

Negotiating Generational Authority: Education, Technology and Social Change in Hunza and Nagar

Saeeda Zehra¹, Abdul Basit², Sidra Umar³, Shahida Yousaf⁴, Iraj Iqbal⁵

¹MPhil Scholar, Department of Sociology, PMAS Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi,

Email: saeedazehra12@gmail.com

²MPhil Psychology, National Institute of Psychology, Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad,

Email: basit.memon172@gmail.com

³Lecturer, Department of Sociology, PMAS Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi,

Email: sidraumar@uaar.edu.pk

⁴Department of Education, PMAS Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi. Email: shahida@uaar.edu.pk

⁵MPhil Scholar, Department of Sociology, PMAS Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi,

Email: Irajiqbal111@gmail.com

Abstract

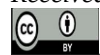
This study examines the effects of education, technology and globalization on intergenerational and youth authority in Hunza and Nagar, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. The qualitative case-study design was used, and the sample consisted of 15 participants who were purposively selected, representing younger and older generations. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used to gather data, which was then analysed thematically, as suggested by Braun and Clarke. Four main issues emerged from the analysis: education as a source of increased youth authority, the role of technology and globalization in fostering intergenerational change, increased youth engagement in family and community life, and intergenerational tensions and negotiations between tradition and modernity. Education proved to be most important in contributing to the confidence, knowledge and involvement of young people in decision-making. The increasing accessibility of information among young people and more reciprocal patterns of knowledge transfer between generations were also promoted by digital technologies and many other developments in the wider world. Elders, however, did not lose their important cultural, moral and advisory roles. The results indicate that it is not a process of replacing the authority based on age but a negotiated process of adaptation in intergenerational change in Hunza and Nagar. The study points to the fact that while participation of youth and respect for cultural traditions are certainly growing, so too is intergenerational cooperation.

Keywords: youth authority; intergenerational relationships; education; digital technology; globalization; modernization; Hunza; Nagar

Introduction

Relationships across generations are a key element in the way families and communities are organised. Traditionally, in many societies, older generations have been accorded significant power since experience, knowledge of culture, social legitimacy and responsibility for upholding the standards of the community are all linked to age. Elders may serve as an adviser, mediator, decision-maker, and custodian of collective memory. Mannheim's (1952) classic theory of generations highlights the need to consider how the various generations form their social orientations in

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Corresponding Author Email: saeedazehra12@gmail.com

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different ways based on unique historical experiences, and Bengtson and Roberts' (1991) research indicates that intergenerational relationships are grounded in more than just solidarity; they are also characterized as having shifting patterns of obligation, authority and negotiation.

These relationships change and evolve. This process leads to changes in social institutions and the structures of authority within a society when there are changes in education, economic organization, communication, mobility and access to information. The modernization perspectives are, in general, that industrialization, growing education, urbanization, technology and more exposure to external institutions lead to a transformation of traditional forms of social organization (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). These shifts may influence intra-family and community dynamics as knowledge and decision-making are now more reliant on education and expertise, competency with digital technology, and access to broader social networks, rather than just age.

Education is a key aspect in this transformation in particular. Formal education and further education give the younger generations knowledge, skills and qualifications, and access to ideas, which may not have been possible for previous generations. Education can thus help to enhance young people's capacity to participate in employment, community, social and family discussions. Education from a capabilist point of view contributes to individuals' meaningful access to social and economic life (Sen, 1999). It can also challenge the traditional relations of authority by providing the younger generation with other types of knowledge and cultural capital, which are becoming more significant in the current institutions. (Bourdieu, 1986).

These have been hastened by the roll-out of digital technology. Young people's communication, networking, information seeking, and opinion sharing have been changed by the use of mobile phones, social media, the Internet and online information. In contemporary society, Castells (2010) contends that social relationships are becoming more networked and information and communication are now transmitted across traditional geographical and institutional boundaries. Digital media can provide opportunities for younger generations to engage with others in a less dependent way on traditional gatekeepers of the community.

Studies with young people and digital communication also reveal that the Internet can offer opportunities for participation, for their own self-expression, for learning and for building social networks (Livingstone, 2008). Social media can widen young people's information horizon and allow them to join in discussions on issues which are outside the scope of their families and local communities. A meta-analysis of studies on social-media use and participation by Boulianne (2015) revealed a positive association overall between the use of and participation in digital media and different kinds of civic participation. Also, in relation to participation, Loader et al. (2014) portray the development of the "networked young citizen" who may be involved in participatory processes through flexible digital networks as well as other traditional institutions.

