

# GIRLS' EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

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## INTRODUCTION

In developing countries all around the world, there are tens of millions of illiterate, uneducated children with dreams of attending school. South Asia has over 50% of the world's uneducated population, Pakistan being one of the biggest contributors to this percentage. Pakistan is a sovereign country located in South Asia, bordered by India, Afghanistan, Iran, and China, with a population of an estimated 180 million, the sixth most populous country in the world. Pakistan covers 307,374 square miles, being the 36th largest country in the world in terms of area. Pakistan is a democratic parliamentary Islamic federal republic. (Wikipedia)

Pakistan has the second highest number of children deprived of school (UNESCO). Within these numbers, two-thirds (over 50 million) are girls. Only 54% of the girls are enrolled into primary schools in Pakistan, which drops to a drastic 30% for secondary school. Girls from rural areas have even more inferior percentage rates (50% primary enrollment, 24% secondary). Figures vary by region. Pakistani girls are also more likely to drop out of primary school than boys are, mainly because of poverty. The ratio of Pakistani girls to Pakistani boys in primary schools is 79 girls to 100 boys (World Bank), although figures improved from 2001 to 2011. The consequences of illiterate children lead down to further generations -- today, only about 60% of Pakistani women are able to read or write.

I became very interested in the topic of girls' education in Pakistan during the later part of my seventh grade student year. I wrote an "advocacy" themed speech on girls' education using online information I had gathered. After the speech, I became very concerned about the lack of girls' education in Pakistan, and I was curious with many questions. By then I had learned of the many reasons Pakistani girls do not attend schools. For example, financial issues regarding family income and large families not being able to send all their children to school, early marriage and/or pregnancy, access to schools from villages with varying topography and no access to roads, religious constraints and/or ultra conservative religious leaders against girls' education, etc.

After some extra research, I compiled my questions into three formal questionnaires: a student's, a teacher's, and a policy maker's. One curious girl's idea, three questionnaires, and four plane tickets later, I was in Lahore, Pakistan interviewing girls, teachers, principles, politicians, and policy makers. I had gathered lots of information by then, but since Lahore is the hub of education in Pakistan, I was not really that aware of how many girls have had to put their lives in danger to fight for their education. I had been reading girls' education activist Malala Yousafzai's book "I Am Malala", and it became clear that I would get a clear idea of how girls have had to fight for education if I interviewed someone who has been through an experience similar to hers. A few days later we were headed to the village of Swat, Pakistan, Malala's village. There I interviewed a teacher and two of her friends from the school she attended, the Khushal College.

This report summarizes all the interviews I held, what I have learned from this trip, and how it has helped me discover that education in developed countries like the United States is considered a right, while in under-developed or developing countries it is considered a privilege. A privilege you have to fight for.

# **SECTION 1: TEACHER INTERVIEWS**

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## LAHORE GRAMMAR SCHOOL PHASE V, DHA, LAHORE, PAKISTAN FIRST TEACHER INTERVIEW

Lahore Grammar School Defense is a private, very high caliber school in Lahore.



A typical classroom at LGS

### **How much exactly is the tuition fee for this school?**

The way of charging the kids is quarterly. After every three months, the families get their fees. The tuition fee for a month is around Rs. 7,000 - 8,000.

### **Have you ever worked in other schools?**

Yes. You'd be surprised I've worked in various school's in the U.K. I was there for seven years. I did my teacher's training course there. I worked with kids with special needs. Kids from different countries from Asian backgrounds, like Bengali kids, Indian kids, Pakistani kids, and I worked as their interpreter. I've worked in various borders over there. I was settled for seven years there so I did lots and lots of training. I've worked in Lahore Pre-schools, I've got a lot of experience in other schools.

**How different were those schools compared to this one?**

They were pretty different in the sense that those are government schools, they are community schools, and in their academics they do deliver what needs to be delivered, what their syllabus is, but what I think that is different is that those environments are more relaxed. They are not that stressed upon the fact that their kids should learn to read *and* write that academic year of studies, you know, a list of this, this, this, and this. If they don't know they are not very stressed about it. They are relaxed, but over here our kids are accustomed to a very high level syllabus, they are very hard working. And, as you know, Asian kids when they go abroad they do extremely well, they take the top positions. So that is the difference, that we give our kids a very very challenging syllabus which they have to complete and henceforth we are a very well school academically.

**How do you think those schools were different economically or in terms of tuition fees?**

Those are community schools so obviously the parents are working and their taxes are being deducted from their salaries. And that's how [they pay]. The kids know that they don't pay any fees besides their dinner money. But the amount they have to pay is not very different because the amount of taxes in the U.K. that they deduct is quite a [high] amount over there. So I would not say that our school is very expensive and their universities are *extremely* expensive.

**What were the outcomes of these schools? (Did the girls drop out, did they finish their education?)**

No, no, it was a huge percentage, the girls *never* dropped out, the parents were very concerned about their education, there was no segregation. The girls were excelling like anything. For what, sometimes I feel that the girls do much better than the boys because they had that sense of consciousness; they want to excel in any subject, any aspect of life, the girls are just amazing these days and not just in their academics but in their extra curricular activities as well. I would say the girls are *no* less than boys, in fact they turn out to be much better in excelling in their education.

**Do you have any daughters or nieces?**

Yes, I have a daughter.

**What type of school does she attend?**

She goes to Lahore Grammar School (LGS).

The next question ("Would you want your daughter to attend this school?") does not apply because her daughter is already attending the school.

