemented dwelling. Of the youth that was employed, the majority 77 (42 %) were earning a salary/wage in the range of (PKR) Rs. 10,000 to 20,000 per month, followed by 40 (22 %) drawing a salary between Rs. 20,000 to 30,000 per month. As many as 54 (29 %) were bringing home a salary that was either Rs. 10,000 or less. Considering that a large majority of the youth respondents were living in a joint family.

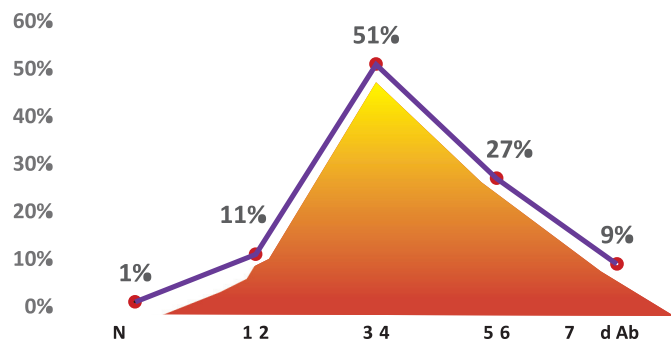


Figure 4.6 Number of Siblings

The earning contribution to the household income, segregated by gender, including the female/ male respondents (who were earning), their father/mother, sisters/ brothers, including their spouses & children and other relatives is given in Table 4.6 and Figure 4.7. These figures reveal that female's cumulative contribution to the total household income stood at 22 percent (188) compared to 78 percent (672) of the males.

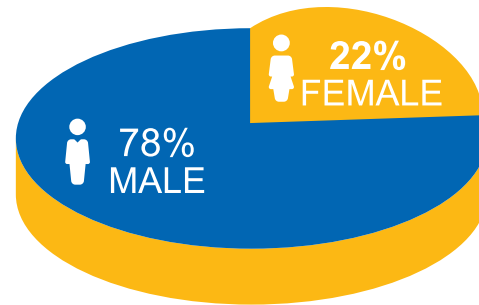


Figure 4.7: Earning Contribution to Household Income (by gender)

the respondents were asked about the total household income in a month. Figures reveal that more than half 271 (57 %) had a household income ranging between Rs. 10,000 to 30,000 per month, followed by 85 (18 %) and 41 (9 %) living on a total household salary ranging between Rs. 30,000 - 40,000 and Rs. 40,000-50,000, respectively.

The earning contribution to the household income, segregated by gender, including the female/male respondents (who were earning), their father/mother, sisters/brothers, including their spouses & children and other relatives is given in Figure 4.7 These figures reveal that female's cumulative contribution to the total household income stood at 22 percent (188) compared to 78 percent (672) of the males. Social conditions such as health, nutrition, education and housing influence productivity, thus affecting poverty status. These in turn are influenced by poverty, affecting the ability of households to gain access to adequate social conditions to improve their productivity. The scope of the current study was not to determine and calculate poverty. However, as clearly indicated by the total household size and the accumulative household income, the majority of the youth lived by meagre resources, affecting their opportunity and chances to avail good education, decent employment and living conditions.

The study further explored, in detail, the following youth indicators, along with the major challenges and issues as triangulated by the household survey, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):

1. Status of Formal Education and Associated Challenges
2. Status of Formal Employment Opportunities and Associated challenges
3. Status of Marketable Skills and Training leading to Livelihood and Income Generating Activities (Informal Sector)
4. Enabling Environment for Inclusiveness and Growth

I. STATUS OF FORMAL EDUCATION

Education provides opportunities for social mobility. Access to education depends on availability and

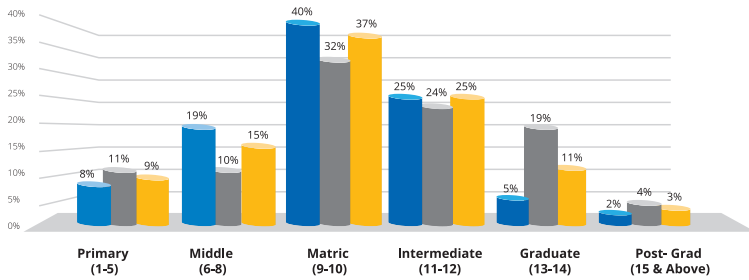


Figure 4.8: Education Level both Total and Sex-disaggregated (%)

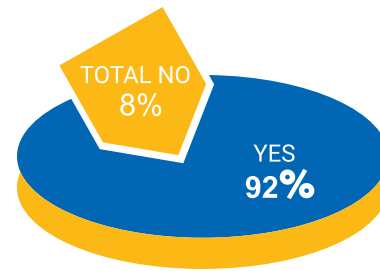


Figure 4.9: Have you ever been to School?

quality of state and private services, as well as, local attitudes towards education. The survey sought to establish the education level of the youth in the survey sample. Of the total 92 percent of the youth had gone to a formal school, 37 percent managed to reach matric (grade 9-10) as their highest level, but the majority did not complete the level to attain a certificate or as stated by some respondents at the time of the survey and FGDs, were planning to take supplementary exams. On probing further, through the FGDs, the youth revealed that quite a large number, especially the boys, never got to clear their 10th grade, in order to acquire the required minimum qualification. Of the total, a comparatively lean 25 percent managed to reach the Intermediate level (grade 11-12), followed by 11 percent reaching the graduate level as shown Figure 4.8.

By and large, the education patterns are very similar for both females and males till the intermediate level. Sex-disaggregated data reveals that male youth show an eight-point advantage at 40 percent than the female counterparts at 32 percent. However, 19 percent females edged out males at 5 percent in advancing to the graduation level (Figure 4.8). During the Focus Group Discussions a strong point arose that, “parents and other elders talk and worry about their daughters being more educated than their male counterparts, mainly, the worry is that it is difficult to find boys who could match up to their daughters educational achievements - In other words, they worry about the shortage of male matrimonial match”.

The following Table 4.10 provides province wise education status of the respondents. For every province, the distribution is skewed towards the youth that reached the Matriculation level (9-10 grade). Most of the participants reported to have stopped their education owing to the inability to pass examinations. During these FGD discussions, they also cited economic reasons, as a major factor that led to the truncation of their education. Female participants reported marriage as a major reason for dropping out of school.

Table 4.10: Formal Education Status of the Respondents by Province (%)

Education Level	Punjab	KPK	Sindh	Balochistan	Islamabad	Total
1-5 years	8%	17%	13%	3%	14%	9%
6-8 years	13%	21%	25%	7%	19%	15%
9-10 years	38%	17%	37%	23%	46%	37%
11-12 years	26%	38%	22%	20%	16%	25%
13-14 years	11%	0%	3%	37%	5%	11%
15 and over	3%	8%	0%	10%	0%	3%

Key problems faced by young people include lack of good education, low motivation leading to dropping out of school, not interested themselves, no support financially from family, fee structure of missionary schools is unaffordable. Moreover, parents themselves are uneducated.

