

**EDUCATION AND INEQUALITY**  
**DISCERNING THE FOUNDATION OF CITIZENRY**

**Amjad Nazeer**

**Asad Khan**



**Lead Researcher and Author:**

**Amjad Nazeer  
Institute of Development Research and  
Corresponding Capabilities (IDRAC),  
Islamabad**

**Co-Researchers:**

**Muhammad Asad Khan, and  
Azhar Sharif,  
(IDRAC), Islamabad**

**Field research coordinator:**

**Sultan Mahmood, Saqib Khadim**

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HRCP, Pakistan.**

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## Table of Contents

List of Acronyms .....	vii
Executive Summary .....	1
<b>Chapter - 1.:</b> Introduction and Methodology .....	4
1.1. Introduction.....	4
1.2. Methodology Adopted .....	5
1.3. The Sample of Data Collected .....	6
1.4. Rationale for Selection of Districts and the Province .....	10
<b>Chapter - 2.:</b> Perspectives and Problems with Respect to Equality and Non-Discrimination.....	11
2.1. Textbooks Driven Bigotry and Predispositions .....	16
2.2. Education and Equal Citizenship of Minorities.....	17
<b>Chapter – 3.:</b> Experiencing Discrimination in Educational Life .....	20
3.1. Oppression and Ordeals of Ahmaddya Students and Teachers.....	23
3.1.1. A Teacher Who Seeks Asylum Abroad.....	23
3.1.2. A Shining Student under Pressure.....	23
3.1.3. A Superb Teacher Who Had to Quit School .....	24
3.1.4. Persecution of School Children, Teachers and Parents in Nankana.....	25
3.1.5. Raza Butt - The Story of a Businessman.....	26
3.2. Oppression and Ordeals of Hindu Students and Teachers.....	27
3.2.1. Convert or Face Humiliation: .....	27
3.2.2. Faith, Character and Valentine Day.....	29
3.2.3. School Going Children of Shakeela Devi – the Railway Employee .....	30
3.2.4. How Arpan Suffers .....	31
3.2.5. Traumatizing a 3rd Grade Hindu Child .....	31
3.2.6. As You Are a Hindu, Move to the Other Section .....	32
3.2.7. As Hindus are Extremists, So You Too Are an Extremist.....	32
3.2.8. Javeria Kanwal – A Public College Student, Khanewal.....	33
3.2.9. For a Hindu, it is an Arduous Task to Become a Teacher .....	33
3.2.10. KII with Sajid Naz Mukesh Laal, Islamia University, Bahawalpur .....	34
3.2.11. KII with Shakuntla Devi, Multan .....	35
3.3. Oppression and Ordeals of Christian Students .....	35
3.3.1. A Baby Girl Taught on Faith in Khanewal. ....	36
3.3.2. I Will Fix You Christians – The Tale of an IT Student.....	36

3.3.3.	Astive Satial, The Student of a Public College, Khanewal .....	37
3.3.4.	Javed Massih, Government College, Khanewal.....	37
3.3.5.	KII with Amanat Massih, Headmaster Rtd., Government School, Khanewal.....	38
3.3.6.	Punishing a Christian Student for Using the Same Glass .....	39
3.3.7.	Christian Students Beaten up by a Tea Staller .....	40
3.3.8.	What did you think then? – Efforts to Convert a Christian Teacher in Gujranwala ...	40
3.3.9.	The Nephew of Y. K. Massih, Rawalpindi .....	42
3.3.10.	KII with Professor Sallahudin, Former Principal of a Public College, Gujranwala.....	43
3.3.11.	KII with Mushtaq Ahmad Kashfi – Social Worker, Gujranwala .....	44
3.3.12.	KII with Albert Youhana, Principal Girls High School, Gujranwala .....	45
3.3.13.	KII with Dr. Kristofer John, Leader of Anjuman Mazareen Punjab, Khanewal .....	46
3.3.14.	KII with Manzoor Massih, Government Teacher, Khanewal.....	47
3.3.15.	FGD in Aziz Colony, Gujranwala .....	48
3.3.16.	FGD in Francisabad, Gujranwala .....	49
3.3.17.	FGD with a Christian Group in Jahanian, Khanewal: .....	51
3.3.18.	FGD in Amrat Nagar, Mian Chanoon, Khanewal .....	52
3.4.	Oppression and Ordeal of Sikh Students and Teachers.....	52
3.4.1.	Ramesh Singh, Nankana Sahib.....	52
3.4.2.	Guru Nanak Model High School – An Icon of Religious Harmony.....	54
3.5.	Informal Comments by Non-Muslim Students and Teachers.....	54
3.6.	Interpretation and Implications of Discrimination with the non-Muslim Stu. and Tea....	56
<b>Chapter – 4.:</b>	<b>Quantitative Findings .....</b>	<b>60</b>
4.1.	Non-Muslim Students views about discrimination .....	60
4.1.1.	Discrimination in classrooms. ....	60
4.1.2.	Facing discrimination.....	60
4.1.3.	Discrimination with respect to School/College Management.....	62
4.1.4.	Psycho-social inferiority .....	62
4.1.5.	Discrimination in Textbooks.....	63
4.1.6.	Complaint to relevant authorities .....	64
4.1.7.	Satisfaction with Behaviour of Teachers .....	65
4.2.	Non-Muslim Teachers’ views about Discrimination .....	66
4.2.1.	Discrimination faced by non-Muslim teachers.....	66
4.2.2.	Non-Muslim Teachers perspective about non-Muslims students .....	67
4.2.3.	Discrimination in Textbooks.....	70
4.2.4.	Policy Issues and recommendations .....	71

4.3. Parents of Non-Muslim Children views and perspectives about discrimination.....	72
4.3.1. Equal Rights.....	72
4.3.2. Complaint against discrimination .....	72
4.3.3. Discrimination in Academics.....	74
4.3.4. Registration of complaint. ....	75
4.3.5. Policy Issues and Recommendations .....	76
<b>Chapter – 5.: Conclusion and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>80</b>

## List of Acronyms

AIOU	Allama Iqbal Open University
B.A.	Bachelor of Arts
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
C111	Convention - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) 1958
CoP	Constitution of Pakistan (1973)
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
DEO	District Education Officer
EDO	Executive District Officer
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GBHS	Government Boys High School
GBMS	Government Boys Middle School
GGHS	Government Girls High School
GGMS	Government Girls Middle School
GGPS	Government Girls Primary School
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
HSSB	Higher Secondary School for Boys
HSSG	Higher Secondary School for Girls
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDRAC	Institute of Development Research and Corresponding Capabilities
ILO	International Labour Organization
IT	Information Technology

KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority, Pakistan
NBF	National Book Foundation
NEP	National Education Policy
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCTB	Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board
PMTA	Pakistan Minorities Teachers Association
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UGC	University Grants Commission
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**“We are starting in the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State.”**

- Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876 - 1948),  
Address to the First Constituent Assembly of Pakistan,  
August 11, 1947.

**“The minorities to whichever community they may belong, will be safeguarded. Their religion, or their faith or their belief will be protected in every way possible. Their life and property will be secure. There will be no interference of any kind with their freedom of worship. They will have their protection with regard to their religion, their faith, their life, their property, their culture. They will be in all respects citizens of Pakistan without any distinction of caste or colour, religion or creed.”**

- Muhammad Ali Jinnah, The Founding Father of Pakistan.  
- (July 13, 1947).

**“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”.**

- (Constitution of Pakistan - 1973, Article 22-1).

## Executive Summary

Ideally, education is one of the most effective tools to address parochialism and ethno-religious fault lines in society, particularly in a diverse and polarized country like Pakistan. If imparted intelligently, it can help transforming tense relationships and conflicting identities. Where it concerns nurturing behaviours towards or against a community, the process confers ideological support too. Myths and stereotypes maintained against the so called minorities speak volumes about a country's will to accommodate diversity and inclusivity, in other words, towards plural democracy and social justice. On the other hand, it also suggests what is wrong and where in handling extremism, instability and violence.

Discrimination and inequality are deeply entrenched malaise in our society. Education is the most significant arena to be investigated from this perspective. For all intents and purposes, it builds and sustains children's attitudes for the rest of their lives. Potentially, the outlooks and impressions picked up through this process cast their impact in all arenas of social life. Regrettably, education in Pakistan, largely sharpens the existing divisions mainly around religious lines, supplementing the so-called ideology of Pakistan.

Discriminated in all respects and every aspect, the life of the non-Muslims students and teachers has turned miserable. In Punjab, wherefrom the data was collected, an alarmingly 60% of the non-Muslim students experience discrimination or feel being discriminated and disrespected. About, 70% of the teachers endure exclusion just because they do not happen to be Muslims. As high as 72% of the parents report their children to be ill-treated in schools/colleges for being Christians or Hindus or coming from some other faith. Their torments and tribulations are portrayed here in the form of case studies, key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

Precisely, education and academic environment lack the characteristics of objectivity, impartiality and critical cum analytical thinking. Scientific and empirical principles of thought and enquiry, mainly in the social arena, are almost missing. Islamic content has overwhelmingly crept all across social science subjects that affect teachers' as well as students' behaviours and bent of mind. Due to non-recruitment of desired teachers, in-built bias and impracticality, non-Muslim students are almost compelled to study Islamiyat. Neither non-Muslim teachers nor students are 'reasonably accommodated' while studying or teaching religion.

Unfortunately, undermining every other identity, faith has become the only denominator of one's existence. Other ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities that are integral part of Pakistan's composition are rarely acknowledged or respected. Even one's professional distinction or eminence is subordinated to one's faith. Humanist values of respect, equality and empathy rarely feature in the academic environment or teachers' orations. Lessons on equality, fraternity, interfaith harmony, social justice and citizenship fall short of dissemination in academic curricula. Sometimes, Muslim students are found to be confusing 'the west' with the local Christians and India with the local Hindus and Sikhs. Non-Muslims are widely perceived to be the enemies of Islam by Muslims students and Muslims teachers.

Ceremonies and festivals of non-Muslim communities are never considered by the academic system. Sometimes they coincide with unavoidable academic events even with in-house assessments or final exams. Almost all the students, parents and some of the teachers, express their discontent over the aberration. To reasonably accommodate difference, if not the national holiday, community specific arrangements need to be made. Periodical exams and teachers' duties can be avoided coinciding their annual festivities.

Influencing and proselytizing non-Muslim teachers and non-Muslim students to embrace Islam seems to have become a great mission. One can hardly find a non-Muslim student or teacher who had not encountered that assault. Teachers' attitudes towards non-Muslim students clearly influences the attitudes of Muslim students towards their fellow students. Faith is rarely perceived as one's personal matter.

Disproportional to their population and the quota, non-Muslim teachers are very few at all levels which itself is a statement of formal and non-formal discrimination in recruitment processes. Nevertheless, the constitutional provision barring non-Muslims to hold the position of power and influence does not include teaching but it directly affects the attitudes and preferences of recruitment panels as teaching is generally perceived to be the position of power and influence. Though not analyzed in the present study but it is obvious that curriculum and methodology for teachers training needs a thorough revision and improvement to transform it on modern lines of teaching and learning. Teachers' refreshers and students' awareness sessions need to be organized from time to time.

Although there is a need for one but there is no specialized body to observe discrimination, receive complaints and reports, redressal grievances and compensate losses. Most of the victims of discrimination (80%) reported of not submitting an application to the court or even to the district ombudsman. However, whenever a student or teacher communicated an act of discrimination to the higher authority within the system, in most of the cases, he or she was heard and an effort was made to address the problem. Sadly, the system does not encourage non-Muslim students and teachers to lodge complaints while there is a need for such measure.

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## Chapter - 1.

### Introduction and Methodology

#### 1.1. Introduction

Unequal treatment and faith-based discrimination are recurrently observed and reported from multiple arenas of life in Pakistan. Education is one of the most significant areas to be investigated from this angle. It is a process that most probably builds and sustains certain attitudes for the rest of one's life. And in case, it is to nurture behaviours towards or against a community, the process provides them with ideological backing as well. The measures and dispositions maintained against minorities speak volumes about a country's polity and posture towards diversity and inclusiveness; in other words, towards plural democracy and social justice. Alternatively, it opens up a window into the menace of extremism, instability and polarization at large.

Indubitably, education policy, curriculum and teachers cum students' behaviour induce an environment of acceptability and inclusion or rejection and exclusion casting ripples across the societal plateau. Reasonable amount of work has been produced on the biased, exclusionary and myopic curriculum offered from elementary to the intermediate in public schools and colleges of Pakistan. However, relatively limited work been done on the teachers' and students' behaviours and the belligerent milieu it generates against Christians, Sikhs, Hindus and Ahmadyya communities. Apart from several other factors, the mirror effect of the text and the teachers' attitudes and other way round cement pupils' behaviour towards one another and towards the minorities. It is, therefore, essential to look at the overall academic environment with faith-based spectacles. Listening to the victims i.e. the non-Muslim students carries immense importance. To know who says what, about whom from a religious denominator and how it affects students, teachers and parents also prescribe the much desired improvement in the children's learning environment. Precisely, there is a lot to work beyond addressing the biased textbooks.

Discrimination may range from admissions, teachers' behaviour and marking to peer group's exclusion and extra-curricular activities. The broader Muslim society happens to be biased against the non-Muslims and the same attitudes proliferate in our schools and colleges. The psycho-social inferiority it afflicts upon minority students is poorly documented. A minority student may

suffer from multiple discriminations if s/he happens to be a non-Muslim, a disable, a girl and simultaneously comes from very poor background. Non-Muslim teachers may face structural discrimination, hateful attitudes and decisions obstructing their professional growth and progress.

The study is an effort to document direct discrimination quantitatively and qualitatively. Difficult to study, indirect discrimination, is nevertheless equally important that the present work may suggest certain clues about.

## **1.2. Methodology Adopted**

To collect evidence on the scale and patterns of discrimination, the Institute of Development Research and Corresponding Capabilities (IDRAC), in collaboration with Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), employed both the stated methods. To serve the purpose, IDRAC devised a plan to study discrimination against minorities in education sector in the 5 select districts of Punjab.

To commence the task, IDRAC identified the secondary and higher secondary schools/colleges close to the vicinity of non-Muslim communities in Bahawalpur, Multan, Khanewal, Nankana Sahib and Gujranwala. District Multan was not part of the study in the first place. However, in later stage, it was added to include small minority communities to tote up voice of religious minorities in the study. Therefore, without increasing the sample size, Multan and Bahawalpur districts were break it down into half. So, to collect quantitative evidence, close to 50 structured from Gujranwala, Khanewal and Nankana Sahib; and at least 25 close-ended questionnaires from Multan and Bahawalpur were filled in from the consenting schools'/colleges' students in each district. Out of the said sample, exactly half<sup>1</sup> the questionnaires (100) were filled from non-Muslim boys and remaining half (100) from the girl students. In addition to that, about 23 questionnaires were filled from male Non-Muslim teachers and 17 from female Non-Muslim teachers out of the sample size of 40 teachers. Similarly, around 18 questionnaires from the non-Muslim fathers, 21 from non-Muslim Mothers and 1 from guardian were collected out of sample size of 40. In nutshell, 280 questionnaires in all were filled. This includes 200 from the students and 80 questionnaires (40 each from Non-Muslim parents and 40 from Non-Muslim Teachers) were filled in total to take into account the teachers' and parents' opinions in this regard.

To accumulate qualitative evidence, accurately 2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) each in Multan and Bahawalpur and 4 FGDs each in Gujranwala, Khanewal and Nankana Sahib were organized each in select communities, encouraging participants to discuss and analyze the issue of discrimination against their children themselves. Precisely, 16 FGDs in all were organized to serve the purpose. Digging the problem deeper, IDRAC managed to conduct 20 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) in all from parents, teachers and community leaders or expert representatives of non-Muslims or from some education authority/administrator. Simultaneously, IDRAC collected a sum of 24 'Case Studies' of minority students or teachers (stories of worst forms of discriminations) from all 5 districts. Precisely, the said combinations of tools equipped IDRAC to cease on generalizable data about the nature and patterns of discriminations in Punjab<sup>2</sup>.

### 1.3. The Sample of Data Collected

<b>Non-Muslim Students Covered Per District</b>		
	<b>Students Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Bahawalpur	25	12
Gujranwala	51	26
Khanewal	43	22
Multan	33	16
Nankana Sahib	48	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Non-Muslim Parents Covered Per District</b>		
	<b>Parents Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Bahawalpur	4	10
Khanewal	8	20
Nankana Sahib	10	25
Gujranwala	10	25
Multan	8	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>2</sup> The plan was to collect quantitative and qualitative information accordingly but in reality, there is some difference given the field situation, availability and consent of the respondents and the sensitive nature of investigation. Number of respondents themselves had apprehensions to open up entirely and narrate the whole story. Anyway, the numbers are not widely different to affect generalization and reliability of the data.

<b>Non-Muslim Teachers Covered Per District</b>		
	<b>Teachers Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Bahawalpur	4	10
Khanewal	9	23
Nankana Sahib	8	20
Gujranwala	10	25
Multan	9	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Gender Wise Non-Muslim Students</b>		
	<b>Male/Female Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	100	50
Female	100	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Gender Wise Non-Muslim Parents</b>		
	<b>Male/Female Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	19	48
Female	21	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Gender Wise Non-Muslim Teachers</b>		
	<b>Male/Female Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	23	58
Female	17	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Relation with Non-Muslim Students</b>		
	<b>Father/Mother Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Father	18	45
Mother	21	53
Guardian	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Non-Muslim Students Covered by the Level of Institution**

	<b>School/College Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
School	122	61
College	78	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

**Non-Muslim Parents Interviewed by the Level of Students' Institutions**

	<b>School/College Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
School	24	60
College	10	25
Both School and College	6	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Non-Muslim Teachers by Level**

	<b>School/College Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
School	36	90
College	4	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Non-Muslim Students Covered by Minority Group**

	<b>Students Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Christian	145	72
Hindu	51	25
Ahmadi	3	2
Sikh	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

**Non-Muslim Parents Covered by Minority Group**

	<b>Parents Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Christian	29	73
Hindu	11	28
Ahmadi	-	-
Bahai	-	-

Sikh	-	-
Total	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Non-Muslim Teachers Covered by Minority Group**

	<b>Teachers Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Christian	29	73
Hindu	9	23
Ahmadi	1	2
Bahai	-	-
Sikh	-	-
No response	1	2
Total	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Non-Muslim Students Covered by the School/College Category**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
GGMS <sup>3</sup>	13	7
GBMS <sup>4</sup>	4	2
GGHS <sup>5</sup>	52	26
GBHS <sup>6</sup>	36	18
HSSB <sup>7</sup>	9	4
HSSG <sup>8</sup>	13	6
Government College for Boys	48	24
Government College for Girls	25	13
Total	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

**Age of Teachers**

	<b>Teachers Interviewed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
< 25	1	3
26-30	4	10

<sup>3</sup> GGMS: Government Girls Middle School

<sup>4</sup> GBMS: Government Boys Middle School

<sup>5</sup> GGHS: Government Girls High School

<sup>6</sup> GBHS: Government Boys High School

<sup>7</sup> HSSB: Higher Secondary School for Boys

<sup>8</sup> HSSG: Higher Secondary School for Girls

31-35	10	25
36-40	11	28
40>	14	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **1.4. Rationale for Selection of Districts and the Province**

According to the population census of 1998, religious minority is close to 3.73%<sup>9</sup>. Out of the whole lot Hindus constitute as (1.60%), Christians as (1.59%) and Ahmadyya (Qadianis) as (0.22%), Scheduled castes as (0.25%), while others i.e. Bahais, Sikh and Parsi (Zoroastrians) as (0.07%) in all. Although, summarize results of Pakistan's most recent population census (2017) are now public. However, statistics like number of religious minorities are still awaited.

Punjab accommodates the largest diversity and concentration of non-Muslims, particularly Christians, in Pakistan. Christians, Sikhs, Bahais and Ahamadyya (though the last category does not accept themselves as non-Muslims) communities mainly live in Punjab. The province is too large (comprising on 36 districts) to collect evidence from all of its areas, therefore, IDRAC collected data from only the select 5 districts as indicated above.

Bahawalpur and Multan maintain a small but considerable Hindu population and Khanewal does the same for Christians in the Saraiki Region of Punjab. Nankana Sahib is the birthplace of the founding father of Sikh dharma i.e. Guru Nanak and is the heart of Sikh population. After Lahore, the largest Christian minority resides in Gujranwala. It is to be noted that IDRAC did not intentionally ignored or undermined other, but important, non-Muslim identities say Bahais, Ahmadyya and Parsi (Zoroastrian) communities. They are not appropriately represented as Bahais and Parsi population is too scanty to be easily identified while Ahmadis are too scared and secluded to disclose their distinction without one's prolonged effort. However, successful effort was made to collect their opinion and experiences as well.

<sup>9</sup> As calculated by 1998 census. Non-Muslim communities themselves project it far higher than the present figure. See: <http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files//tables/POPULATION%20BY%20RELIGION.pdf>

## Chapter - 2.

### Perspectives and Problems with Respect to Equality and Non-Discrimination

Potentially, education is the very prism suggesting what is wrong, where and how can we address the broader chasms and fault lines in our social fabric. Simultaneously, if directed otherwise, the very process can pose massive challenges for peace, plurality, inclusiveness and diversity. Depending on its content and contours, it can bridge or widen the societal rifts and breaches. Also, if employed wisely, it can transform even revolutionize a society. What of dealing with the existing ones, the process holds a key to resolve the emerging even futuristic enigmas too. Apart from combating with the physical and technical paradoxes, education is tremendously capable to impart empathetic and humanist attitudes to its new generations. Unfortunately, education in Pakistan, at least the social science education, is instrumentalized to serve the parochial nationalist and political purposes.

