

Dr Yahya Hassan Bajwa (Baden, Switzerland)¹:
The Pakistani School Textbooks Project

I. Foreword

Pakistan is a country where religion – here Islam – plays an imminent role. More than 98% of its population belong to one of the Sunnite or Shia sects.² Important to know is also that more than 60% of its population is illiterate. Also out of the Mullahs, the religious leaders, many are not able to read or write! They just know a little of the Holy Qur'an by heart and that is enough to play an important role in the village which can not be challenged by an ordinary man or woman because of lack of knowledge. Once the Islamic prayer "Rabbe sidni ilma" (God give me knowledge) was embedded in the thinking of the society. Today it seems that religion and politics are misused in Pakistan to keep the people shut their mouths. Since the take-over by the military dictator Zia ul Haq in 1977, the rate of illiteracy has risen. Also governments which were voted for after 1988 through the Pakistani voters were not able or willing to improve this situation. Even when Benazir Bhutto, the daughter of Zulifkar Ali Bhutto who was hanged by Zia, was Premier Minister, nothing changed to the positive in this matter – although she promised to do something and many women had put their trust and hope in her!

One achievement of culture is its literature. Books play an important part in culture! Not only are they written records of the history of a nation but also give on traditions to the next generation. School textbooks are therefore a very powerful tool to give on information which form the children in their thinking and in their (future) behaviour. "Since 1988, Aurat Foundation [Aurat = Women], with the collaboration of UNICEF, has been working on textbooks from the perspective of portrayal of women."³ Ruquia Jafri worked on this topic and published the result of her analysis in "Gender Bias in Pakistani School Textbooks" which was updated in September 1994. She pointed out that "abilities are the possibilities a child is born with. Concepts and attitudes are a result of socialization which may occur before the child starts understanding things. Most of this process takes place at the unconscious or the subconscious level. It is through school education that socialization can be carried out at the conscious level. [...] Hence effectiveness of school education and significance as a tool of socialization".⁴

In this research paper I would like to focus on two main elements:

1. The role of religion in the society and its role in school textbooks.
2. The role of the school textbook project for the development of new school books and its possible impact on society.

II.a. The role of religion in the Pakistani society

Pakistan is known as **the** Islamic country on the Indian Subcontinent. The role of the Mullahs, the Islamic clerics, was from the beginning of its creation very ambiguous. While Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, was called by the people "Qaid – e – Azam" (the great leader), most of the religious leaders named him "Kafir – e – Azam" (the biggest unbeliever).

¹ Dr. Yahya Hassan Bajwa is a Swiss-Pakistani national who has worked for the Teachers Publishing House in Zürich/Switzerland (Zürcher Lehrmittel Verlag) and has written the chapters on Islam for several publications which are today in the school curriculum. The book "God has many faces/ Gott hat viele Gesichter" was awarded the Silver award 1996 by the Worlddidac Foundation, Basel, Switzerland. In 2001 the book "Humans live in Religions and Cultures/ Menschen leben in Religionen und Kulturen" was chosen as the third best Schoolbook in the competition "Best European Schoolbook" at the Book exhibition in Frankfurt, Germany.

² Sunnite believe that Hazrat Abu Bakr was correctly chosen as caliph after the death of the holy Prophet Muhammad (sws) while the Shia Muslims point out that only a relative of Muhammad (sws) ought to be chosen.

³ Ruquia Jafri, "Gender Bias in Pakistani School Textbooks", lecture read in the SPELT Seminar in October 1993, published by Aurat Foundation, Lahore 1995 (?), Pakistan, p.2.

⁴ Ruquia Jafri, "Gender Bias in Pakistani School Textbooks", p. 4.

Pakistan, which means the land of the pure, was for the Mullahs “Plidestan” (land of the impure) or even “Kafiristan”, the land of the heretics. Ultimately Jinnah succeeded in creating a new state in 1947 when the British Raj of India ended with its withdrawal from the Indian Subcontinent and releasing two countries, India and Pakistan, into independence. Millions of Muslims and Hindus migrated from one side to the other, leaving back their houses, fields, businesses and their graveyards with their ancestors buried since hundreds of years. They had to give up their homeland and to go into an insecure future. It was a path of blood, death and human sorrow which led to independence – a very heavy price to pay!