**What does your daily commute to work look like?**

I come in a car. It is just a five minute commute.

**Which language do you teach your classes in?**

I teach in English. The medium of the classes is in English. But, when it is their Urdu lesson, which is their mother language, then obviously the teacher will communicate with them in Urdu. But we also have French classes, where the teacher communicates in

French with them. But, whichever class you are teaching, Maths, Science, History, Food and Nutrition, Computers, they all have to be taught in English. That is the medium of education.

**Are the girls' parents involved in their education?**

Yes. Most of the parents are. Rather I feel that their parents are *more* consciences about their education. Come to think of my time I never think that my mother used to be so involved as I am as a mother with my daughter. In everything, in their curriculum, we know everything, parents are definitely much more involved in their education now.

**Which subjects do you teach?**

I teach English, Maths, Science, and Social Studies because I am in the elementary section so in grade one you have to take merely all the subjects. The only thing I don't teach is Urdu. The Urdu teacher teaches Urdu.

**For the upper school, is there a diversity of classes you can take?**

Yes. After grade eight they have their subject selection where they have a meeting where upon the parents are sitting there, the students are sitting there, their ninth grade teacher is sitting there, they are all sitting there and they are recommended classes. If the child, for example, wants to take literature, her previous background has to be taken in account of whether the child did well in grade eight in literature. And sometimes they are given an option, they can go into the class and check it out and if they don't like it they can pull out. So yes, there is a selection of classes. Some students take arts, some take pure sciences. So there is a large variety of subjects in our school.

**What are the future plans of these girls?**

They have big plans. They have reached Oxford, Cambridge, Yale, you name it. And it is not that our girls are wanting to go there, these colleges are asking for our girls. They are saying we want girls from LGS. Our school is now internationally recognized. They are working wonders, wherever they go they are shining bright and high.

**Do you see a variety in job choices?**

Yes, I suppose so. When they achieve this type of education, they are opting to be Graphic Computer Designers, Engineers, Doctors. They are doing really well. There are all sorts of aspects. Yes, they have a variety of choices for these girls.

**Do you believe the education these girls are receiving will help them achieve those goals?**

Yes, yes. They *have* achieved those goals. You may have heard of the phrase 'If you educate a woman, you educate a generation.' These girls are not just going into the communities and sharing their knowledge, they are bringing it into their households, educating their children, their families. So yes, of course, definitely.

## LAHORE GRAMMAR SCHOOL PHASE V, DHA, LAHORE, PAKISTAN SECOND TEACHER INTERVIEW



Lahore Grammar School

The first question (“What is the tuition fee for this school?”) was not asked because the information had already been given in our first interview with a teacher.

### **Have you ever worked in other schools?**

Yes.

### **How different were those schools compared to this one?**

Well, Lahore Grammar School (LGS) is a place where.. we have a very ballistic approach to education, so it is not just about teaching what is in the curriculum, but trying to ensure that we are providing our girls with every opportunity that they can possibly have at par with what is being offered to girls *and* boys in the U.S., in Europe, and across the globe. So be it, we prepare them for their O and A level examinations, we provide them with the opportunities for project based learning, and extra curricular activities are incorporated as part as our co-curriculum, which is not done across the globe, which is not done in schools

especially for girls in Pakistan. Some of our students represent us at forums nationally and internationally. Our students are pitted at university graduates and university students and we still manage to do really well. Our faculty is top-class, our environment is very conducive for effective learning on all levels. We do not stress science, we do not stress art, we try and create a very well balance for any child for whatever they feel is their talent.

**What were the outcomes of these schools? (Did the girls drop out, did they finish their education?)**

Well mostly in schools, because we're still talking about different cadre of schools, the big difference comes when they are applying to colleges. We have a very high rate of students applying to Ivy League colleges, to universities around the world, be it Harvard, London School of Economics, across the globe, we are not just focused on the U.S. or Europe, the rate of students getting admissions in universities abroad are pursuing higher studies with a view of following a career path, and this is the edge that we have which is very different from other schools.

**Do you have any daughters or nieces?**

I have a daughter who attends this school and is nine years old.

The next question ("What type of school does she attend?") did not apply because it was answered in the previous question.

The next question ("Would you want your daughter attending this school?") did not apply because her daughter is already attending LGS.

**What does your daily commute to work look like?**

My daily commute to work is about 32 minutes one way.

**Which language do you teach your classes in?**

English. And some Latin because I teach law.

**Are the girls' parents involved in their education?**

Well, at Lahore Grammar School, that is a given. All parents are very hands-on, and they are very involved with everything that LGS does, and regularly we have, not at the senior level but with the middle school and pre-school, things like Reading Week, and Color Week, and Bake Sales and things like that so the parents are invited to come in and be a part of their daughters' everyday lives. So they can read to their children, read to their children's class, be a part of projects that take place on a regular basis in our school.

**Which subjects do you teach?**

I teach law.

