

NHDR 2015 - Report on Consultation with Youth Group

A. BASIC DATA

Location	Jhang Madrassah
Date and Time	26 th November 2014
Topic	National Human Development Report 2015
Participant Profiles	20 male youth with few above the age of 29
The IDEAS Team for UNDP Report	Salman Khan (Research Associate IDEAS)

B. OVERVIEW

The NHDR team at IDEAS held a focus group discussion with a group of male Madrassah students, most of whom were aged between 15 to 29 years, to discuss the upcoming UNDP National Human Development Report and to understand the youths point of view regarding a) the burning issues that affect their lives and b) the changes they would hope to see in the society.

C. KEY ISSUES & THEMES

Issues

The Madrassah students participated in the discussion with a great deal of reluctance although there were a few participants who spoke at length. By the end, attempts to engage the whole bunch of people proved to be more successful but there were still a few students who kept their silence and merely nodded in agreement with their participants:

- Most of the students had obtained degrees in secular education in addition to their religious education.
- The center had a technical center set up through TEVTA which had been operating for over 10 years and provided vocational training in electrical works as well as computer training.
- The students were participants in the Dars-Nizami course and this dictated their time in the madrassah.
- Most of the students were from nearby areas although some students had come from place such as Jaranwala and Sargodha.
- The students belonged to Ahl-e-Sunnah wal Jamaat ideology and focused that they were taught the message of peace and not of extremism.
- They were very active in pursuing computers and internet as it enabled them to spread their message of Islam to the entire world.
- Only 2 people of the entire group were married. Rest were not married but said that studies and marriage cannot go together very well so they weren't too eager to get hooked soon. Some also cited lack of resources as reasons for not being married as well
- Most of the students saw a career in religious studies and some saw themselves as being teachers. Few planned to obtain Msc Islamiyat or similar degree which would allow to get teaching jobs at schools and colleges.

- Some of the graduates were taking up positions as Khateebis in army and some were using the trainings obtained through TEVTA to take up jobs at places like Qarshi Industries.
- By definition, they were not allowed to carry cell phones but most did. They also got access to newspapers on Friday only. TV was shown only on special occasions.
- They did not have any strong political affiliations or at least were not willing to voice them. They reckoned that every party was working in self-interest and they did not see any one worthy of supporting.
- Looking forward they didn't see much hope for Pakistan and felt that terrorism was a major issue which had hampered the country in the past and was likely to do so in the future as well.
- Their entertainment was constrained by lack of grounds but a few played cricket, volleyball etc.
- Their circle of friends was, by and large, influenced by their peers. They shared their academic problems with their teachers and social problems with colleagues.

D. INTERESTING QUOTES AND EXAMPLES

- One of the participants was teaching kids in Australia through online courses.
- One of the participants was well aware of the political scenario in terms of dharnas and Jalsa's but reckoned that this was because he had been home for that weekend so was abreast with the news. It was not the case when he was at Madrassah.
- It would make much more sense to take pre-emptive actions such as bands for water overflow rather than giving money to affected as this doesn't solve the problem.