

- Peace
- Diversity
- Interfaith
- Mutual Respect
- Tolerance
- Religious Minorities
- Justice
- Text Books
- Culture
- Harmony

# Education & Religious Freedom :

*a fact sheet*

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## FOREWORD

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Since the past seven years, NCJP has been annually observing and analyzing the National Education Policy and Curriculum along with the content prevalent in the textbooks taught in public schools across Pakistan. The commission has been demanding transformation in education policy and curriculum as guided by our national and international commitments. In order to make education more qualitative and inclusive, Pakistan needs to be dedicated to work for UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of which Goal 4 stresses the importance of giving children a quality learning experience. Therefore provinces need to strive to provide quality education to all children, regardless of their socio-economic, ethnic, religious and gender identities.

Over the past several years, NCJP has been actively taking up the issue of the Education Policy, Curriculum and Content, which violates the fundamental rights of religious minorities in Pakistan and deprives them of an equal status in society. Our efforts on lobbying, awareness raising and engaging with different levels and departments of the government have borne positive changes in textbooks of all four provinces and government seems more sensitized and motivated now to focus more on quality education despite various challenges at grass root and policy level.

This year's factsheet attempts to take stock of the various factors that are hampering progress on the issue of Education that is constantly violating, discriminating and depriving equal opportunities to the students from the minority communities, while also providing a resolve of the problem in a very pragmatic way.

This document is built upon the demand to promote equity in education and enable a conducive and unbiased learning environment. Likewise the government should introduce emerging trends, modern developments and scientific learning in education to promote awareness and understanding of national integration, diversity of views, beliefs and cultures.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Ms. Maryam Saeed for leading and compiling this research, Prof. Dr. A. H. Nayyar for his valuable comments and guidance during the course of this research and the team at NCJP comprising of Mr. Kashif Aslam, Ms. Aila Gill, Ms. Merab Arif and Ms. Amelia Gill for their efforts in putting this together.

I hope that this factsheet will guide the concerned authorities ensure that the state is able to provide quality, non-discriminative and inclusive education to all citizens of Pakistan in order to form a more tolerant and peaceful society.

**Cecil S. Chaudhry**

Executive Director



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# Abstract

Based on its own study of a large number of textbooks and curricula from the four provinces, and also benefitting from a number of earlier studies on the topic, this study gives a comprehensive account of the blatant violation of the rights of religious minorities enshrined in Pakistan's Constitution, as well as multiple commitments the country has signed in this regard at international fora. By doing so, this study shames Pakistan's educational officialdom, and holds it responsible for poisoning young minds towards religious and ethnic diversity. Pakistan has suffered immeasurably on account of the mishandling of young minds for about four decades. Successive generations have slowly turned into social pariahs on the global scene as those who are not only devoid of any useful social skills but are also easily attracted to destructive ideologies and movements. The true purpose of this study is to stem this rot and to give a call for course correction.

*-Prof Dr. A.H Nayyar*

## Summary

The public school textbooks continue to teach bias, distrust and discrimination against the religious minority communities and in doing so Pakistan outrightly contravenes its international obligations and Constitution. The main findings can be summed up as:

- A monolithic image of Pakistan is portrayed as a country for Muslims alone;
- Islamic teachings, including a compulsory reading and memorisation of certain verses of Quran, are added in most compulsory subjects also, hence forcibly taught to all the students, irrespective of their faith;
- Inclusion of Islamic teachings in the textbooks has made the content of certain books completely irrelevant to the subject being taught;
- Vague and cursory mention of the religious minorities in some books while a discernable silence can be found in others, which outrightly denies their contribution in the making of Pakistan and its history;
- Factual inaccuracies, historical revisionism and easily recognizable omissions teach a version of history that is decidedly monolithic, reinforce negative stereotypes and create a narrative of conflict towards religious minorities; Ideology of Pakistan is to be internalized as faith, which creates a bias for diversity, excludes religious minorities from national identity and calls their patriotism into question; and
- The glorification of Jihad and limited attention laid on Jihad al-nafs leads to confusion. Hence, following the path of Jihad can seem to many like a religious order, particularly those who fall prey to brainwashing by religious elements.
- Some textbooks seem to be attempting to include diversity in their syllabi, although it is vague and minimal at best and instances are few and far in between but this serves as a refreshing first step.

The National Curriculum of 2006, which is currently followed by all provinces, prescribes the inclusion of Islamic teachings and often Quranic verses in subjects that are to be studied by students of all faiths, and is hence a grave infringement of their constitutional rights.

On the whole, Punjab's textbooks are far more centered than those of other provinces around the province itself and around the principles of Islam as a centering force for society. While the importance of this inclusion is understandable, it ought not to lead to what is often seen in these books: a glorification of Muslim leaders and of Islam as the one true religion, one-sided view of the victimization of Muslims by both the British and fellow Indians in pre-partition India, and an overemphasis on following the tenets of Islam, which automatically excludes all those citizens of this country who are not Muslims. One way in which the syllabus of Punjab differs from all three other curricula is that it often involves an intra-provincial comparison of culture, whereas Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan tend to focus more on their own cultures.

Some of the Sindh books, the Punjab Ethics books, as well as the KP Citizenship book prove to be a refreshing and inclusive view of the country. While the Urdu and General Knowledge books of all provinces are hugely problematic, owing to their hyper-focus on Islamization based on the suggestions laid out in the National Curriculum 2006. The Islamiyat books for all four provinces are more or less the same, focusing more on the miracles and histories of religious personages than the ideals of tolerance the religion tries to espouse. Some books misconstrue the concept of Jihad as violent conflict for the individual rather than focusing on the concept of struggle against the self.

Justifying the creation of Pakistan and building a national Islamic identity seems to be the sole purpose of many History and Pakistan Studies textbooks. All four provinces deal with the partition of the Subcontinent in a remarkably similar, decidedly one-sided way, which presents Muslims as the wronged party and victims of the conspiracies of the British, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians and the language used is notable for its blatancy and lack of nuance. That being said, the Sindh curriculum gives slightly more room for even representation to the religious rituals, ways of living, and rights of minorities in this country. Even so, such instances are not nearly adequate to inculcate in students a holistic understanding of what it means to live in a state that claims to respect and protect minorities.



# 01 Introduction

The General Zia ul Haq's process of Islamization reshaped the curriculum and textbooks in the 1980s and ever since the effects of his policies are felt in the education system. Inconsequential attempts to reform the curriculum have been met with extreme resistance from the religious zealots. Since then, Pakistan's education system, curricula and textbooks have constantly come under international criticism for fostering bias, intolerance and discrimination towards religious minorities and being completely blind towards their freedom of religion and belief. Pakistan is an ethnically and religiously diverse country and education plays a critical role in bringing the society together or creating an irreparable divide.

For a large majority, public school textbook provides the fundamental source of information and knowledge and hence, the textbook authors and provincial textbook boards carry a huge responsibility towards the future generations of Pakistan to prepare empowered citizens with sophisticated skills to survive in a competitive world. Especially important is the role that the educators can play in what they teach as it deeply influences whether children appreciate and respect ethnic and religious diversity or view religious minorities negatively, as insignificant and aliens in their own country. Once implanted early in life, negative attitudes often resist change and factor into the disintegration of the social fabric of communities, and lead to discrimination, and even sectarian violence.

Private schools and academics involved in offering progressive curricula have received threats of violence and hate campaigns. In such a climate, the government which already seems motivated to impose a religio-national identity, lacks the intent to enter in the thicket of curriculum reform without attracting street agitation and worse. In June 2014, former Chief Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani gave a landmark judgement asking the government to protect the constitutional rights of the religious minorities. In the judgement, he specifically urged the government to develop appropriate curricula at school and college level to promote a culture of religious and social tolerance.<sup>1</sup>

However, the curricula and the textbooks continue to overlook Pakistan's religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in a conspicuous way. The teachers, often, have their own deeply-ingrained biases which further exacerbate hate spewing against the religious minorities in the educational setting. No measures have been taken so far to implement the instructions of the 2014 judgement to reform the curricula and the education sector to make it more aligned with Pakistan's constitutional and international obligations towards its religious minorities.

Rights activists have labelled the country's education policies and curricula that is decidedly Islamic, as an attempt of organized violence against the religious minorities. The insensitivity associated with the pervasive majoritarianism gives rise to laws and policies that in effect take the form of a state approved violence against religious minorities. Resultantly, the potential for friendly relations, social harmony and coexistence is lost and we have generations after generations plagued with hate-infused mindsets who fail to respect anyone who does not act in accordance with the narrow interpretation of religiously appropriate conduct. The textbooks fail to portray the true aspects and various facets of Pakistani identity and thus demand urgent review and action.

What completely gets ignored is the fact that the brunt of this ideological assault is only faced by our future generations of Pakistani citizens, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and the only harm is that faced by our nation.

# Historical Background

The ten educational policies from 1947-2017 reflect that successive governments lacked the seriousness to reform the sector and provide quality education to its citizens. The policies made loud promises and charted unrealistic targets well-beyond the tenure of the policy-making government, thus making accountability an impossible affair.<sup>2</sup>

The proceedings of the Education Conference of 1947 serve as the first education policy document and represent the early thinking of educational planners of the newly formed country. The ideological basis of this policy lied in using the Islamic principles of universal brotherhood, social democracy and social justice to uplift the character of students<sup>3</sup>. It also made religious education compulsory for Muslims as well as students of other faiths in the spirit that these students would morally and spiritually benefit from Islamic education to become good human beings<sup>4</sup>. Thus, right from the beginning, there was a reflection of resolve for the orientation of education on the ideals and principles of Islam. This policy decided to include Islamic Studies in school curricula failing to acknowledge that religious education in public schools of a multi-religious society can be divisive and disruptive. This decision was later made into a law by its inclusion in the country's constitution.<sup>5</sup>

The Objectives Resolution 1949 downplayed Muhammad Ali Jinnah's 11th August speech about a secular state and this document laid the foundation for promoting extremism in this country.

The main consideration of the 1979 Education policy, launched during the military regime of General Zia ul-Haq, was to align the education

[1] [http://www.supremecourt.gov.pk/web/user\\_files/File/smc\\_1\\_2014.pdf](http://www.supremecourt.gov.pk/web/user_files/File/smc_1_2014.pdf)

[2] National Commission for Justice and Peace (2018). Education: A Pathway to Convergence, a baseline research on textbooks in Pakistan (2017-2018). Lahore.

[3] Siddiqui, S. (2016). Education policies in Pakistan. 2nd ed. Karachi: The Times Press Pvt. Ltd.

[4] Mahmood et al. 2016 'Educational system of Pakistan: critical analysis in Islamic perspective', Asian Journal of Management Sciences & Education Vol. 5(3)

[5] National Commission for Justice and Peace (2018). Education: A Pathway to Convergence, a baseline research on textbooks in Pakistan (2017-2018). Lahore.

[6] Siddiqui, S. (2016). Education policies in Pakistan. 2nd ed. Karachi: The Times Press Pvt. Ltd.

system with the Islam<sup>6</sup>. The ideological assault started off by General Zia ul-Haq was faithfully transmitted onwards by the governments of Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif and General Pervez Musharraf<sup>7</sup>. General Zia co-opted Jama'at-e-Islami for formulating the 1979 education policy, with a view to ensure inclusion of adequate content on Islam, the ideology of Pakistan and the promotion of national cohesion in the entire curriculum, even in the compulsory subjects that were to be studied by students of all religions. Islamic Studies was extended to university level<sup>8</sup>.

The curriculum thus became replete with Sunni orthodoxy. Besides, distortion of historical facts, social and physical science teachings also promoted religious intolerance and xenophobia. Glorification of violent jihad was discerned in a way as to portraying resistance to Indian rule in Kashmir as a religious duty. Hindus were depicted as enemies of Pakistan. Colleges and university campuses also adopted military jihad immediately as part of the culture.

“**Following 9/11, the Pakistani education system came under the spotlight with the West pressurizing to make the curriculum less inclined towards extremism and militancy**”<sup>9</sup>.

The 2009 Education Policy was launched under General Musharraf's liberal social reform agenda, "enlightened moderation". Under this, Musharraf sought to promote a more tolerant and peaceful image of Islam, both inside and outside Pakistan and proposed the inclusion of citizenship education curriculum. Musharraf's era prepared a draft policy which did not have a separate chapter on Islamic education. This, however, triggered frantic opposition from the conservatives who launched nationwide street protests and rejected the idea as a Western conspiracy<sup>11</sup>.

As a response, General Musharraf replaced his education minister with the former chief of the ISI, General Javed Ashraf Qazi. Some think that the move may have been intended to give him the authority and credibility to put a less ideological curriculum

in place. At the National Education Conference held in 2006, Dr. Javed Ahmed Ghamdi, a prominent religious scholar who pleads moderate causes, recommended that Islamic studies be introduced as a subject only after Class V. He argued that religious education without formal education from an early age tends to produce religious and sectarian extremists<sup>12</sup>. However, this was not given due consideration and General Musharraf backtracked and chose to appease the Islamist parties by including a chapter on Islamic Education in the final policy and a curriculum replete with Islamic teachings<sup>13</sup>. The inclusion of themes focused on Islam is haphazard in the curricula and seems to have been done in haste and at the very last minute, after the opposition from the conservatives.

