

Male youth, gender, and development

Lived experiences of male youth in the context of change in
Ahmedabad, India.

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Abstract

Men and their lived experiences are frequently missing from gender and development policy, or are only portrayed as oppressive. Youth are currently a vital demographic in the Global South, with many states experiencing a 'youth bulge'. This research aims to understand the effects of social and economic change on male youth, and how this can be useful in improving future gender policy as well as addressing issues such as educated un- and underemployment.

The research was conducted in Ahmedabad, India, through in-depth interviews with young men who are involved in the youth programmes of local NGO, Saath. It would appear that with societal changes have come local crises of masculinity as a result of a changing labour market, infrastructural development, and shifting societal values. Gender roles remain static, as do most opinions regarding them. Entrepreneurialism amongst male youth as well as non-violent actions in response to their changing situations suggest that they do not follow conventional notions of how 'disaffected' young men assert their masculinity in times of crisis.

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List of Abbreviations

AAP..... Aam Aadmi Party

BJP..... Bharatiya Janata Party

INC..... Indian National Congress

NGO..... Non-governmental organisation

1. Introduction

Men are often missing from much gender and development policy, although there is now more awareness of recognising the relationships between men and women, as well as other social factors and associated personal agency (Cleaver, 2002). Amongst other concerns, gender is often seen as being only about 'women's issues' (Roche, 2000), and it is therefore important to analyse and understand the lives of men as well as women in the context of development. Changes in social and economic structures are occurring in the Global South at a time when youth - especially male youth – are becoming increasingly important demographically (Cole, 2004).

Young people are key social and economic actors in the contemporary world. Recent work on children's geographies has revealed the active ways in which young people in different contexts engage with their spatial and social environments (Dyson, 2008). Young people's geographies are not a lesser form of adult ones; but youth are often highly strategic, self-reflective actors, and can play important political roles in processes of spatial change (Jeffrey & McDowell, 2004).

1.1 Research aim

The aim of this research is to understand the lived experiences of male youth (especially regarding their identities, and role within society) who are involved with the youth programmes of the NGO Saath in Ahmedabad (a city in eastern Gujarat state, located in west-central India) in relation to changes that are occurring in their social and economic structures (as a result of the reforms which occurred in India in the early 1990s), and how this might be useful for application in development in the area, and on other scales or localities if relevant.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Youth and the 'youth bulge'

In 1985, over ninety percent of Indians lived on less than one dollar a day, but after the country began reforms in the early 1990s, economic growth rose to around 7 percent, slowed again in the late 1990s, but since 2002 has continued at a rapid pace, to become one of the world's largest economies (Farrell and Beinhocker, 2007). This growth has brought millions out of poverty and is changing the social and economic structures that are experienced by Indians, and due to their dynamic nature, are particularly influential upon youth.

The United Nations considers youth to be people between the ages of 15 and 24 years old, because by the age of 24 the transition from childhood to adulthood (both physically and emotionally) is complete (United Nations, 1981). Those theorising about the 'youth bulge' define youth as being between the ages of 15 and 30 (Mabala, 2011). It may be argued that the higher the age that defines youth is, the more marginalised the younger youth become, and pushing back the age of when adulthood begins leaves young people in a state of uncertainty, as they have not been given the social space to become or be recognised as adults (Mabala, 2011). Even if the lower range of 15 – 24 years old is used, youth cannot be treated as homogenous group of people – there is a huge difference between individuals at each end of this range.

Gender plays a major role, as aspirations, support, and opportunities for girls and boys during their adolescence are usually very different (Mabala, 2011). The concept of youth is in itself not overly sensitive to gender as it is more often applied to young men rather than young women, with young married men sometimes still considered as a youth, but a woman in the same position (especially if she has a child) is often not within this category (Mabala, 2011). Females often face a double disadvantage because of their

age and their gender, as sometimes, do males in the less visible conflict between older and younger men. Other aspects of difference and divides also affect youth, including educated/uneducated, employed/unemployed, rural/urban, and rich/poor.

How youth are enabled (or not) to participate socially, politically, and economically and the ways in which their issues are addressed in society depends on how the group is viewed. In the Global South, youth has generally been viewed negatively, termed as a 'youth bulge' – a very large youth cohort relative to the adult population of a nation (Urdal, 2004) - an evermore expanding and explosive force. All countries experience this bulge, as infant and child mortality declines and health improves, more children survive until the age of 'youth'. The 'youth bulge' concept is usually focused on men, with the trend often interpreted as too many unoccupied young men, that are seen as a threat to stability and security (Mabala, 2011). Based on the perception that young men are inherently more violent than older men, or women, large numbers of young men are seen to be those who may turn to violent crime, political violence or terrorism, with such a perspective leading to measures which 'entertain or contain' young people, rather than providing them with opportunities for livelihoods and self-development.

Marginalisation and the social construction of masculinity can play a major part in the decisions made by youth. Social exclusion of youth is a recurring feature of many societies and communities, and mention of the social, political, and economic marginalisation of most young people is common. (Sommers, 2007). Adulthood and masculinity expectations and pressures can also profoundly influence youth decisions and their outlook on the future. Governments can make the promotion of male youth frustration worse in many ways, including making access to land and non-agricultural employment difficult, severely reducing their ability to progress and 'become men' (Uvin, 1998).

The situation for female youth is similar, since attaining a respectable and therefore protected form of womanhood is often attainable only through marriage. Without marriage, and since female youth tend to have far fewer

economic options than their male counterparts, involvement in irregular or risky income-generation (including prostitution) is often their only means of survival. Fear and presumption often make poor female youth almost imperceptible and contributes towards making young men into an undifferentiated mass of security threats (Sommers, 2010).

Donors often run the risk of making unstable governance worse by supporting government policies that make the lives of marginalised youth majorities even more marginal, and creates the risk of undermining government institutions and increasing frustration within youth populations. Presuming an inherent male youth threat is suspect and should not be allowed to overshadow other security-related factors, such as economic ones, the frustration of youth, their endurance of social humiliation and the state's relations with its youth populations.

2.2 'Youth' in discussion

The last Indian census (2011) announced a provisional total population of 1.21 billion, showing an increase of 181 million since 2001 (Corbridge et al, 2012). There has been a trend in recent decades towards a large population of young adults in India (aged 15-44 years), and a key question is how India can benefit from this 'bulge'. Bloom and Williamson (1998) argued that some countries (mainly examples from East Asia) are moving from high birth rates to lower fertility rates quite quickly, and this is resulting in the emergence of a large young adult labour force. Lots of young adults could lead to an increase in earnings, because a large proportion of the population are in employment (Bloom et al, 2003). This large young population also generates more personal savings which can lead to income growth. Lowering dependency ratios usually means rising life expectancy (all of this is known as a 'demographic dividend'), and therefore often adult populations doing more long-term planning, such as for their children's education. Young adult

populations with fewer children could also lead to more investment in girls' education and increase female involvement in employment (Nayab, 2007).

Bloom et al. (2003) believe that in order to take advantage of a 'demographic dividend', two conditions have to be met: there must be a 'youth bulge'; and there must be infrastructural conditions in place that allow the young adult population to contribute in a positive way to the economy and society. India certainly has the 'youth bulge', with two-thirds of its population under the age of 35 (Burke, 2014). Burke's (2014) article is just one example of a Western media article that discussed the 2014 Lok Sabha elections in India, and notably referred to the country's large youth population and its seething potential.

The run-up to the 2014 Lok Sabha elections saw an enormous surge in media interest in the youth of India, both in internationally and within India. They mostly allude to the same notions of what India's youth wants from the election, and the importance and power of the youth vote. Media headlines across the world illustrate this, from *Time's 'Youth Vote Key In India's Marathon Elections'* (Bhowmick, 2014) to the BBC News' *'India's awakening youth threaten political status quo'* (BBC, 2014), to *The Times of India's 'Election 2014: What does young India want?'* (Dehadrai, 2013).

Despite this huge surge of media interest in 2013-2014, attention to India's youth amongst certain academics and popular writers is nothing new. The work of Dyson (2010), Jeffrey et al. (2004), Jeffrey (2008), and Corbridge et al. (2012), all pay the subject close attention, as the following review of said literature demonstrates. The popular Indian writer, Chetan Bhagat (author of several very successful Indian novels, and journalist) also compiled a series of essays and speeches on the topic, entitled *What Young India Wants* (2012). The book criticises the Indian government's poor functionality, as well as the current condition of India and its moral shortfalls. Bhagat writes about how India can be a progressive society in the future and discusses the rampant corruption in India and the societal change needed to solve such problems. The book's central theme is that of Bhagat's dream of a free and progressive India, at least in terms of thinking.

Mabala's (2011) '*Youth and "the hood" – livelihoods and neighbourhoods*' describes how 'youth bulges' in low- and middle-income countries, particularly those living in urban areas, are being demonised as potential threats to stability and development. This negative perception is a self-fulfilling prophecy, as by neglecting or mistreating youth, they may become the very threats the supporters of norms fear most. Mabala argues that new, creative, holistic and youth-led programmes are needed to enable the majority of youth to participate as full citizens in the development of their communities and society as a whole. Young people need to have their own institutions at community level that provide a focus for their education, recreation and entrepreneurial activities, as well interaction with other organisations and involvement in and activism on issues that matter to them. Such youth institutions should be supported by governments, with sufficient funding and authority to ensure that youth are integrated and involved in all sectors.

To a certain extent, this echoes Bhagat's (2012) views on what is required of the Indian government. Mabala's (2011) work, although mainly focused on the African context has lessons which may be applied throughout the Global South, with considerations of what youth perceive as necessary for their development, in a time when they are such a vital demographic.

Linda McDowell (2000; 2004) discusses youth and masculinity in the context of the contemporary Global North. Their discussion of crises of masculinity questions its newness and very nature, and explores the more complex relationships between class, gender, and work (McDowell, 2000). The social construction of multiple masculinities is considered in respect to its political implications, particularly when they are involved in accounting for diversity, inclusion, and responsibility. The case study of male youth in contemporary Britain looks at the possibilities regarding wider social inclusion in democracies, and how difference can be connected to structural inequalities (McDowell, 2004).