General Zia-ul-Haq's regime (1977-1988) changed the entire outlook and spirit of education, to Islamize the whole society. Part of that was done under the shadows of America's war against Soviet Union in Afghanistan and Pakistan was its frontline ally. In Zia-ul-Haq's own words: "*Our Curriculum must ensure that our children are brought up educated as good Pakistanis and good Muslims. They must imbibe the lofty ideals and principle of Islam<sup>10</sup>.*" Quoting him again, "*The highest priority would be given to the revision of the curricula with a view to reorganizing the entire content around Islamic thought and giving education an ideological orientation so that Islamic ideology permeates the thinking of the younger generation and helps them with the necessary conviction and ability to refashion society according to Islamic tenets<sup>11</sup>.*"

A directive issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to the textbook authors in early 1980s, very clearly states that: "*To demonstrate that the basis of Pakistan is not to be founded in racial, linguistic, or geographical factors, but, rather, in the shared experience of a common religion. To get students to know and appreciate the ideology of Pakistan, and to popularize it with*

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<sup>10</sup> Excerpt from the inaugural speech of General Zia-ul-Haq in his inaugural speech of National Educational Conference 1977. Quoted in: SDPI (2009) Subtle subversions: The state of curricula and textbooks in Pakistan, See: <http://www.sdpi.org/publications/files/State%20of%20Curr&TextBooks.pdf>

*slogans. To guide students towards the ultimate goal of Pakistan – the creation of a completely Islamized State<sup>12</sup>”.*

Little surprise that number of educated people or persons in the process of education happen to be far more parochial or prejudiced than the non-literate. Sounds quite relevant here to mention the precautionary words of Katarina Tomasevsky (special rapporteur on the right to education), *“more importantly, retrospective studies of genocide and inter-ethnic or inter-religious warfare have often identified school textbooks as a factor leading to warfare or genocide. Failure to address such issues can thus be deadly<sup>13</sup>”* In that case with reference to Pakistan, apart from the widening of societal rifts, polarization and sectarianism, it is the non-Muslim minority that suffered the most. Nevertheless, one thing is sure, that education reform process can prove successful only if the human rights and the principles of equality and non-discrimination are underlined in the social science curricula and teachers are intensively oriented towards.

Exclusion, discrimination and victimization on any social, linguistic, cultural, racial or religious grounds is prohibited in international human rights law and the principles of equality and non-discrimination. To look at the depth and the magnitude of the problem in the following chapter, it is adequate to make an a-priori reference to the human rights provisions of equality and non-discrimination.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) delineates very clearly that *“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace”* (Article 26).

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in David j. Roof (2015) Problems of common interest: The shaping of education in Pakistan: 1970-2014, Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences, Vol. 9 (1), 35-51,

<sup>13</sup> Commission on Human Rights, 56th Session, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Progress report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Katarina Tomasevski, submitted in 1999.

Discrimination, as defined by UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), includes *“any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education and in particular: of depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level; of limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard; of inflicting on any person or group of persons conditions which are incompatible with the dignity of man<sup>14</sup>”*.



*UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), includes “any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education and in particular: of depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level; of limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard; of inflicting on any person or group of persons conditions which are incompatible with the dignity of man*

**- UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education**



To prevent and eliminate discrimination, it also binds States Parties to: *“abrogate any statutory provisions and any administrative instructions and to discontinue any administrative practices which involve discrimination in education; ensure, by legislation where necessary, that there is no discrimination in the admission of pupils to educational institutions; not to allow any differences of treatment by the public authorities between nationals, except on the basis of merit or need...; not to allow, in any form of assistance granted by the public authorities to educational institutions, any restrictions or preference based solely on the ground that pupils belong to a particular group<sup>15</sup>”*.

Reinforcing the obligation further, Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states: States Parties shall respect and ensure education to...*“each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.”* Article 29 (1) of the same Convention makes it

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<sup>14</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (1960), Convention against Discrimination in Education. See: [http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/DISCRI\\_E.PDF](http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/DISCRI_E.PDF)

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (1960), Convention against Discrimination in Education, See: [http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/DISCRI\\_E.PDF](http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/DISCRI_E.PDF)

very clear that the education of the child shall be directed to: *“The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the UN Charter; 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; 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<sup>16</sup>.....”*

Likewise, Article 26 of ICCPR emphasizes, *“All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination”*.

Non-discrimination and equality go side by side. Without abrogating discrimination, ensuring equality is impossible. According to the Declaration of the Principles on Equality, *“The right to equality is the right of all human beings to be equal in dignity, to be treated with respect and consideration and to participate on an equal basis with others in any area of economic, social, political, cultural or civil life. All human beings are equal before the law and have the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.”* The law of equality offers protection from discrimination in *“the exercise of public functions, employment, education, provision of goods and services<sup>17</sup>....”*.

The equality principles also prohibit discrimination when it: *“causes or perpetuates systemic disadvantage; undermines human dignity or adversely affects the equal enjoyment of a person's rights and freedoms in a serious manner that is comparable to discrimination<sup>18</sup>”* on the prohibited denominators as mentioned above. The same Declaration identifies certain acts and attitudes as ‘victimization’ when: *“a person subjects another person to a detriment because that other person has, or intends to make a complaint or an allegation of discrimination; give evidence or information in connection with a complaint of discrimination; or bring proceedings or do anything else under*

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<sup>16</sup> OHCHR, Convention on the Rights of the Child, See: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Equal Rights Trust 2008, See: <http://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/Pages%20from%20Declaration%20perfect%20principle.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Same as above.

or by reference to the anti-discrimination law”. It also needs to be noted that some laws assume victimization as a form of ‘discrimination’ while others take it as a distinct form of prohibited conduct apart from discrimination<sup>19</sup>.

To eradicate extremism, violence and religious persecution, Pakistan’s National Action Plan (2014) emphasizes that: *“the material promoting hate and extremism will be considered crime under Anti-Terrorism Act and strict action would be taken against the printers and publishers who will publish such material and; effective steps would be taken to stop religious persecution.* In a similar standpoint In Article 20, the Constitution of Pakistan also guarantees that *“Every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion.”*



*Constitution of Pakistan (CoP) 1973 states that “No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own (Article 22-1*

**- Constitution of Pakistan (CoP) 1973**



First and foremost, it is enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan (CoP) 1973 states that *“No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own (Article 22-1).”*

In violation of national legislative provisions and international obligations (mostly ratified by the State of Pakistan), attitudes of inequality and discrimination, in certain cases quite abysmal and appalling, are commonly observed in our school and college environment. It is an established fact that History, Islamiyat, Pakistan Studies, Urdu and English Language cum Literature from Grade I-XII preach and promote the supremacy of Islam and Islamic glory. To other religions and cultures, their views are exclusionary and myopic. Assumably, there is immense give and take between the text, curricular instruction for teachers and the teachers’ behaviours<sup>20</sup>. Supplementary teaching instructions usually advise teachers to highlight the Islamic spirit of the

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<sup>19</sup> Same as above

<sup>20</sup> Several studies have examined and analyzed social science textbooks in Pakistan. However, there is a need for an in-depth psychosocial study to examine the influence of textbooks on the students and teachers’ behaviour and their influence on teachers’ behaviour towards non-Muslims students.

lessons. No exception, but social science teachers particularly prove to be discriminatory and derogatory towards non-Muslims.

## 2.1. Textbooks Driven Bigotry and Predispositions

Although textbook analysis is not part of this study but seemingly this is also true that apart from parental and clerical influence, much of the teachers' and students' behaviour is drawn from the textual content itself. While explaining an essay, a poem or story, teachers' supplementary interpretation flows along with his/her own biases too. Hence a cursory reflection will help the reader to comprehend the context.

Blatantly undermining Pakistan's multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious society, social science textbooks, especially Pakistan studies and Islamiyat, exclusively instill and uphold the Islamic identity of Pakistan and Islamic Ideology of Pakistan. Its' integrity is described as tantamount to the integrity of Islam. To the exclusion of all other religious values and cultures, only Islamic values and Muslim nationalist aspirations are promoted. In other words, Islamic indoctrination appears to be the sole purpose of social science subjects. While teaching Ethics (optional subject for non-Muslims in place of Islamiyat) or comparing religions, the whole purpose is not to purport common humanity but to prove Islamic superiority. Deplorably enough, lessons on peaceful co-existence, empathy, tolerance, equality and human rights are almost missing.

For instance, the analysis of compulsory integrated curriculum of the First-Grade students i.e. Meri Kitab (My Book) reveals that the 7 of the 16 chapters in all maintain Islamic orations. Similarly, an examination of the Punjab Textbook Board's compulsory Urdu language texts up to Grade 10, divulges that out of 362 in total, 96 essays, stories and poems heavily communicate Islamic substance. No mention of Pakistan's other religions and cultures is made.



*The anti-Islamic forces have always been trying to eradicate the Islamic domination of the world and it can endanger the very existence of Islam.*

*Today, defending Pakistan and Islam is important more than ever.*

- **Social Studies textbook, Grade 5, Punjab Textbook Board, p.7**



The Hindus are portrayed as cunning<sup>21</sup>, unjust, irrational, cruel, backward, superstitious and caste driven while Islam is portrayed as a logical, just, peaceful and natural faith<sup>22</sup>.

With the implementation of the National Curriculum Policy 2006, and National Textbooks and Learning Materials Policy 2007, efforts have been underway to transform social science curriculum on progressive lines with some success but the process in general remains controversial and procrastinated. Anyway, the outcome is relatively encouraging.

For instance, National Book Foundation (Islamabad) published an essay “The Role of Minorities in the Creation of Pakistan” in its History VIII Book in 2014. Similarly, Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board (PCTB), Lahore has published “The Role of Minorities in the Establishment of Pakistan” in History VIII Book, 2015<sup>23</sup>. The essay *ravadari* (respect for other identities) in Islamiat’s Textbook V advises children to respect Christianity and other faiths. Also, it has got a whole essay on the Prophet Jesus Christ<sup>24</sup>. The province of Sindh also has taken some progressive initiatives but its details are out of the scope of this study. Such content is supposed to promote equal citizenry and peaceful coexistence.

## **2.2. Education and Equal Citizenship of Minorities**

The notion of inclusive citizenship, civic responsibilities of a citizen and citizenry rights and equalities rarely feature in our textbooks or class lectures. Alluding or upfront, our teachers and the textbooks label non-Muslim communities as unpatriotic and inferior citizens. Emphasis on minority rights and their presence and contribution in different sectors is avoided to acknowledge. In young minds they further strengthen the idea of non-Muslim as inferior and untrustworthy citizens. Mixed with madrasa and clerical influence in society, close to an apartheid like citizenship is hatched for non-Muslim communities.

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<sup>21</sup> Social Studies (Urdu) VIII (2012), Tehreek-i-Pakistan (Pakistan Movement), Page 70, Para 3, Punjab Textbook Board, Lahore

<sup>22</sup> Connecting the Dots: Education and Religious Discrimination in Pakistan (A Study of Public Schools and Madrasas), United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, (2011).

<sup>23</sup> Anjum James Paul, Pakistan Minorities Teachers Association (PMTA), Role of Minorities in the Establishment of Pakistan” becomes part of the textbook of History 8<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> West Pakistan Textbook Depot (2017), Islamiat V.

Despite the Founding Father Muhammad Ali Jinnah's stress and assertions and CoP's inclusion of equal citizenship of all, it is rarely advocated by the textbooks. Students and teachers are observed clearly undermining their right to equal citizenship and equal opportunity. Despite this being an essential aspect, citizenship education hardly appears anywhere in the elementary and higher secondary education and



*Even the CoP prohibits a non-Muslim citizen to become head of the State and practically, it is almost impossible for him/her to become a prime minister which reinforces the students' and teacher's perception of non-Muslims being unequal citizens of the country*



classroom instructions. Along with that teaching and learning environment and attitudes are devoid of citizenry norms. Even the CoP prohibits a non-Muslim citizen to become head of the State and practically, it is almost impossible for him/her to become a prime minister which reinforces the students' and teacher's perception of non-Muslims being unequal citizens of the country. High Court of Islamabad recently issued a ruling that before assuming a position of power and influence in civil and military bureaucracy, it is must for a citizen to declare his or her faith. The ruling argues specifically to bar Ahmadis from holding a position of power and influence but it might potentially disfavour other minorities even certain sects of Islam too.

As assessed in Connecting Dots (2011)<sup>25</sup>, only about 60% of the public school students could identify religious minorities as the equal citizens of the country. Many of them were even skeptical about the role of religious minorities in the development of Pakistan. Mirroring the students' opinion, a little over half the public school teachers also suspected equal citizenry of religious minorities. What of being equal, they even had their doubts of them being 'good citizens' of the country. It is very much likely that both the teachers and the students' attitudes are influenced by the textual opinions of the non-Muslims and ignoring their role in the making and development of Pakistan.

Discrimination and marginalization is one of the causes that leaves them behind in education. According to the Population Census - 1998<sup>26</sup> a paltry 11% Christians and 20% Hindus are identified to be literate. The following chapter illustrates the entrenched biases and the kind of humiliating atmosphere cultivated for non-Muslims in our schools and colleges. Non-Muslim

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<sup>25</sup> Connecting the Dots: Education and Religious Discrimination in Pakistan (A Study of Public Schools and Madrasas), United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, (2011)

<sup>26</sup> Other than block figures of population, specific results of Census 2017 are yet not declared and notified.

students and teachers, as well as parents and community representatives, share their and their children's firsthand experiences and interactions with reference to studies and schooling. Quoted by them, comments and statements of the Muslim students and teachers amply demonstrate widespread prejudice and exclusionary behaviour dominating our learning courtyards.

## Chapter – 3.

### Experiencing Discrimination in Educational Life (Stories, Interviews and Group Discussions)

Precisely, non-Muslim students and teachers are overwhelmingly believed to be ‘unequal others’ but all of them are not believed to be equally unequal. Therefore, to have an idea of the subtle differences in discrimination with different communities is also helpful. To address the problem effectively, it is relevant to hint at the historical, ideological or theological ‘causes’ and ‘justifications’ put forward overtly or covertly by the State and/or the larger society to ‘justify’ the unjust treatments and behaviours towards different non-Muslim groups:

Of all non-Muslims, Ahmadyya community is the worst victim of discrimination, oppression, exclusion and ‘otherization<sup>27</sup>’. In other words, an institutionalized and slow genocide is in process against them. Skipping the history and heated theological controversies of admitting or discarding them as part of the Muslim community, they were officially declared as non-Muslims in Pakistan in 1974<sup>28</sup>, succumbing to the violent religious movements and lobbying continuing since 1952 to 1973. Contrary to the perceptions of accommodating them a place (of citizenry) as a non-Muslim community, aggression and hostility against them deepened and multiplied. Now there was and is the force of law behind outright rejection of a group of people and almost turning them apartheid.

Widely believed to be ‘apostates and deniers of the finality of the prophet-hood’ their seclusion and tyranny is on the rise. Blasphemy law (298-B and 298-C in particular), evolving and getting stronger and stronger since 1986 institutionalizes their unequal status and ill treatment. Socio-economic boycott and their removal or denying them influential political, civil, military, bureaucratic and judicial positions is somehow officially sanctioned. In some of the big cities even shopkeepers affix posters saying “*Qadianis, who call themselves Ahmadis are non-Muslims and blasphemous, therefore any business deal with them is haram in sharia.*”<sup>29</sup> When a couple of shopkeepers were

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<sup>27</sup> The term has gained currency in minority studies to indicate the process of estrangement or alienation of a religious, ethnic or racial group by the majority population.

<sup>28</sup> Fatwas and hate campaigns against them are reported to be from other Muslim countries like India, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Indonesia, and others

<sup>29</sup> Express Tribune (December 14, 2015) Two arrested for putting up anti-Ahmadi posters in Lahore, See: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1009503/two-arrested-for-putting-up-anti-ahmadi-posters/>

*arrested on that, a large protest gushed out the following day*<sup>30</sup>. Recently another tough ruling was issued by the Islamabad High Court compelling them to declare their faith before assuming or expressing an interest to occupy a position of power and influence<sup>31</sup>. Although the ruling is Ahmadi-specific but it may further disfavour other minority communities as well. Obviously, teaching is not part of that but religious influence and a tacit and tangible tendencies ‘justify’ their segregation in the academic institutions too. To many, teaching is also a position of exercising power and influencing young minds.

After the Ahmadyya community, Hindus are the second most discriminated people in Pakistan. Historically, Hindus and Muslims have been having much in common and composite<sup>32</sup> for living centuries together. Almost equal number of Muslims still live in India as are in Pakistan. The two-nations theory was instrumentalized during the struggle to seek identity and autonomy of Muslim minority (1916-1946) in the undivided India. But post-partition (1947) and post-cessation of East Pakistan<sup>33</sup>, in spite of a tiny population of Hindus left behind, the idea has been hammered into the students and teachers minds that Hindus and Muslims are two separate faiths and civilizations living together worlds apart. Hindus are infidel polytheists venerating myths and idols. No book or prophet was descended upon them and what they profess is all manmade. They believe cow as their *maata* (mother), adore its excreta, burn their dead, incarcerate (*satti*<sup>34</sup>) widows and most importantly are potentially disloyal to this country.

At times certain acts and incidences of violence against Muslims in India provoke reaction and hostility against the local Hindus as was observed against Muslim massacre in Gujrat (2002) and the demolition of Babri Mosque (1992). Historical and geo-political tensions and the rising Hindutva extremism in India is often reduced to the religious enmity and alienation. Also, the sizzling concern for Kashmir and Kashmiris supplements antagonism against India that is, at times, wrongly directed towards native Hindus. Their poverty and engagement of many a Hindus in lowly jobs, mainly in Punjab<sup>35</sup>, diffuses religious discrimination with the class-based disaffection.

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<sup>30</sup> Daily Dawn (December 14, 2015) protest in Lahore against arrest of shop owner for putting up hateful posters, See: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1226322>

<sup>31</sup> Daily Dawn (March 9, 2018) Declaration of faith compulsory before joining civil, armed services and judiciary: Islamabad High Court, See: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1394175>

<sup>32</sup> Demonstrated by Khurshheed Anwar in his famous work, Composite Heritage, Published by Centre for Social democracy, Dehli, India.

<sup>33</sup> Now Bangladesh

<sup>34</sup> Traditionally widow of a man would also sit with the chitta (dead body) of her husband as a token of loyalty to her husband.

<sup>35</sup> Many Hindus in Sindh province are quite wealthy as well as respected professionals.

Loosely speaking, Christians fall at the third level of discrimination. *Ahl-i-kitab* and *Din-i-Ibrahimi* 'People of the book', and 'Abrahamic faith' the theological clichés are abundantly brought forward as an argument for their equality and fraternity with the Muslim *ummah*. The reality often falls contradictory. Yes, they are discriminated a little less, so to speak, but equality is usually conditioned with theo-political qualifiers. Directly or indirectly students and teachers are convinced that Islam is the ultimate and the only true message of God. Their sacred book, the Holy Bible, has been amended or distorted through times. They conflate the divinity of God with the divinity of Jesus Crist and esteemed Maryam *Muqqadisa*. Better they be diverted to the 'right path'. Off and on, they are perceived to be the stooge of western (Christian) nations. Given the circumstances, retaliation and scapegoating them to the Euro-American policies is also been witnessed, say in reaction to post September 11 (2001) American led 'war on terror and 1990 Gulf War.'

Finally, the Sikh too are treated unequally, though grievance towards them is not theologically loaded. In the subject of History and Pakistan Studies at higher secondary and intermediate level, one reference is especially made without a miss that immediately after the Independence (August 14, 1947) Hindu and Sikh *balvai* (rioters) massacred migrating Muslims and raped innocent women, overshadowing the sad truth that both sides were engaged in the said atrocities and bloodshed. Never in texts but at the societal level, their (the Sikhs') appearance and their rituals are also criticized to proclaim that Muslims are the only 'rational and true believers'. Plenty of jokes and parables about the Sikh individuals keep circulating around. Nonetheless, a relative harmonious relation between the Sikhs and the Muslims, mainly in Punjab, must also be acknowledged. Sikh religious pilgrims are welcomed almost every year and appropriate security is ensured by the government<sup>36</sup>. Sometimes, it is also acknowledged that scores of Baba Farid's (a venerated Muslim sufi poet of 12<sup>th</sup> century) *abyaat* (couplets) are part of Garanth Sahib.

To sum up, nothing parallels the stories told by the victims<sup>37</sup> themselves. Described above, the so called 'justifications' can be ostensibly read through the stories, comments, statements and

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<sup>36</sup> Express Tribune (April 13, 2018) Indian pilgrims arrive in Pakistan for religious festival, See: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1685059/1-indian-pilgrims-arrive-pakistan-religious-festival/>

<sup>37</sup> The authors do not intend to convey an impression that all is as worse as communicated by the case studies. The case studies have mostly been collected from the victim of discrimination and inequality. There are others who think that situation is not that or things are changing with the passage of time. The significant ratio of that opinion is clearly reflected in quantitative part of the study.

satires quoted by the non-Muslim students and teachers. Their experience has been sequenced with the degree of discrimination here below with discursive interpretation at the end.

### **3.1. Oppression and Ordeals of Ahmaddya Students and Teachers**

#### **3.1.1. A Teacher Who Seeks Asylum Abroad**

R. A. Butt<sup>38</sup> is an Ahmadi by faith. In Qala Rai Singh, Gujranwala, a couple of years ago, he was appointed as a maiden primary school teacher. In his words, “before I would begin teaching, mullahs of the local area made an announcement in the loud speaker that ‘an Ahmadi teacher has arrived here to teach our children. Do not send them to school. He will turn them apostate’. For a few days no child turned up. But when the children began to come, mullahs pounced upon and whisked all the children out of the school yard.” “He will spoil your faith, the mullahs shouted”.

“Knowing, EDO-Education of the district invited me to explain the situation. Sympathizing and fearing a risk, he transferred me to another school in Tatley Wali, Gujranwala. Over there, the same and some other mullahs approached the respective *numberdar* (local leader) and pursued him to evict me from the school. They launched a whole camping against me over there too. The *numberdar* ignored their concerns and children kept attending the school. But, I then began receiving life threats. One day, when I was going to school, someone shot me from the hideout tearing my shoulder apart. Fortunately, I survived. Now, there was no way out but to resign”. Later on, he sought asylum and now lives in UK<sup>39</sup>.

