

YOUTH DE-RADICALIZATION: AN INQUIRY FROM YOUTH IN PAKISTAN

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Background

Setting the directions of youth and managing their capabilities in a positive way is a serious concern of the modern world, because youth is more vulnerable than any other segment of the society to the multiple challenges. Young people are more vulnerable due to unemployment, heightened poverty, and are often afflicted with high rates of crime and violence (Sampson & Bean, 2006). Similarly, youth radicalization and involvement in violent behavior is also on rise, which increase the importance of managing youth and protecting them from radicalization. On the other hand, youth is the most important segment of the society as it has the potential and determination to contribute in the overall development of the society. Henceforth, properly managing their abilities and positive development of the youth is essential for the smooth running and development of the society (Silva & Souto, 2009).

However, one question arises that, which segment of the society is considered as youth because there are differing views and stances regarding the age bracket of youth. Therefore, defining youth is a difficult task owing to changes in demographic, economic and socio-cultural circumstances around the globe (UNDESA, 2010). However, United Nations defines "Youth" as the person between the ages of 15-24 years (UN, 2010). United Nations is using the term youth and young people interchangeably. Youth comprises most of the population of the world.

Youth is increasingly valued for their ideas, energies, imagination and skills they bring to society (Brown, Larson, & Saraswathi, 2002). Despite being the most important segment of the society youth population is vulnerable to the radicalization and extremism. The provision of basic needs as if health and education are important aspects that youth must

possess and that help the youth counter the radicalization. Youth welfare can be enhanced by empowering them and engaging them in the policy making process and this is the best way to utilize their potential (Ostby, 2008). This study addresses the same issue by finding out the risk and protective factors regarding the youth radicalization.

Radicalization

The term radicalization was first used in 1970s when it was used as a political dimension and actually uses of violence. It was referred to an interactive social or state movement and dynamics in the formation of aggressive and violent, most often covert groups (Kundnani, 2012). Until the early 2000s, the notion of radicalization was rarely mentioned in terrorism and political violence however, now it has been widely acknowledged and mentioned in the literature as the process of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs. Similarly, radicalization has been addressed as the precursor of terrorism in modern literature after 2000s.

The term of radicalization is very difficult to define as scholars have attributed it as poorly defined and complex phenomenon. The term is often interchangeably used as radical, radicalize and radicalization (Schmid, 2004). Schmid, 2011 defined it as the “process by which individual become socialize into engaging in political violence without moral restraints”. In addition to that, term radical and radicalization have also been defined in a more comprehensive way. A parson harboring deep-felt desire for essential change in the socio-political order is called a radical person. On the other hand, radicalization is a growing readiness to support and pursue far-reaching changes in the society that contradict the existing order of the society (Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010). Despite multiple dimensions and areas in radicalization, there are two important types and areas of radicalization. Non-violent and violent radicalization are two major facets of radicalization (Bartlett, Birdwell & King (2010). According to the EU, radicalization is defined as “the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to acts of terrorism” (European Commission, 2005). On the same token Ajzen defines radicalization an attitude as being “a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event, and like criminal attitudes towards violence” (Ajzen, 1988).

Non-Violent Radicalization

The first type of radicalization is known as non-violent radicalization and it may be referred as the first step towards the violent radicalization. Non-violent radicalization is a process whereby individual hold radical views in relation to the status quo but do not take or directly assist terrorist activities. In this type of radicalization individual only develop radical or extremist thoughts but do not take actions that are violent.

Violent Radicalization

Violent radicalization is actually taking part into the extremist or terrorist activities or assist such activities. This is the most serious form of radicalization as it directly disrupts the fabric of the society.

Risk and Protective Factors of Youth Radicalization

Radicalization is a type of behavior that has affected each individual in the society. All the important segments of the society are equally vulnerable to radicalization and violent extremism. However, it has been acknowledged that youth is the most vulnerable segment of the society with regard to radicalization. Youth radicalization is often attributed to the parenting and socialization processes (Pauwels & De Waele, 2014).

