

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Around 5,000 Hindus migrate to India annually due to security concerns.

### PIPS WORKSHOPS

A snapshot of all activities in the first quarter of 2025

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***"Inclusivity means providing equal opportunities in education and employment while safeguarding civil liberties for all. It is a transformative process that begins at the individual level—an antidote to anger, fostering harmony and mutual respect."***

**Muhammad Amir Rana, President PIPS**



**Pak Institute for  
Peace Studies (PIPS)**

KNOWLEDGE FOR PEACE

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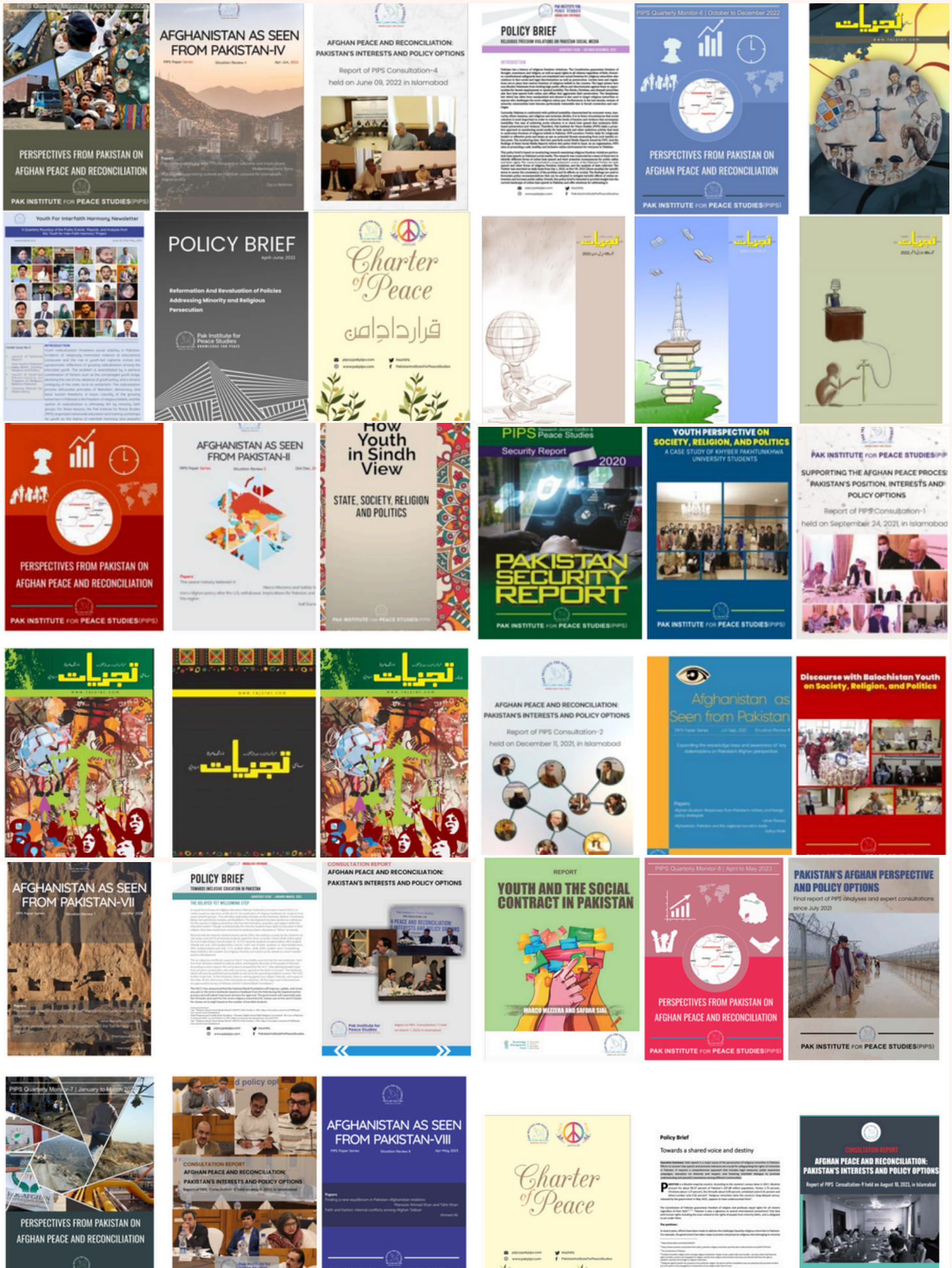
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## HIGHLIGHTS OF PIPS JOURNEY





## POLICY BRIEF ON HINDU MIGRATION/EXODUS

By Hina Khaliq Taj

### A BRIEF OVERVIEW

According to the 2023 census, the population of Pakistan is 241.5 million. Hindus are the largest minority, comprising 5.2 million, which constitutes 1.6% of the population classified as Hindu Jati and 0.6% as Scheduled Castes.[1] Most of the Hindu population in Pakistan is concentrated in Sindh, accounting for 8.8% of the province's total population.