A vital opportunity in wake of the international pressure which could have been used to reform education was thus lost. The 2009 policy proposed major changes in the curriculum, such as emphasis on fundamental rights, peace and interfaith harmony and environmental education, but the curriculum largely remained a copy of the curricula in General Zia's era. The policy was prepared during the regime of General Musharraf but was finalized and approved during the Pakistan People's Party government of 2010<sup>14</sup>.

The National Education Policy 2009 envisages an education system that "develop[s] a self-reliant individual, capable of analytical and original thinking, a responsible member of society and a global citizen", "ensures equal educational opportunities to all the citizens of Pakistan and to provide minorities with adequate facilities for their cultural and religious development, enabling them to participate effectively in the overall national effort" and "create[s] a just civil society that respects diversity of views, beliefs and faiths"<sup>15</sup>. The policy seems to make contradictory claims. Despite the abovementioned aims to uphold fundamental rights and promote peace education, it emphasizes on "infusing Islamic and religious teachings in the curriculum, wherever appropriate"<sup>16</sup>.

A welcome change presented by the 2009 policy was the introduction of the subject of Ethics in place of Islamiyat for students belonging to other faiths. However, the introduction of Ethics does not

[7] Hoodbhoy P, and Abdul Hameed Nayyar A.H., 'Islam, Politics, and the State' ZED Books, 1984

[8] National Commission for Justice and Peace (2018). Education: A Pathway to Convergence, a baseline research on textbooks in Pakistan (2017-2018). Lahore.

[9] <https://www.cfr.org/background/pakistans-education-system-and-links-extremism>

[10] Grossman, D., Lee W., and Kennedy K., 2008, 'Citizenship Curriculum in Asia and the Pacific, Springer Science and Business Media

[11] Pervez Hoodbhoy, Education Reform in Pakistan: Challenges and Prospects; <http://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2014/02/Pakistan-Education-Challenges-and-Prospects-2006.pdf>

[12] Pervez Hoodbhoy, Education Reform in Pakistan: Challenges and Prospects; <http://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2014/02/Pakistan-Education-Challenges-and-Prospects-2006.pdf>

[13] Pervez Hoodbhoy, Education Reform in Pakistan: Challenges and Prospects; <http://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2014/02/Pakistan-Education-Challenges-and-Prospects-2006.pdf>

[14] Pervez Hoodbhoy, Education Reform in Pakistan: Challenges and Prospects; <http://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2014/02/Pakistan-Education-Challenges-and-Prospects-2006.pdf>

[15] [http://itacec.org/document/2015/7/National\\_Education\\_Policy\\_2009.pdf](http://itacec.org/document/2015/7/National_Education_Policy_2009.pdf)

[16] Siddiqui, S. (2016). Education policies in Pakistan. 2nd ed. Karachi: The Times Press Pvt. Ltd.

seem well-thought-out or efficiently implemented as introducing Ethics only for students of other faiths eliminates the one chance that Muslim students could have to get acquainted with other religions. It also problematic because minority students have to study 10 other religions in the Ethics course and schools often do not have specific teachers to teach the course<sup>17</sup>. Islamiyat is a compulsory subject for Muslim students at school and college levels. However, minority students cannot learn Ethics because of the non-availability of qualified teachers. Also, minority students fear, and experience shows this fear to be true, that in the major board examinations, a student taking Ethics gets easily identified to be from the minority faiths, and can be, and is, discriminated against.

The Education Policy of 2017 was passed to fill in the vacuum created, as after the 18th amendment implementation of the National Education Policy 2009 was virtually stopped and none of the other provinces had formulated their own comprehensive policies<sup>18</sup>. This policy too is blind towards incorporating diversity and needs of minorities. As it's foremost goal, it aims for character building on the basis of universal Islamic values integrated with ethical values relevant to all human beings. To achieve national integration, it requires fostering the ideals of Muslim Ummah and cultivating inter-faith harmony and celebration of diversity of faiths. Despite these claims, the policy remains completely based on Islamic ideology and does not mention the methodology to promote inter-faith harmony and diversity. Chapter 3 focuses on Islamic education and mentions that the ideology of any country is reflected in their education system. The policy asserts that the fallacy of the education policy of 2009 was that it reduced the core components of Quran and Hadith in the curriculum

of 2006, which has to be revised<sup>19</sup>.

In almost all education policies, inclusion of Islamic ideology seems like a compulsion or sole inspiration as the vision, mainly for political reasons<sup>20</sup>. Excessive references to Islam are also understandable as their effort to legitimize the formation of Pakistan as a Muslim majority country<sup>21</sup>.

Successive governments have been fearful of taking on powerful religious forces, and have thus refused to take a position to make the curriculum less religious and more secular. With time, the system has become more difficult to change owing to the increased intolerance, prejudice among the society, absence of political will, and fear of opposition from the religious elements.

The consequences of the emphasis on Islamisation of education on the next generation is worryingly a secondary matter for all governments and the current situation of an intolerant society bears testimony to this.

## Methodology

Textbooks will be reviewed for table of contents and chapters will be analysed page by page and line by line for any material that is biased in terms of religious identity, exclusionary against religious minority communities or historically incorrect. The goal is to develop descriptive thematic categories that represent the treatment of content related to the above-mentioned themes. Texts will be analysed to generate categories that describe the data.

Our study population of interest is primary and secondary public-school textbooks including General Knowledge, Urdu, Social Studies, Biology,



English, Islamiyat and Ethics used in the grades from I to VIII and high school textbooks including Pakistan Studies, Urdu, Civics and Ethics used in the ninth to eleventh grades in the academic year of 2018-2019

The analysis has been restricted to these textbooks as based on our past experience of content analysis, we have observed biased content in textbooks of these courses and not the rest. Also, primary and secondary school textbooks hold a high degree of importance as these set the foundation for the students' social skills, perception of the world, moral outlook as well as the development of their cognitive skills that determine future learning and success in life. Also, for many whose education stops at or before the Class XII or they lack the exposure to study books beyond school curricula, the textbooks are the only source of information.

Our analysis of biased content and hate speech in textbooks is based on a broader framework which includes the following thematic categories: exclusion, the quality of representation, relevance of the content to the subject and distortion of facts. 'Exclusion' refers to the lack of presence of a particular religion, poor 'quality of representation' refers to the incorrect or biased portrayal of one religion over the other, irrelevant content refers to the lack of appropriate content and biased choice of chapters for the subject and 'distortion of history/facts' includes denial of certain aspects of history, or twisting/exaggerating content to make it biased in favour of a particular group/ community.

For the purpose of the study, the key terms used for review of the curriculum and the textbooks are defined here for the reader.

**Bias** is defined as the tendency, inclination, feeling or opinion for or against a person, group or community in a way which is considered unfair, unreasoned, preconceived and prejudiced.

**Violation** is any action which is a breach, infringement or transgression of a law, rule, agreement or a basic right or freedom to which all humans are entitled.

**Hate/ Dangerous speech** is defined as any abusive or threatening verbal or written expression towards a person, group or community, especially on the basis of race, color, disability, nationality, religion, ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation.

The list of passages and errors that these books contain crossed the century mark and so owing to space restrictions all the references could not be added here. The ones that are added have been selected based on the severity of the bias or violation of the community's basic human rights and fitness with the thematic categories. At many instances the erroneous content could fit into more than one category and judgement call was made to see which category suited the content the best.

## International Treaties and Conventions

Protection of the right to freedom of religion and belief of religious minority communities is enshrined in international human rights law and international treaties and covenants. Pakistan has ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and is thus bound by its international obligations to adhere to these.

### *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*

Article 18 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

### *Convention on the Rights of the Child*

Pakistan ratified the CRC in December 1990. Despite 30 years since its ratification, Pakistan has continuously failed in fulfilling its obligations towards its children.

As a rights holder, every child has the right to freedom of religion or belief and to education. Article 14(1) enjoins States Parties to 'respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.'

Article 30 asserts that 'in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or which is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.'

Article 28(1) affirms that 'States Parties recognise the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity.'

Article 29 (1b) State parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations

Article 29 (1c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

Article 29 (1d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.

### ***International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)***

The ICESCR recognises education should protect and strengthen the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the children and it must be in accordance with their own religious beliefs.

Article 13 (1) requires State Parties to recognize the right to education of everyone and agree that the education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and the strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The education shall also enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, races and religious groups<sup>22</sup>. Article 13(3) of the ICESCR requires States to respect the right of parents and legal guardians to ensure that their children's education conforms with their own religious and moral convictions

### ***International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights (ICCPR)***

ICCPR builds on the definition of freedom of religion or belief outlined in the UDHR. It states that the right to freedom of religion or belief includes the right to manifest your religion or belief individually or with others, in public or in private. This manifestation can be in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

Article 18 (4) introduces the rights of parents and legal guardians to educate their children in conformity with their own convictions<sup>23</sup>.

### ***Universal Periodic Review (UPR)***

In the third UPR in 2018, Pakistan accepted and noted several recommendations that call for an end to all forms of discrimination against the religious minorities. In particular, the recommendations 87, 148, 149, 224 and 225, call to ensure that all children enjoy a right to education without discrimination and protection of freedom of religion or belief of religious minorities<sup>24</sup>.

### ***Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)***

SDGs 4 (quality education)<sup>25</sup> and 16 (promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies)<sup>26</sup> are also require Pakistan and other countries to provide inclusive and equitable quality education to all the citizens and end abuse, exploitation and all other forms of violence against children. To achieve SDGs 4 and 16, Pakistan needs to ensure and fulfill the rights of students of minority faiths in the educational setting.

Serious concern was expressed by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child during Pakistan's UPR in 2016 over the discriminatory and biased hate content in public school textbooks against religious minorities. The said committee in its recommendation number 31 strongly urged Pakistan to protect freedom of religion of all children, particularly children of the religious minority communities. It also recommended to conduct a thorough review of the public school curricula and textbooks and ensure subsequent removal of all derogatory and hateful content about religious minorities in order to promote tolerance, non-discrimination and human rights of the religious minorities. Pakistan has a binary obligation to adhere with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the recommendations by its committee, first as a state party to the convention and second as a beneficiary of the European Union's Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) status<sup>27</sup>.

[22] <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>

[23] <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

[24] <https://dailytimes.com.pk/229458/right-to-education-without-discrimination/>

[25] <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>

[26] <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/>

[27] <https://dailytimes.com.pk/229458/right-to-education-without-discrimination/>

# Pakistan's Legal Frameworks

Freedom of religion and belief of the religious minority communities in the educational setting is also protected in the Constitution of Pakistan under Articles 20, 22, 25 and 36.

Article 20 guarantees the 'freedom to profess, practise and propagate his religion and to manage religious institutions' for all citizens.

Article 22 specifically addresses freedom of religion and belief in an educational setting with Article 22(1) stating that, 'No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own. Article 22(3)(a) guarantees the rights of religious communities to provide religious education for pupils of that community or denomination in any educational institution maintained wholly by that community or denomination and Article 22(3) (b) states that individuals should not be denied admission to education institution on the basis of their race, religion, caste or place of birth.

Article 25A protects the right to education of all citizens by stating that the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law.

Article 36 guarantees protection to the minorities by 'safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of minorities, including their due representation in the Federal and Provincial services.'



# Violation of Pakistan's Constitution & International Obligations

The 2009 education policy, which is currently in use, contravenes the international treaties to which Pakistan is a state party. It is in direct violation of Articles 14, 28, 29 and 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which have been mentioned in the previous sections. The said policy also infringes Article 13 (1 and 3) of the ICESCR and Article 18 (4) of the ICCPR which guarantee religious freedom and religious education to children in conformity with their parents' convictions. Similarly, the policy of 2017 seems blind towards the freedom of religion and belief of religious minority communities and contravenes Pakistan's obligations with regard to the CRC, ICESCR and ICCPR.

Both policies of 2009 and 2017 relied on articles 31 and 25-A (Islamic way of life, right to free and compulsory education) of the Constitution, but ignored the constitutional guarantees under articles 20, 22 and 36 for safeguards against discrimination in educational institutions with respect to religion and protection of the rights of religious minorities.

The National Curriculum of 2006 also stands in clear violation of Pakistan's international obligations and its Constitution by including Islamic teachings in textbooks of compulsory subjects, including Urdu and General Knowledge that are to be studied by students of all faiths, particularly because the National Curriculum of 2006 specifically requires the

textbooks to do so.