In his inaugural speech in the Constituent Assembly Muhammad Ali Jinnah gave a clear secular message which again was not according to the wishes of the clerics. He had a moving vision indicated in the following words:

“You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State... We are starting in the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, we are all citizens and equal citizen of one State... Now I think you should keep that in front as our ideal, and you will find that in course of time Hindu will cease to be Hindu and Muslims will cease to be Muslims – not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual but in the political sense as citizen of the State”.⁵

It is understood that once Pakistan was existing the clerics would not give up till they had influence on the state. The mullahs opposed at the beginning the idea of an Islamic state because they said that in an Islamic state there is no place for non-Muslims. In this sense Pakistan for them was not Islamic enough. Further the idea of an Islamic state was not acceptable to them as they believed that there is only one Muslim Umma (Muslim Nation) which can not be divided into different national states. With the time the religious fundamentalists gained power. Till late fifties the constitution of Pakistan was just called “The Constitution of Pakistan”. This changed 1963 into “The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan”. “Religious groups that had opposed the creation of Pakistan and had lost credibility were now anxious to establish themselves as loyal citizens of the State and to build a base of support amongst the urban lower middle class.”⁶ In the seventies Zulfikar Ali Bhutto managed to win the election with his slogan “Roti, Kapra, Makan” – he promised the people bread, clothes and housing. In 1973 Bhutto made clear that Islam is the state religion. Under article 2 of the constitution of the year 1973 it reads: “Islam to be State religion. – Islam shall be the State religion of Pakistan”⁷ and he also newly introduced the Islamic [Ideology] Council under the heading “Islamic Provisions” in the new constitution:

“227. Provision relating to the Holy Quran and Sunnah.”⁸ (1) All existing laws shall be brought in conformity with the Injunction of Islam as laid down on the Holy Quran and Sunnah, in this Part referred to as the Injunctions of Islam, and no law shall be enacted which is repugnant to such Injunctions. [...]

228. Composition etc. of the Islamic Council. (1) There shall be constituted within a period of ninety days from the commencing day a Council Ideology, in this part referred as to Islamic Council.

⁵ Inaugural speech of Muhammad Ali Jinnah in the Constituent Assembly. In: Human Rights and Democratic Development in Pakistan, Hina Jilani, Democratic Development Studies, Montreal/Quebec, Canada, 1998, p. 42-43. English edition publication supervised by Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

⁶ Human Rights and Democratic Development in Pakistan, Hina Jilani, p. 45.

⁷ The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan [1973], by Zafar Hussain, Nawaz Printing Press, Lahore, Pakistan, 1973, p. 18.

⁸ Under Sunnah the Muslims understand the acts and deeds done by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sww) during his life time. The Quran is the theory and the Sunnah the tradition which was written down and thus handed over from generation to generation.

- (2) The Islamic Council shall consist of such members, being not less than eight not more than fifteen as the President may appoint from amongst persons having knowledge of the principles and philosophy of Islam as enunciated in the Holy Quran and Sunnah, or understanding of the economic, politic, legal or administrative problems of Pakistan.
- (3) While appointing members of the Council, the President shall ensure that: -
- (a) so far as practical various schools of thought are represented in Council;
 - (b) not less than two of the members are persons each of whom is, or has been a Judge of the Supreme Court or of a High Court; [...]
 - (d) at least one member is woman. [..]

230. Function of the Islamic Council. ...

- (a) to make recommendations to the Parliament and the Provincial Assemblies as to the ways and means of enabling and encouraging the Muslims of Pakistan to order their lives individually and collectively in all respects in accordance with the principles and of Islam as enunciated in the Holy Quran and Sunnah; [...]
- (c) to make recommendation as to the measures for bringing existing laws into conformity with the Injunction of Islam and the stages by which such measures should be brought into effect...”⁹

Here it is seen that the idea of the Pakistani State has changed from the secular idea of which Muhammad Ali Jinnah spoke in his inaugural speech in the Constituent Assembly. This is the first step into a religious state that had its prime time under the military dictator Zia ul Haq in the eighties. The other permanent problem is the question who should be appointed into the Islamic Council. In Islam we have 73 different sects. By Pakistani Constitution the Islamic Council has maximum fifteen members. What to do with all the other sects which are not represented in the Council, and an even more serious question is if they, who are not represented, would at all accept the interpretation of Islam of the others “in power”? Interesting at that time was also the question how would a president, who was not even a practising Muslim – he misused religion for his own interest – chose members having knowledge of the principles and philosophy of Islam as enunciated in the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

Another delicate question was what to do with the religious minorities such as the Christians or Hindus.

