

NHDR 2015 - Report on Consultation with Youth Group

A. BASIC DATA

Location	Jaamia Muhsanaat, Jhang
Date and Time	26 th November 2014
Topic	National Human Development Report 2015
Participant Profiles	20 girls between the age of 17-20
The NHDR Team	Zohra Sohail, Neelum Maqsood, Amal Masud

B. OVERVIEW

The NHDR team held a focus group discussion with a group of young female Madrassah students, most of who were aged between 17 to 20 years, to learn about their experiences, problems and aspirations. The team discussed the UNDP National Human Development Report 2015 and explored the youth from madrassas point of view regarding a) the current situation of their lives and their country b) their hopes and fears.

C. KEY ISSUES & THEMES

Issues

The Madrassah students participated were initially reluctant in voicing their opinions and choices but after the first few minutes and a few probing questions, most of the girls started to actively participate in the discussions. Two of the madrassa teachers were continuously present in the room but it did not hinder the girls in speaking out but it may have restricted them in voicing their opinions regarding the quality of teaching or their curriculum.

- The hobbies of the girls varied from playing sports to cooking , drawing and book reading
- The school had given them the opportunity to play sports
- The girls mostly enjoyed reading Islamic Novels or other Urdu novels
- The girls reported that during the initial periods of their lives they were studying in government schools near their homes, the quality of education in those schools was not good. The girls who used to study in private schools did not have any problems with the quality of education in their schools.
- A girl had complete 6th, 7th, 8th grade at home as there was no middle school in her village.
- The distance to the school was a big factor in determining their school choices as their parents did not want them to travel long distances to go to the school.
- Unlike the teachers in public schools, the teachers in private schools were more effective and concentrated on the students
- The parents were happy to send their children to another city to attend school (the madrassa) but the people around them in their village were not supportive of it
- Our relatives don't support the fact that we are madrassa is away from our village
- A girls family is not letting her continue her education beyond bachelors as that would entail her to go to another city for education and the family doesn't allow that

- Overall, the girls think that Pakistan doesn't have enough school for girls, especially in the villages. Most villages don't have schools beyond primary schools, and the smaller cities don't have colleges or universities
- The girls cannot travel long distances to get education even if the school has a bus service because they cannot travel on their own without their parents or a chaperone
- A good college is such that provides security, Islamic knowledge, spiritual upbringing along with formal education.
- They prefer schools where there is no ragging or bullying, this is why they like this madrassa
- The teachers not only help them with the curriculum but they also solve their personal problems
- The parents happily send their children to the madrassa as they know that the madrassas administration will take care of their children.
- A large number of girls wanted to go for their masters but they were not sure about their specialization.
- Some of the girls want to go to the Islamic University but a girl pointed out that she will not be allowed to go to that university as it is away from their homes
- Some of the girls said that they will get the permission to do a job, a few girls wanted to join the army but they know that they will not get the permission of joining the army
- The girls wanted to do a job to apply their knowledge, transfer knowledge and to earn.
- The girls would only be allowed to work in those places where there is a minimal interaction with males. They think that teaching is the ideal job as there is gender segregation in this stream of employment, unlike other occupation where males and females work together.
- The girls would be able to work in an occupation of their choice if the Islamic System is implemented in Pakistan. As this would entail that there would be separate departments for each gender.
- There are very few employment opportunities for girls in Pakistan.
- The girls are interested in watching the news channels and reading the newspaper as they are keen on knowing about their country
- The girls want an Islamic System to come in Pakistan and they want unity in the country therefore they plan to vote for Jamat-e-Islami
- The girls don't attend political events but they do meet up with the female political workers who come to their villages
- They would want to bring justice and modesty in the society. They want women to do veil and hence that would bring modesty in the society.
- They want a society where women can freely travel with any fears
- They want a society where men respect women
- The girls are allowed to meet those friends whom their parents approve of. They either call their friends over to their place or they go to their place but they cannot go unaccompanied so either of the parents or someone accompanies them to their friends place
- They fear that another nation will take over Pakistan as we are becoming friends with enemy countries and we are not extending out hand of friendship to other Muslim countries

- They fear that the society will become even more indecent and westernized
- They fear that inflation would keep on increasing
- They fear that if the judicial system doesn't improve then our nations situation will worsen
- They fear terrorism and bomb blasts
- They fear that if our politicians won't change then our nations situation will worsen
- A girl mentioned that she is scared that she will not get what she is struggling for.
- They believe that if the Quran and Ahaadis are implemented in the country then the situation of country will become better. They want the implementation of Shariah in the country
- They believe that Pakistan needs to implement hadood in the country as that would bring modesty
- We want to make Urdu the most spoken and popular language of Pakistan. Our ruler should speak Urdu even when they go abroad.

D. INTERESTING QUOTES AND EXAMPLES

- "Our parents will not allow us to join nursing, as nurses have to do everything and our families will not permit us to do that"
- "Casting a vote is our right"
- "I am scared of breaking down"
- "we are hopeful about the future of our country"
- "We got this country on the name of our religion (Kalma)"