The Hindu community in Pakistan, predominantly residing in Sindh, faces persistent socioeconomic marginalization and security threats. This community experiences systemic discrimination, particularly among Scheduled Caste Hindus, who often endure severe economic hardships. Increasing incidents of violence, forced conversions, and growing economic instability have led many Hindus to seek refuge in India in search of safety and improved living conditions. Despite a long tradition of diversity and tolerance in Sindh and elsewhere, rising religious polarization is contributing to discrimination and violence against the Hindu population. Insecurity further exacerbates their exclusion from political participation, education, and employment, prompting many to emigrate. A Hindu parliamentarian revealed that around 5,000 Hindus migrate to India annually due to security concerns.[2] Pakistan ranked among the top 11 countries experiencing large-scale violence, according to the 2021 Minority Rights Group International (MRG) report. [3] It ranked second in the Global Terrorism Index 2025, with terrorist attack-related deaths rising by 45% over the past year to 1,081.[4]

### CAUSES OF EXODUS

#### Key Drivers of Migration

1. Insecurity and Threats to Women's Safety: Rising violence, forced conversions, and targeted attacks drive many Hindus, especially from Sindh, to seek refuge in India.
2. Economic Struggles: Financial hardships and systemic discrimination further create an environment of insecurity and fear facilitating push migration.
3. Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA): India's CAA provided a fast-track citizenship process for non-Muslim migrants, facilitating migration.

#### Community-Specific Challenges

1. Caste Dynamics: Upper-caste Hindus receive better support, while Scheduled Caste Hindus face severe discrimination and poor living conditions. A survey of 750 households conducted by the International Dalit Solidarity Network highlights a longstanding issue within the Dalit community, documenting instances where Dalit girls and women have been subjected to sexual violence, including gang rapes, by Muslim men.[5] Dalits face systemic discrimination in healthcare, transportation, and education. Medical staff refuse to provide care, public transport denies them seats, and schools impose Islamic curricula while subjecting Dalit students to segregation and mistreatment. Authorities' inaction continues to perpetuate their social exclusion. Fifty-eight percent of Dalits believe they are paid less than upper-caste Hindus for the same role, and seventy-seven percent report being unable to get a haircut from barbers due to the stigma of untouchability.[6]

“Around 5,000 Hindus migrate to India annually due to security concerns.”

2. Internal Migration: Many Hindus relocate within Pakistan, moving to urban centers for safety and better employment opportunities.

3. Violence and Intimidation: Northern Sindh experiences frequent kidnappings, extortion, and targeted attacks, exacerbated by ineffective law enforcement. The rise of Daku Raj in Sindh and Punjab has caused widespread havoc for the local population. The Jeay Sindh Mahaz organized protests in 10 cities across Sindh against Daku Raj. The leader of the Jeay Sindh Mahaz expressed concern that the Hindu community is being deliberately targeted by criminal elements, prompting a significant number of Hindu families to migrate abroad.[7]

4. Historical Context: Hostility toward Hindus in Pakistan has historically been linked to Indo-Pakistani conflicts, with violence spiking in 1947–48, 1965, 1971, and following the 1992 Babri Mosque demolition. Systemic discrimination continues, including the non-recognition of Hindu marriages, which leaves individuals vulnerable to legal exploitation. With each incident between India and Pakistan, violence and hatred toward the Hindu population tend to rise.

5. Impact of Climate Change: Sindh's extreme climate, marked by droughts and floods, disrupts livelihoods, especially for marginalized Scheduled Caste Hindus. Economic instability and inadequate relief efforts force many to migrate to other cities in Pakistan or India in search of stability and employment.