**What difficulties do you/have you seen girls, now and in the past, encounter getting an education?**

Well, primarily I think the kind of families girls are coming from at this school.. we don't face the stereotypical issues of 'OK, we have a choice, we are going to send our boys to school

and not our girls' and although, because I work in education policies also, we encounter a lot of that in Pakistan. It is a huge problem and getting parents to send their girls to school is an issue in our country. However, the kind of people that send their girls to school here are not facing those issues and the issues [end up coming] a little later. When it's time for them to apply to universities and colleges abroad. That's where the choice really has to be made. It takes some convincing. I am a counselor, too, and, it takes sometimes a little convincing to convince parents to send their girls to universities. They are eighteen years old, so it's scary for the parents to send them away and say 'you are all grown up and it is time for you to pursue your career'. One of the things that I realize at LGS is the fact that our girls have career plans. It is not that they just wake up and decide one day 'oh, you know, I think I am going to be a lawyer'. It is a plan that is built into the system from the time that they start choosing their subjects in grade eight. So by the time they are choosing their subjects we have started interacting with them, we have started talking to their counselors, so by the time they have done A levels, they know where their strengths are, they know where their coping mechanisms are, and when we are helping them choose their universities we are helping them take into account where their strengths and weaknesses lie. If they cannot deal with a very large university then we will help them find a smaller community where they are just going to be able to fit in and take off.

**Do you see a variety in job choices?**

Yes. Of course. Every little subject, opens up a whole new [door] of opportunities, different combinations of different subjects open up new [doors] of opportunities, and if you mix those subjects with their own extra curricular activities like sports, dramatics, you know, it's that combination of both at the end of the day which really defines what career path they are going to take.

**Do you believe the education these girls are receiving will help them achieve those goals?**

Absolutely, I'm a firm believer they will do very well. And the more diverse your educational opportunities are, the better equipped they will be to get out into the world.

## **BASTI SAIDIN SHAH GOVERNMENT SCHOOL TEACHER'S INTERVIEW**

Basti Saidin Shah is a government run school in Lahore. A government school is a public, government sponsored school; it is tuition free, funded in whole or in part by taxation. The government pays for their materials, such as books, furniture, computers, etc.

The Principal of the school was interviewed.



**How much exactly is the tuition fee to this school?**

There is no proper tuition fee, instead a 20 fund collected at the end of every month to pay for things the government does not cover.

**Have you ever worked in other schools?**

Yes. 20 years in other schools.

**What was the tuition fee for that school?**

Tuition was the same because these schools were also government run.

**What were the outcomes of that school? (Did the girls finish their education in that school? Was there a large dropout rate?)**

No. Dropout rate was only due to the transfer policy. This is because in this area lots of people work as police officials, they are working in [near] areas, and their children are studying there. Dropout is only due to transfer. Some children studying in this school are servants' children. And sometimes they change their destinations, they change their residencies, they change their owners. That's why.

**So, do you think it's dependent on where the school is located?**

No, no. It is dependent on their parents' income. If they change their owner, they have to change their [location]."

**Do you have any daughters or nieces? What type of school do they attend?**

Yes, my daughter is in Lahore Grammar School. It is a high caliber school. They are offering O Levels and A Levels. Not this metric system. They are out of this system.

**Would you want them attending this school? If so or if not, why?**

No. [She is] doing a high caliber english medium, which this school does not offer.

**What does your daily commute to work look like? Is it long or short, difficult or easy?**

Not difficult or easy. In the middle.

**What language do you teach your classes in?**

We use both English and Urdu. Government schools are [transitioning] into English. But, all of the [english material] we are receiving, the parents are totally [uneducated on] --

**So they are not able to help their kids at home?**

[Exactly], they cannot speak english to their children. That's why we have to teach in both English and Urdu. When we teach them in English, we have to translate to them in Urdu.

**Are any of the girls' parents involved in their education? If so, how?**

We want to try to involve their parents in the education, and we invited them to a parent teacher conference, but a lot of parents didn't come. They don't want to come. And lots are serving in other people's homes as I have told you, and they can't come because they cannot get permission from their owners. And, [just so you know] not all of the children are from this [kind of] caliber, some are from a [low] caliber, some are from a [medium], some are from a [high]. Every caliber is there. And some parents come. The ones which are educated, they come. They try to help their children.

**What subjects do you teach? Are there a large variety of subjects taught in the school?**

Basically my subject is chemistry. I can teach biology also. About variety of subjects, all the science subjects are going to be taught in this school for elementary. Pakistan studies, Islamiyat, these are all at elementary. But when you get into higher [grades], you have options. You can take art, you can take science, you can take lots of classes.

**What difficulties do you/have you seen girls encounter getting an education?”**

Not so many difficulties. But some difficulties because the parent doesn't bother [with] their kid. Lot's of schools do not attend school regularly. Lots of parents say, 'oh, this is for Saturday'. Lots of parents say, 'you don't need to go to school [today]'. This is [one of] the only problems. Also, in this area lots of people get diseases and sicknesses, so they cannot attend school.

**How have those difficulties affected their education?**

This is the main problem. Lots of children do not attend school regularly, and when they skip classes they can't understand the lesson. But some parents understand it, and [the other] parents don't want to understand it.

**What are the future plans of the girls you teach? Do you see a variety in job choices? If not, why?**

There is a variety. Lots of students in their [higher grades aspire] to be doctors, engineers, lots of choices.

**So, what is the percentage of girls who graduate from here?**

90%.

**And then, from those 90%, how many end up going to college?**

It depends on their income. Not from their marks, lot of girls get good marks. But it depends on if their parents can afford it.

**Do you see any cultural constraints?**

No, no. None of that.

**Do you believe the education these girls are receiving will help them achieve their goals?**

Yes. If they get good marks, they can do what they want. The [material] here is not the problem. It is up to a very good standard. Our educational level and teaching levels are very good. But the problems lie with the parents. Financial problems, family crisis, this is why they cannot attend regularly. These are the only things [holding them back].

