

Promoting Inclusive and Tolerant Educational Narratives.



PAK INSTITUTE FOR PEACE STUDIES (PIPS)

Promoting Inclusive and Tolerant Educational Narratives

Report of three two-day training workshops with teachers

By

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Background

Education constitutes one of the foremost components of most of the counter-violent extremism (CVE) models and frameworks currently being implemented in the Muslim-majority and Western countries. In countries like Pakistan, where education, both mainstream and religious, is considered by many to have been a factor in the promotion of ideological radicalization and violent extremism, the need to promote inclusive and tolerant educational narratives becomes even more significant and pressing.

Against this backdrop, Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) engaged leading and senior faculty members—mostly from Islamic studies and Arabic departments¹—of universities and colleges from across Pakistan in three two-day academic and intellectual dialogue-cum-training workshops in 2016. The purpose was to influence teachers as well as educational discourse in support of inclusive, tolerant and harmony-supporting education including education curricula. This report provides a summary of the proceedings of these workshops including key findings and participants' responses collected before and after each workshop through two types of survey questionnaires.

The rationale for the workshops was built upon on the available evidence that Pakistan's education system is, as deemed by many, one of the factors of extremism and persecution of minorities in Pakistan. While most of the emphasis is put on the institutions of religious education, or madrassas, when it comes to discuss the causes of intolerance and radicalization in Pakistani society, many scholars believe that a great deal of problem also lies in the public school system, which subsequently feeds into the higher education system of colleges and universities.² C. Fair contends in her paper on militancy and madrassas that the public school system in Pakistan works on a basis of a curriculum that is highly likely to engender intolerance and promote the concept of conflict resolution through violence.³ S. Hafeez has made the point in these words: "Any

¹The rationale for initially engaging teachers of Islamic studies and Arabic is provided in the "Methodology" section of this report.

² Pervez Hoodbhoy, "Education Reform in Pakistan: Challenges and Prospects," in *Pakistan: Haunting Shadows of Human Security*, ed. Jennifer Bennett (Dhaka: BIIS, 2009), 58.

³ Quoted by Safiya Aftab in her paper on "Poverty and Militancy," *Conflict and Peace Studies*, 1(1), 75.

attempt to ‘Islamize’ the social sciences is very likely to engender fanaticism, emotionalism, and post-facto analysis on or interpretation of social realities.”⁴

Parallel to public schools, the higher education also has had the similar trends of Islamization. A directive issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 1983 said that textbook writers were to demonstrate that the basis of Pakistan is not to be founded in racial, linguistic, or geographical factors, but rather, in the shared experience of a common religion”.⁵ In 1978, Council of Islamic Ideology had proposed a scheme of ‘establishment of an Islamic society’ and sought Islamization of educational, economic, legal system etc. of the country.⁶

As a result, parallel to historians and clergy, the work of strengthening national Islamic ideology was undertaken by the educationists and textbook writers, supported by the successive governments. This, many believe, sowed the seeds of religious intolerance particularly in terms of persecution and exclusion of religious minorities. A close review of the textbooks, particularly on the subjects of Islamic and Pakistan studies, reveals that their writers believe that “Pakistan ideology is indeed Islamic ideology, which guides us in every sphere of life.”⁷

While the issue of curriculum reform falls in the domain of the federal and provincial governments, it is imperative at civil society level to influence educationists and teachers in support of tolerant, inclusive education and curricula that do not teach discriminatory treatment of minorities and extremist viewpoints or narratives.

There are several initiatives and institutes in Pakistan which focus on education’s link to peace and harmony but most of these are random and do not exclusively focus on influencing educational discourse and training teachers in support of inclusive, tolerant and harmony-supporting education. Nor has government launched any initiative with the same objective. Indeed most of the related measures either talk about curriculum reforms or engage students in programs of peace education and awareness. On the whole, these PIPS workshops also meant to support the on-going state- and society-level efforts to improve quality of education, which is imperative to bring a positive social change in society and promote favourable views about minorities.

⁴Sabeeha Hafeez, *The Changing Pakistani Society* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1991), 256.

⁵University Grants Commission directive (Islamabad: Allama Iqbal Open University, 1983), 11.

⁶Saeed Shafqat, *Political System of Pakistan and Public Policy* (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1989), 104.

⁷ M. Amir Rana and Safdar Sial, *Radicalization in Pakistan* (PIPS: 2013).

Methodology

The three two-day workshops brought together in all 101 teachers of mainly Islamic studies and Arabic language from universities and colleges across Pakistan. Anticipating a top-down approach, largely professors, associate- and assistant professors were invited to participate, who are considered opinion makers and trend setters in educational discourse.

PIPS started with the engagement of teachers of Islamic studies and Arabic language in training and dialogue sessions because there is evidence to suggest that ideologically-imbued and discriminatory materials/narratives in textbooks and educational discourse are largely driven by religious [Islamic] standpoint. Secondly, most among those teaching these subjects, i.e. Islamic studies and Arabic, also steer and influence the educational discourse on the subjects of Pakistan studies, history and social sciences.

One of these workshops was held in Karachi for Balochistan and Sindh group; and two in Murree, one for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, FATA and Gilgit-Baltistan group, and one for Punjab, Islamabad and Azad Kashmir group. (*Lists of participants are given at Annex-A*)

A panel of key speakers, who also chaired different sessions and steered workshops as trainers and facilitators, included Dr. Khalid Masood, Islamic scholar who headed Council of Islamic Ideology; Dr. Qibla Ayaz, former vice chancellor of Peshawar University; Khurshed Nadeem, columnist and scholar; Muhammad Amir Rana, director, Pak Institute for Peace Studies; Dr. Syed Jaffer Ahmad, director, Pakistan Studies Centre, Karachi University; Dr. A.H. Nayyar, educationist; Dr Khalida Ghaus, former director, Centre of Excellence for Women, Karachi; Maulana Raghib Naeemi, principal, Jamia Naeemia Lahore; Ammar Khan Nasir, deputy director, Al-Sharia Academy, Gujranwala; Romana Bashir, peace activist; Jennifer Jenny Christine, director, Christian Study Centre, Rawalpindi; and Wusutullah Khan, journalist.

Each dialogue-cum-workshop was titled as “The role of teachers in social cohesion and religious harmony” and was divided in seven extensive sessions focusing on the following themes:

1. Introduction and background: dominant educational narratives in Pakistan and their implications for peace and social cohesion.
2. Identifying issues, root causes and recommendations (focus groups formation and discussions).
3. Focus groups reports and subsequent discussion.
4. Key speeches by experts [on different related subjects].
 - a. The socio-political landscape of Pakistan and role of educational institutions.
 - b. Religious and sectarian diversity in Pakistan and the role of religious institutions.
5. Education’s link to] intolerance and extremism.
 - a. Intolerance: a hurdle in social harmony.
 - b. Dynamics of extremism in Pakistan.
 - c. Religious narratives, education and the state.
6. Religious intolerance and negative perceptions (or stereotypes).
 - a. Non-Muslims in Pakistan: victims of intolerance.
 - b. Intolerance, extremism and role of media.
 - c. The Constitution of Pakistan and safeguards to the marginalized.
7. Final recommendations to promote tolerant, inclusive educational narratives.

Pre- and post-workshops surveys

PIPS extended two different types of semi-structured survey questionnaires to participants, one before and other after each workshop. The purpose was to explore participants’ views on educational patterns and narratives, the role of teachers, and assess the effectiveness and impact of the workshops. The survey responses also helped in refining the final recommendations.

Key findings

Key findings of the proceedings of workshops and discussion among participants on narratives in educational discourse and their implications for peace and social cohesion in Pakistan are described below:

- **The question of identity**

Most speakers and participants discussed at length the question of identity, mainly highlighting how people saw and compared citizenship and religious identity.

“The day we decide that this country does not solely belong to Muslims but all Pakistanis, we will eventually be able to end intolerance and bring social harmony in society,” said Wusatullah Khan.

Ms Romana Bashir argued that at the time of Pakistan’s creation, there was no such indication that this country was meant for non-Muslims. The founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam, also called for a citizenship void of any religious leaning. But that doesn’t appear so. “Today’s majority was minority yesterday,” she reminded.

Several speakers also illuminated how religion was invoked in Pakistan’s history to its national interest. Religion, after all, had a role in society. It is one way to contest India over points like territory or rivers, some argued, but it is another to portray it as a battle between right versus wrong.