Globalization brings this change to the fore. The movements of information, media, education, tourism, migration and cultural exchange are global, bringing ideas and ways of life to the local communities that are not part of their local social life. Appadurai (1996) points out that people, technology, media and ideas flow into and out of globalization, shaping the ways in which people think about their identities and possibilities. As young people come into contact with local cultural values and global cultural influences, Arnett (2002) also asserts that globalization offers new opportunities for identity that are open to them.

But with increased exposure to education, technology and ideas at a global level, traditional identities don't necessarily fade away. Youth can embrace new concepts and retain significant aspects of their local culture, family responsibilities and community values. The process of modernization cannot simply be interpreted as a process of replacement of tradition by modernity. Many cultures have an interplay between traditional and modern, and negotiated and hybrid forms of social organization.

This is a key concern in mountain communities where geographical features, robust social networks, relatively few external institutions, cultural cohesion and the absence of formal structures throughout history can enable elders to play an important role in the community. Meanwhile, enhanced road, educational, tourism, migration, telecommunication and digital connectivity systems can quickly change such communities. In his study on the Karakoram Highway and the mountain societies in the North of Pakistan, Kreutzmann (1991) showed how the physical improvement of the Karakoram Highway has resulted in significant social and economic changes in the communities that have been geographically isolated.

These processes can be studied in the context of Hunza and Nagar in the territory of Gilgit-Baltistan. There have been significant alterations in the area related to the growth in education, tourism, migration, road travel, mobile telephony and internet use. Young people have increasingly been able to attend university and work in professions, become entrepreneurs, and have access to digital media and information networks outside the valleys. The changes could help empower youth to engage in decisions and in the community that were traditionally dominated by older family and community members.

Furthermore, Pakistan has a large youth population, which makes the study of youth participation even more pertinent. The nation has a large youth population, and the importance of education, employment, civic involvement, skills, and meaningful participation of young people in social development is now increasingly being put on the agenda of national development discussions (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2018). But youth involvement is not in a vacuum of society. Youth still work within families and communities that value and respect the elderly, that have a sense of family responsibility, that are religious, that have kinship, and that maintain cultural traditions.

Therefore, rather than viewing greater youth involvement as a loss of authority for the elders, it should be understood as a shift in power. So, an increase in youth participation does not necessarily mean a decrease in the power of elders; it is a change in power. Intergenerational change could also be one of shifting from hierarchical to consultative and negotiated decision-making processes. When it comes to issues of tradition, family reputation, marriage, religion, dispute resolution, and other areas, elders may have more authority, but when it comes to education, technology, employment and other areas in which contemporary knowledge is paramount, younger people may have more influence.

This difference is crucial, as authority is not just about power in the form of authority but also about authority as well. It also encompasses who is believed to know the truth, whose opinion is listened to, who can get information from it and who can sway community conversations. Digital competence and higher education can then lead to youth authority even in the absence of formal leadership roles for youth.

There is increasing research on the intergenerational dynamics in the context of modernization, digital communication and social change among youth, but relatively little attention has been paid to the intergenerational dynamics at the community level in the context of change in Hunza and Nagar. Previous approaches take a fragmented view of education, technology, migration, tourism and/or youth participation. The interactions of these forces, and the understanding of the redistributions of voice and influence among both younger and older community members, have received less attention.

To fill this lacuna, the present study explores the relation between education, technology and the changes in the status of youth and inter-generational relations in the context of Hunza and Nagar. Instead of examining modernization as a clash between youth and elders, this study examines whether there is a process of renegotiating the role of authority in the community through greater consultation, participation and adaptation between youth and elders. It aims to give an understanding of mountain communities' reactions to social change in a context-specific way whilst trying to preserve cultural continuity.

Problem Statement

Elders were an important part of intergenerational communities in Hunza and Nagar, where he/she was responsible for decisions, culture, dispute resolution, religious issues and community affairs. They were backed by age, experience, local knowledge and being custodians of social and cultural traditions. This trend is being challenged, however, by the spread of formal schooling, electronic communication, tourism, migration and foreign ideas.

Youth today have more opportunities to attend school, attend college, access mobile technologies, social media, and information networks than have previous generations. Digital technologies expand youth access to information and open up new opportunities for communication and public expression, and education equips them with new knowledge and professional skills. The spread of globalization also brings alternative lifestyles, values and forms of social involvement to young people. These changes can help bring youth to the forefront of family and community decision-making and, over time, impact traditional or existing power dynamics.

However, the problem of the loss of authority of elders is not merely whether. This would ignore the fact that intergenerational relationships are not being superseded but are being reshaped. The modernization process can create shifts in the distribution of power, but cultural continuity also matters, and younger people can become more powerful without completely usurping the power of their elders to participate in community life (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Arnett, 2002). Likewise, there could be shifts in who is seen as knowledgeable or influential in areas of education, employment, technology and contemporary social issues thanks to greater access to digital information (Castells, 2010).