#### **3.1.2. A Shining Student under Pressure**

It is a story from Muzaffarabad (Azad Jammu and Kashmir) shared by Mr. K. Ahmad an advocate living and working in Rawalpindi<sup>40</sup>:

“The daughters of I. Ahmad are my real nieces. Back in 2013 one of my niece was in 7<sup>th</sup> and the other was in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade in Kulala Girls High School, Kulala Bral (Pallandri, AJK). The younger one stood first in her 7<sup>th</sup> Grade final exams and was just short of 10-12 marks from the total. Her record of securing such high marks has yet not been beaten up in the school. Soon the village people

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<sup>38</sup> Name has been changed to maintain confidentiality.

<sup>39</sup> The information was collected by IDRAC’s coordinator through a skype interview.

<sup>40</sup> Although Muzaffarabad and Rawalpindi both of the areas are not part of our target areas but given the difficulty of identifying and finding desired issues, the authors are compromising on the area, believing that issue is far more important than a technical compulsion.

came to know that the girl who stood first is the daughter of an Ahmadi man. The village people gathered together and put up banners against the girl. Some of them went to the headmistress and insisted her to expel the girl from her school. The following day when the girl – and her sister - went to school, her headmistress said, 'go back home; you need not come to school'. When I came to know, I got the headmistress's cell from someone and called her up. 'I am going to report EDO and to higher authorities', I said. 'I know the girls are very competent but the village fellows compel me to take a decision, which is unfair, but I am helpless' said the headmistress." "I said, I will write against you and take action".

In the evening, the headmistress gave me a call and said, 'the only thing I can do is to get myself transferred, nothing else'. 'Give me some time and let me think it over', she added. After two days, she called my nieces back to school and asked them to take their classes. But after sometime, she managed herself transferred to some other school. People kept complaining to the new headmistress as well but she did not bother."

### **3.1.3. A Superb Teacher Who Had to Quit School**

The story was shared by the same person as above:

"Coming from Ahmadi faith, Master N. Ahmad would teach in the Government Middle School, Tarbakla, Paintal (AJK). By the end of 2009, about 70-75 people from neighboring houses – including some of the local influential - organized a meeting against the teacher, his family and other members of the Ahmadyya community. They agreed to socially boycott the whole community including the said teacher. Also, they decided that whosoever will maintain a relation with them, will have to pay a fine with of Rs. 25000".

"Once the decision was made, they further mounted pressure on Master N. Ahmad to quit the school. He was a talented teacher who meant teaching. Students loved him a lot and as a teacher he was quite famous. Eventually he had to resign. Leaving his hometown he, later on, sold his property and migrated to Kotli".

Likewise another teacher from the same school and the same area, Mr. A. Farooq, had to resign prematurely, amidst local protests and propaganda, a decade or so back in time. In that case even his own fellow teachers turned against him".

### **3.1.4. Persecution of School Children, Teachers and Parents in Nankana**

The story was described by the head<sup>41</sup> of the press unit, Jamaat Ahmadyya:

“R.M. Akmal<sup>42</sup> is a school teacher in Hakamwala, district Nankana. Being Ahmadi by faith, he has been facing threats and humiliation since his appointment in 2013. The same year in the month of Ramzan, local clerics announced in the mosque loudspeakers enticing people to sever all social ties with him for he was a Mirzai (Ahmadi) and maintaining any relationships with him and his family were haram. ‘Even an exchange of greetings with them was disapproved with them in Islam,’ they emphasized. He was communicated life threats, directly and indirectly. Feared, he disappeared from his job and sought refuge somewhere else but returned after few weeks”.

One dark night, a couple of men barged into his house and threatened him and his family to kill them. They warned them to quit Ahmadyya faith or wait for a follow up visit. Robbing them off some cash and jewelry, they left the house. In the face of severe hostility, Mr. Akmal moved to the Nankana city. Over there, when the administration of his son’s school came to know his identity, they told him either to quit his faith or enroll his son to some other school. He chose the latter but things for him, his son and his family are still not very different”.

In Nankana Sahib, most of the shops read, ‘entrance for Qadianis (Ahmadis) is prohibited’. The hostility and anti-Ahmadyya agitation turned even worse in the city after the murder of Mr. Saleem Latif, an Ahmadi lawyer on 30 March 2017. Anti-Ahmadyya agitation further ensued in the city after his murder.

Another Ahmadi, Mr. Muddisar Ahmad from Shadbagh Colony was repeatedly harassed by a local person who would almost follow him everywhere. September, last year when he was waiting to collect his child from his school, an unknown man approached him and asked him to stay away or end up dead. At another occasion, the same man encountered him at a stationary shop where Mr. Ahmad was buying stationary for his son. His wife and his son too were with him. Intercepting the shopkeeper, he said, ‘selling them anything was haram (disapproved) in Islam as they were Mirzai (Ahmadis)’. He too threatened to kill him. At another occasion, Mrs. Ahmad bought some fruits from the shopkeeper. Handing her over the bag of fruit, he asked if too they were Ahmadis.

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<sup>41</sup> Name is being kept confidential.

<sup>42</sup> All names of Nankana case studies have been changed for safety concerns.

She nodded in affirmation. The shopkeeper kept the bag back and used foul language. She got back home crying”.

“Mr. A. Masood, another Ahmadi from the same locality, is also facing a tragic situation. All his neighbours observe social boycott against him and his family. Several schools refused admission to his children and those who would discover their faith later, would urge him to lift his children from the school. Once his son Absar A. was returning home having said hi maghrib prayers. Some young boys grabbed and manhandled him. Onlookers saw, what was happening but no one stepped in to rescue. Masood’s daughter died of natural cause sometimes back and was buried in the common cemetery. When certain extremists know, they exhumed her body and asked his family to bury her somewhere else. The bereaved father had no way out but to succumb the pressure. He then buried his daughter in his arable land.”

### **3.1.5. Raza Butt<sup>43</sup> - The Story of a Businessman**

In his own words: “I am Raza Butt. I am a businessman and come from the Ahmadi community. My own brother was a government school teacher. His children were studying in a private school in Ghummanwala, Gujranwala. They would always face hatred and humiliation everywhere. Be it school, streets, playgrounds, markets or shops, wherever people would know, misbehave and insult them. Excluded and ostracized, they remained. This badly affected their psychology and self-esteem. Eventually, he had to move his children to Rabwa<sup>44</sup> (officially renamed as Chanab<sup>45</sup> Nagar) to enroll his children in a community school there”.

“Earlier he was appointed in Qala Rai Singh. Over there, people rallied against him and he was not allowed to teach the kids. He managed his transfer to a small village of Tattley Wali but was hounded out from there too. There was a murderous attempt on him but somehow, he survived. Frustrated, he secured Asylum in Britain<sup>46</sup>”.

“Likewise, one of my cousins, Imran was appointed as a teacher in Zia-ul-Islam School, Gujranwala. For being an Ahmadi, he too was intimidated every now and then. Even the school principal was warned to kick him out or face the consequences. Initially, the principal put up some

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<sup>43</sup> Name has been changed as an ethical responsibility.

<sup>44</sup> Rabwa is the town in Punjab where the largest Ahmaddyya community is concentrated.

<sup>45</sup> Renaming Chanab Nagar was neither chose not accepted by the Ahmaddyya community.

<sup>46</sup> His own story is also quoted above.

resistance but eventually knelt down to the extremists' demands and insisted him to seek a transfer or resign. He too had to quit the country".

"We are 25 families in Tatley wali. Neighboring community observes a social boycott against us. They hate mingling with us and those who mingle up are also ostracized. Rumour is common that, they and their food smells badly as they are Ahmaddis. Although, we are quite prosperous and our property and business in the market is worth millions. But even a small shopkeeper in the village refuses to sell goods to our children, saying, 'you are Ahmadi-Mirzai'<sup>47</sup>. Accepting your pennies is *haram* (disapproved) in Islam'. Hotel owners refuse serving us food for their utensils will turn impure. No one participates in our marriage and death ceremonies. We are vilified and maligned in more than one means and manners. Whenever there is a religious upsurge, be it the execution of Mumtaz Qadri<sup>48</sup> or something like Moulvi Khadim Rizvi's *dharnas*, we fear lest we face the wrath. Our life is too miserable to state".

### **3.2. Oppression and Ordeals of Hindu Students and Teachers**

#### **3.2.1. Convert or Face Humiliation:**

Rabia Sakeena, the Hindu Student of Class IX at Government High School, Multan narrates her story as under:

"Given our faith, most of us Hindu students have to face many difficulties in school from day one. Impelling us to embrace Islam, keeping their food and utensils apart, not to play with, ill treatment from teachers, so on and so forth, are common gestures of discrimination that we suffer from. My brother and sisters also pull through similar circumstances and no idea how many other students endure the same.

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<sup>47</sup> Name of the founder of Ahmadi faith was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani. Mirza is the cast and Qadian a place in India. They are popularly known as Mirzai, or Qadiani. However, they themselves prefer to be called Ahmadi.

<sup>48</sup> Mumtaz Qadri is the assassin of former governor Punjab, Salman Taseer who was defending Asya Bibi, a blasphemy convict Christian woman, mother of five. Awarded death penalty, he was executed in 1916 and since then he is glorified by the extremist religious circles.

When I was promoted in 8th Class, I found one of our teachers particularly biased and discriminatory. She would teach us Islamic Studies and Arabic as part of it. As for non-Muslims, there is a choice to study Islamiat or Ethics. Usually, there is no teacher for Ethics and we are left with no option but to choose Islamiat. I, therefore, chose Islamiat”.

*Most of us Hindu students have to face many difficulties in school from day one. Impelling us to embrace Islam, keeping their food and utensils apart, not to play with, ill treatment from teachers, so on and so forth, are common gestures of discrimination that we suffer from.*

- **A Hindu Student**

“In her class she would always speak negative about Hindus and Hinduism, say, “these are the people who refused to embrace Islam. They worship idols, pray and bow before and seek their forgiveness. They are *kafir* (infidels) and commit *shirk* (share divine powers with gods and goddesses). Such denigrating comments turn many students negative towards us”. One day, the said teacher asked me to convert to Islam. “I shall perform the ritual and no one will know it including your parents”, she said. After three-four days, she asked again, if I had decided? I refused. She insisted a little harshly and said, she too will go to Jannat (paradise), if I embraced Islam. But I did not reply affirmatively. She turned hostile and inattentive towards me.

One day, while listening to the lecture, I perhaps was not attentive. She hit me with a stick so harshly that the stitches of my shirt went off from the spot and I got a big mark of injury on my shoulder. I complained to my parents and my aunt back home and they communicated the same to one of the local correspondents of the daily ‘Pakistan’ Multan. The respective correspondents visited my school and reported the same to the School Principal. “I shall report in the national media, said the correspondent.” Hearing that both the principal and the respective teacher apologized and said, it wouldn’t happen again. But later on, she kept saying, ‘you are such a mean student that you made a news out of a small matter’. This one and other forms of discriminations are very common in our school and now in college. In the final board exams, I secured 85 marks out of 100 and she was unbelievably surprised to hear that. You were never that good in Islamiat. How you could secure that high marks, she commented”.

“Muslim girls refuse to accept food from Hindu girls in school. Generally, when we take our home-made food to school, about 7 out of 10 girls refuse to eat with us. At times, they would come forward and tease Hindu girls saying “is that true that you worship cow? Is that true that you adulate monkeys? Do you believe in elephant god? Is that true whatever the teacher says? And

we have seen such and such things in a film or a teleplay, specifically referring to some negative character or characteristics and would assert, are you Hindus like this and that? Arguing about religion, they would almost try to pick up fight with us.” Facing such attitudes, many a Hindu girls drop off and never get back to school”.

In case, Muslim girls are fighting and we try to arbitrate. “You stay away, they say. You are a Hindu. How can you settle a dispute between two Muslims?”

### **3.2.2. Faith, Character and Valentine Day**

Muskan is the daughter of a poor tailor Ramesh and lives in an under bridge squatter colony, Multan. She is the student of Grade IX in a GGHS. In her own words:

“Last Valentine Day (February 14<sup>th</sup>), I arranged a party with few of my Muslim friends and class fellows in school. All of us put on beautiful clothes and brought home-made food to eat together. Somehow, one of the teachers discovered that we were celebrating the Valentine Day there. She came to shout at us in the middle of the party and disrupted the whole fun. The next day, she made a big fuss out of that and sneered Muslim girls saying, ‘why were you observing Valentine Day and that too with Hindu girls? Are you a Hindu?’ Pointing out one of my Muslim friends in particular, she said, ‘why do you befriend with a Hindu girl at all? I did notice you wearing Hindu-like costumes and wearing Hindu-like make-up. Are you scheming to perform *nikkah* (wed) with her brother?’ It might be fine in their faith, she further asserted, but don’t you know celebrating Valentine Day is *haram* (disapproved) in Islam. You are a Muslim and you must behave like a good Muslim.’ As a token of penalty, she confiscated our utensils too but returned next day.

Also, she further said, “you need to know that Valentine Day is banned by the Government of Pakistan and about 400 boys are already captured for that”. Lo and behold, she said all this in the mike in assembly and in-front of the whole school. Next day, she said satirically, ‘why do you worship the gods whom you create with your own hands and then pray before them. Do you believe they listen to and fulfill your prayers? In a day or two, I took my mother along who asked her about criticizing her daughter’s faith. She simply denied that anything like that had happened at all. The following day she said complaining, ‘you Hindus are very quarrelsome’.

Ramesh contacted Shakuntla Devi, a human rights activist struggling for the rights and welfare of the Hindu community and herself a Hindu too. He asked her to report this to Media. Shakuntla,

as she said, did contact a couple of the local correspondents but they said, as celebrating Valentine Day is officially banned plus she scolded Muslim girls as well, therefore, the issue will not catch media attention. Hence, we went silent, said Shakuntla.

### 3.2.3. School Going Children of Shakeela Devi – the Railway Employee

Shakeela Devi lives in Double Phatak Colony squattered by the poorest of the poor Hindu families across railway track under the bridge. About 100 children are of school going age there but only 20 go to school. Poverty and unavailability of a school there is the major cause though some of the parents do refer to the teachers' indifference and loathsome attitude towards the wretched community. Closest public school there is at least one kilometer away and being jam-packed by traffic and passersby, it is impossible for a child to commute for his/her school.

“I work as a cleaner for Divisional Supervisor's Office in Multan Railways at a very low scale, says Shakeela Devi. I also work as a household maid in a bungalow and then manage my own house too. Four of my children go to school. The youngest one is 6 but I do not send him to school. I am already managing the pick and drop of my other children with a great hassle. Their father has placed all the pick and drop responsibility upon my shoulder. If I put him to school, it will be an added responsibility. Another reason is that, he was born in Haroonabad (my parents' town) and I will have to collect his janam parchi (birth certificate) from Haroonabad. Both of us (husband and wife) are terribly busy making the ends meet”.



*‘Schools do not award public holidays at Holi and Diwali and sometimes the said festivals coincide with tests or annual exams that cause a big trouble for our children’, she added. If they take these days off without informing the school, they will have to bear insult, exclusion of missing out certain classes. Public Holidays should be mandatory for Hindu community on their annual religious festivals,” she suggested.*

- **Shakeela Devi**



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### 3.2.4. How Arpan Suffers

Arpan is the student of 9th Grade in a public school in Multan. At the first place, getting admission was an arduous task. For whatever reasons, the school in his vicinity was reluctant to enroll him. “Finding the *sifarish* (personal influence) of an army officer, I finally secured admission, says Arpan. ‘You are the first Hindu in our school’, I was told by a teacher later.”



*My school-mates irritate me calling kafir-kafir (infidel-infidel) and put on false and disturbing names. Even they distort names of our gods and goddesses. Whenever there is something about Indo-Pak history, the teachers try to prove Hindus as enemies of the State. Such lessons further strengthen my class fellows’ unfriendly and hostile attitudes.*

- A Hindu Student

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(infidel-infidel) and put on false and disturbing names. Even they distort names of our gods and goddesses. Whenever there is something about Indo-Pak history, the teachers try to prove Hindus as enemies of the State. Such lessons further strengthen my class fellows’ unfriendly and hostile attitudes towards me”.

### 3.2.5. Traumatizing a 3rd Grade Hindu Child

When Radheka<sup>49</sup> was the student of Grade III at a GGPS, Multan. The fellow Muslim girls would often make a mockery of her as she was a Hindu. ‘You worship *buutt* (idols) whom you create yourself. How can they help you ever?’ One day a girl almost assaulted her saying, ‘hey you Hindus worship a funny creature like Kaali Maata possessing many heads and arms and a long bloody tongue of her. Horrible. I wish to chop her tongue off.’

‘We don’t criticize your God why do you do ours,’ replied Radheka. In the middle of mutual argument, approached her elder sister. While fearing the dreadful outcomes for such arguments sometimes, she slapped Radheka to silence her. Getting back home, she told all this to her mother and aunt. All of them warned her to never indulge into an argument with Muslim girls. Lest you say something wrong, they will lynch you then etc. ‘We overly scared the girl’, says her mother, so that she never fights or argues with Muslim girls in future. Who knows what a child may say in innocence. Whatever, they (Muslim girls) say, just go silent, told Radheka’s parents to Radheka. She is in 5<sup>th</sup> Grade now near Kalar Kahar and lives with her aunt. Since then, she is feared enough to avoid picking up any quarrel with Muslim girls.

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<sup>49</sup> The name has been changed for the reasons of confidentiality.

### **3.2.6. As You Are a Hindu, Move to the Other Section**

“I am Mahik Ajmal<sup>50</sup>. When I reached 9<sup>th</sup> Class, the school administration put me in Section – A. Things were fine till my teacher and the class fellows had no idea what faith did I practice. But after a week, when I filled up my Registration Form, it disclosed my faith to my ‘Class In-charge’ that I was a Hindu, the attitudes began to change. First, my Class In-charge was surprised to know that I was a Hindu. Later on, she asked, If I would like to change my Section? I refused and preferred to stay in the same Section. Despite my dis-inclination to switch over, the said teacher put me in another Section and the next morning asked me to move to the other Section. I quit my Section, went outside and in spite of going to another Section sat in a grassy plot, sadly.

Quite unexpectedly, the Deputy Head Mistress turned up there and asked me why I was sitting out there. I told her the problem. Grabbing my hand, she took me to the Class and told the class teacher that she had no right to compel a child to switch over her Section, if she was not willing to. She warned the teacher to not to discriminate a child on the basis of her faith. ‘Hope I will not come to know any such complaint in future,’ she warned my Class In-charge. Once the Head Mistress was gone, the teacher said, ‘I could not expect you doing that’. After a few days, she tried to convince me to convert to Islam. I said, ‘every one’s faith is good for one’s own self. Our Quaid (the founder of Pakistan), did not believe in faith-based discrimination, I argued. Thereafter, she went silent and did not say anything disturbing”.

### **3.2.7. As Hindus are Extremists, So You Too Are an Extremist**

Shiva is the student of Government Boharwali School, Multan. In her own words:

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<sup>50</sup> Mahik Ajmal is a common name and not one of the typical Hindu names.

“When I was promoted into the 9th Class, my teacher-in-charge changed. In the first couple of weeks, when she discovered that ‘I was a Hindu,’ she said. ‘Oh, you are a Hindu. In other words, you too are extremist as I know that Hindus are extremists’. I said, says Shiva, ‘Ma’am the Hindus you are talking about are Hindustani Hindus while we are Pakistani Hindus, why do you draw a parallel?’ Though she went silent on that but she hurled me down to the back of the class”. The next couple of weeks, she remained indifferent towards me. I reported that to the ‘Deputy Head Mistress’ but things remained the same.



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### **3.2.8. Javeria Kanwal – A Public College Student, Khanewal**

I am Hindu by faith and an intermediate student at a Public College, Khanewal. I am not interested in studying Islamiyat but there is no way out. I have to. If we don’t, teachers insist and sometimes compel us to study Islamiyat. If I, and a couple of other Hindu students, skip the class, teachers threaten to put on a fine. Fellow students overwhelmingly insist to become a Muslim. Most of them irritate by calling us infidels and idol venerators. Most of the students as well as teachers abhor us, I believe. Therefore, I do not feel going to college regularly. I personally think, teachers should avoid spreading religious hatred. Teachers are known as spiritual parents, so they should treat all as equals. By smile and love, we can eliminate faith-born odium, she suggested.

### **3.2.9. For a Hindu, it is an Arduous Task to Become a Teacher**

Shirimati, is a primary school teacher at a GGPS, Thattapur, Multan. Ever since, she did her B.A, B. Ed, she dreamt of becoming a teacher. She tried both for government and private school vacancies but in vain. She secured the present job after number of attempts. She explains her experience quite reluctantly lest she loses the job in hand too:

“When I was trying for a job as a school teacher, I appeared for several interviews. The panel would ask questions about Islamic history or Islamic teachings, which obviously I did not know as I studied ‘Ethics’ as an optional subject. (Even the non-Muslim girls who opt for Islamiyat just to secure marks, forget it once the exams are over). As a result, I failed to qualify more than once. The experience was not very different for private schools too. Here the problem was not the

Islamic questions but the penal was normally observed to be disinclined to take a Hindu teacher. In one of the case, the principal told me that, 'he would like to take me but his fellow teachers disagreed arguing that the parents may object'. Finally, I secured the present government job through the quota system".

### **3.2.10. KII with Sajid Naz Mukesh Laal, Islamia University, Bahawalpur**

Describing in his own words:

"My Muslim name is Sajid Naz while my Hindu name is Muskesh Laal<sup>51</sup> and I belong to the Hindu Community of Yazman. I work in Islamia University, Bahawalpur, as a senior clerk. Myself and my forefathers all have been living here in Bahawalpur since times immemorial. We are not immigrants. This is our *dharti mata* (mother land) and we love it. Ironically, we have been turned aliens in our own land. Poverty and untouchability is corroding our lives like anything. General social hatred multiples our menial status. Even at a place like university, people preach me to embrace Islam. "Lest we are accountable hereafter that we found an infidel, yet we did not invite him to come to the 'true faith of Islam'.