Some participants noted that during the independence movement for a separate country, all Muslims stood together. Even minority groups significantly contributed in the establishment and development of this country. One noted that the great divide in 1947 proved counterproductive for religious and communal harmony in the newly established Pakistan as new processes of identity construction and sectarian associations started in subsequent years.

Amir Rana gave overview of how Pakistanis identify themselves. Quoting surveys, he asked participants to ask as to why there is still confusion on whether we are Muslims first or Pakistani first or ethnic groups first. He shared that those who stress upon

their Muslim identity either belong to low-income groups or are young. This means, he argued, that many review their own thoughts with changes in socio-economic status or even age. Teachers, too, operate within such a context.

Dr. Qibla Ayaz underscored the imperatives of emerging post-globalization world where, he noted, knowledge and diversity were substituting the old racial, religious foundations and narratives of societies. Today we have multi-cultural and multi-religious societies and should learn to co-exist.

• **Shrinking space for pluralism and diversity**

Participants noted that on the whole Pakistani society was adrift towards polarization with space for pluralist co-existence shrinking. That has impact on educational narratives and institutions as well. Some highlighted the fact that Pakistan had already well developed distinct educational systems which catered to the needs of different socio-economic classes. These systems also espoused different cultures and ideologies, to some extent, some argued.

Amir Rana in particular underscored that in our society, including in educational discourse, space for pluralistic and accommodative viewpoints is shrinking. “The lack of knowledge-based discourse shows that either our society has lost a collective understanding of the challenges or the educational capabilities of the society have stopped functioning,” he argued.

Highlighting the trends of polarization in our society, Ammar Khan Nasir said harmony and tolerance are linked to mind-set and confused minds are more prone to polarization and intolerance. He stressed upon the role of political and community leaders in clarifying those confusions and reforming the society.

Some pointed to the deep intellectual divergences, too. One reasoned that unless intellectual tensions lessen, a character promoting social harmony alone is not sufficient.

- **“Diversity” does not hurt but promotes unity**

Dr. Khalid Masood said that because of diversity, we tend to stress upon unity, even though there is nothing wrong in that. He argued that even in Islamic tradition, diversity was upheld.

Earlier, he spoke how the state of Pakistan, in its attempt to unify people, imposed certain social symbols like Urdu language. It came as literary element, focusing more on grammar, rather than on its functional utility. The social perspective, espousing diversity of the country, was missing.

Speakers highlighted how that diversity has been benchmark of civilizational success. Ammar Khan Nasir argued that the glorious Islamic civilizations even relied on knowledge from non-Muslims; today too, some civilizations accept people from all backgrounds.

Dr. Masood called for diversity on different level of education: “Basic skills should be taught at primary level, note taking should be at middle level, and complete intellectual freedom should be granted at higher level.” It is up to the students to ask questions, to which teachers can respond, he advised.

Few argued that sects are interpretations and respect for other interpretations or sects will strengthen diversity and pluralism. Difference in opinion or interpretation is natural and should be considered a positive value.

- **The purpose of education**

Some participants highlighted that one of the fundamental purposes of education, i.e. character building or ethics, was missing in Pakistan’s educational discourse. Mufti Muhammad Rafiq, lecturer of Islamic studies at Government Intermediate College, Quetta, said that without ethical education, even educated and learned people could behave like ignorant and illiterate people.

Others said our education system was producing submissive minds and another major purpose of education, i.e. the culture of questioning or critical inquiry, was missing in it.

These two missing links were making the students vulnerable to consume whatever they were being offered in educational institutions including the content that could have negative implications for harmony and tolerance.

• **The role of teachers and educational institutions**

Participants of all workshops seemed in agreement that teachers should not be concerned with political ideologies, whatever side of the spectrum. Educational institutions, too, should be concerned with education only with research their forte.

One of the key speakers Dr. Qibla Ayaz said that given that teachers and religious scholars hold respectable position in Pakistani society, it is their duty to jointly work for improving social harmony. He was of the view that “we have to learn living alongside the people from other faiths and sects, and for that purpose, we have to benefit from the collective wisdom of the society.”

Khursheed Nadeem emphasized the role of teachers in promoting a healthy society and said that immense struggle is needed in this respect in Pakistan. “Teachers have two important roles: one is linked to the promotion of [a constructive] educational environment; and second is related to designing of [educational] curriculum. Development and execution of these two elements together helps in creating a society conducive of religious harmony,” he opined.

Speakers also called on teachers to adopt an inclusive educational approach. Some noted that while our textbooks and syllabus promote differences among students adhering to different faiths, teachers can play their role to break such stereotypes against one or another.

Speakers also stressed upon the importance of having “genuine” scholars – those who produce knowledge with direct relevance to social needs. One advised participating teachers to be true “activist”, in the sense of producing research relevant to society.

All agreed that teachers have a central role in not only teaching the content of the courses, but also building characters of their students.

Meanwhile, renowned Islamic scholar Khalid Masood argued teachers should shun negativities around terms like “diversity” and “variation”. Diversity, he argued, is our strength.

Peace activist Romana Bashir argued that not only is there insensitivity in textbooks, but teachers too don’t reflect sensitivity in their teaching. Knowledge acquired beyond textbooks is not appreciated. “A teacher should think how to address students of all faiths,” she said. Some participants however argued that they were fully aware of the problem and treated their students equally and sensitively.

For instance, Muhammad Tahir Abdul Qayyum Sindhi, Government Degree College for Men (Buffer Zone), Karachi, said he faced questions related to faith and harmony as he taught students adhering to different faiths. “I try to respond in a way so that my words do not hurt the feelings of non-Muslim students and feel proud that I have created an environment of social harmony in my class,” he stated. Similarly, Maula Baksh Muhammadi, assistant professor of Islamic studies at Government Pakistan College, Badin, said: “I belong to an area in Tharparkar (Sindh) where Muslims are in minority and Hindus in majority. I have not witnessed a single incident of offense against any Hindu student in my class room during my 24 years of teaching there.” He argued that that was mainly due to efforts of teachers to maintain an environment of tolerance and harmony among their students.

Dr. Saifullah Bhutto, assistant professor of Islamic studies at Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Nawabshah, said teachers can improve religious tolerance among their students by teaching them how to listen to and accept others. Professor Abdul Razzaq Ghangroo from Islamic Studies Department at Mehran University of Engineering and Technology Jamshoro emphasized that teachers should be so objective and neutral in their teaching that their students are unable to detect their sect, or school of thought, and religious leaning.

Most participants thought that by thwarting the effects of sectarian and communal divides in the society, including in class rooms, social harmony and tolerance could be promoted. To this end, participating teachers, asked for promoting harmony and

identifying elements curbing that harmony. One participant said how he has allocated one day in the week for discussing social problems, raising questions and answering them, adding how he also tried to resolve issues of students. These, he admitted, were not sufficient, calling for teachers to play their role. Likewise, another said he often writes to magazines and spread the write-ups after much deliberation.

• **The role of the state and society**

Most participants, either explicitly or implicitly, agreed that Pakistani state had failed to provide minorities a sense of equal citizenship and security. They also seemed aware of the fact that the world was not impressed with Pakistan's dealing with religious minorities. Which is why, some argued that protecting minorities and their rights will help us build a better, softer image of Pakistan in the world.

They also observed that followers of the majority faith do not have the right to impose their ideologies on minorities. To that end, several asked for the government to constitute a clear policy of promoting social and religious harmony and put an end to persecution of minorities.

Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmad, while speaking at the occasion, said that pluralism should be the policy of the state that should entail the provision of legitimate spaces and equal opportunities to all citizens." These can promote peaceful co-existence, adding that Quaid-e-Azam in his inaugural speech to the constituent assembly on 11 August 1947 made it clear that the state of Pakistan would act as a neutral actor in promoting and safeguarding the rights of Muslims and non-Muslims in the country. That means the founder upheld a constitution for Pakistan that would equally safeguard the rights of majority and minority communities.

Some participants looked at external factors, including Pakistani state's foreign policy responses to some events like Soviet-Afghan war, as more responsible for disharmony in the country. They wanted those factors be "identified". One participant, for instance, traced the history of disharmony to the power politics of two global powers during the cold war era, which he believed, exploited this region for their interests, using religion as a tool.

Khursheed Nadeem wondered as to what is the cause and effect relation between education and society: Does education influence society? Or is it other way around, with society setting agenda for what needs to be taught?

