



Australian Government

Department of Immigration and Border Protection

Standard Q&A Report

Pakistan: CI150313142225972 – Western Values – Returnees

Date of Report

23 March 2015

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Background

Applicant is a Pakistani male who is from s. 47F(1), Punjab, Pakistan. He does not have an identifiable profile of interest in Pakistan.

He is claiming harm from non-state actors - extremists, including the Taliban, because he will be viewed as a Westerner on return to Pakistan.

He claims this will occur due to his s. 47F(1) spent in Australia.

Questions

1. [Are there reports of the Taliban, or any fundamentalist group, targeting returnees in s. 47F\(1\) on account of their having resided in a western country?](#)

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Answers

1. Are there reports of the Taliban, or any fundamentalist group, targeting returnees in s. 47F(1) on account of their having resided in a western country?

No reports were found of any fundamentalist groups, including the Taliban, targeting returnees in s. 47F(1), or any other part of Pakistan, on account of their having resided in a western country.

In its *Country Information Report* for Pakistan, dated 29 November 2013, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) stated that it had ‘no evidence that indicates individuals would be subject to discrimination or violence as a result of them having spent time in western countries’ and noted that Pakistanis living abroad who returned to Pakistan for visits were ‘not at any increased risk because they have spent time in western countries.’¹

Returning to Pakistan

The act of returning to Pakistan from a western country is common.

Although limited to student migrants, rather than the entire migrant population, a 2012 article for the peer reviewed journal *Islamic Perspective*, published by the London Academy of Iranian Studies, states that ‘30 per cent of the 100,000 Pakistani students who study abroad annually return to Pakistan’, and that the Pakistani government has been trying to increase that number by ‘increasing their salaries, better housing opportunities and job incentives.’² Whilst the article does not state how many of the 30,000 students return from western countries, other reports were found which indicate that the phenomenon of students returning from western countries is common.

For instance, the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan, which administers the Fulbright Scholarship in Pakistan, arranges for Pakistani students to spend part of their degree at a US University, before returning to Pakistan to complete their studies. According to a July 2012 report by *The News International*, 200 students leave and return to Pakistan each year.³ The report notes that the students selected for exchanges were from all parts of Pakistan, including Gilgit Baltistan and Balochistan.⁴ Students similarly return to Pakistan from Australia, with the Australian Trade Commission launching an Australia – Pakistan Alumni Business Forum, which is reportedly designed to facilitate networking among individuals who studied in Australia and have returned to Pakistan.⁵

¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2013, *DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan*, 29 November, Section 3.76, p.18 <CIS26783>

² Tavakol, M 2012, ‘Brain Drain: Problems and Solutions’, *Islamic Perspective*, Vol. 1, no. 7, Spring, p.165 <CIS961F9402123>

³ Khan, A S 2012, ‘200 undergraduates to leave for US’, *The News International*, 20 July <<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-6-121671-200-undergraduates-to-leave-for-US>> Accessed 20 March 2015 <CX0D38E8E20146>. For more on the foundation, including a statement that all 100 from the latest batch had returned to Pakistan, see: <http://www.usefpakistan.org/Programs/GlobalUGrad.cfm?Tab=Programs>. *The News International* is part of the Jhang media group, Pakistan's largest media organisation. *The News International* is thought to be the second most widely read English language newspaper, after *Dawn*.

⁴ Khan, A S 2012, ‘200 undergraduates to leave for US’, *The News International*, 20 July <<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-6-121671-200-undergraduates-to-leave-for-US>> Accessed 20 March 2015 <CX0D38E8E20146>

⁵ Australian Trade Commission 2014, *Australia – Pakistan Online Alumni Business Forum launched in Pakistan*, 8 April <<http://www.pakistan.highcommission.gov.au/files/islam/140408-PakistanAlumniLinkedInLaunchMedia%20Release.pdf>> Accessed 20 March 2015 <CIS2F827D92297>

According to a May 2010 *BBC News* report, many Pakistani migrants regularly move between Pakistan and the west. The report describes how 'thousands' of Pakistanis with UK citizenship, having lived in the UK, returned to the city of Mirpur in Pakistani-administered Kashmir, which is reportedly known as 'little Britain'. The report claims that 'British accents' in the area are common and that people continue to associate themselves with western products.⁶ According to the report, people regularly travel between the UK and Mirpur:

When thousands of residents lost their livelihoods as farmers in the 1960s - when a huge dam was built in the area - there was a mass migration of Mirpuris to the United Kingdom, where there were labour shortages.

As a result at least 70% of the Pakistani diaspora living in Britain today originates from this one small district.

Generations on, they travel back and forth for holidays, work and to see family.⁷

Western Culture in Pakistan

According to DFAT, 'western influence remains pervasive in many parts of Pakistan, particularly in large urban centres.'⁸ DFAT also provided information outlining the significant level of western influence in Pakistan:

Western films and music are widely available (though in many cases subject to censorship) and western branded chains operate throughout Pakistan. Both Urdu and English are recognised as official languages in Pakistan. English is taught in many schools and is widely spoken among Pakistan's elite. Many Pakistanis have relatives living in western countries and many more aspire to migrate abroad.⁹

Reports were found which support DFAT's assessment, and suggest that the level of western influence in Pakistan is now such that some conservative elements within Pakistani society, including religious political parties, believe that Pakistan is experiencing a cultural crisis.

