

## **Interviewee: Hasan Hafeez**

Male, Age: 32

Birthplace: Misgar, Pakistan

Occupation: Business

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

H.H.: One thing that I think U.S. students should learn about Pakistan is cultural norms. This will help develop more understanding between our nations. A second topic is religious values. Pakistan is an Islamic nation and that influences much of Pakistani living. Finally, students could learn about Pakistan's economic status and its issues as a developing nation.

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

H.H.: I think that Pakistan's image in regards to religious extremists and terrorism is a challenge because we want to get rid of these people. They are causing problems for our image. Also, Pakistan is struggling with political instability. There is sectarian and tribal tension that threatens our political system.

### **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?**

H.H.: In my opinion the education in Pakistan is not similar with the education given in U.S. by any means, because in the U.S. there is advanced, researched based education, whereas in Pakistan a traditional education system is being implemented. The system of teaching in Pakistan is obsolete. Analytical and critical thinking is not encouraged in learning, and due to this most of the students lack analytical and creative thinking capabilities. However, in some educational institutions where the IB (international baccalaureate) system of education is in place and Cambridge or Grammar Schools education is used, there is a much higher standard of education.

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

H.H.: In our region, life is different in the sense that we have the joint family system. Plus, being an Islamic country there are limitations and boundaries in terms of values and behaviors. For example, in the West children after the age of 18 are independent and free to make their own lives, but here in Pakistan it is not so. Also, in the U.S., parents after a certain age are sent to

senior citizen organizations or nursing homes, but here we often serve the parents in their older age. In the U.S. and other Western societies a wife can have male friend relationships with men other than her husband, and vice versa for husbands. However that is very different in the Pakistani context.

**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?**

H.H.: The gender norms and roles are entirely different in Pakistani culture for both men and women. In Pakistan the man is supposed to be an extraordinary person. He is responsible for protecting and providing for the whole extended family. Although many more women are competing in the workforce today, I don't think Pakistani women are being given full equal status as Islam urges and as human rights demands. Also, there are different activities for men and women to do in traditional Pakistani culture, like woman are responsible for having babies; it is a woman's job to have children for the family. Also, the women must cook and look after the house, the children, her husband, other extended family members and cattle or other livestock. The men are responsible for outdoor activities like working a job, earning the money, doing the farming and such. It is not socially acceptable for men to do women's work or for women to do men's work.

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

H.H.: Some things that Pakistan is famous for are for being a moderate Islamic country, an atomic country, playing field hockey and cricket, and for the yogurt drink, lassi.

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

H.H.: I want people to know that Pakistan is one of the richest countries in many ways, like beauty, natural resources, high mountain peaks, lush green areas, full flowing rivers, glaciers, and mesmerizing locations. Pakistanis are hard working people. The only shortcoming is the lack of awareness about the importance of education and getting access to a good education. I think it is true that education is the only light which guides people and nations towards progress, happiness, and prosperity.