2.3 India's 'youth bulge'

Recently, fertility rates in India have declined due to changing attitudes about family, better education, family planning, and urbanisation (Corbridge et al, 2012). This has also slowed population growth, and changed population structure. Up to and including 1981, around forty percent of India's population was aged 0-14 years, but this had fallen to thirty-five percent by 2001 (Dyson, 2010). The proportion of those aged 15-44 years (i.e. considered to be 'young' or 'youth' in terms of their social age), is rising, from forty-three percent to fifty-one percent between 1981 and 2001, a trend which is – according to Dyson (2010) – likely to continue until the mid-2020s. When using the narrower category of ages 15-24 years to describe 'youth', this group constituted 18.2 percent of India's population in 2013 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013a) (see Figure 1).

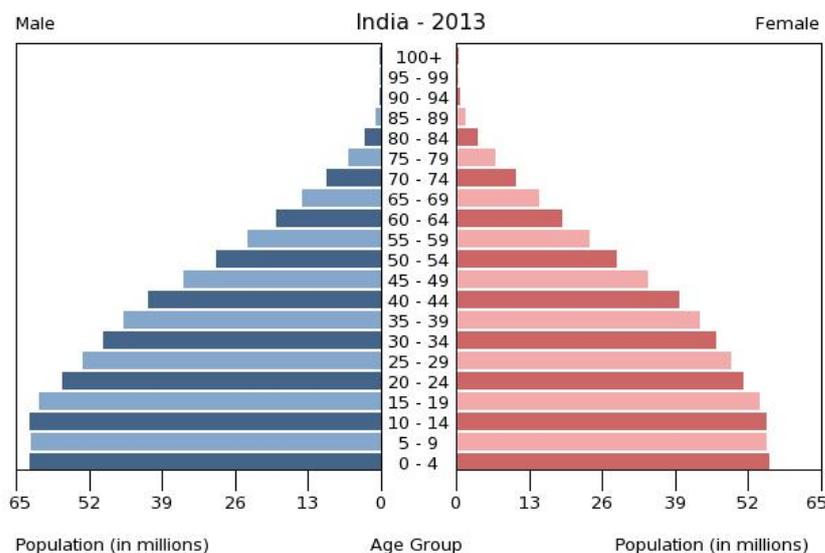


Figure 1:
Population pyramid for India, showing the beginnings of a 'youth bulge',
(Central Intelligence Agency, 2013b).

Agreement is lacking about whether India has the necessary infrastructural conditions for the demographic dividend to 'pay off'. Organisations such as the World Bank consider India to have a huge number of skilled English-speaking knowledge workers, and predict that India will shine as a result of the demographic dividend (Dahlman and Utz, 2005), amongst others, especially in the media and popular opinion, that see huge potential for India's emerging entrepreneurial youth. For example, media articles such as

Shashank Mani's (2013), entitled '*How Young Entrepreneurs Bring Hope and Enterprise to India*'.

Others, such as James (2008) are less optimistic. They look at the relationship between India's changing age structure, household savings rate and female participation in the labour force, but do not find clear positive correlations, concluding that there is a connection between demographic change and economic growth, but that it is more complex than assumed and depends on how changes to the age structure connect with a range of other factors, including public policy. Dyson (2010) argues that India's demographic dividend is unlikely to be realised without greater investment in education, health and infrastructure.

An evermore-prevalent feature in the lives of India's youth (amongst many others across the world) is levels of educated unemployment. This is of increasing concern to governments, activist groups, and international organisations, as it demonstrates that education is not fulfilling its role in increasing employment opportunities for youth, as purported by the wide-ranging images of success due to high levels of education followed by professional employment in which parents have invested time, money and effort (Jeffrey, 2008). At the same time as an increase in the number of people previously excluded from education coming to realise its empowering possibilities, opportunities for many of these groups to gain from education are diminishing (Jeffrey et al, 2004). Jeffrey (2008) emphasises that South Asian youth make up a substantial segment of the world's educated unemployed population.

The inability of male youth to move quickly from school or university education into employment has led to this generation having many members who often remain unmarried, cannot establish financial independence, and are considered by many still to be 'young' regardless of their biological age (Ruddick, 2003). Similar to 'youth' as examined in other contexts, men such as these define themselves differently from adults, are often still in active search for employment, and are concerned with their identity (Jeffrey, 2008).

Approximately eighty-five percent of the world's 'youth' population (those aged 16-30 years) are in the Global South. Jeffrey (2008) considers three analytic groups of young people the youth of the Global South, based on their education and employment status: an ever-decreasing upper level of youth (mostly male), who have education from elite institutions and transition easily into secure, paid, and often professional employment; a cohort of young people who lack access to secondary school education who engage in poorly paid manual or unpaid household labour, or industrial or service work, usually in extremely poor conditions; and those who have completed education, but not moved into secure, paid employment (Jeffrey's work focuses on the young men within this third group).

While not novel, an increase in people's investment in education and lack of paid employment for graduates has intensified and highlighted the huge issue of un/under-employment among youth in Asia since the early 1990s, with the wide variety of neoliberal economic reforms that have occurred, failing to generate sufficient quantities of jobs for skilled youth in the Global South (Jeffrey, 2008). This has all occurred whilst youth – especially male – are becoming increasingly important demographically in the Global South (Cole, 2004). Of course, educated un/under-employment also affects female youth, but evidence areas including India, suggests that male youth make up the majority of the educated un/under-employed, and usually experience this most evidently, reflecting gendered educational and employment practices in parts of the Global South, which privilege the schooling and employment provision of boys over girls (Chopra and Jeffrey, 2005).

Pressures exerted on male youth demonstrate the increase of transnational and regional discourses that create images of young men, as rebellious, dangerous, and apathetic (Jeffrey et al, 2008), or as 'disaffected' youth. Within the sphere of politics, some educated un/under-employed male youth in the Global South are sceptical or somewhat indifferent, but most studies of the unemployed illustrate the active efforts of male youth to engage in political action (Jeffrey, 2008).

The 'distinctive capacity' of youth to challenge and transform structures of political domination is considered by Cole (2004), and particular attention is given to gender relations between the educated un/under-employed. There is considered to be a certain distance in how each new generation perceives and acts upon their economic, social, and cultural context: "Youths' structural liminality – the fact that they are less embedded in older networks of patronage and exchange – makes them uniquely poised to take advantage of new social and economic conditions" (Cole, 2004: 576). Dyson's (2008) case study of young people's lichen collection in Bemni, Uttarakhand, shows how youth can give their work meaning, manage their work practices, and sometimes transgress established norms in specific work settings. More broadly, the study provides a counterpoint to studies of youth in the West by illustrating the powerful role of gender and caste inequalities in shaping young people's lives, highlighting their spatial agency, and stressing the importance of examining processes of identity formation among young people.

2.4 Men, gender, and development

It is important to analyse and understand the lives of men as well as women in the context of development. Where men are considered, they are generally seen as obstacles to women's development, and there is a perceived need for men to change in order for women to benefit.

Assuming a focus on men is often justified in terms of securing benefits for women, which is linked to simple ideas about power and gender relations: women can only be empowered when men give up power, however, impacts upon men and gender relations are often not considered (Cleverly, 2002). Approaches that argue for gender equality and social justice avoid seeing gender concerns as just instrumental in securing effective development, but recognise men *and* women as potentially disadvantaged by social and economic structures, and that empowerment is needed for both men and women to overcome oppression and produce beneficial outcomes (ibid.).

Most literature and work about the experience of men is in the Global North, with most 'Southern' studies being ethnographically 'exotic' or historical, as well as there being a lack of literature about how including men in gender relations can aid in understanding livelihoods of people in developing countries. There are several arguments for the need to pay attention to men and masculinities in development.

A lack of views on men in practical applications of gender and development policy is in part considered by Chant and Gutmann (2002) to be a legacy of the early stages of the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985) when the 'Women in Development' movement emerged as the first step in a struggle against widespread male bias in programmes. Other reasons considered for this include the concern to protect the relatively small amount of resources women have worked very hard to secure, a lack of understanding regarding men as gendered individuals, practical difficulties involved in incorporating men into projects aimed most at women, and an apparent lack of interest by men in gender and development (Chant and Gutmann, 2000).

Traditionally considered ways of being a man are evermore counterproductive in the face of long-term economic and social changes. Alternative discourses on masculinity now include notions of entrepreneurialism (McDowell, 2000), something which is frequently found at the forefront of discourses about contemporary India. Male youth may remain even closer to old versions of hegemonic masculinity in situations of high youth unemployment and poorly-paid casual work (Frosh, 1995). Behaviour such as this may hinder their relationships with women, as Giddens (1993) suggested that clinging to dominant masculinity is a frequent reaction of many men towards the uncertainties they face in contemporary society.

2.5 Masculinity and gendered vulnerabilities

Changing gendered divisions of labour, social practices, and concepts of masculinity can disadvantage and benefit, creating gendered vulnerabilities. Men are not always 'winners' and their gender-specific inequalities and vulnerabilities should not be overlooked (Jackson, 1999). Changes in economic and social structures, and household composition are resulting in crises of masculinity, such as low educational attainment for boys, increased female incorporation into the labour force, more female-headed households, and fewer male role models. Poverty and economic change are seen by some to have 'demasculinising' effects, as roles of men are caused to change, calling their identity into question (Bujra, 2002; Barker, 2000).

Masculinity and femininity are defined relationally, i.e. one is what the other is not: masculinity is not compassionate, emotional, complicated or cluttered, and is not made up of relations of dependence as femininity is, but is rational, logical, strong, nonchalant, and independent (McDowell, 2004). Theorisations contemporary to McDowell's (2004) work emphasise the multiple nature of masculinities and femininities, as opposed to the dichotomous structure previously outlined. There must be a focus on both the cultural construction of multiple identities and the continued dominance of older structures of inequality (ibid.). There is a notion of men being inherently exploitative of women, and dominant (or hegemonic) masculinities and compliant (or subordinate) femininities (Jackson, 1991).