"About children's education, you just don't ask; things are too bad, mainly for Hindus. They begin feeling themselves people apart since early years of their education. Number of Hindu children hardly get to their 5<sup>th</sup> Grade then quit. Apart from poverty and inappropriate environment at homes, discrimination plays a part". Even private schools are not free from derogation. My own daughter, who is 10, studies in a private school at Bahawalpur Cantonment. Even she faces discrimination".

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<sup>51</sup> To avoid discrimination members of Hindu community sometimes take two names, one for the public and one that is their real name at homes.

“I think all religions try promoting humanity; all differentiate between ‘virtuous’ and the ‘vile’. But Muslims are adamant that only Islam is the best faith in the world. Same is true for Christians”.

Earlier, at least an introduction to the major faiths of the world was part of our higher studies but no more. It needs a re-incorporation, I believe”....What is almost entirely neglected is our religious ceremonies and festivals. Hindu minorities must be awarded nationwide holidays on their big days such as Holi, Diwali and Dosehra.



*“Independence movement’ in Pakistan studies, portrays Hindus as evil creatures and refers to them as ‘cunning’, ‘greedy’, ‘caste-driven’ and ‘scornful’. It also asserts that Hindus massacred innocent Muslims, raped women and occupied their properties at the time of partition. Naturally, it affects their attitudes towards Hindus. Whosoever did it, and of course on both sides of the borders, have nothing to do with us, we were here in this land for centuries, and people need to understand this”*

- **Sajid Naz**



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### **3.2.11. Kill with Shakuntla Devi, Multan**

“I am a Hindu. Our community is very poor. But we are now educating our children. As you know, non-Muslim children have no option but to study Islamiyat and Arabic as part of Islamiyat at various levels. Not being well oriented to the language, they often make mistakes. Arabic is difficult and is known as the sacred language to Muslims. It is often possible that children may make mistakes. I therefore, would suggest to please avoid teaching Arabic or Islamiyat to our Children. Under the circumstances, it is highly riskier that children make a mistake and face any trouble like blasphemy allegation etc. Thank you for considering our problems”.

### **3.3. Oppression and Ordeals of Christian Students**

### 3.3.1. A Baby Girl Taught on Faith in Khanewal.

I am Saleem Massih. My daughter, ‘Yumna Romio’ is in Grade - II and attends a Government Primary School in Khanewal. For several months, I kept seeing my daughter getting back from school crying. The reason was interesting. ‘My teacher pulls my hair and beats me up. She says, you are a Christian. You are black. You are devoid of any faith. You will go to Hell, so on and so forth’. The next day, I went to school and complained to the Headmistress. “It wouldn’t happen again. I will speak to the teacher,’ she promised.



*My teacher pulls my hair and beats me up. She says, you are Christian. You are black. You are devoid of any faith. You will go to Hell, so on and so forth.*

**- A Christian Student tells about teacher’s attitude**



“After some time, the same practice recurred again, and once again I went to see the Headmistress. ‘The Headmistress told me to write an application to the EDO-Education, Khanewal and she will pass it to him’. I wrote an application and went back to her office. I was right there when the same teacher turned up in the Headmistress’s office with a couple of her colleagues. She discovered that I had an application in my hand against her written to the EDO. Knowing that, the teacher apologized and promised to not to taunt or punish my daughter for her faith again. After that day, my daughter has yet not complained. Hope it is over”.

### 3.3.2. “I Will Fix You Christians” – The Tale of an IT Student

Abeel<sup>52</sup> belongs to a Christian family that lives in a small Chak/Village of Khanewal. He is the student of Intermediate at a Public College<sup>53</sup>, district Khanewal. Since he got enrolled into this college, he is suffering from the contemptuous behavior of a Muslim teacher<sup>54</sup> who instructs them in Business Information Technology (IT). In Abeel’s own words:

“It’s a class of about 90 students and 5 of them are Christian by faith, all coming from the same village. The teacher is ostensibly biased against the Christian students including myself. He, the teacher says, that ‘teaching IT to the Christian youth is a waste of time. They are incompetent and can hardly succeed. Lampooning Christian boys is part of his attitude. Occasionally, he would

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<sup>52</sup> The name has been changed to maintain confidentiality.

<sup>53</sup> Full identification of the college is not given to maintain confidentiality.

<sup>54</sup> Teachers name has been kept confidential.

slap them too. He is particularly prejudiced against me and there are times when he does not allow me to sit in the class, though I am a good student, I believe. Having been enrolled, I was allotted two roll numbers. This means that I could sit in this one or another class too. Perplexed, sometimes I would sit in this one and sometimes in the other class. Like a shuttle, I would move from one to the other classroom.

Last month, I was terribly disappointed and there was some problem at home too that caused me skip the college for a few days. When I turned back, I was surprised to know that due to absence and using two roll numbers at a time, my name was struck off from the college. My fellow students spoke to the administration and succeeded in getting me enrolled back. But now, the teacher would not allow me to sit in the class.



*Christian children are here only to waste their time. They are absolutely dumb and unlikely to succeed. Even if they get through, ultimately, they are going to hold a broom in their hands and sweep the streets. I will fix these Christians.*

**- A Teacher's remarks about Christian Students**



'You are not going to succeed anyway, therefore, it's a waste of time helping you get through. You better stay out there,' he said. Several other students insisted on him but he did not agree allowing me to take the classes. Abeel and a couple of his class fellows think that the teacher is only prejudiced because Abeel and his friends are Christian.

"Christian children are here only to waste their time. They are absolutely dumb and unlikely to succeed. Even if they get through, ultimately, they are going to hold a broom in their hands and sweep the streets. I will fix these Christians."

### **3.3.3. Astive Satial, The Student of a Public College, Khanewal**

'I am an intermediate student of a Public College, Khanewal. Teachers' behaviour, mainly of Islamic and Pakistan studies, is unkind with Christian students. One way or the other, they try to preach Islam. More than once, it happened to me too and I have observed the same for other Christian students too that they are punished more severely for a similar mistake than a Muslim student. Exclusion from sports is also common. Once in a blue moon, a non-Muslim student is encouraged to play a game for his college.

### **3.3.4. Javed Massih, Government College, Khanewal**

“I am Javed Massih and I work as sweeper in Government College, Khanewal. I feel that Christians, particularly rural Christians, are discriminated in jobs including the jobs for janitors in education sector too. They are very poor and must be employed in education and other sectors to come out of poverty. There is also a Muslim janitor appointed here in the same college. His attendance despite absence remains complete while he draws his salary from the same place I draw my salary from. But as I know, he works for EDO Office and almost never comes in”.



*My Children face severe problems in schools as they are poor Christians. Studying Islamiat and especially Arabic phrases as part of Islamiat is a serious challenge for them. Sometimes, my children take their separate glass and plate with them as the Muslim children hate to use the pots they use. But I still believe that Muslims attitudes towards Hindus are improved than a couple of decades ago”.*

- **A Christian Father shares his children’s problem.**



“I do have interaction and relations with the Muslim brothers too. Some of them insist me to convert to Islam but I have yet not decided”.

“My Children face serious problems in schools as they are poor Christians. At times they happen to wrangle with one another and mainly the argument starts from what they believe. Studying Islamiat and especially Arabic language as part of Islam is a serious challenge for them. Sometimes, my children take their separate glass and plate with them as the Muslim children hate to use the pots they use. But I still believe that Muslims attitudes towards Hindus are improved than a couple of decades ago”.

### **3.3.5. KII with Amanat Massih, Headmaster Rtd., Government School, Khanewal**

Amanat Massih’s is almost a unique case where a Christian made his progress to the position of a Head Master but faced many challenges too. He was quite reluctant in describing his story in detail but this is how he partly describes his experience in the education sector:

“I have served education sector for 40 years as a dedicated teacher. I taught children with my heart and soul. Never discriminated a child on one or another ground. To me, a child is a child, the son or daughter of a human person. Given my commitment and experience, I was promoted as a Head Master in 2008 and was transferred to a rural school in Jahanian, Khanewal. In a couple of weeks, I began to notice that my colleagues, I mean my subordinate teachers, began

developing prejudice. ‘How cum a Christian is appointed as the Head Master? Why should we report to a Christian Head?’ I could easily read such questions on their faces. They started communicating their grievances out in the community, I suppose. One day about half a dozen community members and couple of teachers gathered around and threatened me to quit the schools otherwise they will kill me. One of them even held a dagger in his hand”.

“I made a complaint to the Education Department. They were kind enough to transfer me to another area but nothing beyond. I worked for three years there too. Nonetheless, situation there was not largely different, though I did not face a life threat. Contempt and disdain for a Christian head of the school was noticeable in my fellow teachers’ and parents’ behaviors there too. Then I worked at a couple of other places in similar circumstance. Deeply disheartened, I finally resigned though I could still hang on to the position for 10 more years. Now I am running a private school”.

### 3.3.6. Punishing a Christian Student for Using the Same Glass

The story was told by the Pastor Younis Massih from Nankana Sahib as under:

“One of my relative girls studies in intermediate at a public college in Nankana Sahib. Without knowing, once she used her principal’s glass for water. Noticing that, the principal called her into her office and beat her up very badly. ‘Don’t you know, you are a Christian; you have no right to drink water in my glass. You made it impure (*pleed*). You should have not done it. Never do it again,’ she stressed”.

“When I came to know it, describes the pastor, I went to the college and protested to the principal. She got embarrassed and apologized. ‘I will take care in future’, she said.



*Don't you know, you are a Christian; you have no right to drink water in my glass. You made it impure (pleed).*

- **A Christian student describes her teacher’s reaction.**

“My own daughter kept facing distressing attitudes in her school and college at Nankana. About her faith, she keeps hearing the following comments from her fellow students and



teachers: “Holy bible is no more in its original form. Its message has been muted. Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God. Christians do not believe in heaven or hell. Therefore,

they are free to commit sins. After all, who is going to ask them?” When my daughter asks them how do you know it and can you prove that? They fail to provide an answer”.

“Textbooks are almost silent about the role of minorities, including the Christians, in the making of Pakistan which implies that they are alien and non-citizens of Pakistan. In-fact, several of the Muslim and Christian values are the same that need to be promoted. Being Punjabis, our culture is the same as is of the Muslims”.

### **3.3.7. Christian Students Beaten up by a Tea Staller**

“Concentrating Christians, Qasim Bela is a suburban town in Multan. Near their school, one day, three to four students went to a Tea Stall and had their tea there. Discovering that the students were Christians, the stall owner thrashed and humiliated them. “You should have told me that you are a Christian. You have polluted the pots. Now pay the price, he shouted”. The students took the matter to the police. When policemen came, he apologized out of fear”. The story was narrated by Munir Gill, Local Councilor of Qasim Bela, Multan.

Relating the story, Munir Gill says, “when we were students, we too had to have our food and drinks separate. It is 50 years now. Things are still the same. So sad”.

Two of the Christian students, who are studying in Islamia School, Khanewal, said, their math teacher hated them a lot. He would hardly answer any of their questions. If at all, he would ask their class mates to explain them the problem or a formula. Canteen of the school refuses to offer them food. Once, as he claimed, he made a complaint to the school administration but things remained the same.

### **3.3.8. What did you think then? – Efforts to Convert a Christian Teacher in Gujranwala**

I am George Farhan<sup>55</sup>. I am a born teacher, I believe. Given the overall hostile environment against non-Muslims, I was never inclined to opt for public school teaching. To satiate my tendencies, I have been teaching in a missionary school, ‘Saint Francis’ for more than a decade. After that I got job in a well-known private school<sup>56</sup> at Gujranwala. I would teach there to higher secondary students with honesty and commitment. Being a competent teacher, within few

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<sup>55</sup> Name changed to maintain confidentiality.

<sup>56</sup> Name and locality of the school is being kept confidential.

months, I earned respect from students and fellow teachers. Administration also admired my sincerity and wholeheartedness.

One day, I was chatting with my fellow teachers in the break time. One of the teachers, Mr. Akhtar<sup>57</sup> said, “George Sahib, you are not only a good teacher but a man of character and cordial spirit too. Me and my friends think that you should embrace Islam and become a source for yours and ours redemption in the afterlife. No compulsion but you must think it over. Take your time please. Think it over and then decide”. Finding it unanticipated, I was confounded as we never spoke of faith in-

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*One of the teachers, Mr. Akhtar said  
“George Sahib, you are not only a good  
teacher but a man of character and cordial  
spirit too. Me and my friends think that you  
should embrace Islam and become a source  
for yours and ours redemption in the afterlife.  
No compulsion but you must think it over.  
Take your time please. Think it over and  
then decide”*

- **George Farhan**

”

between. After a few days, I almost forgot the talk. The next week, when I went to teach my 10<sup>th</sup> class, a couple of students stepped forward after the class and asked, what did I decide then? I said what do you mean as I had forgotten the whole argument? They said, Sir Akhtar, as we came to know, offered you to accept Islam. I was baffled to hear that. It was quite provoking but composing myself I asked them to leave it and sit back in the class. Next day, a couple of other students asked the same question, ‘if I had decided?’ In a few days, once again, I was asked the same question by another group of students in another class whom I snubbed. In no time it became almost a universal query in the whole school.

Amplified, such voice echoed in the school corridors. Knowing, the school principal invited me to explain the story. I told him everything as it is. Listening to the whole story, what he said is stunning. “It is a divine call. You must listen to your heart. How lucky you are, you need to consider. Think of that invitation. Seek God’s assistance to get to the right decision”.

Upon my silence on all that, behaviours of my fellow teachers, administration and students began to change. Alienation, was a common gesture, what I could best describe. Obviously, it turned very difficult to continue teaching there. Finally, I decided to quit the school”.

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<sup>57</sup> Name has been changed to maintain confidentiality.

### 3.3.9. The Nephew of Y. K. Massih, Rawalpindi<sup>58</sup>

“I am Y. K. Massih and work as a ‘finance officer’ at a private school in Rawalpindi. A couple of years ago, my cousin’s son secured his admission in 8th Grade in my school. When he approached 9th Grade, he opted for Islamiyat instead of Ethics that he had in the previous grade. Hardly after one and a half month, his teacher said. ‘My son, while studying Islamiyat, please avoid touching the verses of Holy Quran as (being a Massihi), you are (naturally) not with *wuzoo* (ablution). If you touch holy verses, it will be an act of (*bay-hurmati*) disrespect. My nephew, reported it back to her mother. She turned nervous and gave me a call to state the problem. I did not believe it and asked her to send the boy to my office next day.

Next day, when the boy came to my office, I reconfirmed the matter. He said, “Uncle, it happened as it is. If you don’t trust me, please confirm it from rest of my classmates. I told that to the vice principal, who is a qualified man and also a good friend of mine. He affirmed the matter as other children had already spoken to him. Then, I asked the same to the relevant teacher. “It is essential to perform *wudoo* before you touch Quranic verses, she insisted. I said that because your nephew is without *wudoo*”. ‘Are you sure that other Muslim Children are with *wuzoo*, when they put their fingers on the verses of Holy Quran that are part of Islamiyat course, I asked. She had no answer to that. I said, please come to the administration office, we shall talk it there.

The teacher came there. The school Principal was also there and the Administrator too who is the owner of the school too. The Administrator said, ‘there is nothing wrong in that. When I myself take Islamiyat Class, I request Christian children to please leave the class’. I was so sad to hear that as I was working in that school for almost a decade. In-fact, his elder brother ran the school earlier who was a learned man and held no biases. Also, he gave me a lot of respect. When he left for USA, his younger brother, the present Administrator, assumed control, who is a little conservative.

After that event, the administration turned biased against me. They replaced my revolving chair with a simple one, raised the salary of the same Islamiyat teacher and did a couple of other discriminatory acts. In protest, I resigned and said, if that is the case, please appoint a Muslim finance officer’ in my place. Vice Principal intervened and requested to me withdraw my resign and was cautious that if the problem reaches out to the Rawalpindi education board, it will not be

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<sup>58</sup> Once again, it is the story of a private school and falls outside the target area. But as the sole purpose of the research was to study discrimination on the basis of faith in the school environment, IDRAC, therefore compromised on the study area and the category of schools and preferred incorporating this story as well.

fair for us all. I withdrew my resign. She encouraged me to take a stand and extended her support too. The relevant teacher changed her attitude later and her unnecessary increment was withdrawn. I am still there. The Vice Principal then is now the Principal and the problem is over.”

### **3.3.10. KII with Professor Sallahudin (Rtd.), Former Principal of a Public College, Gujranwala**

“I have seen discriminatory behaviours against religious minorities multiple times in my career. Minority students and teachers are never treated equally. Ahmadi students are treated very poorly in particular. What of unequal treatment, they are assumed as enemies of Islam and their lives have turned pathetic.

Let me share the example of one of my fellow professors who was Christian named Ashiq Massih Yazdani. He was a very decent and competent person. Once, in the times of elections for teachers’ union, I gave his name for vice president on part of my group for he was a man of character and popular too. Fortunately, he won the elections. His opponent professor was the member of Jamat-e-Islami (JI). Having lost, he visited my office next day and said, “I have no regrets losing, but what hurts me most is that you got a janitor (*choorha*) elected as a vice president of teachers’ union”. Such is the behavior of even the teachers. What do you expect from others?”



*Once, in the times of elections for teachers’ union, I gave his name for vice president on part of my group for he was a man of character and popular too. Fortunately, he won the elections. His opponent professor was the member of Jamat-e-Islami (JI). Having lost, he visited my office next day and said, “I have no regrets losing, but what hurts me most is that you got a janitor (*choorha*) elected as a vice president of teachers’ union”*

**- Ashiq Massih Yazdani**



Having retired from the college, I opened-up a private college in partnership with another professor. He was Hafiz-e-Quran (one who memorizes Holy Quran) and was highly a religious man. Whenever he would discover that some of the enrolling student was Ahmadi, he would simply refuse admission. Though, it was a financial loss too but in Ahmadyya-opposition he was so advanced that he even afforded the financial loss.

I think exclusivist attitudes are getting stronger by the time. Socio-economic backwardness of minorities contributes to that. Better off non-Muslims are treated relatively better. Muslims in

general believe themselves to be superior. Partially, it is the legacy of Mughal rule in India too. I saw anti-Ahmadyya movement very closely in 1973. But it got intensive in Zia-ul-Haq's regime (1977-1888)<sup>59</sup>. What of teachers, even students would hurl insults on Ahmadi teachers. But in return, they would even not whine. Fear is major cause for their pusillanimity. Law of the land was and is entirely against them. Fear subdues them entirely and they are further being pushed to the margins every coming day.

On the other hand, I think America played a role in that. "Bay, (B)", *bandoq* (Gun) and *Jeem*, (J)," Jihad type alphabets and early childhood lessons were even printed there and exported to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Biases against minorities multiplied with that. The books of science would even read religious inscriptions then. You can see the books of biology printed in 1980s clearly revealing Islamic Influence"

"I personally think, religion must not be taught in schools or colleges. It is but a personal matter. If at all, then teach whatever is one's faith. There is serious need for secular legislation with respect to education in the country".

### **3.3.11. KII with Mushtaq Ahmad Kashfi – Social Worker, Gujranwala**

"I have a rural background and can relate some rural experience. Many a times, I saw people hurling indignation to non-Muslims. To insult a Christian, they would most often call him a janitor (*choorha*). In police and court cases, Muslims are usually preferred over non-Muslims".

"Similarly, if a Muslim girl falls in love and gets married with a non-Muslim boy while fulfilling all the legal requirements, yet people and the respective legal institutes favour the Muslim family if they are unhappy with that.

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<sup>59</sup> Authors's insertion.

I personally think that “in a school or college environment, text is responsible to generate and/or entrench such attitudes. Thrusting the superiority of one’s faith over the other causes many problems once the students enter into their professional lives. Look at the History and the Pakistan Studies, how far they have distorted facts just to demean India and the Hindus. I think our textbooks are entrenching unequal attitudes. In other words, instilling and consolidating religious prejudice is the prime characteristic of our textbooks. There is no need to impart religious education in schools and colleges. Objective textbooks hold tremendous potential to nurture egalitarian behaviours. Only science and secular studies can improve the situation”.



*There is no need to impart religious education in schools and colleges. Objective textbooks hold tremendous potential to nurture egalitarian behaviours. Only science and secular studies can improve the situation”*  
- **Mushtaq Ahmad Kashfi**



### **3.3.12. KII with Albert Youhana, Principal Girls High School, Gujranwala**

She states:

“Usually people think it’s’ all about social status. If you are prosperous who cares what faith you belong to. They will treat you just equal. But I think faith still matters in Pakistan. Once they discover that you are not a Muslim, they put the discriminatory spectacles on. Say, one of my acquaintances is a Christian and teaches at Government High School, Ferozewala. He complains frequently that he cannot eat and drink with his Muslim colleagues. He has to keep his food and utensils apart”.

“My own daughter, Maryam, is aggrieved from similar behaviours. Maryam is the student of Punjab University Campus, Gujranwala. One day, while teaching Islamiyat, her teacher passed denigrating comments about Christians, so mean that even her Muslim friends felt terribly embarrassed. But the teacher did not care”.

“Similarly, one of my colleague’s daughter studies in Jinnah College. In a derogatory manner, the very first day her teacher said, ‘what are you doing here? Go to your Christian college please’. She kept hearing such remarks on and on. Deeply disturbed, one day she quit the college”.

“I know a local private school which neither appoints a Christian teacher nor do they take a Christian student. We hope, but behaviours are not very different in private schools too. Not to mix up with and separation of utensils is common there too.