This, he said, is the ultimate paradox in engaging teachers to promoting social harmony. Elaborating the point, he argued that if education is to direct society, a teacher takes on the steering role. But if the roles are reversed – with society shaping education – then, leaders in the society take the driving seat.

Some also described the problematic state-society and centre-provinces relations at the heart of disharmony in Pakistani society.

- **Education a factor in ideological radicalization and extremism**

Most speakers and several participants seemed convinced that education has been a factor in ideological radicalization and extremism in Pakistani society.

Dr. Khalida Ghaus, former director, Centre of Excellence for Women, Karachi, held education and different education system along with social injustices, prevailing social disparities and religious intolerance, responsible for the lack of harmony in Pakistani society. “We have to undergo structural changes in social, educational, religious, legal, and ethical codes because our society is an emotional society that lacks rationale and reasoning thus leading to intolerant tendencies,” she said.

One participant stressed upon making all possible efforts to bring in clarity and understanding in society through education because confused minds are more prone to extremism.

Participants also stressed for engaging scholars. One said, “It is easy to hand over a gun, than taking it back; that is why a strong curriculum together with bringing the issues to the notice of the scholars, is required.”

• **The significance of critical inquiry**

Participants agreed that our education system is failing in promoting the trait of critical inquiry among students. To engage students in research, universities should open up to new thinking – something that requires being ready to “unlearn” things afresh, said former vice chancellor of Peshawar University, Dr Qibla Ayaz. “We are influenced by different schools of thought; sometimes, it’s necessary to learn from scratch.”

Dr Ayaz pointed to the 1980s as the pivotal decade when the country’s socio-political worldview changed – all in the name of religion. Because we lacked critical inquiry, we accepted notions that were never untrue, he argued.

One participant, understanding the importance of research-based teaching, lamented how “there is a trend of people delivering speeches or writing texts without any proper research”; moreover, he added, “things are extrapolated on the basis of some association”, because of which the intellectual world laughs at “us”. These, he said, result into lack of social harmony and tolerance.

Dr Abdul Hameed Nayyer also stressed upon the teachers to create and encourage an environment in classrooms where students are inspired to ask questions.

• **Media’s role**

Lack of research in educational institutions notwithstanding, reliance on media reports compounds the problem.

Amir Rana shared figures that Pakistan ranks low in countries accessing academic tools like Google Scholar. The sources of information of Pakistanis, including teachers, said Dr Khalid Masood, are mostly newspapers. Often, there is inaccurate information.

Journalist Wusutullah Khan concurred, saying that just because something appears in paper, doesn’t imply it is correct.

Several charged that media too highlight differences, instead of stressing upon commonalities. Scholar Raghbir Naeemi said harmony is often missing on some media shows.

Journalist Khan agreed, saying that those who fan up emotions are more likely to get ratings than someone offering intellectual advice.

He argued that often people say that “it is not for media role to promote harmony”. To them, he countered, “It shouldn’t be for media then to churn hate speech. Media should stay neutral.”

Khan recalled that even though the environment in 1960s was much tolerant compared to today’s Pakistan, even then, students were taught in such a way that they couldn’t differ between Hindu and Indian. Sharing example from media, he narrated how the newspapers till 1970s would often report riots or even fistfights in India as some sort of anti-Muslim riots.

He stated media is to be blamed, saying that media fall for knowledge quacks before media personnel themselves are not well-read and therefore, unable to judge between right and wrong.

- **Implementing Constitution will solve many problems**

Jennifer Jenny Christine, director of the Christian Study Centre in Rawalpindi, highlighted the safeguards provided in the Constitution of Pakistan for the protection of the rights of minorities and marginalized communities. She said while Article 36 guarantees the protection of minority rights, Article 22 clearly states that no person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own. She lamented that this constitutional rights of minorities was being violated in most educational institutions.

Critical areas and challenges

Speakers and participants also highlighted some critical areas and challenges that hampered the ability of Pakistan's education system to promote social harmony and religious tolerance.

- **Divisive, discriminatory curriculum**

Amir Rana asked teachers to explore the causes behind social disharmony and what they, as teachers, could do to end that. Clearly, one of the reasons behind radicalization, he argued, is a divisive curriculum, which thrusts upon students divisions.

Some participating teachers, however, argued that they are wrongly blamed for not being sensitive in their content delivery, saying that the curriculum is developed by public departments, who don't engage teachers. But many argued that teachers are engaged in shaping curriculum, though they tend to avoid going to the meetings, which are often tedious.

Some participants argued if curriculum is not uniform, the challenges to harmony are inevitable. Some content, for instance, is not acceptable by members of different faiths. "Harmony is not possible", one of them said, "if teachers and society are headed in different directions."

Leading educationist Dr Nayyer underscored the need for introducing fundamental changes in our educational curriculum to improve religious tolerance and harmony. "Books being taught in our primary, high schools and colleges contain certain words, phrases and lessons that create and stimulate a feeling of hatred against non-Muslim Pakistanis, which is embarrassing for them," he highlighted. He called for revising curriculum that includes all instead of creating stereotypes against one or another.

He also emphasized that "dialogue supported by arguments, counter-arguments and the power of listening opponents' views are the best way of gaining knowledge, that ultimately helps in creating spaces for mutual co-existence and harmony in a society."

Romana Bashir also enlisted several problems non-Muslims face in existing educational setup of Pakistan: For one, textbooks still are filled with hate material against non-Muslims. “Our syllabus promotes differences among students”, she said, as a result of which, she added, teachers had to face problems.

Wusutullah Khan pointed out myopic and skewed [educational] perspectives that hinder social acceptance of minorities and thus harmony. “It is a general practice in our society that we distort truth at all levels. We did not spare even education and knowledge.” Mr. Khan lamented.

• **Stereotypes of non-Muslims**

In Pakistani society, negative images and demeaning religious stereotypes of non-Muslims exist. Many participants identified exclusive and intolerant educational narratives as one of the main factors promoting misperceptions about the minority communities such as Christians and Hindus.

Dr. Qibla Ayaz said we have not been able to develop the study of religions including Islamic studies as a regular academic discipline. For instance, he explained, we include comparative study of religions in the subject of Islamic studies. But he asked: “Do our professors teaching Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc., really understand the precepts of these religions from their original books and testaments?” He further inquired: “Has anyone among those teaching Buddhism studied the original book of that religion in Pali language? Do we really try to understand Hindu scriptures and Bible in an objective way?” That is why whenever we say something about other religions, followers of those religions say this is not what we believe in.

One participant suggested that in all teaching institutes, especially religious ones, curriculum based on the positives of other religions be made compulsory. That will help remove stereotypical images of the followers of minority faiths and help in improving interfaith harmony.

Others highlighted the role of violent and non-violent religious groups in promoting such stereotypes and argued that those religious organization that justify their existence upon the rejection of others should be banned; instead organizations rejecting violence be established.

- **Exclusive history**

Peace activist Jennifer Jenny shared how non-Muslims played a pivotal role in Pakistan movement, a role acknowledged by Pakistan's founder. "The heart of Pakistan, Punjab, was included in Pakistan through the vote of a Christian: S. P. Singha", she recalled. Non-Muslims, she said, fought against the enemies of the country. Such an inclusive history is missing in the curriculum, she stated.

Several participants supported Ms Jenny's argument. In order to improve social harmony and acceptance in our society, Ms Romana argued, we have to teach our students the history of Pakistan that gives them full insight including about those who belonged to minority faiths, who too played an important role in the creation and development of Pakistan.

- **Curriculum designers and textbook writers**

Some opined that curriculum designers and textbook writers are not properly trained and sensitized on issues linked to harmony and religious tolerance and fail to avoid contentious matters.

Some also highlighted the lack of teachers' and educational practitioners' role in curriculum design.

- **The issue of 'equal' citizenship for non-Muslims**

Speakers also highlighted the role of religion in the construction of national identity and ideology, which they believed contributed in the creation of a sense of being 'second rated' citizens among non-Muslims.

Romana Bashir, for instance, said the absence of "real equal citizenship" to the minorities worked as a force that stimulated a sense of fear and insecurity in their minds. "Minorities in Pakistan are facing challenges on social, educational and religious levels. Unfortunately these challenges are growing instead of dissipating," she argued.

- **Classroom discrimination**

One of the central challenges to teachers of Islamic studies is how to engage with the diversity around them including in classrooms.