Hegemonic masculinity enforces the idea of male dominance as 'natural', based on the subordination of women and bonds between men. It comes from the essentialist notions of inherent biological differences between men and women, from which associated social consequences have come (Jackson, 1991). Although this comes from work written two decades ago, it continues to ring true, as demonstrated by a recent opinion article published in *The Japan Times*, entitled '*In defense of traditional Indian masculinity*' and includes lines such as "But even so, let's admit that man was born tribal (as woman was

born domestic) and must continue to be so if he is to remain in touch with the roots of his nature.” (Choudhury, 2014).

Empowerment, social justice, and progressive gender change can be best achieved through strategic partnerships. Men are needed to ensure that they do not become obstacles to development, can provide access to valuable resources, and more can be achieved for men and women through solidarity and cooperation. For example, men are needed to overcome the excessive labour burden of women if they are employed outside of the household (Sweetman, 2001).

Men are also needed as joint partners in responsibility for the family and children, and some authors, such as Montoya (2000) have shown that confining men to their ‘traditional’ roles can be restrictive and that many desire instead to forge equitable partnerships. Gendered patterns are reinforced in the restructuring of economies, both in the Western advanced economies in the 1970s and in the Global South from the 1990s onwards. The ‘trouble with men’ (crises of masculinity) is a problem for many women too, and for all poorer households, whether they are relying on one or two insufficient incomes (McDowell, 2000).

Men are also needed as partners in political movements and development organisations to ensure that gender issues are not marginalised or underrepresented, and helping to avoid gender being seen as only being about ‘women’s issues’ (Roche, 2000). This, in turn, relates to feminist concerns about whether focusing on men will risk them dominating the field and inequalities persisting (Cleaver, 2002).

General recognition of the importance of wider social and economic structures and how they can oppress men and women is required, and questions must be asked about the limitations of development projects and their ability to promote empowerment (Cleaver, 2002), such as the consideration as to whether women’s empowerment at the expense of men will be beneficial in the long term. There is a role of state action in creating masculinities, or creating the conditions for changing gender relations, as well as in generating violence and conflict, and creating conditions which lead to

distorted and antisocial expressions of masculinity (ibid.). These in turn fuel often-misrepresentative images of violent, disaffected male youth, especially in the Global South.

There has been a reluctance of the media (in the West, at least) to consider females' higher levels of educational attainment as a story of girls' relative success rather than a problem for boys and men, or even as a consequence of feminist pressure (McDowell, 2000). A particular response of disaffected young men is their participation in erratic urban violence, such as the riots in Britain in the early and mid-1990s, or more frequent episodes of fighting such as in bars, at sporting events or in the streets (ibid.). However, in the contemporary Global South, and especially in India, perceptions of violence that disaffected male youth engage in are generally either associated with politics or are domestic.

2.6 Challenges and knowledge gaps

Some of the challenges facing development interventions include the need to link macro-level societal and economic changes and processes to shaping individual behaviour, particularly in trying to change manifestation of masculinity based on violence. This may be addressed through the identification of personal and social factors which influence men in adopting non-violent practices and behaviours (Cleaver, 2002). While new forms of masculinity might have emerged from the challenge of feminism, patriarchal structures remain resilient (Jackson, 1991).

There are various suggestions about the need for more research into men and masculinities in development, particularly in deconstructing gender identities and determining roles in different cultural contexts, such as the use of a life course approach to track the changing roles, needs, and identities of men. Jackson (2000) suggests looking at men within the global context that considers the implications of globalisation, structural inequalities, and radical multiculturalism. Changing family structure, gender roles, attitudes and

practices are seen as the important aspects by Unicef (1997), while Jackson (1999) believes that investigating men's use of time, and the relations of power in valuing lives, to see how gender inequalities are reproduced or transformed.

Jackson (1991) considered the experience of men *as men* to have barely been addressed, and whilst this may no longer be entirely true, there remains another 'geography of gender' to be mapped regarding the spatial structures that reinforce contemporary gender relations (and thus various development-related implications) and potential political pressure points where change may be possible. The case of different masculinities and how differing contexts of labour affect men's conceptions of themselves might also be considered (Jackson, 1991).

The variation of forms of masculinity are usually differentiated by power and status relations, and constructed through social and discursive practices. McDowell (2000) argues that contemporary economic changes have destabilised, as well as made redundant this binary distinction. Whilst their work is in the context of a study about young men in contemporary Britain, the author invites readers to consider the political implications of their arguments in other localities and nations, and additionally the implications for theory and practice in critical social science on the whole, especially regarding analysis of uneven development. Therefore, a link to the study of the contemporary Indian context certainly seems appropriate.

Traditional roles of men in families are usually those of providers, but this is something evermore frequently threatened by social and economic change. Despite prevailing cultural norms that consider the role of men to centre on their providing capabilities, in many places, families which are solely dependent on male incomes are declining, and challenges to traditional gender relations are increasing (Chant and Gutmann, 2002). Declining employment opportunities and global economic changes have given rise to uncertainty about men's roles and identities, particularly how they fit into the world in which they are not assured their identity as provider. Men may be confused about their roles within a familial unit (Barker, 2000).

Men's authority in the home depends greatly on their not being there during the day, and without paid or otherwise meaningful employment, men experience a threat to both their *manhood* and their *livelihood* (Jackson, 1991). Although various cases and themes may overlap, there is currently no clearly identifiable general crisis of masculinity, but a series of local crises, wherein structural change may be able to occur due to the changes in the lives and trajectories of men in certain circumstances (Connell, 1983).

Smith's (2000) work showed that young men and women have very different perspectives about what are everyday problems, and how they might limit livelihoods and the processes and structures which disadvantage youth. Economic changes which risk or remove men's traditional livelihoods without providing alternatives can make violence an attractive option (Chant and Gutmann, 2002), and it is therefore key to understand these changes and how men experience them, as well as which problems and issues arise from them, and how men use their time in response to such transformations occurring in their social and economic structures.

Looking at the role of masculinity in development processes is considered by Greig et al. (2000) to be not just an analytical exercise, but something which has vital implications for the effectiveness of programmes that foster development in many contexts.

There is little guidance for men who wish to challenge the patriarchal assumption of male superiority, and it may be easier for such men to show support of feminism rather than to consider the contradiction of our own experiences as men, and use these (Jackson, 1991). As with the work of Jackson (1991), the strongly political and social change-oriented nature of feminist literature has been more helpful than the literature of 'men's studies'.

The domain in which meanings are constructed and negotiated, and where relations of dominance and subordination are defined and debated is known as cultural politics, and the geographical variations in masculinity are the spatial structures that support existing forms of masculinity and determine the possibilities for their transformation (Jackson, 1991). The contemporary Indian context of both of these should be addressed.

2.7 Research questions

How do male youth involved in Saath's programmes in Ahmedabad, India experience changes in their economic and social structures?

1. Do male youth perceive their identities/role within society to be changing as a result of social and economic changes occurring around them?
2. What do male youth consider to be 'everyday problems', i.e. how are they disadvantaged?
3. How do male youth use their time?
4. What are the attitudes of male youth towards women and gender relations?
5. Is there a prevalence of educated, unemployed male youth in this area?
What are the experiences and opinions of local male youth?

2.8 Conceptual Model

The following conceptual model was produced prior to this research being conducted. It is based on several concepts that emerged from the preceding review of literature that consists the theoretical framework. The concepts displayed appear throughout the literature, and feature in the research questions.

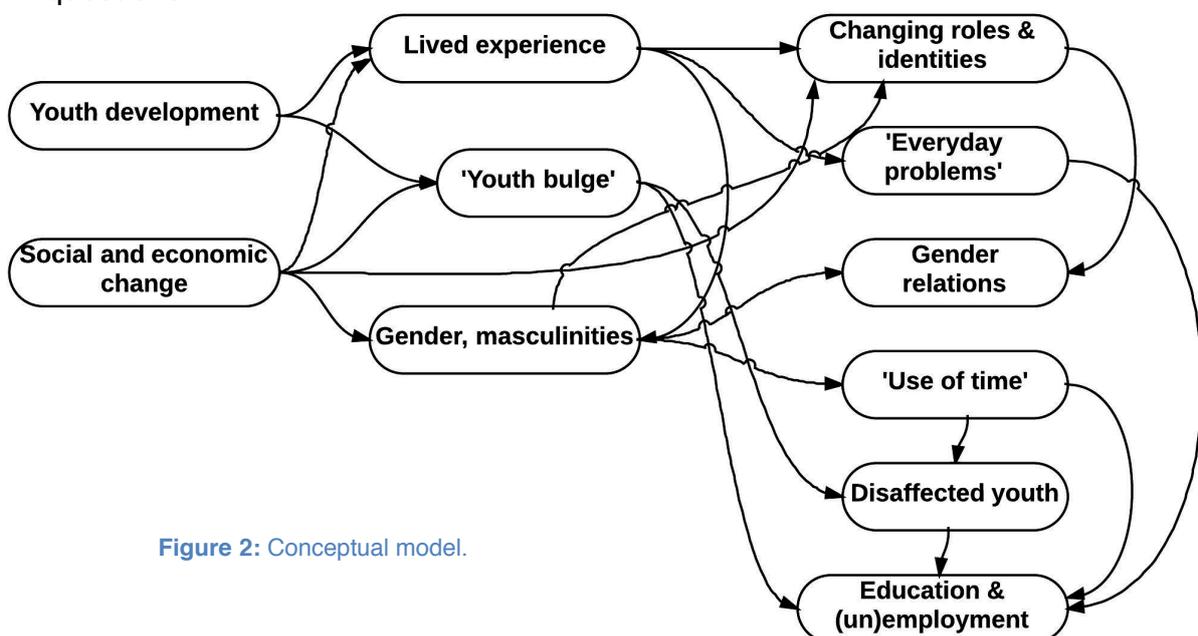


Figure 2: Conceptual model.