However, the perspectives of the residents of Hunza and Nagar on the ways in which change has taken place have received little empirical focus. The present study thus examines the reconfiguration of authority between the young and old, and the implications of this reconfiguration: is it a conflict, a replacement or a progressive shift towards negotiated and shared authority?

Research Objectives

RO1: To explore the role of education in reshaping youth authority and intergenerational decision-making in Hunza and Nagar.

RO2: To examine how technology and globalization influence youth participation and intergenerational relationships in community life.

Research Questions

RQ1: How does education shape youth authority and intergenerational decision-making in Hunza and Nagar?

RQ2: How do technology and globalization influence youth participation and intergenerational relationships in community life?

Significance Of The Study

This study is important because it offers context-specific knowledge of the impact of education, technology and globalization on youth authority and intergenerational relationships in Hunza and Nagar. Research on modernization, digital communication, and youth participation has been conducted at a macro level, but little attention has been paid to how these changes are felt at a micro level in mountain areas where traditional authority and cultural continuity continue to play a role.

The study also adds to the sociology of youth and social change, demonstrating that younger generations are becoming more influential, but do not necessarily usurp the authority of elders in community life. It also underscores the significance of negotiated authority and co-production of decisions, as well as intergenerational adaptation in fast-changing societies with social and technological transformation.

The results could be practically applied to developing community-based, educational, and policy efforts that build on and validate the knowledge and sociality of elders, and encourage young people to engage in these activities. The study can also serve as a reference for future studies on intergenerational change in other culturally unique and geographically distant parts of Pakistan.

Literature Review

Intergenerational Authority and Community Life

Intergenerational relationships play a crucial role in social organization, especially in communities where the hierarchy has been traditionally defined by age, experience, kinship and culture. They frequently hold influential roles as older generations are considered keepers of collective memory, social norms, religious practices and community traditions. According to Mannheim (1952), the generations are formed by the historical, social circumstances in which they develop, and it is possible that different generations will have different attitudes, expectations and ways of knowing. However, with a society in flux, generational gaps can increasingly become apparent.

Intergenerational relationships need not be seen as a conflict, however. Bengtson and Roberts

(1991) point to several aspects of intergenerational solidarity: emotional, interactional, valuational, functional, and normative. A transition in authority can thus occur without an absolute eradication of intergenerational cooperation. Older generations might have more control in some areas, whereas younger individuals have more control in other areas related to tradition, family reputation, religion, and the community history.

This is a very important point of view to comprehend communities like Hunza and Nagar. In the past, elders have been involved in various ways in dispute resolution, cultural matters, family matters and community affairs. The present study has indicated that these relationships are becoming consultative instead of one-way, hierarchical. This is a reshaping of voice and influence and not just a replacement of one generation by another.

Education and The Transformation of Youth Authority

Intergenerational relations are shaped by one of the most powerful factors of education. Schooling gives young people the knowledge, qualifications, ways to communicate, and access to institutions that were not necessarily available to previous generations. Younger individuals may become more involved in family and community decisions with the acquisition of specialized knowledge.

Education from a capability point of view extends the capacity of an individual to engage in social, economic and political life in a meaningful way (Sen, 1999). Education not only creates employment opportunities, but it also builds confidence, awareness and the capacity to consider different options. In the context of social change, educated youth can thus serve as a critical source of information in the field of employment, technology, legislation, health, and government institutions.

The term cultural capital can also be useful to grasp this process (Bourdieu, 1986). Education and skills can serve as a form of capital that elevates an individual's place in society and his or her credibility. The extension of education brings an alternative form of legitimacy when authority was previously considered mostly as age and experience. This means that younger people can thus acquire influence, as they have certain forms of knowledge which are becoming more and more valuable in today's society.

This does not mean that elders' authority is confined to the realm of education. Rather, education can help create more specialization of intergenerational relationships. The elders will be able to continue to play a role in community traditions, family history, religious concerns, and social relations, and the educated youth may be more influential in careers, higher education, technology, business, and in interactions with formal institutions.

Expansion of education in the North of Pakistan has helped to promote all-round social and economic transformation. The more convenient access to schools, colleges and universities has allowed younger generations to seek occupational and social opportunities other than those they may have enjoyed within the traditional local economy. These experiences can help to expand social relationships and introduce youth to different perspectives on work, family life and community involvement.

The first research question of the present study is therefore relevant to education, which is chang-

ing youth authority and intergenerational decision-making in Hunza and Nagar. Previous studies indicated that rather than leaving elders out of the picture, education can foster youth involvement through the development of new knowledge-based influence.