There are a number of factors behind the phenomenon of youth radicalization. Some of them have more importance while the rest of them have little. Demographic background is the leading factor behind the issue of youth radicalization. The children that live in the miserable circumstances have more tendencies to be engaged in the radical activities (Victorof, 2005). Their parents also cannot pay attention to them due lack of resources and poverty. Parents have many children which also plays a lead to radicalization. It is not possible to educate all the children rather the most of them remain uneducated which tend the children to motivate to the way of radicalization. On the other hand, the psychological conditions which again have links with demographic backgrounds also play a role in radicalization. The psychological pressure is also triggered by the religious means which create a path of radicalization among the youth (Stern, 2016).

In the modern times, the new techniques are being introduced among the young generation about that the parents are not familiar. This is the reason that the social researchers are also focusing the emerging trends of radicalization which include the low self-control, the schooling years, the parental involvement and normative structure of the society (Pauwels & Schils 2016). In the traditional societies, the norms and values had the strong control over the personal development but contrary to that the modern societies lack this way of social control. The modern/urban societies have weaker normative structure and by the same token, the parents also lack the control over their children. All of the responsibility has been laid on the educational institutions where the youth is easily targeted by the extremist. Hence, it is the demand of the current era, that the governments must frame well established policies for the educational institutions to control in issue of youth radicalization (Baier et al. 2016).

In addition to that, lacks of social integration and group discrimination have been found to be an important factor in youth indulging into radicalization. On the same token delayed justice because of procedural justice is another factor of youth radicalization. In western societies youth sub-culture or youth violent sub-culture also promote youth radicalization.

These sub culture are based on ideological differences and street gangs, which eventually establish radicalized thoughts and beliefs (Ramalingam, 2014). It has been observed that sub-culture movement is the most prominent factor in youth indulging violent extremism (Taylor, Currie & Holbrook, 2013). Schmid, 2013 explained in a comprehensive way the process by which youth can be a victim of radicalization and violent extremism. The researcher attributed three levels of reasons of youth radicalization.

1. The first level is micro-level where youth is prone to radicalization owing to identity problems, lack of social integration, alienation and relative deprivation.
2. The second level is meso-level where youth become radical due to surrounding and neighborhood.
3. At the third level, known as macro- level, where youth are disposed to radicalization because of political system, majority- minority relationship and broader social relationships.

Youth Radicalization in Pakistan

The vivid Pakistan youth can be viewed both in positive and negative ways, in the coming decades it can lead to a prosperous Pakistan if it is handled properly or it can be a liability for the country. The mismanagement of the resources and lack of proper schooling is leading this youth to deviant ways which sometimes have fatal consequences as they may be part of the religious or extremist movements through radicalization (Haque, 2014). The radicalization of the youth is not only reported among the far flung backward areas rather it has encompassing the educational institutions too. The colleges and even the universities are being targeted by the means of radicalization. This has creates a sophisticated form of youth radicalization in Pakistan due to emergence of the new technological ways too (Afzal, 2018).

The youth which is becoming the easy target of radicalization is basically from the deprived areas of Pakistan. The lack of educational and employment opportunities, the youth is being inspired by the local religious r ethnic groups. They consider such local authorities their ideals and obey their order due to their fake charismatic personalities. They are also creating confusions among the minds of these tender souls which are ultimately be their prey if not controlled by the administration properly (Anwar, 2017).

The youth radicalization in Pakistan is largely perceived in the religious framework that religious institutions promote ways of radicalization. On contrary, the reality is something differs from the larger perception that religion is not the main promoter of youth radicalization in this country. Madrassah education is also associated with engagement of the youth in terrorist activities but this is not only madrassah education there are other factors too like political and ethnic (Winthrop & Graff, 2010)

The young scholars are also conducting the systematic studies on the association of religiosity and terrorism in Pakistan. There are researches which show that religion is not

the major factor of youth radicalization in Pakistan as Rana (2019) found in a survey that 92% of the respondents reported that religion plays an important role in the life so it cannot promote terrorism in society. Islam strongly prohibits the killing and massacre of the people rather it promotes solidarity and stability among the different segments of the society. Then how religion can be major factor behind the youth radicalization in Pakistan (Rana, 2019)?

