



# RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

## **M.Ed. In TESL Program Country Informational Reports**

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program  
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

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# Pakistan

Juliann Igo TESL539

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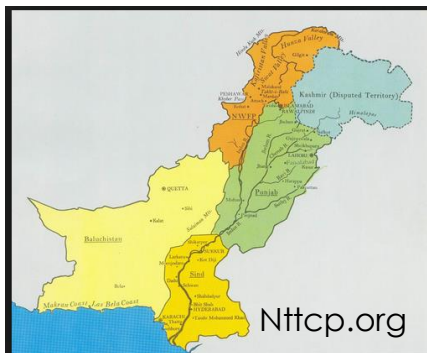
# Basic Facts

**Population:** 176.7 million (World Bank)  
**Life Expectancy:** 65.2 years (World Bank)

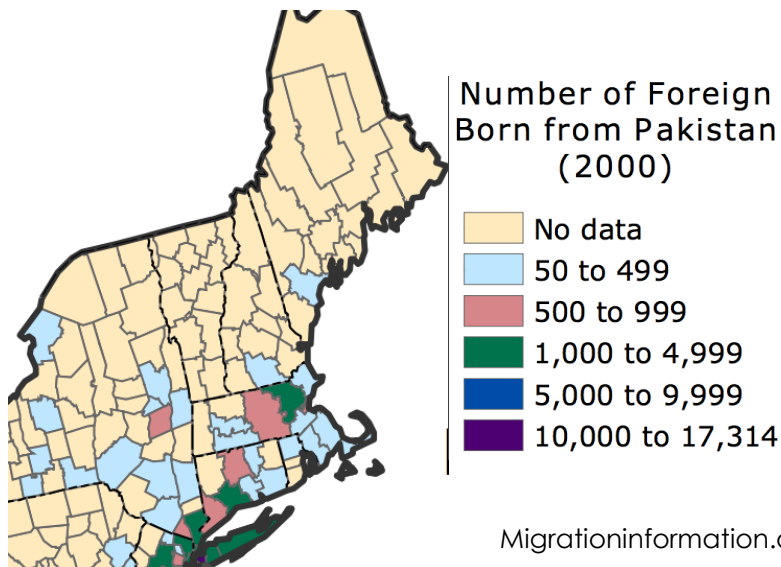
**Official Languages:** Urdu, English  
**Provincial Languages:** Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi

**Major Religion:** Islam

**Most Populated US Cities:** New York City, Houston, Chicago, Los Angeles



# Migration to RI >>>



Migrationinformation.org

# Obstacles



- **Floods** in 2010 and 2011 required extensive repair of school infrastructure
- **“Ghost Schools”**
  - Schools with poor teacher attendance or unsafe facilities that were shut down
  - Still are collecting government subsidies without any students (estimated 5% of schools)
- Reputation of Madrassas (estimates of 20,000 across country) as encouraging jihad
- Money taken away from education to fund military expenses
- Ongoing political turmoil: many immigrants to U.S. are displaced Pakistani refugees

# Language Policy

- Urdu and English are considered “official languages”, although only 7% of the population identifies as Urdu speakers
- During the British colonial era, Urdu was the language of the masses and English was the language of the elite class
- The teaching of English in schools depends largely on the availability of qualified teachers
- Provincial languages are permitted to be used during breaks/assemblies in schools (IBE)

Source: (Coleman, 2010)



# Literacy/Education

- **Literacy Rate (Overall):** 46%
- **Literacy Rate (Females)** 26%
- In northern rural regions, female literacy rate is 3-8%
- **Literacy Rates (Adults)** in 2011: 54% (via WorldBank)
- **17.6%** of Pakistani children work to support their families, especially females as domestic servants
- **1/3** of children age 6-16 in Balochistan and Sindh are out of school
- **14%** average absenteeism rate nationwide
- There is **considerable economic pressure** for children to be pulled out of school to work to support family, especially females who often become domestic servants



The Nation (Inayatullah)  
Source: UNESCO



# Educational Opportunities

## **Private Elite English Medium Schools**

- Very few in existence
- Reserved for the very wealthy/powerful

## **Private Non-Elite “English Medium” Schools**

- Educates 1/3 of primary children
- Modest fees to attend

## **Government Urdu Medium Schools**

- Rural & Urban settings
- No cost to attend
- Large teacher absenteeism rate

## **Dini Mararis (madrassas)**

- Religiously-oriented
- Free to attend with board/food provided
- Controversial because of Islamic orientation

Source: (Coleman, 2010)

# Structure of Schooling

- Preschool: Age 3-5 (formal/informal)
- Primary: Grades 1-5; admitted age 5+
- Middle: Grades 6-8
- Secondary: Grades 9-10
- Higher Secondary: Grades 11-12  
(considered part of college education)



# Structure of School Week

Primary  
School

5 days/week: 4 hours, 40 minutes  
1 day/week: 2 hours, 40 minutes

Secondary  
School

5 days/week: 5 hours, 40 minutes  
1 day/week: 3 hours, 20 minutes

Source: IBE (International  
Bureau of Education) World  
Data

# Gendered Education

- Many families feel unsafe sending daughters to school
- Gendered language in textbooks
- Gender biases in mathematics



Source: (Qureshi & Rarieya, 2007)

# Positive Feelings Towards English Instruction

- English is marketed as a language of “upward mobility” for rural Pakistanis
- English is a barrier to entry for most white-collar jobs

Source: (Coleman, 2010)

# Negative Feelings Towards English Instruction

- There is growing resentment about the push away from provincial languages, specifically Punjabi (16)
- The Urdu/English policy contributes to a “cultural anomie” (14)
- English is considered an “exam language” without much practical relevance (16)
  - There is little access to “white collar jobs” in Pakistan for rural citizens

Source: (Coleman, 2010)

# Negative Attitudes

*Pakistan has been ranked the third least-religiously tolerant country in the world (Pew)*



## **Attitudes towards religious minorities** (i.e. Christians & Hindus)

- Textbooks show negativity towards Britain/India/Hinduism
- Majority of students studied viewed non-Muslims as “enemies of Muslims”
- Though teachers encourage cultural tolerance and awareness, students are confused about practices of non-Muslims
- In madrassas, religious intolerance is more severe because of lack of access to non-Muslims

(Hussain, Ahman & Arif 2011)



# Pakistani Values

- In 2009, only 2.69 of the national GDP was allocated to education
  - the allocation of these funds is skewed towards higher education, so the benefits are only accessed by the wealthy who pursue higher education
- Textbooks are religiously-focused, even in non-madrassas schools
- Pakistani females are generally raised more strictly than males
- Sharing social issues in a group setting is thought to be disrespectful
- Parents sometimes reluctant to send daughters to mixed-gender schools because of cultural restrictions



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