

PIPS Young Observers

Inside Issue No 2

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How Youth in Pakistan View State, Society, Religion, and Politics
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INTRODUCTION

Youth radicalization threatens social stability in Pakistan. Incidents of religiously motivated violence at educational campuses and the rise in youth-led vigilante crimes are symptomatic reflections of growing radicalization among the educated youth. The problem is exacerbated by a perilous combination of factors such as the unmanaged youth bulge, declining the rule of law, absence of youth policy, and a chronic ambiguity of the state vis-à-vis extremism. The radicalization process obfuscates principles of liberalism, democracy, and basic human freedoms. A major casualty of the growing extremism in Pakistan is the freedom of religious beliefs, and the upshot of radicalization is ultimately felt by minority faith groups. For these reasons, the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) organized nationwide education and training workshops for youth on the theme of interfaith harmony and peaceful coexistence.





Launch of National Report

“How Youth in Pakistan View State, Society, Religion, and Politics.”



On 26 March 2022, PIPS launched a national report based on a year-long PIPS engagement with educated youth through training workshops and social action projects conducted across Pakistan. The report includes key findings obtained through observation and survey of the university students along with recommendation on how to make youth an agent of positive change in an environment of growing radicalization and extremism.

“The study’s overarching aim is to analyse youth radicalization through empirical inquiry using primary data and reveal useful facts about the problem. And building on these facts, to propose potential solutions to key problems

Highlights



Dr. Qibla Ayaz



Ambassador Wouter
Plomp



Ahmed Ali



Dr Syed Jaffar
Ahmed



Dr Khalid Masud

To Download National Report: <https://www.pakpips.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/National-Report.pdf>



Launch of Youth-led Observatory on Freedom of Religious Beliefs in Pakistan

After a year-long exercise to train university students on interfaith harmony and social peace, Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) selected a pool of 50 young observers to monitor freedom of faith violations and hate speech. A two-day training and orientation session was conducted on 27-28 March in Islamabad where they were introduced to the web observatory developed by PIPS IT team. The training commenced with an awareness session on legislative framework on faith-based rights in Pakistan.

Young Observers' Meeting with H.E Mr. Wouter Plomp

On the second day of workshop, the group of young observers met with H.E Mr. Wouter Plomp, the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Pakistan, and discussed the youths' peacebuilding role in society. Mr. Plomp appreciated the youths' interest in promoting peace and their commitment to contributing to interfaith harmony in Pakistan. During the interactive meeting, the Ambassador enquired about the youths' experiences of exploring the issues of interfaith relations and their learning outcomes.



Program with the National Television PTV

The national broadcaster PTV World arranged an interactive program with the young observers in Islamabad. Senior journalist Sabookh Syed interviewed the youth about their visions and missions for interfaith harmony and social cohesion in Pakistan. Young





observers from all corners of the country attended the PTV program. Syed hailed the Pak Institute for Peace Studies' efforts for promoting religious harmony through the youth, saying that the youth were ambitious and energetic as they were in the prime of their lives, and that they could make great contributions to peace in society.

Visit to the Council of Islamic Ideology

The day concluded with a study tour to the Council of Islamic Ideology in Islamabad. The observers were received by senior officeholders of the Council on arrival. Later, the group held a formal meeting with the CII Chairperson Prof. Dr Qibla Ayaz that lasted for over an hour. During the interactive meeting session, the Chairperson briefed the participants about the Council's mandate and working as well as its historical background and significance.



To Read and Download Event Report: <https://www.pakpips.com/article/6849>



Profiles

PIPS Youth Observers



Mukesh Meghwar

A writer and activist, Mukesh Meghwar is the Acting Chairperson of the *Progressive Youth Forum* (PYF) and founder of the '*Laar Education Campaign*' that promotes school enrollment and quality education in Badin, Sujawal, and Thatta districts of Sindh. His team of volunteers also run two schools for the underprivileged children in Mukesh's hometown of Badin. Mukesh writes on educational and human rights issues in regional newspapers. In 2014, he was selected for the Emerging Leaders of Pakistan fellowship by the US Department of State. He holds degrees in psychology and law.



Anila Fatima

Anila Fatima is a peace enthusiast with deep interest in promoting diversity and inclusion through better mutual understanding among faith communities in Pakistan. As a student at the Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, she has organized discussions and dialogues among her university fellows to promote social cohesion and harmony.



Muhammad Abdullah

Muhammad Abdullah believes going places and exploring cultures different than yours is the best way to self-education. As a graduate of International Relations from Bahauddin Zakariya University, Abdullah has great interest in maps and political geographies. He sees multiculturalism and peaceful coexistence as keys to progress and prosperity of his country.



