

Discourse with Balochistan Youth on Society, Religion, and Politics



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- Muhammad Amir Rana

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement	3
Introduction	7
Themes of Discourse.....	11
Problems and Challenges.....	31
Pre-workshops survey responses	39
Pre-workshop Survey Results	42
Interviews with Select Participants.....	57
Analysis of the Interviews	59
Feedback about the Workshops	67
Post-workshop Survey	71
Recommendations for Promoting Social Peace and Harmony.....	73
Annexures	77
Annexure 4 Picture Gallery	93

Introduction

Introduction

Pakistan is one of the youngest nations on earth with a whopping 140 million youth population.¹ Only those between the age of 15 and 29 account for about 64 million which is nearly four times the population of Netherlands. Pakistani leaders often point to their youth population figures to suggest the development potential in their country. But a youth bulge without a clear policy to turn the youth into engines of growth and development has little value. In fact, if anything, an ever-expanding young population left rudderless and neglected is like a brewing storm, waiting to unleash itself.

In Pakistan, political leaders do broach the topic of empowering the youth through education and skills development every once in a while², but no government has prioritized the youth in policymaking. The country lacks a functional youth policy. And during the past decades, thousands of young people fell into the wrong hands to become fuel in Pakistan's many internal

and foreign conflicts that ranged from Kashmir and Afghan jihad to sectarian violence and separatist insurgencies. Insurgent groups – religious or nationalist - thrive on the vigor of the Pakistani youth, and ride on their shoulders to further their missions. Some radical Islamist groups such as the TLP or sectarian outfits like ASWJ have mastered the art of mobilizing the youth around a cause of their choosing. They regularly mobilize the youth on the streets as well as on the internet with remarkable ease and speed.

The Pakistani youth are vulnerable to emotional and faith-based exploitation. This vulnerability primarily stems from the youth's stunted cognitive skills. Underfunded and academically substandard, the education system has failed to impart basic intellectual skills such as logical thinking and reasoning to the Pakistani youth. In the Swat valley in recent past, the absence of basic critical thinking among youth was found to be a major culprit behind young boys joining

¹ Shakeel Ahmed, *Unleashing the potential of a young Pakistan*, UNDP Human Development Reports, 24 July 2018
<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/unleashing-potential-young-pakistan>

² *Pakistan to progress with innovations, ideas of youth of country: Murad Saeed*, Radio Pakistan, 28 May 2021
<https://www.radio.gov.pk/28-05-2021/pakistan-to-progress-with-innovations-ideas-of-youth-of-country-murad-saeed>

the ranks of the terror outfit TTP.³ They fell easily for extremist propaganda.

The youth face many challenges as they step into practical life. While the public education mostly fails to give them marketable skills, the largely aid-based economy also struggles to provide them with decent employments. This systemic failure leads to frustration and anger among the youth. And with limited space for free and creative expression, the lingering frustration often morphs into acts of violence which in turn threaten social peace and stability in the country.

For these reasons, the *Pak Institute for Peace Studies* organized workshops on the theme of interfaith harmony and peaceful coexistence in Balochistan. Over a hundred university students from across the province were trained and educated about critical social issues that affect peace and stability in the society. Three two-day workshops were organized in Balochistan in which

scholars and university students were brought together to discuss important issues about interfaith harmony. The youth were encouraged and given opportunity to freely express their thoughts on diverse social issues. In addition, surveys were also conducted in order to understand their views and perspectives on different topics. Furthermore, about 16 students from three 2-day workshops were shortlisted and interviewed in detail about topics and issues relating to interfaith harmony and peaceful coexistence. The purpose of this exercise was to get an insight into the youth's thinking patterns and perspectives on critical issues. The report at hand contains the findings of the interaction with the Balochistan youth. The results and analyses of the surveys and interviews are also given, and a set of recommendations for improving the overall situation of the Pakistani youth is also provided at the end of this report.

³ Dr. Feriha Peracha (supervising psychologist of Sabaoon de-radicalization program), input at PIPS consultation on CVE, Nov 2020

Themes of Discourse

Themes of Discourse

1. Common Sense and Citizenship

Cultural diversity creates discord but such a discord is not inherently violent, nor does it have to necessarily take a violent form to be resolved. Social dissensions can be addressed peacefully through dialogue or legal remedies. The Pakistani legal system, notwithstanding its weaknesses, does provide for peaceful resolution of social conflicts that arise in the society. It's only when the rule of law is flouted that discords like those involving religion turn into nightmares for the weaker lot. In Pakistan where radicalism has carved out much of the public space, riding the emotional rollercoaster is increasingly becoming mainstream. This phenomenon manifests itself in violent forms sometimes e.g. a mob beating up or lynching someone merely on a suspicion of a crime such as blasphemy etc.

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Mob mentality is rooted in people's inability to see through the consequences of their actions.

Amir Rana

Talking about mob violence, CVE analyst Amir Rana said mob mentality is responsible for numerous episodes of vigilante justice in Pakistan. Such a mentality is rooted in people's inability to see through the consequences of their actions. Many people are instigated by others to behave irrationally and jump the bandwagon of vigilantism. In the heat of the moment, they fail to realize that by committing the act of violence they are breaking the law for which they will face the

consequences. It takes not intelligence but mere common sense to see the consequences of one's actions, Amir Rana said. "Intelligence will tell you what the usual causes are behind the acts of faith-based lynching in our society, but common sense will tell you not to incite or participate in a lynching, because doing so is a serious crime which entails grave consequences like arrest, prosecution, imprisonment, or worse", he added.

Amir Rana addressing the youth workshop said that common sense is a basic social skill that helps a person perceive things in a good or bad way or judge the right from the wrong in a quick manner in social situations. Since common sense is not an inborn characteristic but a skill that can be learned through mindfulness and active observation of others' actions and behaviors and their consequences, the workshop participants were urged to develop common sense and employ it in everyday life. The more the use of common sense, the less the chances of irrational choices. According to Amir Rana, it was everyone's responsibility as a citizen to use their common sense to judge the wrongs being done to the citizens of minority faiths in the country.

Many of the social issues that impede peace and harmony in society could be resolved at individual level if more people practiced common sense in their

daily lives. While common sense helps people judge the good from bad and the right from wrong, it does not make them judgmental about other people who belong a different ethnicity, culture, or faith group, Rana said. Therefore, underlining the importance of common sense, he urged the youth to avoid impulsiveness in their everyday decisions and instead use common sense for a better and more rational choice. The youth were also encouraged to create little opportunities for themselves to stay happy because happiness is good for their health and wellbeing.

Additionally, Amir Rana also talked about the modern concept of citizenship at the workshop, explaining how in a democracy the citizens were accorded equality as members of the state regardless of their religious beliefs. Citing the constitution as well as the UDHR 1949, he said that in a democratic republic like Pakistan the state is legally and morally responsible for treating all citizens equally, and adopting equitable policies towards the weak and

vulnerable segments of the population. He also enlightened the participants about the privileges that come with citizenship, and drew a picture of the stateless people in the region including in Pakistan. Millions of people around the world live as stateless people because they are deprived of the universal right to citizenship.

In Pakistan alone, thousands of Rohingyas and Bengalis have been living as stateless people for decades. These communities raise their children without education because they have no right to education and health, and are forced to live in shantytowns in metropolises like Karachi where basic social services are nearly non-existent. Various governments have promised to naturalize them, but none has taken practical steps to mitigate their suffering. This continued indifference to a humanitarian problem is not only cruel but it also contradicts Pakistan's international obligations e.g. Pakistan is a signatory of the UDHR which says citizenship is universal human right, Rana said.

During the workshop, the young participants were asked about their perception of the '*best Pakistani*'. In response, varying definitions and

descriptions emerged. Some respondents believed patriotism was the key element to make the best Pakistani while others ranked religious piety as a necessity for being the best Pakistani. The participants were allowed to liberally express their thoughts and opinions on the question before the speaker put forth his own understanding of the matter. Amir Rana said that as per his understanding and belief, the best Pakistani was the one who was simply a good citizen. A person who is law-abiding and understands his duties and responsibilities as a citizen is a good citizen and the best Pakistani, he added.

2. Rational Thinking and Reasoning

Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed, an educationist who has taught at leading universities of Karachi, held a session on rational thinking and reasoning. Dr. Ahmed said humans hold diverse beliefs on any given issue. Just a look at the myths associated with the Covid-19 in Pakistan reveals an incredible number of stories believed in by thousands of people. For instance, in 2020 when the Covid-19 had already been declared a pandemic by the WHO, many people refused to believe such a virus even existed. This denial later morphed into a conspiracy

theory that warned that the virus was actually meant to reduce Muslim population in the world, and termed the pandemic a Western conspiracy against the Muslims, even though the virus originated in China.

Similarly, when the Covid-19 vaccine was invented, stories started making rounds that vaccination sterilized Muslim males. Such stories keep coming to the marketplace of ideas, and thousands of people believe in them.

Myths may or may not be harmful, but believing in unsubstantiated and conspiratorial stories in times of serious crises such as during the ongoing pandemic can have grave consequences at individual, family, and much broader levels, Dr. Ahmed said. The basic reason people fall for conspiratorial narratives is the lack of culture of scientific research. He said scientific knowledge rests on universal facts which means they can be tested anywhere for accuracy and authenticity but the results would be universal. While believing in fictitious stories rather than in scientific evidence, many people tend to forget that the immense luxuries and comforts of the modern life and improved life-spans are all products of science which is

underpinned by rational thinking and reasoning.



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Dr. Jaffer Ahmed

Dr. Jaffer Ahmed said had the humans not been curious about their world and not questioning of the phenomena of nature, there would have been no science and no inventions. Therefore, it all started with questioning and reasoning. To think scientifically is to think rationally using logic, he said, adding that scientific thinking is not

always about inventions or technology. It is the ability to think logically and construct your views on the basis of available evidence.

There would have been no science and no inventions without human curiosity and questioning.

He deplored that scientific research and rational thinking have never been strong traits of the education system or the larger society in Pakistan. Thinking patterns are linear which often take simplistic views on issues. For example, the state's attitude towards justice is to just ensure that a criminal gets a befitting punishment for the crime committed. Beyond punishment, there is little curiosity to research and find out why a particular crime was committed, how frequently it is committed, and what were the factors and various dimensions of the crime etc. On the other hand, progressive societies with strong culture of research always long for new knowledge and learning. They study the causes of a crime which help enhance their understanding and enable

them to make better decisions for deterrence and prevention.

According to Dr. Ahmed, scientific research and rational thinking and reasoning help people understand the complexities and nuances of social diversity in their country. And evidence-based informed thinking help people appreciate and accept diversity. He also narrated his personal story of a long friendship with a Hindu, saying that he and his Hindu friend shared a room for several years without either having any problem with the other's faith or religious rituals and practices. Where scientific thinking is missing as is largely the case with Pakistani society, people often rely on myths and stereotyping which, of course, is not helpful for social harmony. During the workshop, Dr. Ahmed urged students to make it a principle of their life to always think rationally and scientifically. Basic scientific principles should be applied to matters of everyday life, he said. It is easier to jump to conclusions or adopt preconceived ideas and harder to think scientifically, but the little efforts put into rational thinking and reasoning will pay off in big ways, he said.