II.b. Pre-programmed step: Ahmadiyya Muslim sect declared non-Muslim by the Pakistani parliament

The next consequence of this step was pre-programmed. When would the Muslim majority declare one of the smaller sects non-Muslim? In the time of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto the Ahmadiyya question emerged. Ahmadis call themselves Muslims. They believe in the Holy Quran, in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sws) and the Sunnah as it is done by all other Muslims. The only difference is the interpretation of the advent of Jesus Christ and in the coming of the Imam Mahdi.¹⁰ In 1974 under the regime of Bhutto the Pakistani Parliament declared that Ahmadis are no more Muslims. The Ahmadiyya community was founded 1889 and till 1974 they were always accepted as Muslims and even their interpretation that after the Holy Prophet Muhammad also other prophet may come was not only theirs. It was a political

⁹ Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan [1973], p. 83-4.

¹⁰ Ahmadis believe that Jesus did not die at the cross nor was he taken directly into heaven – as most of the Muslims believe. They believe that he survived the crucifixion and left for Kashmir (India) where he preached to the Jews who accepted him as the Messiah. He died in Kashmir and is buried in Sri Nagar, Kashmir (India). The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, said that he is the Imam Mahdi, a reformer and prophet, who was awaited by all Muslims in the 19th century. He also claimed that his coming is the second advent of Jesus Christ. Ghulam Ahmad told that the coming of Christ has to be interpreted in a symbolic way and that the historic Jesus would never come again.

decision which brought a change in history and society of Pakistan. The first time a worldly parliament decided who is a Muslim and who is not.

This parliamentary decision contradicted the Pakistani Constitution. Under article 20 one reads:

“20. Freedom to profess religion and to ménage religious institutions. – Subject to law, public order and morality.

(a) every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion; and

(b) every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and ménage its religious institutions. [...]

22. Safeguard as to educational institutions in respect of religion etc. ...

(3) (a) no religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any educational institution maintained wholly by that community or denomination; and

(b) no citizen shall be denied admission to any educational institution receiving aid from public revenues on the ground only of race, religion, caste or place of birth.”¹¹

The new law which was amended in 1974 reads as such:

"A person who does not believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (upon whom be peace) the last of the Prophets, or claims to be a Prophet, in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever, after Muhammad (peace be upon him), or recognises such a claimant as a prophet or a religious reformer, is not a Muslim for the purpose of the Constitution or Law."¹²

After Bhutto was convinced that he had the Muslim clerics under his regime he also wanted to be sure of the army. Against the army rule he made a junior officer commander of the army – Zia ul Haq. In 1977 it was this man who toppled Bhutto and hanged him in 1979. Shortly after that Zia proclaimed a hard line Islamic State. He told that from now on only Islam and Islamic law would be valid. One example may show the type of Islam he introduced:

He wanted to introduce the law that a person who committed adultery should be stoned to death. This law was given to the highest judge in Pakistan to find out if this was according to Islam. The result was, that this law is nowhere in the Holy Quran but in the Old Testament. Zia was not satisfied with this answer. He expelled the judge from his post and put a new person who – lucky for him – told that this law is absolutely Islamic. Since then the Pakistani nation is blessed with this law. Zia also introduced laws such as cutting off the hands for theft, banned drinking alcohol, and interest-free economy.

In 1984 the Anti-Ahmadiyya laws became more rigid and 1986 the so-called Blasphemy law was introduced.

"Ordinance No XX of 1984 an Ordinance to amend the law to prohibit the Qadiani group, Lahori group and Ahmadis from indulging in anti-Islamic activities."¹³

"298-B.- (1) Any person of the Qadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves 'Ahmadis' or by any other name) who by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, -

(a) refers to, or addresses, any person, other than a Caliph or companion of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him), as 'Ameer-ul-Mumineen' [Head of the faithful] [...]

shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extent to three years, and shall also be liable to fine.

