

NHDR 2015 – Report on Consultation with Youth Group

A. Basic Data

Location	PC Hotel Peshawar
Date & Time	21 Dec. 2014, 13:30 pm - 14:30 pm
Topic	National Human Development Report 2015
Participant Profiles	11 participants from the Hindu community, 4 female, 7 male, aged between 19-28
UNDP Team	Dr. Adil Najam (Lead Author), Gemma Stevenson (Lead Coordinator), Muntazir Ali (Research Analyst)

B. Overview

The consultation with Hindu youth was the first of the sessions planned for KP. This session was made possible by Mr. Haroon Sarab Diyal, who is a known rights activist, not only in his own Hindu community but also in Christian and Sikh communities. Although he was quite self-conscious not to dominate the discussion, his presence significantly influenced the dynamics of the session, if not the views of the participants. Moreover, he personally knew all the participants, not to mention that his daughter and son were among the participants. All the participants lived in Peshawar, and represented a small section of the educated Hindu youth. Most of them had master degrees in subjects like commerce, business studies and natural sciences. Most of them were eager to participate, some, however, had to be encouraged to contribute to the discussion. The NHDR team felt that more careful thought needs to be invested in how the project and its outcomes are to be conveyed to the participants.

C. Key issues & themes

- All the participants wanted to continue their studies and obtain advanced degrees, but they said that lack of financial resources was a hurdle in the way of their academic ambitions.
- They were of the view that lack of educational institutions run by the Hindu community was a major factor explaining low literacy rate in the community. They said that most Hindu parents could not send their children to government schools because of anti-Hindu texts in Pakistan Studies and Islamiyat textbooks, and they could not afford the expenses of most private schools.
- They thought that teachers, especially those who teach Pakistan Studies and Islamiyat need to be properly trained.
- Most of them were happy with the quality of education they received, but were not sure of its value in securing a fulfilling jobs for them.
- Almost all of them were more educated than their parents.
- Three of the participants said that they were working; with only one of them, a female working in the provincial secretariat, saying that she was satisfied with the job she was doing.

- The participants agreed that non implementation of assigned quotas was the major reason for their unemployment. They added that sometimes they don't even receive call letter for tests/interviews for various jobs, just because they are Hindus.
- Two female participants said that in response to their job applications in various institutions, they were told that their applications were rejected because they were Hindus.
- Most of them said that if they were offered the same job in Peshawar and elsewhere (Islamabad, Karachi, Dubai) they would prefer to stay in Peshawar.
- They thought that lack of financial resources and discrimination towards their community were major hurdles in any entrepreneurial activity they want to undertake.
- Most of them were not very optimistic in the value of their votes in changing the quality of their lives.
- All of them had cell phones, which they used for using internet, chatting, listening to songs and for making calls. They used the internet for facebook, job searches and for watching videos. TV news channels were their preferred source of news.
- Their fears revolved around insecurity, discrimination, religious freedom, and resource distribution. They all hoped for a secure and respectable job.

D. Interesting quotes

- “We are Pakistanis. Being Hindu does not mean we are Indians. If there is an India-Pakistan cricket match, it should not be assumed that we would support India. If we were to support India, we would have lived in India.” *Male, 21*
- “It may be easy for those who ask us to convert to Islam, but it is not easy for us. How can we leave the religion of our ancestors? We respect all religions.” *Female, 17*
- “In our primary schools they teach literature which is anti-Hindu. They teach that Hindus are infidels, they are our enemies.” *Male, MS student*