

Throughout my life, whether it was blatant or inadvertent, I have always sensed the discord with Pakistan. Even in the United States, we Indians and Pakistanis interact under the guise of friendship but the dislike is present in each other's mannerisms; we were raised to feel this way. That is why, if I could pick any place in the world to go, I would pick Pakistan. The enmity that stretches over five decades must have a deep-rooted purpose, a raging epicenter, which must be evident if it can influence the relationships of Indian and Pakistani teenagers an ocean away. I wish to see the cities, interact with the people, breathe in the culture, so I can understand what it is that could cause such enmity with a country that was our own flesh and blood...

I am especially interested in the religion of Pakistan due to its Muslim majority. Pakistan's population is composed of approximately 96.4% Muslims (DeSilver). In this respect, I can relate to Pakistan more than India since being an Indian Muslim myself, I have felt out of place in the deep southern India from which I originate, as the prevalent religion there is Hinduism. I wish to see how it is to live in a country where my main religion is synonymous with the national one, and I wish to see if I feel accepted under the unity that religion provides. Also, the official language of Pakistan is Urdu, a language closely linked with ancient poetry and Islam. Within my family, we primarily speak Urdu while my homeland region speaks strictly Tamil. In the province of Tamilnadu, I cannot communicate with a majority of the locals there while in Pakistan, I would be able to converse with whoever I chose. Though Pakistan is not considered home for me and is even resented amongst my outer family, I wish to explore a country that exhibits characteristics that I associate with my own identity....

I want to view this India-Pakistan conflict from the Pakistani perspective, to see Indians through their eyes. Would we look any different through the lenses of our neighbours? To broaden my perspective by interacting with the people is not only a desire, but a necessity if we are to continue coexisting in this era. To truly understand each other, we must walk in each other's shoes.