3. To Be Minority in Pakistan

Life is a rough trot if one happens to profess a religion that is different from that of the state. Hazards come naturally when a culturally diverse populace is governed by a state that is motivated by a singular religious ideology. With a religionized political structure, the state in Pakistan has a tendency to indulge in faith-based discrimination against citizens in its constant pursuit to maintain the legitimacy of its ideological underpinning. The injection of faith into politics was sold as a necessity for national integration.

The early politicians were not only averse to but apparently also incapable of handling the cultural diversity in the country. Consequently, the majority's faith was propounded as a unifying force that would quell ethnocentric emotions and hold the budding nation together as one. Needless to ask if the dream of integration was fulfilled, but it must be noted that the harm this policy inflicted on Pakistan's social fabric was phenomenal.



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Safdar Hussain Sial

While making the religious establishment as the informal co-guardians of the state, the Islamization reduced the non-Muslim communities to social underlings. Over time, the marginalization and persecution of the minorities became mainstream. Some of the key challenges faced by the religious minorities were elaborated by researcher and author, Safdar Sial, during the workshops. He discussed how life in Pakistan is much harder for members of minority groups than

ordinary Muslim citizens, and listed the social, political, and economic issues that the minorities have to put with up on daily basis. According to Safdar Sial, members of minority groups face obstacles in acquiring citizenship documents. Many fail to get identity cards altogether. This situation has serious economic impacts on the affected communities because without formal identity documents they are effectively cut from the job market. For survival, they do menial jobs and get trapped into an unending cycle of poverty.

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Besides economic exclusion, violence is a frequent and formidable challenge for religious minorities. And threat of violence comes not only from extremist militant groups but also from ordinary members of the public belonging to majority faith, Sial said. For long, the country's blasphemy laws have been used as a weapon to silence and persecute minorities. Cases have also

been recorded of people weaponizing these laws to settle personal scores. In such a flammable social environment, a mere accusation of blasphemy can trigger mob lynching. Likewise, while the sword of blasphemy hangs over the heads of non-Muslims, the problem of forced conversions go on without effective check. Mainly targeting the Hindus in Sindh, the forced conversion is reported to be overseen by influential clerics like Mian Mittu. In a typical case, a young, often underage, Hindu girl is abducted and converted to Islam and married off to a Muslim man. And once converted, her parents are denied access to her.

Active citizenship is key to building robust institutions and a progressive society.

Safdar Sial said in the current environment the religious minorities lack safety and security regardless of what safeguards are accorded to them in the law. A legal safeguard without effective implementation is no safeguard at all, he said. The citizens have their rights and freedoms protected by the constitution, but the

state's inability or unwillingness to enforce laws renders the legal protections meaningless. During an interactive session at the workshop, Sial asked the young participants whether they thought the Hindu and Christian citizens were given their due rights in the country. An overwhelming majority of the participants replied in negative, with some saying that minorities were persecuted. This reflected that majority of the educated youth were cognizant of the injustices being done to the minorities.

The youth were urged to be mindful of what was happening in their social surroundings. Nationhood is based on shared values of equal citizenship and coexistence, Sial said, adding that every citizen is morally obligated to be empathetic towards their fellow citizens. Active citizenship is key to building robust institutions and a progressive society, and what promotes active citizenship is social empathy, he said.

4. The Politics of Exclusion

While societal discrimination socially excludes the religious minorities from the mainstream, the political structure prevents them from sending their true

representatives to the political powerhouse i.e. the parliament. The joint electorate puts the political fate of minorities in the hands of major political parties which distribute seats according to their own interests and preferences. Speaking at the workshop, BBC journalist Riaz Soahil said that in the old system of separate electorate the minorities like the Hindus of Sindh could elect their representatives who would genuinely represent their communities. But, that system was done away with and replaced by joint electorate.



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Riaz Soahil

He said the border regions of Sindh are inhabited by the Hindus who face numerous

problems and challenges to their faith, culture, livelihood, and way of life, but due to lack of genuine representation in the parliament no one pays attention to their plight. In social and economic development, public spending is concentrated in major urban centers, and the minorities dwelling in the rural border regions continue to long for basic necessities. The mainstream political parties do not care much if these communities need schools or hospitals, Sohail said. Over the past years, the demands of religious minorities have progressively declined, and at present all they want is safety and security. And unfortunately, even these bare essentials are also not met. The Hindus continue to face persecution in the form of violence and forced faith conversions etc.

In pursuit of better commercial ratings and more ads, the issues of human rights often get buried beneath flimsy and sensational contents.

Persistent insecurity is perpetuating a slow and steady demographic change as many Hindus migrate to urban centers for relative safety and security. Riaz Sohail also narrated a story of his Hindu friend who quit his federal government job because he felt lonely and isolated at the workplace. His colleagues often avoided interaction with him, making him feel excluded and alien. According to Sohail, the hateful sentiments against the Hindus are primarily preached through the textbooks that identify Hindus with India, and describe the atrocities of the Hindus against the Muslims in the wake of partition. Besides, the Urdu press in the country has played key role in excluding the Hindus from the mainstream by propagating hate against them, he said.

Similarly, journalist and author Yar Jan Badini said that in rural regions of Sindh and Balochistan the influential landlords and tribal chiefs force members of minority groups to cast their votes for them. In such areas, the minorities are at the mercy of

powerful tribal chiefs and feudal lords. Like religious minorities, the ethnic minorities like the Baloch too face political exclusion. The Baloch have been undergoing crises for years, but their

plight is seldom debated in the parliament. They are effectively excluded from the national discourse, he said. Due to lack of minorities' representation in the media, the media houses also overlook the issues.

According to investigative journalist Zia-ur-Rehman, the Pakistani media landscape is near devoid of minority representation. In major media houses, there are almost no Christian or Hindu journalists of professional standing. Resultantly, nobody cares to investigate what minority communities face in the country. He said the situation is not dissimilar in Balochistan where a few local journalists do all the reporting from the province because the media houses have little interest to have more reporters in the province. And there are several mainstream media houses which do not have a single reporter from Balochistan, Rehman said, adding that the province is not a priority for reporting both for commercial and security reasons.

5. Media and Minorities

Commercialism, censorship, and bias are key factors that shape the media's collective outlook and approach towards religious minorities in Pakistan. Far from



'With their billions invested, the owners do not like to see their media houses set ablaze by angry mobs. Therefore, the media tread carefully while reporting persecution of minorities.'

**President PFUJ,
Shahzada Zulfiqar**

being a pillar of democracy, the media is primarily driven by corporate interests rather than considerations of public good. While the media's supposed preoccupation with public issues is reflected in unending news bulletins and talk shows, commercial rating and consumers' demands are the ultimate determinants of the industry's priorities.

In this profit-driven environment where media houses compete for better rating and more ads, the issues of human rights often get buried beneath flimsy and sensational contents.

Awareness about how the media works, its interests and priorities, and the broader media landscape is necessary for the common people because the industry is supposed to be a champion of public interest and it influences public opinion. For this purpose, senior journalists were invited to explain the working of media in Pakistan, and how the mainstream media treat the issues of religious minorities. These journalists were of the view that issues like persecution of minorities do not make great stories from commercial point of view. So, the media mostly give little of their tightly-packed air time to such issues. Often, there is little appetite to investigate stories based purely on their human rights value, they said.

Addressing the workshop, PFUJ President Shahzada Zulfiqar said there have been instances in which the mainstream media overlooked the persecution of minorities either entirely

or through underreporting. There have also been blackouts of news about religious minorities. Factors that instill this behavior in the media range from commercial viability of the news to censorship and fear of reprisal from the radicals. Media owners with their billions invested in the business do not like to see their media houses set ablaze by violent mobs. According to a study, there was a cumulative investment of 4-5 billion dollars in the Pakistani electronic media industry between 2002 and 2018.⁴ Therefore, the sensitivity around matters of faith compels the media to tread carefully while reporting anything that shows the radical elements' excesses against minority faiths, Zulfiqar said. He added that lack of professionalism among reporters and in the larger media community is also a serious issue. While reporting the issues of minorities, many journalists struggle to separate their personal beliefs and biases from their professional work. This dilutes the integrity of their reports. According to an estimate, the number of journalists in Pakistan has ballooned from 2,000 to 20,000 since the advent of private electronic media in the country

⁴ Nazam Maqbool, *The Electronic Media Economy in Pakistan*, 2021, News Media – Policy and Research, Vol. 2,

issue 9, PIDE <https://pide.pk/research/news-media-policy-research-pr-vol-2-issue-9/>

in 2002.⁵ Shahzada Zulfiqar said the fundamental ethics of journalism demand that the media give due coverage to the problems of religious minorities.

Media is not meant to serve the interests of the majority, but to report issues of public interest in general.

Similarly, senior Dawn reporter Saleem Shahid said that quite often the press has been a part of the problem rather than solution when it came to the plight of religious minorities in Pakistan. Anti-minority contents were published by Urdu newspapers. These had significant influence in shaping perceptions about non-Muslim communities. But, the situation has gone from bad to worse because previously mostly Urdu newspapers used to publish such contents but currently the English language press is also doing it. Universally, there are ethics that inform the media's working, but in Pakistan

those ethics have been thrown out of the window, Saleem Shahid said.

One of the reasons for falling standards is semi-literate billionaires owning media houses, he said, asking that how a barely literate owner with influence on the working of his organization would ensure professionalism among his employees. Saleem Shahid explained the absolute essential for a reporter: reporting neutrally without involving their personal beliefs and emotions. All citizens and communities deserve fair and just coverage. Media's job is not to serve the interests of the majority, but to highlight things in general public interest, he said. The public is also passive as it seldom demands of the media to report on serious and bigger public issues.

However, there are also external factors that influence the media's behavior and dictate its priorities. According to senior journalist Imran Mukhtar, the media often avoid publishing news about religious minorities due to certain pressure groups. Many a time, news about minorities do not make it to publication stage unless significantly

⁵ Nazam Maqbool, *The Electronic Media Economy in Pakistan*, 2021, News Media – Policy and Research, Vol. 2,

issue 9, PIDE <https://pide.pk/research/news-media-policy-research-pr-vol-2-issue-9/>

moderated and given consent to by these pressure groups. To avoid such inconveniences, many media houses simply switch to reporting non-issues, sidestepping stories of serious nature. A news story is subjected to intense gatekeeping, involving at least three layers. First, the reporter applies censorship; secondly, the news desk puts censors, and finally the editor does the job, Mukhtar said.

6. Women Rights

CVE experts see a relationship between religious radicalism and misogyny. The extremist lots have been vocal opponents of women rights. And disturbingly, both extremism and anti-women violence are rising parallel in Pakistan. In view of this, sessions on women rights were arranged at the workshops. Women leaders and professionals shared experiences of their struggles with the youth. Speaking on challenges faced by women, rights activist Faiza Mir said her parents were stigmatized by the society for having only daughters and no son. At young age, she shouldered familial responsibility due to her father's failing health, and helped her siblings get education. 'I faced hardships and numerous challenges, but in the end I

proved to be equal to a son', she said. Women are strong enough to face and overcome challenges, but they require great patience to put up with male dominance, she added.

Religious conservatism and patriarchal social values and traditions put up great challenges to aspiring women.

Likewise, researcher and educationist Fatima said men are preferred in employment opportunities including in the development sector because women are not considered intellectually or professionally as capable as men. She deplored the patronizing attitude of the society towards women. Women are denied decision making even in matters of their own lives such as education etc., she said, adding that often what a girl should study at college or university is decided by her male relatives. She urged women to stand up for their fundamental rights as equal citizens, and put their abilities to use to improve their lives. 'At some point, you have to stand for yourself and demand your rights', Fatima told the workshop.