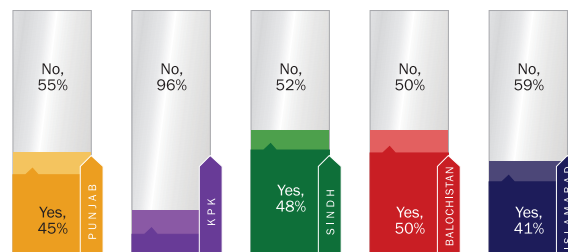
**“I don’t need education to earn money. I do it by “wheeling bike” said an 18 year old boy sitting, wearing jeans and a Tshirt, holding an expensive mobile in his hand, living in the slum colony of sector F-7 of Islamabad.
Source: FGDs**

Sex-disaggregated data on the current enrollment shows that 46 percent male and 40 percent female respondents were currently enrolled in an educational institute compared to more than half, that is, 60 percent females and 54 percent males who were not enrolled anywhere. Of all the currently enrolled 190 participants 111 (58%) claimed to be enrolled in government schools and colleges while 30 (16%) in private institutions. The rest 49 (26%) said they will appear for the examination privately, on their own.

SOURCE: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

- Dropping out of school is of direct concern to adolescent school drop-outs. They left school without any professional qualifications, feeling frustrated or even in rebellion against the school system, family and society.
- Their parents are not well aware of the school system, and are not in a position to help their children in their school work or in choosing the right direction for their studies. They don’t have the resources to get good quality education for their children
- Living conditions in low-income areas are not conducive to scholastic success. Housing units are poorly suited and cramped to allow freedom of movement and activities.

Figure 4.11: Are you currently Enrolled in Educational Insitute?

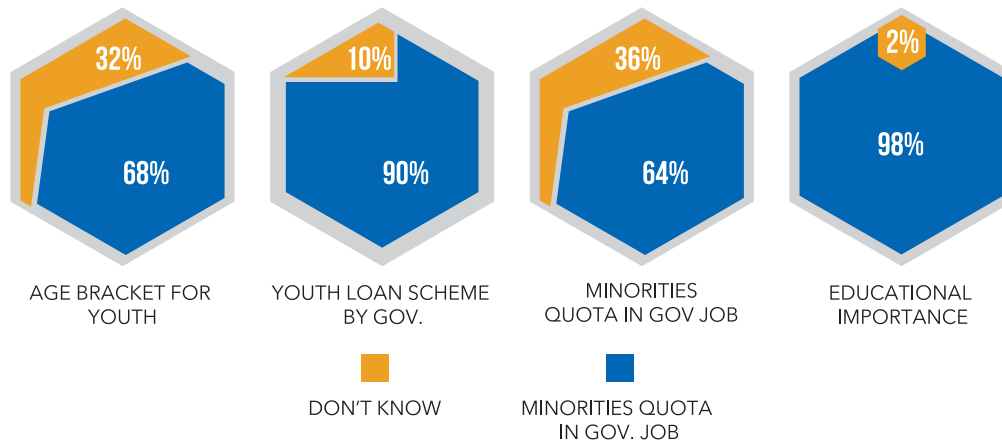


Data on currently enrolled status, segregated by province/region shows (Figure 4.11) that 96 percent respondents from KPK, 59 percent from Islamabad, 55 percent for the Punjab, 52 percent from Sindh and 50 percent belonging to Baluchistan were not enrolled in any educational Institute.

While discussing about the quality of education in Pakistan, the youth during the FGDs stated that “firstly, education alone is ineffective in providing young people with the skills required for employment. Secondly, there is a huge unmatched difference between the private and public schools, not only in terms of the quality of education but also the fees and other associated

expenses like uniforms, books and other activities are higher in private schools. Medium of education is English in private schools which is much better. We cannot afford all this and that is why we are where we are so why should we study? Our parents don't have this kind of money and we won't get good jobs, any ways." As defined, a good quality education is one that provides all learners with capabilities that are required to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being. The survey also highlighted huge gaps in areas of access to information, as a result most of the youth respondents were unaware of the current policies, programmes or initiatives in the open market. The study unraveled that a high 90 percent of the respondents had no information about any existing youth development schemes/ youth loan schemes launched by the government, while only 36 percent had knowledge of the minority job quota offered by the government (the job quota is for all minorities and not only the Christians) as shown in Figure 4.12 below.

Figure 4.12: Knowledge and Awareness



The study also revealed that of the 36 percent who knew about the minorities' quota for employment were those who belonged to a family where either the parent(s) or other family member(s) were in the government service.

II. LACK OF DECENT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Results of this national study show that 61 percent of the youth were unemployed, despite the fact that 84 percent were in the age category of 18-29 years, that is, the legal working age in Pakistan. Distribution by gender reveals that a total of 75 percent female youth and 51 percent of the male youth were not employed or engaged in any gainful employment. Of the total 39 percent who reported as being employed, 19 percent were in the government sector while 51 percent were working in the private sector (Figure 4.13).

A miniscule 4 percent of the youth were running their own business or were self-employed. Unskilled laborers on the other hand accounted

Figure 4.13: Employment by Gender (%)

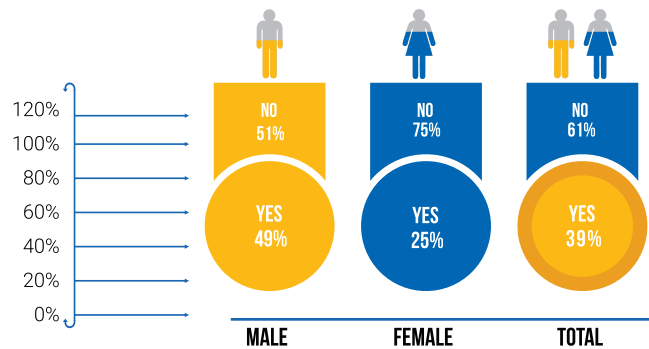
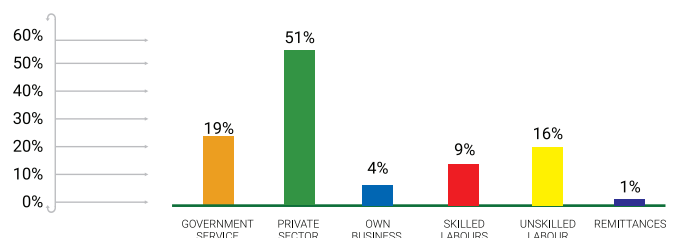


Figure 4.14: Employment Distribution By Sector (%)



for 16 percent of the total employed youth and were engaged as casual laborers, domestic workers, cleaners in schools/ homes/ local hotels etc. Data reveals that the majority of the youth in the private sector were involved in low paid jobs (Figure 4.14). Even though a huge chunk of the youth was unemployed (290) when enquired if they were searching for employment, a total of 62 percent (181) admitted that they were not.