However, in many instances, where the Curriculum does not require the inclusion of Islamic teachings, the textbook boards do so on their own as shown does not require the inclusion of Islamic teachings, the textbooks of English, Biology and Social Studies. Compulsory courses should not include teachings of Islam unless in a manner of studying comparative religions.

By demanding an urgent review of the curricula and the textbooks to remove biased and hate content against the religious minorities, we are reiterating the State's obligation and responsibility towards its citizens for the provision of their constitutional rights.

However, freedom of religion and belief particularly in educational settings has failed to receive its due importance despite the fact that generations after generations have been marred by social disharmony, religious intolerance, xenophobia, narrow-mindedness, extremism and hatred of imagined enemies both local and foreign.

The failure to address discrimination on the basis of religion in the educational setting also has a catastrophic impact on all other fundamental freedoms of the children belonging to the minority communities.

# Curricula & Textbook Boards

When pressure was exerted by Western countries post 9/11 to revise the curricula and textbooks, Musharraf's government appointed special task forces to formulate a national education policy



(National Education Policy 2009), design new curricula of studies for classes I to XII (National Curriculum 2006)<sup>28</sup> and draft a policy on textbooks and learning materials (The Textbooks and Learning Materials Policy 2007)<sup>29</sup>.

The Curriculum 2006 improved on that of 2003, which aimed at indoctrinating students with religion and nationalism. The 2006 curriculum discarded rote learning and placed greater emphasis on analytical thinking. It was more objectives and outcome driven and included student learning outcomes (SLOs) for each subject and grade level. It was, however, not before 2012 that new textbooks following the National Curriculum 2006 were printed and used in schools. Until then, provinces continued to reprint older books or produced new ones based on the older curriculum<sup>30</sup>.

Under the Textbooks and Learning Materials Policy 2007, as an attempt to improve quality of textbooks, provincial Textbook Boards were reformed to become regulatory bodies and

private-sector bidding for design and production was opened. The Textbook boards assess textbooks produced by private publishers and select ones that are to be prescribed for public schools<sup>31</sup>. However, only one fixed textbook per subject per class can be chosen, which deprives teachers and students of a diversity of sources and views that might realize the objectives of the curriculum<sup>32</sup>.

### Post-Devolution

In 2010, significant changes were brought to the federal and provincial roles of curriculum and textbook development following the 18th Amendment.

The amendment triggered the dissolution of the Federal Ministry of Education and its Curriculum Wing and repealed the Federal Supervision of Curricula, Textbooks and Maintenance of Standards of Education Act, 1976<sup>33</sup>. Provincial governments were required to make their own laws, devise their own curricula and print new textbooks, which are to be distributed free of cost to all the students in public schools. However, until the provinces devised their own laws, the existing regulations and curriculum will be used<sup>34</sup>.

All provinces are currently using the deeply flawed National Curriculum 2006, which is still fraught with very serious problems including promotion of Islamic national identity, distortion or omission of historical facts, exclusion of religious minority communities and their negative portrayal. The curriculum puts emphasis on national cohesion, while regional diversity, culture and histories remain largely absent<sup>35</sup>. The textbooks based on NC2006 follow the guidelines faithfully and sometimes go overboard to include religious material in compulsory subjects, which makes the learning material very problematic and is clearly violating Pakistan's constitution and international obligations.

[28] <http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/index.php/downloads/12-curriculums>

[29] [http://www.itacec.org/document/nep09/Textbook\\_and\\_Learning\\_Materials\\_Policy\\_and\\_Plan\\_of\\_Action280607.pdf](http://www.itacec.org/document/nep09/Textbook_and_Learning_Materials_Policy_and_Plan_of_Action280607.pdf)

[30] <http://itacec.org/document/nep09/NCERT%20Pakistan%20paper%20BRJ.pdf>

[31] <http://www.sahe.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/EM-1-Reviewing-quality-of-key-education-inputs-in-Pakistan-Part-6.pdf>

[32] Siddiqui, S. (2016). Education policies in Pakistan. 2nd ed. Karachi: The Times Press Pvt. Ltd.

[33] Ahsan Rana, "Decentralisation of Education under the 18th Amendment", Monthly Economic Review, 15 May 2014.

[34] Crisis Group Asia Report 'Education Reform in Pakistan', 2014.

[35] Crisis Group Asia Report 'Education Reform in Pakistan', 2014.



# Findings: A Provincial Review of the Textbooks and Curricula

The findings are presented under five thematic categories: relevance of the content, exclusion, the quality of representation, distortion of facts and glorification of jihad.

## RELEVANCE OF THE CONTENT

The provinces are currently following the National Curriculum of 2006 and hence, similar observations have been made regarding the relevance of the content to the subject under consideration. The curriculum for Urdu and General Knowledge, which are compulsory subjects studied by children of all faiths, is exceptionally problematic, largely exclusivist and stands in clear violation of the country's Constitution and its international obligations. Both curriculums make explicit suggestions for textbook authors to include, as part of the syllabus, Islamic history, beliefs and values. While these are mere suggestions of topics and themes, textbooks follow these guidelines religiously, resulting in content that is not only largely problematic but also irrelevant to the subject being taught. By adding topics and themes that are not befitting for the subject, the curriculum fails to achieve the desired outcome set forth to invoke critical and analytical thinking and make learning a positive experience for all students alike.

### Urdu

The NC2006 for Urdu (I to XII)<sup>36</sup> requires the inclusion of a Hamd and a Naat in the textbooks of all grades. There have been references of the inclusion of Hamd and Naat as essential components of training in Urdu as these two are specific genres of literature since the times of undivided India

However, the high levels of intolerance and bigotry in the society as well as the emphasis on the rights of citizens require that this is reassessed for a compulsory subject like Urdu.<sup>37</sup> It is a clear violation of Article 22 (1) as it can amount to forcing students of other faiths to learn about a religion besides than their own.

Another clear violation of the constitutional obligations is the suggestion of NC2006 for grades I to VIII to include at least one lesson with an Islamic touch, either a historical account or an Islamic personality.

*NC2006 for Urdu (I to XII) contains under the title of stories a statement for all grades, which read,*

“.... include two stories, one with an Islamic touch, either in relation to a historical event or a personality, and the other should be about an eminent national personality or a Shaheed.”

This recommendation has been followed rather earnestly by the textbook authors in all provinces as the textbooks for Urdu are replete with multiple chapters on Islamic teachings and various aspects of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) life and that of other holy personages of Islam. Some of the references can be found in the table below and some in the footnotes<sup>38</sup>.

Chapters on Islamic teachings	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
Four chapters: <i>Hamd, Allah governs all, Naat, Our Beloved Prophet (PBUH)</i>	Ch1, p1; Ch2, p3; Ch3, p7; Ch4, p10	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Urdu Class I
Four chapters: <i>Good behavior, Story of Zam Zam, Sacrifice, Eidi</i>	Ch2, p38; Ch3, p40; Ch5, p47; Ch18, p105	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Urdu Class II
Three chapters: <i>My Allah, Allah created everything, Hazrat Fatima (R.A)</i>	Ch1, p5; Ch2, p8; Ch4, p14; Ch5, p16	Sindh Textbook Board Urdu Class I
Five chapters: <i>Hamd, Naat, Khadime Khalq (Servant of the people), Great sacrifice, Jabal a Noor ul Quran,</i>	Ch1, p5; Ch2, p11; Ch3, p17; Ch10, p61, Ch13, p81	Balochistan Textbook Board Urdu Class IV
Six chapters: <i>Hamd, Naat, Conquest of Mecca, Hazrat Ali Murtaza (RA), Mahabat Khan Mosque, Our festivals, Faith in Allah</i>	Ch1, p1; Ch2, p10; Ch4, p29; Ch12, p24; Ch17, p92; Ch26, p144	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Urdu Class IV

[36] [http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/59.%20Urdu%20\(I-XII\).pdf](http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/59.%20Urdu%20(I-XII).pdf)

[37] A.H. Nayyar (2013) A Missed Opportunity: Continuing flaws in the new curriculum and textbooks after reforms, Jinnah Institute Islamabad; <http://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2014/05/A-Missed-Opportunity.pdf>

[38] Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board Urdu Class IV: Rahmatul-Ill-Alameen SAW (Mercy to the Mankind), Hazrat Abu Bakar Siddiq RA

Balochistan Textbook Board Urdu Class III: Hamd, Naat, Festivities of Eid, Ilm hasil karo (Gain knowledge)

Balochistan Textbook Board Urdu Class VI: Hamd, Naat, Islamic Brotherhood

Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Urdu Class VI: Hamd, Naat, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

Sindh Textbook Board Urdu Class II: Hamd, Naat, Beloved Prophet (PBUH)'s beautiful sayings, Hazrat Usman (RA), Eid Mubarak, Brotherhood

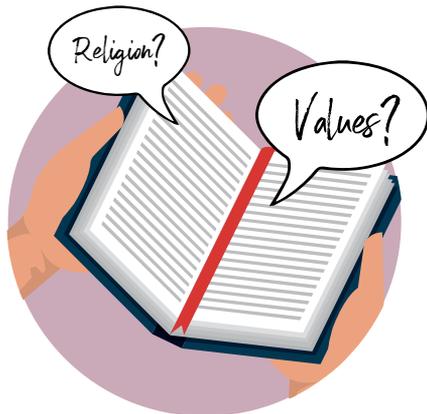
Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Urdu Class VIII: Hamd, Naat, We are born to empathize with others, Women's role and their rights (Islamic perspective), Hazrat Umer bin Abdul Aziz RA

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa textbook for Urdu Class I has the first four chapters solely dedicated to Islamic teachings as listed in the table above. Instead of focusing on alphabets, grammar, spellings and rules of phonology for the first grader, the textbook begins with an introduction to Islam, thereby not only forcing the students of other faiths to learn about a religion besides their own but the subject also falls short of achieving its desired outcome of imparting language skills. A noteworthy observation was that the Sindh Textbook Board has included a religiously infused preface in its Urdu books, which says,

**“The prime aim of the Board is to create and provide educational material for the new generation that will aid in cultivating the skills through which they can lead a successful life whilst respecting the Islamic principles of brotherhood and respect and our own heritage and culture and adhere to scientific, technical and social requirements of the new age”**

This stands in clear violation of the constitutional rights of the religious minority students who are forced to understand and learn about another religion.

The textbooks misrepresent curriculum guidelines insofar as to present most, if not all, topics in religious colors with authors going beyond the curriculum guidelines to include Islamic references under themes that are not religious. Books of all provinces are abounding with Islamic references, words, expressions and connotations, which are not relevant to the subject and can easily be avoided for a compulsory subject. The textbooks also contain multiple Quranic verses<sup>39</sup>.



Content	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>We are Muslims. Cleanliness is half faith for us.</i>	Environment, p27	Sindh textbook for Urdu Grade 1
<i>For a healthy life, it is important that we pray five times a day as then we will perform wuzu five times which will keep us clean and we will be healthy.</i>	Health & Cleanliness, p1	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board Urdu Class IV
<i>Sana is a good girl. She rises early in the morning. She reads the Quran.</i>	Good habits, p30	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board Urdu Class I
<i>When Muslims meet each other, they greet by saying assalamualaikum.</i>	Greeting with Salam, p11	Sindh textbook for Urdu Grade 1
<i>Islamic history is replete with examples where Muslims have sacrificed their lives while helping the oppressed, ignored their own needs to fulfill those of the needy, irrespective of their faith, race or color and have always stood for the truth.</i>	Brave husband's brave wife, p2	Balochistan Textbook Board Urdu Class VI
<i>In Islamic teachings, a hard worker is called Allah's friend. Our beloved Prophet (PBUH) did his own chores himself such as stitching his torn garments and mending his</i>	Fruits of hard work, p70-71	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Urdu VI
<i>I will say InshAllah before everything that I do and I am confident that nothing that I do will go wrong.</i>	InshAllah, p74	Sindh Textbook Board Urdu Class III

It is worth noting that Balochistan Textbook Board Urdu for Class III includes a chapter on letter writing. The chapter has a sample letter written from a father to his son. The letter is overly Islamic and provides instructions to pray and read the Quran and contains numerous sayings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)<sup>40</sup>. There's a similar letter in Sindh Textbook Board Urdu Class III book, p51, in which a passage is written about Islamic teachings on helping the needy. Letter writing could be taught with a more generic topic under consideration. Giving it a complete religious look was totally unnecessary and exclusivist towards the students of other faiths.

Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Urdu for Class VI, Ch24 has an essay on mathematics which encourages irrationality rather than logical reasoning skills by

[39] Quranic verses and Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s sayings added in a chapter about frugality in Balochistan Textbook Board's Urdu Class IV, p119

[40] Balochistan textbook for Urdu Grade III, Letter writing, p125, "Rise early in the morning to offer the Fajr prayer. Afterwards read the Quran and make sure you read the Quran properly without any haste. Be careful about the Arabic pronunciation of words, which if mispronounced can change the meaning of the verse and is considered sinful. ...Lying is the biggest vice. Our Prophet (PBUH) said that if you want to become a good person, first of all quit lying which will help you get rid of all other vices"

including religion in a subject which is based on reason alone<sup>41</sup>.