Speakers noted that curriculum with questionable content, for sure, is one thing, but equally important is for teachers to learn and practice the ways to engage and sensitively reach out to students from diverse faiths.

Students belonging to minority faiths face discriminatory attitude of teachers in schools which is counter-productive in achieving social and religious harmony,” Ms Romana said.

Some suggested rigorous training of teachers including on issues linked to harmony and tolerance. Others emphasized the need to raise the criteria for selection of teachers. One participant said those who do not get job anywhere become teachers.

- **Historical and ideological sensitivities linked to education**

Some deliberated upon how India-centric considerations sneaked in the construction of educational curriculum and media in Pakistan. The religious considerations compounded the problem, said others.

Even today, there is an ‘overemphasis’ on historical and ideological sensitivities and less on modern and emerging areas of education, argued Dr. Qibla Ayaz. He further stated that our vision in universities is weak. We should understand the demands and needs of our new generation. Those studying and teaching Islamic studies have eventually to come towards tweeting and blogging.

- **Madrassa-university gap**

A participant brought to attention the gap between worldviews of the students of madrassas and universities. “While madrassa student doesn’t give much attention to

natural sciences, a university student is believed to have only a little knowledge of the basic concepts of religion”, he said, saying that people from madrassas, for their austere outlook, are stereotyped and relegated to the lower strata. This gap should be bridged, said Sobia Khanum, lecturer at Department of Islamic Studies in Azad Jammu Kashmir University.

Dr Syed Bacha Agha, assistant professor at the Department of Islamic Studies in Government Degree College, Quetta, said he also taught in a madrassa and could clearly see that a huge gap existed between viewpoints and attitudes of students of madrassas and colleges. “People often ask me the reason for that,” he stated.

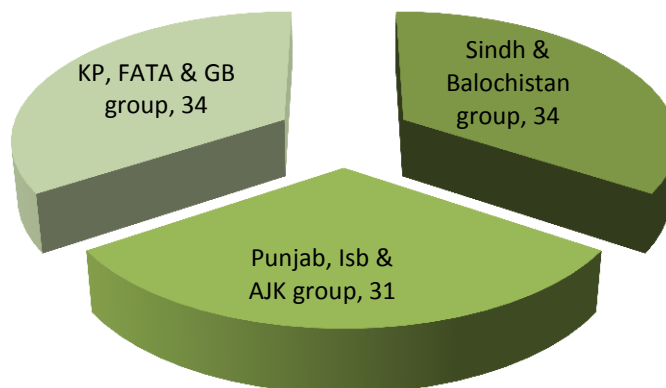
Dr Ziaur Rehman, assistant professor of Islamic studies at Islamia University Bahawalpur, was of the view that bringing madrassas and colleges/universities closer and enhancing interaction among their students could improve social harmony in Pakistan.

“Different educational systems in forms of different public, private and religious educational institutions with different curricula are leading to polarization in society,” said Professor Dr. Abdul Ghaffar Bukhari, head of Islamic History department at NUML, Islamabad.

Pre-workshops survey responses: Teachers' perspective on social cohesion and harmony

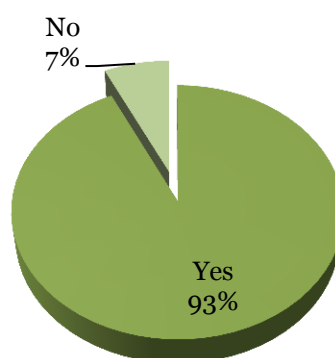
Of a total of 101 participants of the three workshops, 99 provided their responses to pre-workshop survey questionnaire extended to them. This survey mainly asked about the role of teachers and educational institutions in improving social cohesion and harmony, impact of this role on society, and associated problems and issues. The survey also tried to explore teachers' understanding of the issues of social cohesion and religious tolerance. Regional distribution of pre-workshops survey respondents is given in Chart 1.

Chart 1: Geographical distribution of pre-workshops survey respondents



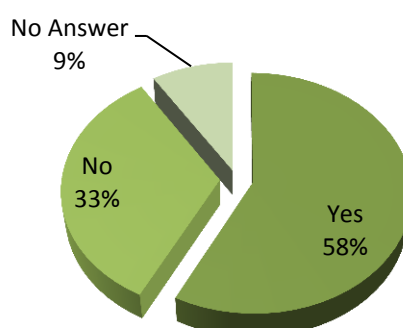
Most of respondents (93 percent) believed that teachers and educational intuitions have a role to play in improving social harmony and religious tolerance among students as well as in society. However, a small number of respondents (7 percent) thought otherwise; none of them however was from Sindh and Balochistan group.

Chart 2: Do university/college teachers have any role in social cohesion and religious harmony

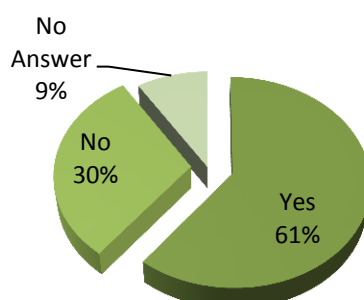


But not all of them were convinced that teachers are playing their due role in that regard. Compared to a big majority of 93 percent of respondents suggesting that teachers had a role to play in improving harmony and tolerance, only 58 percent of respondents said teachers were actually playing their role in this regard. About 33 percent of total respondents said teachers were not playing their due role (about 40 percent of them were from Sindh and Balochistan group), while 9 percent chose to not to reply to this particular question. (See Chart 3)

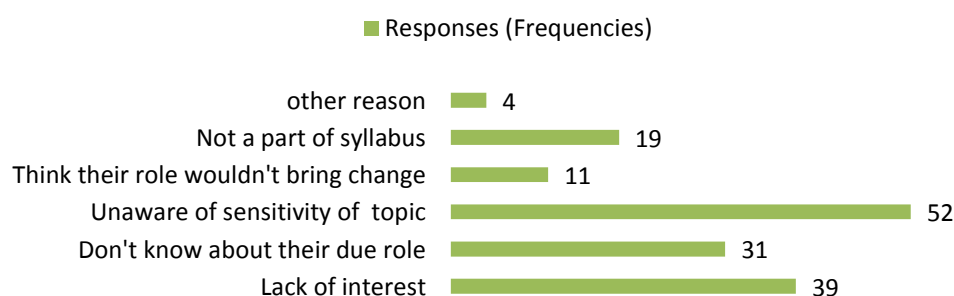
Chart 3: Are teachers playing their due role in this regard?



When asked if the role being played by the teachers had any impact on society, 61 percent of respondents said 'yes', 30 percent said 'no' while 9 percent did not reply. Respondents from KP, FATA and GB group formed the majority of those who believed teachers' role was not impacting society.

Chart 4: Does this role have any impact on society?

One question in the pre-workshops survey asked the participants about possible reasons behind ‘ineffectiveness’ of teachers’ role and ability to promote social harmony and tolerance among students and society. As many as 52 respondents said that teachers did not fully understand the sensitivity and importance of the issues linked to social harmony and religious tolerance.⁸ Meanwhile 39 respondents said it was due to lack of interest on part of teachers, and 31 were of the view that probably teachers do not really know their due role in this regard. (See Chart 5) There were fewer respondents from Punjab, compared to other regions, who thought lack of teachers’ interest and understanding of issues or unawareness of their due roles were the reasons behind teachers’ possible ineffective role.

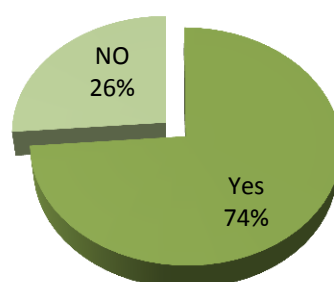
Chart 5: What could be the reasons behind teachers’ possible ineffective role?⁹

⁸Many respondents selected more than one options, therefore total of responses to this question would not correspond to the number of total respondents (99).

⁹Ibid.

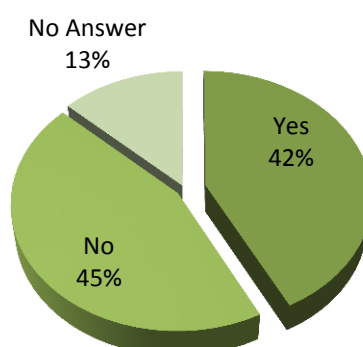
When asked if their students ask questions relating to social cohesion and religious harmony, most of the respondents (74 percent) said 'yes', and 26 percent said 'no'; most among those who said 'no' came from KP, FATA & GB group. A same number of respondents (74 percent) said they believed that their students expected a role from them in this regard, or at least looked to them for understanding the issues linked to harmony and tolerance.