As stated earlier only 4 percent of the total respondents owned a small business. The percentage of young people wanting to start a business was only 5 percent. On probing, they cited lack of capital and lack of skills to launch and sustain a business as the main obstacles to self-employment. "Elders are skeptical about the ability of the youth to run a business, and the lack of supporting incubation facilities further worsen the situation" stated the males in the FGDs.

The Youth were asked to identify reasons for unemployment to which 44 percent could not pinpoint the exact reasons, while 26 percent believed lack of education as a major reason, 18 percent stated lack of skills, 11 percent said lack of information, and another 11 percent said there were no opportunities. A miniscule 5 percent of the youth stated religion and age (few youth of ages 15-19 years) as a barrier. An overwhelming majority of youth stated that the most significant factor related to their socio- economic status was lack of decent livelihoods. They mentioned that they had no money and no viable job opportunities in their communities. Almost two-thirds of the FGDs participants were unemployed and stated that "young people are doing nothing except being involved in irrelevant activities."

Running a business requires money, place and guidance. We have none. However, if an entrepreneurship system is established where one can acquire the skills, and is able to secure loans – basically a system supporting to start and sustain a business, we would love to open up a business. Right now we have fear of the unknown" –FGDs

YOUNG PEOPLE'S LACK OF JOBS: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Key youth issues/problems:

Lack of employment opportunities for Christian Youth

Barriers:

- no education/ qualification to get jobs
- no technical training and skills
- interested in getting government jobs only

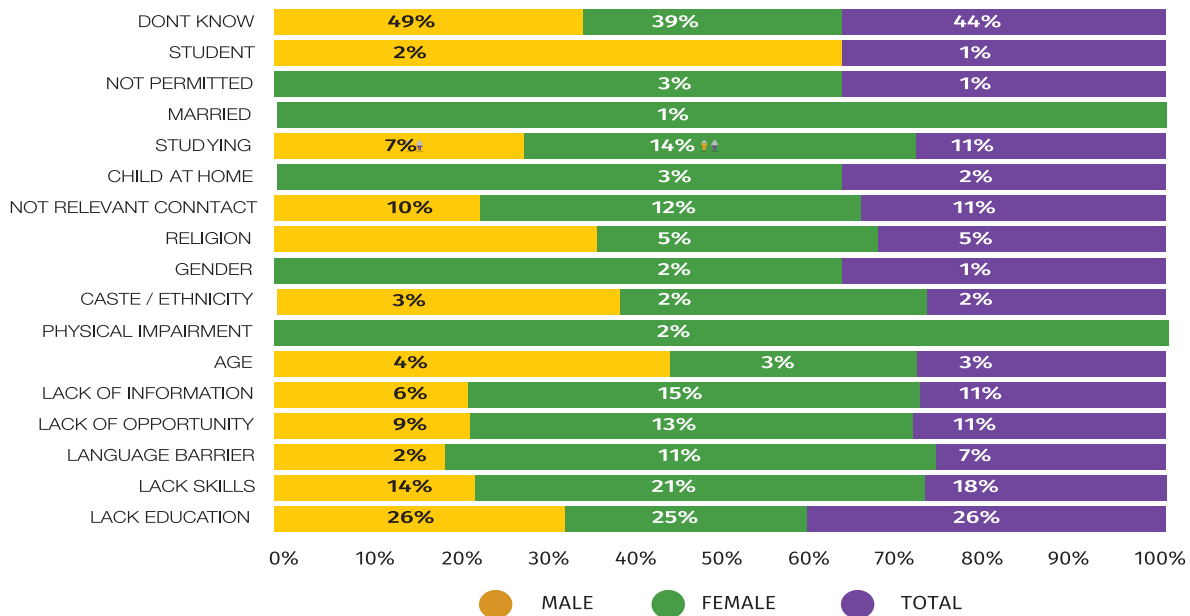
List of problems in order of prioritization:

- Employment – difficulties in getting jobs
- Delinquency – bad influence on the younger ones
- Lack of good education, low motivation leading to dropping out of school.

An interesting phenomenon observed was that the majority, with low education and those having jobs as sanitary workers or as a government employees were the ones satisfied. Even those engaged in private jobs desired a government jobs, equating it with permanency and pension in future; even if it was of a low level or, as presumed not commensurate with their educational level.

The figures 4.15, 4.16 and 4.17 provide data on the respondent's perceptions/ experiences regarding the availability of employment opportunities for Christian youth.

Figure 4.15: Perception Of Youth About Reasos For Unemployment



“I feel the main challenge lies in the financial resources to start up one’s own business. Having said that I also feel that there is a sense of inferiority that also exists which makes the youth apprehensive whether people would work for or purchase the services/ goods from them if they come to know that she/ he is from the Christian community.”

Source: KII

Almost 79 percent of the youth opined that the opportunities were either few or rare. Findings of the FGDs also reveal that many of respondents, despite being educated ended up working as daily laborers/ sanitary workers/ cleaners, causing several youth to perceive the pursuit of higher education as a waste of time. Many shared that even if a job is socially considered as a low or a dirty job, they would be willing to accept the position if it was a government employment, as it is considered “Pakki Nokri”; lifetime with pension benefits. Nepotism, they identified, was another factor that prevented them to avail various employment opportunities. To another multiple response question regarding their preferred and specific job sector, as high as 71 percent of the youth wanted a government job (Figure 4.17). The majority, however, opined that there were very few opportunities available for the minorities in this sector.

To another multiple choice question on what were the major employment issues in different organization, 45 percent said there was religious discrimination, 41 percent stated that the jobs that they could avail were low paid opportunities, while 19 percent identified ‘insecure working arrangements’ as one of the major issues. Although, the desire to upgrade their status was there, their life was in a “limbo”, resigning to it they preferred to “stay below the radar” or away from the mainstream. In a multiple choice question about what

FIGURE 4.16: Perception of Christian Youth About Employment Opportunities (%)

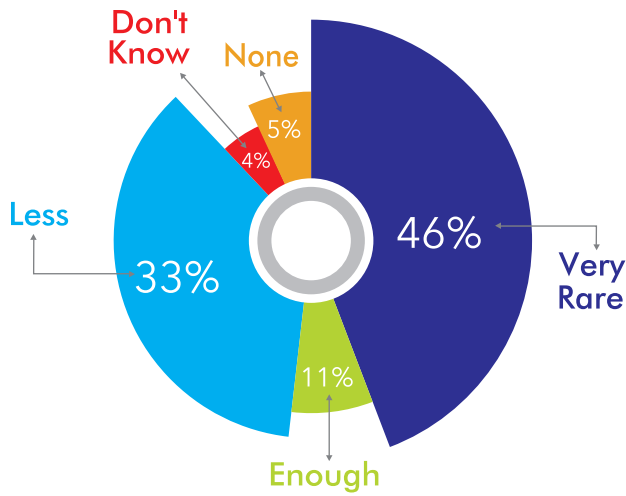


FIGURE 4.17: Perception of Christian Youth About Employment Sector With Less Opportunities