Sharoon Stiphenos

A young scholar, activist, and musician, Sharoon Stiphenos has an incredibly diversified personality. As a student, he gathered people from different religions and faiths to form a group of peacebuilders called the "Social Movement Team" (SMT). The SMT seeks to end discrimination and persecution based on faith and promote cultural diversity and equality of all citizens. He is a graduate in psychology from Kohat University of Science and Technology.



Zakir Hussain

Zakir Hussain is the President of the Gilgit Baltistan Student Council and the lead person of the “We Care Welfare Society” that aims to help the disadvantaged class in GB. He is also associated with the leading international volunteer organization the “Youth Impact Initiative” and has worked for the Akhuwat Foundation. Zakir attended the UNDP-funded International Teen Conference in Nepal in 2020 and was selected for the Kectil Program for Young Leaders in Atlanta, USA. He is pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering at the UET Lahore.



Kainat Farooq

Kainat Farooq is a promising young woman who believes that women should be at the forefront in the fight against persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan. She views herself as the ambassador of all indigenous cultures and promotes ideas of peace and harmony in her community. Kainat has arranged several focused-group discussions among youth at university campus as well as in the community to promote social integration of religious minorities. She is a graduate of the University of Jhang.



Sanjay Kumar

Founder of the “Hindu Youth”, Sanjay Kumar capitalizes on the power of digital platforms to voice against social injustices and raise awareness about extremism and faith-based discrimination. His Sanghar-based organization also collaborates with the Maharaj Youth Forum for joint efforts against religious extremism. Currently, Sanjay is a law student, and he has done internship with the National Commission for Peace and Justice.



Muhammad Tausif

A medical student at the King Edward Medical University, Muhammad Tausif is committed to promoting freedom of beliefs, thoughts, and conscience to mitigate radicalism and establish peace and justice in Pakistan. He has a great interest in learning about diverse peoples, religions, and cultures in his country, and participates in peacebuilding efforts.



Chaman Lal

Chaman Lal is an advocate of the rights of minorities and the incumbent CEO of the “*Samaj Sewa Foundation*”. He is a young peacebuilder with focus on empowering minority faith groups. Chaman served as the deputy coordinator (South Punjab) of the Human Rights and Minority Affairs Ministry. He is also the head of the Punjab chapter of the *Pakistan Hindu Youth Council*. Chaman holds a degree in computer science.



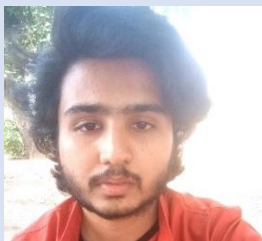
M. Shahzad Akram

Shahzad Akram holds an LLB Hon’s from the Punjab University Law College. He has experience working as the Assistant Attorney at the Hussain and Hussain Law Associates and the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, Punjab Government. He also has experience in marketing and campaign in the development sector. Currently, Shahzad is pursuing LLM in Constitutional Law.



Aftab Ahmed

Aftab Ahmed is the Co-founder of Swat-based *Idara Baraye Taleem-o-Taraqi* (IBT), a research institute working for peace and harmony among the marginalized communities in Northern Pakistan. Aftab has extensive experience in mother tongue education. He has been part of the process of designing curriculum for Torwali MTB-MLE Schools, has also supervised these schools and has spearheaded female adult literacy programs in MTB-MLE. He has written multiple course books for children in their native languages and has also compiled a trilingual Torwali-Urdu-English dictionary. Mr. Aftab is also *Acumen Pakistan* fellow.



Shariq Rasul

Shariq Rasul is a media and communication student with experience in creative writing. He writes television commercials (TVCs) for food items for various digital platforms. Previously, he edited the official website of the Zaman Foundation. Currently, he is doing internship at the Bargad Organization for Youth Development.



Mursaleen Abdullah

Mursaleen Abdullah is a social worker and youth activist. His interests include digital marketing with a focus on strategies for online communication. He is also an NGO activist. He works to promote human rights, social development, and citizen participation. He is linked with multiple organizations to promote social tolerance and interfaith harmony to encourage peaceful co-existence.