“If the art of numerology is used to find the number for Mohammad Sallallahu Alaihe wa Alehi wa Sallam, it comes to 92. Since the Holy Prophet’s (PBUH) person is sa blessing and source of guidance for all the worlds, therefore the name of everything and person revolves around the number associated with His pious name.”

The content of Urdu books of all the provinces fails to remain relevant with respect to the subject being taught and falls short of achieving its intended learning outcomes. The emphasis on teachings of Islam and various aspects of Islamic history with particular reference to the life and character of Holy personages, even in topics which are not directly related to religion, contravenes the constitutional rights of the religious minorities. It also implies that following the tenets of Islam is the only way to become a ‘good human’ and a ‘good citizen’, which automatically excludes all those citizens of this country who are not Muslims.

### General Knowledge

The National Curriculum 2006 for General Knowledge<sup>42</sup> aims to create an “appreciation of and interest in Science, Social Studies and Islamiyat/Ethics.” The course aims to lay down the foundations of Islamiyat before it is introduced as a separate subject from Class III. Thus, Islamic studies was integrated with other topics contained in the General Knowledge course, which forms the basic criticism of this curriculum. As a subject, the content for General Knowledge should be aimed at developing cognitive, critical thinking and logical reasoning skills by engaging students in a variety of interactive activities and games. It should have multiple components which introduce the student to the world around us and social concepts. However, despite making tall claims in its outcomes, the content suggested by the curriculum guidelines remains myopic and

resolutely focused on imparting religious education of the dominant religion.

The curriculum for Class I suggests multiple themes with an Islamic focus, including Our Belief, Prophets, Prayer and Holy Books. It proves incredibly problematic for its hyper-focus on teachings of the dominant religion and tends to be exclusionary and discriminatory towards all religious minorities and fails to even properly recognize their presence.

In the suggested themes for Grade I, there is a theme on belief system, the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for which specify that the students should be able to recite Kalimah Tayyibah, Ta’awwuz and Tasmiyyah with its Urdu and English translation.

The Curriculum specifically mentions that this is “for Muslim students only”, which is practically impossible to implement for a compulsory subject studied by students in the same class, under the same roof, appearing for the same examination.

The curriculum for Grade II recommends the inclusion of multiple chapters on Islamic education. It prescribes to begin the book with a chapter to thank Almighty Allah for His countless blessings and makes students recite Arabic words used in everyday life by Muslims such as MashAllah, InshAllah and Alhamdulillah. It proposes the books to include chapters on fasting and religious festivals and a narration of events from the lives of Prophets of Abrahamic religions as a motivation to develop a good character.

The curriculum for Grade III, on the contrary, offers a welcome surprise by not prescribing inclusion of chapters on religious education. This is because Islamiyat is introduced as a separate subject from Class III.

The textbooks follow the recommendations in the curriculum faithfully and the first six chapters<sup>43</sup> of the textbook for Grade I emphasize on Islam, are not relevant to General Knowledge and also in violation of Pakistan’s constitutional and international obligations. The table below shows the contents of the textbooks which prove to be irrelevant to General Knowledge.

[41] A.H. Nayyar (2013) A Missed Opportunity: Continuing flaws in the new curriculum and textbooks after reforms, Jinnah Institute Islamabad; <http://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2014/05/A-Missed-Opportunity.pdf>

[42] [http://moent.gov.pk/userfiles1/file/General%20Knowledge%20I-II%20%20\(20-09-17\).pdf](http://moent.gov.pk/userfiles1/file/General%20Knowledge%20I-II%20%20(20-09-17).pdf)

[43] [http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/17.%20English%20I-XII\).pdf](http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/17.%20English%20I-XII).pdf)

Chapters on Islamic teachings	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>Allah Almighty is One, Ambiya-e-Karam Alaihissalam, Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), Holy Books, Prayer, Ta'awwaz, Tasmiyah and Kalamah Tayyabah</i>	Ch1, p1; Ch2, p4; Ch3, p6; Ch4, p8; Ch5, p9; Ch6, p11	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board General Knowledge Class I
<i>The Blessings of Allah, The Holy Life of Prophet (PBUH), The Ambiya and Character Building, Fasting, Religious Festivals</i>	Ch1, p1; Ch2, p5; Ch3, p8; Ch4, p11, Ch5, p14	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board General Knowledge Class II
<i>Our Allah, Holy Prophets, Prayers, The Holy Books</i>	Ch1, p1; Ch10, p26; Ch14, p36; Ch23, p59	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board General Knowledge Class I
<i>Our belief, Ambiya Alaihissalam (Holy Prophets), Holy Books</i>	Ch1, p5; Ch10, p39; C23, p77	Balochistan Textbook Board General Knowledge Class I
<i>Our Creator, Prophets, Holy Books, Our Prophet (PBUH), Worship, Prayer, The mosque in our neighborhood</i>	Ch1, p1; Ch2, p2; Ch3, p3; Ch4, p4; Ch5, p5; Ch6, p6, Unit 6, p42	Sindh Textbook Board General Knowledge Class I
<i>Allah's blessings, Fasting, Religious festivals</i>	Ch1, p2; Ch2, p4; Ch3, p6	Sindh Textbook Board General Knowledge II

The above listed topics form an essential component of Islamiyat and its inclusion in a compulsory subject like General Knowledge seems unjustified, against the constitutional protections enjoyed by religious minorities and also implies that Pakistan is only for Muslims and students of minorities are bound to learn about its teachings.

### Ethics

Ethics was introduced as a subject for 'non-Muslim' students in 2009. NC2006 for Ethics (III to XII)<sup>44</sup> prescribes the teaching of common morals and values of different religions for the future generations to be more tolerant and closer to each other. The curriculum calls itself "progressive, liberal and all inclusive", with a view to promoting respect for all humans and religions. The content of books of all provinces is a refreshing take on an otherwise redundant topic. The books treat all religions they speak of with equal respect and do not institute a

comparison with each other.

Introducing Ethics only for students of other faiths eliminates the one chance that Muslim students could have to get acquainted with other religions. At the same time, students of the minority have to study 10 different religions in an Ethics class, but in practice, many schools don't offer ethics and instead require everyone to study the Quran. A report also mentions that students of minority faiths not only have to study one religion but also memorize verses from the Quran to receive extra marks<sup>45</sup>.

This presents a monolithic image of the society that doesn't accommodate diversity. It also means looking down upon the other faith traditions and ultimately results in intolerance against the minority groups, whether teachers or students<sup>46</sup>.

### English, Biology, Social Studies, Civics, History and Pakistan Studies

The NC2006 prescribes Social Studies for grades IV to V, after which it is divided for grades VI to VIII into separate disciplines of History and Geography.

The English<sup>47</sup>, Biology<sup>48</sup> and Social Studies curriculum<sup>49</sup> prescribe themes and subthemes to be covered in textbooks, none of which include chapters on religious education. However, the textbooks, which are to be read by students of all faiths, contain chapters with Islamic teachings and references, forcing non-Muslim students to learn things which should otherwise have been a part of an Islamiyat book.

Sindh Textbook Board English Class VI has a chapter on Reading Comprehension, in which on multiple pages 60 (line 8, 10, 18), 108 (line 3) and 111 (line 10), the passages used for comprehension contain needless additions with an Islamic touch, such as 'have faith in Allah', 'Quran classes'.

Sindh textbook for English Class X has a chapter, 'Dignity of Work', p29, which from line 5-17 provides an account of Islamic history which is completely irrelevant in the context given.

Similarly, in the Sindh Textbook Board for Biology Class VIII, the chapter 'Introduction to Biology' contains a

[44] [http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/05.%20Biology%20\(IX-X\).pdf](http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/05.%20Biology%20(IX-X).pdf)

[45] <https://religionunplugged.com/news/2019/3/15/pakistani-minorities-are-fighting-religious-discrimination-in-schools>

[46] <https://religionunplugged.com/news/2019/3/15/pakistani-minorities-are-fighting-religious-discrimination-in-schools>

[47] [http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/17.%20English%20\(XI\).pdf](http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/17.%20English%20(XI).pdf)

[48] [http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/05.%20Biology%20\(IX-X\).pdf](http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/05.%20Biology%20(IX-X).pdf)

[49] [http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/56.%20Social%20Studies%20\(IV-V\).pdf](http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/56.%20Social%20Studies%20(IV-V).pdf)

section, p4-7, on Quranic teachings in Arabic accompanied with their translation about animals and plant life. The same chapter has another section on the Islamic view of the origins of life. Given, Biology is a compulsory subject, inclusion of Quranic verses in Arabic is against the human rights of religious minority students and completely irrelevant to the subject being taught.

Similarly, the Sindh Textbook Board's Social Studies for Class V in its chapter, 'Why do we need history?' teaches the students how to read the Islamic calendar which is unnecessary in a Social Studies book.

Balochistan Textbook Board's Social Studies Class V has a chapter on 'Government', which on p77 mentions a paragraph on illiteracy using Quranic quotes and sayings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to establish the legitimacy of the issue.

NC2009 for Civics (Grades IX -X and XI -XII)<sup>50</sup> is a welcome departure from the curriculum of 2002<sup>51</sup>, which extensively focused on inculcating among the students a sense of gratitude to Allah and an understanding of social relationships and citizenship from an Islamic perspective. The Curriculum for 2009 has a specific learning outcome which requires students to identify the human rights in Islam with reference to the last address of Holy Prophet (PBUH).

It also engages students to draw comparisons between constitutional rights, children's rights and women's rights from an Islamic perspective with the current rights' documents such as the UDHR. The table below shows instances of irrelevant passages and sections included in the Civics textbooks.

Content	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>Singularity of religion in a country is a strong force behind nationhood. In Europe, many states were formed on the basis of religion. In the current times, Pakistan is an example of this.</i>	Introduction to Civics, p13, line 1	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Civics Class IX-X
<i>A section on Muslim Ummah and another on the important components of Muslim Ummah.</i>	Introduction to Civics, Nation, p12-14	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Civics Class IX-X
<i>A section on Islamic state.</i>	Introduction to Civics, State, p12-14.	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Civics Class IX-X



A subject like Civics loses its essence if it teaches about the nation's institutions solely from a religious lens. It needs to educate children to become enlightened citizens who respect all other citizens irrespective of their class, color or religion.

As a welcome step, the NC2006 for History (VI to VIII)<sup>52</sup> prescribes the book for Grade VI to start from the ancient civilizations in the region, before it talks about the advent of Islam.

History curriculum does not have any specific suggestions to include chapters which can be considered irrelevant. However, the books are fraught with content that is largely Muslim-centric, contains factual inaccuracies or omissions, represents religious minorities in a negative manner and promotes exclusion and hatred, which are discussed in the following sections.

Gratitude to Almighty for blessing us with an independent state is an objective listed in the Curriculum for Pakistan Studies (IX and X)<sup>53</sup>. It requires the inclusion of a first chapter on the ideological basis of Pakistan with a particular reference to the basic values of Islam, which means Pakistan will be defined in certain religio-political way instead of the internationally accepted principles of humanism and basis of history. This serves as a first step in telling non-Muslims citizens that this country is not theirs<sup>54</sup>.

By further asking textbooks to "identify the major sources of Pakistan Ideology" the curriculum forces the textbook writers to define basic religious principles as the source of the ideology. The second chapter as suggested by the NC2006 is on tracing the history of making Pakistan. As the first chapter sets the tone to define the ideology in Islamic terms, the textbooks are bound to be selective in choosing what to highlight in the history<sup>55</sup>

[50] [http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/11.%20Civics%20\(IX-XI\).pdf](http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/11.%20Civics%20(IX-XI).pdf)

[51] This was formulated in the KP province during the coalition government of Awami National Party and People's Party Pakistan. Subsequently, in 2013, these parties lost the elections and a new coalition of Pakistan Tehrik e Insaaf and Jamaat e Islami came into power and reversed all the positive changes of the previous govt.

[52] [http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/32.%20History%20\(VI-VIII\).pdf](http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/32.%20History%20(VI-VIII).pdf)

[53] [http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/46.%20Pakistan%20Studies%20\(IX-X\).pdf](http://www.kptbb.gov.pk/images/download/46.%20Pakistan%20Studies%20(IX-X).pdf)

[54] A.H. Nayyar (2013) A Missed Opportunity: Continuing flaws in the new curriculum and textbooks after reforms, Jinnah Institute Islamabad; <http://eacep.org/content/uploads/2014/05/A-Missed-Opportunity.pdf>

[55] A.H. Nayyar (2013) A Missed Opportunity: Continuing flaws in the new curriculum and textbooks after reforms, Jinnah Institute Islamabad; <http://eacep.org/content/uploads/2014/05/A-Missed-Opportunity.pdf>

Some textbooks state learning outcomes at the beginning of each chapter. In Urdu and General Knowledge textbooks, the learning outcomes of certain chapters focus on inculcating knowledge and appreciation of majority faith teachings and values in all students, irrespective of their faith.