## **KHUSHAL SCHOOL TEACHER INTERVIEW**

Khushal School is a private school in Mingora, Swat owned by Ziauddin Yousafzai, father of Malala Yousafzai



**How much exactly is the tuition fee for this school?**

Around Rs. 1000 - 1600 (\$10-16)

**Have you ever worked in other schools?**

Yes. I worked in six other schools prior to joining Khushal School

**How do you think those schools were different economically or in terms of tuition fees?**

One of them was a nursery and that was Rs. 4000. Others were as low as Rs. 800 per month

**What were the outcomes of these schools? (Did the girls drop out, did they finish their education?)**

There was a lot of dropout from those schools. One of the main reasons was poverty and generally after matriculation exam, children dropped out and not go to school as they start working and supporting their families.

**Do you have any daughters or nieces?**

Yes, I have a niece. I wish she could attend Khushal School

**What type of school does she attend?**

She goes to a private school with a lower tuition rate.

**What does your daily commute to work look like?**

I drive a car across the bridge but I usually run late due to traffic across the bridge.

**Which language do you teach your classes in?**

I teach in English. I am an English teacher and I have to speak in English in class. Pushto is banned in school.

**Are the girls' parents involved in their education?**

Yes. Most of the girls' parents are worried and concerned about their daughter's education

**Which subjects do you teach? Are there a large variety of subjects taught in the school?**

I teach English. You take English, Urdu, Islamiyat, Physics, Chemistry, Pakistan Studies

**What difficulties do you/ have you seen girls encounter getting an education?**

Poverty is a big difficulty that a lot of girls encounter. Society awareness about the importance of girls' education is lacking. Early marriages in this culture also hinder in girls getting an education. Conservative ideals also hamper girls getting out of homes to go to school. Misinterpretation that girls getting an education will not listen to elders is also a concern.

**How have these difficulties affected their education?**

Girls usually quit school after either primary education or after matriculation

**What are the future plans of these girls? Do you see a variety in job choices?**

They have big plans. Some girls want to be doctors, others engineers. However we see not much variety in choices for these girls in the future.

Yes, I suppose so. When they achieve this type of education, they are opting to be Graphic Computer Designers, Engineers, Doctors. They are doing really well. There are all sorts of aspects. Yes, they have a variety of choices for these girls.

**Do you believe the education these girls are receiving will help them achieve those goals?**

Yes. Education is like a light that shows you the way forward.

**AHMAD SHAH**  
**PRINCIPAL SAROSH ACADEMY, SWAT, PAKISTAN**

Dr. Ahmad Shah is the principal of Sarosh Academy in Swat, Pakistan. He started this academy in 1996 with his partner Ziauddin Yousafzai, father of Malala Yousafzai. He is a very close friend of Mr. Yousafzai.



We visited with him in March, 2014 as part of my research project and met at his school for an informal conversation about girls' education in developing countries, and some of the issues surrounding this topic as pertinent to Pakistan.

**What types of schools are there in Pakistan?**

There are basically two types of schools in Pakistan, government run and private run schools. Government run schools are free schools not charging a tuition fee and may charge a nominal Rs. 20 (\$.20) per month for maintenance of property. Private schools range from being very high standard schools to average schools. High standard schools

show very good results and various examinations and their tuition fee ranges from Rs. 1000 to 8000 (\$10 - 80) per month. Average private schools, so called "street" schools show average results in standard matriculation exams and their tuition fee can range from Rs. 300 - 500 (\$3 - 5) per month

### **What are some the reasons for lack of girls education in this society?**

There are many different reasons for lack of girls education. One of the main issues is poverty which leads to parents not sending their girls to schools. The second issue is early marriages. Girls are sent off in early marriages by parents as they are considered someone else's property right from birth.

### **Is there parent involvement in education of their children?**

This is one of the biggest issues with respect to education as a whole both for boys and girls. Maximum 5% parents are involved in their children's education. This percentage is even lower for girls. I consider that education and success in education is dependent on a triangle. This triangle involves students, teachers and parents. If the triangle is incomplete due to lack of interest of any one corner, it is very difficult for that child to get good performance and education.

In our schools, we see that the response of parents is very low.

### **What subjects are taught in your school?**

Computer, English, Science, Social Studies, Urdu, Maths, Islamiyat, Chemistry, Physics, Biology

### **What can be done to improve on the state of girls education?**

Awareness is what is needed by a lot of these parents. Parents are not aware about the importance of educating girls. They do not realize that educating one girl leads to the betterment of an entire future generation that they will raise as mothers. Parents do not realize that girls need as much education as boys.

Another thing that is important is parent involvement in the education of their child. Until there is an interest, it does not go far. The conservative environment has to change slightly allowing mothers to get more involved in their children's education.

Ultimately, unfortunately majority of girls education ends without it getting completed.

### **What fields do you see most of the girls going into if they are successful in getting higher education?**

Mainly doctors and teachers.

## **SECTION 2: STUDENT INTERVIEWS**

### **CONTENT:**

**LAHORE GRAMMAR SCHOOL GIRLS' INTERVIEW**

**BASTI SAIDIN SHAH GIRLS' INTERVIEW**

**KHUSHAL SCHOOL GIRLS' INTERVIEW**

**LAHORE GRAMMAR SCHOOL PHASE V, DHA, LAHORE, PAKISTAN  
GIRLS' INTERVIEW**



A computer room at Lahore Grammar School.