Reflecting upon the model post-research, it is interesting to consider how some of the directions of the relationships may have altered from the perceptions of the original model. There may be a link between gender relations and 'use of time', regarding how masculinity is asserted through how and where men spend their free time. The relationship between educated un- and underemployment and gender and masculinities also emerged, and whilst in the conceptual model the links from other concepts are portrayed as leading to un- and underemployment, this relationship could easily be reversed, with notions of disaffected youth, how male youth use their time, and 'everyday problems', being resultant of the concept rather than leading to it.

Thus, the model could certainly be modified in light of the findings of this research, with further concepts and linkages, although perhaps with a structure more conducive to such a complex network.

2.9 Notes on the literature

It may be noted that some of the literature used in the theoretical and conceptual framework is relatively old, with much being from around the early 2000s. There is a large body of literature from this period regarding crises of masculinity, and masculinities and development, in particular from authors such as Chant & Gutmann (2000), Cleaver (2002), and Jackson (1999; 2000).

In order to ensure the contemporaneous relevance of this research, the sources used regarding contemporary India and its youth are from recent years. Whilst there is some older material used in order to ground much of the theory, many of the works used come from leading experts in the field and some of their most recent publications, including Corbridge et al. (2012).

3. Regional thematic framework

3.1 Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad is a city in eastern Gujarat state, located in west-central India. It lies along the Sabarmati River about 440 kilometres north of Mumbai. The city has a population of more than 5.8 million and an extended population of 6.3 million, and is the fifth largest city and seventh largest metropolitan area of India. It is also ranked third in Forbes' list of fastest growing cities of the decade (Kotkin, 2010). This growth and the apparent dynamic nature of this urban centre is reflective of change across India, which demonstrates the value and interest of studying how youth – a key demographic in contemporary India – and their experience of such changes.



Figure 3: Map showing the location of Ahmedabad, within Gujarat state, and India (adapted from: Haros, 2008).

The old city lies east of the Sabarmati River, while newer sections lie along the west bank. An interesting local feature is the division of the old city centre into pols, or self-contained blocks of houses that shelter several thousand people each. Some pols are virtually small townships, crossed by a street with gates at either end. The city has large populations of Hindus, Muslims and Jains, and these cultures are prominent in the city.

Ahmedabad is at the junction of the main roads leading to Mumbai and central India, the Kathiawar Peninsula, and the Rajasthan border. The city is also a major junction on the Western Railway, with lines running to Mumbai, Delhi, and the Kathiawar Peninsula (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2014).

The city was named by The Times of India (2011) as the country's best megacity to live in, as a result of an extensive opinion poll conducted for the newspaper by a leading market research firm across the country's eight biggest urban agglomerations. However, the article also cites some concerns regarding the findings, considering the possibility of coincidence that Ahmedabad and Pune, which are at the top of the rankings, are also the two smallest cities on the list. It may be that India's cities manage reasonably when they are of mid-size by metropolitan standards but find it increasingly difficult to cope as they grow beyond a certain size. Cities such as Ahmedabad and Pune may not have the 'social infrastructure' to support rapid growth. The two very large cities that have also done quite well in the rankings, Delhi and Mumbai, also have historical advantages, one by virtue of being the political capital and a virtual city-state and the other due to its long reign as the country's commercial capital.

3.2 Saath

Saath is a non-governmental organization (NGO) registered as a public charitable trust in Gujarat, India. In Gujarati the word 'Saath' means 'Together, Co-operation, a Collective or Support'. Saath's programmes reach over 100,000 slum dwellers in Ahmedabad, and many more across Gujarat

and Rajasthan. Since 1989, Saath has facilitated participatory processes that improve the quality of life for the urban and rural poor (Saath, 2014a). Saath is the host organisation through which this research was conducted.

The organisation invests in human capacity to manage Saath programmes in their own communities. These communities co-invest with Saath and donors for the programmes, and are involved in decision-making and implementation (Saath, 2014b). Saath have a variety of programmes, working in the areas of livelihoods, health and education, governance, human rights, affordable housing, and microfinance. The focus of this research are male youth involved in their Youth Force programme.

Established in 2005, Saath's employability programme (Umeed) was formulated where young talented youth who due to social and economic constraints are not able to complete their education and thus are not eligible for employment, are trained in various professional courses, which then qualifies them for a salaried position at an organisation, through a vigorous process of placement and counselling (Saath, 2013).

3.3 Youth Force

Saath's Youth development programme was originally launched as Azaad Youth Group in 2008, and was re-established as Youth Force in 2012. It aims to provide a platform for the youth of the urban poor settlements. This programme currently looks at forming groups where young talented youth gather to discuss upon issues, plan and execute activities, drives and cultural programmes forming a doorway to leisure activities as well as empowering them with confidence and problem solving practices. There are a total of 350 members in ten groups across Gujarat, Mumbai, and Maharashtra, four of which are in Ahmedabad, with a total of 81 members (Saath, 2013).

3.4 Other initiatives

There are several NGOs operating in Ahmedabad and Gujarat state, including many which work towards the education and empowerment of marginalised children, such as Pratham, Kadam Education Initiative, and Shwas. Utthan, another NGO aims to initiate sustainable gender sensitive processes of empowerment amongst the most vulnerable communities, through a process of building conscientiousness, and organising around their major issues (Utthan, 2014).

Sarathi works in the Panchmahal District of eastern Gujarat, and one of their focus areas is the 'gender sensitisation of adult men', which aims to promote equality and teach men to respect the views of women, and understand (and therefore implement) more equitable gender relations (Sarathi, 2014).

However, it appears that within Ahmedabad itself, Saath remains one of the only – or at least the leading – NGO or organisation that is actively working with the city's marginalised youth, through programmes such as Youth Force. Some projects, such as 'Youth Connect', "India's first and only media house for the youth" (Youth Connect, 2014), aim to source, identify, develop and deliver locally unique, youth-specific, inspirational and significant content to India's youth through this online media platform. It is run by students in Ahmedabad, who are driven by their passion have their views and opinions heard, both by their young contemporaries, and further afield (Youth Connect, 2014).

4. Methodology

4.1 Qualitative methods

Qualitative methods aim to produce a holistic understanding of complex realities and processes, rather than quantitative measurement of predetermined hypotheses. The 'objectivity' of quantitative research may be questionable, and it is therefore more pertinent to understand the differing, and frequently competing 'subjectivities', regarding different experiences of 'facts', giving varying perspectives, perceptions, and meanings (Mayoux, 2006). Qualitative research usually focuses on collecting various micro-level case studies, produced by methods such as interviewing, participant observation, and potentially visual media such as videos and photographs. The type of questioning involved is usually broad and open, and they adapt and develop during the research process in order to create the a picture of an outcome through the various accounts of 'reality' being told, which are considered to be 'true' in that they are experiences, as they are specific and subjective (Mayoux, 2006).

Analysis provides inductive causal inference from detailed systematic analysis of patterns of difference and similarity between the case studies and accounts collected (Mayoux, 2006). Such methods use small purposive samples, finding participants through key informants, and 'contingent' sampling in chance encounters. Qualitative methods give a holistic understanding of complicated issues and processes, with flexibility and understanding that allows the researcher to see underlying meanings and have access to potentially sensitive and unforeseen issues.

Qualitative methods, like any research process, have their advantages and disadvantages. They give a holistic understanding of complicated issues and processes, with flexibility and understanding, that allows the researcher to see underlying meanings and have access to potentially sensitive and unforeseen issues. However, there may be a possibility of a lack of focus, and the

influence of subjective external analysis. A variety of local perceptions can be captured well, along with subjectivity, with such methods, and purposive sampling means that a clear focus can be maintained on the group(s) and issue(s) concerned. Unfortunately, the small-scale nature of much of this type of research may expose it easily to bias (especially that of the researcher), and with generalised findings, proving them may be of difficulty. While qualitative methods provide an excellent overall cumulative picture, that reveals processes and causality, it can again have the issue of the difficulty of proving anything to be more than anecdotal (Mayoux, 2006).

Ethically, these methods aim to be empathetic and about understanding, and giving freedom of expression to participants, with minimal interference. In this case, impact was minimised due to the positionality of the investigator: also a young male, and therefore well positioned to understand and empathise the situation of the participants to a certain extent, whilst also relatively well provisioned to be able to consider and reflect upon their own positionality.

4.2 Interviews

Interviewing in research is generally divided into three categories of 'structured', 'semi-structured' and 'unstructured'. Semi-structured interviews follow a form of interview schedule with suggested themes, but with scope and space to allow interviewees to develop their responses. Semi-structured interviews are often popular in development research, because they allow areas considered to be most important to the interviewer to be covered, but also provide the opportunity for interviewees to give their own ideas and thoughts (Willis, 2006).

Within this research, there were basic questions and an interview schedule in order to keep the semi-structured aspect of the interview. Interviews were chosen for this research because they provide the opportunity to examine processes, motivations, and experiences, and not the more 'quantitative' data

provided by a questionnaire or survey, for example. Using a semi-structured approach also allows for a degree of flexibility and adjustment for each individual, as is useful in this case, due to the experience-based theme of the research topic.

The group interviewed were from various slum communities of Ahmedabad, as decided and given access to by Saath. They were male youth, aged between 18-35 years, all involved with Saath's Youth Force programme. Thirty in-depth individual interviews were conducted over a period of 8 weeks from February-April 2014. Interviews were conducted at various Youth Force centres across the city (such as the one shown in Figure 4), in the interviewees' homes, and in public parks, depending on where participants wanted to be interviewed.



Figure 4: Saath Youth Activity and Resource Centre, Ahmedabad (Source: Author).

Interviews were conducted in English, Hindi, Gujarati, or in a mixture of two or more, with a translator. Notes were taken by hand during the interview, which were then processed digitally at the first available opportunity. The interview questions asked were as follows:

Research question 1:

Do male youth perceive their identities/role within society to be changing as a result of social and economic changes occurring around them?