#### Blasphemy Accusations and Legal Measures

1. Blasphemy Cases: The targeted blasphemy allegations are also a cause of concern for the Hindus of Pakistan. Despite being less than 4% of the population, almost 25-30% victims of blasphemy laws were religious minorities.[8] Actual numbers are likely higher due to underreporting. This leads to an increased sense of insecurity among the minorities of the country.

2. Censorship and Legislation: On 3rd November 2024, PTA blocked over 96,622[9] in the 'glory of Islam' category for creating public

awareness about "blasphemous and immoral contents".

In January 2023, the Senate and National Assembly passed stricter blasphemy laws bill, but they haven't been signed by the president yet.

#### Forced Conversions and Violence Against Minority Women

1. Widespread Issue: Forced marriages and conversions are a grave issue in Sindh. All party parliamentary group launched a report in Westminster in titled "Abductions, Forced Conversions, and Forced Marriages of Religious Minority Women and Girls in Pakistan" quoting "up to 1,000 religious minority women and girls face this fate every year." [10]

Between 2020 and 2022, multiple cases of alleged forced conversions, abductions, and coerced marriages involving underage minority girls were reported in Pakistan.[11] Hindu and Christian girls, some as young as 10, are forcibly converted to Islam and married off under coercion, exposing critical gaps in child protection and minority rights enforcement. Cases like the murder of 18-year-old Pooja Kumari for resisting conversion and the reported sale of 17-year-old Eshwarya Rai highlight the systemic vulnerabilities faced by religious minorities. Legal loopholes, weak law enforcement, and societal pressures perpetuate these abuses, necessitating urgent policy reforms, stricter legal frameworks, and stronger protections to safeguard fundamental rights and prevent further exploitation.

2. Legal Gaps: Hindu marriages often lack legal recognition, and conversion supersedes existing marital status, leaving women without protection. For instance, Gaavri,[12] a mother of two in Singh allegedly forced into conversion and marriage reported on 28th of February 2025. The 20-year-old Hindu woman from Umerkot, allegedly kidnapped, raped, and forcibly converted, now identifies as Zahra and claims to have willingly married Muhammad Irfan while accusing her family of threats. Her family, however, disputes these claims, asserts coercion and intimidation. This case exemplifies the broader issue of forced conversions and the systemic challenges faced by minorities, highlighting the urgent need for



stronger legal protections, independent investigations, and policy interventions to safeguard vulnerable communities.

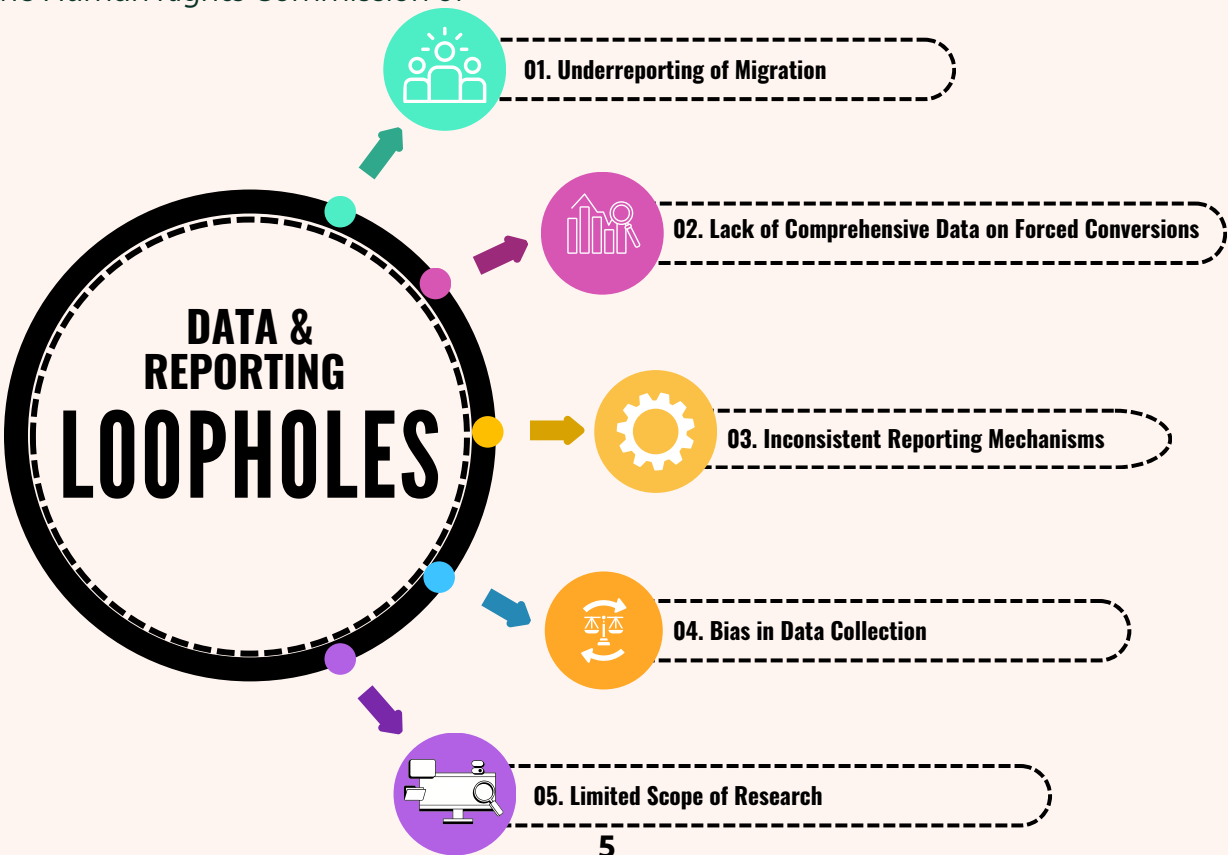
3. Scheduled Caste Vulnerability: Despite constitutional protections, Scheduled Caste Hindu women face a disproportionate risk of abduction and forced conversion. Shiva Kachhi, co-chairman and founder of minority rights organization raised one similar case of the abduction, forced marriage and conversion of Rajeeta Kohli who pleaded for protection of her life and to go back to her parents.