This interview was taken with two girls, so this is why some of the questions have two answers.

**What tuition fee do your parents pay?**

Rs. 7,000 - 8,000 a month.

**Do you have any siblings? If so, do they attend school as well?**

1: I have three brothers. One of my brothers attends university and the others are working.

2: I have two sisters. One is in medical school, and the other is in pre-school.

**Did you ever have a chance to get a scholarship? If so, how much of the fee did it cover?**

**1:** No.

**2:** My elder sister did, and it covered about 25% of the cost.

**Do you live near or far from the school?**

We both live close to the school.

**How do you get to school from your home?**

We both take cars.

**What subjects are your classes taught in?**

English, with the exception of Urdu class.

**What subjects are you learning in school?**

We learn a variety of subjects at LGS. Some of our classes include Urdu, Math, Computers, and Science.

**How are your parents involved in your education?**

They help us with our studies and projects.

**What difficulties have you encountered getting an education?**

None so far, thankfully, for both of us.

The next question ("How have these difficulties affected your education?") did not apply because there were no difficulties.

**What are your future plans?**

**1:** I would like to do something in the field of law.

**2:** I would like to be in the area of medical discovery.

**Do you believe this education will help you achieve those goals?**

Yes.

**How many friends/family do you have (female) that do not attend school? Why do they not attend school?**

None, Masha Allah we are very lucky to be so highly educated.



### **BASTI SAIDAN SHAH GOVERNMENT SCHOOL STUDENT INTERVIEW**

Since this school is government run, there is no actual tuition fee. The Rs. 20 is the monthly fee the parents must pay (separate from any tuition) to the school so the school can cover costs that the government does not cover.

#### **What tuition fee do your parents pay?**

Rs. 20.

#### **Do you have any siblings? If so, do they attend school as well?**

I have one brother, and two sisters. My brother attends a private school, and my sisters work.

(The price of her brother's school is high, but the exact cost is unknown.)

The next question ("Did you ever have a chance to get a scholarship?") did not apply because it was a government school, and there is no tuition fee. Therefore, there could be no possible scholarship. The question was not asked.

#### **Do you live near or far from the school?**

I live close to the school.

#### **How do you get to school from your home?**

I walk.

#### **What subjects are your classes taught in?**

Urdu and English.

**What subjects are you learning in school?**

I am in seventh grade, so I take Arabic, Math, Science, English, Computers, Urdu, Islamic Studies, Home Economics, History, and Pakistan Studies.

**How are your parents involved in your education?**

They help me with my studies.

**What difficulties have you encountered getting an education?**

Financial. It will be hard for my parents to afford my college.

The next question ("How have these difficulties affected your education?") did not apply because she is not in college yet and her parents have not yet encountered those difficulties.

**What are your future plans?**

I want to be a doctor.

**Do you believe this education will help you achieve those goals?**

Yes.

**How many friends/family do you have (female) that do not attend school? Why do they not attend school?**

My cousins do not go to school because of their early marriages.

## **KHUSHAL SCHOOL STUDENT INTERVIEW**

This is the school founded by Malala Yousafzai's father Ziauddin Yousafzai in Swat Pakistan. This is a private school offering girls an education in the area. This was the school Malala attended.



Myself and my cousin standing in front of Khushal school.

**What tuition fee do your parents pay?**

Rs. 1900 (around \$19) per month.

**Do you have any siblings? If so, do they attend school as well?**

I have no siblings.

**Did you ever have a chance to get a scholarship?**

Yes, after the matriculation exam.

**Do you live near or far from the school?**

I live close to the school.

**How do you get to school from your home?**

I take a van everyday.

**What language are your classes taught in?**

English, but of course Urdu is in Urdu and Islamiyat is in Urdu.

**What subjects are you learning in school?**

Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, English, Urdu, Pakistan Studies, and Islamiyat (religious studies).

**Are your parents involved in your education?**

Yes, they help me. But there are other girls that do not receive any help from the parents.

**What difficulties have you encountered getting an education?**

We have suffered from Taliban controlling our area. We used to wear home clothes instead of a uniform so we could hide our textbooks under them and secretly go into the school and learn. Ours was the only school that stayed open during the time the Taliban controlled the area.

**What are your future plans?**

I want to be a doctor, and my friend would like to be a fashion designer.

**Do you believe this education will help you achieve those goals?**

Yes, it is the most important thing which will help me achieve my goals.

## **SECTION 3: POLICY MAKER INTERVIEWS**

### **CONTENT:**

**MR. AITZAZ AHSAN INTERVIEW**

**DR. MUHAMMAD ARSHAD INTERVIEW**

**LT. COLONEL MAZHAR INTERVIEW**

**SENATOR AITZAZ AHSAN  
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE SENATE OF PAKISTAN**

**How much is the Government currently spending on education?**

Expenditure in Pakistan on education is low. In the fiscal year 2013 - 2014 only 3% of the Gross Domestic Product was allocated for education by the Federal and Provincial Governments. This is too low.

**What are your thoughts on girls receiving education? Why do you think that?**

I think that girls must receive as much education as boys do. There should be no discrimination or difference. An educated mother is the best academy for her children. A low literacy level impedes the growth and development of future generations.