“I think, the non-Muslim children need not to be taught Islamiyat. If at all, they should be taught Bible or Gita. Ethics, I rather believe, should to be taught to every single student. Textbooks need to be rewritten on the principles of equality and mutual respect”. “Non-Muslims live in a state of fear, particularly after the incidences of Shanti Nagar, Badami Bagh and Youhanabad<sup>60</sup>. Blasphemy law is like a naked sword over our heads. I myself have observed how the extremist Muslims invaded Aziz Colony and attempted to set their houses on fire”.

She further said, “I have no idea whether there is a law to arrest for discrimination against non-Muslims in the academic institutes or not but I sincerely think there is a need for one. Those who discriminate against students or teachers in a school or college must be brought before the law and those who suffer need proportional compensation”.

### **3.3.13. Kill with Dr. Kristofer John, Leader of Anjuman Mazareen Punjab, Khanewal**

As expressed by Kristofer John:

“As a leader of the land rights of peasants, I do not believe in faith-based segregation and discrimination. But how can I deny that such thing is always there. Many a Christian children of the area attend private schools till primary. Once they start going to the public school from the sixth grade, they study Islamiyat and certainly the verses of the Holy Quran too. Given the lack of orientation, what becomes harder for a Christian child is to understand and appropriately pronounce



*Once they start going to the public school from the sixth grade, they study Islamiyat and certainly the verses of the Holy Quran too. Given the lack of orientation, what becomes harder for a Christian child is to understand and appropriately pronounce Quranic verses and then translate in Urdu. Upon that teachers get furious and mistreat our children. Hence children begin experiencing, injustice and religious discrimination right from an early age”*

**- Dr. Kristofer John**



Quranic verses and then translate in Urdu. Upon that teachers get furious and mistreat our children. Hence children begin experiencing, injustice and religious discrimination right from an early age. Besides that, text of the social studies is discriminatory and teachers of the Islamic studies and social studies are usually poorly educated. They reinforce hatred against religious minorities. At school level, there is need to promote argument and dialogue amongst the students. It may help them thinking better.

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<sup>60</sup> All three were stormed by Muslim mobs over the allegation of disrespecting Islam at separate times and separate occasions.

If a child is interested in Islamic Studies, he or she has every right to study it but one needs not to force someone. In general, all religions need to be respected and should find a place in the text. If not possible or not acceptable then no faith needs to be educated in schools and colleges”.

### **3.3.14. KII with Manzoor Massih, Government Teacher, Khanewal**

Manzoor is a teacher at a government college, Khanewal, In his own words:

“My father was a priest, he says. I myself and he too believe that discriminatory attitudes are coming down with the passage of time and better education. About a decade ago, someone inscribed on our door, “this is a Christian’s House”. But I think, the reason might be the post 9/11 American led invasion in Afghanistan and heightened opposition amongst Muslims.

In my academic experience, I have never felt any major discrimination. Earlier, I was appointed in a college at Layyah. There, local teachers kept some distance from me. But I think it might be ethnic prejudice rather than the religious one. Where Saraiki identity is stronger, people do not admire Punjabis much. Including myself, almost all Christians in Punjab speak Punjabi. Those struggling for a separate Saraiki province assume Punjabis as oppressors and usurpers of their lands. Here, in Khanewal, I do not feel excluded as almost the whole staff speaks Punjabi”.

“In recruitment process, 5% quota for non-Muslim teachers is usually trespassed and once a non-Muslim teacher is taken, he is thrown off in far off places. Christian-Muslims are far friendlier in rural areas than in urban ones, as I understand. Rural Christians have got their own land and live there before partition while the urban Christians are migrants from villages and interact with the local middle classes. Teachers’ behaviour is relatively egalitarian than administrative staff. More discrimination is heard of in schools than in colleges. Students are even compelled to convert to Islam. Education does affect attitudes. I am the only non-Muslim teacher in my college while 4 of the Christians are Class IV employees (i.e. janitors)”.



*In one of the local hotels, its wall read, “Christian customers must declare their faith before they ask for food or take tea here. We have got a separate arrangement for them”*

**- Manzoor Massih**



“In one of the local hotels, its wall read, “Christian customers must declare their faith before they ask for food or take tea here. We have got a separate arrangement for them”.

“While the fact is that eating with Christians is pretty fair (*jaaiz*) as they are ‘people of the book’ and Muslims fellow believers. We hold no prejudice against any one. We demand equal rights.” Nevertheless, I think the teachers’ role is only to focus on Children’s education so that they can grow up as good citizens of the country.

### 3.3.15. FGD in Aziz Colony, Gujranwala

Most participants of the FGD were female students or teachers. All of them were Christians by faith. However, some of the household women were also part of the discussion. In response to the discrimination with Christians in education sector, the following comments were randomly shared:

Most of the participants agreed that non-Muslims are never treated equally. Many persons would address them with derogatory titles like janitors etc. In a comparative situation, Muslims are always preferred. However, they agreed that less educated communities were far more discriminatory than educated and upper classes. Many Muslims avoid sharing food and water with them. On the other hand, non-Muslim communities are mostly non-literate and poor which cements their low self-esteem even further. Derogated and disrespected, they lose their confidence to fight for progress. Gradually, they begin to accept their social standing as it is.



*“Take the case of education, said one of the participants. It is the worst arena of discrimination. My brother used to go to KIPS. The Canteen owner would keep his utensils separate. One day, he took water in the same glass as did others. One of the students, right in-front of him, smashed the glass on floor. He remained heart-broken for several weeks”*

- **Shama Faryad, a FGD participant**



“Take the case of education, said one of the participants. It is the worst arena of discrimination. My brother used to go to KIPS. The Canteen owner would keep his utensils separate. One day, he took water in the same glass as did others. One of the students, right in-front of him, smashed the glass on floor. He remained heart-broken for several weeks”. “When I put my brother in a school, said Shama Faryad, his class fellows would tease him calling *choorah, choorha* (janitor, janitor). He quit the school and is now wasting his life”.

“Though ‘Ethics’ is an optional subject for non-Muslims students but once again, it is fraught with Islamic messaging. On the other count, those who opt for Ethics fail to secure better marks. Simultaneously, those attempt Ethics in exams are readily recognized by the marking examiner. Therefore, most of the non-Muslim students prefer studying Islamiyat. A *Hafiz-i-Quran* Muslim student secures 20 marks extra while applying for a professional degree<sup>61</sup> but a non-Muslim candidate cannot enjoy that privilege. In-fact Ethics need to be taught to all the students as our societal morals are too conservative”.

“Religion and one’s religious superiority has crept into the minds of teachers and students so complete equality seems to be a far cry. Teachers and head teachers can play a role in promoting equality and non-discrimination but unfortunately, they are the ones who themselves are indoctrinated. ‘Education, is the key to promote secular attitudes’, stressed the participants. Our religious festivals are not respected and no community-wide holiday is announced by the government say on Easter or Good Friday. Fortunately, Christmas happens to be on Quaid’s anniversary and coincides with the national holiday”.

*“Your complexion is so fair and you are so beautiful, how we can I believe that you are a Christian”, comment my teachers as well as my class fellows. Why you don’t become a Muslim, most of them insist”*

- **Anam, a FGD participant**

”

I have had interesting experience, said Anam, a student there in the group. “Your complexion is so fair and you are so beautiful, how we can I believe you to be a Christian”, comment my teachers as well as my class fellows. Why you don’t become a Muslim, most of them insist”.

One can quote many incidents of harassment and violence against the Christians. However, the incidence of this very colony is horrible. Blaming some Christians of desecrating Holy Quran an angry mob of extremists attacked Aziz Colony with arson and other tools. By the end of the day, it only proved to be a false accusation.

### **3.3.16. FGD in Francisabad, Gujranwala**

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<sup>61</sup> Also a *Hafiz-i-Quran* is given preference in contesting for a job.

Participants of this FGD were teachers, students and employees of different departments. Their experiences and observation about discrimination go as under:

Most of the participants agreed that non-Muslims are inherently assumed unequal, whatever the field. Education, however, is strategic as it can manufacture good and bad both behaviours. Unfortunately, it is the very sector where non-Muslims are distinctively discriminated. Ahmadis, on the other hand, face worst kind of discrimination, more than *Massihis* (Christians).

“One of my friends, said Dr. Ilyas, is a government teacher. His son was studying in Punjab College<sup>62</sup>. His class fellows, sitting behind his chair would imprint “Eisai (Christian)” in bold on the back of his Shirt, as if it is something to be ashamed of. A couple of times, he happened to scuffle with them. Yet, the practice did not stop. Eventually he abandoned the college and went to study abroad, obviously never to return. He had some resources at his disposal to send his son abroad. What of many other students at various levels who have to go through such derogation every day. Many of them are dumped down in streets and fall prey to drugs”.



*“His class fellows, sitting behind his chair would imprint “Eisai (Christian)” in bold on the back of his Shirt, as if it is something to be ashamed of. A couple of times, he happened to scuffle with them. Yet, the practice did not stop. Eventually he abandoned the college and went to study abroad, obviously never to return”*

- **Dr. Ilyas, a FGD participant**



Regarding the choice between ‘Ethics’ and ‘Islamiat’ as optional subjects, the point is that Ethics is not an alternative to Islamiat for non-Muslim students. Either they should be offered their own holy book, say Bible, Ramayana or Granth Sahib along with the separate teachers from their own faith, or religious text, in our opinion, must not be taught in schools/colleges at all”.

Over something, once we had an argument with our Muslim friends, said Chand Mughal. Few of us said, you are disfavoring us as we are Christians. R. A. Khan<sup>63</sup>, a Muslim fellow said, “Believe you me, we never assume you as Christian.” In other words, if they take me a Christian then discrimination was due.

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<sup>62</sup> It is a private college.

<sup>63</sup> Name has been changed for confidentiality.

In a village S. G<sup>64</sup>., once a group of four young men, two Muslims, two Christians, raped a woman. All the four were arrested. When the case proceeded, Muslim men were freed for ‘so called lack of evidence’ while the Christians were handed over the life sentence. In our perception, that too was discriminatory as all the four were equally involved in that crime.

### 3.3.17. FGD with a Christian Group in Jahanian, Khanewal:

It was a mix group and about 10 persons participated in the following discussion:

“Christian women are suffering from multiple problems. We can hardly secure a job other than household work. If we send our children to government schools, teachers and students both torment them and make a mockery of their identity and faith. “He or she is a Christian. His or her father cleans gutters. His or her father sweeps the streets. It is one of the major causes that our children lag behind in education. Sometimes we feel not to send our children to schools. Disheartened, many children drop off half way through”. If we put them in private schools, their fees and other expenses are too high to afford. They have to hear contemptuous and scornful comments like these, equivocated a couple of women in the group.



*“One of the teachers wipes of her desk with my daughter’s dupatta. ‘It is impure,’ she says”*

**- Christian Woman, a FGD participant**



“One of the teachers wipes of her desk with my daughter’s dupatta. ‘It is impure,’ she says, added another woman. It is even difficult for me to secure a certificate for my child so that I can put her in a private school”. School uniforms are given to the Muslim children on priority basis and many of the Christian children are deprived of free uniforms provided by the Punjab government. Our children are given only books for free. Scholarships are won by Muslim students and there is hardly a Christian child who secures a scholarship”.

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<sup>64</sup> The village name has been hidden deliberately.

“Studying Islamiat is a challenge for our kids. Arabic expressions and phrases are simply too difficult for them to understand and narrate properly. Ethics is there but no one is there in school to teach it. We feel as if it is the government’s policy to force them to study Islamiat”.



*Class mates would, most often, pull off my turban or open it up, not necessarily to ridicule but out of curiosity too. ‘What is in there, they would ask. Are you hiding something, they will ask’.*

**- A Sikh Student tells about other students’ behaviour**

### **3.3.18. FGD in Amrat Nagar, Mian Chanoon, Khanewal**



About 19 men and women participated in this FGD organized in Mian Chanoon. Apart from other similar concerns and observations that have been stated in other FGDs following additional points were made by the participants of this FGD:

“Many of the Christian boys and girls have got their names in English. Sometimes primary school teachers and administration at the time of admission gets this wrong. False spellings change the name, sometimes partially sometimes whole. Christian youth also faces a similar difficulty after doing their matriculation and/or once they attain the age of 18. People in Baldia (Municipality) and people in NADRA usually put our named wrong. Under the circumstances, correction requires prolonged procedures and multiple justifications. Clerks sitting in service windows usually say it is irritable, ‘change your name or chose a simple name like Muslims”.

“Teachers quota in education department needs to be increased and the present one be respected so that more and more Christian teachers can secure the job. Teachers need to be educated that non-Muslim minorities did play an important role in the creation of Pakistan so that their attitudes towards minorities may change. Simultaneously, they need reasonably sufficient training to understand and respect the presence and acceptability of non-Muslim communities in Pakistan. They are keen to serve their country but only if they are extended opportunities”.

## **3.4. Oppression and Ordeal of Sikh Students and Teachers**

### **3.4.1. Ramesh Singh, Nankana Sahib**

One of the parents from Nankana Sahib said that:

“Earlier most of our children used to go to public schools. Over there, their class mates would, most often, pull off their turban or open it up, not necessarily to ridicule but out of curiosity too. ‘What is in there, they would ask. Are you hiding something?’ Teachers too are ignorant and insensitized towards other belief systems. While speaking against other faiths, they turn sentimental as if they themselves were hurt by them or have afforded some personal loss from non-Muslims. The influence of Zia regime continues in schools and colleges and that is of belligerence towards religions, other than Islam. I have heard, not seen, that new syllabus is better which is a good news.

Simultaneously, as there is an exclusive emphasis only on one religion in all school texts and academic environment, therefore, most of the children hold false opinions about Sikhism or they develop certain stereotypes learning from films and television. Therefore, Children are criticized for their appearance or religious rituals and practices they perform.

Gradually, we began to lift our children from public schools and put them in our community-driven private schools or other private schools. Primary schools are now set up in our *gurdwaras* and our children seek both religious as well as secular education there. They learn Granth Sahib, Gurmukhi language and even music too there. Apart from studies a Sikh child completes his/her religious course in three years mainly from 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> Class. In fact, about 200 of our families moved from Orakzai Agency and Peshawar to Nankana and around 600 families moved to Hassan Abdal. We are interested to educate our children more and more and would like the discrimination to end. There must be quota for Sikh community to seek admission in colleges and professional institutes.

### 3.4.2. Guru Nanak Model High School – An Icon of Religious Harmony

“There is a Guru Nanak Public Model School in Nankana Sahib. It is a unique school all over Pakistan where children of all faiths are equally respectable. The school begins with the teaching of each faiths Holy Book for each group of children separately. There are separate teachers for and from each faith. After the first period, they study rest of the subjects together. Poor children are encouraged to come to this school. Free books and free uniforms are provided by the Sikh Gurdwara Committee working since 1999. No faith-based conflict or discriminatory attitude has ever been reported in this school”. (Sardar Mohindar Singh, Baleela, Gurdwara Patti, Nankana).



*“There are separate teachers for and from each faith. After the first period, they study rest of the subjects together. Poor children are encouraged to come to this school. Free books and free uniforms are provided by the Sikh Gurdwara Committee working since 1999. No faith-based conflict or discriminatory attitude has ever been reported in this school”*

- **Sardar Mohindar Singh**



### 3.5. Informal Comments by Non-Muslim Students and Teachers<sup>65</sup>

While interacting with non-Muslim students and teachers, some of them have been commenting about the discriminatory situations they face. Their select statements and expressions re being quoted here below:

“In class, sometimes, we feel as if we keep studying Islamiat all day long.” “It doesn’t make a difference whether the minority students study or not. Eventually they have to clean the streets”, some, of our teachers say it satirically”. S.J. Bhatti, male student of a public school, Khanewal.

“Whenever someone knows that I am an Ahmadi by faith. Most of them stiffen in response. Avoid taking food with me; ask tricky questions; dub me infidel straight on”. (S. Masood. Jalalpur, Multan)<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> These comments were noted down while conducting structured interviews with the students. Finding them relevant and meaningful to our concern, it is important to place them somewhere under qualitative analysis.

<sup>66</sup> Names changed to respect confidentiality.

“There are three government schools i.e. primary, middle and high, in Youngsonabad, Nankana where majority of the Christians live. But not a single Christian teacher is there as they are not preferred in recruitment”. (McArthur David, Minority Counselor, Nankana Sahib).

“Sometimes some of the students make fun of our *pagri* (turban) and there was something in our BS Part One in a subject that made fun of the Sikh turban in particular. We reported it to our MPA. But in general teachers and students of our college are well aware of social harmony and educate the same to others as well”. So, I have no specific story of discrimination to tell. (Diljeet Singh, Government College, Nankana Sahib).

“

*Hindus worship cow. They drink its urine,” sneer my classmates.*

- **A Hindu Student tells about other students’ behaviour**

”

“I am doing my matriculation from Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). When I would go to public schools, the girls would usually argue and ask questions about my faith. Simultaneously, my parents could not afford school expenses. Hence while I quit the school”. (Shumaila, female student of a government school, Khanewal).

“In my class, a student who sits on the nearby seat says, “do not accept water from this girl because she is Christian. Christians are impure. If we take water in their glass or the water left over by them, we shall turn Christian”. Class monitor says, “why don’t you become a Muslim? You already look like a Muslim”. (Samra Thomas, GGHS, Khanewal).

“Hindus worship cow. They drink its urine,” sneer my classmates”. Sonia Bibal, GGHS, Bahawalpur.

“Wherever we go around, common Muslims avoid shaking hands. Utensils are separated. In case being a teacher, we are not allowed to teach, and essentially never to teach Islamiat. Social boycott by the larger Muslim society is a matter of routine”. (R.A. Butt, A Former, Ahmadi Teacher, Gujranwala)

“

*“why don’t you become a Muslim? You already look like a Muslim”*

- **Samra Thomas, GGHS Khanewal**

”

“Being Christian, we are opting out the subject of Ethics in place of Islamiyat. When the Islamiyat class begins, the teacher sends us out of the class. There is no one to teach Ethics, so we have to prepare the subject on our own”. (Samrina Tariq, GGHS, Nankana sahib).

“When I was a student, I would face discriminatory behaviour both from my teachers as well as my peers in school. Often, I would take my own glass. Had to have my food separately. Discrimination still persists but ways and means have changed. In-fact, teaching moral values should be the first duty of teachers in schools”. (Munir Gill, Minority (Christian) Councilor, Multan).

“Ethics and human rights should be part of school syllabi”. Sardar Mohindar Singh, Baleela, Gurdwara Patti, Nankana).

“Most of our (Sikh) children study in private schools. Muslim and Christian students are also there. Religious harmony is part of the study there and no complaint is heard”. (Sardar Mastan Singh, City Municipal Ward, Guru Nanak)

“A Hindu girl Maneesha of GGPS (Khanewal) says that, “I am forced to study Islamiyat in my school. A couple of times, my teacher said that if I am not going to study that subject, she will put a fine on me”.

### **3.6. Interpretation and Implications of Discrimination with the non-Muslim Students and Teachers**

The study in hand clearly identifies the violation of Article 20 (a), 22 (1) and 25 (a) of the CoP in every sense of the term. One can easily extrapolate that the textbooks consider all of the students coming from one faith i.e. Islam and predominantly preach and glorify it. Almost all textbooks exclusively uphold Islamic identity of Pakistan, downplay other holy books, other identities and present Quaid-i-Azam as the leader of Muslims alone. Teachers and students, assumingly, borrow superiority behaviours from the textbooks and a division between Muslim and non-Muslims cultures and civilizations is created and disseminated in the education sector.

Though, no case of blasphemy allegation was shred in this study. But the constantly lurking fear amongst all the non-Muslim students, teachers and parents (except the Sikh community) was noticed. In a politically and religiously charged environment, the apprehension of making a mistake, saying or reading something wrong, unintentionally, keeps children’s parents on toes.

The best way to deal with it is to not to force non-Muslims (directly or indirectly) to study Islamiat. It will minimize their probability of uttering something, unknowingly or unintentionally inaccurately, and will free them from unnecessary fear.

While generating an individual divide, they not only hurt non-Muslim Pakistanis but hurt its national integrity as well. It is felt if the role of non-Muslim in the creation and development of Pakistan is highlighted in the textbooks, it can make a potential difference. Presenting non-Muslim role models in history and in present times can help boost non-Muslims self-esteem and they can feel motivated as an equal Pakistani citizen.

The information collected above reveals that all the four forms of discrimination as identified and prohibited under the Principle-5 of 'the principles of declaration' are observed and practiced in Punjab i.e. direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and failure to make reasonable accommodation. It is observed that in a comparative situation – be it classroom, administrative arena, staffroom, canteen or general social gathering, non-Muslims students and teachers are treated less favourably than Muslim students and teachers. Qualified non-Muslim individuals are discouraged directly and indirectly, as seen in more than one cases above, to become teachers. Informal discrimination appears to be a greater problem than the formal one.

Also the education department and higher authorities fail to reasonably accommodate non-Muslims students and teachers. Say, no specialized teachers to offer them education in their own faith is arranged. It is permanently being ignored that given different religious and family orientation, it is naturally difficult for non-Muslim Children to read Arabic words and verses as accurately as the Muslim Children may do. Teacher in Ethics is usually not available. If at all, the same teacher of Islamiat teaches them the subject and alternatively teaches Islamic principles and moralities. No national or community-specific arrangement of vacations to allow Hindus, Christians and Sikh students to celebrate their religious festivals is made. Sometimes, it conflicts with important academic days and they miss the valuable lectures. Little care is taken for their holy days while setting up academic schedules, which is another case of failing to reasonable accommodate non-Muslim students.

Contrary to the 'Principle-13' of the declaration of equality the State of Pakistan (in this case the Government of Punjab) has failed to achieve 'full and effective equality' by failing to make necessary arrangements to reasonably accommodate difference and different capabilities of non-

Muslim students and teachers. It has blatantly failed to make 'necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments, including anticipatory measures, in curriculum, teachers training and attitudes to 'facilitate the ability of every student and teacher' to fully 'participate in economic, social, political and cultural or civil life' on an equal basis with the majority citizens of Pakistan.

