

# Pakistan



## COUNTRY FACTS:

**Capital:** Islamabad

**Population:** 184,404,791

**Area, sq. mi.:** 307,374

**Real GDP per capita:** 2,400

**Adult literacy rate:** 63% (male); 36% (female)

**Ethnic make-up:** Punjabi 44.68%, Pashtun (Pathan) 15.42%, Sindhi 14.1%, Sariaki 8.38%, Muhajirs 7.57%, Balochi 3.57%, other 6.28%

**Religion:** Muslim 95% (Sunni 75%, Shia 20%), other (includes Christian and Hindu) 5%

## School Classes

The Pakistani educational system varies across the country. Evaluation is based on final exams once a year. As a result of these examinations, students are either allowed to move on to the next grade level or not. Homework assignments and periodic assessments are given, but final exams are the most important and exams are given daily. In Pakistan, students usually have homerooms and students stay in that room while teachers rotate through the classrooms. Students often have the same teacher for more than one subject area. There are both gender-specific and co-educational schools in Pakistan. However, in co-ed schools, distance is generally maintained between boys and girls.

## School Relationships

Pakistani culture requires students to have very formal behavior with teachers. A teacher in the classroom means that there are no jokes, no slacking off and no non-curricular discussions. Teachers are addressed by a title, Sir or Madam, and students show respect by standing up when the teacher walks in and they even stop walking if the teacher passes by.

## Extracurricular Activities

Most schools have sports teams that students can participate in as well as drama clubs, event organizing committees and other opportunities. Social relationships and friendships are developed from co-curricular activities. Although Pakistani parents often visit schools to see their child participate in sports and co-curricular activities, they may not be very involved overall.

## School Rules

Cell phone usage is generally not allowed at all in school in Pakistan. Fighting is also prohibited, however, many YES students may not grasp the severity of the consequences of verbal threats, fighting or breaking the rules in American high schools. Uniforms are mandatory in schools.

## Family Life

Pakistani society holds on to extended family systems very tightly and family composition generally includes members of the extended family living in the home. There are nuclear families in the urban areas however it is not common. Families usually eat together. Pakistani families give each other space and family members usually have some things to do on their own. There is both family time and there is personal time. In Pakistan, women generally stay at home as homemakers, even if they are professionals. Decision making which affects the entire family is generally made by the father 90% of the time and by the mother 10%.

## Teen Life

Teens maintain respectful behavior with parents and other adults of the family. Siblings are informal with each other. Teenagers are responsible for cleaning their own room, taking care of their belongings and helping the family with household work. No financial responsibility is expected from teenage children unless it is needed.

## Responsibilities

Depending on the family's financial situation, maids and helpers work in most middle class households. Girls also attend to house chores while boys generally do not. In Pakistan, it is uncommon for male teenagers to cook for themselves or for their family. Teenagers are dependent on their parents for allowance. Some manage their budgets regularly while others take allowances on a daily or weekly basis. In Pakistan, it is common to share money and is considered a good practice, especially between siblings to share money.

## Pets

In Pakistan, pets are not common but some families do keep dogs, cats or birds. Dogs will typically be kept outside of the house.

## Parental Involvement

Parent Teacher Meetings are held in Pakistan, but not necessarily regularly except in some of the better schools. Most other schools send report cards home and parents aren't as directly involved. Pakistani mothers generally attend to their children's educational needs. Usually Pakistani parents do not monitor or restrict what their children do online or the amount of time they spend online.

## ***Personal Interactions***

### ***Mixed Gender Socializing***

Pakistani parents prefer same gender social gatherings for their teenagers to socialize. Mixed gatherings may be avoided by parents. Students studying in a co-educational system may go out for lunches or trips together but most students do not socialize with the opposite gender. It is culturally acceptable for boys to hug, shake hands or jest with each other but not with girls. It is the same case with girls.

### ***Friendships***

In Pakistan, friendships are initiated in school. Family gatherings and neighborhood connections also play a vital part in establishing long term friendships. The primary mode of socializing for Pakistani teenagers is family gatherings. Boys usually socialize with their class fellows after school and play cricket or football matches with their neighboring friends. Girls visit each other or go out shopping. Some teenagers socialize in same-gender groups and go to restaurants.

### ***Communication Styles***

Pakistani students are not usually open about personal issues with their parents. They usually approach the same gender parent in order to communicate a personal issue that needs to be discussed. In the U.S., Pakistani students are generally comfortable with their same gender host siblings and find them to be helpful in communicating their concerns to host parents.

The Pakistani family discipline system is very strong and children pay respect to their parents and don't argue with them. If they wish to express their opinions, they cannot yell at their parents, but rather try to communicate with them openly. This is also the same with friendships.

### ***Eye Contact***

Eye contact is one of the basic principles of communication and it is highly regarded in Pakistani culture. However, it is considered a symbol of respect by the youth to not maintain eye contact while talking to grandparents and respected elders.

### ***Independence***

Teenagers are mostly dependent upon their parents for all their expenses, traveling and food. However, they may get monthly pocket money from which they purchase gifts, food, pay for socializing and phone bills. Usually students have a good sense of spending and saving money.

## ***Personal Hygiene***

It is customary to shower once or twice a day. It is generally thought to be unclean in Pakistan to wear the same clothes two days in a row. Girls generally wear clothing made of silk and do not wash them every time they are worn. Since schools and colleges have uniforms, the students have a habit of changing clothes immediately after they come from school and may take shower at that time as well. Most Pakistani homes have domestic help who keep the bathrooms clean and dry after use. Pakistanis usually use one towel in their bathroom to use to dry their body and maybe a separate towel to dry their hair or face.

## ***Religion***

For Muslims, there are religious gatherings and processions that are attended by many people. Usually men go to mosques for performing prayers five times a day and women stay at home to perform prayers. Friday prayers hold a great significance as it is a congregational prayer and attendance at the mosque is higher.

### ***Holidays***

Ramadan is the month of the Islamic calendar in which it is obligatory for most Muslim adults and teenagers to fast daily from dawn till dusk for the entire month without food or drink. There are many traditions during Ramadan in Pakistan. The fast is broken at sunset usually with a sweet fruit or food, often dates. The family usually eats an early morning breakfast at dawn, known as sehri, prays and then follows their regular daily routine. At sunset they break the fast together and pray. Ramadan lasts either 29 or 30 days depending on when the new moon is sighted which begins the Eid al-Fitr holiday. Eid prayers are attended by men in the mosque while women perform Eid prayers at home. Eid al-Fitr is celebrated with new clothes; people visit each other, exchange gifts, cook sweet dishes, especially sheer khorma, baked noodles and milk. Ramadan is also a time of spiritual contemplation and practicing personal good behavior.

Pakistani holidays include, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Eid Milad Alnabbi, Prophet Muhammad's Birthday, Shab-e-Baraat, Night of Emancipation, Shab-e-Mairaj, Night of the Journey and Ascension, and Ashura, the 9th and 10th of the Islamic month of Muharram.