**What are some common reasons girls do not attend schools in Pakistan?**

The most important reason for girls not being registered as students is poverty. Parents cannot afford to educate all their children. Hence the education of male children is preferred. Moreover Pakistani society is patriarchal and, in large measure, tribal. Even in communities, such as urban and metropolitan communities, where patriarchalism and tribalism should be a thing of the past, attitudes remain patriarchal and tribal. The vigor of the campaign to impose the Shariyah are presently reinforcing patriarchal tribalism. In such an environment, a girl/woman becomes a thing to be owned by the man. She loses rights and choices and is reduced to the status of a domestic slave. Social norms therefore condone parents in not sending their daughter to school. Girls are vulnerable and constantly under threat of abuse and denial.

**Why do you think these threats exist?**

These threats are the product of a primeval social structure that sanctions the dominance of man over the woman. The woman is kept weak. Her movement and choices are restricted. Dogma and society deny her equal inheritance, her free choice in marriage and the freedom to take up professions where she would compete with male counterparts. Man appears to be obsessed with woman fearing that if she were allowed to make free choices he would lose control over her. As such she has to be kept in hand and tethered to the home.

**How often have you seen or heard of girls dropping out of school?**

A high percentage of girls who go to school dropout before they have completed high school education. But a vast percentage of girls do not even begin to go to school. There is another distortion. Very many girls who do receive education up to the highest level do not pursue the professions they have been qualified for. Thus on getting married, lady doctors often give up jobs or practice to devote themselves to their husbands and children 24/7. What then was the purpose of obtaining a medical degree?

**What are your thoughts about ultra conservative religious leaders against girls' education?**

The ultraconservative religious leaders who oppose education for girls are obviously wrong and totally misdirected. They lead religious groups which fire at girl students and blow up schools. They seek to deny Pakistan's progress towards a modern and prosperous state.

**Do you have any daughters or nieces? Do they attend school?**

I have two daughters. The elder one is a graduate of McGill University in Canada and the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS), London. My younger daughter graduated from Brown University, USA and completed her education at Harvard Business School. Both are working as senior executives.

**What do your daughters dream of becoming as adults? What are their goals?**

My daughters strive to become good citizens of the world and to serving Pakistan to make it a better society for all its citizens, men and women.

**What kind of school do they attend?**

The question has been answered.

**Would you want your daughter to finish school and go on to college and even further, achieve these goals?**

I have given my response above.

**Do you believe the education your daughters or nieces are receiving will help them achieve those goals?**

Yes.

**DR. MUHAMMAD ARSHAD PhD  
DIRECTOR EDUCATION  
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN**

Dr. Arshad is currently the Director of Education for the Government of Pakistan. Prior to his current post, he was the deputy secretary education with the Government of Pakistan. He has also served as a college principal. Education is his field. He has a PhD in educational management.

**How much is the Government currently spending on education?**

It is about roughly 2% of GDP. Data is scattered and girls education numbers are not very clear. Same is about India, Afghanistan, and other SAARC countries. Sri Lanka and Maldives are better. India is better than Pakistan.

**What are your thoughts on girls receiving education? Why do you think that?**

To me, I prefer my daughter on my sons. I have two sons and one daughter. I prefer in all aspects for my daughter to get better education. My sons go by public transportation to school but I arranged for private transportation for my daughter to get to school.

In general, there are two types of people in Pakistan. One are those who are aware and have the resources and they prefer their daughters to get an education. The other group includes both well off and poor people. These people think that the girls are not important and that they have to leave their house and move to their in-laws. As a result, they have differential treatment for these girls. They think that the girls are not theirs and they avoid spending and they think the girls are inferior. To me, this type of paradigm has improved. The people are now improving their thinking due to media and education and awareness. There is a shift from non-preference to preference.

I have visited almost all SAARC countries, and I have studied their education system. The thinking is shifting in the country. At this moment, about 50% people think that the girls should not be educated, or given any equal treatment. Other 50%, think that the girls are same and should be taken care of.

Your next question should be what opportunities do we offer to the girls. At policy level, there is no distinction between girls and boys. They have equal opportunities, they have equal treatment. If based on merit, they have equal treatment and equal opportunities.

In medical colleges presently, and in other good fields, the girls are grabbing more opportunities than boys. But there is the thinking in the back of the mind of a fraction of people in countries even the US who think that the girls are inferior. Due to media, the perception of countries like Pakistan is seen like bad picture. We are very sweet people. They are as good as others

Even our prophet preferred his daughter. He loved his daughter a lot. He set an example for entire generations to come that the girls are not inferior. There is bad thinking but the criminal mind cannot be eliminated. Even though, there is a lot of law enforcement there still is discrimination.

### **What are some common reasons girls do not attend schools in Pakistan?**

There are multiple reasons. Some of them are socioeconomic reasons. Socially people are suppressed and they do not have the opportunity or the resources. This is a large class in our developing countries. This is one reason. Poverty and deprivation lead to less resources. This is about 20% of people in our country.

Second reason is geographical or regional issues. They live in such a region or area where the school is located at a far distance. They can send a boy by bicycle or walking but the parents are concerned about the girls going to school alone. This is another 20%.

Next one is 10%. This is the conduct of schooling. The process of schooling is not conducive for the girls. This forces the girls to quit school due to teacher behavior.

Next 10% includes multiple reasons. One is difficulty in educational content. The girls feel they cannot cope with that content. They fail and quit school.

30% girls pass the matriculation exam and 70% drop out.

### **Why do you think these threats exist?**

#### **How often have you seen or heard of girls dropping out of school?**

About 70% drop out of school. The problem is not girls only but the boys as well. Boys drop out at the same ratio, due to poverty and they start working to run their household.