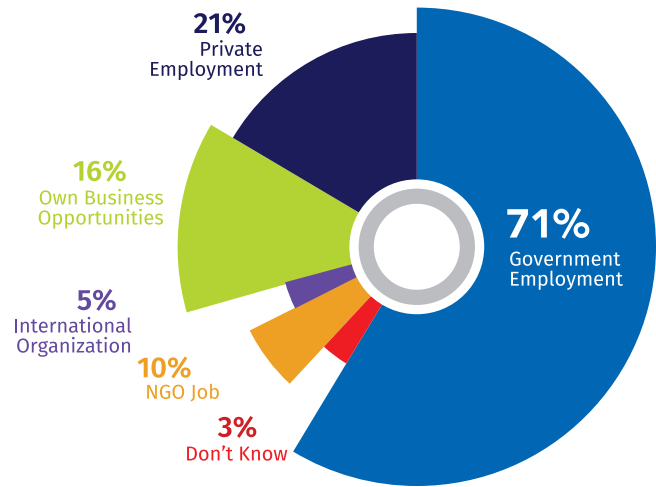
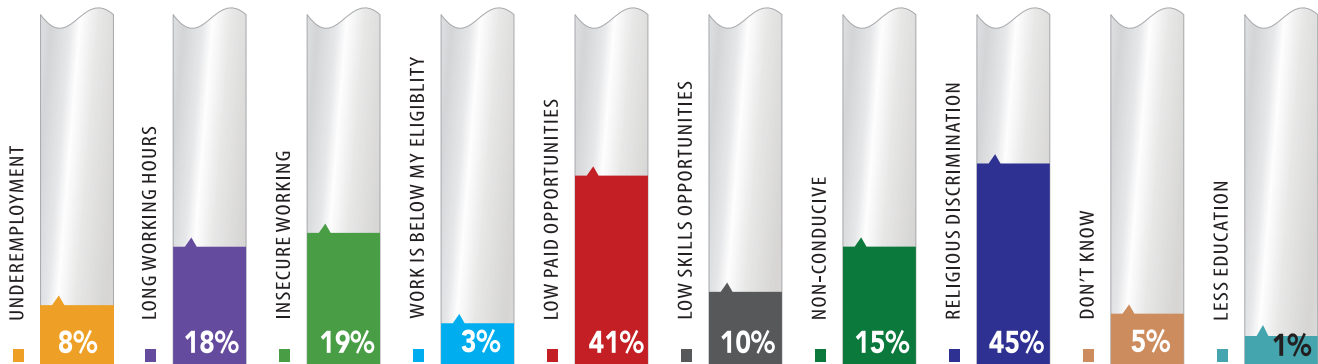


FIGURE 4.18: Major Employment Issue in Organizations (multiple choice)



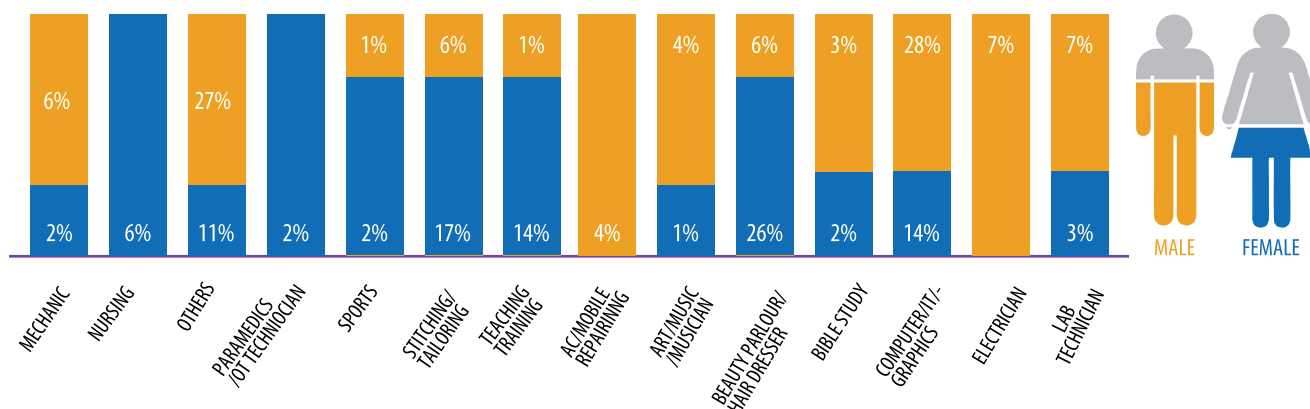
will happen if all the Christians are educated, 71 percent respondents agreed that if they were educated, this would lead to better employment and upgradation of their socio-economic status. Almost all, 93 percent also stated that improving English Language skills could get them a job, a better job.

III. LACK OF MARKETABLE SKILLS AND LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITY (INFORMAL SECTOR)

The survey results show that 137 (71%) of the respondents were never exposed to any vocational training compared to 29 percent who received some form of a vocational training. Of these, 26 percent girls had received training in beauty parlor, 28 percent boys took computer courses, while 27 percent acquired skills that were not marketable.

Upon asking if they would like to acquire a skill/ attend a training or would like to pursue further education, 51 percent showed interest while 49 percent categorically said they were not interested. Of those who showed interest, 70 percent wanted to receive vocational training; 29 percent wanted to get the opportunity to study further; while 22 percent wanted skills development.

FIGURE 4.19: Received Training - Distribution y Gender (%)



NEET (NEITHER IN EMPLOYMENT, NOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING)

The NEET indicator refers to persons meeting two conditions: (i) they are not employed (i.e. are unemployed or inactive), and (ii) they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. If we follow this customized definition i.e. youth who are unemployed and not involved in any economic activity (inactive) and not receiving/received any training and by excluding nor (currently) in education then we get a total NEET figure of 42.8% with males at 21.5 % and females as 21.4%. These figures support the rest of the data that a majority of the youth is basically inactive and lethargic towards any activity.