As per the same declaration, the study observes discrimination of Muslim teachers and students who associate themselves with the non-Muslim students or teachers. Take of the Case of Muskan who observed Valentine Day with her Muslim friends and her Muslim friends were cursed vociferously by her teacher. Take the case of Ashiq Yazdani who contested elections and the nominating principle was derogated. The case of Mahik Ajmal whose section is change out of her will also demonstrates avoiding association with a non-Muslim student. Similarly, the case of the Principal of a school in Qala Rai Singh, who was threatened to accommodate an Ahmadi teacher, all are the examples of discrimination with respect to association.

Perceptual discrimination is also found say, Shiva is immediately dubbed as an extremist by her teacher as in her opinion all Hindus are extremist because she has heard some examples of Hindu extremism against Indian Muslims. Although, the cases of overt discrimination are getting less and less but in case of Hindu, Ahmadi and in some cases Christian students and teachers, the study reveals overt discrimination where they are not allowed to teach or not to pay attention to them on prohibited grounds of discrimination. The case of Amanat Massih and the case of A.R. Butt are very clear examples.

Unfortunately, less and less complaints are made to the higher authorities by the victims of such discrimination, therefore the alternative forms of overt discrimination are also observed. Case studies also demonstrate very clearly that where complaint was made to some higher authority, in most cases the victims were facilitated. Civil law in this case needs to be improved to encourage non-Muslim students and teachers to file a suit against the cases of outright discrimination.

Once again referring back to the 'declaration of the principle of equality' non-Muslim students and teachers are harassed with a clear purpose or effect of violating their dignity and 'to create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment' for them. The study observes that very clearly in the cases of A.R. Butt, Raza Butt, Arpan, Radheka, Abeel, George Farhan and some other students and teachers.

In violation of labour law 'discrimination (employment and occupation), C-111, 1958 (Article - 2) the State (in this case the Government of Punjab) has failed to promote 'equality of opportunity' rather 'equity' and 'of equal treatment' to eliminate discrimination. Though the study has not investigated and has no evidence to offer but as perceived by the non-Muslim teachers, 'distinctions, exclusion or preference is made on the basis of religion and social origin, nullifying or impairing the equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation.

Several teachers and sometimes students bring forward a theological argument that 'People of the Book' (those who believe in 'monotheistic Abrahamic faiths) must not be discriminated in social affairs and interactions. But realities and practices in the education sector (and others) refute such claims. Similarly, most of the authorities (political and in this case educational) are not willing to allow non-Muslims to assume a position of power and influence. Though no one indicated explicitly in this study, but their attitudes of exclusion and unequal citizenry allude to another theological problem of 'dhimmitude'. In other words, non-Muslims can be given protection in exchange of *jizya* (special or additional tax) but they are not allowed to assume any political or any other influential office. The treatment of Ahmadyya community vividly substantiates that while opposing Hindu and Christian teachers (examples shared above) reflect a similar conviction operating behind.

## Chapter – 4. Quantitative Findings

### 4.1. Non-Muslim Students views about discrimination

#### 4.1.1. Discrimination in classrooms.

Out of 200 students, 140 (70%) say that they are not treated equally in schools and colleges. Around 60 (30%) respondents affirm in positive that they enjoy equal rights in classrooms.

<b>Non-Muslim students enjoy their equal rights freely at school/college?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	60	30
No	140	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.1.2. Facing discrimination.

It was asked from the students whether they are facing or faced or faced any discrimination in the past with respect to their safety, faith, religious beliefs, class representation or in merit policy? A significant number of respondents 151 (76%) replied confessed to endure such experience and 46 (23%) said 'No,' and only a fraction of the students did not provide any response to the question.

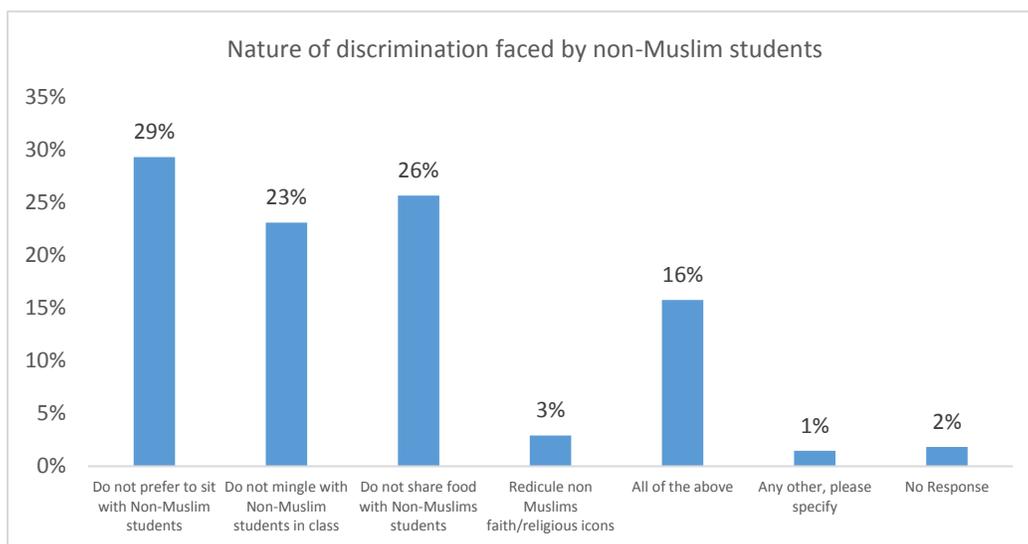
Majority i.e. 62% of the students saying they are discriminated by fellow students and nearly a third (30%) students responded that teachers do discriminate them, about 5% are discriminated by school administration and only 3% answered that the non-Muslims student are discriminated by the students, teachers and school administration. Thus, it is clear that majority of the students are discriminated in the school/college setting.

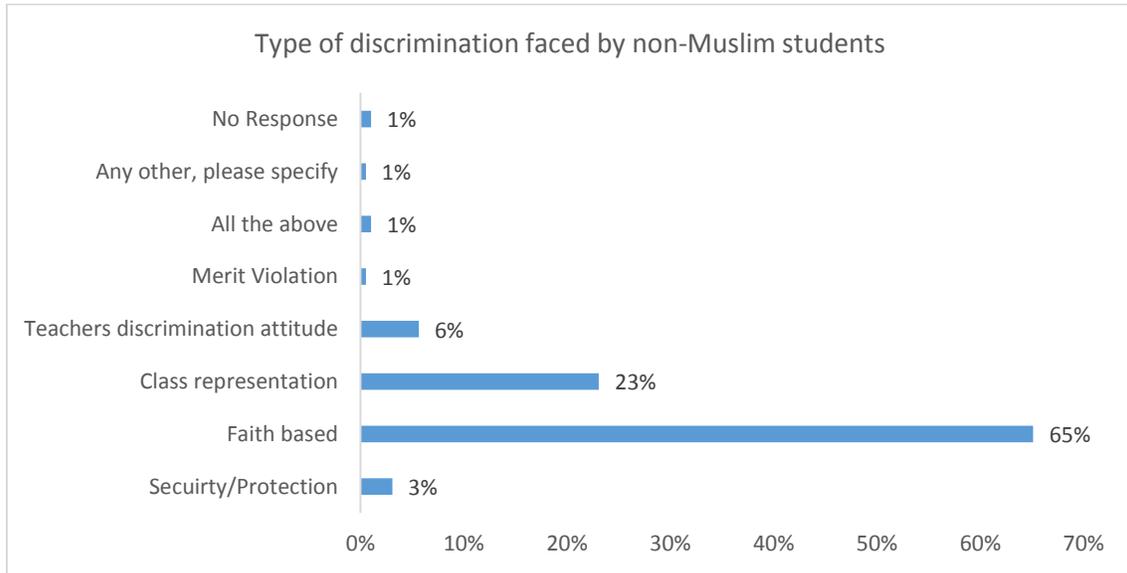
In this regard, when asked to state the nature of discrimination, 29% of the respondents confirm that Muslim students 'do not prefer to sit with Non-Muslims students', 26% 'do not share food with Non-Muslims students', 23% 'do not mingle with non-Muslim students in class' and to 3% Muslim students 'ridicule non-Muslims faith and their religious icons'. While describing the type of

discrimination, majority of students i.e. 65% says, they face faith-based discrimination, 23% face the same in 'class 'representation', in various events and opportunities, 6% endure the 'teachers' discriminatory attitude' and only 1% did not like to respond the question.

<b>Do you (non-Muslim student) face any Discrimination with respect to security, faith, religious beliefs, class representation or merit policy for students?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	151	76
No	46	23
Do not know	2	1
No response	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Non-Muslim Students Discrimination by Whom?</b>	
	<b>Percent</b>
Fellow students	62
Teachers	30
School Administration	5
All the Above	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>





#### 4.1.3. Discrimination with respect to School/College Management

However, students also stated that they feel less discrimination on part of the school/college management or relevant authorities. For example, more than half (57%) of the students feels that school management or authorities do not discriminate and nearly one-quarter (24%) answered that school/college management does discriminate with non-Muslims and only small percentage (8%) did not prefer answering the question.

Do you think any discriminatory attitudes exist in school management/Authority?		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	48	24
No	114	57
Do not know	22	11
No response	16	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.1.4. Psycho-social inferiority

A vast majority of the students (68%) affirm that non-Muslim students feel deprived in enjoying academic opportunities of growth and this in due course afflicts them negatively in phyco-social

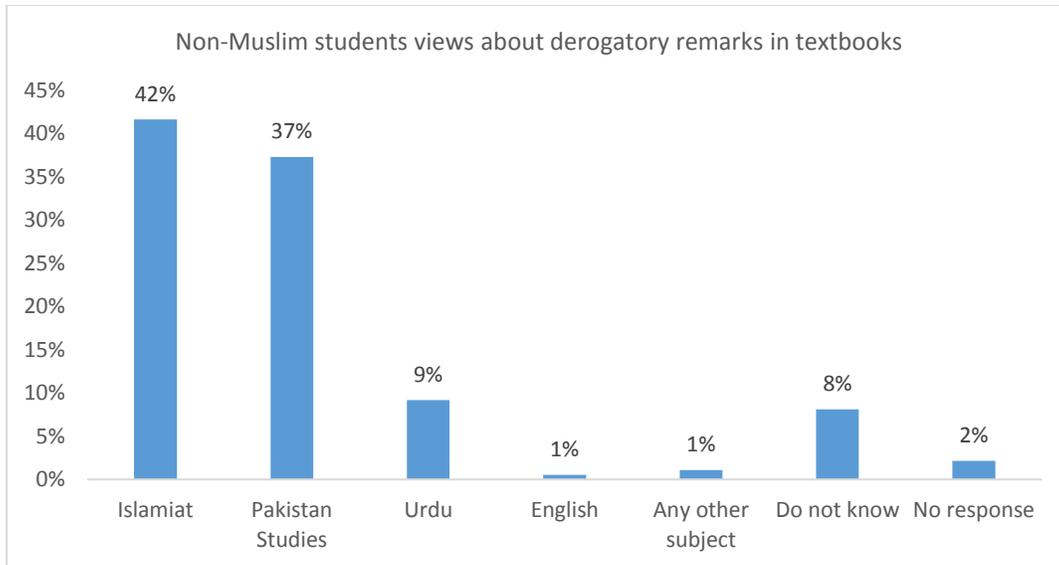
sense of the term. About 24% of the respondents did not feel any deprivation in availing academic opportunities.

<b>Do you think, minority students are deprived from academic opportunities of growth or afflicting with a sense of psycho-social inferiority?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	136	68
No	48	24
Do not know	12	6
No response	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **4.1.5. Discrimination in Textbooks**

Regarding discrimination, when was asked from the non-Muslim students that do they feel any discriminatory or derogatory remarks about non-Muslims in the textbooks? In respond, over half of the respondents (56%) affirm, noticing discriminatory or derogatory remarks about non-Muslims in the textbooks which in the end may lead to hatred for non-Muslims. Rest of the 24% responded in the negative, 6% had no idea about the extent of derogatory remarks in the textbooks, and 2% opted not to answer.

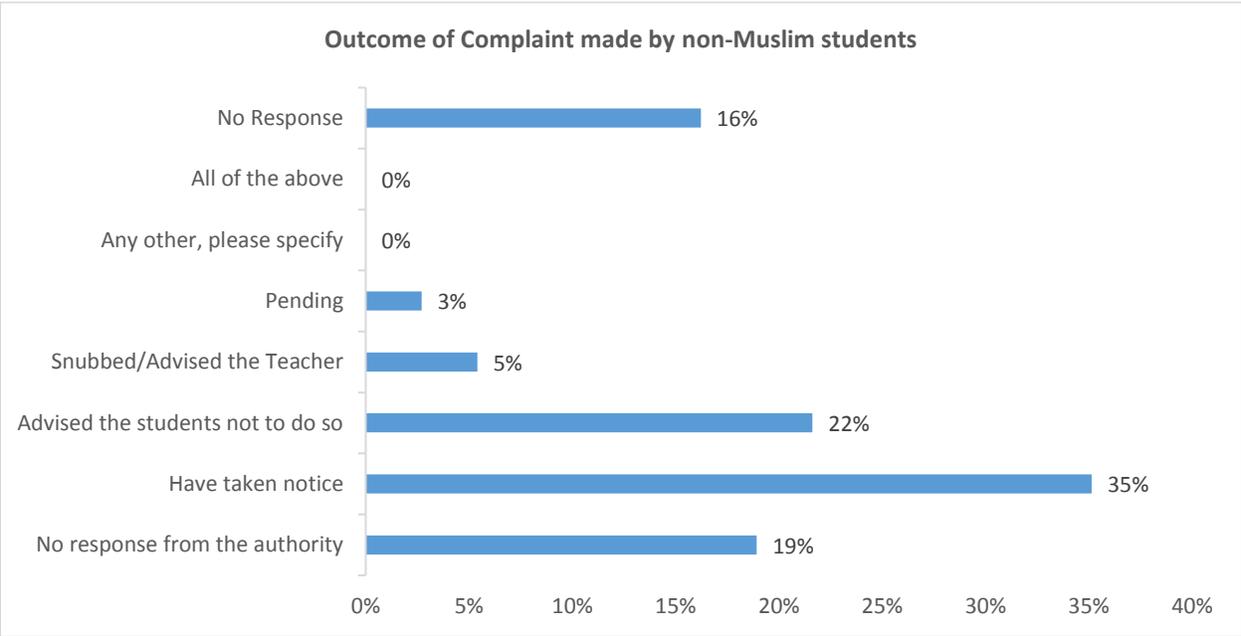
Going further, 42% of the non-Muslim students feel that perhaps 'Islamiat' is the major subject spreading out discrimination. For 37%, 'Pakistan Studies' is the second such subject and 'Urdu (language and literature)' (9%) as the next subject that the non-Muslim student senses discriminatory about non-Muslims in textbooks. Whereas, 8% did not know or did not like to answer which subject communicates discrimination or derogation.



#### 4.1.6. Complaint to relevant authorities

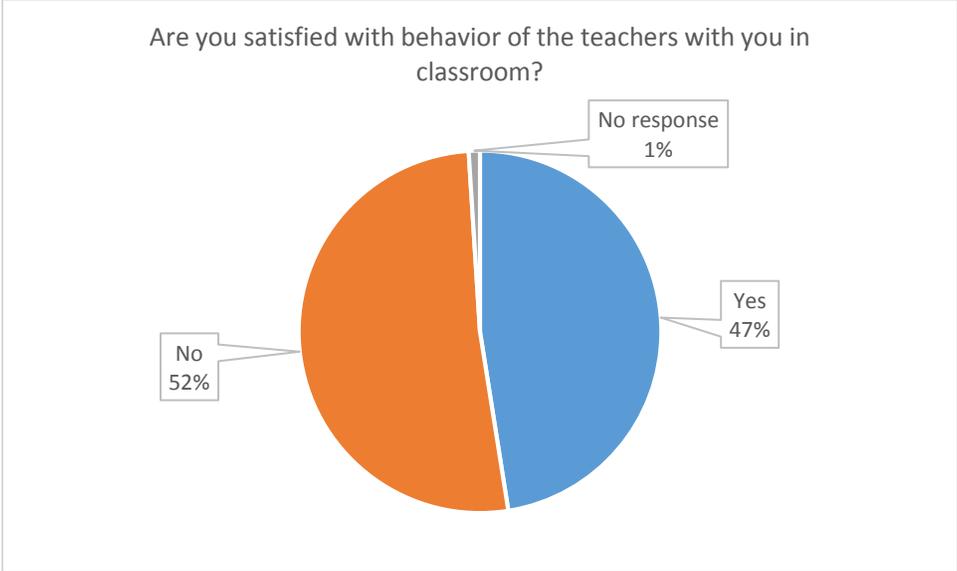
In this regard, strikingly 82% of non-Muslim students reported that they did not complained any relevant authority against discrimination and a mere 14% of the non-Muslim students agree of registering a complaint to school/college administration or a relevant authority. And only 4% decided to remain silent. Out of 14% who filed complaint to relevant authority, a good 35% of non-Muslim students says that authorities took some notice upon their complaint. For instance, 22% of the non-Muslim students told that authorities advised the students not to do so, 19% told that despite their complaint, they received absolutely no response from the relevant authorities'. Moreover, a small percentage (5%) said that the teacher snubbed and advised the Muslims students to not to discriminate non-Muslims students in future, and 3% told that authorities did took notice of their complaint but the outcome was still pending. 16% of the students did not reply the question.

<b>Have you ever registered any complaint against students'/teachers discriminatory behavior to school administration/relevant authority?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	28	14
No	164	82
Do not know	1	1
No response	7	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>



**4.1.7. Satisfaction with Behaviour of Teachers**

Upon asking from Non-Muslim students about the behavior of teachers, over half of the students i.e. (52%) were not satisfied with the behavior of the teachers and with nearly the same percentage (47%) were found satisfied with the behavior of teachers. Only 1% of students did not respond at all.



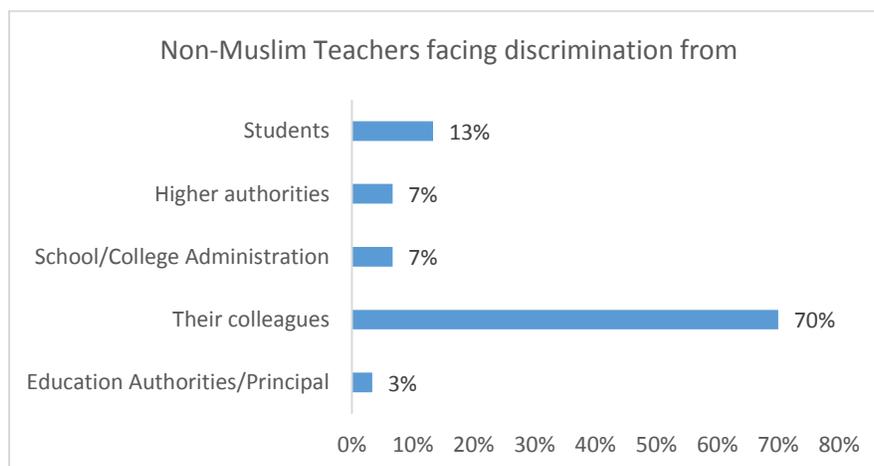
## 4.2. Non-Muslim Teachers' views about Discrimination

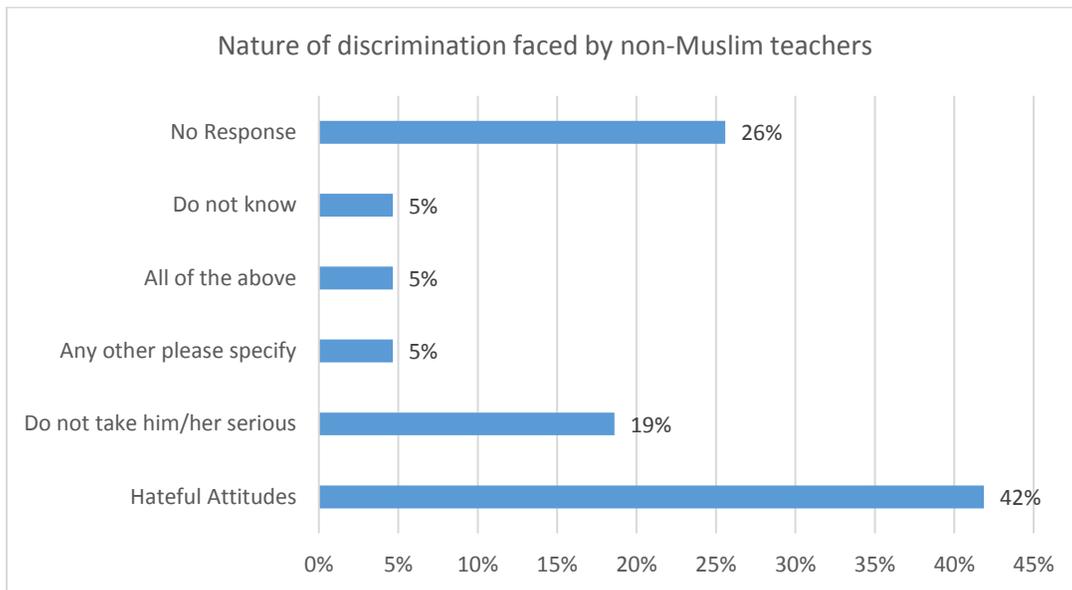
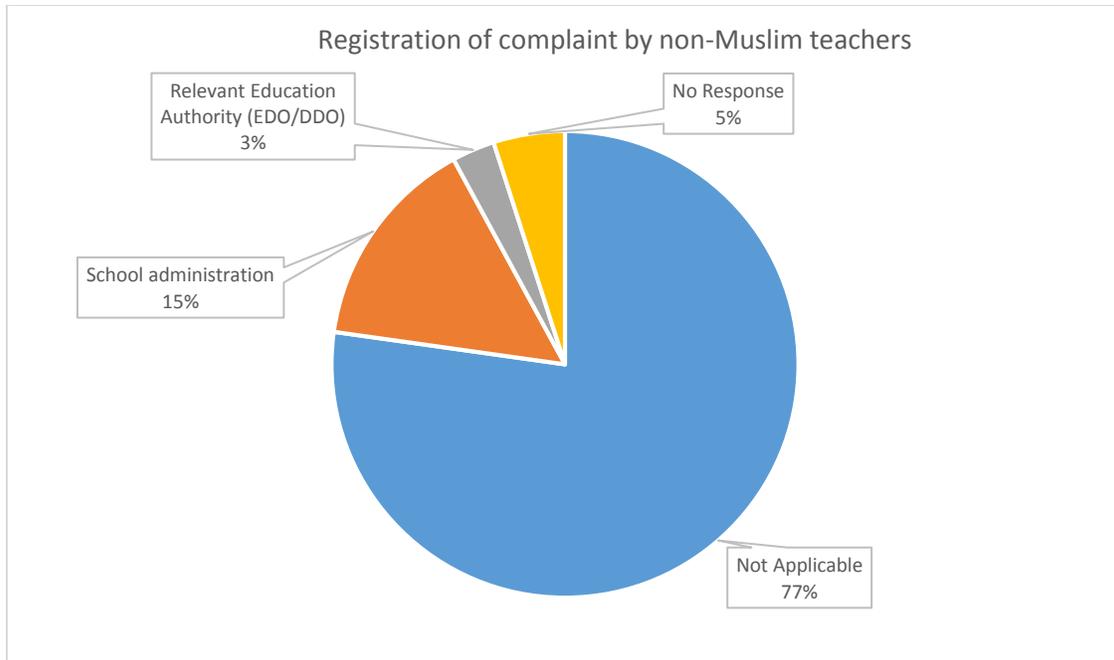
### 4.2.1. Discrimination faced by non-Muslim teachers.