Digital Technology and Access to Information

Along with the growth of digital technology, generation gaps have been further reshaped. The mobile phone, Internet access, messaging services and social media have transformed the way information is sought, accessed and assessed. Parents, elders, teachers or local leaders are no longer the primary source of information. Information that used to be highly reliant on parents, elders, teachers or local leaders is now accessible directly through digital networks.

In today's society, Castells (2010) says society is becoming more and more organized around networks that enable the rapid flow of information across geographical and institutional space. Being connected to these networks can shape social power, as people with increased connectivity can gain access to information, contacts and communication opportunities that were not available to them.

Youth are likely to be the first to use emerging communications technology. According to Livingstone (2008), digital and social media offer opportunities for young people to express themselves, communicate with others, build their sense of identity and connect with others outside of traditional social interactions. Digital spaces can thus be seen as producing new spaces that allow young people to think and communicate outside of the conventional community.

In a society that has relied on older generations to provide information, this shift could have a particularly important impact. If young people use digital technology to access educational, legal, religious, professional and/or political information, then elders are no longer the primary source of information. Rather, info is spread over generations and networks.

Digital platforms can also boost the involvement of youth outside the household. The “networked young citizen” is a new citizen who participates mostly through flexible social and digital networks, as described by Loader et al. (2014). Likewise, in a meta-analysis, Boulianne (2015) concluded that there was an overall positive correlation between social-media use and various civic and participative behaviors.

Meanwhile, digital technology can raise issues of social interaction. Increased reliance on mobile phones and the internet could lead to a decrease in some face-to-face interactions and lead to intergenerational differences in communication styles. Some older people may see digital communication as a way to diminish traditional forms of respect or social engagement, whereas some younger people may see digital communication as a way of getting information and being involved in broader networks as more efficient. Technology thus can serve as an opportunity and a site of intergenerational negotiation.

Globalization, Media, and Youth Identity

Along with these developments, globalization is making a further contribution to the changing status of youth in relation to traditional community structures. In addition to these developments, the role of youth in relation to traditional community structures is changing also due to globalization. Globalization sees the integration of the world economy as well as the transfer of people,

information, culture, media and ideas between the nations and regions of the world. Appadurai (1996) highlights the importance of the global circulation of media, people, technology and ideas and how these influence the way people think about identity and social possibilities.

These global influences may be especially pronounced for young people when they travel, learn and migrate, watch TV and get their news online. Globalization, on the other hand, may extend a young person's repertoire of identities available in his/her life if they come across values and lifestyles other than those in their local culture (Arnett 2002). Through this process, new goals are formed regarding education, work, marriage, roles of women, consumption and individual autonomy.

Globalization does not necessarily result in “cultural replacement,” however. People often don't just discard one idea and substitute the other, but rather blend them together. Youth can take on new technology, aspirations for learning, or career plans, and still have high levels of family, religious, language, and community bonds.

This process is significant in the context of the Hunza and Nagar valleys, where there has been a significant increase in the valleys' exposure to people and ideas through tourism, migration, education and digital communication outside the valleys. The exposure to national and international media can expand young people's viewpoints and can also bring about discussions on cultural continuity.

Globalisation and youth authority is thus a complex relationship. Younger generations could benefit from the availability of more diverse ideas and experiences and be more confident and involved in life, but their contributions remain a matter of negotiation within more established cultural frameworks. It is not just a question of whether or not the local tradition is supplanted by the global influences, but the question of how the local traditions are reinterpreted in light of new social circumstances.

Modernization and Social Change in Mountain Communities

In geographically distant mountain societies, the impact of education, technology and globalization may be more apparent. There are historical limitations on access to physical areas, transportation, communication and formal institutions in mountain communities. Therefore, the social changes that can be expected from improved roads and communication infrastructure can be particularly great.

In the case of northern Pakistan and mountain societies, the increased connectivity from the Karakoram Highway revealed the impact on economic activities, mobility, market relations, and the interaction with the outside world in the work of Kreutzmann (1991). Infrastructure that helps to decrease geographical isolation and to connect the communities with national and international institutions.

These changes impact more than economic life. The development of transportation, tourism, education and communication provides opportunities for younger generations to travel and study, seek employment and build connections beyond their community. They might therefore come back with new knowledge, professional skills and new expectations that impact local decision-making.

One approach is to understand changes within the framework of modernization theory. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) suggest that there are connections between socioeconomic development and changes in values, social participation, and authority relations. But modernization is not a process that can be read as a process of transition between “traditional” and “modern” society. Local institutions are responsive to change, and communities can maintain cultural practices while at the same time introducing new ways of knowing and participating.