People having only daughters and no sons are often stigmatized by the society.

Faiza Mir

Gender disparity is a serious problem because it marginalizes half of the country's population, and the impact is felt far and wide in every field particularly in the socio-economic sphere and peacebuilding. The Pakistani women's role in the public sphere is not even meagerly proportionate to their huge population. Religious conservatism and patriarchal social values put up great challenges to aspiring women. The speakers said there is no royal road to women rights and empowerment. The only way is to go through the challenges and never give up on basic rights. Women are equally capable of not only dreaming big but also achieving those

dreams. Fatima said that a woman is not a mere appendage to her male relatives. Therefore, identifying a woman as somebody's mother, sister, or daughter is an injustice and a denial of her own identity. A woman carries her own independent identity as a human and as a citizen, and she must be identified by her own name, she said.

To end gender-based discrimination and balance the male predominance, the women need to come out of the traditional mother-sister-wife roles and lead the struggle for their fundamental rights because no messiah will come to make things right for them, they added. The battle for equality begins right at home where the son is valued over girl. This mentality and outlook at the household level must be tackled first before fighting for greater rights, the speakers said. But at the same time, families also play crucial role in empowering their female members. Great majority of women who touched heights of success were actively encouraged and supported by their families. A parents' support for their daughter, or a husband's for his wife can go a long way in helping women realize their dreams, they said.

7. Why Constitutional Literacy?

At workshops, the youth were sensitized about critical national and international legal instruments like the constitution, the UDHR 1949, etc. Given the poor state of public education, it was only expected that majority of the youth either lacked basic understanding of or interest in the constitution, or both. But, lack of understanding or interest does not reduce the significance of Pakistani youth learning what their constitution says, or for that matter what other instruments like the UDHR stands for. To provoke the youth's imagination, the speakers explained the pre-UDHR scenario in which millions of people including children were murdered, and which compelled the nations to think collectively to prevent atrocities for future generations. Those collective deliberations gave birth to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1949. And those rights given in the UDHR inform the constitutions of the countries around the world. Printouts of all key provisions of the UDHR were distributed among the workshop participants, and random participants were asked to read those provisions out to their fellows.



'The UDHR 1949 marked many nations' transition from monarchies to democracies, and from monarchical subjects to state citizens.'

Harris Khalique

Secretary General HRCP Harris Khalique said the UDHR was a milestone in human history as it marked many nations' transition from monarchies to democracies, and from monarchical subjects to state citizens. He explained the five categories of the human rights given in the UDHR i.e. civil rights, political rights, economic rights, cultural rights, and social rights. Interestingly, the UN committee that drafted the UDHR included Pakistan. Legal

instruments empower citizens to claim their basic rights, and human rights are not favors by the states, Khaliq said, adding that they are inborn to every human.

'There are basic contradictions in the Constitution. For instance, ensuring fundamental rights for all citizens, and then prohibiting non-Muslims from holding high public offices.'

Haris Khaliq also pointed out some basic contradictions in Pakistan's constitution, saying that certain provisions conflict with one another. For instance, one article ensures the rights of all citizens, while another prohibits the non-Muslim citizens from contesting for the offices of the president and prime minister. Likewise, freedom of speech is ensured in the constitution, but the same constitution bars any criticism of the judiciary and military. He said these discrepancies must be corrected by the parliament, otherwise there is no point in including clauses on rights and freedoms. According to Khaliq, Pakistan is still struggling to transition from a colonial state to a democratic state

which is why the constitutional provisions lack implementation. He underlined the significance of the parliament, saying that the body is a medium for negotiation between citizens and institutions of the state, but unfortunately the parliament in Pakistan is neither democratic nor is it free to make laws.

'The primary audience of the Constitution is the common man.'

Constitutional literacy was termed critical for every citizen because the constitution is the supreme law and all other laws flow from it. Any law that contradicts the articles of the constitution becomes invalid because in cases of conflict between laws, the constitution prevails. Key articles and provisions including the ones explaining fundamental rights and freedoms were discussed at the workshop. The citizens must guard against any breach of their rights and freedoms, but for that to happen basic clarity and knowledge of the constitution is indispensable, the speakers added. Contrary to the general perception that the constitution is a book of laws to be read by the legal

fraternity only, the primary audience of the constitution is the ordinary citizen. Every citizen is responsible for reading or learning what his country's constitution says. Mass ignorance about the constitution allows authoritarianism to creep in and take hold of the state and society. Public vigilance empowers democracy, and vigilance is underpinned by awareness.

8. Freedom of Expression

Popular columnist Wusatullah Khan spoke about freedom of expression at the workshop. He said that fundamental rights and freedoms are ensured by the constitution, but that does not automatically mean that those rights and freedoms would be offered to people readily. The rights are taken through struggle and sacrifice. In societies where the public lacks awareness about its rights and does not understand the concept of accountability, the state tends to encroach upon basic rights and freedoms on various pretexts. He discussed restrictions on the freedom of speech, saying that before complaining about state highhandedness, one must realize that curbs on free expression begin at home where young people are often prevented from talking on many

issues in the name of social values or traditions.



'Struggle for rights is not a short endeavor, but one that may stretch over several generations.'

Wusatullah Khan

According to Wusatullah, the society has a tendency to curb free expression on grounds of religious sensitivity, security, or social norms and mores. And the few limited freedoms that exist in the country are also reserved for the privileged lot. The

minorities have practically no say in whatever narratives the elite manufacture. While such a practice may create an illusion of *all-is-well* in the society, but it also breeds resentment.

He warned that suffocating environment leads to explosive outcomes.

Wusatullah said that people in Pakistan often abandon their rights and put their fate into others' hands and then complain about lack of freedoms. No right is ever given willingly unless voice is raised. Even an infant has to cry to register his hunger and get fed. The state also works in a similar fashion. The people have to raise their voice and take

their rights. The people of this region have been waiting for centuries to get their rights, but the state is not designed to give the rights easily. Whatever rights are enjoyed today were taken after struggles and sacrifices, and for more rights, the people must struggle more. Every pleasure needs struggle, and the struggle for rights is not a short endeavor but one that may stretch over generations. But, what is important is to not stop this struggle, he said.

Problems and Challenges

Problems and Challenges

i. Weak Cognitive Skills

Cognitive skills such as logical thinking and reasoning were found to be wanting among majority of the workshop participants. Many attendants were seen struggling to process moderately complex ideas, while others had little clue about the importance and practice of evidence-based thinking. This problem was observed in almost all Pakistani youths across four provinces and diverse ethnic groups. And the reasons are not hard to find out given the poor state of public education. For decades, the education has served as the conduit for churning out state ideologies and narratives in order to produce uniformity of thinking and a consensual political outlook on a mass level. The endeavor is supposed to serve the greater cause of national unity and harmony.

On the other hand, the development of intellectual skills and logical thinking and reasoning abilities has not been a priority. Some educationists liken this phenomenon to mental indoctrination, and critics like Rubina Saigol term the education-based nation building endeavor as 'psychic violence' against the youth. Whatever the factor driving

the education policy, the fact remains that rote learning, feeding of vague and confusing ideas and ideologies, and lack of academic freedom on campuses check intellectual growth among the Pakistani youth. Even at graduate levels, many students were noted to be scrambling to process simple to moderately compound ideas in a rational way using available evidence. Many had never bothered to subject their opinions to fact-checks, and same was the case with the information feeding their worldviews.

Weak cognitive skills also have social implications in the forms of twisted worldviews or stereotypical thinking.

Where weak cognitive skills have social implications like harboring twisted worldviews or stereotypical thinking, there it also cost the Pakistani youth in terms of employment opportunities especially in the highly competitive international job market where intellectual abilities such as critical thinking and scientific reasoning and

problem solving skills are essential requirements. Little wonder that Pakistan lags behind the regional countries in exporting skilled human resource to global job markets.

In the classrooms, conformity in thought is rewarded and inquisitiveness is frowned upon.

Lack of logical thinking and reasoning makes the youth vulnerable to propagandistic and conspiratorial narratives, both of which have had a negative bearing on social peace and harmony in Pakistan. Many a time, conspiracy theories also target and demonize religious minorities like the Hindus, Ahmadis, etc. The educational curricula, likewise, contain many factually incorrect and conspiratorial accounts of historical events. Usually, while such readymade narratives are fed as facts, questioning is discouraged in the classrooms. The students are compelled to digest preconceived notions without them having the privilege to challenge the credibility of such ideas. Overall, conformity in thought is rewarded, and inquisition is frowned upon.

ii. Who am I?

Political Islamism interwoven with ideals of nationalism and democracy have created quite the opposite of what was sought when the country first embarked on its Islamization scheme in 1949. A socially well-integrated population identifying itself as a Muslim nation was likely the ultimate end of the Islamization experiment. But, a couple of decades down the road, the outcome hardly looks the way the original architects of the Islamization project had imagined it to. Ask the contemporary Pakistani youth what their primary identity is and they will usually come up with an incoherent description of how they perceive themselves. Much like in everywhere else in the country, in Balochistan the youth's perceptions of identity revolved around '*I am a Muslim first*' and '*I am a Pakistan first*', with little clarity as to what did exactly they mean by either of these. Sense of shared citizenship was lacking, as was confidence to speak up their minds.

A culturally diverse Pakistan is not capable of absorbing a blanket national identity based on the religious faith of the majority.

Many of the participants held unclear and often contradictory views about what political system was best for Pakistan. For instance, some of them favored democracy on the one hand, and viewed past dictatorships as legitimate on the other, likely unaware of the contradiction in their views. Not surprisingly, many of them parroted the textbook view of nationalism. Some were not very welcoming of the cultural diversity in the country, and their thinking indicated a patronizing attitude towards the Hindus, Christians, etc. And some of their views on politics mirrored the usual narratives e.g. they believed the politicians were corrupt.

A socially well-integrated population identifying itself as a Muslim nation was likely the ultimate end of the Islamization experiment.

Culturally, Pakistan being hugely diverse is not capable of absorbing a blanket national identity based on the religious faith of the majority. Even if such an identity is embraced by the great majority of the people, still how could it be enforced on the millions of Hindus,

Christians, and others who profess other faiths? The state's religious identity has been responsible for fostering social chasm, and classifying citizens into mainstream and peripheral, first-class and second-class, and often also into patriot and suspect. The religious identity has also entailed a relentless Islamization process that has caused more harm than good to the now lost cause of social integration and nation-building. It would be no exaggeration to view the minorities' persecution as a fallout of such policy choices. According to Amir Rana, the ruling class has been unable to reconcile the political system's internal discrepancies stemming from the mixing of religion and politics. In a republic, shared citizenship and not religious faith informs people's identities. When a singular religious ideology is imposed on a culturally diverse society, rifts are bound to appear, he said.

The confusion around national identity is a broad matter that needs to be debated by the parliament. Factors that contribute to this problem should be identified and the errors rectified so as to address this chronic confusion around the question of identity. So far, the parliament has avoided touching upon this subject, probably because it does

not feel impelled to take up such a potentially daunting or sensitive task. One probable explanation is that any such debate would inevitably lead to discussions about the mixing of politics and religion, thus possibly also calling into question the ideological basis of the state. But, the cost of inaction is no less disquieting because the longer the confusion lasts, the greater the damage it inflicts on the socio-cultural landscape of the country.