¹¹ The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan [as amended up to June 1995], compiled by Sheikh Ebrahim, research and reference Officer, Lahore High Court, PLD Publishers, Nabha Road, Lahore, Pakistan, 1996? P. 10-11.

¹² Manfred J. Backhausen, Inayat K. Gill. Die Opfer sind schuld! Machtmissbrauch in Pakistan. Akropolis Verlag, 1993, page 133.

¹³ The Gazette of Pakistan, Islamabad, Thursday, April 26, 1984.

(2) Any person of the Qadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves 'Ahmadis' or by any other name) who by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, refers to the mode or form of call to prayers followed by his faith as 'Azan' [Muslim call for prayer] or recite Azan as used by the Muslims, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, and shall also be liable to fine.

298-C. Any person of the Qadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves 'Ahmadis' or by any other name) who directly or indirectly, poses himself as a Muslim, or calls, or refers to his faith as Islam, or preaches or propagates his faith, or invites others to accept his faith, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, or in any manner whatsoever outrages the religious feelings of Muslims, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine.

295-C. Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shall be punished with **death**, or imprisonment for life, and shall be also liable to fine." ¹⁴

For Pakistan and its society these amendments brought a big change. In future also the elections were separately held for religious communities such as Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Ahmadis. They were only allowed to vote for their own Christian, Hindu, Sikh or Ahmadi candidates and the result was they were no more important for the Pakistani parties and no one of them was interested anymore to win them or to look for the interest of the minorities. This was an act against the Pakistani constitution which corrupted the state and its citizen. Till recently the Christians were fighting against this voting system. In January this year Gen. Musharraf announced to abolish this system. Since 1984 no Ahmadi is taking part in politics because the Government is asking from every Ahmadi first to accept that he is no more a Muslim only then he or she can vote – a step an Ahmadi Muslim would never do. Anis Ahmad writes: "Islamic law also recognizes religious liberty and the right to act according to one's religious belief. No legislation can compel people to act contrary to their religious belief. A law that conflicts with religious liberty of a people has to be corrected." ¹⁵

With the abolishment of the old voting system also Ahmadi-Muslims thought that they would get back their citizen's right to vote. But reality showed that for Ahmadis nothing has changed. "President Musharraf made a very important and momentous policy statement on January 12, 2002 regarding the future... Four days after his speech, the government announced its decision to introduce Joint Electorate in place of Separate Electorate. This was indeed a breath of fresh air in the rather polluted political environment of the country. [...] Form No. 2 issued by the Election Commission is meant for Muslims and requires the applicant to sign the following declaration on oath:

I attest that I and all my members of my family who are listed above believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the last of the prophets, and that none of us recognizes any person who claims to be a prophet in any sense of the word or any description whatsoever after Muhammad (peace be upon him) or recognize such a claimant as prophet or a religious reformer. None of us belongs to Qadiani or Lahori group, nor calls himself Ahmadi." ¹⁶

II.c. The war against Soviet Union in Afghanistan and the Talibanisation of Pakistan and recent development

¹⁴ The Pakistan Penal Code & Shariat Criminal Laws by Muhammad Mazhar Hussain Nizami, Advocate, Lahore High Court, Lahore, PLD Publishers, Nabha Road, Lahore, Pakistan, 1995.

¹⁵ Anis Ahmad, Women and Social Justice – An Islamic Paradigm, Institute of Policy Studies and The Islamic Foundation, Islamabad, Pakistan, 1991, p. 19.

¹⁶ Ahmadiyya Foreign Mission Office, Flash-Human Rights, January 30, London, 2002.

The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in the eighties and the help without any condition of Zia and his regime by the Western countries was a milestone in the development of an even more Islamic fundamentalist regime in Pakistan. The USA was convinced that a fundamentalist would never surrender to communism and therefore from all over the world the Mujaheddin – freedom fighters - were invited to join the war against the Russian invaders – also many criminal elements arrived and were trained in the CIA camps in Pakistan or Afghanistan. After ten years of war the invader was thrown out of Afghanistan. What started now was a war between the Afghani people which is going on till now. CIA and the West left Afghanistan and Pakistan because they were no more important and of no use for them. What they left as a gift for these countries was war and a fundamentalist society nobody wanted except Zia and the Muslim clerics.