This adaptive process seems to be especially applicable to the case of Hunza and Nagar. There is the possibility that better connectivity and education may boost youth participation; however, local tradition and respect for elders will still have an impact on the relationships between the youth and the community. This process might thus be better described as negotiated modernization and not as cultural displacement.

Youth Participation and Negotiated Authority

Recent literature on youth participation indicates that youth participation is more than just having youth present in community activities. It needs opportunities to speak, to have an impact, to share ideas and to join in problem-solving about issues that concern their lives.

Hart (1992) noted that adolescent involvement differs in terms of the degree of involvement, from symbolic involvement to actual shared decision-making. While his model was created with children and young people, his general perspective is applicable to community authority: participation is pertinent when young people have not just a voice in the matter, but a voice that matters.

Participating more by youth can then create a transition from a hierarchical to shared or negotiated authority. This does not mean that elders have to give up their authority. Rather, the different generations might provide different resources. The elders can offer experience, historical knowledge, social legitimacy and cultural guidance, and the younger can offer formal education, technological competence, professional knowledge and a connection with other networks.

Such intergenerational complementarity could be especially significant in communities where rapid technological and social change is taking place. If both generations appreciate and value the other's knowledge, modernization can enhance participation without causing dramatic conflict between generations.

To understand the present study, it is useful to take the concept of negotiated authority into consideration. The interviews do not indicate that there is an easy transition from elder to youth authority. Instead, participants report more consultation with the elders and more influence of the youth in education, employment, business, marriage, technology, religion and cultural life, while elders still have significant roles as advisers and moral agents.

Research Gap

There is ample existing scholarship on the ways in which education, digital technology, globalization, and greater connectivity can change youth participation and intergenerational relationships, generally pointing in the positive direction (Arnett, 2002; Boulianne, 2015; Castells, 2010; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Livingstone, 2008). The development of good physical links is also shown to have had a dramatic economic and social impact on mountain communities in northern

Pakistan (Kreutzmann, 1991).

Contrary to this, comparatively little focus has been placed on the interaction of these forces in challenging community-level authority in Hunza and Nagar. The overall literature, however, is largely focused on one of these aspects: modernization, technology, education, youth participation, or globalization. There is less information available regarding the residents' perceptions of authority shifts between young and older people.

It is also important to go beyond the conflict paradigm, where modernization is seen as a process leading to the marginalization of elders and the empowerment of youth. This can be a way to be oblivious to processes of consultation, adaptation, shared authority, and cultural continuity. To fill this void, the present study is based on the following issues: the role education plays in enhancing the youth's authority and inter-generational decision-making, and the impact of technology and globalization on youth participation in decision-making and inter-generational relations in Hunza and Nagar.

Theoretical Framework

The Modernization Theory and the Theory of Generations by Mannheim are the theories which guide this study. These two lenses are a way of understanding the impact of these three factors: education, technology, and globalization on youth authority and intergenerational relations in Hunza and Nagar.

Modernization Theory is an explanation of how education, communication, technology, economic opportunities, and social institutions may change traditional patterns of authority. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) believe that socioeconomic development and an increase in education levels are related to increased participation and shifts in hierarchical relationships. Young people in the context of Hunza and Nagar have new knowledge and participation in the form of access to education, digital technologies, tourism and broader information networks.

In the case of modernization, however, the traditional authority does not have to go away. The results of this study show that elders still have a significant role in the culture, morals and advice, and that the young ones are more and more involved in decisions regarding education, jobs, technology, business, and other aspects of community life. Here, modernization is seen as a process of adjustment and reallocation of power instead of the elimination of elders.

The perspective is complemented by Mannheim's Theory of Generations, which suggests that each generation is influenced by its different experiences in history and in society (Mannheim, 1952). Generally, older people in Hunza and Nagar had access to less education, digital technology and outside information as children, compared to their younger counterparts who have been exposed to more universities, smartphones, social media, migration, tourism and global communication. There may be differences in knowledge, expectations and participation as a result of these different experiences.

The two theories seem to imply that youth participation is shaped by new opportunities, which are being enabled as a result of education, technology, and globalization; and generational differences impact the ways in which these changes are perceived and negotiated. The relationship can theoretically be summarized as:

Education, technology and globalisation → increased knowledge and involvement of the youth
→ renegotiation of intergenerational authority

Thus, this paper sees the transition of authority in Hunza and Nagar as an intergenerational negotiation of adaptation, where the youth can exercise more influence, and the elders still have significant roles in society and culture.

Materials and Methods

The study used a qualitative case-study design to better understand the transformations of youth authority and intergenerational relationships in the context of education, technology, and globalization in the communities of Hunza and Nagar, in the region of Gilgit-Baltistan. A qualitative approach was deemed suitable for the study, as it aimed to deepen and gain insight into the experience, perception, and interpretation of changes in authority in the family and community context.