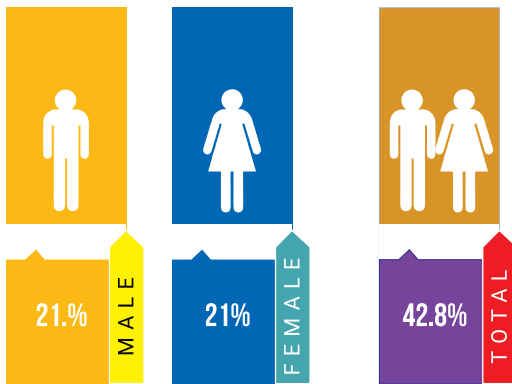
The share of youth population, who are Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training, the so-called “NEET rate”, is an indicator that is associated with its assumed potential to address a broad array of vulnerabilities among youth, touching on issues of unemployment, early school leaving and labour market discouragement. Eurostat, ILO and certain other organizations have adopted the following definition of the NEET rate: the percentage of the population of a given age group and sex who is not employed and not involved in further education or training. The indicator refers to persons meeting two conditions: (i) they are not employed (i.e. are unemployed or inactive), and (ii) they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey⁷.

Young persons who are not engaged in education, employment or training, expressed as the “NEET”, are being used increasingly in developed economies as a measure of youth marginalization and disengagement. The expansion of the focus from unemployment to the broader concept of NEET responds to the need to also consider youth who have given up looking for work or who are unwilling to join the labour market.

If we follow the customized definition i.e. youth who are unemployed and not involved in any economic activity (inactive) and have not received any training, and by excluding nor (currently) in education then we get a total NEET figure of 42.8 percent (females 21.4% & males 21.5 %) for the youth population included in this study (Figure 4.20). These figures support the study data, indicating that a majority of the youth is basically inactive and lethargic towards any activity. However, if we look at the education

⁷ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_343153.pdf

FIGURE 4.20: Neet Indicator (%)



During our schooling, going to government schools we face discrimination, one or two incidents where some students may ask us not to drink water from the same glass. However most of our friends are Muslims - Lahore Youth.

I was employed by Daewoo Peshawar Terminal, where I requested them to give me time off for praying on Sunday. They refused and I left. If people are allowed extra time for Friday prayers, we should be provided that time off as well. Peshawar Girl in FGD

figures, 57 percent youth reported not being enrolled in any educational institution, while the majority of those who said they were pursuing education, were either preparing for appearing in the examination privately, by studying at home, or were preparing to appear for the supplementary/ reappearing for the same subject.

I. LACK OF INCLUSIVENESS LEADING TO EXCLUSION

When youth have nothing to do to enhance their capabilities or lack opportunities to utilize their skills, they are easy prey as pawns by local violence, and get embroiled in instigated violence. The FGDs highlighted this malleable nature of youth, who vacillate between peace and violence, under the influence of peers and adults in their immediate social environment and hence lack of independent decision making. Upon enquiring if they felt they were unable to get a job of their choice because they were Christians, a little less than half (45%) confirmed the negative discrimination, while 47 percent said they did not experience any such discrimination. The remaining 8 percent were not sure about such discrimination.

To another multiple choice question on whether they felt discriminated, in general, on the basis of religion, more than half, 52 percent, stated yes they felt negatively discriminated, while 49 percent had no such experience (including 5 % of those who said 'don't know'). Of those who felt discriminated identified 'being a minority' and 'belonging to the low socio-economic status' as major causes of general discrimination.(Figure 4.21a, 4.21b)

Responding to another related question on whether they felt safe living in their place of residence and the areas around, a large percentage of the youth (70%) had no safety and security issues (Figure 4.22). However, when the youth were asked if there were any incidents of violence in their area of residence and the reasons for it. More than one reason was recorded, including 49 percent having reported religion as the basis of violent incidents in and around their areas of residence (Figure 4.23).