#### **What are your thoughts about ultra conservative religious leaders against girls' education?**

The thinking involves religious thinking. Our religion does not impose any restriction on girls education.

In this country, there are not many restrictions on religious activities. If you want to build a mosque, you can construct a mosque without any permission. This is the weakness of the government. In countries like Muscat, Dubai Iran, Saudi Arabia there is no way that people can speak loudly on loud speakers giving sermons but in Pakistan you can do that without any restriction. This is the weakness of our countries. Same is true for Bangladesh. The Maulwis are the worst. The conservative thoughts about girls are everywhere in the world but in Pakistan due to Talibanization, this element has increased and is spoiling.

#### **Do you have any daughters or nieces? Do they attend school?**

I have one daughter and she is attending college.

**What kind of school do they attend?**

My daughter attended a government school in accordance with my pocket. I think she has gotten a very good education. She got very good marks in her matriculation. She is now studying on her own and got admission in Punjab college which is a very good school.

**Would you want your daughter to finish school and go on to college and even further, achieve these goals?**

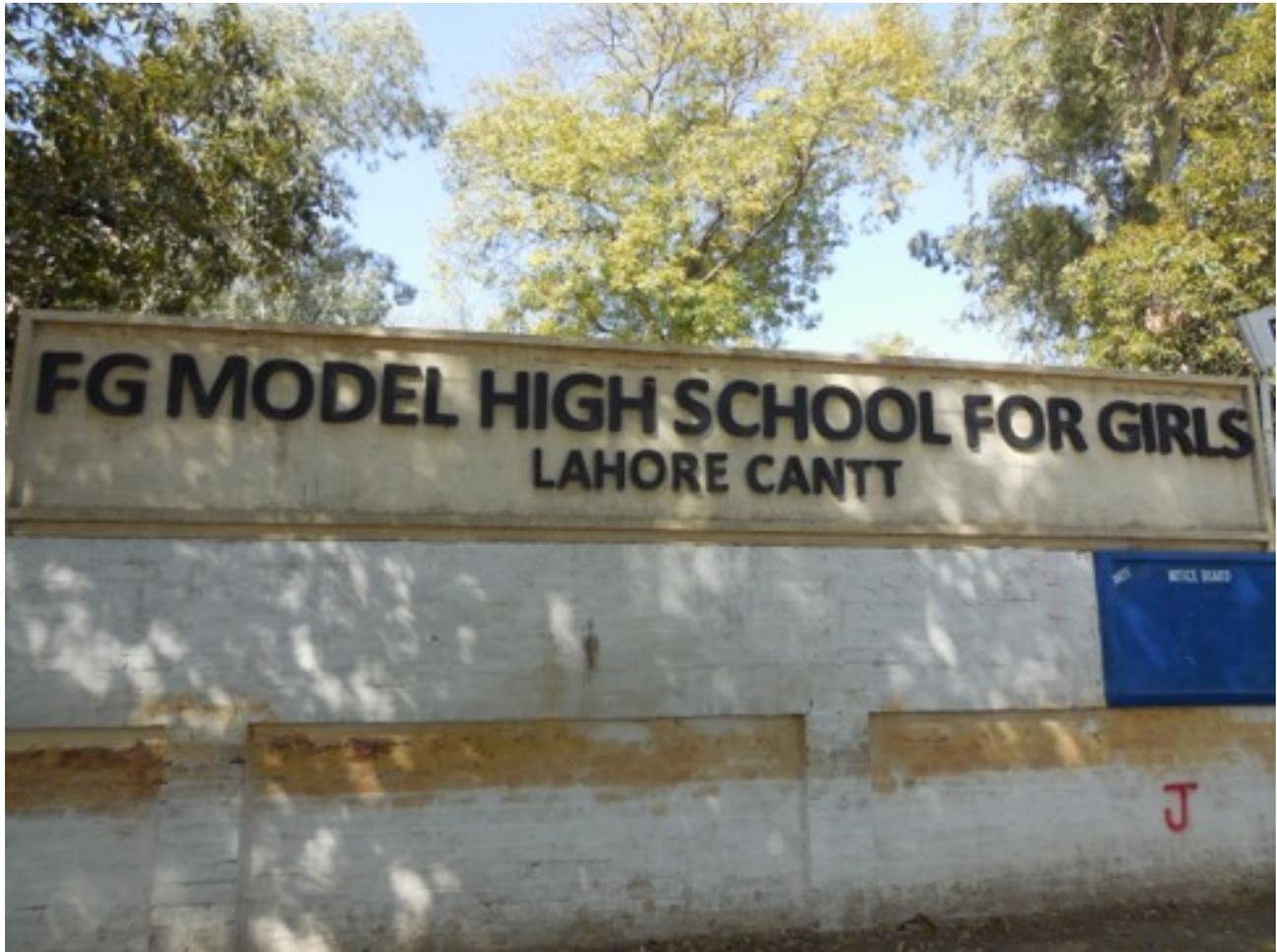
Yes I would love that and that is what she is planning on doing.

**Do you believe the education your daughters or nieces are receiving will help them achieve those goals?**

Yes I think so.

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL SYED MAZHAR HUSSAIN SHAH, M Phil PHYSICS  
ARMY EDUCATION CORE**

LT.Col Mazhar Hussain Shah is the Director of Federal Government Schools. In this position, he oversees the running of all schools operating in the cantonment areas of Pakistan. He was a teacher for 18 years and for 11 years has been an administrator in the army run schools. He is currently the director of Federal Government schools. His office is located in Lahore Cantonment.