Any debate on national identity would lead to a debate on state's ideological basis.

iii. Sense of Lacking

It would be repetitive to state the obvious that Balochistan is longing for justice it deserves. The general sense of alienation rooted in the province's tumultuous political history forms the social and political perspectives among its people. During the workshops, it was noted that sense of lacking was nearly unanimous among Balochistan youth. A feeling of victimhood could be observed in their thinking. Over decades, the province has seen longer periods of militancy and political instability, and

lesser periods of calm. While the region has been the flashpoint of politically-inspired insurgency, it was also a major launch pad of the jihadist militancy in Afghanistan in the 1980s. So far, neither kinetic measures nor gestures of political goodwill like the '*Balochistan Package*' or promises of reconciliation have been able to bring peace and stability in the province. Geographically huge yet sparsely populated, Balochistan longs not for luxuries but essentials like stability and basic amenities i.e. roads, education, health, drinking water etc.

The dismal realities in the province continue to influence the thinking and outlook of its people which is one of lacking. Many students at the workshops complained they lacked adequate access to education, professional training, and employment opportunities as compared to the youths of other provinces. There are only few universities in the entire province, and the youth usually travel long distances – often to Quetta - for education. Poverty and lower incomes contribute to dropouts, and majority of the rural youth who continue to pursue higher education face immense challenges. And those who can afford, send their children to educational institutions in Sindh and Punjab because

the few universities that exist in the province are often not at par in terms of quality with those in other provinces. Pointing out the disparity in access to opportunities, a young workshop participant said that till a few years ago the students from Balochistan had to travel either to Karachi or Multan to take IELTS tests because there was no testing center in the whole province.

So far, neither kinetic measures nor gestures of goodwill or promise of reconciliation have been able to restore peace in Balochistan.

Similarly, jobs are scanty even for the comparatively small population of the province. Private sector and industries have little presence, and the public sector is unable to tend to the job needs of the youth. The economic woes are aggravated by continuing security instability which deters business investments. On the other hand, the fruits of the mega development projects like the CPEC are yet to reach at the grassroots in the province. Some of the youths who expressed their views on the CPEC were not very much inspired by the

government's promises of economic prosperity. Few believed their province had been betrayed by shifting the weight of benefits of the CPEC to larger provinces particularly Punjab.

iv. Self-Confidence Deficit

As discussed earlier, the public education is markedly short of fulfilling some basic educational purposes such as broadening the pupils' worldviews or developing their cognitive skills. Issues of underfunding and poor quality aside, the public education has historically been used to manufacture consent and followership for the orthodox ideas of nationhood. Nationalistic ideologies wrapped in religious overtones usually produce vague and confused thinking among the youth. As a result, even years of schooling fail to equip them with adequate intellectual skills. To top these up, inquisitiveness is also curbed both actively as well as through normative behaviors e.g. teachers acting as authority figures to not only be respected but also feared. This factor may deter students from questioning their teachers. During the workshops, it was noted that many participants lacked confidence to pose a question or challenge a notion logically, or even simply share their viewpoints

coherently. Docile and obedient classroom-behaviors were conspicuous.

Nationalistic ideologies wrapped in religious overtones usually produce vague and confused thinking among the youth.

At the workshops, the participants were repeatedly encouraged and, at times, even pushed to express themselves and share their thoughts and experiences about different things. Apparently, most of them were reluctant to raise questions or liberally express their thoughts and opinions – likely an indication of the lack of academic freedom in the traditional classrooms where questioning is sometimes equated with rudeness. Overall, the educational process in the classrooms is a top-down exercise in which the teachers pour out contents from the

syllabus without much interactive discourse. On the other end, the students are expected to memorize lessons unquestioningly and later regurgitate them in the examinations to get along successfully.

In a way, the education system teaches obedience to authority figures and promotes a tendency not to challenge whatever comes down from those authority figures. This educational policy or tradition has implications that stretch beyond the educational institutions, and influence the larger public behavior. Graduates of this schooling system are likely to take obedient and unquestioning behaviors into their adult lives where they show reluctance or lack of confidence to challenge flaws in government policies or demand accountability of the state due to the mental conditioning that authorities are to be respected or feared, and therefore, not questioned.

Pre-workshops survey responses

Pre-workshops survey responses

The Youth's perspective on Interfaith Harmony

103 students participated in the pre-workshop survey, of which 53 were male and 50 female. Age-wise, 92 of these belonged to the age group 18-25, nine were from the 26-35 age bracket, and only one was older than 35. The survey intended to explore the participants'

views on social cohesion, interfaith relations, gender, and basic rights. It also sought to understand how the youth viewed their own role with regard to the afore-mentioned matters. The statistics are given below:

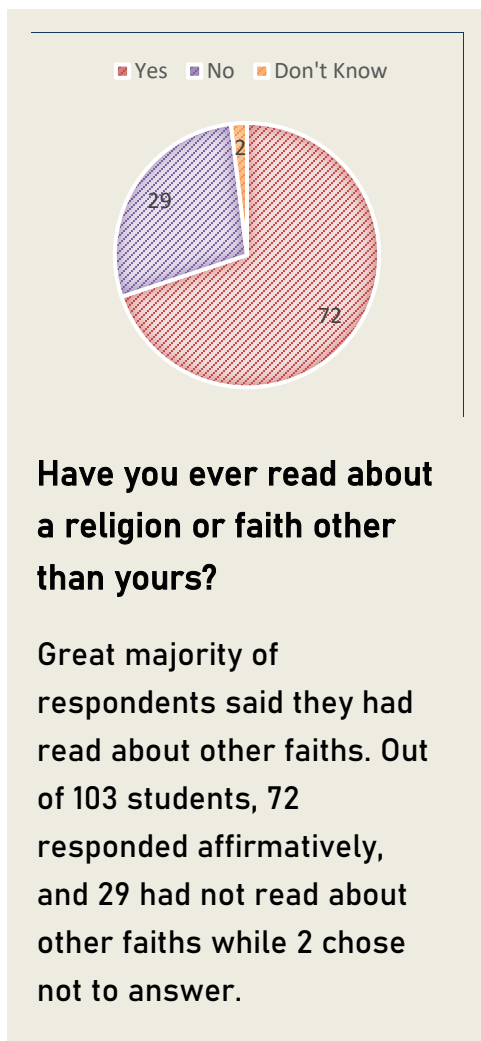
No	Questions	Reponses
1	Have you ever read about a religion or faith other than yours?	
	Yes	70%
	No	28%
	Don't know	2%
2	What is the main source of your knowledge about other faiths or religions?	
	Books	36%
	Newspapers/Magazines	2%
	Religious scholars	19%
	Television	7%
	Internet	27%
	Others, please specify	9%
3	Do you think people of all religions and faiths are equal citizens of Pakistan?	
	Yes	85%
	No	13%
	Don't know	2%
4	Have you ever read about any similarities among different religions?	
	Yes	72%
	No	18%
	Don't know	11%

No	Questions	Reponses
5	Have you ever witnessed incidents of religious discrimination at university campus or in society?	
	Yes	
	No	40%
		60%
6	What do you think is your primary identity?	
	Ethnic background	14%
	Citizenship of Pakistan	64%
	Religious affiliation	18%
	Provincial affiliation	2%
	Linguistic identity	1%
	Other	1%
7	Do you think textbooks and curricula teach respect for diversity?	
	Yes	45%
	No	43%
	Don't know	12%
8	Are you aware of your fundamental freedoms granted by the constitution?	
	Yes, I am aware of all fundamental freedoms	29%
	Yes, but I know only few of them	60%
	Not aware	11%
9	Do you think non-Muslims played any role in the creation, defense, and development of Pakistan?	
	Yes	74%
	No	13%
	Don't know	13%
10	Do you think we need more women in leadership roles in various fields?	
	Yes	96%
	No	4%
11	Do you think a transgender person is an equal citizen?	
	Yes	90%

No	Questions	Reponses
	No	7%
	Don't know	3%
12	Have you ever heard of Paigham-e-Pakistan?	
	Yes	44%
	No	53%
	Never	3%
13	What do you think Paigham-e-Pakistan is?	
	It is a law	9%
	It's a message of peace from the Prime Minister	38%
	It's a declaration by religious scholars	17%
	Don't know	36%
14	What do you think your purpose is for attending this workshop?	
	To learn something new	93%
	To meet new people	7%
15	Do you think attending workshops is useful for your future career?	
	Yes	96%
	No	3%
	Not answered	1%
16	Have you decided about your future career path?	
	Yes	91%
	No	5%
	Don't know	3%
	Not answered	1%

Pre-workshop Survey Results

Youth's on Religious Diversity



Majority of the workshop participants (70%) said they had read about other religions. The sources of their knowledge about other faiths varied

with books being reported as the main source for 36% of the respondents, followed by internet for 27%. Another 19% cited religious scholars as their main source of knowledge about other religions. Though a significant number of the youth (28%) said they had not studied any religion other than their own, still the majority had had the opportunity to learn about other faiths. And while the culture of book reading is on the decline in Pakistan, majority of the respondents who said they had read about other religions cited books as their main source.

Likewise, the internet was the second most cited source of information about other religions. The internet is an omnipresent commodity in urban and many rural regions of Pakistan. Nearly all participants of the workshops had access to internet. Therefore, it is understandable that internet was mentioned by 27% of the youth as their main source of learning about faiths. But, it must be borne in mind that the Pakistani online space is not without risks given the significant presence of radical groups on the internet. The government has been slow in clamping down on extremist contents. Many

religious extremist outfits or their followers or sympathizers continue to propagate their radical views in the cyberspace. And thousands of youths are exposed to these contents.

Besides, on the Pakistani social media platforms such as the Youtube and Facebook, a lot of conspiratorial narratives and substandard and inauthentic contents about Hindus, Jews, Ahmadis, etc. can be found. The youth's exposure to such contents can potentially influence their views and opinions negatively because there is also a lack of tendency among the youth for evidence-based thinking and reasoning.

However, when asked whether people of all religions and faiths in Pakistan were equal citizens, the great majority of the respondents (85%) said 'yes'. This indicates an accommodating and inclusive outlook on the part of the youth. Likewise, 71% of them said they had read or heard about similarities among different religions.

But, it is noteworthy that 40% of the respondents reported to have witnessed an incident of faith-based discrimination at university campus or in society. This figure is significant as it may be an indication that discrimination against religious minorities is a serious problem

in the society. In addition, available evidence also supports this disturbing reality.

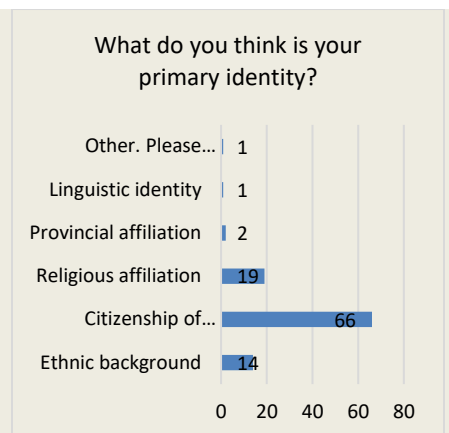
However, what is interesting is that in Balochistan only 44.7% of the respondents believed the textbooks teach respect for diversity. A nearly equal number 42.7% disagreed, while another 12.6% said they did not know whether the textbooks promoted diversity. When this same question was posed to the youth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 71% had replied that textbooks teach respect for diversity. This may indicate that the youth in Balochistan have a comparatively better understanding of the textbooks than the youth in KP. Surely, the Pakistani textbooks are not known for teaching respect for diversity. Many studies have found that textbooks promote skewed worldviews, and bias towards certain faiths like the Hinduism. The educational curricula are often loaded with narrow religious ideologies.