Learning outcomes of the chapter	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>Develop respect and love for Islam; raise awareness about Islam; and acquaint with Holy Prophet's (PBUH) character</i>	Story of Hajr ul Aswad,	Punjab Textbook-Board Urdu Class V
<i>Get acquainted to the Islamic history; understand the great deeds of Hazrat Umer (R.A); and get informed about his exemplary character</i>	Hazrat Umer (R.A), p78	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Urdu Class VIII
<i>Understand the spirit of Islamic brotherhood; and get informed about the golden Islamic rule</i>	Islamic Brotherhood, p89	Balochistan Textbook Board Urdu Class VI
<i>Introduce the historical relevance of Eid ul Azha; and understand the real spirit of sacrifice</i>	Great sacrifice, p61	Balochistan Textbook Board Urdu Class IV
<i>Understand and use the Arabic expressions including InshAllah, MashAllah and Alhamdulillah that are used by Muslims on an everyday basis</i>	Allah's blessings, p1	Sindh Textbook Board General Knowledge Class II

The Urdu and General Knowledge textbooks contain activities for the students, and instructions and guidelines for the teacher which test the Islamic knowledge of students.

Activity/ Instructions	Title, Page, Line No.	Textbook Board, Subject, Class
<i>Narrate more examples of sacrifice, brotherhood, unity from Islamic history</i>	Brotherhood, p37	Sindh Textbook Board's General Knowledge Class II
<i>Write the given Ayaat and Hadis about hard work in your notebook and memorise these. Write an essay on Holy Prophet's (PBUH) character</i>	Hard work (poem), p127	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Urdu Class VI
<i>Tick true or false. Do you say Bismillah before starting a meal? Do you say Alhamdulillah after finishing a meal?</i>	My daily food, p18	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board General Knowledge Class I

## EXCLUSION

The NC2006 and textbooks of all provinces for the subjects under consideration lack representation and at times fail to even acknowledge the presence of religious minorities in Pakistan. The content is decidedly narrow in its world view by focusing in entirety on Islam as the defining feature of success at personal and national level. The textbooks are littered with specific examples of content that is exclusionary and religiously-biased. Even a cursory glance at a few passages that are exclusionary suffices to cast light on the gravity of the issue.

The textbooks force students of minority faiths to recite and memorize Islamic verses which is not only a violation of the constitution but also pressurizes the students perform a certain act to conform to the influencing group. There are references about reciting Bismillah before one eats a meal but the prayers used by different religions are not mentioned. Such content is easily avoidable in compulsory textbooks that are to be studied by students of all faith. Here are some examples.

Content	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>You recite Bismillah first</i>	Whenever you eat food (poem), p50, line 3	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Urdu for Class II
<i>Before starting a meal, say Bismillah and after you finish, say Alhamdulillah</i>	My daily food, p17, line 1	KPK textbook Board's General Knowledge for Class I
<i>Recite Bismillah before starting your food. After finishing your food read the given Quranic verse.</i>	Our diet, p27	Balochistan Textbook Board's General. Knowledge for Class I
<i>Recite Ta'waz, Kalma Tayaba and Tasmiyah with translation</i>	Our faith, p5, line 1	Balochistan Textbook Board's General.Knowledge for Class I
<i>Memorize the Dua for ending Roza and recite it to your teacher"</i>	Ch4, p 13	Punjab Textbook General Knowledge Class II

The textbooks force students of minority faiths to learn about Islamic rituals, including fasting and prayer, and reiterate the importance of these in disciplining their life and conduct. There are also multiple chapters in Urdu books of all provinces that emphasize on the importance of cleanliness from an Islamic perspective. However, the books remain silent on rituals of other religions and their prescribed way of life, which implies that these are considered less important.

Content	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>Teacher: What is the best way to keep our hands, ears, eyes and teeth clean?</i> <i>Student: Wuzu (ablution) is the best way to keep ourselves clean</i>	Health & Cleanliness, p66, line 3	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Urdu for Class VI
<i>For a healthy life it is important that we pray five times a day because to pray we will perform ablution five times which will keep us clean and healthy.</i>	Health and Cleanliness, p19, line 1	KPK Textbook Board's Urdu for Class IV
<i>Praying five times a day at specified times is a prime example of self-discipline.</i>	Discipline & Restraint, p28, line 3	Sindh Textbook Board's book for Urdu Class VII
<i>Our Holy Prophet (PBUH) said, "Cleanliness is half faith", so whoever has adopted cleanliness is half way through achieving the religious practices.</i>	Our environment, p76, line 3	KPK Textbook Board's book for Urdu IV
<i>Islam has laid huge emphasis on the respect of humans</i>	Brave husband's brave wife (story)	Balochistan Textbook Board's Urdu VI
<i>Islam has laid great emphasis to maintain honesty. Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) was called truthful and trustworthy among the Arabs.</i>	Making the world a better place, p134, line 8	KPK Textbook Board's for General Knowledge Class III

The content of the textbooks draws a clear binary between Muslims and other communities by showing that Muslims are better and the Islamic way of life is the most preferred, best way of life. Examples of high moral character have been derived from Islam and chapters have been dedicated to holy personages to make students learn good conduct. Such content is discriminatory towards minorities and contravenes their constitutional rights by forcing them to learn about another religion. It can also imply that their religions do not provide examples of good character.

Content	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>Controlling your anger is a sign of bravery. We should refrain from doing anything that can offend Allah and His Prophet (PBUH).</i>	Good kids, p43	Sindh Textbook Board's Urdu for Class III
<i>The better Muslims we become, the better citizens we will prove to be.</i>	Good citizen, p75, line 7	Balochistan Textbook Board's Urdu Class IV
<i>Even Islam teaches that we should be mindful of the rights of others.</i>	Good citizen, p138	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Urdu Class IV
<i>Lovely kids! We are Muslims, so we will discuss the characteristics of an exemplary Muslim student. A good Muslim student wakes up early, recites the Kalma, prays and reads the Quran.</i>	Exemplary student, p 104/101, line 13-20	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Urdu Class VIII and Balochistan Textbook Board's Urdu Class VII

Any references made about the religious minority communities, particularly in the Urdu and General Knowledge textbooks show some level of inclusion in contrast to complete exclusivist approach. However, these examples are few and far in between, vague, brief, decontextualized and insignificant.

The curriculum for General Knowledge Grade I, under the theme on Holy Books mentions as a sub-theme "respecting all Holy Books" which is meant to create a broader worldview on religions but this sub-theme is literally translated into a single line, "We should respect all faiths" and no more in the Punjab textbook for General Knowledge Class I. The Holy Books mentioned are all of Abrahamic faiths, excluding scriptures from other religions like Hinduism and Sikhism while the main focus remains on emphasising Quran as the last book revealed by Allah.



Similarly, General Knowledge curriculum for Class II proposes a lesson on fasting and religious festivals, with an outcome to recognize the importance of fasting for people of all faiths and learn about other cultural and religious festivals. This has also been translated by textbooks in a single line which mentions that people of all faiths fast at one time or another with the remaining chapter detailing about the Muslim way of fasting.

*Punjab Textbook General Knowledge Class II, ch4, p 11,*

**The concept of fasting is also present in other religions of the world. The Jews, the Christians, the Hindus and the followers of Buddhism also fast according to their own religious instructions. For example, the Christians fast in March and April**

*Sindh Textbook General Knowledge Class II, ch2, p4,*

**Followers of most religion observe fast. They fast at different times of the year**

Another chapter is proposed on religious festivals which includes as a learning outcome identification of other religious festivals celebrated in their village/city. The textbooks touch upon the festivals celebrated by other religions which is a sign of inclusion. However, the reference is insignificant insofar as it is no more than a sentence while the remaining chapter talks in detail about the two Eids celebrated by Muslims. The Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's General Knowledge for Class II sparingly mentions

**the people of other religions of the world also celebrate festivals, for example, Christmas, Baisakhi, Holi, Diwali etc**

without acknowledging their presence in Pakistan also. In another chapter, the curriculum suggests narration of events from the lives of Prophets of Abrahamic religions as a motivation to develop a good character. This is an essential component of Islamiyat and its inclusion in a compulsory subject like General Knowledge seems

unjustified, against the constitutional protections enjoyed by religious minorities and also implies that other faiths do not offer narratives for developing good character.

The textbooks of social science courses that contain chapters on the creation of Pakistan exhibit a discernible absence of the role played by members of religious minorities.

*Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Urdu for Class VIII, p55, line 1,*

**Our beloved country Pakistan came into being after the sacrifices of millions of Muslims**

The list of members of religious minority communities who played an eminent role in the creation of Pakistan is endless. Their contribution in nation building and social, economic and political development is commendable. However, their names and roles have been purposely hidden from historical accounts and the syllabus at all levels of education. This seems to be fulfilling a nationalistic agenda by creating a strong binary between Muslims as good citizens and all other religious minorities portrayed as outsiders and second-class citizens.

Balochistan Textbook Board's Social Studies Class V in its chapter on History, p59, line 1, has a list of world's important personalities which begins with the name of Holy Prophet (PBUH) and contains only Pakistani Muslims.

The absence of minority heroes strengthens contempt and biases against religious minorities, which the entire educational system sets out to achieve in the name of developing an Islamic identity. It also makes students of other faiths feel like complete outsiders in the educational settings and can infuse a sense of inferiority.

Multiple generations of students have been plagued with biased mindsets against the religious minority communities. The near-complete exclusion is not only unfair but also presents a distorted picture of history and fosters intolerance in the student whose prime source of knowledge is the curriculum textbook. Furthermore, by failing to elaborate on achievements of other minorities, textbooks are taking away a group's validity and stating that their advancements and

strengths are not important enough to be mentioned.

## REPRESENTATION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

The textbooks of all provinces, particularly Social Studies, History, Pakistan Studies and Islamiyat, portray citizens of other faiths in a negative manner. They are represented in stereotypical ways, which reinforces the negative biases that exist in the society against them and becomes the cause of further victimization. The narrative created to misrepresent religious minorities is often historically incorrect also.

There is always doubt about the loyalty and sincerity of religious minorities. Hindus are often shown as sympathetic towards the country's perceived enemy, India. Friends from the Hindu community have shared instances when a Pakistani Hindu is intentionally or unintentionally always asked which country they support in the Pakistan-India match as a sign of proof of their loyalty and patriotism. They are often labelled as agents of Indian intelligence.

The books don't contain many specific references to Christians, but those that do exist seem generally negative. For Class VI (ages 10-11), the Punjab Board's Islamic Studies book says:

**For the person who is not in financial need, is not governed by a tyrant and still does not perform [the pilgrimage to Mecca], it does not make a difference whether he dies as a Christian or a Jew**

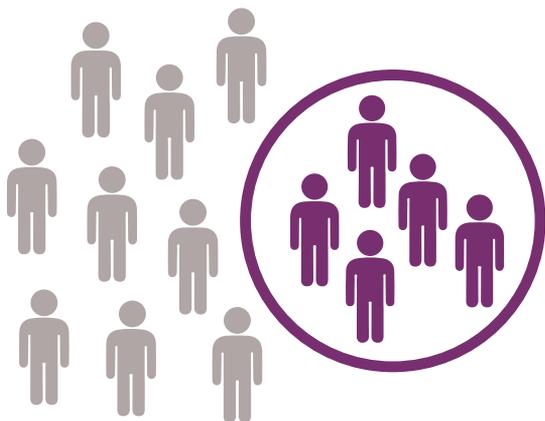
An exceeding majority of Pakistanis target religious minority communities whenever there is a perceived crime against Islam or Muslims even elsewhere in the word. Members of minority faiths, particularly the Christian community, feels greater insecurity in Pakistan when someone makes blasphemous caricatures or movies in the West<sup>56</sup>.

The textbooks present Islam's superiority over all other religions and make unsupported statements towards this end. Looking own upon other faiths and their rituals and traditions ultimately results in intolerance against the minority communities. The Muslim way of life has been portrayed as an egalitarian antithesis

to the supposedly intolerant, hierarchical mode of existence prescribed by other religions, which demonizes other religions as inferior.