FIGURE 4.21a

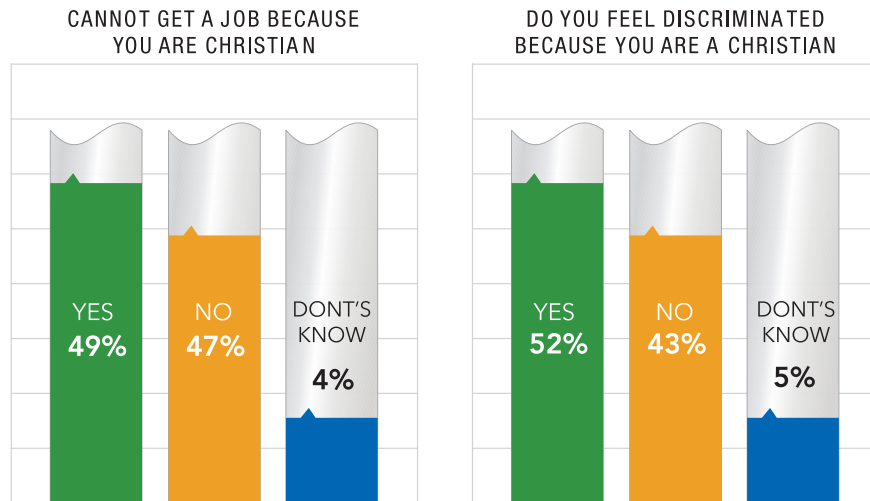


FIGURE 4.21b: Reasons for Discrimination

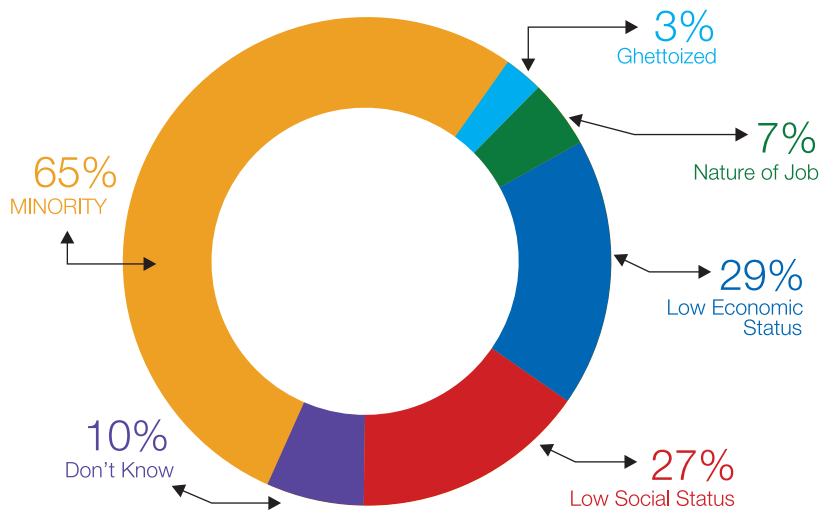


FIGURE 4.22

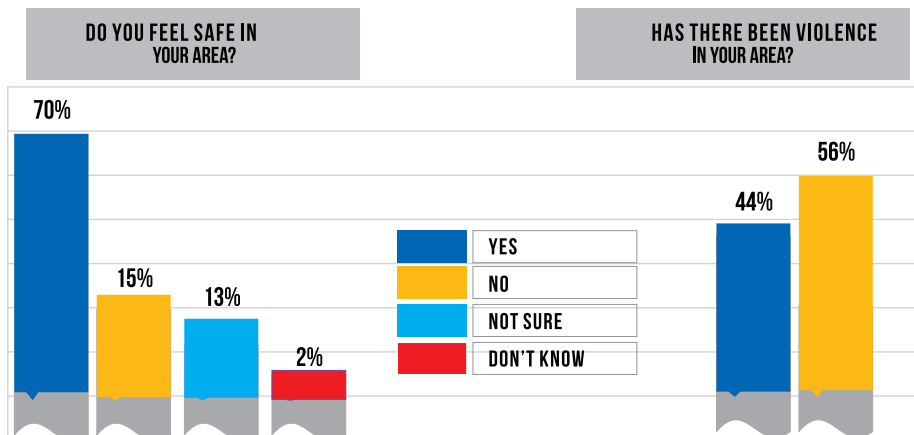
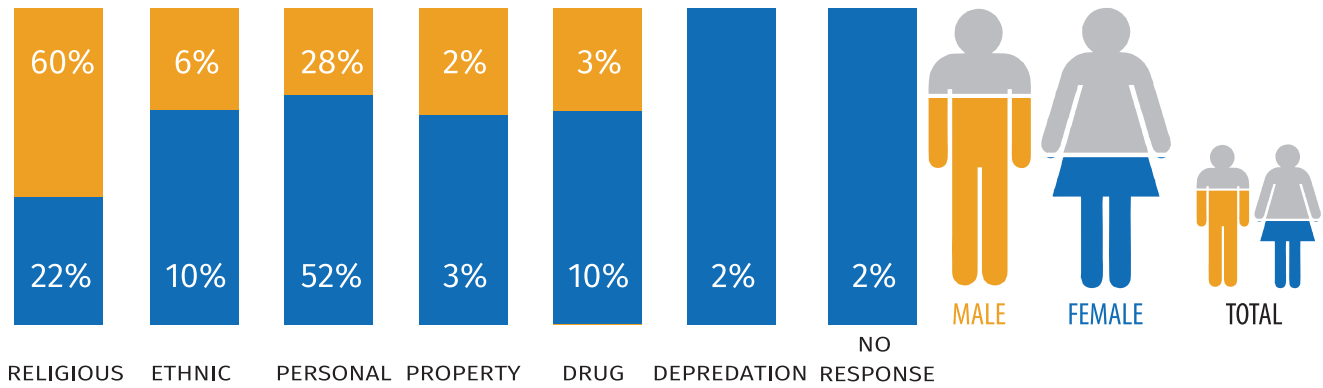
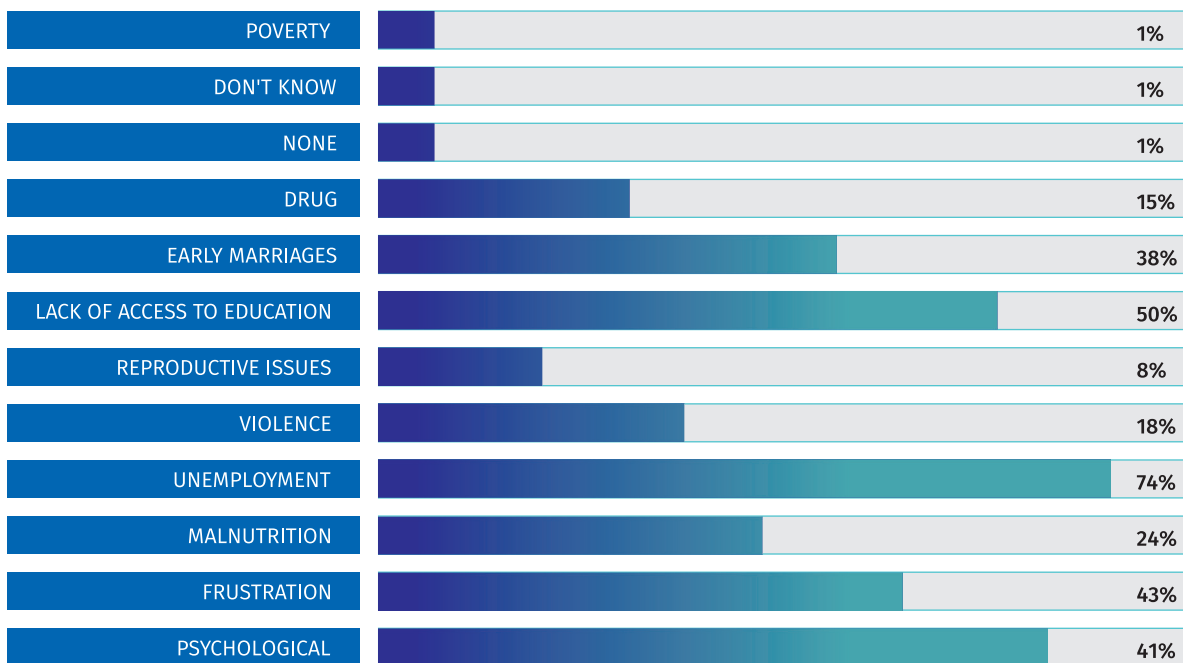


FIGURE 4.23: Reasons for Violence in the Area



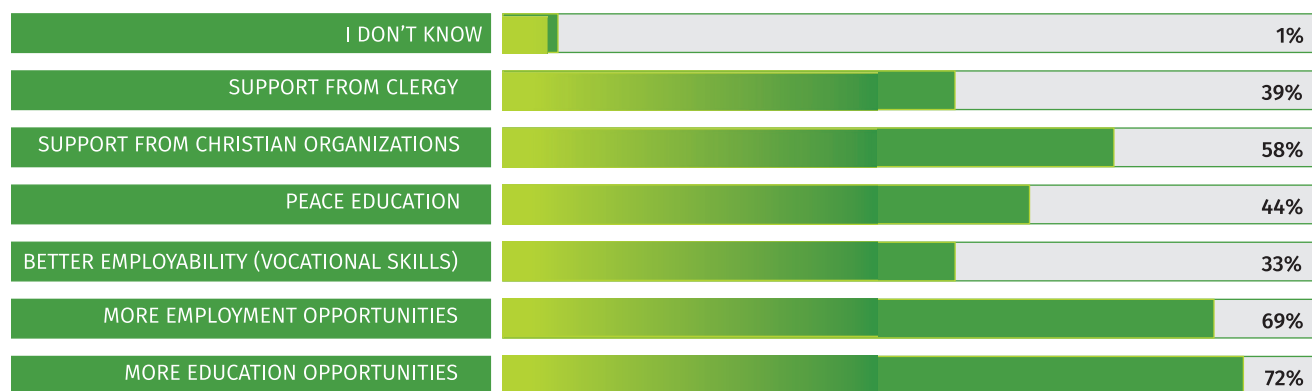
In response to a direct multiple choice question regarding the main issues faced by the Christian youth, as high as 74 percent related to unemployment followed by 50 percent who said lack of access to education was a major issue. A sizeable 43 percent considered 'frustration' as an issue and a challenge, 41 percent said 'psychological' issues, while 38 percent opined 'early marriage' as one of the factors amongst others, as shown in Figure 4.24.