Concerning discrimination faced by non-Muslim teachers, Quantitative findings suggest that what of non-Muslim students, non-Muslim teachers are also discriminated from multiple corners. Similarly, the finding also indicates that a higher percentage of teachers (70%) validate that non-Muslim teachers are being discriminated by their fellow teachers, alarmingly 13% from students, 7% from higher authorities and with an equal percentage from school/college administration. Only 3% teachers say that they are being discriminated from top leadership of school/colleges for instance head of the school or principal of the college.

Being a non-Muslim teacher and filing of complaint against discrimination, survey finding reveal that significant (78%) of non-Muslims teachers did not dare to file a complaint to respective authorities for whatever reasons better known to them. Only 15% did file complaint to the school/college administration and only a small 3% approached the respective District Education Officer (EDO) or any other concerned authority. This trend points out that majority of non-Muslim teachers are reluctant filing of a formal complaint against discrimination.

A sizeable percentage (42%) of non-Muslim teachers also states that they face hateful attitudes and 19% feels that Muslims do not take non-Muslim teachers seriously. Whereas, as small as 5% chooses other reasons like Muslims do not like to share food with non-Muslims teachers, do not like to sit with non-Muslims and even do not trust non-Muslims and as high as 26% just refrains from responding to the question.





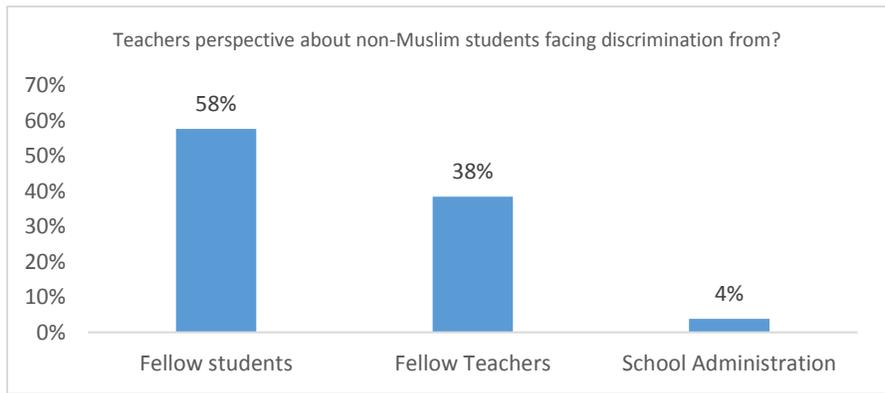
#### **4.2.2. Non-Muslim Teachers perspective about non-Muslims students**

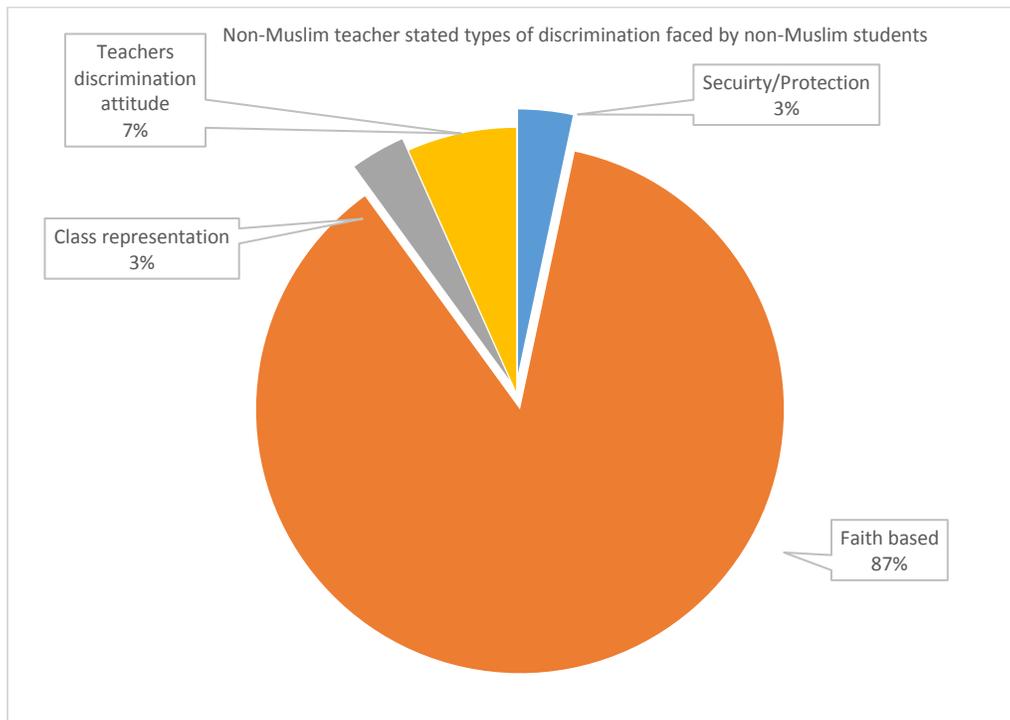
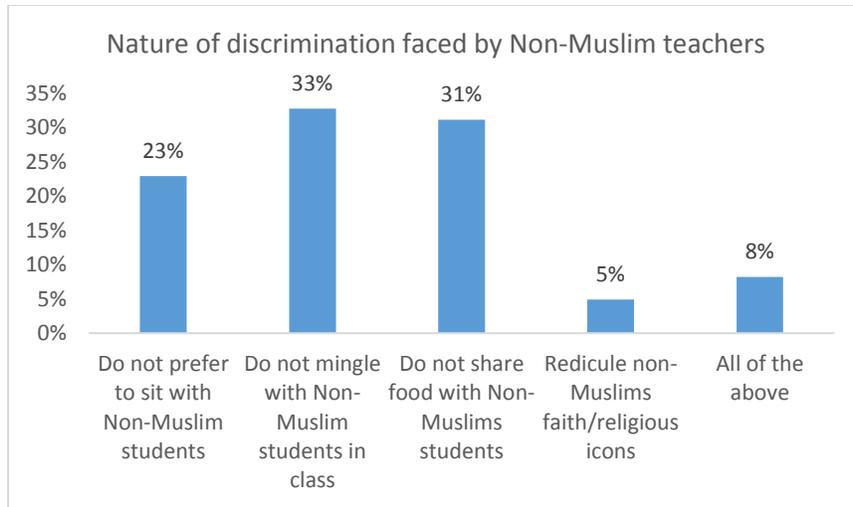
A higher percentage of Non-Muslim teachers (83%) feels that non-Muslims students face discrimination in school and college environment. They further elaborate that from their experiences, over half (58%) of the students face direct discrimination from their fellow students, from teachers (38%), and a small percentage i.e. (4%) from the school administration. Further, when bifurcating the nature of discrimination, teachers tell that one-third (33%) of Muslim students

do not like to mingle with Non-Muslim students, 31% do not like to share food with Non-Muslim students. Whereas, 23% do not prefer to sit with Non-Muslim students and a small number (4%) of Muslim students tend to ridicule non-Muslims faith and religious practices.

Similarly, non-Muslim teachers also told that the larger percentage of students (87%) face faith-based discrimination in government schools and in their opinion far smaller but meaningful percentage (7%) of the non-Muslim students face discrimination from their Muslim teachers.

<b>Do you (as a non-Muslim teacher) think Non-Muslims students face any Discrimination in School/College environment?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	33	83
No	7	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

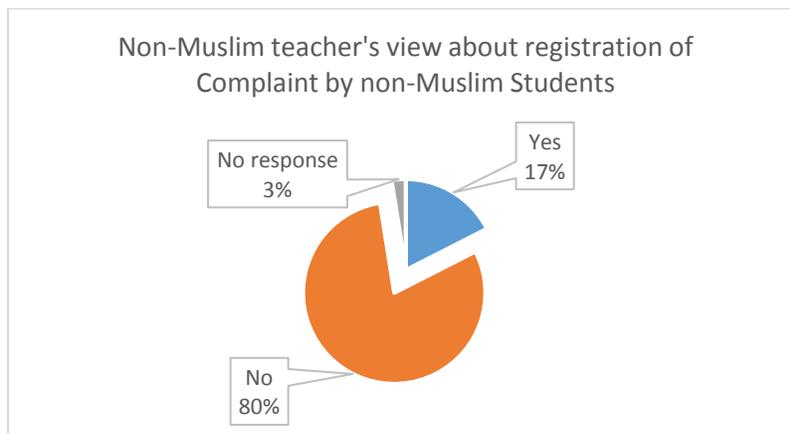




Teachers also say that like non-Muslim teachers, non-Muslim students too have limited tendency of filing complaint against fellow other Muslim students or teachers. Table below validates that the said finding that 80% of the non-Muslim students refrain from filing a complaint against fellow Muslim students and teachers.

**Non-Muslim Students registered complaint against Muslim students'/teachers' discriminatory behavior to school administration/relevant authority?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	7	18
No	32	80
No response	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>



**4.2.3. Discrimination in Textbooks**

A major chunk of 60% non-Muslim teachers feel that there is sufficient amount of discriminatory content and derogatory remarks in the prescribed textbooks. However, 30% of them answered in the negative and 8% simply did not answer.

**Do you (as a non-Muslim teacher) feel any discriminatory or derogatory remarks about non- Muslims in the textbooks?**

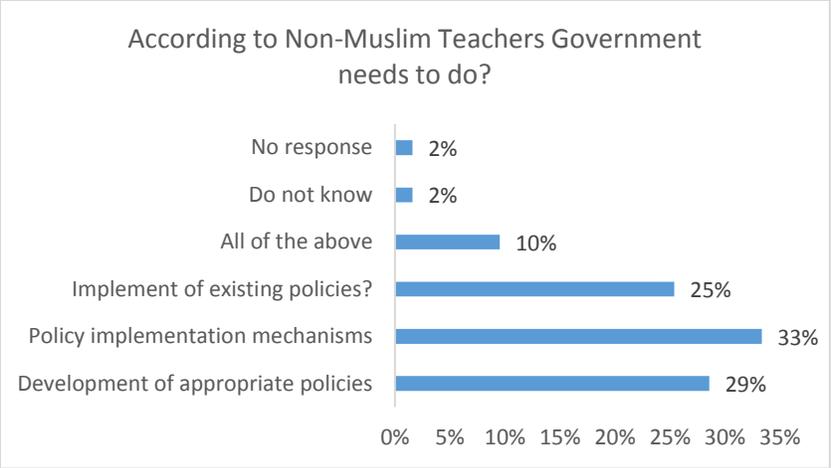
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	60
No	12	30
Do not know	1	3
No response	3	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.2.4. Policy Issues and recommendations

Teachers feel that that biased religious attitudes (45%) and lack of policy implementation (40%) are the leading causes behind discrimination against non-Muslims. In addition, a staggering but not surprising and (98%) of the non-Muslim teacher feels that human rights should be part of the social science curriculum at the at the school/college level. On top of that, 33% non-Muslim teachers think that government should develop policy mechanisms, 29% recommend appropriate policies and a quarter i.e. 25% proposes to implement existing policies to reduce and eliminate discriminatory attitudes against non-Muslims teachers.

<b>What are the reasons that Non-Muslims Teachers are discriminated?</b>	
	<b>Percent</b>
Lack of policy implementation	40
Biased religious attitudes	45
All of the above	3
No response	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Do you (as a non-Muslim teacher) think that human rights/equal rights should be part of the social science subject at the school/college curriculum?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	39	98
No response	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

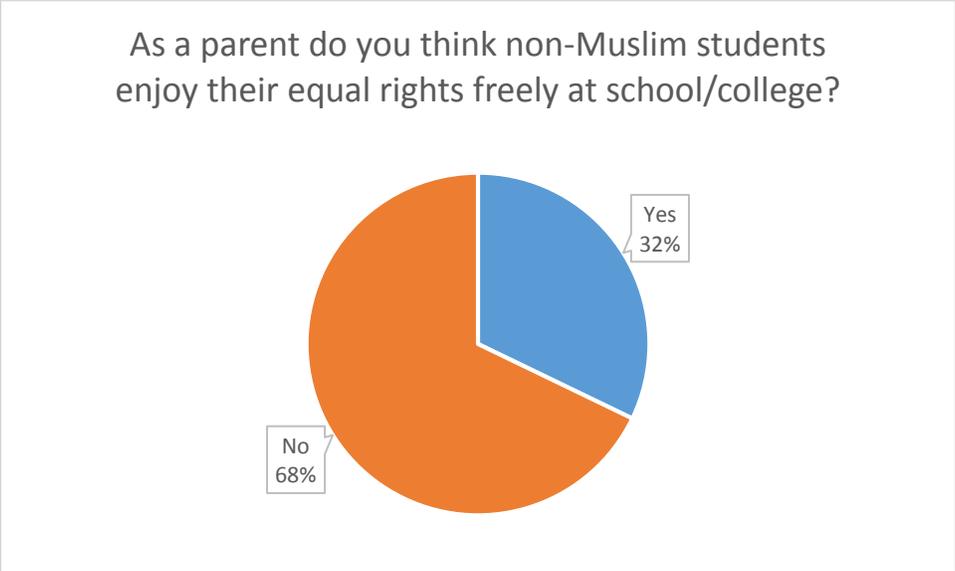


**4.3. Parents of Non-Muslim Children views and perspectives about discrimination**

Non-Muslim Parents are also interviewed to identify the patterns of discrimination against their children and how do they think, feel and view about the nature and types of discrimination about their children or their loved ones.

**4.3.1. Equal Rights**

Majority i.e. 68% of non-Muslim parents told that they do not think their students enjoy equal rights at schools and colleges. However, one-third (32%) of parents agree that they are treated equally as other Muslim students.



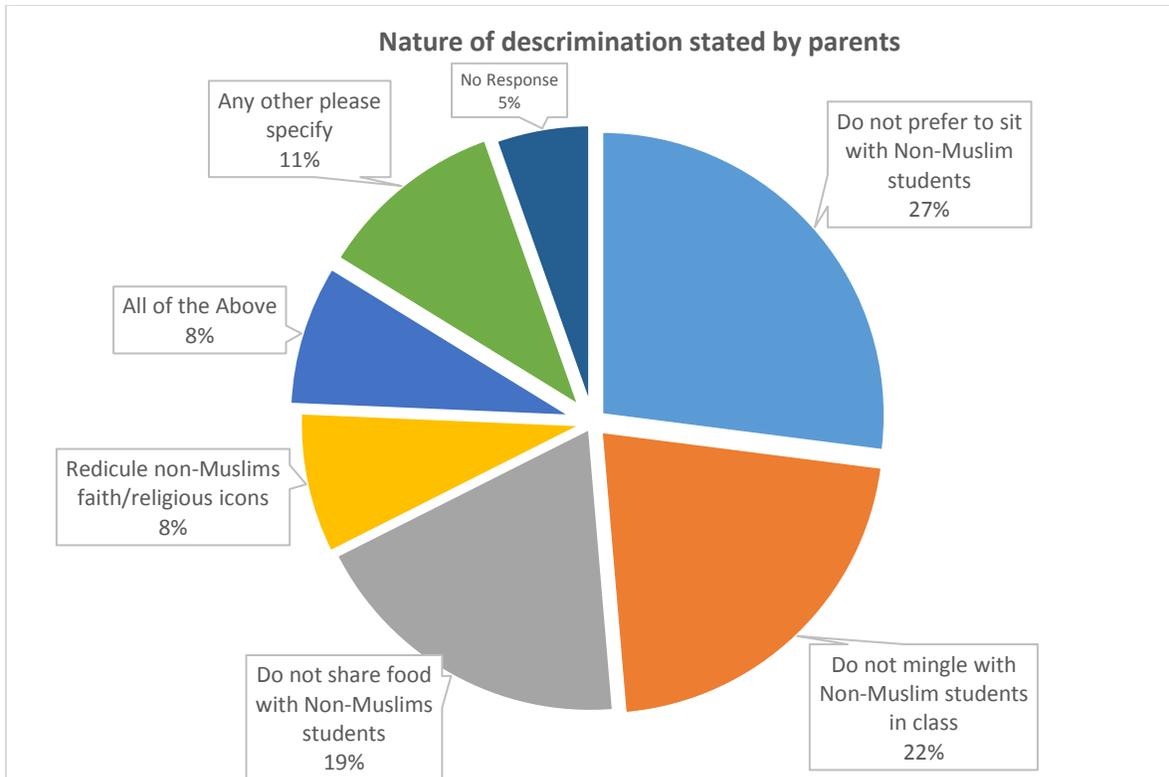
**4.3.2. Complaint against discrimination**

Based on their faith, the larger percentage (72%) of non-Muslim parents believe their children are being discriminated in schools and 28% does not equivocate the feeling. Whereas, describing the source of discrimination, over half percentage (57%) of parents say their children’s fellow students discriminate them and to parents about 34% are discriminated by their teachers based all because of their faith. Only a miniscule 3% of children (as suggest parents) are being discriminated by fellow students as well as by teachers. However, 6% of parents decided to not to respond the query.

Stating the nature of discrimination by parents regarding discrimination against their children includes 27% of Muslim students do not prefer to sit with non-Muslim students, 22% of the Muslim students do not mingle with Non-Muslim students in class and in other school activities. 19% of the Muslim students do not share food with non-Muslims and likewise, in parents’ opinion, 8% of the students ridicule non-Muslims’ faith and/or religious practices/icons. 11% parents choose ‘other’ to describe nature of discrimination which involves hateful attitudes of teachers towards non-Muslim students, deliberately ignoring them, forcing them to sit at the back and degrade them every now and then.