- Age
- Job/employment status, and educational background
- Role within the household?
- Has this changed in recent years (depending on age), and how?
- How long have you been involved with Saath/Youth Force?
- How has this influenced/affected you?
- As far as you can remember, what changes have you noticed in society?
- Have they affected you? If yes, how?

Research question 2:

What do male youth consider to be 'everyday problems', i.e. how are they disadvantaged?

- Are there any problems that you encounter in your everyday life?
- Are there any problems that youth in general face?
- Has your involvement/experience with Saath/Youth Force helped to change any of these?

Research question 3:

How do male youth use their time?

- What is your normal daily routine? (working day/weekend)
- Ask about specific things relating to answer, or what other things they might be involved with.

Research question 4:

What are the attitudes of male youth towards women and gender relations?

- Do you think/consider men and women to have different roles within society?
- If yes, how so? Why?

- In your experience, have you noticed any changes in these roles/can you imagine if they were different?
- What is your opinion of this?

Research question 5:

Is there a prevalence of educated, unemployed male youth in this area?

What are the experiences and opinions of local male youth?

[This section depends on responses gathered relating to the personal history/experiences as discussed in relation to the first section].

- How does being educated but un/under-employed make you feel?
- *OR:* Do you think it will be easy/hard to find a job in the future? Why?
- *OR:* Go to the next question:
- Is this phenomenon widespread/common in this area?
- Is it a problem (short or long-term)/barrier to development?
- How (if at all) does experience with Saath/Youth Force helped?
- What do you think today's youth want now and in the future?

On several occasions, there were also impromptu discussion groups held amongst youth involved with Youth Force. These groups occurred at Youth Force events, and where a time and space in which the youth would casually converse with one another, and the researcher, about their life. Whilst not in any way formal or recorded, a few insights and general ideas and perceptions did come from these discussions. Figure 5 shows a group of Youth Force members involved in such a discussion during an exposure visit organised by the programme to the Mahatma Gandhi Ashram at Sabarmati, Ahmedabad.



Figure 5: Youth Force members in discussion at the Mahatma Gandhi Ashram, March 2014
(Source: Author).

4.3 Ethical considerations

This research followed the guidelines of the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (2011), as although all research on human subjects and their social and cultural life raises ethical issues, those posed by anthropological studies are especially wide ranging and profound. The intimate nature of the information produced by ethnographic research is one of several dilemmas researchers frequently face. These guidelines were chosen as this research closely aligns with that of social anthropology.

Participants were protected from any anticipated harms wherever possible, with conscious attempts to minimise disturbance to themselves and their environments, and to avoid undue intrusion. All participants gave their informed consent to be interviewed, and were all assured of their rights to confidentiality and anonymity.

All research findings and materials were in the process and upon completion of this thesis, made available to the host organisation (Saath). As well as being for scholarly purposes, this research is also intended to facilitate

in generally widening the scope of social research, through providing additional and potentially novel insights and information that may help inform further research and policymaking.

4.4 Analysis

The content of the interviews was analysed using manual coding, identifying key emergent themes and patterns. Following this, a further, more detailed analysis was conducted, of which the findings can be found in chapter 5, and a discussion of these findings in chapter 6.

4.5 Reflection on methodology and positionality

Generally, the structure of the interviews and their questions worked very well. Participants were mostly very open with their answers, appeared comfortable, and were enthusiastic about being part of the research process. Of course, as the interviews were mostly conducted in Gujarati or Hindi (neither of which are intelligible to the researcher), a certain amount of information, or at least inferred and colloquial words, phrases and notions may have been 'lost in translation'.

Whilst the interviews conducted were certainly of sufficient depth and provided the researcher with a wealth of information, it would have certainly been advantageous, had time and resources permitted, to conduct further interviews within the local community, such as with marginalised youth not associated with Saath, and those from other social strata, including middle class youth who are also affected by the changes that poorer youth have experienced.

Regarding the positionality of the researcher, most aspects here were (perhaps surprisingly) positive. With the researcher being young, and white British, and Anglophone, there were obvious, stark differences between they

and the participants. However, the similarity in age, gender (the researcher was also male) the informal atmosphere, and intrigue of many of the participants allowed the impact of much of the difference to be minimised. There can be little doubt that some of the answers given were likely to have been what the participants thought the researcher 'wanted to hear', but this is inevitable in most research of this type. Additionally, the ability of the researcher to share their own lived experiences as a young male, to empathise and be able to compare participants stories with their own helped to bring out much more from the interviewees, and allowed them to feel comfortable.

That said, without the intention to directly contradict the aforementioned, it can only apply to those who were in a similar situation to the researcher, i.e. of a similar age, and either still in higher education or recently graduated and seeking employment. Those who had very different life experiences and significant age difference cannot be considered to have close comparability or relatability with the researcher purely on the basis of gender and topics discussed. Culture, and all of its components (language and values being probably the most stark examples), alongside the political and socioeconomic views and experiences of the researcher and participants puts them far apart from each other, and thus influencing the outcome of the interviews.

5. Findings

The following are the findings observed from the content of the aforementioned individual interviews (chapter 4.2). They are arranged in correspondence to the five research questions (chapter 2.7).

5.1 Do male youth perceive their identities/role within society to be changing as a result of social and economic changes occurring around them?

In 21 out of the 30 interviews, participants had at least some kind of responsibility within the household, ranging from minor help with housework to being the main earner. In most cases the father was the main earner, with youth employment important in supplementing the household income in order to support the family. Most had been working for at least 5 years, many either alongside their studies or instead of continuing their education. Generally those who were not the main earner but worked felt helpful and more independent. Responsibility of most participants increased with age.

Those who were the main earner in their household, carried a large amount of responsibility or were a main contributor to their household's income usually did so as a result of their father being unable to work in order to provide for the family, due to death, illness or other undisclosed issues. Participants often also noted that the financial situation of their family was often poor, and thus required their income in order to supplement that of the main earner. Additionally, those who did have their own income, as well as feeling responsible, also mentioned feeling more independent and confident.

Amongst those interviewed, there was a relatively even split (coincidentally) between participants who were in employment (14) and full-time education (10) and the remainder both who work and study (6). Most of those in education were studying accountancy and commerce, as there is a perception

of this being the most meritorious field among youth, especially with India's rapid economic growth. There is quite a disparity between the level of educational attainment of those still in education and those in full-time employment, with those who have jobs generally being educated to a far lower level, often for the aforementioned reasons of family difficulties that have lead to them needing to work.

Involvement with Saath/Youth Force has wide-ranging and entirely positive impacts on the members interviewed, regardless of how long they have been involved with the programme. Most youth have made new friends and contacts, and feel that as a result have many more opportunities and better prospects, including increasing their educational achievements.

A major theme that emerges is the growth in self-confidence that members gain, something which many seemed to lack beforehand. Several mentioned that they have gained awareness of their surroundings and this has allowed them to develop their identity and personality. Many also like the programme as a platform for discovering and showcasing their talents.

The most noticed changes were within the city itself. Growth and improvements in infrastructure and public transport, such as flyovers, roads and buses were considered positive as they reduce traffic congestion and make movement much easier for young people, as well as the city becoming a more pleasant place to live. An increased prevalence and development of technology and communications (including social media) was also noted, along with banking become easier and more accessible.

The negative aspects of such change were also evident, including inflation and an increase in expenses and the cost of living in the city, although those who owned their own businesses or worked in the informal sector (many of those in employment) considered this to be positive, as it improves business and entrepreneurial prospects. There has been a marked shift from formal to informal sector employment, due to insufficient wages and poor job security in the formal sector. This includes a shift towards entrepreneurialism.

These changes were viewed as especially beneficial for children and youth as they can take best advantage of them, are most relevant, and are most

easily adaptable to such change. Growth in infrastructure and physically visible development of the city was almost totally seen as positive, and equalling opportunities. Some changes observed were far more basic, such as the provision of running water in certain areas of the city.

The improvement in quality and accessibility of education was the change most often cited. It has brought many opportunities for all youth, even the most marginalised. Education is now more highly valued than ever, and there are many schemes such as scholarships to help those who need it, such as the lower castes and extremely poor.

There is also now a better provision for women in education and in employment, as well as better protection due to new laws. Women are also perceived as being more empowered and safer within the city. Accompanying this is a change in the attitudes of youth, both generally and those involved with Saath. Youth have been given more decision-making power. However, on the household and community level, there is less perceived change, with traditional and religious values still reigning strong.

There was also an emphasis on the cleanliness and improvements in public spaces, and the clearance of slums on the riverfront. According to interviewees, this has made the city a better place to live, and gives them more opportunities for leisure (the city is also safer). Previously, and still in some areas, leisure opportunities have been restricted due to lack of appropriate space and facilities. Some mentioned the importance of organisations such as Saath in helping slum-dwellers as they are often ignored or not considered by government schemes.

5.2 What do male youth consider to be ‘everyday problems’, i.e. how are they disadvantaged?

While 18 participants stated that they did not face any personal everyday problems, almost all of those interviewed cited several problems that youth in general have in their lives.

Something which emerged early was the issue of transport and movement. It is interesting that this should come to light when considering how many noted positive change in the transport infrastructure in response to earlier questions. Many youth struggle with movement as they do not have their own vehicles, and slum areas are generally poorly connected by public transport, and in those that are it is unreliable, and those who do use it spend a lot of time travelling or waiting, wasting time and therefore creating negative impacts on their livelihoods, often in a linked or snowballing way. This was seen as an issue specifically troublesome for youth as they lack alternative means of transport, and links closely with another prominent disadvantage that many face, money. Youth have no other options mainly because they are unable to afford other means of transportation within the city.

Financial issues are clearly the largest disadvantage youth have or perceive. These come for a variety of reasons, such as un/under-employment and medical expenses, and often impose significant restrictions on youth, holding many back from education and pursuing their goals, as they are required to work. For example, in most cases where the participants were in full-time employment, as previously mentioned, they did not generally have a particularly high level of educational attainment. This is due to the fact that these individuals were required to stop their education in order to become the main (or at least a major) contributor to household income. The increased time commitments and other familial responsibilities that accompany such change mean that education is simply not an option, and thus access to education is therefore difficult for many.