Chart 6: Do your students ask questions related to social cohesion and religious harmony



Around 45 percent of total respondents did not feel any sensitivity attached to their role of promoting harmony and tolerance among their students. About 42 percent respondents said they felt 'sensitive' (most among them from Sindh and Balochistan group), while 13 percent did not respond to this question.

Chart 7: Do you feel sensitive in your personal role of improving harmony in classroom?



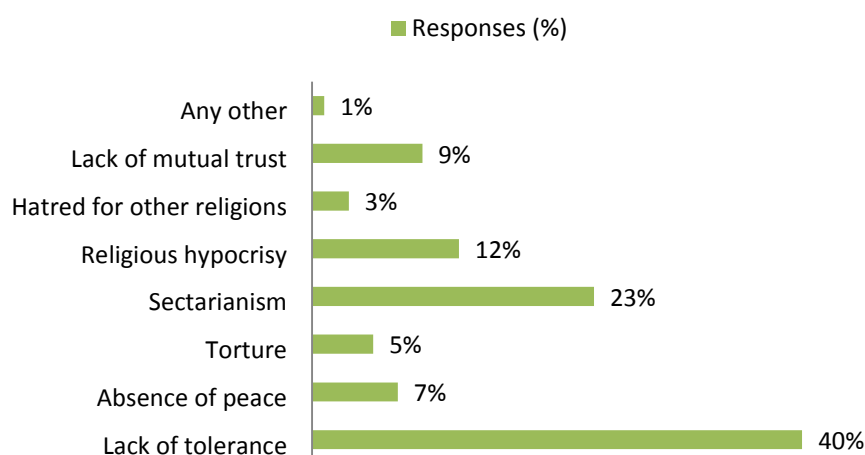
Some survey questions were designed to explore participants' general understanding and viewpoints on social harmony and religious tolerance. Almost all of respondents (99 percent) said that lack of harmony and tolerance in the society was an issue, indicating they understood the gravity of the situation.

Chart 8: Is lack of social cohesion and religious harmony an issue?



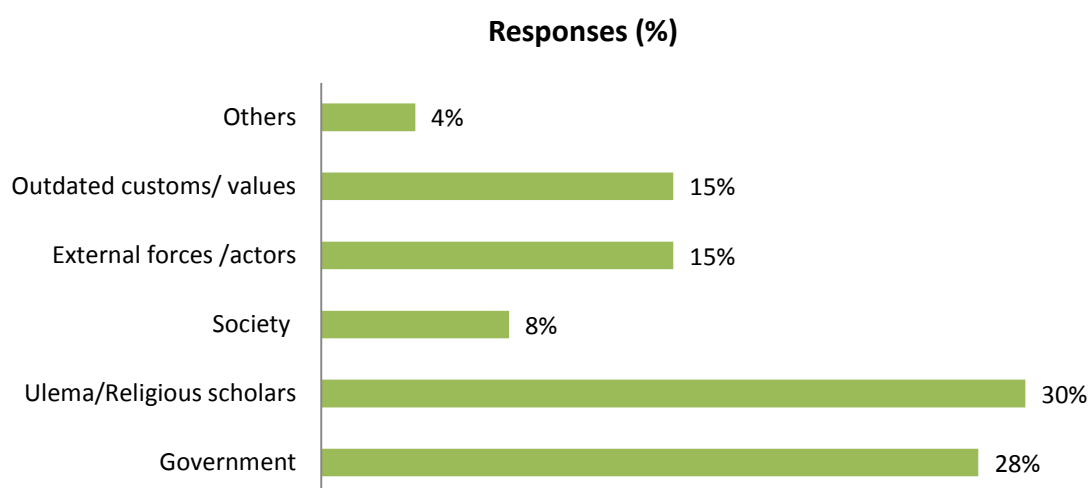
Respondents were also well aware of negative implications of the lack of harmony and cohesion in society. About 40 percent of total respondents believed that tolerance was the foremost casualty of diminishing social harmony. However only 3 percent thought lack of harmony resulted in increased hatred for other religions and their followers. Other possible consequences, as seen by respondents, are given at Chart 9.

Chart 9: What are the consequences of lack of social cohesion and religious harmony?



A combined total of 58 percent of respondents considered government and religious scholars responsible for the lack of social cohesion and religious harmony in Pakistan. Only 8 percent of respondents held society responsible for that. About 15 percent respondents considered factors behind lack of harmony and a same percentage of them (mostly from Sindh & Balochistan group) blamed out-dated customs and values for the lack of harmony in society.

Chart 10: Who is responsible for the lack of social cohesion and religious harmony?

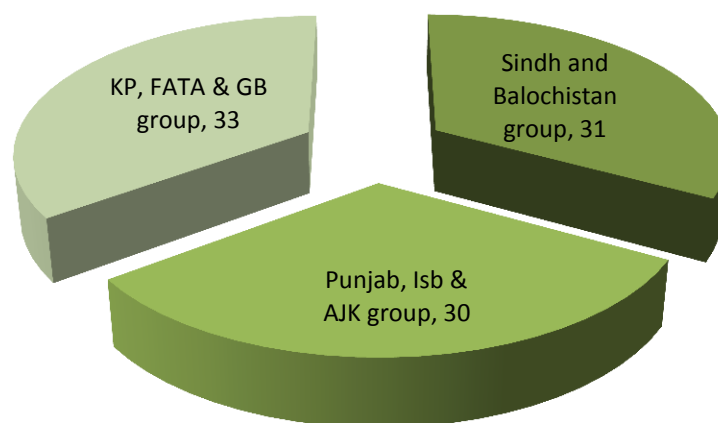


Post-workshops survey responses: impact and effectiveness of workshops

Post-workshop survey mainly asked questions about the effectiveness and impact of the workshops and future considerations to refine such measures aimed at promoting tolerant and inclusive educational narratives. The survey also tried to explore to what extent the workshops had contributed to change the views of participating teachers on the focused issues.

Out of 101 total participants, 94 responded to post-workshops survey, whose regional distribution is given at Chart 11.

Chart 11: Geographical distribution of post-workshops survey respondents



On the whole, the survey responses, PIPS' interaction with participants and participatory observation of workshops proceedings suggested that there was an improved understanding and sensitization among participants about the need of

tolerant and inclusive educational narratives, and improved ability of participants to indiscriminately and inclusively engage with students irrespective of the latter's faiths.

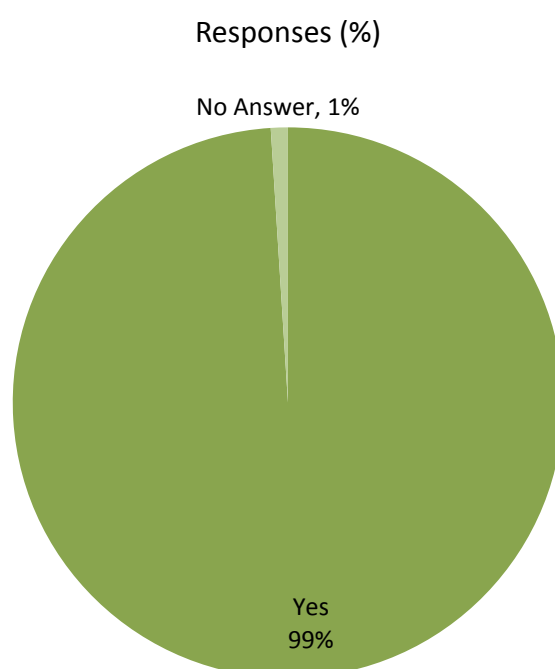
The dialogue-cum-training workshops also contributing in reducing appeal of irrational and discriminatory approaches and content in educational curriculum and teaching. The participants seemed convinced to revisit and challenge the discriminatory and intolerant educational narratives.

Also, the whole process resulted in a set of comprehensive recommendations to reform educational curricula, teaching and educational environment with a view to improve interfaith harmony and social cohesion.

