

Interviewee: Syed Masood

Male, Age: 62

Birthplace: Gilgit, Pakistan

Occupation: Marketing Officer, Retired

1. What do you feel are three important things U.S. students should know about Pakistan?

S.M.: I feel that U.S. students should know that many of today's extremists and terrorists in South Asia were once allies of the U.S. military during the U.S.S.R. and Afghan war. The terrorists and the Taliban group, including Usama bin Laden, were working with the U.S. troops to fight the Soviets. Also, in Pakistan history, the U.S. has not proven to be a sincere friend. However, despite the difficulties in the past between Pakistan and the U.S., I hope all students will want to improve the relationship between our nations for a better future.

2. What do you feel are two critical issues or challenges facing the nation of Pakistan today?

S.M.: I feel that one of the biggest issues in Pakistan today is the sectarian extremism between the Sunni and Shiites (sects of Islam) and terrorism. These issues are important because they negatively impact our political and economic stability.

3. How do you feel that education in Pakistan is similar to and different from education in the U.S.? Could you give one example?

S.M.: There is a great difference in education between the U.S., a global superpower, and an underdeveloped country like Pakistan. I think that an educated U.S. student has full confidence and security of employment in his/her future, whereas a student has no such privilege in Pakistan. Also, my observation is that many U.S. children spend less time with their parents. It seems that U.S. children rely on their teachers for more guidance and learning, rather than the parents. Many children in Pakistan are brought up in homes entirely under their parents' guidance. So the children's knowledge and behavior depends on whether the parents themselves are educated or ignorant.

4. How is daily life in Pakistan similar to and different from daily life in the U.S.? Could you give one example?

S.M.: It is like a one hundred and fifty year gap between the U.S. daily life and a typical Pakistani's daily life. In the U.S. a citizen starts his day with pleasure, ease, and happiness, whereas a Pakistani starts his day with a lot

of problems. For example, a Pakistani may not even have access to good water, whereas a U.S. citizen just turns a lever and good water runs right in his home.

5. What are some typical expectations for men and for women in Pakistani society and culture or what are standard gender norms? Could you give one example?

S.M.: Pakistan is a moderate Islamic nation and Islam has equal rights for women. For example, we have had a woman Prime Minister by virtue of democratic voting rights.

6. Some Americans say that “classic” or typical American elements are apple pie, automobiles, and Baseball. What do you feel are some things that form the core of Pakistani identity?

S.M.: Pakistan is known as a small Muslim country full of natural resources. It is a fact that the geography of Pakistan has had a huge impact in South Asia and in the world.

7. Is there anything else you would like to share about Pakistan?

S.M.: I am a retired marketing officer of an international firm, so I have come across many different types of people throughout the world. My personal opinion is that most of the U.S. people are friendly, broad minded, and they are free to enjoy their lives. The people of other countries, like Pakistan, dislike many of the foreign policies and actions of the U.S. government, *but not the U.S. people*. I think that if the friendship and close political relations between the U.S. and Pakistan today are based on sincerity, better results can be achieved by the both countries.