Unemployment, especially for educated youth unable to find suitable work, came up as another prominent issue, perceived to be due to a lack of vacancies, corruption, the need for bribes (which they are unable to pay due to dire financial situations), and nepotism. Often, those who are working are doing menial jobs such as labouring, in order to have an income of some kind, i.e. there is definite underemployment. This in turn makes youth feel unfulfilled, and that they are disappointing their families.

Several interviewees mentioned family problems, such as youth having many responsibilities and pressures on them which they struggled with, as well as clashes between generations and general family tensions. Participants did not know how to cope with such problems. They believed that youth are not listened to or respected by older family members, and are marginalised by their seniors in society, that they lack a voice. This is even a problem in situations where participants were the main or significant earners in the household, but still felt that they lacked knowledge and decision-making power. In one instance, a participant became estranged from their family for a period of time due to medical issues which required many expensive procedures and led to him borrowing large amounts of money.

The older youth also had responsibilities for organising and managing their family finances, and furthermore being responsible for family members and friends should they find themselves with difficulties or 'bad habits' (such as alcoholism), adding to their stress. However, some did not view situations such as severe illness in the family (which incurs huge costs and disadvantages) to be 'everyday problems', perhaps because of their lack of clear, direct impact, or because of the time-span involved.

Homelessness and marginalisation of the poorest youth was considered as both a general problem, and one which had been experienced by a handful of participants. Population growth without appropriate housing provision or attention to the poor was seen as the cause, leading additionally to overcrowding and unemployment. The provision of scholarships for the poorest and lower caste communities is helping to change this, as has occurred with these participants. The belief that such problems are needed in order for solutions to be found was also expressed by one participant.

Youth Force was seen by almost all participants as vital in providing connections and opportunities for youth in the city to find jobs, and giving support to young people when they need it. It also plays an important role in allowing youth to be heard regarding issues they have – many participants felt that youth strongly lacked a 'voice' in society. Youth Force is also important in providing appropriate guidance and solutions to resolve many of the problems

faced by the city's youth, especially for the most marginalised groups and in deprived areas of the city.

5.3 How do male youth use their time?

All of those interviewed either studied or worked, or did both. Those who were in full-time employment work either seven days per week, or had a free day on Sundays. Many had two jobs, and most of those who studied also had a part-time job or worked at home or in the family business (such as sweeping, sewing, running a small shop, or some kind of household labour). Those who did have these household-related jobs as well as their studies or main employment did not mention them however when asked earlier in the interviews if they had any responsibilities at home. If they did not work, most who were in education would use non-class time during weekdays for extra studies.

None of the participants did 'nothing' but several were underemployed or had insecure work, and were often seeking something better. Examples of such jobs included farm watchman and auto-rickshaw driver. Many were looking for more secure employment, including the army and government jobs, although were held back by their lack of educational attainment.

The majority of those in employment gave the impression that they worked very hard, for the maximum number of hours possible, in order to support their families and improve their personal situation. This included a great deal of extra work such as promotion if they had their own business, or fieldwork and area visits in other positions. There was also mention of travelling and commuting to work being a significant part of the daily routine for some participants.

During their free time, most liked to do two or three hobbies, including playing and watching cricket (by far the most popular, unsurprisingly), watching movies, spending time with their friends and families, roaming, listening to music, and dancing. 'Roaming' was a frequently recurring 'activity'

that participants did in their spare time. Its definition was somewhat unclear, but may be linked to the limited leisure opportunities available to marginalised youth in the city. There was also an interest in playing volleyball expressed by one, something often unheard of in India, at least for male youth. The main reason for the interest in this over cricket was because of its niche status means that it offers better opportunities for success and progress within a sport, whereas cricket's immense popularity renders it more of a 'dream'.

Some felt that their range of both employment and leisure opportunities was limited due to their low education status. However, Youth Force meetings were something they all had in common, and these help those needing a place to have fun and make friends, without social boundaries. They also offered many a place (often the only) in which they could improve and showcase their talents such as singing and dancing.

Only eight participants expressed an interest in politics, but most said they would vote in the upcoming election, as it is their duty to do so. Political interest was mostly general, but a few were very involved, with one being a local campaign officer for their party, and the other attending many rallies and events. One participant was not necessarily interested in politics, but frequently worked as a promoter for a political party as a means of earning extra income. There was support for the three main parties; INC (commonly called the Congress; one of the two major contemporary political parties in India; centre-left on the Indian political spectrum), AAP (much less significant following the 2014 Lok Sabha elections; centre-left; anti-corruption), and the BJP (the other major party; Hindu nationalist; right-wing, party of the current Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi).

Those who supported the AAP did so with conviction. There was a strong belief in its anti-corruption values, and its value as a voice for people such as the participants. This is interesting to note, considering their relative lack of success in the 2014 Lok Sabha (lower house of the Parliament of India) elections, especially in Gujarat state. Participants who stated that they had no interest in politics did so in two very distinct ways: either by adamantly making it very clear that they had no interest or involvement whatsoever; or taking a

very laissez-faire attitude towards the question and politics, or asking why someone like them, or young people in general would be interested.

5.4 What are the attitudes of male youth towards women and gender relations?

The majority of respondents gave very similar responses in this section: that the role of women is in the home, taking care of the household, and a man's role is to work and provide for the family. In many cases, this was seen to be because being the breadwinner is a fundamental part of a man's identity, or in the words of an interviewee "It's what it means to be a man". Words such as 'normal', 'traditional' and 'family' were strongly connected to participants' ideas surrounding this topic.

It was made fundamentally clear by most that regardless of what women do; a man should always be the main earner/provider within the household, and that they could not be considered to be a man otherwise. The idea that the roles of men and women were 'naturally' different was conveyed with conviction. Additionally, the 'goals' of men and women in life were described as to provide and to be a homemaker, respectively.

Some believed that when women go out to work, especially if they are the main earner, it brings shame on men, and that women should only be going out to work if their husband is unable to, due to illness, or the most frequently cited reason, issues such as alcoholism. Many stated that when women are earning, that it is simply 'wrong' (other frequently used terms were 'bad' and 'not ok'), as this is not their duty, and while it may happen, it should not. Additionally, it was considered not safe for women to be working outside of the home, and should only be allowed in times of financial crisis. Whilst deemed acceptable and potentially helpful for higher levels of gender equality to exist, again this would only be permissible in times of financial issues within a household.

Others mentioned that it would be permissible for roles to change and become more like those in the West, but that this is unlikely to happen in India. There has been some change, but very little. Men are considered unable to do household work (they would 'feel silly' as it is distinctly 'women's work'), meaning that even if women are employed outside of the home, they still have their household responsibilities. This was true even with those who believed that women should be allowed to work. Similarly to providing being seen as a 'duty' for men, running the household was seen as such for women.

There was generally no mention of what types of work outside of the household it may be deemed acceptable for women to do – just that it should be different to what men can do - with the exception of one participant who believed office work to be suitable (although only if absolutely necessary, or there is no man able to). However, the type of jobs acceptable and which men should aspire to included 'office jobs' and 'working for a company'.

All participants believed that women should have the same opportunities in education as men, even if they do not work outside of the home. This was because they may need a job in an emergency situation, but also in order to maintain a healthy relationship with her educated husband, and to be able to offer good advice and guidance to her children. Being a good mother and able to pass on knowledge and skills to their children was cited most frequently as the reason for women to be well educated. Most believed that women should not remain in education after marriage, or have a higher level of education than her husband. Although, some considered men to be less stable and reliable in contemporary society, so women must be prepared for all eventualities, such as her husband abandoning the family for any reason.

Men were thought to be required to remain 'one step ahead' of women to ensure that they are respected within society and their community. Despite this, women are expected to be able to do everything (earning and running the household) should they be so required. Contemporary women were considered to be more intelligent and capable than their counterparts in previous generations, as well as in general. This is because they manage

everything within the household, whereas men are breadwinners because they are stronger and physically more capable.

An interesting response came from one participant who had experienced a situation in which both he and his wife had been necessarily in full-time employment, but their shift work had made it necessary for them to also share the burden of running the household. His situation has since changed, yet they continue to share both duties, which he deems the key to their happiness and prosperity. He also noted that women work just as hard, if not harder, than men, as running a household, including budgeting and planning is their own form of 'provision'.

While most thought that gender roles do not and should not change, there were a few different viewpoints offered, including that women often cannot work due to the restraints imposed upon them by society and their families, despite being qualified. They are only viewed as homemakers, and therefore unable to escape this constraint and for changes to the structures to occur.

Others thought that men have an unequal amount of freedom in comparison to women, and that there should be a greater provision of safety and educational opportunities specifically for women, especially in the poorer sectors of society, where this is a far bigger problem than within the middle and upper classes. However, even though almost all participants believed that greater levels of safety, education and empowerment for women were necessary, very few could (or rather were willing to) explain why, and did not agree with such conditions if it were to be in their own circumstances.

There was also mention of the sex ratio issue in India, and that since both genders are born equal, this should continue throughout their life. One man believed that women are more reliable than men, and make better workers, and therefore everything should be shared.

Some of those interviewed simply declined to answer, due to the fact that this was not something they thought about or considered important – that it is just the way things are. Furthermore, some simply could not imagine changes to 'traditional' gender roles occurring, and that therefore they simply should not. Where changes had been noticed (although often minimal), like more

women in the workforce, they were generally viewed as largely negative, and that there is simply no need for change, it will just upset the status quo and cause further problems.

5.5 Is there a prevalence of educated, unemployed male youth in this area? What are the experiences and opinions of local male youth?

It would appear that educated un/under-employment is considered by male youth to be widespread in Ahmedabad, and is particularly an issue for poorer youth in the city. Many of those currently in education believed it will be very difficult for them to find employment upon completion of their studies, and that despite working hard, most will only find poorly paid work that lacks job security.