The researchers in Pakistan are trying to locate the hidden realities of youth radicalization in Pakistan. As most the researchers found that educational institutions are becoming the hub of radicalization among youth in Pakistan. Contrary to this perception, Siddiqi (2010) explored that educational background of the youth does not have causal link with radicalization in Pakistan. The uniqueness of her research can be viewed in her research as she made distinction of hybrid religious and socio-political attitudes which concluded the attitudes of the people are dual. They are moderate in one side and religiously conservative on the other hand (Siddiqi, 2010).

The determinants of youth radicalization are mixed in Pakistan as a few the above mentioned studies reported that there is not close association between the youth radicalization and education and religion. At the same time, there are some studies which found the same as it is perceived mainly. Similarly Yusuf (2016) explained that alone education is not sole predictor of youth radicalization. It may be a factor of the same when it is merged with other factors like background and parents. According to the researcher, the youth of Pakistan is at the pre-radicalization stage which may be victim of the phenomenon in future if it is not tackled properly. According to the researcher, psychological frustration, lower socio-economic conditions, poor governance and the weak writ of the state are the major factors of youth radicalization in Pakistan (Yusuf, 2016).

Role of Family and Peer in Countering Youth Radicalization

Social institutions are very important in terms of influencing the behavior of the youth. In the first place family is the most significant social institution in terms of nurturing and guiding the behavior of the youth (Osgood & Chambers, 2000). Family connectedness and support in the form of economic and emotional support is very important to make the behavior of youth in line with social fabric, hence family is the major protective factor against radicalization and other deviant behavior (Cahill et al., 2002). Role of family has also been acknowledged in the development of the youth in positive direction which indirectly care the youth from violent behavior.

Youth with other peers involved in community activities help in setting their directions and help them positive utilization of their resources and potential. This helps youth from engaging in negative and radicalized activities. Similarly, violent organization tends to focus less on such youth and have more focus on youth that are not involved in healthy activities (Catalano et al., 2004). It is also evident from the existing text that community

also serves as the major protective factor against youth radicalization. Community empowers youth to use their potential in the community activities that boost their confidence and helps them in attaining a recognized status in the society (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Role of community is also acknowledged in terms of setting goals and positive directions of the youth which controls the behavior of the youth (McLaughlin, 2000).

On the same token the role of the formal schooling and education system is also at the higher level. In the first place education and formal schooling teaches the rule and regulation of the society which help the youth learn the positive social fabric of the society and protect youth from engaging in the negative activities (Crosnoe, 2004). The role of school is not limited to academic performance of the students only. Apart from social and political training of the youth school's extra-curricular activities have great bearing on the overall development and performance of the youth. These activities promote competition and make the youth work in group and towards desired goals (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Existing literature has illustrated that the population of Pakistan is primarily composed of young people and this trend is more likely to continue till 2050. Hence, this is the right time to channelize their capabilities and potential in the right direction. Youth capabilities must be used in the positive direction which will not only benefit youth but society as well.

However, in the current circumstances the youth population is confronting multiple issues and challenges. They mainly confront issues such as unemployment, lack of guidance and support from the social and political circles. In addition to that youth is vulnerable to radicalization and violence in Pakistan and there are multiple factors behind it. There is a growing trend of youth involvement in radicalized and violent activities. Therefore, a proper mechanism and framework must be developed to counter this growing radicalization in youth population of Pakistan.

Existing literature has identified multiple protective factors for youth against radicalization and violent extremism. The current study is an attempt to look into this issue by identifying key protective factors against youth radicalization in the Pakistani context. The current study intends to illustrate the role of family, peer and community as the informal mechanism and support system that protect the young people from indulging in deviant and radicalized activities. Similarly, the role of school as the formal instrument of protecting and guiding young people from radicalization.