4. Protective Measures: Dalit families avoid sending daughters to school due to the fear of insecurity. Cases like Neena, a 13-year-old Gujarati girl from Kot Ghulam Muhammad, Sindh, highlights the persistent issue of forced conversions and child marriage. Allegedly abducted, forcibly converted, and married to a married man, her case underscores law enforcement's inaction, as authorities refused to intervene despite the Sindh Child Marriage Prohibition Act. Social activists have condemned this pattern of complicity and legal failure, where religious conversion is misused to justify underage marriages. Neena’s family remains determined to seek justice, emphasizing the urgent need for accountability and legal reforms to protect vulnerable minority girls. Former vice-chair of the Human Rights Commission of

Pakistan, Amarnath Motual, noted that “20 or more Hindu girls are abducted every month in Pakistan.”[13]

Loopholes in Data and Reporting

- 1. Underreporting of Migration: Estimates of Hindu migration from Sindh to India, such as the claim that 5,000 Hindus migrate annually, lack comprehensive verification and rely on anecdotal evidence. The number can be higher or lower.
- 2. Lack of Comprehensive Data on Forced Conversions: Forced conversions, particularly of underage girls, are a significant issue, but many cases go unreported due to fear of retaliation and lack of trust in law enforcement.
- 3. Inconsistent Reporting Mechanisms: The absence of standardized reporting for crimes against religious minorities results in unreliable data, as law enforcement agencies often fail to prioritize these cases.
- 4. Bias in Data Collection: Law enforcement and local authorities may downplay incidents involving minorities, leading to a distorted picture of security challenges faced by the Hindu community.
- 5. Limited Scope of Research: The reliance on qualitative research, including interviews and case studies, restricts the ability to provide a broader quantitative analysis of the issues.



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A comprehensive approach involving law enforcement reforms and legislative measures is essential to address the challenges faced by religious minorities in Pakistan. Implementing these recommendations will enhance their security, rights, and social inclusion.

### Law Enforcement Improvements

1. Establish Independent Oversight Mechanisms: Create independent bodies to monitor law enforcement, ensuring accountability and protection of religious minorities. Mandate human rights training for police officers.
2. Strengthen Law Enforcement Presence: Increase police deployment in high-risk areas and establish specialized units to handle cases of religious discrimination and violence without political influence.
3. Prioritize Investigation of Crimes Against Minorities: Ensure prompt and impartial investigations of crimes targeting minorities by forming dedicated police units in regions with significant minority populations.
4. Protection for Minority-Owned Businesses: Implement security measures for minority-owned businesses in areas prone to violence and extortion, including security details and community watch programs.