Key responses to the post-workshops survey are listed below:

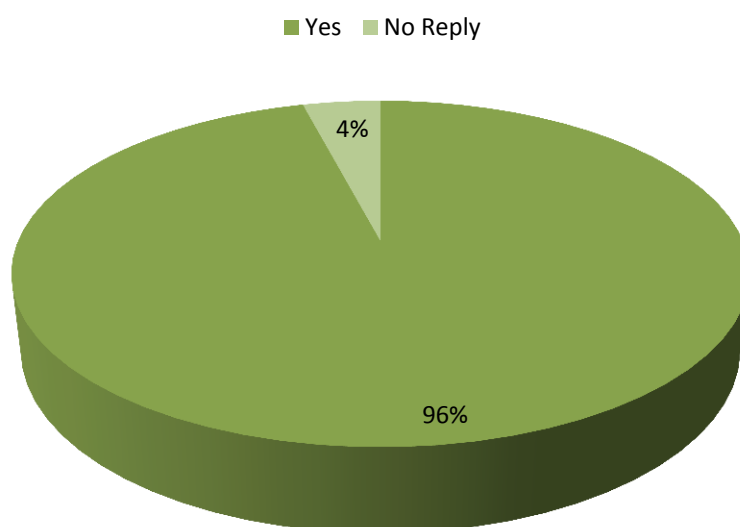
- Most of the respondents of post-workshops survey (98 percent) said the workshops helped them a lot in understanding the issues of social cohesion and religious harmony and their link to education.

Chart 12: Has the workshop helped you in understanding the topic?



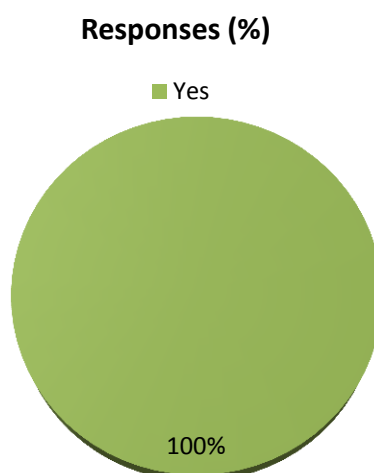
- Similarly most of them (95 percent) said they were in agreement with the final recommendations all the groups had prepared during the workshops, indicating that these were consensus recommendations. Only 2 percent respondents (belonging to Sindh & Balochistan group) said they did not agree, and 3 percent did not reply.
- As many as 93 percent of total respondents affirmed their opinion had been given due consideration in the group discussion sessions wherein recommendations were prepared and finalized. About 2 percent respondents (all from Punjab, Islamabad, and AJK groups) said their viewpoints were ignored, while 5 percent chose not to reply.
- A big majority of the respondents (94 percent) also believed that the final set of recommendations prepared by participants was applicable. The remaining 6 percent did not reply.

Chart 13: Are these recommendations applicable?



- All the respondents (100 percent) said they will practice the recommendations concerning teachers and their responsibilities will influence other teachers and students also in support of these measures and practices.

Chart 14: Will you practice recommendations concerning teachers and influence others for the same?



When asked if the workshop helped in improving your previously-held opinions on the subjects of social harmony and religious tolerance, about 96 percent of total respondents said 'yes', one percent (from KP, FATA & GB group) said 'no', and 3 did not respond.

Chart 15: Did workshop help in improving your previously-held opinions

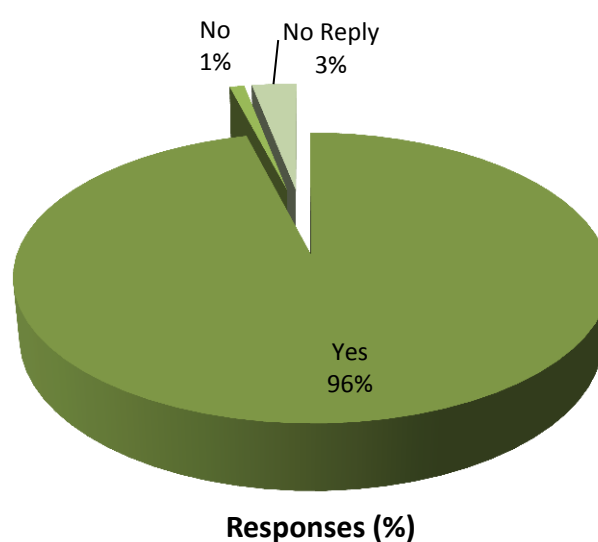


Image gallery

Image gallery

1ST WORKSHOP: SINDH AND BALOCHISTAN GROUP APRIL 27-28, 2016



2ND WORKSHOP: KP, FATA AND GILGIT-BALTISTAN GROUP MAY 30-31, 2016



3RD WORKSHOP: PUNJAB, ISLAMABAD AND AZAD KASHMIR GROUP JUNE 1-2, 2016



Recommendations

While the three focus groups, which were constituted during each workshop, prepared sets of recommendations, they finalized a set of consensus recommendations at the end of the last workshop. These final recommendations were indeed a refined version of earlier similar sets of recommendations obtained through rigorous exercise of discussion. An abridged version of these final recommendations to promote tolerant, inclusive educational narratives is given below.

- There is a need to promote dialogue among madrassas, sectarian groups, and minority communities.
- Strenuous efforts are needed to bridge the existing gaps among public, private and madrasa educational systems.
- The state should fulfil its responsibilities to protect minority and marginalized communities in line with the constitutional requirements.
- A balanced, inclusive educational curriculum incorporating the latest developments and trends should be supported and encouraged; innovations are needed in curricula.
- Efforts are needed to make existing curricula free of controversial topics and hate material.
- Instead of promoting stereotypes, curriculum should highlight positives of all religions including commonalities.
- There is a need to promote study of different faiths and sects and also dialogue in education system including in textbooks.
- Lessons aimed at bringing social harmony must be added in syllabus at primary and secondary levels.
- There is a need for strengthening the element of research and inquiry in educational curricula and pedagogy. Critical inquiry and ethics/character-building should be among the major purposes of education.
- Curriculum of all the universities should be gathered to discuss them and try reforms therein.

- Women education and their role in society should be promoted. Being the first ‘school’ of their children, women can play a very positive role in eradicating social disharmony and religious hatred from our society.
- Educational institutions should stay impartial and neutral in educating students.
- Madrassa educational boards should eliminate all hate material from the curricula taught in madrassas of different school of thoughts. They should also try to reduce sectarian content and orientation from madrassa education.
- Teachers should recognize and realize their stature and responsibility and must play their due role accordingly.
- Teachers training programs by the state and civil society are needed to be strengthened.
- Questions pertaining to social and religious harmony must be made part of teachers’ selection, examination system.
- Collectively, society should work for promoting social harmony. To that end, self-accountability should be promoted and practical steps taken for creating an atmosphere of tolerance and harmony in all spheres of life.
- State should prioritize the promotion of religious pluralism in society and educational institutions.
- Creating a sense of unity in society is direly needed, but not at the cost of diversity.
- Teachers should act as role models for the students belonging to all sects and faiths and should see all with the same lens.
- For a teacher, it is necessary to have deep and wide knowledge of one’s subject; he or she should answer students’ questions rationally and promote practices of harmony and tolerance among students. A teacher should be a good psychiatrist, too, so as to easily understand behaviour of students and advise appropriately.
- Teachers must work for the promotion of enhancing religious harmony among their students in classrooms. State should promote such initiatives that help teachers in this respect.
- Students and teachers of women madrassas should also be engaged in activities aimed at involving teachers in promoting social cohesion.
- Similar events/workshops in the future should prioritize the following:

- Students and teachers from all departments, beyond the Islamic studies only, should be engaged, because promoting harmony is a collective responsibility.
- Media should highlight such training workshops. Also, media should not sensationalize events of disharmony such as of sectarian and communal violence.
- Such workshops should be held in all districts or at least at in all divisions of the country.
- Participants of the workshop should also be extended survey questions via email; this will provide them time and better environment to respond.
- At the end of the dialogue, a joint statement be released and distributed in relevant institutions.
- Representation of all sects and religions be ensured in these events.
- Someone from the West may also be invited to present a western perspective of the issues being discussed.
- Such training workshops should be conducted in high schools and colleges and also across the country, especially in areas where people have seen enough violence.
- In the future, students may also be invited, along with teachers, so as to learn the viewpoint of both sides.
- State should also initiate such efforts of trainings teachers of schools and universities in social harmony and religious tolerance.