Objectives

This research aims to achieve the following objectives

1. To explore the role of family, peer, neighborhood/community and Schooling in reducing the youth radicalization

Significance of the Study

Taking into account the issues and problems of the youth is a purely sociological issue and must be understood in a sociological way. Youth is the most important segment of the society yet continue to struggle to gain proper recognition, which requires a proper insight into their problems (Muggleton & David, 2002). The findings of the current study provide deeper insight into the topic by exploring and explaining the prospects of youth radicalization in the Pakistani context.

Youth radicalization and factors that enhance or inhibit that topic needs to be explored in Pakistan. Youth radicalization as a research topic has gained much importance in the recent times owing to international pressure as it has distorted the social fabric of the society. This study rightly addresses the issue and explores the factors that are associated with youth radicalization in the Pakistan.

Youth radicalization is on rise there is a lack of seriousness on part of the stakeholders that can contribute in a positive way regarding the countering strategies (Leahy et al., 2007). The lack of youth development and their involvement in the radical activities is frequently associated with economic hardships, unemployment, a breakdown in social relationships and a lower level of standard of living. Hence, this issue should be treated from the point of the society, as the consequences are related to the society (Williams & Patrick, 2003). The findings of the current study elaborated the role of the all-important stakeholders in terms of countering youth radicalization.

The society has to take steps and measures to develop the youth in a positive way by improving the family ties, neighborhood, and community and education process. On the same token society must take steps to see the vulnerability of the youth in terms of violent behavior and radicalization. The findings of the current study are of prime importance and direct the way in which society can take part and contribute towards youth de-radicalization.

Methodology

The current study is based on quantitative research technique to determine the role of family, peer, community and schooling in de-radicalization of youth in Pakistan.

Research Design

Research design is the entire research process is executed with a particular frame of reference. This frame of reference is used to execute each stage of social research. There are multiple research designs but the current study investigates the phenomenon of youth radicalization by using explanatory research design. The primary assumption of explanatory research design is to find out the predictive relationship between independent and dependent variable (Creswell & Clark, 2011). This is the exact essence of the current study i.e. predicting the relationship role of family, peer, community and schooling in protecting the youth from radicalization.

Population of the Current Study

Youth is the population of the current study and to be more specific university students were selected as the population of the current study. The selection of the university students for the current study was not based on random rather there were few theoretical and methodological considerations while selecting youth as the population of the current study in general and university students in particular.

- Youth is the most important as well as most vulnerable segment of the society confronting the issue of radicalization hence youth was the most appropriate population in the current study.
- In addition to that, existing literature also provided strong evidences of researches being conducted on youth radicalization.

Sample Size

Selecting the sample size is an important step in quantitative research as it is not easy to get data from all the units of population. In the course of the current study, youth is the target population while university students comprises the study population. The researcher selected eleven universities from different regions of the country and sample was selected from those universities. As the total population and sampling frame was available, researcher applied Research Advisor Formula, 2006 to determine the sample size. Following is the research advisor formula.

$$n = \frac{X^2 * N * P * (1 - P)}{(ME^2 * (N - 1)) + (X^2 * P(1 - P))}$$

Where in formula is

n=sample size

X²=Chi-square for the specified confidence level at 1 degree of freedom

N=Population size

P=population size

ME= desired margin of error

A sample size of 3150 was determined by maintaining a 99% confidence interval and 2.5% margin of error

Sampling Technique

To identify the respondents the research adopted multistage sampling. The researcher passed through four stages to reach the respondent to conduct the interview/ survey. Following are the four stages involved in the sampling process

1. At the first stage researcher collected a list universities in Pakistan from HEC website. The researcher separately clustered the universities according diffident regions of the country i.e. federating units. This was done to equally include all the important regions of the country for a better representation of the entire country.
2. At the second, stage the researcher obtained enrollment of all the universities. Data from HEC website provided enrollment of 2014-15 and researcher stick to that enrollment as most of the universities have fixed seats.
3. During the third stage of the sampling technique, researcher applied proportionate sampling technique. This was done by dividing University size to the total population and then multiple with the sample size required.
4. At the final and fourth stage, the researcher applied convenient sampling technique. From every selected university the researcher collected the data based on availability of the students. As some of the universities were closed due to Covid restriction and some were applying hybrid model of classes.