### Legislative Measures Against Forced Conversions

1. Enact Comprehensive Legislation: Introduce and enforce strict laws against forced conversions and underage marriages, with severe penalties and strong victim support mechanisms.
2. Foster Dialogue Among Stakeholders: Facilitate collaboration between the government, civil society, and religious leaders to address the concerns of minority communities and improve policy implementation.
3. Collect Credible Data on Forced Conversions: Conduct systematic research to gather reliable data on forced conversions to inform policy decisions and targeted interventions.

4. Political Representation for Minorities: Strengthen political representation for religious minorities at local and national levels to ensure their concerns are addressed in decision-making.

5. Integration of scheduled castes in the economy: Scheduled Caste Hindus, as a marginalized minority, face limited job opportunities, preventing their economic integration. This not only affects their livelihoods but also places a burden on the economy. Therefore, ensuring their inclusion in the workforce is essential for both their empowerment and overall economic growth.

### Footnotes:

- [1] Population by sex, religion and rural/urban, census 2023.
- [2] Irfan Haider, "5,000 Hindus migrating to India every year, NA told," Dawn, May 13, 2014,
- [3] Derek Verbakel, "Peoples under threat 2021 – Authoritarianism," March 15, 2024,
- [4] Amin Ahmed, Dawn, March 6, 2025, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1896075/pakistan-rises-to-second-in-global-terrorism-index>
- [5] International Dalit Solitary Network, "Equality Denied International Dalit Solidarity Network," 2008,
- [6] International Dalit Solitary Network, "Equality Denied International Dalit Solidarity Network," 2008,
- [7] Our Correspondent, "Jeay Sindh Mahaz Stages Protests against Daku Raj," The Express Tribune, March 24, 2024,
- [8] "Pakistan - Minority Rights Group," Minority Rights Group, 2015,
- [9] Bureau Report, "1.3m URLs Blocked over Illegal Content, Reveals Telecom Regulator," DAWN.COM, November 3, 2024,
- [10] Julie Jones, "APPG for the Pakistani Minorities: Abductions, Forced Conversions, and Forced Marriages of Religious Minority Women and Girls in Pakistan - APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief," APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, November 26, 2021,
- [11] Global Human Rights Defence, "FORCED CONVERSIONS of HINDU SINDHI GIRLS in PAKISTAN," UPR Info (Global Human Rights Defence (GHRD), March 2023),
- [12] Editor Sindh Renaissance, "Tragic Tale of Gaavri: 20-Year-Old Hindu Mother of Two in Sindh Allegedly Forced into Conversion and Marriage - Sindh Renaissance," Sindh Renaissance - Building a New Sindh, February 28, 2025,
- [13] All-Party Parliamentary Group for Pakistani Minorities, "APPG for the Pakistani Minorities Inquiry Abductions, Forced Conversions, and Forced Marriages of Religious Minority Women and Girls in Pakistan," 2021,



## BUILDING BRIDGES: FOSTERING INCLUSIVITY & TOLERANCE AMONG YOUTH

As part of its nationwide initiative Building Bridges: Fostering Tolerance & Inclusivity among Youth, the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) organized a series of two-day national workshops in Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Lahore, Sukkur, Multan, and Bahawalpur. These workshops aimed to promote tolerance, inclusivity, and diversity by facilitating meaningful dialogue among educators, university and madrasa students, human rights activists, and professionals.

Rawalpindi , Faisalabad, Lahore, Sukkur, Bahawalpur, Multan



Participants thoroughly involved in the workshops



PIPS Program Manager Muhammad Murtaza outlined the workshop's objectives, emphasizing inclusivity and dialogue.



Lawyer Dileep Doshi emphasized preserving and celebrating Pakistan's cultural diversity.



Senior journalist Imran Mukhtar discussed the trichotomy of power and the Eighteenth Amendment's role in state governance.