A study was carried out in the selected villages of Hunza and Nagar. The areas selected were based on their community organization, culture, and growing interaction with education, tourism, digital communication, and broader society. The participants were divided into two groups, young (18-30 years) and older adults (50 years and above).

The selection of the participants was made by purposive sampling, using participants who are able to provide information that is relevant to intergenerational change and community authority. The final sample comprised 15 individuals (students, lecturers, teachers, retailers and businessmen) from both joint and nuclear families. This diversity enabled capturing various views on education, technology, globalization, and modified decision-making patterns.

In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured instrument developed based on the research questions of the study. Teachers and educators shared their experiences and perceptions of education, technological change, their access to outside information, their involvement in youth, and the role of elders in family and community life. The semi-structured format enabled participants to relate their experiences in detail and ensured that the key themes of the research were consistently covered.

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach. Transcripts were analysed for common themes and patterns of youth authority, intergenerational decision-making, teaching and learning, technology, globalization and cultural continuity. The findings and interpreted results were structured into themes, which were grouped into major themes on the basis of the recurring patterns.

Results

From the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews four major themes were discovered: (1) education as a source of increasing youth authority; (2) technology and globalization as a source of intergenerational change; (3) the increasing youth participation in education, religion, and cultural practices; and (4) the negotiation between tradition and modernity. In all themes, participants typically spoke of a process of shifting power, not supplanting elders with younger people.

Education as a Source of Growing Youth Authority

Education was the most common theme cited as a factor that is enhancing the role of the youth in the family and community. Participants saw education as a means of increasing their confidence, knowledge, awareness, and their participation within discussions that were mainly handled by elders. A higher proportion of educated youths were seen as being better able to discuss issues of careers, business, social matters, and interactions with formal institutions.

Some of the participants compared current decision-making with past decision making. Across all youth participants, one said:

“In the olden days, it was the elders who used to make the decisions. There existed a system called Jalga. All the elders used to sit together and make decisions in that.”

The participant's account suggests a history of a decision-making process that was held by senior community members. Younger family members, however, are much more highly involved in decisions related to higher education, career, finances, business, and marriage.

The older participants recognized changes in family structures and social relationships as well. One elder talked about broader social change in terms of changes in family systems, traditions, society and family functioning. While some concern was voiced by the participant(s) about some of these changes, it was also noted that the current family dynamics are different from previous generations.

It seems that education has provided a new source of authority in addition to age and experience. Elders are still held in esteem and are still important in key family issues, but younger people are seen as expert contributors. A shift in authority, which is moving away from a strictly hierarchical decision-making system and towards consultative intergenerational decision-making, seems to be occurring.

Technology and Globalization as Drivers of Intergenerational Change

The second theme was technology, and exposure to global information. Mobile phone, internet, social media, tourism and international media were recognized as significant factors in the change of young people's knowledge and viewpoints. These technologies offer youth a new opportunity for public expression and communication that goes beyond their families and communities, and sources of information. One of the older participants commented:

“Yes, it's a huge change! I have noticed that the youngsters are affecting the elders.”

This is an interesting switch in the flow of influence, from the usual. In the past, information and knowledge was passed down mostly from older to younger people, but participants reported instances of the former introducing information, ideas, and technological knowledge to the latter.

Another youth respondent described how decisions about the household have been transformed:

“Parents are also now leaning on their children. They ask their kids for advice on the most serious of issues. When they have to make a decision, start a business or do anything, they involve their children.”

The interviews, then, indicate that technology has been a factor in the relationship between generations becoming more reciprocal. Younger people are more often involved in decision making as a result of their familiarity with new information, technology, education and business opportunities.

Globalization was discussed also with the exposure on the tourism, media and outside ideas. Young people's outlook was found to be wider than that of the previous generations as they are exposed to information and lifestyles from outside the confines of Hunza and Nagar. Others, meanwhile, worried that too much digital communication could diminish in-person interaction and decrease traditional social interactions.

Therefore, the technology and globalization were seen as opportunities and challenges. They boost the knowledge and involvement of young people but they also raise new questions about respect, communication and the retention of valued social norms.

Expanding Youth Participation in Education, Religion, and Cultural Practices

The third theme was about the increasing participation of youth in particular aspects of family and community life. The younger people are reported to now have more influence on educational choice, career choice, marriage, religious discussions and cultural practices.

One of the most marked instances in which young people had acquired decision-making power was in the realm of education. Younger family members were explaining that they are now making decisions on what to study and what to do for their careers instead of following their parents or elders' choices. These were echoed regarding marriage, as young people were more likely to report on changes in expectations regarding their preferences before final family decisions.