Tool for Data Collection

A pre-coded self-administered questionnaire was used for this study. The questionnaire is formed in the English language along with Urdu, which is the regional language. This was done so that the respondents could easily understand what is being asked from them.

Independent Variable

Search institute 40 item scale was used as the independent variables regarding the role of family, peer, community and schooling.

Dependent Variable

For the measurement of the dependent variable i.e. youth radicalization two different tools developed by L. Rowell Huesmann, from Research Center for Group Dynamics. The first part contains 8-items while second part contains 12 items. The primary objective behind using two tools or two parts is to measure non-violent and violent radicalization. It is important to mention here is that there is no specific tool to measure radicalization rather measuring violent behavior or favoring violent behavior is the indicator of measuring radicalization (Rita, 2020). Existing literature and empirical research provide strong evidences that violent behavior and favoring violent behavior are the indicators of radicalization among youth (Borum, 2011). The term radicalization has most often been used in the political sphere hence most of the measurement tools of radicalization focused on violence to measure it (Crone, 2016). Hence, current study measured the radicalization among youth by focusing on non-violent and violent attitude.

Findings and Results

Socio-Demographic

This section of the report presents socio-demographic features of the participants of the current study. Age and gender are the two major areas and faculty of the participants of the study are important features of socio-demographic in the current study.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	19.00	161	6.4	6.4
	20.00	220	8.8	15.3
	21.00	270	10.8	26.1
	22.00	258	10.3	36.4
	23.00	336	13.5	49.8
	24.00	220	8.8	58.6
	25.00	362	14.5	73.1
	26.00	143	5.7	78.9
	27.00	83	3.3	82.2
	28.00	141	5.6	87.8
	29.00	69	2.8	90.6
	30.00	78	3.1	93.7
	31.00	157	6.3	100.0
Total	2498	100.0		

The above table shows the age distribution of the participants of the current study. The table shows that most of the participants i.e. 14.5% and 13.5% belongs to the age 25 years and 23 years respectively. Similarly, 6.4%, 8.8% and 10.8% belongs to 19, 20 and 21 year respectively. The least number in the age category is 3.1% of 30 years. However, it is evident that most of the respondents i.e. 73.1% belong to 19 to 25 years age group.

Table No. 3.5 Gender of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	1338	53.6	53.6
	Female	1160	46.4	100.0
	Total	2498	100.0	

Gender is another important socio-demographic variable of the current study and above table shows that 53.6% of the respondents were male while 46.4% were female. Researcher tried to ensure representation of both the genders.

Radicalization

Table No. 3.11 Violent and non-violent radicalization

	Low	Medium	High	Total
Non-violent radicalization	881 (35.26%)	1010 (40.43%)	607 (24.29%)	2498
Violent Radicalization	1210 (48.43%)	888 (35.54%)	400 (16.01)	2498

Before applying the regression analysis and to predict the relationship between independent and dependent variables the above tables presents a general understanding of the violent and non-violent radicalization as reported by the respondents of the current study. The level of radicalization i.e. both violent and non-violent have been categorized at the three levels i.e. low, medium and High.

The above table shows 40.43% of the respondents reported medium level of non-violent radicalization while only 24.29% reported higher level of non-violent radicalization and 35.26% reported lower level of non-radicalization. In the same respect the violent radicalization, 48.42% of the respondents reported lower level of violent radicalization and only 16.01% of higher level of violent radicalization. Hence, the frequency of violent radicalization is lower as compared to non-violent radicalization.

Table No. 3. 12 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.886 ^a	.786	.785	.21169	1.936

a. Predictors: (Constant), Schooling, Peer Group, , Neighborhood & Community level , Role of Family

b. Dependent Variable: Radicalization

The above table shows the model summary for the current study, which shows the relationship between independent and dependent variable. The value of R-Square, which is 0.786, shows the combined effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable and illustrates that there is 78% of variation in the dependent variable on account of the independent variable. This explains that the all the independent variables i.e. family, peer, community and schooling explain 78% variation in the youth radicalization.