The most commonly cited reasons were that nowadays, extra skills, connections (some mentioned that nepotism is rife in the job market) and experience (not just 'book knowledge') are needed even for the lowest-tier professional jobs, and this is something which many – especially slum youth – struggle with. Extra skills and 'general knowledge' are seen to be needed in order to stand out from the crowd. 'Skilled' people can earn just as much as graduates. Formal qualifications lack value, or fail to add it, because everyone has the same, and these are not enough to ensure job security. One participant (who had been relatively successful) was keen to share their experiences, and teach general knowledge and skills at Youth Force centres in order to help those with only 'book knowledge' to progress.

One participant believed that there are plenty of jobs, and just not enough sufficiently qualified or highly skilled young people to fill the positions. A strong theme regarding corruption and bribes emerged, but usually not regarding it as something which must change, but as a barrier to poorer youth seeking employment as they are not able to afford to make 'donations' to employers. There are links here to much of the earlier mentions of financial problems and

crises faced by various participants, which include being unable to afford bribes and therefore limiting their possibilities for gaining employment.

Poorer youth have few opportunities in the job market, regardless of their education. Some also hold the opinion that jobs are only available in areas that are inaccessible to poorer youth. The more deprived areas of Ahmedabad are on the east side of the river (the old city side), with most development and employment opportunities being on the west side. The costs of living in, or even travelling to these areas is considered by many to be reason enough not to consider certain jobs; taken on a second job to cover their costs, or to settle for underemployment. Connections can be made here with the discussion of personal transport issues surrounding the themes in research questions one and two (chapters 5.1 and 5.2).

There is the perceived notion that many are 'moving backwards': they are taking jobs for which they are highly overqualified, and working far below their potential, with little or no upward mobility. Poor job security and a lack of leisure time were mentioned again here. Unemployment and underemployment are both perceived by youth to be barriers to growth and development, on both the personal level and on larger scales. Traditions and older generations in society are considered by some to be blocking or hindering changes that would increase prospects for youth. It is worth noting that the disappointment and associated feelings with unemployment, underemployment and the failure of the meritocratic system are not considered as the 'everyday problems' discussed in the responses to research question two (chapter 5.2). Belief in that the harder or more one works, the more will be achieved (i.e. a meritorious society) remains strong.

Politics may play a role in this area, with some having a strong belief that Narendra Modi (Chief Minister of Gujarat when the research was conducted, and current Prime Minister of India) and the BJP will solve all of the problems and provide jobs for all youth (this was in fact one of their key priorities in the election). The AAP were also mentioned as being a source of hope for people such as those interviewed, as they aim to help on poor-specific issues, especially their core values including anti-corruption. Whilst they could have

been instrumental (and were viewed by some participants as such) in bringing about positive change regarding corruption and nepotism in employment, their lack of success in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections may alter these considerations.

Youth see politicians and politics as both using them for publicity (youth are considered to be highly reactionary) and votes, but also as a potential (or perhaps only) way of having their voices heard and issues addressed. Notions of youth lacking a 'voice' echo here once again, as they did in responses to research question two (chapter 5.2).

In some cases, educated un/under-employment leads to youth having bad habits such as alcoholism and crime, due to boredom and anger with their situation. Participants highlighted this as a big problem which is both bad for the youth themselves but also for the future growth and prosperity of India. However, a few interviewees were convinced that their hard work and commitment to their education would reward them easily with good jobs in the immediate future. Family businesses may be key for some as a means of security, but youth are perceived as too little aware within such situations of their responsibilities.

Whether still in education or not, all participants emphasised the importance of Youth Force in helping young people in Ahmedabad, especially those in slum areas, to find work, through its various events, providing connections, giving advice and guidance (including support and direction when youth have 'bad habits'), and acting as a referee. Saath's reputation in the city and further afield is extremely important, and provides a truly strong reference for those with whom it is associated. One example of positive change through involvement with the programme was a Youth Force member who had been studying journalism and hopes to become a news reporter. Through the contacts and connections he has made with Saath, a local group leader helped him to secure a position as a trainee reporter with the local state news agency.

Youth Force runs events known as 'Campus Interviews' wherein recruiters from local enterprises come to Youth Force centres and conduct interviews

with a great number of young people. A large number of offers are made, although Saath struggles somewhat with acceptance rates due to some of the factors mentioned previously, including the distance between the location of the jobs and where the candidates live. The researcher attended two such events. The most popular recruiters seemed to be those from call centres and other sectors of the service industry.

Ahmedabad's contemporary male youth appear to generally have big dreams of houses, cars and beautiful wives, but are considerably less clear on how these dreams are to be realised. There are dreams of prosperity and freedom too, although a government job remains a dream for today's youth as it has been for many generations, due to the perceived job security, high salaries and pensions, although the limited number, high levels of nepotism, and difficulty of qualifying exams mean that they are not even considered as a realistic possibility by poorer youth such as those interviewed.

Despite these various problems and lack of opportunities in many spheres, the youth of contemporary Ahmedabad remain motivated (in many cases thanks to organisations such as Saath and programmes like Youth Force) to improve their environment and prospects, as well as being drivers behind positive change in the city's most deprived areas.

6. Discussion of findings

6.1 Discussion

Growth and infrastructural changes within the city of Ahmedabad have clearly influenced the quality of life of many of its youth, most of which is perceived as positive, especially regarding education. Programmes such as Saath's Youth Force have played an important role in these improvements for those interviewed. Many of the youth have an amount of responsibility within their household (mostly financial), which has generally increased with age and changing family circumstances. In some cases, this is restricting their opportunities and access to education, potentially limiting their prospects for the future.

Slum clearances within the city, such as the development of the Sabarmati riverfront were viewed as largely positive by the participants that mentioned the project. They were seen as important in the growth and development of the city, and part of the frequently cited infrastructural development and improvement. The work of Leela Fernandes (2004) on the politics of forgetting may come into play here. It is widely acknowledged that policies of economic liberalisation have been accompanied by discourses on the rise of the new middle class in India. The 'new' Indian middle class are called such due to their changing consumption practices and lifestyles. The growth and resultant visibility and prevalence of this new middle class in urban India sets into motion a politics of forgetting with regard to social groups that are marginalised by India's policies of liberalisation.

The politics of forgetting refers to a political-discursive process in which specific marginalised social groups are rendered invisible within the dominant political culture, and unfold through the reconfiguration of class inequalities in urban spaces. Both middle-class groups and the state engage in a politics of forgetting that displaces the poor and working classes from such spaces. The result is the production of an exclusionary form of cultural citizenship which is

then contested by these marginalised socioeconomic groups (Fernandes, 2004). Although not previously considered in this research, as a result of the discussion of the slum clearances in the city, a politics of difference and forgetting becomes relevant.

The link to this research comes from the idea that a politics of forgetting may also be occurring within other strata of society. The middle class ideals and lifestyles that are projected throughout Ahmedabad (and most likely other urban spaces throughout contemporary India) are influencing the cultural citizenship of marginalised groups also, but perhaps developing within them almost a 'middle class mentality' in that they are 'forgetting' the very poorest strata of society. Whilst the slum clearances are a cause for distress and severe disruption of the livelihoods of those involved, the participants in this research viewed the process from the 'outside' (although being from a marginalised group themselves) and thus were convinced by the political agenda surrounding the project to 'forget' those who could be considered as victims. Therefore, we may be able to say that a 'politics of forgetting' has trickled down from the middle classes, carrying with it their ideals on political agendas and caused the poor to 'forget' the poorest.

Despite its growth, many youth from slum areas still face problems with transport and movement within the city, affecting their ability to work and study to their full potential. Financial issues are also a common affliction, as well as unemployment (including educated un/under-employment), and family tensions such as inter-generational clashes. Youth Force is seen as an important resource for its members, for advice and guidance, as necessary.

Frequently, in studies of young men with limited options, both in the West and the Global South, rebellion against the norms of mainstream behaviour is common, as noted by McDowell (2000). However, in this case, in-keeping with other work looking at the lives of un- or underemployed male youth in contemporary India (such as that of Craig Jeffrey, 2008) violence or other forms of rebellion do not appear to occur. In fact, similarly to Jeffrey's subjects which were engaged in 'timepass' the participants in this research mostly cited 'roaming' as their pastime of choice.

While the activity of 'roaming' is consistent with un- or underemployment, it can also be linked with gender. In response to questions about the topic of men and women, certain participants considered men to have much greater amounts of freedom in comparison to women. 'Roaming' is a clear example of this. Peter Ward's (1990) study of courtship, love and marriage in nineteenth-century English Canada may be used to draw an interesting comparison and confirmation of 'roaming' as an exercise and demonstration of male power, freedom, and therefore mobility: "...the urban bachelor...like his rural counterpart he could roam more or less at will...Woman's place was much more circumscribed. The home was her primary space" (Ward, 1990: 76-80).

Clearly, there is a large difference in place and time here, but the similarities cannot be denied. Male youth in Ahmedabad may be using 'roaming' as a means of increasing their mobility and thus masculinity that is taken away from them due to un- or underemployment, or from the limitations they face due to the constraints imposed by a lack of sufficient public transport within the city.

Unlike male youth in other studies, most participants were indifferent to politics. Most interviewees either worked or studied, or did both, and all had similar hobbies. While none faced unemployment or no occupation, many had poor job security or were under-employed, and often limited from upward mobility by their personal circumstances.

There were frequent mentions of family tensions and inter-generational conflict, which again may be linked to the 'crisis of masculinity' being faced by men in India. Whilst usually used as a term in reference to troubled youth, it can also include older men who have been disproportionately or even indirectly affected by economic restructuring (McDowell, 2000) that has resulted in changes in the labour market and also familial structure and (also gender) roles. For example, with a shift towards service sector work which may require a certain level of educational attainment (e.g. a Bachelor's degree) will put certain generations of men at an extreme disadvantage, and remove their role as primary earner, and replace that with the younger men in

their own household, or even women, thus greatly challenging their masculinity.

Regarding gender, the majority (there were exceptions) saw the roles of men and women as distinctly different and fixed: men go out to work, earn, and provide for their family; while women manage the household. Here, the significance of the gendered division between 'private' and 'public' space (Jackson, 1991) can be seen. This may also help to explain how although many young men are pro-female empowerment, yet would not support such in their own household or other personal circumstances.