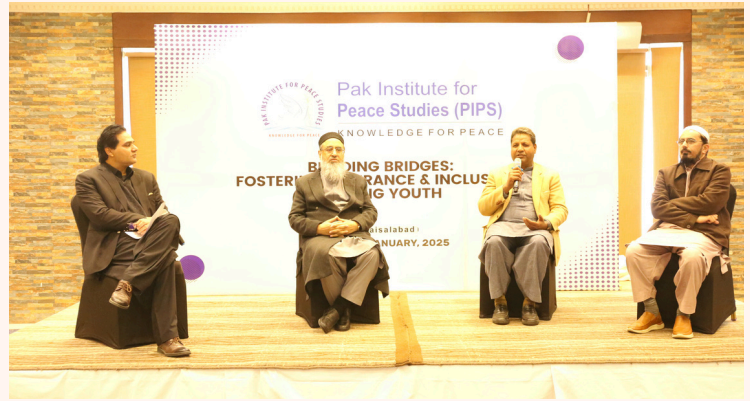


Research Officer Ms. Hina Khaliq Taj explored societal challenges and data-driven insights on gender inequality in Pakistan.

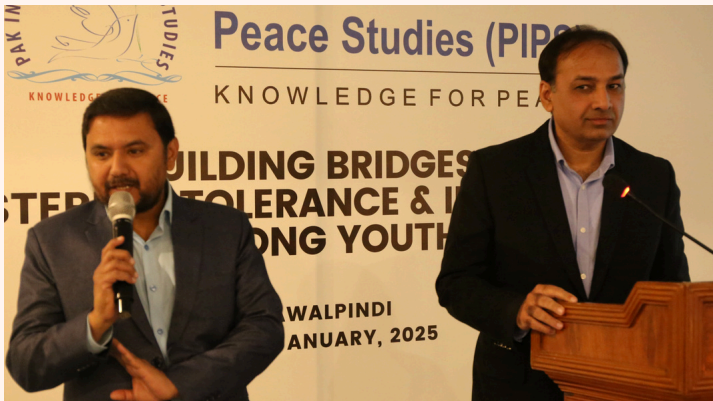




Maulana Ragheb Naemi, Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology and Mr. Khursheed Nadeem, Chairman National Rehmattul-lil-Aalimeen Wa Khatimun Nabiyyin, moderated by PIPS President Mr. Amir Rana, discussed ownership and compliance challenges in Paigham-e-Pakistan, stressing its role in promoting harmony.



Experts from academia and religious institutions, including Maulana Ammar Khan Nasir, Mufti Zahid, Prof. Anjum James Paul, and PIPS President Muhammad Amir Rana, analyzed societal challenges to diversity, emphasizing inclusive narratives and coexistence.



Development Professional Mr. Asif Khursheed and Senior Journalist Mr. Imran Mukhtar discussed digital literacy, fake news, and responsible online engagement.



Religious scholars Maulana Ragheb Naemi, Dr. Ammar Khan Nasir, and Peer Ziaulhaq Naqshbandi emphasized the initiative's role in countering extremism and highlighted the responsibility of state institutions in fostering religious harmony.



Ms. Esham Farooq, Research Officer led a conflict resolution activity, engaging participants in scenario-based problem-solving exercises.



PIPS President Mr. Amir Rana offered insights on strategic thinking and future planning.





Ex-advisor to CM Punjab on energy Shahid Riaz Gondal, senior journalist Habib Akram, and author, columnist & journalist Gul Nokhaiz, moderated by Mr. Imran Mukhtar, discussed press freedom, responsible journalism, and the need for institutional reforms to uphold democracy.



Dr. Altaf Hussain Langrial, Chairman of Islamic Studies, BZU, and Professor Dr. Zia Ur Rehman, Chairman of Quranic Studies, IUB, moderated by columnist Farnood Alam, emphasized Paigham-i-Pakistan's role in countering extremism and the need for inclusive dialogue to foster diversity.



Jami Chandio, Dileep Doshi, and Ali Raza Lashari, moderated by PIPS President Muhammad Amir Rana, explored the importance of diversity, human rights, and inclusive narratives in fostering social cohesion.



Former Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Columnist Farnood Alam and Prof. Dr. Zia ur Rehman emphasized the need for institutional reforms in religious education to promote inclusivity and acknowledge Pakistan's diversity.



Columnist Farnood Alam explored the influence of societal pressures on norms, advocating for inclusivity to foster meaningful social change.



Former Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad Khan emphasized the need for economic reforms and political stability in response to evolving global dynamics.





Professor Abdul Quddus Suhaib, Director Islamic Research Centre, BZU emphasized the importance of equal religious and social rights, advocating for constructive discourse over divisive debates.



Concluded the workshop with a group photo.