Table No. 3.13 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	409.296	7	58.471	1304.748	.000 ^b
	Residual	111.587	2490	.045		
	Total	520.883	2497			

a. Dependent Variable: Radicalization

b. Predictors: (Constant), Schooling, External Development Asset, , Peer Group, Internal, Neighborhood & Community level , Role of Family

The above table shows significant value is > 0.5, which indicates that the regression model is significant in nature. In the same manner, regression sum of square also indicates the strength of the model in the study.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	4.750	.046		.000
	Role of Family	-.310	.007	-.416	.000
	Peer Group	-.143	.005	-.267	.000
	Neighborhood & Community level	-.139	.006	-.229	.000
	Schooling	-.278	.013	-.199	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Radicalization

The above table shows the contribution of each category of the independent variable to explain the variation in the dependent variable. There are primarily seven categories of the independent variable and researcher intended to find out how each one is contributing change in the dependent variable.

Role of Family

Predicting the role of family was another important objective of the current study. The above table shows that P value falls in the significant category level and shows a significant relationship between family and youth radicalization. The negative sign with the coefficient value shows that increase in the role of family decreases the youth radicalization. The coefficient value of -.310 shows the average intensity of radicalization is decreased by -.310 with one unit increase in the average intensity of family.

Peer Group

Finding out the role of peer was another important objective of the current study. The above table shows that P value is less than .05, which illustrates a significant relationship between family and youth radicalization. The negative sign with the coefficient value shows that increase in the role of peer decreases the youth radicalization. The coefficient value of -.143 shows the average intensity of radicalization is decreased by -.143 with one unit increase in the average intensity of peer.

Neighborhood & Community level

Neighborhood and community found to be an important predictor of controlling youth radicalization. The above table shows that there is a significant relationship between

neighborhood/community with youth radicalization as the $P > .05$. On the same token negative sign shows, a negative relationship between the variables, which implies that increase in one variable, decreases the other variable. The coefficient value of $-.139$ shows the average intensity of radicalization is decreased by $-.139$ with one unit increase in the average intensity of neighborhood & community.

Schooling

The above table shows that schooling is significantly related to the youth radicalization as $P > .05$. Similarly, negative sign shows that a negative relation exists between schooling and youth radicalization i.e. increase in schooling will decrease the youth radicalization. The coefficient value of $-.278$ shows the average intensity of radicalization is decreased by $-.278$ with one unit increase in the average intensity of schooling.

Summary of the Findings

- There is not much difference with reference to the gender and non-violent radicalization. However, female showed a slighter degree higher level of non-violent radicalization than male.
- Similarly, there is not a significant difference of violent radicalization for male and female population of the study. However, male reported slighter higher degree of violent radicalization.
- With reference to faculty and non-violent radicalization, the findings showed a similar trend for natural and social science faculty with natural sciences faculty reporting slighter higher degree of non-violent radicalization
- Similarly, there is not a significant difference between faculties regarding violent radicalization but participants from social science reported a slighter higher degree of violent radicalization.
- There is a strong and significant relationship between the predictors and dependent variable in the current study
- Nature of the relationship between the study variables is negative i.e. increase in one variable decreases the other variable.
- All the included variables of the study (independent variable) explained 78% variation in the dependent variable, which is quite high and show a higher level of relationship between independent and dependent variable.
- Role of family is at the highest level when it comes to the protective factor against youth radicalization.
- Role of peer and community/neighborhood lies at the lowest level for controlling youth radicalization.

Conclusion

The study concludes that family is at the top level in its contribution in countering youth radicalization and school is at second level when explaining the youth radicalization. Peer group is at third level and neighborhood/community is at fourth level when it comes to the youth development. The qualitative themes also showed and shed light on the importance of family, peer and other stakeholders in youth development. Family, peer, siblings of the youth all have positive contribution towards eradicating youth radicalization.

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