FIGURE 4.24: Challenges Faced By Christian Youth



The respondents were asked to share their opinion and recommendations on how the Christian youth can be engaged in positive activities. Providing more than one recommendation to this multiple choice question, an overwhelming 72 percent recommended and wished that more avenues of attaining education could be made available, 69 percent said greater employment opportunities should be generated, 58 percent desired support from Christian organizations, 44 percent were interested in peace education, 39 percent expect the clergy to provide support, and 33 percent recommended that skills enhancement opportunities should be made available (Figure 4.25).

FIGURE 4.25: Recommendations To Increase Youth Engagement In Postive Activities



The majority of the youth during the FGDs expressed that “the Church is not doing anything for us”; they expect that “the Church should provide support for education and provide social guidance and counselling, along with the spiritual teaching.”

A specific topic focused on during the FGDs was - How does the youth see themselves growing in their faith as a Christian? (The challenges to live out and grow in their faith. The mushrooming of Churches (any faith/ theology) within the communities instead of registered Churches.

To this query, the youth unanimously voiced that they felt proud of being a Christian, notwithstanding, as indicated in the study, the youth appear to have gravitated away from the religious activities. Even in communities that are home to growing Churches, the overall percentage of the population that attends Church continues to drop, especially among under 30s.

The challenge of the Christian youth growing to live out and grow in their faith is also complex with mixed convictions. The majority of the youth during the FGDs expressed that “the Church is not doing anything for us’they expect that “the Church should provide support for education and provide social guidance and counselling, along with the spiritual teaching.” Therefore, youth, as well as, opinion makers expect the Church to play a positive and an active youth development role to benefit the Christian community at large.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this national study, on the Issues and challenges of the Christian youth in Pakistan, reveal that the majority of the Christian families, living in urban and peri-urban locations (included in the study) belong to the lower socio-economic strata of the society. The canvas of the study was spread over a total of 474 women and men, married & unmarried, boys and girls aged between 15-29 years. A large majority, 71.6 percent, of the Christian youth in the survey were under the age of 25 years. Social characteristics of the study show a high 92 percent of the youth had ever attended school; with a high dropout at early stages, tapering off to a low 25 percent of the youth who managed to get enrolled at the intermediate level, that is grade 11-12 (this percentage, in no way, indicates that those enrolled at the intermediate level, actually completed the 2-year term).

The majority of the youth belong to poor families, living on a total household income ranging between (PKR) Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 30,000 per month. Low household income is a composite of the low paid jobs that the youth, their family members including the parents are engaged in. A total of 87 percent of the families live in extended families, including the grandparents, siblings, children of other siblings, amongst others, weighing heavily on the already meagre resources of the families. This has, by and large, led to unaffordability of accessing quality education and acquiring vocational skills, which could ameliorate the socio-economic status of the young. The youth appear disgruntled and expressed that “we can’t even afford the concessions that are provided by some Christian schools and colleges, leave alone the capital needed for entering a vocational or a training centre.” The situation is further exacerbated by lack of an enabling environment, that is, lack of motivation, counselling, guidance, leadership/role models, neither at the family nor at the Church or social levels. “The parents are too busy being out of the house to earn daily or monthly wages”, shared the youth included in the FGDs. Encapsulating these determinants, most of the Christian families and youth are trapped in this vicious cycle of poverty, affecting distorted self-worth and daunting them to interact with the mainstream society. In other words, they suffer from a perpetuating situation termed as a ‘minority syndrome’ as defined by a Christian leader.

Experts/leaders opinions on the socio-economic situation of the Christian youth is in tandem and strongly substantiated by the findings of the research. Most of the experts opined that “Unfortunately education today has become too commercial, hence most of the schools, including Christian are out of the reach of the underprivileged communities; furthermore, those who do receive education have no awareness as to what to do with the education acquired; no guidance, motivation or counselling is available to students at any level regarding careers and opportunities, job quotas etc.” – KIIs

Considering the ongoing state of the poor Christian families and its ghettoization, the youth cohort included in the study has been further marginalized on the basis of two major factors: First, that a growing number of the poor Christian families have in-migrated from the rural to urban areas, in search of better employment opportunities and an uplifted city lifestyle, which has not materialized effectively. The second factor relates to the Islamization of the Pakistani society initiated and brutally implemented by the Zia regime, in the late 1970s, leading to lasting repercussions on the society at large, and indenting the minorities in specific. The youth cohort of this study is a product of the Zia regime and is growingly bearing the fallout effects of it. The Vehari case of an eighth (8th) class Christian student, who was killed by his own class fellows for drinking water from the same source is indicative of some of the grave repercussions of Islamization. Other cases bearing witness to the Islamization factor, at the national level, include the killings of the Governor Salman Taseer and the Minister for Minority Affairs Shahbaz Bhatti, to mention a few. The key informants highlighted this particular aspect stating “Ever since 1980 when the Islamization of Pakistan started; the poor Christian community finds itself isolated; resulting in ghettoization of the community, it has changed the narrative - identity crisis. We have multi identities, this unfortunately continues to date. The intolerant and hostile attitudes towards Christians compel

them to live and remain within their own secure comfort zones, hence, resulting in staying away from the mainstream.” – Klls

Overall the issues and challenges of the youth are summarized as:

- i. Lack of Quality Education
- ii. Lack of Finances
- iii. Lack of Decent Employment Opportunities (Formal sector)
- iv. Lack of Marketable Skills leading to livelihood (Informal Sector)
- v. Lack of an Enabling Environment
- vi. Lack of inclusiveness leading to Exclusion
- vii. Lack of personality development and grooming

The challenge of the Christian youth growing to live out and grow in their faith is also complex with mixed convictions. An approximate half of the youth are not inclined towards the main Church. They are of the opinion that “the Church is not doing anything for us”, they expect that “the Church should provide support for education, social guidance and counselling, along with the spiritual teachings”. Therefore, youth as well as opinion makers expect the Church to play a positive-youth development role.

Another spiritual leader stated, “we are misguiding our youth and they fail to grow in their faith. Yes, we do have a very small percent of youth who are strong in their faith and even ready to be challenged. The church is not ready to guide, inspire and sponsor our youth. Churches needs to be involved in the uplifting of their congregations.”