Content	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>Most of the [other] religions of the world claim equality, but they never act on it.</i>		The Sindh Textbook Board's Class VII book on Islamic Studies
<i>The better Muslims we become, the better citizens we prove to be</i>		Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Urdu book for Class IV
<i>Religion plays a very important role in promoting national harmony. If the entire population believes in one religion, then it encourages nationalism and promotes national harmony.</i>		The Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Social Studies Class V
<i>The Bible presented the concept of separation of religion and mundane affairs.</i>	Al Quran Al Kareem, p9, line 13	Balochistan Textbook Board's Islamic Studies for Class IX
<i>Honesty for non-Muslims is merely a business strategy, while for Muslims it is a matter of faith.</i>	Honesty in Dealing, p43, line 20	Punjab Board's Islamiyat textbook for Class VIII
<i>Muslim society was based on the values of equality and brotherhood. These principles were new for the Hindu society because they were inspired by the caste system. In this caste system the Shuddras were at the lowest if the hierarchy. The system of equality and justice in Islam fascinated/impressed the Hindu society very much.</i>	Mughal Empire: Socio-cultural conditions, p59, line 13-15	Punjab Board's History textbook for Class VII
<i>Muslim Ummah's foundation lies in strong principles of love, brotherliness, tolerance and equality which is contrary to the value system of Western nations.</i>	Introduction to Civics, Muslim Ummah, p12, line 17	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Civics Class IX-X
<i>Allama Iqbal gave a message to the Muslim Ummah that they are the best nation which cannot remain a slave to any other nation just like our beloved Prophet (PBUH) is better than all Prophets, similarly his followers are also better than all nations.</i>	Golden Bird, p86	Balochistan Textbook Board's Urdu for Class III
<i>Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) is the master of all Prophets. While other Prophets were sent to serve as examples for their own communities, our beloved Holy Prophet (PBUH) was sent to spread Allah's universal message to the humankind.</i>	Beliefs and Worship, p27	Sindh Textbook Board Islamiyat Class III

[56]<https://themuslimtimes.info/2012/12/06/violence-against-minorities-religious-harmony-must-be-taught-in-schools/>



The Sikhs of the time have been represented as highly warlike people. Not only that, they have also been portrayed as the ultimate enemy of the Mughal period, and as adept and easy for the Mughal forces to conquer in battle. This viewpoint both demonizes Sikhs and glorifies the Mughals. At another instance, Sikhs are presented as a plague upon the Muslims and “jihad” is glorified as a way to drive them out.

Content	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>During the period of Aurangzeb, the Sikhs started robbing and looting in Punjab and Kashmir. At this, the Army had to take action and the Sikhs were defeated in many encounters. A last Sikh Guru was submitted to Aurangzeb.</i>	Mughal Empire: Consolidation, p47, line 1-30	Punjab Board's History textbook for Class VII
<i>Sikhs were bloodthirsty and caused severe harm to the Mughal empire.</i>	Mughal Empire: Disintegration, p79, line 8	Punjab Board's History textbook for Class VII
<i>In those days Punjab and Frontier (KPK) were governed by the Sikhs, ho bothered the Muslims to death. Therefore, Syed Ahmad Shaheed decided to launch jihad against them.</i>	Mughal Empire: Ascendancy of the British, p108, line 14-15	Punjab Board's History textbook for Class VII
<i>Powerful Sikh ruler, Ranjeet Singh ruled Punjab. Sikhs occupied Hazara in 1819. They also subjugated some areas of Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Kohat and Peshawar to some extent till 1824. They tyrannized local population. Later, the British</i>	Important historical events, p37, line 1-4	Khyber Pakhtunhwa Textbook Board Social Studies Class IV

The textbooks remain littered with hate speech against the Hindus. There exists extreme demonization of Hinduism and its followers as an evil force almost working to take over Islam. In writing about pre-partition history, Hindus are especially presented in biased terms, with inaccurate and offensive references. The books provide an extremely one-sided narrative in which Hindus are portrayed as ‘evil’, ‘cunning’, ‘always insincere’, and ready to persecute the Muslims. They are repeatedly described as eternal enemies of Islam and their culture portrayed as ‘unjust’ and ‘cruel’. Extreme distrust is expressed for this community with hatred espoused in relation to a perceived sense of sympathy towards India. Below are some passages that spew hate against the Hindus. For more references of a biased and historically incorrect portrayal of Hindus, see the section on distortion of history.

Content	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>A large number of Hindu teachers were teaching in educational institutions of East Pakistan. They set such literature and promoted negative sentiments and hateful ideas in the minds of Bengalis against the people of West Pakistan.</i>	Constitutional Evolution in Pakistan, p46, line 12-13	Sindh Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class 9-10
<i>In the age of dejection and desperation, Muslims stood by Hindu political movements. Their object was to get rid of slavery of the British, Hindus betrayed Muslims at every step, as per habit.</i>	Ideology of Pakistan, p109, line 8-9	Balochistan Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class VIII
<i>Hinduism was bent upon absorbing Islam as it had done with other religions. If combined Hindustan was freed, modern democratic system, which ensures the rule of the majority, would be an uninterrupted form of Hindu rule. Therefore, the yoke of the Hindu majority had to be dislodged, and it was possible only with the partition of the subcontinent.</i>	Making of Pakistan, p20, line 15-18	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Pakistan Studies Class IX

These wholly generalized perceptions and targeted negative stereotypes influence students early on that the non-Muslim population of Pakistan are “outsiders, second grade citizens and unpatriotic, untrustworthy, religiously inferior, ideologically scheming and intolerant”<sup>157</sup>.

Such messages are reinforced by the absence of deeper content provided by the textbooks to address the complexity of religions, the rights of religious minorities, and their positive contributions in the making of Pakistan. The perceptions furthered by the textbooks are often substantiated by the stereotypical and biased portrayal of religious minorities presented at home and the wider society, which are vital sources of socialization.

One-sided portrayal of events and the lack of critical details all potentially affect the ways in which students create their own understandings and opinions. With the textbook being the only source of information for many students, the possibility of questioning the validity of such irresponsible claims through multiple perspectives are negligible.

## DISTORTION OR OMISSION OF HISTORY

“Every means has been employed to achieve the purpose of manipulating the history. There exist plain lies, lapses, flaws, self-deception, warped notions, loose arguments, preconceived ideas, parochialism, misbelief, oversight, inattentiveness and aberrations of all kinds” - The Murder of History, K.K. Aziz.

Textbooks contain factual inaccuracies, distortions or omissions presented as facts that alter the significance of key events and re-narrate Pakistan’s history since independence, so as to leave a false understanding of national experience. Social studies, Pakistan studies and History textbooks teach a version of history that promotes a national Islamic identity that creates a narrative of conflict and inculcates negative views towards other religions and countries. The curriculum and textbook reviewed illuminate several issues that require urgent attention. In most cases historic revisionism seems designed to exonerate or glorify Islamic civilization, or to denigrate the civilizations of religious minorities.

Pakistan studies textbooks are replete with sweeping statements about the ideology of Pakistan having religious roots, often quoting completely fabricated and unnecessary content, and hence opening door for religious indoctrination of students. This conflation of national and religious identities, serves to marginalize the internal differences, deny the acknowledgment of multiple religious identities that exist in Pakistan and promote homogeneity, solidarity and unity through the majority

religion.

Historical references show that the “ideology of Pakistan (Nazaria-i-Pakistan)” is a term which was never used during the struggle for independence not after the independence<sup>58 59</sup>.

Content	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>The base of Pakistan is exclusively laid on Islam, and its implementation has been on the cards for centuries. Without doubt, Islamic ideology of life is the foundation of Pakistan's ideology.</i>	Ideological Basis of Pakistan, p3, line 12-15	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class IX
<i>Politically, the aim of the ideology of Pakistan was to save the Muslims of South Asia from the obvious domination of Hindu majority forever. While its economic objective was the elimination of economic exploitation and the provision of equal opportunities to all the people alike.</i>	Ideological Basis of Pakistan, p2, line 7-10	KPK Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class IX
<i>The base of ideology of Pakistan and the concept of separate nationhood of Muslim is Kalma-e-Toheed, and not country or race. When the first heathen of Hinduism embraced Islam, a separate nation had come into being.</i>	Ideological Basis of Pakistan, p3, line 17-18	KPK Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class IX

There are numerous passages that distort facts and fabricate historical events to highlight the victimization of Muslims at the hands of the British, Christians, Hindus and Sikhs. They are often presented at dangerous contaminants to the Islamic national identity by virtue of their non-Muslim faith, which is used to legitimize the creation of Pakistan. The students who undergo this hate conditioning will indubitably become resentful to people of religious minorities.

Historical narrations present an idealized past before the British rule and fear of an overly oppressed future at the hands of Hindus if they takeover after the British left. At the same time, the texts glorify Muslims by presenting them as tolerant and valorize Muslim leaders for their exemplary treatment of religious minorities. The textbooks observe a discernible silence on the peaceful nation building efforts of religious minorities and the role they played before and after the creation of Pakistan.

[57] [https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/resources/Pakistan-ConnectingTheDots-Email\(3\).pdf](https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/resources/Pakistan-ConnectingTheDots-Email(3).pdf)

[58] <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/01/24/1979-another-embassy-under-siege/>

[59] <https://www.dawn.com/news/1038961>

The textbooks also distort historical facts of history by misrepresenting other religions. Passages that reflect the abovementioned observations are listed in the table below.

Content	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>The establishment of the British rule eroded the independent status of Muslims. During the rule of Non-Muslims, Muslims found themselves oppressed. When the British rule was at its end, it seemed obvious that Hindus would rule the subcontinent, and Muslims, winning freedom from the temporary subjugation of the British would fall into the permanent slavery of Hindus.</i>	Ideological Basis of Pakistan, p3, line 15-18	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class IX
<i>After the revolt of 1857, Muslims were persecuted and victimized. Although Hindus also stood by Muslims in this war, yet, they holding Muslims responsible for the uprising, managed to save their skin.</i>	Ideological Basis of Pakistan, p8, line 3-5	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class IX
<i>Muslims were thrown out of government jobs because of the prejudiced and biased attitude of British towards them. Despite their capability and integrity as compared to unintelligent Hindus, they were deprived of employment opportunities</i>	Ideological Basis of Pakistan, p8, line 6-8	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class IX
<i>It is also a historical fact that if Muslims were biased, intolerant, and tyrant, not a single Hindu would survive to oppose them. But the Hindu and non-Muslim population ratio with the Muslims always remained one to three (1:3). And it was unalterable.</i>	Pakistan Movement (1937-47), p46, line 11-13	Sindh Textbook Board's Social Studies book for Class VII
<i>Muslims of Subcontinent ruled for approximately one thousand years with crowning glory, but did not convert any Hindu to Islam forcefully. If they wanted to do so, there would be no trace of Hindus left in India. But they showing inclusive approach, offered highly ranked posts to Hindus.</i>	Tolerance, p61, line 20-23	Punjab Textbook Board's Islamiyat for Class V
<i>Pastors of Europe incensed their followers against Muslims, and their supreme religious leader, called the Pope, declared the Crusade against Muslims. Christian priests told them tured to liberate their holy places from Muslims would be absolved of all sins. Resultantly, a large number of Christians gathered and rushed on Muslims and a series of Crusades started.</i>	Muslim World and Colonialism, p13, line 1-5 // Islamic Society, p19, line 4-9	Sindh Textbook Board's Social Studies book for Class VII / Balochistan Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class VII
<i>The influence of Christian priests had gained much substance and they, with manifest back up of their government, were openly preaching their religion. They would go to cities and villages to hold congregations in which they would glorify Christianity and condemn other religions.</i>	Ideology of Pakistan, p99, line 2-4/ Ideology of Pakistan, p105, line 14-19	Sindh Textbook Board's Social Studies book for Class VIII/ Balochistan Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class VIII
<i>Hindus tried to prohibit Islam; they made noise in front of mosques, barred Muslims from getting jobs and tried to promulgate Hindi in schools in place of Urdu. Prostration to the effigy of Gandhi was obligatory, Muslim children were ordered to put bindi (black mark on forehead). The singing of anthem, 'Vande Mataram' which sounds provocation against Muslims, was made compulsory.</i>	Creation of Pakistan, p26, line 18-21	Sindh Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class 9-10
<i>The Congress and Hindus would deprive Muslims of their political and social rights by eliminating their distinctive status.</i>	Creation of Pakistan, p26, line 1-2	Sindh Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class 9-10
<i>In the United India, Hindu-Muslim clashes were a routine in such religious festivals because on such occasions, emotions of each faction were so high. Muslims were particularly tortured by Hindus on Eid-ul-Azha when they slaughtered cows.</i>	Ideological Base of Pakistan, p7, line 10-13	Balochistan Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class 10
<i>In those times, Sikhs ruled Punjab. They tormented and persecuted Muslims and divested them of their religious freedom.</i>	British Ascendancy, p80, line 8-9	KPK Textbook Board's History book for Class VII
<i>Many non-Muslims converted to Islam when they were treated with respect and dignity by Mohammad Bin Qasim.</i>	History, p28, line 7	Punjab Curriculum & Textbook Board Social Studies Class V
<i>It was constructed by Hazrat Ibrahim (RA) along with his son Hazrat Ismail (RA)</i>	Introduction to and importance of Qibla, p36	Sindh Textbook Board Islamiyat Class III
<i>Such situation developed in that turmoil that people took some layman for Jesus and hanged him. In the meantime, God elevated Jesus to Heavens with His exclusive omnipotence.</i>	Origins of Guidance and Luminaries of Islam, p115, line 5-7	Balochistan Textbook Board Islamiyat Class V

There are numerous references in the books which highlight the differences between Islam and Hinduism. These have been supported by Muhammad Ali Jinnah's speech delivered at the time of Lahore Resolution on 23rd March 1940. Including selective text of the speech without providing context removes the possibility of any coexistence between Muslims and other nations, particularly Hindus, on the sole premise that they are religiously and culturally different. It also fails to acknowledge the fact that Muslims and Hindus enjoyed peaceful co-existence in the subcontinent for centuries.