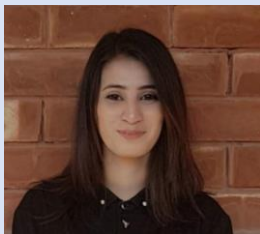
Muhammad Owais

Muhammad Owais is Vice President of the *'Helping Ways Social Welfare Association* and the sub-editor of the monthly magazine *Tameer-e-Afkaar*. Owais is a regular contributor to daily Sahafat and daily Islam as well as weekly Mashriq Sunday Magazine. He also supervises the *Research Academy for Higher Education and Technology* and the media cell of the Islamic Writers Movement Pakistan (IWMP).



Shahab Uddin

Few can fully appreciate the importance of peace as Shahab Uddin who saw his life ruffled by conflict in former FATA. He is a peace activist who aims at bringing a positive change in society. He has been associated with several think tanks and CSOs in the promotion of peace and harmony in Pakistan.



Ashba Haider

Ashba Haider graduated in biotechnology from the University of Central Punjab Lahore. She has been promoting awareness and understanding about Pakistan's religious minorities in her university and community. She is also a forceful voice for women's rights and equality.



Mishal Saleem

Mishal Saleem Rana is a peace activist and a law graduate from the Gujrat University. She served as the secretary of the Odeum Arts Society and Vice President of the Sports Club at the University of Gujrat. She has a deep interest in interfaith harmony, social cohesion, and multiculturalism.



Aisha Imran

Aisha Imran is a journalism student with internship experience with the Geo television. She has been part of multiple initiatives for poverty alleviation and improvement of everyday necessities in Quetta. Aisha organized a training workshop for youth on the topic of peace and tolerance at the Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University, Quetta.



Mahnoor Baloch

Mahnoor Baloch is Quetta-based young teacher and writer. She has a profound interest in promoting the indigenous Balochi culture and literature. She is the coordinator of the Baloch Zind Academy in Quetta. Besides, she is a visiting lecturer at the University of Balochistan. Mahnoor holds an MPhil degree from the University of Balochistan.



Saira Rashad

Saira Rashad is a Sargodha-based academic. She teaches at a public sector college in Higher Education Department, Punjab. She holds a master's degree in English. She is a Fulbright scholar (2016-2017) and has also won Salmati Fellowship at Peace without Borders in 2019. She has regularly been part of the Pakistan Institute for Peace (PIPS) dialogue series. In addition, she has also conducted several seminars and radio shows on the themes of inclusion, diversity and gender issues.



Dileep Permar

A graduate of the University of Sindh, Dileep Permar is the founder of *Karoonjhar Photography* that showcases the wild beauty and local culture of the Thar Desert. Dileep belongs to Nagarparkar and is a teacher by profession. Using the power of camera, Dileep highlights social issues in the region.



Maryam Zaka

Maryam Zaka is pursuing a PhD in Islamic Studies. She has interests in countering religious radicalism and prejudices. She is Adjunct Faculty at the Gujranwala Institute of Future Technology (GIFT). She graduated in madrasa discourses and contending modernity from the University of Notre Dame, USA.



Arslan Abdullah

Arslan Abdullah is an freelance journalist and also working with the Arts Council Karachi. His interests include youth empowerment and right to education for all. He has been part of initiative to promote social values and harmony in Pakistan.



Suraj Pirdhanani

A young journalist from Hyderabad, Suraj is a news presenter at daily Kalyan and Nibaah. He is also a sub-editor of the Shoor magazine. He has organized several programs for the promotion of peace and harmony in Sindh. Through filmmaking, Suraj highlights social issues faced by minorities.



Hamza Yousaf

Hamza Yousaf is a print and radio journalist who focuses on community-level issues in his area. He is founder of *Hamdard-e-Jahan Peace and Welfare Foundation* that promotes, among other things, school enrolment and education for the out-of-school children in KP.



Rasheed Ghani

Rasheed Ghani is a young scholar of Christianity and serves as the Superintendent at the Gospel of Salvation Church Ministries in Pakistan. He is a preacher and motivational speaker who uses his skills to promote peace and harmony in society. Rasheed holds a degree in psychology from the Government Murray College, Sialkot.



Aneesh Kumar

Aneesh Kumar belongs to Sukkur, Sindh. Currently, he is pursuing a law degree at the Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. He is the cabinet member of the Quaid-i-Azam University's debating and literary society and is chairperson of 'The Centre for Peace Education-Pakistan'. He promotes interfaith peace through various on-campus activities like Ramzan Dastarkhwan etc.



Maaz Khan

Maaz Khan is a student of political science at the University of Peshawar. He has deep interest in interfaith harmony and social peace and cohesion. Maaz hails from Lakki Marwat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Rahimullah Kakar

Rahimullah Kakar hails from Killa Saifullah district in Balochistan. Rahimullah earned an MPhil in Forensics from the University of Sargodha. He is a field monitor for World Health Organization in Killa Saifullah. Recently, he was selected for a five-year project of the World Bank to mobilize local community, facilitate the selection of partners and provide support for the establishment and monitoring of the community-based projects.