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

The current findings suggest the following strategies need to be adopted on two levels:

1. Address the issues and the challenges that hamper their (the youth) growth for education, employment and social engagement, multiplying the opportunities that are present in the current scenario
2. Strengthen partnerships and collaborations with youth development initiatives both at the government, private and the NGO levels, especially involving the Christian organizations

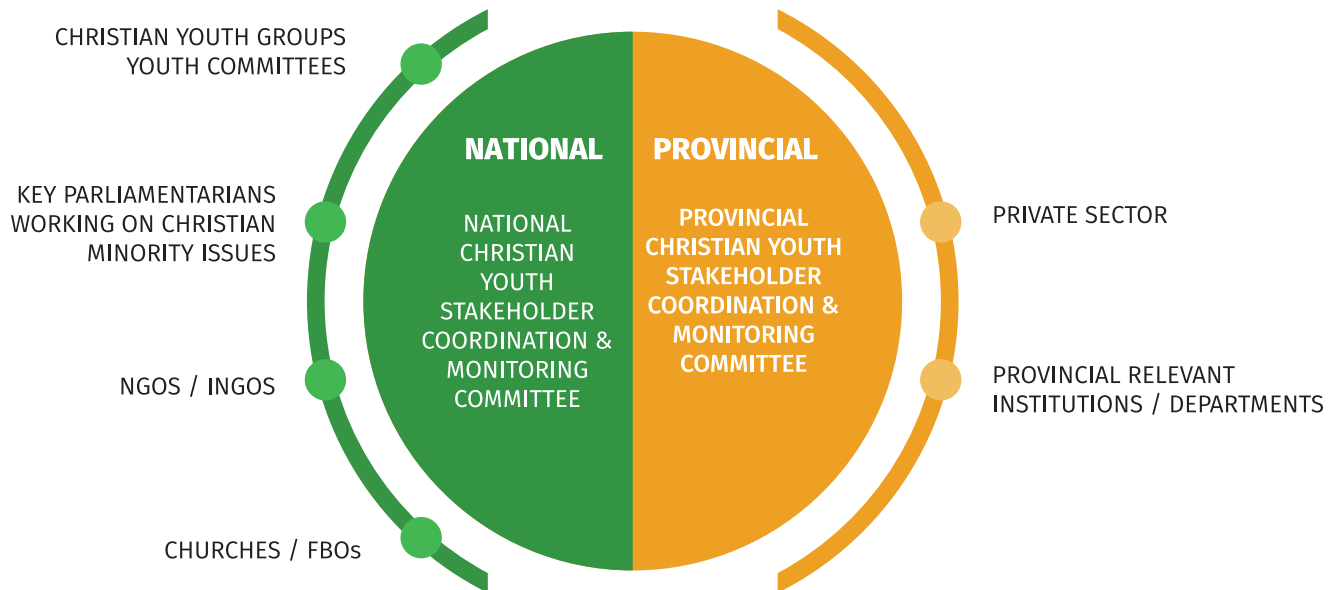
There needs to be a massive effort with a holistic approach in order to address all avenues in a parallel

manner. The underpinning tenet of the framework is to champion an approach to bring all stakeholders working for youth on a single platform where they acknowledge each as equal partners working together as a unified team implementing, collaborating and supplementing each other to promote Christian youth development.

Under the following overarching mechanism, concerning both at the provincial/ district level and the national level where a Christian Youth Stakeholders and Monitoring Committee needs to be formulated comprising of representatives and interacting with key institutions/ departments there is a need to build the capacities of youth.



1. Making education available to all and by creating large-scale awareness among the communities to encourage youth to acquire education. The power of education needs to be highlighted at every level, especially by the faith-based CSOs, Churches and Christian schools. Concessions should be provided to the students, based on the individual economic standing of the family. These institutions should expand their outreach to cover both the rural and urban areas of the country.
2. Formation of youth groups for imparting skills/trainings, are essential at the community level. Young people work better in groups. The groups should be involved in other activities like sports, social gatherings and outdoor activities. The trained should then go out and further train groups within their respective communities.
3. Strong awareness and information campaigns should be launched for the youth to have the awareness and knowledge of the employment opportunities both at the civil society, public and private levels.
4. A cluster approach at tehsil level should be initiated. This approach should be structured to include the tripartite stakeholders, including the CSOs, the Church and the Donors, other than the



active participation of the parents and other community members.

5. A micro-enterprise system along with and for relevant trainings will help the Christian youth to earn a decent livelihood, as lack of jobs is compelling them to take up menial jobs. It will equally help in the socio-economic uplift of the Christian community in general.
6. The Church/Clergy should take the responsibility to extend help in numerous ways to uplift the community, especially through awareness programs, career counselling, skill development. While the CSO leadership should undertake their responsibilities in a way leading to being role models.

National level initiatives:

All the stakeholders, including the CSOs, Churches, the communities and the donors should work in a collective fashion, by working in coordination with each other on a single national program/agenda, under the same umbrella, for the development of the youth in specific, and the Christian community in general.

7. The national, sub-national levels strategic steering committees need to be formed to develop programs, and play an active monitoring and accountability role for overseeing progress and evaluating the impact of the programs, and for future direction.
8. The donors should come together and, in consultation with each other, appropriate their resources sectorally, by taking responsibilities to cover the Education, Employment and Engagement categories.
9. Minority political leadership should pressurize government to ensure safety and protection of every citizen, to ensure that legislation/policies protecting religious minorities is implemented in totality.

The Agha Khan community model should be replicated, contextualized according to the needs of the Christian Community.

Pakistan Partnership Initiative is the outcome of the efforts of likeminded people who felt the burden and took the responsibility to holistically revive the body of Christ in Pakistan with the vision to equip, empower and nurture communities, youth, leadership and institutions to actively engage and catalyze holistic sustainable development and transformation in Pakistan. Under its key priority areas of :

- 1) Leadership Development
- 2) Organizational Capacity Building
- 3) Children and Youth
- 4) Business & Skill Development
- 5) Strengthening Church Insitutions

Youth Development

Pakistan Partnership Initiative (PPI) has strategically prioritized Youth Development as one of its areas of intervention which focuses on confidence building among youth regarding their identity and purpose, career counselling, mentoring, life skills, career options, and awareness raising among youth regarding core Christian values and ethics; ultimately preparing youth for serving the Kingdom of God and Pakistan for larger benefit of the Nation.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

With the objective of identifying and deciphering the key socio-economic and cultural factors that impact the Pakistani Christian Youth aged 15-29, this study aims to give greater clarity on the strategies and activities required to maximize the potential of Christian Youth highlighting their specific needs and challenges in the contemporary context of Pakistan.

Legal status:

Pakistan Partnership Initiative is a humanitarian initiative registered under The Societies Act 1860.