Annexure

Annex-A: Lists of participants of dialogue-cum-training workshops

1st workshop held in Karachi on April 27-28, 2016

(Sindh and Balochistan group)

Sr. No	Name	Designation & Department	University/College
1	Dr. Syed Bacha Agha	Assist Prof. Department of Islamic Studies	Government Degree College, Quetta
2	Dr. Abdul Ali Achakzai	Chairman Islamic Studies Department	University of Balochistan, Quetta
3	Prof. Gul Mohammad	Lecturer Islamic Studies, Department of Basic Sciences	BUET, Khuzdar
4	Mufti Mohammad Rafiq	Lecturer Islamic Studies	Government Inter-College, Quetta
5	Dr. Maroof Bin Rauf	Assistant Professor, Department of Education	University of Loralai, Loralai Baluchistan
6	Dr Sumbal Ansar	Assistant Professor, Department of Basic Sciences	Sindh Madrassatul Islam, Karachi
7	Dr.Zahid Ali	Chairman, Department of Islamic Learning	University of Karachi, Karachi
8	Dr. Abdur Rehman Yusaf	HOD, Department of Arabic	Federal Urdu university, Karachi
9	Dr. Abdul Hai Madni	Associate Professor, Islamic Studies	NED Karachi
10	Dr. Gulnaz Naeem	Assist Prof Islamic Studies	BBSU Lyari Karachi
11	Habib Ullah Raja	Lecturer Arabic	Sir Syed Girls Degree College Nazimabad, Karachi
12	Mohammad Laiq	Lecturer Islamic Studies	Government Degree College Buffer Zone
13	Abdur Rehman Siddiqui	Lecturer Arabic /Research Fellow Karachi University	IBA Karachi
14	Abdullah M. Yusaf Khan	Lecturer Arabic	Institute of Business Administration, Karachi

Sr. No	Name	Designation & Department	University/College
15	Mufti Mohammad Atiq	Lecturer Islamic Studies	College of Education, Karachi
16	Dr. Asif Saleem	Associate Professor Department of Arabic	UOK, Karachi
17	Dr. Mohammad Nawaz	Associate Professor Islamic Studies	Iqra University Karachi Main Campus, Defence View, Shaheed-e-Millat Road
18	Amber Mehr	Lecturer	Meritorious Science College, Karachi
19	Dr. Khan Hafiz Munir Ahmad	Chairman and Professor, Department of Comparative Religion & Islamic Culture	University of Sindh, Jamshoro
20	Laghari Muhammad Ali	Professor, Department of Muslim History	University of Sindh, Jamshoro
21	Prof. Dr. Abdul Razzaq Ghangroo	Professor Islamic Studies, Department of Basic Sciences	MUET Jomshoro
22	Prof. Dr. Muhammad Qasim Soomro	Professor, Muslim History	University of Sindh, Jamshoro
23	Dr. Saifullah Bhutto	Assistant Prof., Islamic Studies	Quaid e Awam University of Engineering, Nawabshah
24	Mohammad Iftikhar	Lecturer Islamic Studies	Government Model College, Mirppur Khas Sindh
25	Dr. Mufti Ijaz	Assistant Prof. Islamic Studies	Isra University, Hyderabad
26	Abdul Hameed	Lecturer Islamic Studies	Government Schal Sarmast College of Arts & Commerce, Hyderabad
27	Dr. Abdul Aziz	Assistant Professor Islamic Studies	Government Schal Sarmast College of Arts & Commerce, Hyderabad
28	Khalid Rasool	Lecturer Islamic Studies	Government Degree College. Tandoo Muhammad Khan
29	Maula Bux Mohammadi	Assistant Prof. Islamic Studies	Government Pakistan College, Saeedpur District, Badin

Sr. No	Name	Designation & Department	University/College
30	Mr. Bashir Ahmad	Lecturer Islamic Studies	Mehran University (Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Campus Khairpur)
31	Dr. Sajjad Ali Raeesi	Director & Assistant Professor, Institute of Islamic Studies	Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur
32	Prof. Sarfraz Ali Korejo	Executive Director, Department of IR	Khairpur University, Khairpur
33	Muhammad Tahir Sindhi	Lecturer	Government t. College for Men, Buffer Zone, Karachi
34	Syed Ahmad Banori	Teacher	Jamia Banoria, Karachi
35	Syed Javeed Sadiq	Director	UNITE, Karachi

2nd workshop held in Murree on May 30-31, 2016
(Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, FATA and Gilgit-Baltistan group)

Sr. No	Name	Designation & Department	University / College
1	Shafiq Ur Rehman	Lecturer, Islamic Studies	Government Degree College Baddan, Lower Kurram Agency
2	Shaheen Umar	Principal & Assistant Professor Udru	Bacha Khan Government College, Civil Quarters Peshawar
3	SaifUllah	Lecturer, Faculty of Islamic and Oriental Studies	University of Peshawar, Peshawar
4	Prof. Dr. Mohammad Zahir Shah	Head of the Department, Department of Arabic	University of Peshawar, Peshawar
5	Muhammad Nawaz Safi	Lecturer, Department of Islamiyat	University of Peshawar, Peshawar
6	Zia Ud Din	Lecturer, Department of Law & Shariah	Swat University

Sr. No	Name	Designation & Department	University / College
7	Ghulam Mustafa	Lecturer, Islamic Studies	Government Degree College Yakaghund, Mohmand Agency
8	Sami Ullah	Lecturer, Islamic Studies	UET Peshawar
9	Dr. Rashid Ahmad	Assistant Professor, Islamic Studies	Sheikh Zayed Islamic Center University of Peshawar
10	Dr. Ansar-ud-Din Madni	Assistant Professor, Department of Education Development	Karakoram University Gilgit Baltistan
11	Dr. Abdul Muhaiman	Assistant Professor &HOD, Department of Islamic & Religious Studies	University of Haripur, Haripur
12	Wahid Gul	Lecturer, Islamic Studies	Government Degree College, Yakaghund, Mohmand Agency
13	Sonia Anbreen	Lecturer, Political Science	Shaheed Benazir University, Larama Campus, Peshawar
14	Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Dawar	Lecturer, Islamic Studies	Government Degree College Baddan, Lower Kurram Agency
15	Dr. Abdul Haq	Associate Professor, Department of Islamic Studies & Religious Affairs	University of Malakand, Chakdara, Dir, Malakand
16	Dr. Aftab Ahmad	Assistant Professor & HOD, Department of Islamic Studies	Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sheringal, Dir
17	Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah	Assistant Professor, Islamic Studies	Government Degree College No 1, Dera Ismail Khan
18	Faiz Ur Rehman	Lecturer, Islamic Studies	Government Degree College Mirali, North Waziristan Agency
19	Sher Ali	Subject Specialist, Islamic Studies	Government H.S.S Ghilanai, Mohmand Agency
20	Abdur Rehman Khalil	Lecturer, Faculty of Islamic studies	University of Peshawar, Peshawar
21	Sajid Mehmood	Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies	Hazara University, Mansehra

Sr. No	Name	Designation & Department	University / College
22	Amin Ullah	Lecturer, Islamic Studies	Gov. Degree College KhugaKhel, Landikotal, Khyber Agency
23	Qaisar Bilal	Lecturer, Islamic Studies	FAST National University, Peshawar campus
24	Dr. Hafiz Salihuiddin	Chairman & Associate Professor, Department of Islamic Studies Faculty	Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan
25	Dr. Khadeeja Aziz	Assistant Professor Islamic Studies	Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar
26	Dr. Farhad Ullah	Professor & Chairman Centre for Religious Studies	Kohat University of Science and Technology, Kohat
27	Zubair Hussain Shah	Principal & Professor Islamic Studies	Gov Degree College, Pattan, Kohistan
28	Muhammad Saeed Khan	Assistant Professor, English Literature	Gov. Post Graduate College, Karak
29	Javed Khan	Assistant Professor, Department of Shariah	Swat University, Swat
30	Mehboob Elahi	Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies	Hazara University, Manshera
31	Nasaran Minallah	Lecturer, Islamic Studies	Governor Model College Khar, Bajaur Agency
32	Dr. Muhammad Ayaz	Assistant Professor, Islamic Studies	University of Agriculture, Peshawar
33	Dr. Naseem Akhtar	Assistant Professor, Islamic studies	Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar
34	Hussain Ahmad	Subject Specialist, Islamic Studies	Government HSS, Ghani Dery, Malakand