On the question of non-Muslims' services for Pakistan, 74% said the non-Muslims played role in the creation, defence, and development of Pakistan. 12% replied in the negative, while another 13% were unaware of the non-Muslims' sacrifices and services for

Pakistan. Though the response to this question is encouraging overall, there is still a need to include the services of the Hindus, Ahmadis, Christians etc. for the creation and development of Pakistan. For instance, lessons about Pakistan's prominent personalities belonging to the Hindu, Christian, and Ahmadi communities can be added in the textbooks.

Primary Identity and Basic Rights

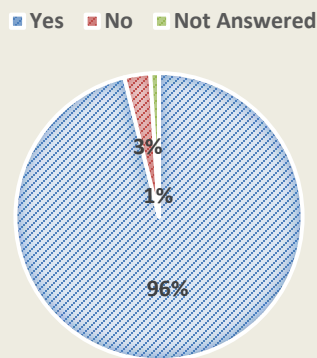
On the question of primary identity, most (64%) of the young respondents said '*citizenship of Pakistan*' was their primary identity. Besides, religion was also an important element of identity as 18% identified '*religious affiliation*' as their primary identity. Nearly 14% identified their ethnic background as their key identity. Here it is pertinent to mention that though majority of the students replied that citizenship of Pakistan was their primary identity, PIPS's own practical observation of the students during the workshops show that majority of the participants lacked clarity on the question of identity, and a sense of shared citizenship was also not very strong among them.



Citizenship of Pakistan, religious affiliation, and ethnic background were top identities among the youth.

Likewise, majority (60%) of the respondents had only partial knowledge of the fundamental constitutional rights. 29% said they were aware of all fundamental freedoms, and 11% said they did not know about their basic rights given in the constitution. As discussed earlier in the report, majority of the university students had little knowledge and interest in matters of constitution. Barring a very few, nearly all of the students had never touched the book of the constitution. This utter lack of interest about the most important legal document may indicate a weak faith in the system. Of course,

the constitution is only as strong as the rule of law in the country. Where rule of law is often undermined and discretion is the tool of choice for the powerful, faith in the system becomes weak. And this phenomenon is reflected in the responses of the surveyed youth.



Do you think attending training workshops is useful for your future career?

96% of the respondents said attending the workshop was useful for their career, and only 3% of the participants said 'no'. students engaged replied no.

However, an overwhelming majority of the youth had a favourable view of women's public roles. 96% of the respondents said there should be more women in leadership roles in Pakistan. Only a comparatively negligible number 4% disagreed. Religious conservatism is not a prominent trait of the Baloch society. In fact, Baloch women have active participation in public life including in politics. Over the past one and a half decade, the insurgency problem has also pushed many Baloch women into public life. They have been taking part in political activities as well as protest rallies etc. Similarly, majority of the young respondents said the transgender persons were equal citizens. This is a positive sign for the persecuted transgender community in Pakistan. The response indicates the newer generations may be more understanding towards and accepting of the transgender persons as equal members of the society, though it is still too early to be optimistic about the plight of this marginalized community.

The workshop participants were also asked if they had heard of the Paigham-e-Pakistan (PeP). Though a critical document against religious extremism in Pakistan, the PeP has not been publicized enough for it to be known

widely among the public. 53% of the respondents had never heard of the PeP or its messages, while 43% said they had heard of it. During practical observations at workshops, PIPS had noted that information about the PeP was scarce among the youth. Even highly educated people have been seen to be unaware of what the so called PeP stands for.

Purpose of Attending Workshops

Majority of the Baloch youth reported they had never attended a career counselling before. 93% of them said

their purpose for attending the workshop was to learn something new. Only 7% said they wanted to meet new people at the workshops. And the great majority (96%) of them believed attending a workshop was useful for their future careers. Likewise, 91% of the respondents said they had decided which career path they were going to take in future.

Interviews with Select Participants

No.	Interview Questionnaire	Responses
1	I am hopeful about my future in Pakistan.	
	True	69%
	To some extent	25%
	False	6%
2	Our society gives opportunity to those who work hard.	
	True	63%
	To some extent	25%
	False	13%
3	Merit is valued in our society.	
	True	6%
	To some extent	63%
	False	31%
4	I have clarity about which profession to join once I complete my education.	
	True	94%
	To some extent	6%
5	One can make a respectable career through hard work even if one belongs to a poor family.	
	True	6%
	To some extent	94%
	False	0
6	Our teachers are helpful in guiding students about career choices.	
	True	31%
	To some extent	50%
	False	19%
7	Education has given me the skills necessary for making a respectable career.	
	True	75%
	To some extent	19%
	False	6%
8	There are enough career opportunities for educated youth in Pakistan.	
	True	50%
	To some extent	25%
	False	25%
9	I have learned the skill to think critically about issues.	
	True	75%
	To some extent	25%
10	Free expression of ideas is encouraged in the university classrooms.	
	True	19%

No.	Interview Questionnaire	Responses
	To some extent	38%
	False	44%
11	Our education system encourages students to be law-abiding citizens.	
	True	25%
	To some extent	69%
	False	6%
12	Extracurricular activities are essential for overall education and training of students.	
	True	88%
	To some extent	6%
	False	6%
13	Education is a priority for the government.	
	True	50%
	To some extent	25%
	False	25%
14	Pakistan is a land of many religions and faiths.	
	Disagree	6%
	Agree	69%
	Strongly agree	25%
15	People of all faiths and religions should be treated equally in our country.	
	Disagree	13%
	Agree	44%
	Strongly agree	44%
16	Incidents of faith-based discrimination happen only rarely in our country.	
	Strongly disagree	25%
	Disagree	63%
	Agree	12%

No.	Interview Questionnaire	Responses
17	The government takes appropriate action against incidents of faith-based discrimination or violence.	
	Strongly disagree	13%
	Disagree	56%
	Agree	31%
18	Every citizen, regardless of their faith, should have equal access to opportunities.	
	Strongly disagree	12%
	Agree	25%
	Strongly agree	63%
19	People of all faiths should be able to hold high public offices.	
	Disagree	13%
	Agree	43%
	Strongly agree	44%
20	Our local languages are as valuable as Urdu.	
	Strongly disagree	13%
	Disagree	6%
	Agree	44%
	Strongly agree	37%
21	We should have more women leaders in every field.	
	Disagree	6%
	Agree	44%
	Strongly agree	50%
22	But a woman's primary role is to take care of her home and household chores.	
	Strongly disagree	44%
	Disagree	18%
	Agree	38%
23	Fixing quotas for women in government jobs is an unfair practice as it deprives many deserving men of job opportunities.	
	Strongly disagree	31%
	Disagree	25%
	Agree	44%
24	Larkiyān parayī dhan hotī hai (girls belong to their husbands' and not their fathers' house)	
	Strongly disagree	37%
	Disagree	32%

No.	Interview Questionnaire	Responses
	Agree	25%
	Strongly Agree	6%
25	Violence against women is a serious issue in our country.	
	Agree	38%
	Strongly agree	62%
26	In rape cases, often the victim woman is also responsible in some way.	
	Strongly disagree	
	Disagree	25%
	Agree	44%
	Strongly agree	19%
		12%
27	Transgender persons should have equal rights as citizens of the state.	
	Disagree	6%
	Agree	31%
	Strongly agree	63%
	Agree	
	Strongly agree	
28	Do you think non-Muslims have contributed to the creation and development of Pakistan?	
	Yes	
	No	38%
		62%
29	Should we read about religions other than ours?	
	Yes	75%
	No	25%
30	Do you think different religions have similarities?	
	Yes	56%
	Yes but only few similarities	44%
31	The constitution of Pakistan does not discriminate among citizens on the basis of faith.	
	True	56%
	False	31%
	Don't know	13%
32	In our country, faith-based persecution is a:	

No.	Interview Questionnaire	Responses
	Minor issue	6%
	Major issue	81%
	Don't know	13%
33	Have you ever heard about Paigham-e-Pakistan	
	Yes, I know what it is about	69%
	Yes, but I have no idea what it is about	25%
	Never heard of it	6%
34	What do you think Paigham-e-Pakistan is?	
	It's a message of religious harmony from the Prime Minister	63%
	It's a declaration by religious scholars	24%
	Don't know	13%
35	Secularism opposes religion.	
	Strongly disagree	19%
	Disagree	38%
	Agree	25%
	Strongly agree	18%
36	Some religions are superior to others.	
	Strongly disagree	37%
	Disagree	44%
	Agree	19%
37	Women naturally lack decision-making power as compared to men.	
	Strongly disagree	25%
	Disagree	25%
	Agree	44%
	Strongly agree	6%
38	Women's rights movements work on foreign agendas.	
	Strongly disagree	31%
	Disagree	38%
	Agree	31%
39	Western media often run malicious campaigns to damage Pakistan's image.	
	Strongly disagree	13%
	Disagree	19%
	Agree	63%

No.	Interview Questionnaire	Responses
	Strongly agree	6%
40	In Pakistan, some ethnic groups have tendency for extremism.	
	Strongly disagree	6%
	Disagree	6%
	Agree	75%
	Strongly agree	13%
41	People of backward provinces have limited understanding of national issues and politics.	
	Strongly disagree	6%
	Disagree	13%
	Agree	63%
	Strongly agree	19%
42	Criticizing the state or state institutions is against national interest.	
	Strongly disagree	19%
	Disagree	31%
	Agree	38%
	Strongly agree	13%
43	India is the eternal enemy of Pakistan.	
	Strongly disagree	6%
	Disagree	31%
	Agree	56%
	Strongly agree	6%
44	We need to spend more to strengthen our defense against India.	
	Strongly disagree	13%
	Disagree	50%
	Agree	38%
45	Foreign conspiracies are principal cause of religious extremism in Pakistan.	
	Disagree	31%
	Agree	63%
	Strongly agree	6%
46	Our public resources are wasted mostly due to corruption of leaders.	
	Strongly disagree	6%
	Agree	13%
	Strongly agree	81%

No.	Interview Questionnaire	Responses
47	Have you ever read about your fundamental rights in the constitution?	
	Yes	81%
	No	18%
48	Which form of government do you think is most suitable for Pakistan?	
	Shariah	13%
	Democracy	69%
	Don't know	19%
49	Do you think dictatorial regimes were justified in the past?	
	Yes, always	13%
	Yes, to some extent	19%
	No	44%
50	Do you think Pakistan has international obligations as member of the United Nations?	
	Yes	75%
	No	13%
	Don't know	13%
51	Do you think some citizens face difficulties while acquiring citizenship documents?	
	Yes	81%
	No	13%
52	What is your most favorite program on television?	
	News	18%
	Political talk shows	31%
	Drama serials	19%
	Comedy/entertainment	13%
	Others	19%
53	What is your most favorite news channel?	
	ARY	31%
	Geo News	31%
	Dawn news	19%
	Other. Please specify	19%

No.	Interview Questionnaire	Responses
54	How often do you read a newspaper?	
	Regularly	25%
	Often	13%
	Sometimes	50%
	I don't read newspapers	13%
55	Which social media platform do you use most of the time?	
	Facebook	44%
	Twitter	31%
	Youtube	19%
	Other. Please specify	6%
56	Have you ever come across religiously hateful material on social media?	
	Yes	56%
	No	44%
67	How often do you see religious debates on social media?	
	Often	50%
	Sometimes	38%
	Only rarely	12%

Interviews with Select Participants

Exploring Youths' Views on Diverse Social Issues

From the three workshops held in Balochistan, 16 students were shortlisted for a detailed interview about various social issues. The aim was to have an insight into the thinking patterns of the youth, and understand their views on diverse topics relating to social peace and harmony. The students were selected on the bases of their active participation in the workshops, the quality of their questions and inputs, and overall interest in the sessions.