An older person explained:

“Even today, when they discuss religion, the elders make the decisions. If they speak of marriage and education, it is in the interest of the young.”

This statement offers an example of how the balance of power does not even out across all aspects of life. The role of the elders will have an increasing influence on culturally and religiously sensitive issues, whereas the young people have come to exercise more influence on decisions that impact their education and future. The same goes for a youth participant, who talked of expanding individual options:

“Youth have the choice of what they want to do with their education, marriage, religion and culture.”

This statement is representative of the fact that in not all areas of life is the shift in authority equal. The elders are still able to influence more in religious and culturally sensitive issues, while young people have gained more influence on decision-making on issues that impact their education and future.

A youth participant also spoke about the need to give them more choice:

“Younger participants also noted that they were more inquisitive and knowledgeable about religion and culture. Instead of dismissing cultural practices, youth were said to be engaged in discussions on how they could be performed and if they should change features of some of the traditions.”

The above accounts indicate that youth authority is far from complete and that it is subject to certain conditions. There is growing participation by young people in activities related to them and their present knowledge and growing voice in areas where cultural experience and tradition are valued, and elders still have advisory and decision-making power in areas that are significant to their cultural experiences and tradition.

Negotiating Tradition and Modernity

The fourth theme was about the attempt to reconcile social change and cultural continuity. There was no general sense by participants that modernization and tradition could not exist together. Rather, it seemed that both generations were having to maneuver over some of the practices that should be preserved or modified for the new situation.

One older participant spoke of "respecting elders" with regard to the ongoing significance even in the face of "changing some traditions" by younger people. The participant explained that in some families there are specific practices that are not done in order to not offend the older people, but to make changes slowly in the family for the younger ones. A younger participant spoke of a tradition and modernity in Nagar:

“Elders become advisors rather than commanders, and youth become active partners, rather than followers, and respect is maintained without a loss of influence.”

One of the key patterns that comes out of the interviews is expressed in this statement. It does not seem to be an absolute rejection of elders that is happening with increasing power of the young. Rather, elders are more and more cast as advisors and sources of cultural information and younger people are more involved in decisions and community affairs.

The balance was generally considered important in achieving social harmony by the participants. They stressed on the awareness and experience of the aged and urged the younger generation to learn from them and the youth to learn the education and technology from the aged.

The overall conclusions suggest that an intergenerational negotiation of authority in Hunza and Nagar is taking place. Technology and globalization allow young people to gain more knowledge and connect to larger social networks and education gives them new forms of knowledge and confidence. Meanwhile, elders retain high cultural, moral and advisory power. The context of shared and negotiated authority is therefore best understood as more of a pattern of partial and shifting generational replacement.

Discussion

The results show that there is a slow process of shifting of the intergenerational authority from elders to youth in Hunza and Nagar rather than complete transfer. The impact of education, technology and globalization has boosted the role of youth in family and community decision making, but elders still hold significant roles in culture, morals, and advising.

The most influential factor in enhancing youth authority was education. Participants felt more confident, more knowledgeable, and more involved in career, business, and family decisions issues than education. This is in line with the research of Sen (1999) who considers education as an extension of individual capacities and Bourdieu (1986) who has argued that knowledge acquired in educational institutions can serve as cultural capital. Education seems to be offering young people a new form of authority in the current context other than what is given to them by elders.

The results also corroborate Mannheim's (1952) theory on Generations. Hunza and Nagar have had various social and technological environments for the older and younger generation. Formal education, professional experiences and access to digital information are increasingly shaping the source of influence for younger people, while elders develop this through experience and local knowledge. This is the reason why, currently, younger family members are more likely to be consulted in decisions.

Intergenerational relationships were also affected by technology and globalization. Young people have greater access to information, external ideas, via mobile phones, social media, internet or through tourism and further media. This is a reflection of Castells' (2010) view that the nature of the distribution of information and influence is transformed by networked communication. Participants also reported that there was a greater exchange of knowledge, with younger people giving advice to elders on business, technology and other modern issues.

Meanwhile, participants didn't paint a picture that was all good with technology and globalization. There was also a concern of decreased face-to-face interaction with friends and the potential for lessening of traditional values. This indicates that modernization is creating opportunities and tensions in the lives of communities.

Another significant discovery was an increasing involvement of young people in education, marriage, religion and culture. The younger generation were actively engaged in decisions that had a direct impact on their lives, while elders held a powerful influence in decisions that had a relationship to tradition, religion and social harmony. This means that there is a shift from authority, not just from one generation to the next.