Mian M. Azan Umer

Mian Azan Umer is a bright name of the GCU Lahore. He won the award for the best-performing delegates at a MUN conference. He is a BSc (Honours) Political Science student with interest in domestic, regional, and global political issues.



Mehran Kanwar

Mehran Kanwar holds MPhil in physics from the University of Agriculture Faisalabad. Currently, he is associated with the Child Labor Eradication Program, focusing on eliminating child labour in Faisalabad. He is the founder of a Faisalabad based UAF blood donor society. He is also associated with multilateral programs to address minorities, including discrimination, lack of education, and extremism, especially in the remote area of Rahim Yar Khan, Punjab.

PIPS Training Manual for Youth

Protecting Faith-Based Rights in Pakistan: An Overview of Legislative Framework



Training can contribute greatly to faith-based rights in Pakistan. Based on the effectiveness of training programs, the PIPS team developed a comprehensive legislative framework of minority rights.

The Manual presents the international and local legislative guidance on all the standards for minorities rights: minorities rights protection, treaties for freedom of religion, conventions against hate speech, articles in the constitution of Pakistan regarding rights of minorities, national anti-terrorism laws and faith-based persecution, the National Security Policy of Pakistan and Paigham-e-Pakistan. It aims primarily to educate the youth, build a better understanding of minorities' rights, and encourage positive action for the protection of fundamental rights, and maximize the impact of the PIPS team's two-day training workshop.

During the Young Observer's training session, Dr. Fizza Batool, a Research Associate at PIPS, explained definitions of key concepts to the students such as minorities, interfaith harmony, hate speech etc. The PIPS team launched its Training Manual for Youth, on the March 28, 2022.

Local Law	International Law
<p>Articles in the Constitution of Pakistan protecting Minorities</p> <p>The Objective Resolution – that makes the preamble of the constitution of Pakistan declares that Pakistanis seeks to establish an order, “wherein adequate provision shall be made for the minorities freely to profess and practise their religions and develop their cultures;” and “Wherein adequate provision shall be made to safeguard the legitimate interests of minorities and backward and depressed classes”. The Articles 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, and 36 of the Constitution of Pakistan provide full protection and equal rights to all citizens, including minorities, without any discrimination of colour, creed, cult, language or gender to freely profess and practice their religions and culture respectively.</p>	<p>International Standards for Minority Right Protection</p> <p>The numerical strength alone cannot constitute a minority; It is the unequal treatment based on power differences that divides societies among majority and minorities. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – the main legal document for any reference to human rights – addresses the basic rights to be provided to all humans, minorities included. Article 1 recognizes that equality is in-born and inherent and not something created through law; Article 2 sets forth the principle of non-discrimination; and Article 7 discusses equality before law.</p> <p>International Conventions and Treaties for Freedom of Religion</p> <p>Pakistan is signatory to international conventions and treaties that protect the freedom of religion and must be considered in</p>

Anti-Terrorism Laws and Faith-Based Persecution

As countering terrorism is not just about conducting military operations, the laws developed to deal with this problem covers policies and practices required to reduce appeal to terrorism. Reducing faith-based extremism is an integral part of it. Here is a summary of relevant articles in anti-terrorism laws of Pakistan

National Security Policy of Pakistan 2022-2026

An Islamic Republic based on the principles of equality and justice, empowered by diversity of culture, ensuring fundamental rights and social justice without discrimination, and delivering on its social contract with its people through good governance to strengthen national esteem and cohesion.

Paigham-e-Pakistan

This unanimously agreed document titled “Paigham-e- Pakistan,” prepared in accordance with the injunctions of the Holy Qur’an, the Sunnah of the Prophet and the Constitution of Pakistan, reflects the collective thinking of the State of Pakistan.

reference to the protection of religious minorities in the country. For religious minorities, both UDHR and the UN Minorities Declaration, specifically mention the freedom of a person to decide their own religious beliefs, to change those beliefs and to express and practice those beliefs. As Pakistan is also signatory to The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), it is bound under article 18 to not only preserve the freedom of religion of all minorities but to allow Hindus, Christian and other religious groups to let their generations follow their religion.

International Conventions against Hate Speech

States are bound to balance between free speech and hate speech. Hence, in the second clause of Article 29 of the UDHR, it is clearly mentioned that “In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.”