<b>Does any of your children complain(ed) about faith-based Discrimination in school?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	29	72
No	11	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

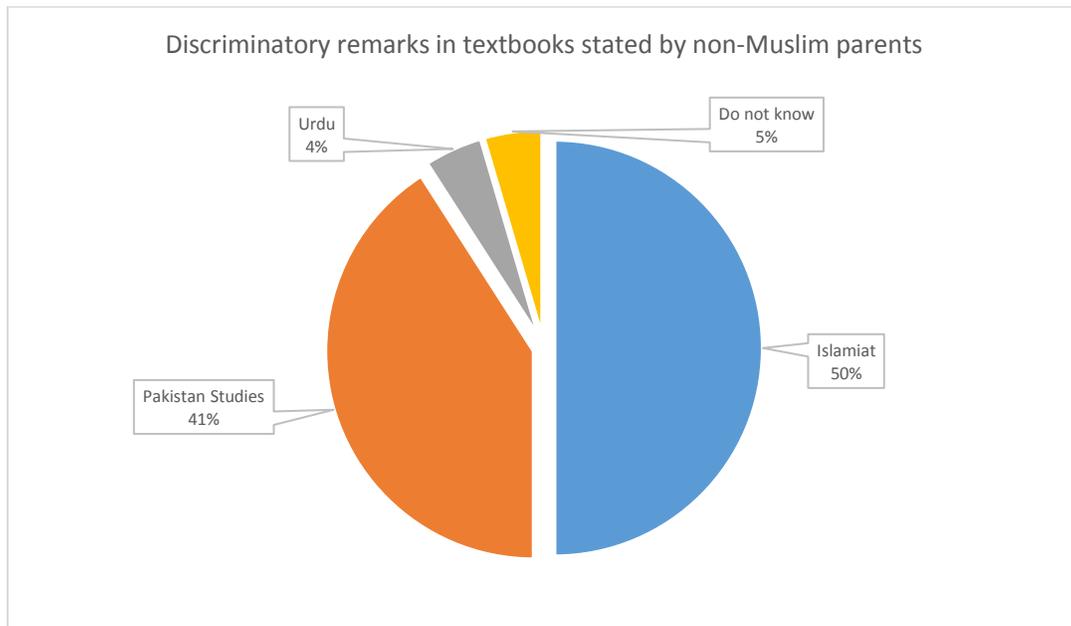
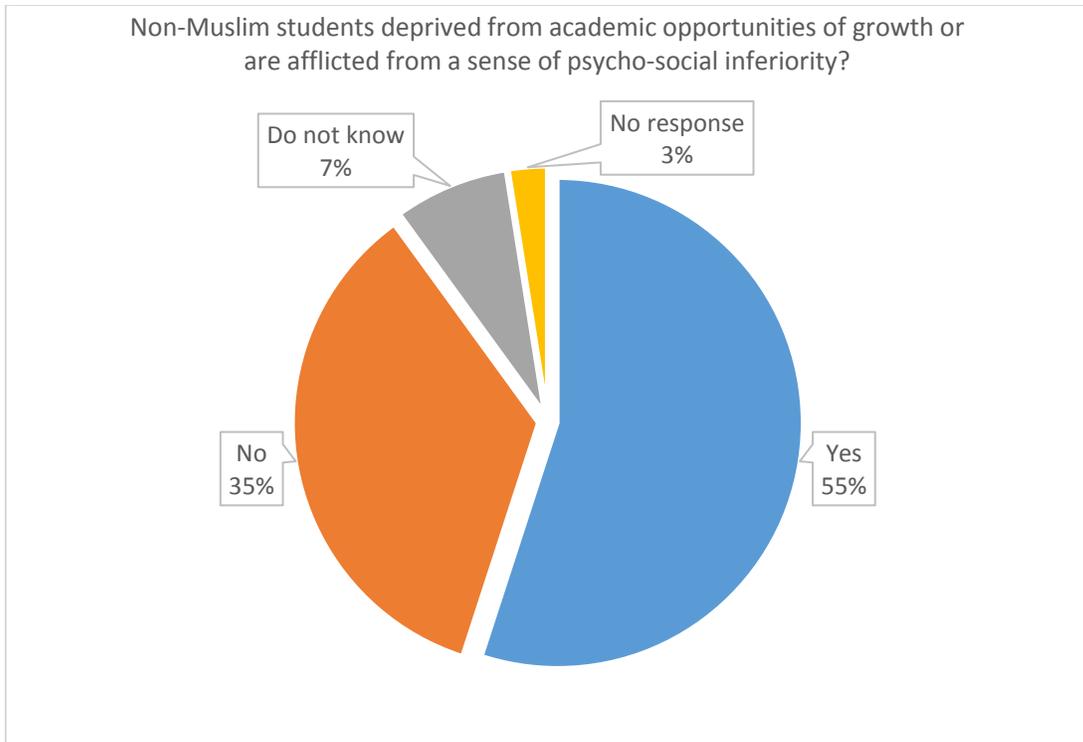
<b>Their children discriminated by whom</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Fellow Students?	20	57
Teachers	12	34
All the Above	1	3
No Response	2	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>



#### 4.3.3. Discrimination in Academics

Faith based discrimination holds direct impact on children's psycho-social abilities and self-esteem. Facing structured and institutionalized discrimination, they began feeling inferior to others in a society. Accordingly, survey result demonstrates that more than half the percentage i.e. (55%) of the parents believe that their children are being deprived from academic opportunities which develops serious psycho-social inferiority in them. However, one third of the parents (35%) do not agree with that and say their children are not being deprived from academic opportunities and are not affected by any feeling of psycho-social inferiority.

In the same vein, half of the parents (50%) recounted that their children did complain them that Islamiat and Pakistan Studies (41%) are the kind of subjects maintaining discriminatory and derogatory comments and statements about non-Muslims. Religions, they say, like Sikhism, Hinduism and Christianity become the victim of discrimination, one way or another. Be it about their faith, and or about their religious icons or about their own community and individual personalities.

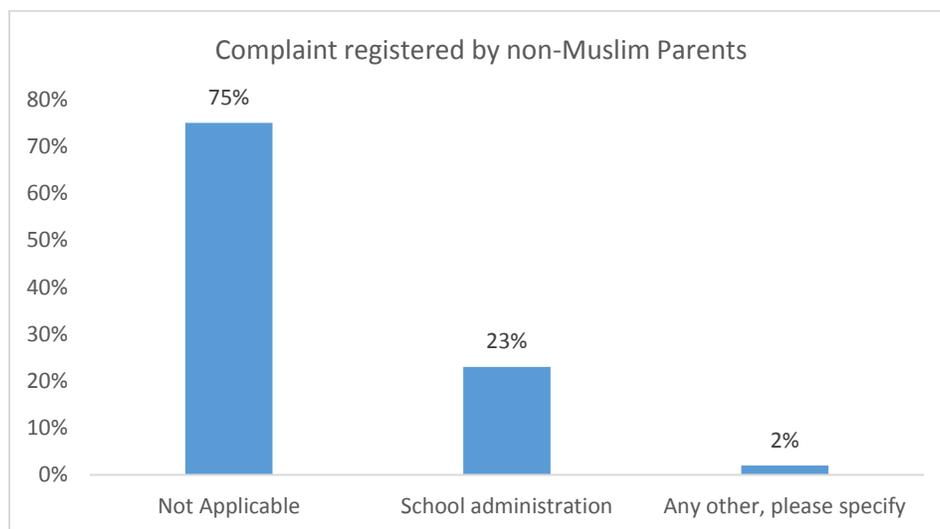


#### 4.3.4. Registration of complaints.

Interestingly, on the one hand parents feel that their children are discriminated but on the other hand, whenever their children quetch, parents respond of not having registered any complaint to any responsible authority. For example, only 25% of the parents consented of having registered

a complaint and a striking big proportion of i.e. (75%) of parents never filed a complaint to respective authorities. Further on, out of 25% of the parents who filed a complaint, about 23% registered the complaint with the school administration and only 2% to other relevant officials that includes relevant education authority, ombudsman etc.

<b>Have you (as a non-Muslim parent) ever registered any complaint against students'/teachers discriminatory behavior to school administration/relevant authority?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	10	25
No	30	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

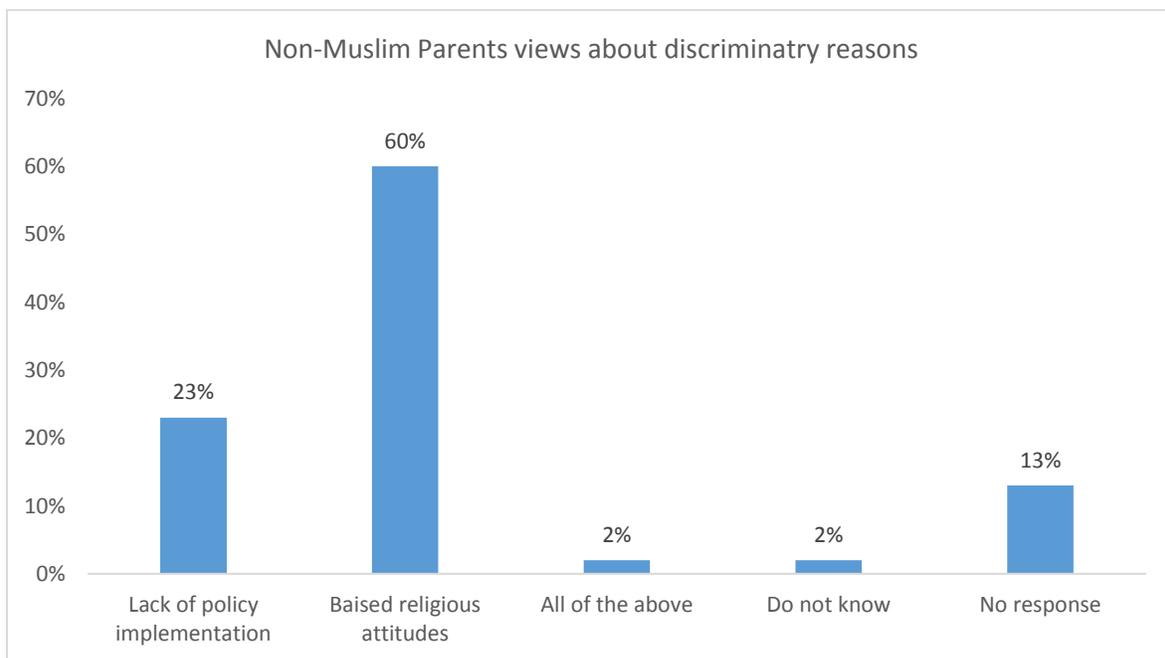


#### **4.3.5. Policy Issues and Recommendations**

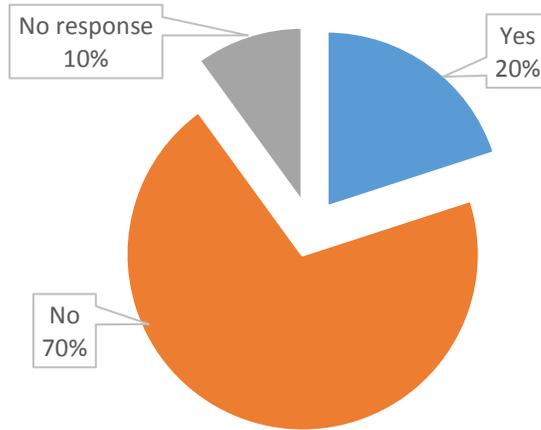
In non-Muslim parents' views, biased religious attitudes (60%) are among the eminent factors that lead to discrimination against non-Muslims in schools and colleges. 23% of parents believe that lack of policy implementation in schools and colleges lead to discriminatory attitudes. However, when asked about the acquaintance with legislative provisions/reforms for the equal rights, 70% of parents did not possess any knowledge and understanding about that and only 20% knew a little about the relevant legal provisions and reforms. Around 10% of the parents did not respond the question.

Despite knowing little about technical and legal provisions, an overwhelming percentage, (90%) of the parents feel that human rights/equal rights should be part of the social sciences syllabus either as a separate subject or integrated in the existing textbooks say in Urdu, English, Pakistan Studies or History at schools and colleges.

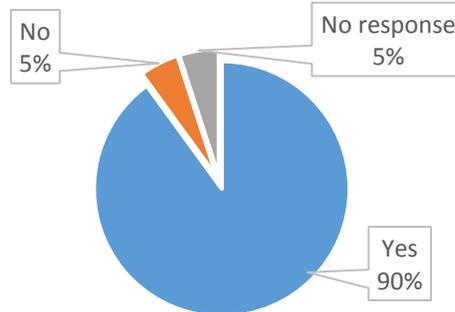
The assessment results also suggest that as high as 82% of the non-Muslim parents think that disciplinary actions should be taken against teachers and students who discriminate against non-Muslims students. Non-Muslim parents also believe that to curb the malefic discrimination in a school/college setting, the government needs to play a pivotal role. To do that 40% of the parents believe that the government should implement existing policy mechanisms, 28% suggest the government of developing appropriate policies, 13% believes that implementation of existing policies and a good 28% say the combination of all the workable ways to overcome discrimination.



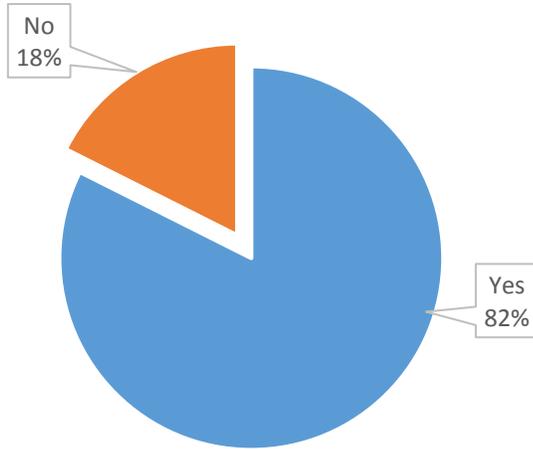
Familiarity with any legislative provisions/reforms for the equal rights and elimination of discrimination against the non-Muslims?



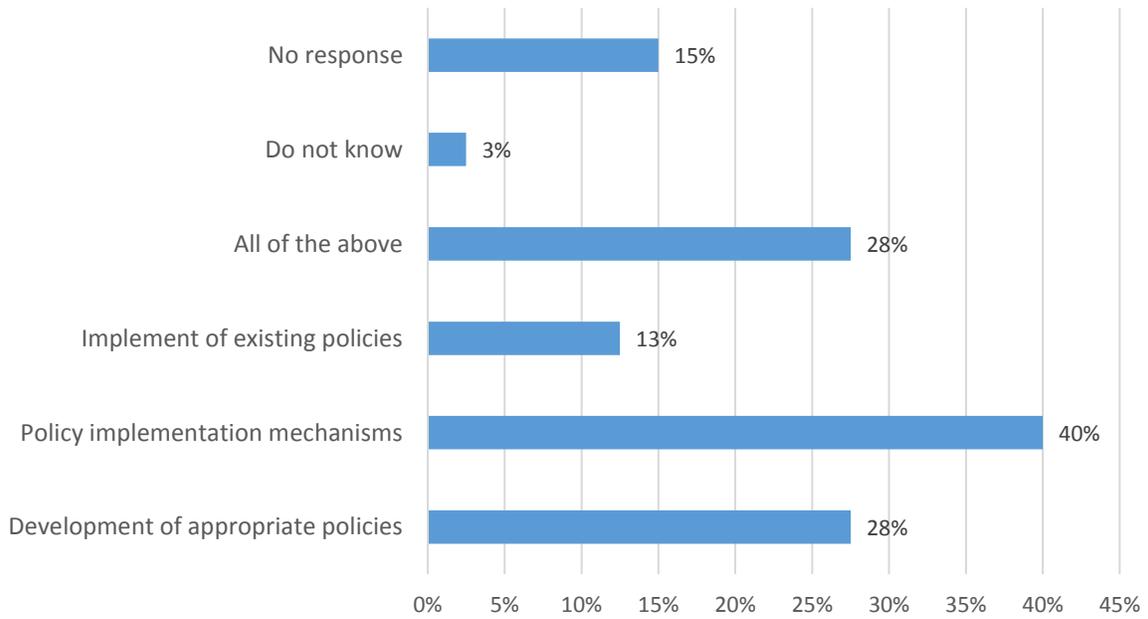
Do you(as a non-Muslim parent) think that human rights/equal rights should be part of the social science subject (Urdu/English/Pak Study etc.) at the school/college curriculum?



Do you (as a non-Muslim parent) think disciplinary action should be taken against Muslim teachers/students who discriminate against non-Muslims students/teachers?



Parents opinion about government's role



## **Chapter – 5.**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

As revealed by the study, the situation is quite alarming. A massive 60% of the non-Muslim students experience discrimination or feel being discriminated and disrespected. Similarly, 70% of the teachers agree of facing discrimination based on their faith. As high as 72% of the parents believe their children to be discriminated in schools/colleges because of their faith-based identity. The state of affairs naturally demands radical shifts and reforms right from legislation to the teachers training and behavioural transformation. Here are significant measures to be recommended:

- a) The policy and purpose of pre-university education needs to be thoroughly revised. The process needs to be instrumentalized to create objective, critical and analytical thinking and understanding in children. Scientific and empirical principles of thought and enquiry need to be promoted across all subjects.
  
- b) Most importantly humanist values of respect, equality and empathy needs to be instilled and strengthened in young minds. Freed from propaganda, History and Pakistan Studies should be taught in modern styles of teaching. Instead, diversity and development and peaceful co-existence be employed to create national unity and patriotism. Language and literature must concentrate evolving aesthetics, artistic and creative spirit amongst the students. Faith is but a personal matter and must not be promoted as the only denominator of one's identity. Other ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities need to be respected and acknowledged as integral part of Pakistan's composition.
  
- c) The publishing of National Book Foundation's (NBF) and Punjab Textbook Board's "Role of Minorities in the Making of Pakistan" for 8th Grade is a welcome sign. Similar essays and historical excerpts further need to be incorporated by other provincial textbook boards at different levels. Their role in the development of Pakistan be highlighted. Lessons on equality, fraternity, interfaith harmony, social justice and citizenship be made essential part of the social sciences to eliminate exclusionary views of citizenship in Pakistan. Non-segregated access of teachers and students be ensured in all academic institutes at all levels.

d) If at all, regional and international trade and political relations and security crisis be presented accurately and analytically so that the students and teachers avoid confusing 'the west' with the local Christians and India with the local Hindus and Sikhs. Information provided in the textbooks needs to be error-free, unbiased, unambiguous and up-to-date. Myths and stereotypes about other religions be avoided. The notion of the non-Muslims as enemies of Islam be dispelled as things in the real-politic are governed by politico-economic interests not by faith. Students of History, Pakistan Studies and Political Science need to know it.

e) All the relevant provisions of equality and non-discrimination that are part of UDHR (especially Article 26-2), ICCPR (especially Article 18), and CRC (especially Article 2 and Article 14-1) and Declaration on the Elimination of All forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief (especially Article 5) signed and ratified by Pakistan must be incorporated in the CoP and enforced. Respecting Article 20 (a), Article 22 (1) and Article 25 (1) of the CoP must be observed in devising, imparting and promoting education.

f) Islamic content must be consolidated in the subject of Islamiyat only. While explaining Jihad, other significant meanings of Jihad i.e. self-discipline and self-purification be highlighted. Non-Muslims must not be compelled (informally) to study Islamiyat or Arabic and they should have a convenience choice to study their own holy books. The Government of Punjab should try to 'reasonably accommodate' non-Muslim children who are not interested in taking lessons in Islamite or Arabic. Simultaneously, it needs to be emphasized that the CoP (1973) doesn't hold a provision for 'reasonable accommodation' on non-Muslim communities in different fields of life that needs to be incorporated.

g) Teachers' and fellow students' proselytization and influence on non-Muslim students to convert them to Islam should be taken notice of and be strictly prohibited. The Supreme Court of Pakistan's verdict of June 19 (2014) to undo all the wrongs against minorities must be considered to eliminate injustices with the non-Muslims in education sector as well.

h) The constitutional provision barring non-Muslims to hold the position of power and influence be removed as it is diametrically opposed to acknowledging them as equal citizens of the country. Pejorative provisions in the CoP 1973, say Articles 41-2, 91-3 & 260-3 (b) be removed. In case of teaching, the subject they teach should and must not have anything to do

with their faith. Non-Muslim teachers should be encouraged to assume teaching roles and offered equal respect.

i) The 2006 curriculum reform plan and the reviewed National Education Policy (NEP) (2009) must be implemented across provinces. Nevertheless, the said policy violates Article 14, 20, 22 & 25 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 13 (1 & 3) of the ICESCR and Article 18 (4) of ICCPR. The proposed education policy (2017) builds upon Article 31 & 25-A of the CoP but ignores its guarantees under Article 22, 26 & 36 of safeguarding minorities against discrimination in educational institutions too. Though limited, certain changes and incorporation of essays, stories and poems on human rights and environmental conservation are welcome, yet much of the problematic content persists. A sort of Provincial Curriculum and Teachers Training Advisory Boards need to be devised to advise on the content and methodology of teaching on progressive lines.

j) Curricula for teachers training be revised and radically improved on modern lines of teaching and learning. A comprehensive mechanism of teachers training both on what they teach and how they teach be devised. Apart from their subject, imparting humane values and accommodating plurality should be part of the training. Under-represented minority Children's enrollment and teachers' recruitment schemes be initiated as a positive action to ensure their proportional representation in schools and colleges.

k) Regarding egalitarian behaviour, teachers and students' awareness sessions be organized from time to time. Strong academic standards be developed along with authentic and effective compliance mechanisms to ensure regulation and to put an end to the acts of intolerance toward religious minorities. Educational aid should be effectively used to develop teachers training centers on and off schools and colleges to promote and implement diversity and inclusion.

l) According to the 'law of equality and non-discrimination', it is primary obligation of the State of Pakistan to respect, protect and fulfil the principles of non-discrimination for people within its territory. It incorporates a range of duties to enact legislation to protect its people from non-discrimination in areas of personal, private and public life (including education); ensure that laws and policies do not discriminate; ensure that public (and corporate actors) do not discriminate; where desired, enforce and implement anti-discrimination legislation and providing effective protection from violence based on discrimination and hate speech.

m) 5% employment quota for non-Muslims must be respected in education sector as well by providing them teaching and other relevant administrative positions in the education sector. Beyond formal equality – as enshrined in the Cop – substantive equality must be ensured to generate a level playing field by specifying proportional vacancies for non-Muslim candidates in the professional colleges/universities and for teaching at all levels in the education sector. Adopting equity principles will help them be treated equally.

n) Accordingly, the Principle – 3 of the ‘declaration on the principle of equality and non-discrimination’, the right to equality desires affirmative action that the State of Pakistan needs to employ to overcome past disadvantages and to expedite progress towards equality of the disadvantaged groups (in this case non-Muslims students and teachers). Similarly, Pakistan needs to abide by the Principle-22 to enforce access to justice and facilitate the victim students and teachers to submit evidence and proof against the injustice done to them. Where necessary, as advised by the said Principle, the Government of Pakistan (in this case Punjab) should impose remedies and sanctions against discriminatory teachers and the sanctions for breach of the right to equality must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive.

o) Specialized body to observe discrimination, confidentially receive complaints and reports, redressal complaints and compensate for loss be created. Such bodies will prove effective and eliminate discrimination as we have already seen (in the qualitative data) that where a victim student or teacher submitted a complaint to the higher authorities, they tried to help him/her. Unfortunately, more than two-third of the affected individuals (about 80%) of the students and teachers never bothered to lodge a complaint outside their system. Simultaneously, it is also a responsibility of the relevant authorities to encourage non-Muslim students and teachers to lodge complaint of wherever they feel. Information be disseminated and procedures be made simple. Even public litigation, civil suit and compensatory claims be made if the complainant believes, s/he possesses sufficient evidence.

p) Public litigation both on part of the non-Muslim teachers and students is extremely uncommon. Invoking CoP’s Articles 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 25 (A) 26, 27, if court cases are pursued, it is very likely that decrees go in their favour and where desired monetary or other forms of compensations can also be extended. Courts can elaborate the Right to Life (Article 9) to the ‘life with dignity and the self-esteem’ and may command affirmative actions.

q) Corresponding to their big festivals and ceremonies, minority-specific national holidays be declared for students as well as teachers. To reasonably accommodate non-Muslim students' and teachers' periodical exams must not be scheduled falling within their big days.

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