The most prominent theme in the interviews was that of the balancing of tradition and modernity. In general, the participants saw change as a process of adjustment and not cultural rejection. This resonates with the modernization view of Inglehart and Welzel (2005) but these results imply that in the Hunza and Nagar modernization is a negotiated process.

In general, it is found that the role of youth authority is growing in education and technology and externalization, while the role of elders is not necessarily declining. Rather, intergenerational relationships seem to be turning towards a more participatory and consultative mode of decision making. The results were consistent with the concept of negotiated intergenerational adaptation where youth have increased agency and elders remain the cultural continuity and social direction.

Limitations of the Study

The results of this study must be viewed in the context of a number of limitations. The first limitation of the research was the small number of the participants, 15, who were purposively sam-

pled from Hunza and Nagar. Although this sample would be suitable for detailed qualitative accounts, the results cannot be given a statistical generalization to the total population of the two districts or to other areas of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Second, all the study was based on semi-structured interviews. The results are thus based on the personal experiences, perceptions and interpretations of participants regarding intergenerational change. These stories can be affected by memory, values or social desirability. There was no observational data, documentary evidence or quantitative measures used to verify the reported changes in authority and decision making that occurred in the study.

Third, this study involved two general generations, youth (18-30 years) and older adults (50 years and older). People outside the age of these groups were excluded, although middle aged family members can also be significant intergenerational players and decision makers.

Fourth, the study explored the effects of education, technology and globalization as the primary influences on youth authority. There is a close interaction between these forces and it is not easy to quantify the contribution of each one of them independently. For instance, more access to digital technology could be linked to education, migration, tourism or economic change.

Lastly, the study was conducted on a limited number of villages in the district of Hunza and Nagar. The study did not systematically consider differences between rural and urbanized settlements, gender, socioeconomic origin, occupation or educational level. To overcome these limitations, future studies may use a larger sample size for comparative study, mixed-method designs, and different age and social groups.

Conclusion

This research examined the changing nature of youth authority and intergenerational relationships in the community life of Hunza and Nagar through the lens of education, technology and globalization. The results show that change is not happening instantaneously, but is a gradual process that is negotiated rather than an absolute transfer of authority from the elders to the younger generation.

Education was identified as being the greatest source of providing greater influence for young people. Educated youth were said to be more confident, informed, and able to engage in decisions concerning careers, business, marriage, and other social issues. Formal education has thus established a new system of authority as well as one based on experience and local knowledge traditionally attributed to elders.

This process has been enhanced by the technology and globalisation as a means to provide young people with additional access to information, communication networks, media, tourism and external ideas. Young people are no longer solely relying on the elders for information and they are able to provide information across various domains including technology, business, education and current social topics. Meanwhile, the participants voiced worries over over-dependence on digital media, and the potential of deterioration to in-person communication and traditional values.

The analysis also revealed that youth involvement is growing in various areas of community and

family life. Educational and career choice, marriage, religion, and cultural preferences are more and more being stated by younger population. But elders remain in other roles in connection with tradition, cultural continuity, moral guidance, and social harmony.

The overall pattern can then be termed negotiated intergenerational adaptation. Young people are not taking the place of the elderly, but are increasingly involved in decision making. The results lend credence to the concept of adjustment between generations of modernization in Hunza and Nagar in which the new knowledge and opportunities are introduced without necessarily replacing the existing cultural values.

Recommendations

Several recommendations can be presented based on the finding. First, there needs to be opportunities for inter-generational dialogue in the community, especially in Hunza and Nagar, which should be regular. Informal conversations between youth and elders can create an opportunity for younger people to bring in new knowledge and for elders to share their experience, cultural knowledge and community history.

Second, the youth should be actively engaged in community planning, development and problem solving processes that help educate them. Their involvement should be in addition to the role of elders and not in lieu of it, so that both generations can contribute according to their abilities.

Third, digital literacy programmes focus on both younger and older people. Although young people might have more technology experience, older members of the community can be provided with better access to digital information and communication technologies. This can help narrow the inter-generational knowledge gap and help encourage more even involvement.

Fourth, educational institutions could foster students' awareness of local culture, oral history and local community traditions in addition to formal education. This can help prevent the erosion of locally important cultural information in the process of gaining knowledge from the outside world.

Fifth, educational, technological and civic opportunities for youth should be increased in a way that is culturally responsive to youth in the community, through programs created by policy makers and youth development organizations. The programs which consider tradition and modernization as two incompatible realities may not have the same success as the others which are willing to make gradual changes.

Finally, future studies should include larger and diverse samples and intergenerational relationships in different parts of the region of Gilgit-Baltistan. Interviews, surveys and comparative community analysis, for example, may give a fuller picture of intergenerational shift in authority and how it is shifting.

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