The respondents' views were sought on the education system, career, citizenship, government, Pakistan's sociocultural dynamics, and the political and legal systems etc. Their responses give an invaluable insight into the minds of the Balochistan youth. Of the 16 selected students, 11 were female and 5 male. Majority of them i.e. 14 belonged to the 18-25 age group, while 2 were between the age 26 and 35. A detailed breakup of their responses are provided below. The statistics are followed by a qualitative analysis of the same.

Analysis of the Interviews

Analysis of the Interviews

a) Education and Career

Element of confusion was apparent in the students' responses. While many of them were upbeat about many issues, their replies to different questions indicated a lack of clarity and coherence in their thoughts. For instance, 62% of the respondents believed the society gave opportunity to those who work hard, but when asked if merit was valued by the society, only 6% answered in the affirmative. 62% said merit was valued only to some extent, while 31% said merit was not valued. Likewise, 69% said they were hopeful about their future in Pakistan. Another 25% were hopeful only to some extent, while a minority 6% were not hopeful.

A great majority (94%) of the respondents said they had clarity about their future career paths, and an equal number said one could make a respectable career through hard work even if one belonged to a poor family. However, the educational institutions appear to be lagging in providing career counselling to students because only 31% of the respondents said their teachers were helpful in guiding them about career choices. 50% said the

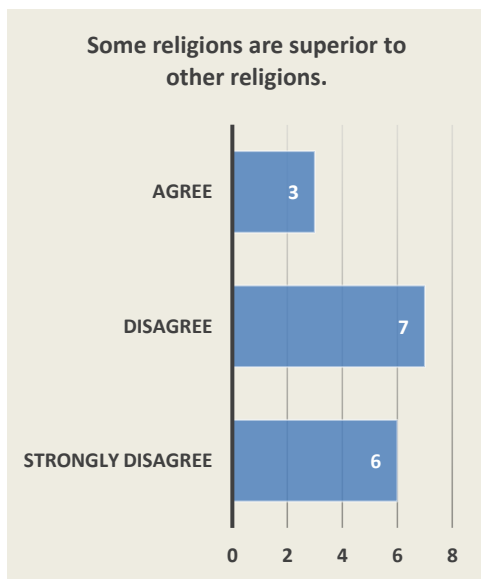
teachers were helpful only to some extent, while 19% were of the view that teachers were not helpful in guiding them about career paths.

Similarly, only a minority (19%) of the students said free expression of ideas were encouraged in the classrooms, but at the same time, majority of them (75%) said education had given them the necessary skills for making a respectable career. Likewise, majority of them (75%) said they had learned how to think critically about issues, and another 50% believed there were enough job opportunities for the educated youth in Pakistan. These responses may indicate the students had an exaggerated view of their academic skills. For instance, as discussed previously, majority of the youth were found to be wanting in critical thinking skills during the workshops. But, contrary to this, majority of them believed they knew how to think critically. Majority of the students also believed education was a priority for the government.

b) On Religious Minorities

The survey shows respondents were cognizant of their country's socio-

cultural diversity as over 90% of them said Pakistan is a land of many religions and faiths, and 80% said people of all religions should be treated equally as citizens. And a greater number of respondents (87%) said all citizens regardless of their religious affiliations should have equal access to opportunities including holding high public offices. But, it is concerning to note that a significant number of the students were unaware of the services of non-Muslim citizens for Pakistan as 37% believed the non-Muslims had played no role in the creation or development of the country.



On the other hand, however, responses show the youth were aware of the problem of religious extremism in

Pakistan. 87% of them believed faith-based discrimination is a frequent occurrence in the country. They had little faith in the government's ability or willingness to curb religiously-motivated discrimination or violence because only 31% said the government takes appropriate action to check faith-based violence. Almost all respondents said there were similarities among different religions. Regional languages also figured as important for the respondents. 81% of the students said local languages were as important as the national language i.e. Urdu.

The interviewed students had a poor knowledge of their country's constitution. Majority of them (56%) believed the constitution does not discriminate among citizens on the basis of religious faith, likely unaware of the provisions that bar a non-Muslim citizen from holding the offices of the president or prime minister. Or other provisions that prohibit certain faith groups like the Ahmadis from practising a number of religious rituals like animal sacrifice during the Eid etc. Lack of interest in the constitution was an omnipresent phenomenon among the youths in all four provinces. In addition, majority of the students also had little knowledge about the Paigham-e-Pakistan.

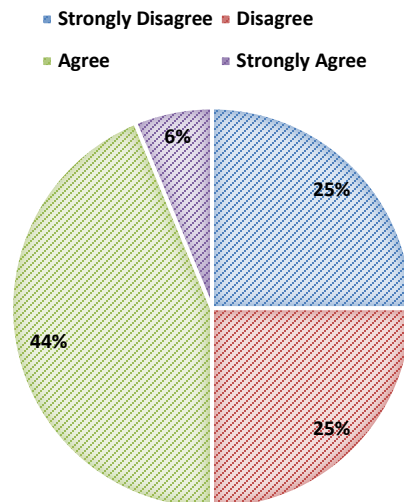
c) Traditional Beliefs and Genders

With regard to women, the youth seemed to have contradictory views. For instance, 94% of them said there should be more women in every field, and only 6% disagreed with this view. But, in the very next question, 37% replied that a woman's primary role was to take care of household chores. Similarly, 44% opposed job quotas for women in the public sector because quota system encroached upon the rights of many deserving men. 50% believed women naturally lacked decision making power as compared to men, and an equal number disagreed with this view. In the same way, 31% believed a girl belonged to her husband's and not father's home. However, all of the respondents were of the view that violence against women was a serious issue in Pakistan.

But, 31% of the interviewed individuals believed that in cases of rape the victim women were somehow also responsible. This line of thinking is highly problematic, and it stems from the common practice of blaming the victim for rape incidents. Public figures and state officials have been seen blaming victims for rape cases. For instance, just recently Prime Minister Imran Khan had

said that women's scanty dress seduce potential rapists. And in another midnight rape case on a highway, a senior police official had questioned why the victim woman had travelled alone so late in the night. The practice of victim blaming shapes the discourse around rape incidents, and people often hold the women responsible in some way.

WOMEN NATURALLY LACK DECISION MAKING POWER AS COMPARED TO MEN.



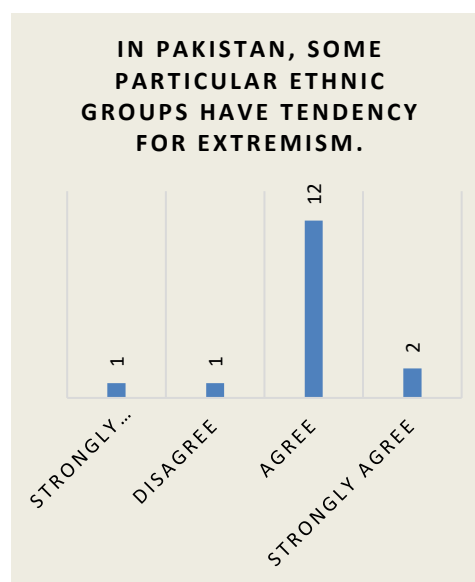
There is a chance that women rights movements expose many people to ideas of gender equality, still the traditional beliefs continue to hold sway over the society. For instance, while the young generation may be supportive of women's emancipation, long-held social

traditions still inform parts of their thinking. However, the youth's views about the transgender community were strongly positive. 94% said that transgender people were equal citizens, and all of the respondents supported the view that transgender persons should have equal access to education and jobs. Traditionally, the transgender community has faced marginalization and persecution in Pakistan. Over the past years, the community has seen numerous cases of targeted violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

d) Prejudices and Stereotyping

The students were found to be harboring social prejudices and stereotypical thinking. 87% of the interviewed individuals believed that particular ethnic groups had tendency for religious extremism. Likewise, 81% said people of the backward provinces had limited understanding of the national issues and politics. This biased thinking is reflective of the general tendency in the country to associate certain ethnic groups with extremism or militancy, or look down upon the people of peripheries as less knowledgeable or politically less enlightened.

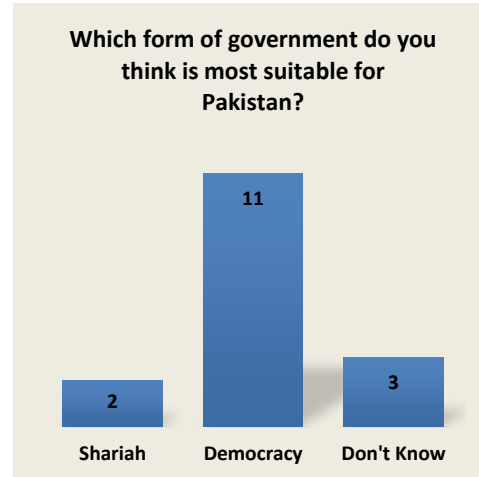
Quite contrary to such stereotypical views, PIPS noted that the youth belonging to the underdeveloped and militancy-hit regions like Balochistan and the merged districts of KP were more critical in their assessment of various national issues than their counterparts in other provinces. Some of the youth from these areas showed better understanding of critical national issues. Students from the southern parts of Balochistan took great interest in political and economic issues faced by their province. This phenomenon is not hard to understand. The people living in economic deprivation and security instability have suffered long periods of hardships, and therefore, they have better understanding of the problems as well as their causes.



e) Political Folktales

The youth's views were also sought about some of the common political folktales. The respondents were equally divided on the question of whether criticizing the state or state institutions was against national interest. Their views about India were in line with the general state narrative that India is an eternal enemy. While 62% of the respondents agreed that India is an eternal foe of Pakistan, only 6% strongly disagreed with this view. Likewise, they were also receptive to the idea of foreign conspiracies being responsible for Pakistan's troubles. 69% said foreign conspiracies were the principal cause of religious extremism in Pakistan. However, majority of them (72%) were not in favor of increased defense spending, and did not support the notion that Pakistan needed to spend more to strengthen its defence against India. On the other hand, the country's leaders fared poorly in eyes of the surveyed youth as almost 94% believed that their country's resources are wasted mainly due to the corruption of leaders. Only 6% strongly disagreed with this notion.