**How much is the Government currently spending on education?**

Around 2% is currently being spent on education

**What are your thoughts on girls receiving education? Why do you think that?**

All girls should be educated. When we were younger, my sister did not get an education. We were 5 brothers and one sister. My sister is uneducated. Once we got educated, we realized how important education was for girls. My nieces are going and getting higher education. So a family where there was no education, now has very high education.

Quran says that educated and uneducated are not equal.

**What are some common reasons girls do not attend schools in Pakistan?**

There are social reasons, there are economic reasons and then there is the matter of preference of boys education versus girls education.

**How often have you seen or heard of girls dropping out of school?**

There are some social compulsions. As Muslims, we think when girls go to school they should be safe and protected. Due to lack of resources, when the school is far from the house, the family may not have the support in the form of money and people to go with them. As a result, they cannot go for further education. The primary school may be close but the middle school may be 10km away and the high school may be 20km away. There may not be money, transport or any person available to take the girl to school

**What are your thoughts about ultra conservative religious leaders against girls' education?**

Religious leaders are not good. Everything is very clear. Quran is very flexible. Quran gives you more protection than any other religion. Unluckily even as Muslims we do not follow everything given to us by our religion. We follow things that suit us and do not follow things that do not suit us.

If someone is against girls education, he is not a religious leader. He is a selfish man doing that for his own reasons. If everyone is educated, they will be able to differentiate between right and wrong. This does not suit some of these so called religious leaders. They do not want people to be aware, know their rights and question the wrong.

**Do you have any daughters or nieces? Do they attend school?**

I do not have a daughter. I have nieces and they are getting a higher education. If my sister was younger than me, I would have wanted for her to get an education as well

**What kind of school do they attend?**

They are attending masters programs in different universities in Pakistan

**Would you want your daughter to finish school and go on to college and even further, achieve these goals?**

Yes as I mentioned earlier they are attending higher education. Education of girls is more important than boys. The whole society is dependent on girls education. If the girl is educated, she will raise sensible children, she will have manners, and will be able to raise more sensible children. If she is not educated, the outcome will not be satisfactory.

**Do you believe the education your daughters or nieces are receiving will help them achieve those goals?**

The girls can become a professional but education is very important. They should be responsible. Change is very important. I will not compel her but will be given any and every opportunity to achieve those goals.

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research I have conducted in this project concludes that there are four main reasons for the lack of girls' education in Pakistan:

1. Financial issues, such as families not being able to afford tuition fees or not being able to send all of their children to school, resulting in the boys attending school while the girls never receive any form of education.
2. The country's GDP and budgeting -- only about less than 2% of Pakistan's GDP is being spent on education.
3. Conservatism and religious constraints, such as the Taliban, who had major influences on girls' education in villages such as Swat.
4. Community awareness and parent involvement -- much of the population not just in Pakistan but globally is unaware of how crucial it is for girls to be educated due to their role as mother in a family. If they are educated they will know how to take care of and provide for their family, and pass down the knowledge that they know to the posterity of the family. Also, many girls' parents are not involved in their education. They do not care about if their daughters are educated correctly, or if their daughters are not educated at all. Parents also arrange for their daughters to marry at early ages and do not know how crucial it is for them to finish their education rather than drop out before they complete their secondary education.

Although Pakistan's girls' education standards are considerably low compared to those of the United States and other developed countries, the statistics *are* changing. There has definitely been a change in Swat since the operation to drive out the Taliban in 2009. The girls can now openly attend school without having to sneak their textbooks under their shirts and slip into the schools secretly. Although the Taliban have left a mark in terms of religious thinking and mindset, it is getting significantly better over the years. And this change has not just been for one village, but for many parts of Pakistan.

In terms of what could be done to bring about even more change, and how people will see these "good parts" is if

1. Pakistan starts spending more than a mere 2% on their education, if they start building schools where children have more access to them, rather than having to walk a miles way over varying topography and without access to roads.
2. If the more conservative population starts realizing that education of girls is not a wrong and sinful thing.
3. If the population is more aware that if a woman has a strong mind, she can bring up a strong posterity, and help create a strong community. An educated woman means an educated society.

## **CONCLUSION**

The primary objectives of my project are for me to personally learn why there are barriers to these educational goals and to be able to do something to overcome these goals. On a much bigger scale, I hope to help raise international awareness on the lack of girls' education in the developing countries and improve the primary and secondary school education rate among these girls.

I believe that my research has helped me in defining some goals that I will work hard to achieve over the course of the next few years. I see myself investing more time and energy and focusing some of my future educational direction towards these goals.

I believe that working towards these goals will not only help me define a future career path but if I can bring about a change and help girls get access to education through any type of work, it will be a very rewarding experience. I also hope that this effort will help encourage some of these girls to start working towards their own goal development.

During my research I have come across the Malala Fund on multiple occasions. The Malala Fund is a non-profit organization that works with local partners in Kenya, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Jordan to help improve girls' education. In the future, during my high-school years, I hope to travel to a developing country and work with an organization such as the Malala Fund. This will not only help me to fulfill the objectives I have set for myself as an individual, but also provide for me the chance to help young girls in need or looking for the chance to be heard to reach their own objectives.

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

This project would not be made possible without the people who have helped, participated, and guided me through the ups and downs of this trip.

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