Content	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>"Hindus and Muslims belong to separate religions which have distinct faiths and they reflect discrete ideas. Their heroes, histories, wars and activities run on opposite lines. Therefore, to assimilate both the nations in one political accord is tantamount to the destruction of the subcontinent. As there is no symmetry between them, they have idiosyncratic marks of minority and majority," Muhammad Ali Jinnah</i>	Ideological Basis of Pakistan, p10, line 16-21	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class IX
<i>Muslims are a separate nation because their customs, traditions, culture and civilization, and above all, their religions are different.</i>	Making of Pakistan, p21, line 18-20	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class IX
<i>Islam is a complete code of life. It guides each Muslim from cradle to grave, and aligns his life. Therefore, under the dominance of non-Muslims or those who have hostile and antagonistic behavior towards Muslims, it is difficult to spend life according to the teachings of Islam.</i>	Pakistan Movement (1937-47), p46, line 4-6	Sindh Textbook Board's Social Studies book for Class VII
<i>In his speech, Quaid-e-Azam said, "Hindus and Muslims have different religions. Their lifestyle, social values, customs, literature etc. are different. They can't have inter-marital relations, nor dine together. Truth is that Hindus and Muslims belong to different civilizations whose ideas and outlooks fall poles apart."</i>	Creation of Pakistan, p27, line 5-7	Sindh Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class 9-10

Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies for Class IX, p13, contains a quotation by Muhammad Ali Jinnah which favors Islam but has not been supported, neither a date nor the speech from which this text is taken is mentioned.

**"We had not demanded for Pakistan's creation to acquire just a piece of land but to acquire a lab where Islamic principles could be tested."**

The NC2006 curriculum for Pakistan Studies Class (IX and X) also commits a mistake in killing the true spirit of the speech made by Muhammad Ali Jinnah on 11 August 1947 to the first constituent Assembly. The curriculum asks "trace the role of minorities in Pakistan with specific reference to Quaid-i-Azam's speech of 11 August 1947, defining their status." The NC2006 has made the mistake of relegating the speech to a mere call for freedom of religion and belief. This has been translated in the textbooks to mean that religious minorities will have the same rights as the majority instead of telling the students that Quaid-e-Azam wanted religion and state to remain separate<sup>60</sup>.

The KPK Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies book for Class IX, p6, quotes the Quaid's speech showing that religious minorities enjoy equal rights in Pakistan while the true meaning of his words is ignored, which is to separate the affairs of the state from religion.

The overall representation of minority groups during events throughout history is a critical aspect to acknowledge. One-sided discussions and excluded details can create a picture of history which students take as truth, but in fact, are inaccurate representations of history and the minorities involved. In addition, by limiting the amount of relevant information of minorities in textbooks, students begin to draw conclusions that these minorities must not be important. Students are not being presented with an accurate history and their knowledge of others becomes skewed. Resultantly, the skewed perceptions of minorities can create disconnected and ignorant inter-group relationships which disrupt social harmony.

History and Pakistan Studies demand an authentic inquiry into the past, however uncomfortable and politically incorrect the truths may be. This is the only way that societies can truly learn from past mistakes and move forward with a better understanding of themselves and each other.

## GLORIFICATION OF JIHAD

The textbooks disseminate militancy and hatred by glorifying jihad. The concept of Jihad has been reduced from its broader meaning of Jihad al-nafs to violent conflict in the name of religion<sup>61</sup>. Jihad al-nafs is an Islamic concept which illuminates the struggle against evil ideas, desires, powers of lust, anger and all other satanic influences from one's soul by placing them under the dictates of reason and obedience to God<sup>62</sup>.

Without providing adequate context, the textbooks make it seem like Jihad is mandatory on every Muslim and the student, whose prime source of knowledge is the textbook, could naively consider it as an order from God to forcibly convert non-Muslims. The textbooks fail to shed light on the fact that the decisions regarding Jihad should be reserved with the state, governmental authority or institutions, or court of law as opposed to the individual. This also creates the possibility, rather a risk, of allowing people to challenge the authority of the state in matters of religion.

Content	Chapter & Page No.	Textbook Board, Subject & Class
<i>Since, Holy Prophet's (PBUH) message to the humankind is to be carried forward by the Muslim Ummah, no Prophet will be sent after Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH).</i>	Beliefs and worship, p27	Sindh Textbook Board Islamiyat Class III
<i>A person who has neither participated in Jihad nor had its passion in the heart, his death will be the death of a traitor.</i>	Jihad, 68-70	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Islamiyat Class IX-X
<i>Without Jihad there is no concept of religion or the concept of Islam. Therefore, times and limits are set for other worships, but not for Jihad. Sacrificing life and wealth for the prestige of Islam and making preparations according to your strength to fight against the enemies of Islam is also Jihad.</i>	Jihad, 68-70	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Islamiyat Class IX-X

In Sindh Textbook Board's Islamiyat p58, the passage, even while preaching tolerance, inevitably ends up demanding Muslim students to "lovingly" try to convert their fellow countrymen.

Although force has not been encouraged, the very need to constantly try to convert non-Muslims leads to a holier-than-thou attitude in children.

The narrative created by these textbooks is predominantly problematic as it outrightly invokes jihad and thus undermines the fundamental rights of the religious minority communities, who are repeatedly forced to convert to Islam, in education settings and beyond.

# Positive Developments

Some textbooks, particularly those of Sindh, try to make an attempt at including religious minorities in the content, which is a welcome first step.

After the inception of National Action Plan government of Punjab introduced a booklet in public school consisting of peace and harmony promoting stories which is now part of textbooks.

Christmas, Diwali and Dosahara have been mentioned as important festivals of Pakistan in various textbook including Urdu, Social Studies and General Knowledge. Images regarding places of worship of different religions including Church, Temple, Gurdwara have also been added.

Here are some notable and praiseworthy references which offer an inclusive and refreshing take on co-existence, tolerance and peace.

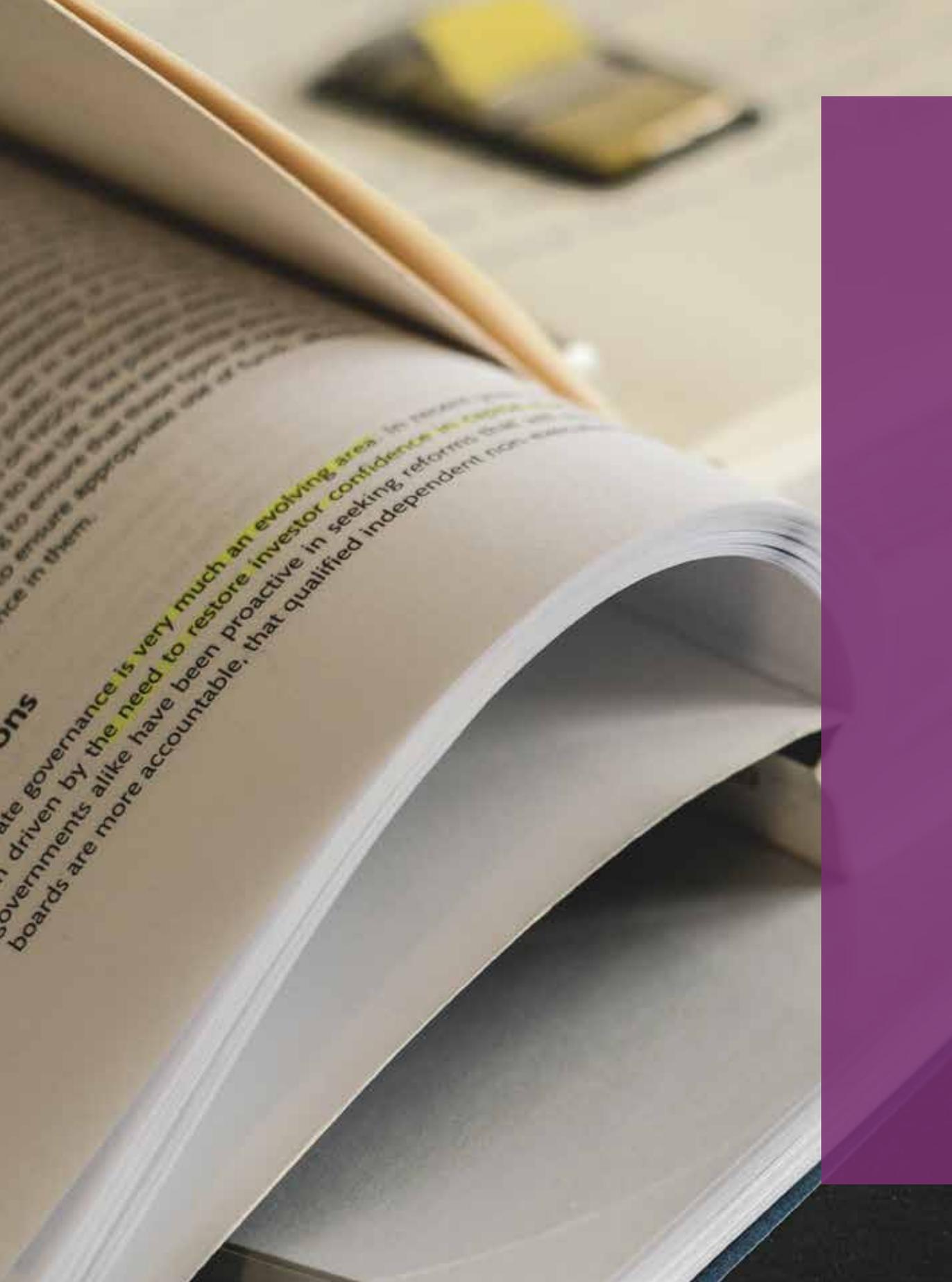
- Sindh Textbook Board's Social Studies for Class IV has a chapter on 'Our collective existence', which on p69 mentions most of the religious festivals held in Pakistan, and how all citizens celebrate state events regardless of their religion
- Sindh Textbook Board's Social Studies for Class V, in its chapter 'Important personalities in Pakistan and the world', on p69 mentions the contribution of Dr Abdus Salam. Another chapter, 'Our heritage', p82-87, charts out a detailed representation of the cultural rituals of different countries.
- Sindh Textbook Board's Social Studies for Class VI in its chapter on media, p95, offers a comprehensive description of what it means to stereotype which would help students to better understand what is okay to say and not say
- Balochistan Textbook Board's History & Geography Class VI, p66-67, provides a list of the Sufi saints of the region with their brief biographical details. It would have been even better to include their sayings.
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board's Pakistan Studies for Class IX in the chapter 'History of Pakistan', p64, provides the details of the first constituent assembly and mentions about Jogendra Nath Mandal, a Bengali founding father of Pakistan.
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board's Civics for Class X, in its chapter on Functions of legislature, p12, mentions the rights of the minorities in decision-making. Another chapter on diversity and tolerance, p94-100, explains diversity, discrimination and representation which reminds students to be tolerant to each other.
- Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's Urdu for Class II has a chapter which includes a Sikh, a Christian and a Parsi. Despite its inclusiveness, it touches upon some negative stereotypes related to religious minorities before giving out a positive message of tolerance and non-discrimination.
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board's General Knowledge for Class I, p37, contains pictures of worship places of religious minorities including Church, Mandir and Gurdwara.

Although these are positive steps that must be appreciated, there is a long way to go before the reforms in the education sector, curricula and textbooks can remove all biases and hate speech against the religious minorities and promote co-existence, tolerance and peace. Till then, our children will continue to be the victims of academic fanaticism, the implications of which are genuinely worrisome.



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ate governance is very much an evolving area. In recent years, governments alike have been proactive in seeking reforms that ensure appropriate use of funds and confidence in capital markets. In order to ensure appropriate use of funds and confidence in capital markets, governments alike have been proactive in seeking reforms that ensure appropriate use of funds and confidence in capital markets.



# 10 Implications

Successive governments have used religion and ideology of the 'other' in education as a tool to artificially create antagonistic national identities, achieve their political goals and control the society. In the past few decades, intensification of persecution of religious minorities has been caused by a combination of factors. The constitutional-legal, socio-religious and political contexts within which these religious minorities exist in Pakistan interact with widely held, and state-supported, Muslim views of Islamic superiority and the inferiority of non-Muslims and perceived heretics. Years of radicalization through an educational curriculum that propagates hatred for religious minorities has resulted in creating a generation with overzealous hatred against anyone perceived as the 'other', hugely biased law enforcement authorities, prejudiced media and a judicial system unwilling to protect the minorities. The implications of an educational system swathed in religiosity are far-reaching, substantial and undoubtedly detrimental to the social fabric of the country. Some of these are discussed below.