However, the students were democratic in their outlook. While confusion did show up in their thinking, generally they



were supportive of democracy in the country. A great majority (69%) of them said democracy is the most suitable system for Pakistan. 19% of them had no opinion which system was best for the country, while only 12% supported Shariah as a political system. Likewise, when asked if dictatorial regimes of the past were justified, majority (44%) said 'no'. 19% said dictatorships were justified to some extent, and only 12% said they were justified. Similarly, 37% said the state could never disregard the constitution on the pretext of national interest. Another 25% said the constitution could be disregarded for the sake of national interest, and 12% believed the constitution could be disregarded only sometimes for the sake of national interest. In the same way, a great majority of them (69%) said determining the national interest was

the parliament's job. Another 19% said it was the government's responsibility, while 12% had no opinion.

f) Media and Internet

Political talk shows were rated as the most favourite programs on the television by the respondents. 31% said talk shows were their favourite programs, while 19% said news bulletins and an equal number listed drama serials as their most favourite programs. 12% said entertainment programs were their most favourite. Among the television news channels, ARY, Geo, and Dawn ranked on the top. Likewise, 25% of the respondents said they read newspapers regularly, while 50% said they read only sometimes. And 12% did not read at all.

All respondents had access to the internet and used social media. Majority of them (44%) reported that they used Facebook most of the time. This was followed by Twitter (31%), and Youtube (19%). And a majority (56%) of the students also reported that they had come across religiously hateful material on the social media. This reinforces the general fact that the Pakistani cyberspace is significantly radicalized where extremist outfits and individuals operate without much check from the authorities. Apparently, the government shows tolerance towards online religious radicalism. Similarly, the respondents also said they often see religious debates on the social media platforms. But, majority of them (75%) said they do not participate in such debates.

Feedback about the Workshops

Feedback about the Workshops

Impact and effectiveness of workshops

From among the total workshop participants, 92 participated in a post-workshop survey which elicited the participants' feedback about the effectiveness and potential impact of the workshops. The feedback will help refine the efforts and measures for interfaith harmony in future. The survey

tried to explore if the workshops had contributed to changing the views of participating students on the focused issues. Majority of the respondents i.e. 84 of them between the age 16 and 25, six were in the age group 26-35, and one was older. The participants' feedbacks were as below:

No.	Questions	Responses
1	Was this workshop useful in enhancing your understanding of issues at hand?	
	Yes	95%
	No	3%
	Don't know	2%
2	Have you learned anything new in today's workshop?	
	Yes	97%
	No	1%
	Don't know	1%
	Not answered	1%
3	Do you agree with the recommendations and training given at the workshop for interfaith peace in society?	
	Yes	72%
	To some extent	23%
	No	5%
4	Were you provided opportunity to participate in the interactive sessions during the workshop?	
	Yes	80%
	No	8%
	To some extent	12%

No.	Questions	Responses
5	Will you be willing to tell your fellow students and peers about this workshop?	
	Yes	98%
	No	2%
6	Has this workshop helped you understand your rights as citizens of Pakistan?	
	Yes	82%
	No	2%
	To some extent	16%
7	Has this workshop broadened your understanding of human rights?	
	Yes	76%
	No	7%
	To some extent	17%
8	Has this workshop changed your understanding of social harmony?	
	Yes	62%
	No	7%
	To some extent	32%

Post-workshop Survey

Post-workshop Survey

Learning Outcomes

The students were asked to share their feedback about the educational and training sessions post workshops. Their views were sought not only about the program design and topics but also about learning outcomes. The overwhelming majority of the participants reported positive takeaways about interfaith relations and peaceful coexistence from the workshops. Almost 95% of the students said their attendance at the workshops increased their knowledge about the topics and issues discussed, and even a greater number i.e. 97% said they learned something new.

Likewise, 72% said they agreed with the training and recommendations given at the workshops. 23% said they agreed to some extent, and 5% said they did not agree. When asked if they were given opportunity to participate in the interactive sessions, 80% said 'yes' while 12% said 'to some extent' and 8% said 'no'. 98% of the participants said they will tell their friends about the workshops. They were also asked if the workshops helped them understand their rights as citizens of Pakistan. Great majority (81%) said their knowledge about their rights as citizens had enhanced. Another 16% said it helped them to some extent, and 2% said 'no'.

Recommendations for Promoting Social Peace and Harmony

Recommendations for Promoting Social Peace and Harmony

- i. Teaching of critical thinking and logical reasoning should be included in the educational curricula in order to develop and improve the basic cognitive skills of the students. Evidence-based thinking rather than rote learning should be stressed in the classrooms.
- ii. The educational institutions should be given more academic freedom and space because restrictions on free thinking on grounds of religious sensitivity etc. check intellectual growth among the youth. Inquisitiveness and questioning should be encouraged and promoted.
- iii. The students should be taught how to use common sense in everyday social situations because the use of common sense normally leads to rational decisions and choices, and helps mitigate emotionalism which is a contributing factor to incidents of faith-based violence in Pakistan.
- iv. While the educational curricula play lead role in shaping the youth's worldviews, the role of teachers in influencing the students' thinking is no less critical. Therefore, the teachers should be trained to identify and overcome their social biases, improve their thinking, and expand their worldviews. Well trained and educated teacher tend to inculcate better thinking in their students.
- v. Teaching of the key articles of the constitution such as those on basic rights should be mandatory in high schools. Besides, the background of the UDHR 1949 and its provisions should also be included in the curricula.
- vi. The parliament should undertake a detailed review of the implicit policy of using the education for the so called nation building. So far, evidence suggests this policy has done more harm than good to the society.
- vii. Any effort to promote interfaith harmony must be preceded by a mass awareness that minorities do face persecution in the country. And there is no better place to create

- such an awareness than the classroom. The students should be taught the factual situation about the plight of religious minorities in order to pave the way for a gradual improvement in interfaith relations.
- viii. Values of democracy and shared citizenship should be taught at schools.
 - ix. The textbooks must be purged of contents that degrade or demonize Hinduism or the Hindus.
 - x. The youth should be sensitized about gender equality at high school levels.
 - xi. The government should protect and promote the freedom of expression, and lift implicit and explicit curbs on free speech.
 - xii. Pakistan's socio-cultural diversity should be highlighted both through the textbooks and media.
 - xiii. In order to mitigate the appeal of and support for religious extremism, the broader implications of
- extremism both on the state and society as well as on individuals should be highlighted through media and educational literature. An individual student should be able to understand how extremism or terrorism affects his/her life.
 - xiv. Book reading should be promoted because there is no better way to widen the youth's worldviews and make them more accepting of diversity and tolerant of disagreement and opposing views.
 - xv. Smaller provinces and minority faith groups should be given representation in the mainstream media. No one can represent these marginalized entities and defend their interests better than themselves.
 - xvi. There is no denying that the media have emerged as a commercial industry, but still it is obligated to adhere to professionalism and maintain a balance between commercialism and public interests.

Annexures

Annexures

Annexure 1 Speaker Profile

Professor Dr. Syed Jaffer Ahmed

Professor Dr. Syed Jaffer Ahmed is dean of the faculty of social sciences at the Sohail University, and director Institute of Historical and Social Research in Karachi. Formerly, Dr. Ahmed headed the Pakistan Study Center at the University of Karachi. With a rich academic career spanning over several decades, Dr. Ahmed has several works to his credit. While a historian himself, he also has edited works of other Pakistani historians such as Dr. Mubarak Ali. Dr. Ahmed is the editor of Dr. Mubarak Ali's work titled *'Challenges of History Writing in South Asia'*.

Harris Khalique

Harris Khalique is a poet, a constitutionalist, and a civil society activist. He has authored nine collections of poetry and two works of non-fiction. In March 2018, he received the Presidential Pride of Performance Award as an acknowledgement of his contributions to Urdu and English

poetry. Khalique is also a University of Iowa Honorary Fellow in Writing.

Muhammad Amir Rana

Muhammad Amir Rana is a security analyst and the director of Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS). He has extensively researched and written on religious radicalism and terrorism in Pakistan and the broader region. A former journalist, Rana has delivered lectures on security, extremism, and terrorism at various local and foreign security institutes. He has published widely in national and international journals. He edits the PIPS's 'Pakistan Annual Security Report' and the quarterly 'Tajziat', and writes a weekly column for *Dawn* – Pakistan's leading English-language daily.

Shahzada Zulfiqar

Shahzada Zulfiqar is a veteran journalist based in Quetta. Zulfiqar is the first journalist from Balochistan to be elected president of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ). He has formerly reported from Balochistan for the daily Nation and magazines like the Newline and Herald. He also served as the bureau chief of the Samaa news television

channel in Balochistan. In the past, Zulfiqar served as the president of the Quetta Press Club as well as that of the Balochistan Union of Journalists.

Wusatullah Khan

Wusatullah Khan is a journalist and anchorperson with decades of journalistic work to his credit. Khan co-hosts a current affairs program 'Zara Hut Kay' on Dawn television, and also writes on Pakistan's political and social issues for the BBC Urdu. Wusatullah Khan's op-eds on BBC Urdu attract huge readership in Pakistan and around the world.

Hafiz Hussain Ahmed

Hafiz Hussain Ahmed is a senior leader of the JUI-F from Balochistan. A politician and scholar, Ahmed served two times as member of the National Assembly of Pakistan from 1988-90 and from 2002-07, and as a Senator from 1991-94. During his term in the National Assembly, he was elected deputy parliamentary leader. Hafiz Hussain Ahmed was a political activist in the 1970s and remained associated with the Pakistan National Alliance.

Safdar Sial

Safdar Hussain Sial is as a research analyst at the Pak Institute for Peace Studies since 2007. His work focuses on conflict, insecurity, and violence in Pakistan and Afghanistan. He has published in national and international journals. He also has co-authored *The Dynamics of Taliban Insurgency in FATA and Radicalization in Pakistan*. Besides, he has edited another work titled *Critical Ideologies: A Debate on Takfeer and Khurooj*.

Veengas

Veengas is the founding editor of *The Rise News* – a Karachi-based non-profit news organization. Besides, she also contributes to *The Wire* and other news organization. Veengas is a vigorous voice for minorities' rights, and her work focuses on the forced conversion of the Hindus, religious conflicts, and national politics. She has been a fellow at ICFJ, Asia Journalism Fellowship, and the Alfred Friendly Press Partners.

Ahmed Ali

Ahmed Ali is project manager at Pak Institute for Peace Studies. He studied political science at the University of Karachi. His research interests include

security and conflict as well as religious minorities in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Ahmed Ali has authored reports on issues of terrorism and extremism. Previously, he served in the Pakistan civil service.

Sabookh Syed

Sabookh Syed is a broadcast journalist and media trainer with a vast experience in journalism. He has worked for Geo Group for about 11 years in different capacities. He delivered training under the umbrella of Pakistan peace collective, PIPS, and various universities on media ethics, conflict reporting, journalist security, and broadcasting. Sabookh has developed a huge network with Pakistan's religious class. He has worked as a researcher/supervisor with the University of Virginia Research Institute in religion, politics, and conflict to evaluate the behavioral tendencies of religious groups in Pakistan. He also supervised Pakistan Saga, (a joint initiative of Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) and the Pakistan Foreign Office) a video magazine that highlighted the diversity in Pakistan.

Saleem Shahid

Saleem Shahid is a senior journalist working with the daily Dawn for the past

several decades. Based in Quetta, Shahid has a critical eye on social, political, and security issues of the insurgency-hit province.

Fatima Iqbal Khan

Fatima Iqbal Khan is a widely-respected human rights activist and development practitioner with eleven years of working experience in the nonprofit & non-governmental sector at different senior positions. She has served as provincial head of different projects and programs of various non-government organizations.

Faiza Mir

Faiza Mir is a lecturer at the department of International Relations in the University of Balochistan. She holds an M. Phil in strategic and military relations. Her publications include *The End of History and Clash of Civilization: A Comparative Study*, *Iqbal's Concept of Khudi and State's Self-Reliance: A Comparative Study from Self-Worth to Resourcefulness* and more.