Few participants were open to change, and those who would be accepting of a woman working outside of the home would still expect her to solely manage the household and family, and not be the main earner. Part of what it 'means to be a man' is being the breadwinner for their family. And, as Peter Jackson (1991) clearly identified, a man's authority within the home depends almost entirely on their absence from it during the day, with the loss of employment resulting in the loss of this power. A loss of livelihood leading to a loss of manhood. 'Timepass' and 'roaming' can be seen as an effort of young men attempting to remain in control of their households and thus masculinity by distancing themselves from the home during 'working' hours if they are un- or underemployed.

Regardless of their role, all participants thought that women should be educated equally to men, in order to maintain balance in their marriage, guide their children, and be a 'safety net' should their husband be unable to work, such as in situations cited where men have issues such as alcoholism. Women are frequently seen as 'guardians of culture' and therefore are required to pass on knowledge and stories to their children. Whilst not wholly negative, notions of patriarchal control over women's bodies through ideologies of domesticity and femininity must be recognised here. Additionally, the view that women are purely reproductive cannot be ignored, and the cultural politics regarding the nature of work in this situation.

According to Jackson (1991), dominant masculinities are oppressive of certain men who may not wish to live up to masculinist ideals, and although

men as a whole benefit in some ways from patriarchal assumptions of male supremacy, they are also restricted by them in that they are unable to consider different options. Therefore, the results of this research must also be considered in light of this, since the answers given by participants may have been influenced by the patriarchal structures within which they live. Participants that would “feel silly” doing housework, or Chandrahas Choudhury’s (2014) views defending ‘traditional Indian masculinity’ do so because of such structures.

Youth un/under-employment appears to be a common problem. Without extra skills and connections, most thought that achieving appropriate employment would be very difficult. There are perceived notions of ‘moving backwards’ due to the lack of appropriate opportunities, especially for slum youth, including their inability to afford bribes. This problem leads to boredom and anger, which in turn causes youth to develop issues such as alcoholism and other ‘bad habits’, all of which are perceived as hindering growth and future prospects for the youth themselves and society on the whole. Again, Youth Force is highly valued as something which will be of immense and vital help for local youth both now and in the future in securing employment.

The participants in this research who are either un- or underemployed can be classified using Jeffrey’s (2008) three analytical groups of young people in the Global South (see chapter 2.3), and fit into the two described as young people who lack access to secondary school education who engage in poorly paid manual or unpaid household labour, or industrial or service work, usually in extremely poor conditions; and those who have completed education, but not moved into secure, paid employment.

In Britain in the 1990s, one of the key reasons for the difficulty for male youth to transition from education into waged employment was due to the climax of rapid economic restructuring that occurred in the labour markets across advanced economies in the mid-1970s, and resulted in a fast decline of industrial manual work for unskilled men (McDowell, 2000). Can we consider, therefore, that a comparable barrier has arisen for young men in contemporary India as a result of the economic reforms of the early 1990s, i.e.

the situation in advanced economies but with a two-decade lag period? Restricted social networks are preventing employment opportunities and therefore young men's adaptation to this change. However, it remains unclear, as it did to Connell (1983), whether we are witnessing a general crisis of masculinity or just a series of local crises.

For young men, whether in Linda McDowell's work (2004) in Sheffield, Cambridge, or New York, or in contemporary Ahmedabad, entry into the labour market is accompanied by low status, lack of respect, low salaries, and poor job security in entry-level jobs. The economic reforms of the early 1990s in India and changes in the labour market, such as a shift in aspirations towards employment in the service sector or 'office jobs' has brought a renewed belief in a meritorious society, in which expectations of success from high levels of academic attainment are often met with disappointment and harsh reality for contemporary male Indian youth.

This is also frequently influential upon their masculinity, and may be linked to their relationship with women. The young men in McDowell's (2004) work had clear views about the types of work they were prepared to consider regarding most service sector work as 'women's work' and so beneath their dignity. Although office jobs were cited as an acceptable form of employment for both men and women according to participants, the idea that men should have government jobs, or work for 'companies' carries a distinctly more masculine tone. Where an 'office job' for a woman could easily imply something secretarial (and thus subordinate), a man working 'for a company' might infer a position of importance or power, and thus dominance. These ideas could offer an explanation for the problems Saath faces regarding male youth receiving offers of employment but either not taking them, or leaving after only short periods of time. It may not simply be due to their time spent commuting or insufficient wages compared to their skill level (i.e. underemployment), but also the effect of this upon their masculinity.

The shift from formal sector employment to informal sector work and entrepreneurialism observed in this research aligns with a concurrent shift throughout India and accompanies an ever-increasing set of discourses about

entrepreneurialism. In the face of economic change, the most successful workers are those who construct mobile careers based on continuous adaptability and on spatial and social mobility (McDowell, 2004). Entrepreneurialism can also be considered as an alternative discourse of masculinity, and its popularity in contemporary India could stem from its being a structure through which young men can assert and retain masculinity in the face of social and economic change. Furthermore, the fostering and promotion of entrepreneurialism in contemporary Indian society emphasises its patriarchal structure, as well as passing on the burden of unemployment to its (generally male) youth.

There is a certain amount of belief, both in the media and amongst participants, that the members of India's 'youth bulge' relate to Narendra Modi and their political agenda. He is perceived as speaking to what they want, of an India without unemployment, with many considering that to have already been achieved within Gujarat (Sharma, 2014). Although, as can be seen, this is not necessarily the case. Sharma (2014) writes about the India's 'youth bulge' as the 'Modi generation', and believes that if Modi fails to deliver during their incumbent term as Prime Minister of India, he will "enrage an already frustrated generation." Once again popular opinion contradicts findings based on the responses to this research, and also that of Craig Jeffrey (2008) regarding the idea of a presupposed violent generation of male youth.

Views such as these echo those of Pai (2011) – amongst others – in that if India does not have opportunities for its 'youth bulge', its much greater 'abundance of grievances' will agitate them, regardless of how healthy or wealthy they might be (Pai, 2011), i.e. violent uprising will be a feature of 'youth' on the whole, not just marginalised male youth. The age structure of India's population (unfortunately sufficiently detailed data about Ahmedabad or even Gujarat were not available) 'indicates a risk of youth bulge unrest' (ibid.). It must be noted that Pai's (2011) work was based on a series of other studies which infer causation through correlation.

It would appear that in contemporary Ahmedabad at least, such correlations should not be made too hastily, and attention must be paid to

relieving issues associated with educated un- and underemployment for reasons other than reducing the potential for violent uprising amongst male youth. Youth must be provided with viable prospects for self-development and livelihood opportunities.

6.2 Policy implications

Whilst not specifically aimed at producing such outcomes, some policy implications can be derived from this research.

The most evident is probably the need for attention to the male experience and any perceived 'crises of masculinity' when producing gender policy, as the views and actions of men, including what disadvantages they can clearly have significant implications on the life of women. This applies not only to the women in their immediate association, but also on the whole, as the male experience is also deeply embedded in patriarchal structures, and without consideration of this, gender policy is likely to be ineffective in reducing the negative effects of these on the lives of women.

Un- and underemployment as a result of economic change emerged as a major theme in this research, and therefore where possible, its discussion should be used if possible and applicable in informing relevant policy. Considerations about how the nature of work may be influenced by masculinity are particularly noteworthy, as well as how entrepreneurialism although potentially useful in times of economic difficulty, may reinforce certain patriarchal structures and negative gender roles, and then stand in the way of positive change in the lives of both men and women, in India and across the contemporary developing world.

Finally, the importance of Saath and Youth Force are absolutely unambiguous in their provision of support and guidance for marginalised youth in Ahmedabad. Wherever possible, the outcomes of this research should be used in strengthening the programme, including its outlook on

gender, and understanding of its members' experiences of educated un- and underemployment.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

It may be interesting for further and more detailed research to be carried out on each of the research topics individually, by more specialised researchers, and with a much wider scope, such as with many more participants and also those not involved with an organisation such as Saath.

Although this research was conducted solely with young men, taking into account the experiences and opinions of women in order to understand the other half of the same immediate binary would also be advantageous.

7. Conclusions

Male youth, while perceiving growth and changes as generally positive, still face many disadvantages, mainly due to their financial and familial situations. Youth from slum areas are balancing both work and education, or are underemployed, constantly trying to improve their position, but against a tide of unemployment and disadvantage, as well as challenges to their identity.

Economic reforms in the early 1990s are having wide-ranging effects on the youth of contemporary India, as the economic restructuring of advanced Western economies in the 1970s did on their youth in the 1990s. Whether a 'crisis of masculinity' is being witnessed or not is still highly debateable, but the links between un- and underemployment, and gender and masculinity are certainly varied and undeniable.

Views of women remain static and somewhat 'traditional'. There is much talk regarding the safety, empowerment and opportunities for women across India, especially in light of the elections, yet with male opinions so apparently unchanging among youth, it may be more difficult than imagined to enable such plans. If empowering women challenges the roles and masculinity of men, which they appear unwilling to let happen, how can equality be achieved? Women cannot simply be expected to shoulder the double-burden of a job and household management. New forms of masculinity may have emerged from contemporary societal changes, but patriarchal structures remain resilient, limiting the lives of both men and women, young and old.

Even with change brought about by economic reform and restructuring, gendered patterns of work and other roles are reinforced, with trouble for men in turn becoming trouble for women. While upper and middle class women may have more freedoms, as is reflected throughout history and in advanced economies, poorer women (and men) remain highly disadvantaged.

Youth Force stands out as a vital resource for local youth, providing much needed guidance, advice, and truly practical assistance to its members, as well as giving them a platform to express their talents, voice, and make new

friends. Programmes such as this may be extremely important in helping to resolve the issues faced by disadvantaged youth, especially unemployment. However, in order for programmes to be successful, especially where they aim to empower (women in particular) it will become evermore important to change the attitudes of youth accordingly, not to change their cultural values, but to achieve positive change.

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