A 2009 article in the peer reviewed journal *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* considered the impact of cognitive therapy on students in Pakistan, noting that critics of the approach believed that the therapy was culturally contingent, i.e. would not work in a non-western culture.¹⁰ The study found that, among the sample tested, 'it is likely that [their] values are similar to those people in the West', noting that 'not only are Western TV channels watched throughout Pakistan, especially by young people, but the Pakistani media promotes Western values'.¹¹

⁶ Maqbool, A 2010, 'Chasing the UK vote in Pakistan's 'Little Britain'', *BBC News*, 1 May <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8655697.stm> Accessed 23 March 2015 <CX744258516843>

⁷ Maqbool, A 2010, 'Chasing the UK vote in Pakistan's 'Little Britain'', *BBC News*, 1 May <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8655697.stm> Accessed 23 March 2015 <CX744258516843>

⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2013, *DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan*, 29 November, Section 3.75, p.18 <CIS26783>

⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2013, *DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan*, 29 November, Section 3.75, p.18 <CIS26783>

¹⁰ Naeema F, Gobbic M, Ayub M, and Kingdona D 2009, 'University students' views about compatibility of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) with their personal, social and religious values (a study from Pakistan)', *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, Vol. 12, No. pp.847-855 <CISE1310071585>

¹¹ Naeema F, Gobbic M, Ayub M, and Kingdona D 2009, 'University students' views about compatibility of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) with their personal, social and religious values (a study from Pakistan)', *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, Vol. 12, No. p.853 <CISE1310071585>

The idea that young people in Pakistan are particularly attracted to western culture is widespread. In 2013 Gallup Pakistan, a Pakistani social research company, asked 2533 men and women from rural and urban areas in all four provinces of Pakistan whether Pakistani youth had become 'westernized'; 53 per cent said yes.¹² A similar poll conducted on the following day found that the same percentage believed that 'Pakistani youth are facing an identity crisis because of globalization'.¹³ That these views represent a critical assessment of western culture and globalisation is not, however, clear. According to a poll also conducted by Gallup Pakistan around this time 46 per cent 'view[ed] globalization as a step towards progress', with 33 per cent viewing it 'negatively'.¹⁴

Westernisation is not, however, limited to youth. According to a February 2011 *Agence France Presse* report, the so-called 'metrosexual man' is 'on the rise', with the adoption of western fashion becoming increasingly popular. A 'salon owner in Islamabad', who claimed that his clients were 'catching up with western fashion', 'attributed the trend to increased travel abroad' while another individual interviewed for the report credited a 'massive explosion in media' as the reason for increased adoption of western habits.¹⁵ Please note, however, that the report relies on anecdotes and the observations of individuals, rather than a quantitative assessment of trends. The South Asia Tourism Society (SATS), a tourism company which collaborates with the government backed South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to promote tourism to and within South Asian countries, provides an overview of the extent to which western culture has penetrated Pakistan:

Increasing globalization has increased the influence of Western culture in Pakistan, especially among the affluent, who have easy access to Western products, television, media, and food. Many Western food chains have established themselves in Pakistan, and are found in the major cities. At the same time, there is also a reactionary movement within Pakistan that wants to turn away from Western influences, and this has manifested itself in a return to more traditional roots, often conflated with Islam.

A large Pakistani diaspora exists, especially in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada and Australia as well as in the Scandinavian nations. A large number of Pakistanis are also living in the Middle east. These emigrants and their children influence Pakistan culturally and economically, by travelling to Pakistan, and especially by returning or investing there.¹⁶

The above quote is in line with DFAT's view that western influence has become pervasive in Pakistan, linked in part to the increased availability of western products, whilst acknowledging in

¹² '53% Pakistanis believe that the country's youth have become westernized; 36% believe that they remain loyal to their culture.' 2013, *Gallup Pakistan*, 9 September

<[http://www.gallup.com.pk/Polls/Sep%2009,%202013%20\(Final\).pdf](http://www.gallup.com.pk/Polls/Sep%2009,%202013%20(Final).pdf)> Accessed 23 March 2015

<CIS36DE0BB1859>. Gallup Pakistan is a member of the Gallup International Association, a group of companies that provide market research on diverse topics throughout the world.

¹³ '53% Pakistanis believe that Pakistani youth are facing an identity crisis because of globalization' 2013, *Gallup Pakistan*, 10 September <[http://www.gallup.com.pk/Polls/Sep%2010,%202013%20\(Final\).pdf](http://www.gallup.com.pk/Polls/Sep%2010,%202013%20(Final).pdf)> Accessed 23 March 2015 <CIS36DE0BB1861>

¹⁴ '46% Pakistanis view globalization as a step towards progress; 33% view it negatively' 2013, *Gallup Pakistan*, 5 September <[http://www.gallup.com.pk/Polls/05%20Sept,%202013%20\(PR\).pdf](http://www.gallup.com.pk/Polls/05%20Sept,%202013%20(PR).pdf)> Accessed 23 March 2015 <CIS36DE0BB1860>

¹⁵ 'Metrosexual man is on the rise in Pakistan' 2011, *Agence France Presse*, source: *The National*, 10 February <<http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/south-asia/metrosexual-man-is-on-the-rise-in-pakistan>> Accessed 23 March 2015 <CXCB3E63420650>

¹⁶ South Asia Tourism Society n.d., *Pakistan Culture* <<http://pakistan.saarctourism.org/pakistan-culture.html>> Accessed 23 March 2015 <CISEC96CF1410>. SAARC is supported by the government of participating countries to increase trade and investment in the South Asian region. SATS collaborates with SAARC, but nevertheless describes itself as a private entity not connected to the SAARC. For information on SATS see its about page [here](#).

line with the Gallup Pakistan polls cited above, that the process of increased western influence is not universally approved.