Mujtaba Rathore

Mujtaba Rathore has twelve years of experience in research analysis and project management, working with a number of non-government organizations in Pakistan. He has worked in areas of conflict and peace studies, peacebuilding and reconciliation, rule of law, international law, governance, human rights, education, interfaith harmony, and media studies. Mr. Rathore studied peacebuilding and reconciliation at the University of Winchester, UK. He has also authored three books.

Ali Baba Taj

Ali Baba Taj is an Urdu and Persian poet and educationist based in Quetta. He has degree in Persian language and literature from the University of Balochistan. Ali Baba has written several articles in Urdu and Persian regarding poetry and literature in Pakistan. His literary works have also been published.

Annexure 2 Speaker Profile

YOUTH FOR INTERFAITH HARMONY

Questionnaire



Gender: Age: University Name:
Place where you grew up was:Rural../..Urban..... Province/Region/District:

Note:

- The surveyor shall apprise the respondent of the aims and objectives of the study.
- The respondent should answer questions voluntarily without any pressure or temptation.
- The respondent shall be given adequate time for answering each question.
- The respondent is not bound to answer each and every question.

A. Personal Development and Career

Please tick **True** or **False** in your responses. Please be open and frank while giving responses.

No.	Statements	True	To some extent	False
1	I am hopeful about my future in Pakistan.	True	To some extent	False
2	Our society gives opportunity for growth to those who work hard.	True	To some extent	False
3	Merit is valued in our society.	True	To some extent	False
4	I have clarity about which profession to join once I complete my education.	True	To some extent	False
5	One can make a respectable career through hard work even if one belongs to a poor family.	True	To some extent	False
6	Our teachers are helpful in guiding students about career choices.	True	To some extent	False
7	Education has given me the skills necessary for making a respectable career.	True	To some extent	False
8	There are enough career opportunities for educated youth in Pakistan.	True	To some extent	False
9	I have learned the skill to think critically about issues.	True	To some extent	False
10	Free expression of ideas is encouraged in the university classrooms.	True	To some extent	False
11	Our education system encourages students to be law-abiding citizens.	True	To some extent	False
12	Extracurricular activities are essential for overall education and training of students.	True	To some extent	False
13	Education is a priority for the government.	True	To some extent	False

B. Diversity in Pakistan

Please **Tick** the appropriate responses to the following statements. Please be open and frank while giving responses.

No.	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Pakistan is a land of many religions and faiths.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2	People of all religions and faiths should be treated equally in our country.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3	Incidents of faith-based discrimination happen only rarely in our country.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4	The government takes appropriate action against incidents of faith-based discrimination or violence.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

5	Every citizen, regardless of their faith, should have equal access to opportunities in Pakistan.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6	People of all faiths should be able to hold high public offices.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7	Our local languages are as valuable as Urdu.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8	We should have more woman leaders in every field.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9	But, a woman's primary role is to take care of her home and household chores.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10	Fixing quotas for women in government jobs is an unfair practice as it deprives many deserving men of job opportunities.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11	Larkiyan parayee dhan hoti hai (Girls belong to not her father's but her husband's house)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12	Violence against women is a serious issue in our country.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13	In rape cases, often the victim women are also responsible in some way.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14	Transgender persons should have equal rights as citizens of the state.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15	Transgender persons should have access to education and job opportunities.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

C. Interfaith Harmony

Please **tick** all correct answers in each question.

- Do you think Non-Muslims have contributed to the creation and development of Pakistan?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know
- Should we read about religions other than ours?
 - Yes.
 - No.
- Do you think different religions have similarities?
 - Yes, many similarities.
 - Yes, but only few similarities
 - No
 - Don't know
- Do you think our education system teaches respect for all religions?
 - Yes
 - To some extent
 - No
 - Don't know
- The Constitution of Pakistan does not discriminate among citizens on the basis of faith.
 - True
 - False
 - Don't know
- In our country, faith-based persecution is a:
 - Minor issue
 - Major issue
 - Not an issue
 - Don't know
- Have you ever heard of *Paigham-e-Pakistan*?

- a. Yes. I know what it is about
 - b. Yes. But, I have no idea what it is about
 - c. Never heard of it
8. What do you think *Paigham-e-Pakistan* is?
- a. It's a law
 - b. It's a message of religious harmony from the Prime Minister
 - c. It's a declaration by religious scholars
 - d. Don't know

D. Thoughts on Random Topics

No.	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Secularism opposes religion.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2	Some religions are superior to other religions.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3	Many of our social problems are caused because of people not following religion in true spirit?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6	Women naturally lack decision making power as compared to men.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7	Women's rights movements work on foreign agenda.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8	Western media often run malicious campaigns to damage Pakistan's image.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9	In Pakistan, some particular ethnic groups have tendency for extremism.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10	People of backward provinces have limited understanding of national issues and politics.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11	Criticizing the state or state institutions is against the national interest?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12	India is the eternal enemy of Pakistan.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13	We need to spend more to strengthen our defence against India.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14	Foreign conspiracies are the principal cause of religious extremism in Pakistan.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15	Our public resources are wasted mostly due to the corruption of leaders.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

E. Constitution, Citizenship, & Rule of Law

1. Have you ever read about your fundamental freedoms in the Constitution?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Please list any two fundamental freedoms protected by the Constitution:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
3. Which form of government do you think is most suitable for Pakistan?
 - a. Shariah
 - b. Democracy
 - c. Dictatorship
 - d. Don't know
4. Do you think dictatorial regimes were justified in the past?
 - a. Yes, always.
 - b. Yes, to some extent
 - c. No

- d. Don't know
- 5. Can the state disregard the Constitution in the national interest?
 - a. Yes, always because national interest is supreme.
 - b. Yes, but only sometimes.
 - c. Never.
 - d. Don't know
- 6. Whose job is it to determine what Pakistan's national interests are?
 - a. Government
 - b. Armed forces
 - c. Parliament
 - d. Don't know
- 7. Have you ever read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Never heard of it
- 8. Do you think Pakistan has international obligations as a member of the United Nations?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
- 9. Please mention any single international obligation of Pakistan.
 - a. _____
- 10. Do you think some citizens face difficulties in acquiring citizenship documents?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

F. Media

- 1. What is your most favorite program on television?
 - a. News
 - b. Political talk shows
 - c. Drama serials
 - d. Comedy/entertainment
 - e. Other. Please specify.....
- 2. What is your most favorite news channel?
 - a. ARY News
 - b. Geo
 - c. Aaj News
 - d. Dawn News
 - e. Other. Please specify.....
- 3. Please name your most favorite political analyst on television?
 - a. _____
- 4. How often do you read a newspaper?
 - a. Regularly
 - b. Often
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. I don't read newspapers.
- 5. Which social media platform do you use most of the time?

- a. Facebook
 - b. Twitter
 - c. Tiktok
 - d. Youtube
 - e. Other. Please specify.....
6. Have you ever come across religiously hateful material on social media?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 7. How often do you see religious debates on social media?
 - a. Often.
 - b. Sometimes.
 - c. Only rarely.
 - d. I haven't seen
 8. Do you participate in religious debates on social media?
 - a. Often.
 - b. Sometimes.
 - c. Only rarely.
 - d. No.



Role of Youth for Interfaith Harmony

Date _____

Questionnaire (Post Workshop)

Gender

Age

University

Background: a) Rural. b) Urban.

Province/District

1. Was this workshop useful in enhancing your understanding of issues at hand?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

2. Have you learned anything new in today's workshop?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

3. Do you agree with the recommendation and training given in the workshop about interfaith peace in society?
 - a. Yes
 - b. To some extent
 - c. No
 - d. Don't know

4. Were you provided with the opportunity to participate in the interactive session during workshop?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. To some extent

5. Will you be telling your fellow students and peers about this workshop?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

6. Has this workshop helped you understand your rights as a citizen of Pakistan under the constitution?
 - a. Yes

- b. No
- c. To some extent

7. Has this session broaden your understanding of human rights?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. To some extent

8. Has this workshop changed your understanding of social harmony?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. To some extent

9. If yes, How?

10. Please share your thoughts on youth involvement in such training sessions?



Role of Youth for Social Harmony

Date _____

Questionnaire (Pre Workshop)

Gender

Age

University

Background: a) Rural. b) Urban. **Province/District** _____

1. Have you ever read about a religion or faith other than yours?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

2. What is the main source of your knowledge about other religions or faiths?
 - a. Books
 - b. Newspapers/magazines
 - c. Religious scholars
 - d. Television
 - e. Internet
 - f. Other. Please specify.....

3. Do you think people of all religions and faiths are equal citizens of Pakistan?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

4. Have you ever read/heard about any similarities among different religions?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

5. Have you ever witnessed incidents of religious discrimination at university campus or in society?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

6. What do you think is your primary identity? *(Please select one only)*
 - a. Ethnic background
 - b. Citizenship of Pakistan
 - c. Religious affiliation

- d. Provincial affiliation
 - e. Linguistic identity
 - f. Other. Please specify.....
7. Do you think textbooks and curricula teach respect for diversity?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
8. Are you aware of your fundamental freedoms granted by the Constitution?
- a. Yes, I am aware of all fundamental freedoms
 - b. Yes, but I know only few of them
 - c. Not aware
9. Do you think non-Muslims played any role in the creation, defence and development of Pakistan?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
10. Do you think we need more women in leadership roles in various fields?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
11. Do you consider a transgender person as an equal citizen?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
12. Have you ever heard of the *Paigham-e-Pakistan*?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Never
13. What do you think *Paigham-e-Pakistan* is?
- a. It is a law
 - b. It is a message of peace from the Prime Minister
 - c. It is a declaration by religious scholars
 - d. Don't know
14. What do you think is your purpose for attending this workshop?
- a. To learn something new
 - b. To meet new people
 - c. No particular purpose

- b. No
- c. To some extent

7. Has this session broaden your understanding of human rights?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. To some extent

8. Has this workshop changed your understanding of social harmony?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. To some extent

9. If yes, How?

10. Please share your thoughts on youth involvement in such training sessions?

15. Do you think attending training workshops is useful for your future career?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

16. Have you decided about your future career path?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

17. Have you attended career counseling before?

- a. Yes
- b. No

A few subjective questions:

18. What do you think extremism is?

19. What is your definition of interfaith harmony?

20. How can youth promote social and religious harmony?

21. What do you expect to achieve by attending this training workshop?

Annexure 3 Universities engaged

- Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences, Quetta
- Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences, Khuzdar Campus
- Federal Urdu University, Quetta
- Government Girls Degree College, Quetta
- The Law College Quetta
- Makran Medical College, Turbat
- Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta
- University of Balochistan, Quetta
- University of Balochistan, Loralai Campus

Annexure 4 Picture Gallery

(Left to right) Journalists Riaz Sohil, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Zia-ur-Rehman and Ms. Veengas discussing media's role in Social Harmony.



HRCP Secertry General Haris Khaliq Interacting with a student



Students in Quetta is listening to Wussatullah Khan



Hafiz Hussain Ahmed and Allama Akbar Zahidi on issues of religious intolerance and social discord in Pakistan



Student from Balochistan expressing her views on interfaith harmony



Dr. Syed Jaffer Ahmed, discussing the importance of scientific and rational thinking.