3rd workshop held in Murree on June 1-2, 2016

(Punjab, Islamabad and Azad Kashmir group)

Sr No	Name	Designation& Department	University
1	Dr. Shahbaz Manj	Assistant Professor, Faculty of Islamic & Oriental Learning	University of Sargodha, Sargodha
2	Dr. Feroz Kagha	Assistant Professor, Faculty of Islamic & Oriental Learning	University of Sargodha, Sargodha
3	Dr. Agha Mehmood Ahmad	Associate Professor, Department of Arabic	University of Sargodha, Sargodha
4	Dr. Syed Izhar Haider	Assistant Professor, Department of Arabic	The University of Faisalabad, Faisalabad
5	Dr. Mehfooz Ahmad	Head of Department, School of Arabic & Islamic Studies	The University of Faisalabad, Faisalabad
6	Dr. Kulsoom Saeed Paracha	Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies	The Women University, Multan
7	Ms. Qudsia Khakwani	Dean, Faculty of Religion and Languages	The Women University, Multan
8	Ms. Hameeda Mazhar	Associate Professor, Department of Arabic	The Women University, Multan
9	Ms. Ume Kulsoom	Assistant Professor, Department of Arabic	The Women University, Multan
10	Ruqayya Bano	Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies	The Women University, Multan
11	Dr. Abdul Ghaffar Bukhari	Professor & Head of Department, Islamic History	NUML Islamabad
12	Hafiz Shoaib Farooq	Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Islamic Studies	University of Wah, Wah Cantt.
13	Mian Mohammad Mushtaq	Lecturer Islamic Studies	Government Islamia college, Kasur
14	Mr. Jamil Akhtar	Lecturer Islamic Studies	University of Gujrat, Gujrat
15	Aftab Ahmad	Assistant Professor, Islamic Studies	Islamic International University Islamabad
16	Dr Nighat Akram	Assistant Professor & Coordinator Department of Islamic Studies	Poonch University Rawlakot, Azad Kashmir

Sr No	Name	Designation& Department	University
17	Dr. Iltaf Hussain Langyarr	Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies	Islamia University, Bahawalpur
18	Dr. Arshad Munir	Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies	Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan
19	Dr. M Atiq-ur-Rehman	Associate Professor Islamic Studies	UET Lahore
20	Dr. Sadaf Sultan	Assistant Professor, Islamic Studies	Lahore College for Women University , Lahore
21	Dr. Tahir Mehmood	Professor &Chairman, Department of Islamic Studies	Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences & Technology, Islamabad
22	Sobia Khanum	Lecturer Islamic Studies, Department of Islamic Studies	Azad Jammu Kashmir University
23	Dr. Raheela Khalid Qureshi	Professor &Chairperson, Department of Arabic	Islamia University, Bahawalpur
24	Dr. Zia Ur Rehman	Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies	Islamia University, Bahawalpur
25	Dr. Abdul Samad Haroon Shaikh	Assistant Professor Islamic Studies, Dawa Academy	Islamic international university, Islamabad
26	Dr. M. AwaisSarwar	Professor &HOD, Department of Arabic	Government Islamia Degree College, Lahore Cantt.
27	Soneela Hussain Khan	Lecturer Arabic, Department of Arabic	Lahore College for Women University, Lahore
28	M Imran Khan	Lecturer, Islamic Studies	Mirpur University of Science and Technology, Azad Kashmir
29	Dr. Mufti Abdul Razzaq	Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies	Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan
30	Dr. Abdul Hassan Shabbir	Assistant Professor Islamic Studies	Islamia University, Bahawalpur
31	Dr. Hussnul Amin	Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science	Islamic International University Islamabad
32	Hafiz Muhammad Ajmal	Assistant Professor Islamic Studies	Government Post Graduate College, Burewala

Annex-B: Media coverage



The Express Tribune

‘Dialogue key to interfaith harmony in Pakistan’

By our correspondent
Karachi

To promote religious tolerance, harmony and co-existence among various religious groups, it is imperative to establish effective forums for interfaith discussions and take steps to safeguard not just the rights, but also lives of Pakistan's religious minorities.

ance and curb militant tendencies. Speaking about the discrimination non-Muslim communities face in Pakistan, Romana Bashir, a Christian rights activist, who also heads the Peace and Development Foundation, said our region was plagued by some of the most serious faith-based violence and discrimination. "Non-Muslims in Pakistan

severely affected by a striking lack of adequate laws and policies pertaining to their welfare. Romana also called for an increase in seats reserved for religious minorities in parliament and enforcement of the five percent quota in its true spirit.

Prof Qibla Ayaz, former vice-chancellor of the University of Peshawar, said social disharmony largely stemmed

The News



Daily Nawai Waqt



شدت پسندی کے خاتمہ میں اساتذہ کا اہم کردار ہے: ورکشاپ
یونیورسٹیوں کو تحقیق کے دائرے وسیع کرتے ہوئے پہلے سے موجود نظریات کو پرکھنا ہوگا

NaiBaat

شدت پسندی کے خاتمے اور سماجی ہم آہنگی کیلئے اساتذہ کا کلیدی کردار
آج ہم جس مذہبی و سیاسی بحران کا شکار ہیں اس کی وجہ عداوت اور جعلی علماء ہیں
چین میں ڈاکٹر خالد مسعود، ڈاکٹر قبلہ یاز، نور شیدہ ندیم، محمد عامر رانا اور عثمان خان ناصر کا خطاب

Jehan Pakistan

‘With no space for pluralism, religious intolerance thrived’

The News

THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE • PAKISTAN

Islamic studies: Teachers urged to adopt 'critical inquiry'

Daily Nai Baat نئی بات

اسلامیات پڑھانے والے اساتذہ طلباء میں یگانگت پیدا کریں

اساتذہ ہم آہنگی کے فقدان کی وجوہات تلاش کریں۔ انسٹیٹیوٹ فار ایس سٹڈیز میں ورکشاپ

اسلام آباد (پ ر) اسلامیات پڑھانے والے اساتذہ طلباء میں یگانگت پیدا کریں تاکہ ملکی سطح پر ہم آہنگی

Nai Baat

‘Centralised policies of state resulted in religious extremism’

[illegible]Daily *Dunya*

Teachers urged to promote social, religious harmony

The Nation

اسلامیات کے اساتذہ طلباء میں یگانگت پیدا کریں، عامرانا
اساتذہ معاشرے میں ہم آہنگی کے فقدان کی وجوہات تلاش کریں

Daily Ausaf

Pakistani teachers play vital role in promoting peace

By [Zia Ur Rehman](#)

KARACHI -- Pakistani civil society groups are training university instructors to become part of the fight for tolerance and against militancy.

A very important experiment is being carried out in Pakistan, aimed at stemming the tide of religious intolerance and extremism (RIE). The experiment is trying to engage university level teachers into investigating the ways in which the teaching of religion – in both secular and religious educational institutions - is contributing to RIE. It is based on the premise that among the many sources of RIE in this society, education forms a crucial, if not the most important, sector through which the young ones learn to be disrespectful of religious diversity and consciously or unconsciously indulge in discrimination and exclusiveness. This report carries the proceedings and outcome of the experiment undertaken by the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies through three workshops with Islamic Studies teachers from all over the country.

Over the years, many people have identified the negativities contained in the national school curriculum and textbooks, but removing them appears to have become a near impossible task. Sincere attempts have been made at the state level to purge such material from the learning schemes, yet the things have remained the same, primarily because education is perceived by politicians less as a means of building the nation's future than as an ideological battlefield. On the other hand, what is being largely overlooked is the fact that it is eventually the teacher in classroom who has the greatest influence on young minds. It is therefore important to address teachers, to sensitize them to religious diversity and to challenge their own intolerance and prejudices.

The participants of these workshops are all highly qualified teachers, engaged in teaching students who are supposed to be mature, rational and objective. If the ideas exchanged at such workshops ever reach those students, they may start to have a reasoned view of the existing religious diversity, and make them respect rather than despise other faiths.

A bigger challenge would be to take the message to school age children who are more susceptible to ideological manipulation. At this age the gravest danger of injuries to their growing minds comes from divisive ideologies, which eventually result in the savage mob behaviour often visible to us. Their teachers also need to be engaged in open and frank dialogue so that they also understand the importance of saving young minds from destructive ideologies.

-Abdul Hameed Nayyar, Educationist



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