Participants engaged in question and answer session in Lahore



Our participant engaged in an interactive activity on conflict resolution



Wrapped up the session with a memorable click



Concluded the session with certificate distribution ceremony



# Stories of Impact: Interview Series, Building Bridges: Fostering Tolerance & Inclusivity among Youth

Naresh Kumar, Chapter Lahore

1. What are some challenges in balancing religious freedom with social cohesion, and how can they be navigated?

Balancing religious freedom with social cohesion can be challenging when practices or beliefs conflict with societal norms or laws. Navigating it requires fostering mutual respect, dialogue, and creating spaces where both individual freedoms and community values coexist.

2. In what ways can art, music, and literature serve as bridges between different faith communities?

Art, music, and literature can connect faith communities by expressing shared human experiences, creating empathy, and highlighting universal values that transcend religious boundaries.

3. How can interfaith initiatives contribute to broader social issues, such as poverty, education, or climate change?

Interfaith initiatives can address social issues by pooling resources, fostering collaboration, and leveraging diverse perspectives to create sustainable solutions for poverty, education, or climate change.

4. How can communities create more inclusive spaces that respect and uplift people of all genders?

Communities can create inclusive spaces by actively listening to marginalized voices, promoting equality, and designing environments that consider the needs of all genders, ensuring respect and empowerment.

5. What personal biases or assumptions did you become aware of during the workshop, and how can you work on overcoming them?

During the workshop, I became aware of my own biases around certain belief systems and cultures. I can work on overcoming them by engaging in more open-minded conversations and educating myself on different perspectives.

6. Which session resonated with you the most, and why?

The session on interfaith dialogue resonated most with me because it highlighted the importance of understanding and cooperation between different faiths to solve global issues.

7. What was the most valuable insight or idea you gained during the workshop?

The most valuable insight I gained was learning how small, inclusive actions can make a significant impact on fostering social harmony and mutual respect.

*"Balancing religious freedom with social cohesion can be challenging when practices or beliefs conflict with societal norms or laws." Naresh Kumar*



1. What strategies can be adopted to address misconceptions and stereotypes about different religions?

Religion, in its essence, is rooted in humanity, and misconceptions or stereotypes arise when its fundamental principles are either misinterpreted or overshadowed by extremism. To dispel such misunderstandings, it is crucial to foster accurate knowledge about religions, cultivate respectful interactions with followers of different faiths, and develop awareness of both the positive and negative aspects of religious practices.

2. How can storytelling and personal experiences be used to promote interfaith empathy?

Effective storytelling and personal experiences can serve as powerful tools to foster interfaith empathy. The use of thoughtful language and a compelling narrative style ensures a deeper emotional impact on the audience. Additionally, incorporating both positive and challenging experiences enhances the listener's understanding and broadens their perspective.

3. What challenges do individuals face in achieving gender equality within religious or cultural frameworks, and how can they be addressed?

While gender equality is undeniably significant, certain situations demand recognition of inherent physiological differences. In such cases, a balanced approach should be adopted rather than enforcing rigid equality. However, in all other aspects, it is essential to ensure that both men and women receive equal rights and opportunities.

4. What role do education and awareness play in eliminating gender stereotypes and building a more equitable society?

Self-centered attitudes must first be set aside, as ego-driven perspectives often hinder progress. Education and awareness are fundamental in fostering an equitable society by instilling critical thinking, distinguishing right from wrong, and creating a balance between tolerance and extremism.

5. What was the most valuable insight or idea you gained during the workshop?

For me, the most valuable insight was learning about the constitutional provisions designed to ensure the convenience and well-being of citizens—an aspect every individual should be aware of.

6. Which session was the most impactful for you and why?

The session conducted by Mr. Amir Rana was the most impactful for me, as it provided an in-depth analysis of significant global and regional developments of the 20th and 21st centuries.

7. Was there a moment during the sessions that inspired you or changed your perspective on your role in promoting harmony?

The session by Mr. Farnood Alam was thought-provoking from beginning to end. It explored critical questions and narratives related to religion, society, culture, and public harmony, leaving a lasting impact on any individual with a rational and conscious mindset.

*“Self-centered attitudes must first be set aside, as ego-driven perspectives often hinder progress. Education and awareness are fundamental in fostering an equitable society by instilling critical thinking, distinguishing right from wrong, and creating a balance between tolerance and extremism.”*

Kabsha Zafar