## ***Abuse, Discrimination and Violence in Educational settings***

The venomous content in education textbooks against religious minorities creates and reinforces negative sentiments among students which then manifests itself in abuse, discrimination and violence.

Teachers and Muslim students often have discriminatory attitudes towards students from minority faiths and also attempt to forcibly convert them. Those with an extremist mindset try to influence minority students and convince them that their faith is contrary to the universal truth and Islam. The excessive pressure to convert has been the reason for many students to quit education.

A report cites as many as 12 Christian students leaving school because of "aggressive discrimination and coercion to convert". There have been many cases of expulsion of students from educational institutes by the school administration owing to their beliefs<sup>63</sup>. In 2011, at least 10 students and a teacher were expelled from two schools in Faisalabad for being Ahmadis<sup>64</sup>.

Students from minority faiths are routinely subjected to severe physical and psychological ill-treatment including being bullied and segregated and beaten on several occasions by both teachers and students of majority faith. In 2018, a Christian boy, aged 12, was beaten and suspended from his school in Attock by his teacher for turning off a running tap and making it filthy<sup>65</sup>.

Students are compelled to not disclose their faith as this can make them more vulnerable to discrimination. Minority students often have to hear hateful remarks about their religions and jihadist propaganda against 'infidels' throughout their schooling years, which they bear with silence, disgust and hopelessness.

## ***Rights abuses and violations of Religious minorities***

In 2019, Pakistan has again been designated as a 'country of particular concern under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), which has been its status since 2002. Religious minorities are faced with innumerable ongoing, egregious and systematic rights abuses and violations with a fatal focus from terrorists and extremists. Their fundamental rights including their right to life and safety has been constantly under threat. From the ethnic cleansing of Hazaras in Quetta<sup>66</sup> to Pakistan's disappeared Shias<sup>67</sup>, from Kot Radha Kishan<sup>68</sup> to Youhanabad<sup>69</sup>, from attacks on Ahmadi places of worship to desecration of Hindu temples, and from the forced conversion of Reena and Raveena<sup>70</sup> to the brutal rape and murder of Hindu minor girl Mina<sup>71</sup>, there is a cold-blooded calculation behind this blood-letting, and these are truly besieged communities. The violence targeted at them is not sporadic but a carefully planned savagery in line with the narrative promoted in the curriculum and textbooks.

## ***Denial of opportunities***

Faced with discrimination in educational institutions, religious minorities are often dissuaded by

[63] <https://www.rabwah.net/shadows-of-endless-nights/>

[64] <https://tribune.com.pk/story/269390/ahmadis-expelled-from-school/>

[65] <https://www.ucaNews.com/news/pakistani-headteacher-suspended-for-attacking-christian-student/837705>

[66] <https://www.pakistanToday.com.pk/2018/05/11/ethnic-cleansing-of-hazara-shias-must-stop/>

[67] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44280552>

[68] <https://www.dawn.com/news/1456442>

[69] <https://tribune.com.pk/pakistan/balochistan/>

[70] <https://www.geo.tv/latest/232320-timeline-the-disappearance-of-raveena-and-reena>

[71] <https://www.dawn.com/news/1255011>

the system to avail any opportunity to help them progress both academically and economically. Many students are often denied admission to our higher educational institutes because they fail to reach the required merit. Their low merit is not due to any academic failures, rather it is because they lose their marks against a hafiz-e-Quran (a person who learns the Quran by heart), who gets bonus points even if he has scored lower than his peers in the exams.

Ignorance of other religions causes students of majority faith to believe in stereotypes and negative portrayal of religious minority communities presented through textbooks or learned from their homes and the society at large. The belief that people from minority faiths, and particularly Christians, are fit for sweeping jobs, pushes them further to the periphery and leads to limiting mobility between occupations<sup>72</sup>. The one chance that Muslim students had to study world religions in Ethics was taken away as the subject is only reserved for minority students.

### ***Intolerance, Extremism and Blasphemy***

Over the years, social productivity has decayed and disharmony has ripened. The curriculum produces students of majority faith whose worldview is largely anchored in nationalist Islamic orthodoxy. A complex interplay of other factors exacerbates the situation, resulting in young minds plagued with extremist mindsets, resistant to coexistence, open dialogue and diversity. Extremist Islamist organizations effectively draw on powerful existing narratives in promoting their worldview. Our history is riddled with examples of violence exhibited in educational settings and beyond against minorities as well as people with liberal ideas, which shows how the propaganda of hatred spread through textbooks finds fertile ground in young minds<sup>73</sup>. Teaching discrimination increases the likelihood that violent religious extremism in Pakistan will continue to grow, weakening religious freedom, national and regional stability, and global security.

The blasphemy law has time and again served as tool used to settle scores and personal vendettas. Recent years have seen an increase in the cases of

blasphemy allegations in both online and offline spaces, particularly from Punjab<sup>74</sup>. In 2019, a third-year student in Bahawalpur stabbed his professor to death over blasphemy for organizing a mixed party for students<sup>75</sup>. In another known case, a university teacher in Multan, Junaid Hafeez, has been languishing in jail under blasphemy charges since 2013. His lawyer, Rashid Rehman was assassinated in 2014 for pleading his case<sup>76</sup>.

The brutal mob lynching of Mashal Khan, a Mar-dan university student, by fellow students for allegedly publishing blasphemous content online<sup>77</sup>. These horrifying cases reflect the extreme level of intolerance in the society towards anything that does not fit in the narrow interpretation of religiously appropriate conduct.



### ***Failure to educate young minds***

Without doubt, education is considered a sound investment into the future of a country. It provides a society with its scientists, innovators, engineers, artists, writers, intellectuals, poets, technicians, doctors and well-informed citizenry<sup>78</sup>. Nevertheless, education has, since its inception remained a low priority issue for Pakistan, evident from the low level of budget appropriated for education and lack of major steps taken to reform the curriculum. Globalization and advancement in technology have blurred the physical and educational borders of

[72] <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/christians-required-only-as-sweepers/>

[73] <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Peter-Jacob-highlights-the-hate-that-fills-Pakistani-schools-lists-those-killed-46629.html>

[74] <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1657005/1-74-blasphemy-cases-pakistan-originate-punjab-reveals-report/>

[75] <https://www.dawn.com/news/1470814>

[76] <https://www.dawn.com/news/1258426>

[77] <https://www.dawn.com/news/1326729>

[78] Pervez Hoodbhoy, Education Reform in Pakistan: Challenges and Prospects; <http://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2014/02/Pakistan-Education-Challenges-and-Prospects-2006.pdf>

Mashal Khan Illustration Credits: Aiza Ahmad, Herald Magazine - Dawn

nation-states, which has opened up huge opportunities for future generations. This requires the focus of education to be such that it prepares young people for life, work and citizenship with critical thinking, creativity, interpersonal skills and a sense of social responsibility to influence each. Textbooks are viewed as unbiased and influential sources of knowledge. However, the current curriculum and textbooks in Pakistan unabashedly lack a multi-purpose perspective and will fail to produce young minds with 21st century skills. Instead of dealing with bigotry and ignorance, the hyper focus on promoting nationalism through Islamic identity makes it impossible for the future generations to appreciate coexistence, social cohesion and diversity. Our future generations will be unable to survive in the competitive world with their limited intellectual and critical thinking ability.

Negative portrayal of religious minorities, factual inaccuracies and distorted history of the sub-continent will only produce 'educated' but narrow-minded, prejudiced, irrational and bigoted citizens.

# 11 Recommendations

Pakistan needs to take urgent steps to remove hate speech, bias, bigotry and militancy from its textbooks. It needs a systemic curriculum reform, following an international-level curriculum that includes rigorous analysis and critical thinking and is based on principles of human rights and equality. Towards this end, it is appealed from the government to implement the following recommendations:

- Undertake an urgent review of the National Curriculum 2006 to make it compliant with Pakistan's constitutional obligations towards its religious minorities. The new or revised curricula must ensure that freedom of religion and belief of the religious minority communities in the educational setting is protected as mentioned under Articles 20, 22, 25 and 36 of the Constitution of Pakistan.
- Install a consultative process to design the new education policy and curricula by bringing different segments of the society on board. A broad-based consultative process leads to ownership by the stakeholders and also increases the chances of success.
- Take steps to adhere with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the recommendations by its committee regarding the reform of the curricula. It is Pakistan's binary obligation first as a state party to the convention and second as a beneficiary of the European Union's Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) status.
- Make the current system of education compliant with the international treaties and conventions to which Pakistan is a state party, including ICCPR, ICESCR and UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.
- Reform and invest in training of the pre-and-in-service teachers to create awareness among classroom practitioners about peace, tolerance and coexistence. Particular attention needs to be paid to sensitize the teachers about the rights of religious minorities by special programs tailored to raise awareness about religious, ethnic, linguistic diversity and equality.
- Take affirmative measures to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal No 4 and 16. These require ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all and promoting peaceful and inclusive society for sustainable development.
- Ratify UNESCO Convention against Discrimination<sup>79</sup> in Education, which lays emphasis on the freedom of religion and belief in educational settings and protects the rights of religious minority students<sup>80</sup>.
- Specific measures must be taken by the federal and provincial governments to constitute committees for the effective implementation of Supreme Court's directive of 19th June 2014 on promotion and protection of religious minorities. It also urged the government to develop appropriate curricula at school and college level to promote a culture of religious and social tolerance.
- Take immediate and urgent steps to remove religious education of majority faith from compulsory subjects as it contravenes their constitutional rights. Religious lessons should only be taught in religious subjects.

[79] <https://en.unesco.org/themes/right-to-education/convention-against-discrimination>

[80] It requires states to ensure that education is directed to the full development of the human personality and strengthens respects for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The convention emphasizes on the liberty of parents to choose for their children's education in conformity with their moral and religious beliefs. Also, it introduces the right to members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities

- Make religious education the responsibility of parents as in public schools of a multi-religious society, hyper emphasis on the majority faith can lead to a divisive society. However, if majority students continue to receive religious education, then other students, irrespective of their faith, must also have the opportunity to study their own faiths. Implementing Articles 20 and 22 of the constitution, it should be ensured that the religious education of minority communities is made part of the curriculum instead of forcing them to either study about the majority faith or multiple religions under the alternative Ethics course.
- Invite and involve well-respected scholars, for Pakistan studies and history specifically, who have authored international scholarship on the topics to devise the curriculum and write the texts. An inquiry based on truth is needed for teaching history rather than simply mentioning selected facets that happen to fit into a certain narrative. A complete restraint should be observed on teaching prejudiced and unilateral history to children. This will allow students to build up logical opinions based on factual accounts of history.
- Make lessons on peace and tolerance and global citizenship an integral part of the social sciences curriculum. Relatedly, students should be encouraged to use multiple sources or information and evidence to learn about a topic and emphasis must be laid on active discussion and debate around current world issues. This will develop their critical thinking skills which will allow them to critically evaluate multiple sources of information on any issue and to reject false information and conspiracy theories.
- Make extra marks given on the grounds of religious qualification, such as Hafiz-e-Quran, invalid or devise a similar criterion of religious qualification for other religious minorities also to provide them with a level playing field as this serves as a discrimination to others.
- Invite authors from the minority faiths to contribute to the Ethics textbooks so that a real picture can be sketched of their religions instead of a distorted and stereotypical portrayal. Currently, Ethics textbooks, like most other textbooks, are written by Muslims authors who present their own view of religion instead of instead of including facts or seeking suggestions from the respective communities. The textbooks should also highlight the common values shared by different religions.
- Include the role of religious minorities in creation, defense and development of Pakistan into the textbooks in order to recognize their contribution, and educate and promote respect for the diversity of faiths prevalent in Pakistan rather than excluding them as second grade citizens.
- Make students aware of major festive events of other faiths of the region. Each school should display a chart of such festive days each year, and students asked to extend greetings to fellow students and persons of these faiths in their neighborhood.



National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP) is a human rights body, established by the Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1985. As an advocacy organization the Commission focuses human rights of the marginalized, especially religious minorities, women, children and labour in Pakistan, which involves interventions regarding awareness, opinion building about law and policy reforms. NCJP carries out its activities through seven regional offices in Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Multan, Hyderabad, Karachi and Quetta and a National office at Lahore. For its activities in the field NCJP relies on a cadre of 500+ human rights activists (volunteers) belonging to different religions, cultures and administrative regions of Pakistan. NCJP received an International Human Rights Award by the Tji-Hak-Soon (Tulip) Foundation of South Korea in 2001, for its services in promotion of human rights.

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