During the Zia regime the religious groups were armed not only in Afghanistan but also in Pakistan. With the killing of Zia ul Haq in 1988 the Pakistan Peoples Party under the daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto and the Muslim League under the rule of Nawaz Sharif were in power. Several times both of these two “leaders” were toppled because of inefficiency and corruption charges. For the West that was democracy but for the Pakistani it was a democratic dictatorship. Each party had their armed gangs who made life difficult. The party gangsters became daily richer while the poor had to suffer tremendous hardship. Killings of party members and the clash of religious groups were a day to day phenomenon to which the normal citizen had to get used. The high time was reached when Premier Minister Nawaz Sharif sent his people to storm the Supreme Court when it decided against him. Sharif even wanted to misuse the Pakistani Army for his own purpose. “We can say, we really had no government. For the last 17 years I have been going to Islamabad to meet diplomats, bureaucrats, retired people and one reads newspaper. There was a total hopeless under Mr. Nawaz Sharif and his tribe. It was a democracy but one was shocked that they stormed the Supreme Court. They totally destroyed the Parliament and also their own party. [...] Now he was planning to change the law so that whatever the Prime Minister would say what would be Islamic. [...] He wanted to be better than Zia ul Haq. Nawaz Sharif being a product of that man, wanted to become a more powerful dictator than Zia. He had no vision for Pakistan.”¹⁷ This situation changed when General Pervaiz Musharraf took over the power on the 12th October 1999 in a bloodless coup d'état. After this take-over interestingly the government became more democratic. Musharraf is the first head of state who dared to call to account also the rich of the country who were misusing the power and taking money from the state without paying it back. During the regime of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif the common citizen had to wait for days till he could ask for a telephone or electric connection and that was just the beginning of a marathon march in which a lot of bakhshish (bribe) had to be paid. Today the same job is done within a few minutes!

It is also the first time after 30 years that in Pakistan a leader forbade religious groups which were terrorizing the people and even the state, such as the Sipah-e-Muhammad, a Shia organization, the Sipah-e-Sahaba, a Sunni terror group, and also Lashkar-i-Taiba who call themselves freedom fighters and who are fighting in Kashmir against the Indian government. "ISLAMABAD, Aug 14: President Pervez Musharraf announced on Tuesday an immediate ban on two sectarian organizations - Lashkar-i-Jhangvi and Sipah-i-Muhammad. Activities of two others - Sipah-i-Sahaba and Tehrik-i-Jafaria - would be watched, he said." "I warn the Sipah-i-Sahaba and Tehrik-i-Jafaria that I will not hesitate to ban them also," the president said..."¹⁸

Musharraf also banned collecting money in public places for these religious groups – something nobody would have dreamt of a year ago. All this started already before the 11th of

¹⁷ Interview taken with Bashir Ahmad, rtd. Brigadier, who established 1982 the Institute Regional Studies in Islamabad, January 2000.

¹⁸ Dawn internet version, August 15th 2001. (www.dawn.com)

September. With the call (once more) for freedom and justice and the question to the whole world “are you a friend or a foe” the United States started their campaign. Pakistan answered positively and Musharraf had an alibi to fight harder against the terrorist elements within the country. 52 Muslim states – including Pakistan – condemned the attack on USA. President Bush spoke of a crusade against the evil – not a very thoughtful statement! Muslims still remember the result of these Christian crusades against Islam. Musharraf made clear that it is a fight against terrorism and not against Islam and also not against the people of Afghanistan but against the Taliban and Al-Qaida organization.

III. The situation of women in the Pakistani society and the effects of fundamentalism

We have seen that religion and especially religious groups play an important role in Pakistan. During the last ten to fifteen years many organizations came into existence, which are by women for women. Aurat Foundation, WAR (War Against Rape) in Karachi and Lahore, Apna Ghar (Your House), Dastak (Knocking at the Door) both in Lahore. There are also some legal cells which are by now specialised on problems of women such as AGHS, Legal Aid Cell, Pakistan Women Lawyer’s Association or Karachi based LHRLA – Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid and also the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan which has its centres all over Pakistan. “Despite making up almost 51 percent of the population, women continue to face a discriminatory status within society. Most alarming, it was found that violence against them, in almost every form, was on the rise. A woman was raped every two hours somewhere in the country, while hundreds others became victims of ‘honour’ killing, domestic violence, burnings and murder. With the woman unsafe even within her home, incidents of harassment at the workplace came in more frequently than before, even as laws continued to discriminate against women and their role in the public sphere remained marginalised.”¹⁹ Asma Jahangir, once chairperson of the HRCP and now special reporter for the United Nations, told to the question how did the situation of the women change during the last ten years:

“The biggest changes were made in the eighties. Not because the state wanted to do something but because the women had decided to become active. At the beginning of the eighties the first women’s organisation started to work. We were the women the people were laughing upon, no body took us serious. The women were not so well organized but they showed their will to change. The people were against that women should get rights. They tried to attack our integrity – without success. They tried to split the women’s organisations – without success. The government tried to shut their mouth by some meaningless reforms – without success. Gradually the women started to speak with one voice. We have to do more intellectual work and make the ideas more clear. Now the military government has started to talk about women’s rights. They pick and choose some rights, which they are going to give them. This is very dangerous. They think that there will be a part of the women’s organizations which will accept. We have to talk about the whole package.”^{20a} She pointed out that the networking among the women’s organisations is very good. “In many countries I have seen that different groups are fighting for the leadership. This is not the case in Pakistan. It was only at the beginning. Over the years I think everybody has recognized the strength and the weaknesses of each other. Now when we are talking with the government then the correct women are selected for this job. When we have to write then we have excellent women writers.”^{19b}

Asma mentioned that the men tried to attack their integrity. In 99 the case of Samia Sarwar became not only known in Pakistan but also all over the world when she was killed in the

¹⁹ State of Human Rights in 2000, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Lahore, 2001, p.173.

^{20a+b} Interview taken with Asma Jahangir on 9.4.2000 in Berne, Switzerland, during the General Convention of Amnesty International Switzerland. Asma was the special guest.

lawyers office of Hina Jilani, sister of Asma and now Secretary General of the HRCP. After the killing leaving several people dead, a case was registered against Asma Jahangir and Hina Jilani. Chaudhary Abdul Aziz, Deputy Superintendent of Police of the Criminal Investigation Agency City Kutwali told me the following:

“Samia Serwar was a girl from Peshawar and was a law student. She asked for protection in their [Jahangir and Jilani’s office]. Her mother, one uncle and a driver entered the office. The driver killed her in the office of Asma Jahangir. The gun man of Hina Jilani shot the driver. Because the killer was killed himself the case became quite difficult to deal with. Then connected with this case was another one of kidnapping which was pending in Peshawar. Now the whole case has been given to me and I am looking after it.”²¹ In March 2000 the women network of Amnesty International Switzerland invited Angelika Pathak, she is representing AI in Pakistan and Freeda Shahid, representation of Shirkat Gah to Berne to talk about “Death in the name of honour”. During the discussion it was soon clear that this problematic is deep rooted in the Pakistani society. General Musharraf declared the year 2000 the year of the Human Rights said on the 21st April 2000 that killing in the name of honour has no place in our religion or in our law. For Bashir Ahmad the Mullahs were always seen far more powerful than they are. “We are a rural society and the Islam in the Indus society comes from Sufism. They were very tolerant where mullahs have no place. The money came and the mullahs were installed. The state played a very important role. If you don’t open primary schools then what happens? Money comes from somewhere. Mafia groups are involved, political and religious parties are involved which open madrassas [religious schools] where free food is given to poor children. It is a failure of the state, that the mullahs have come up. Because of the huge budget for the defence we have not allocated any money for education. If we don’t open schools and with the Afghanistan crisis, then mullahs will become powerful. A lot of money has come from the drug mafia, religious mafia and political mafia. In the parliament the mullahs got just a few seats. If you look at India the fundamentalist party has got most of the seats. Poor leadership and mullahism has destroyed Pakistan. There is no conspiracy from outside it is a total failure of our people.”²² The recent situation has shown that on one side the fundamentalist called for strike against Musharraf after the on-going bombing of Afghanistan. Only a few people turned up, mostly Afghani refugees, mullahs and students from madrassas – the average Pakistani had no interest in this matter.

IV.a. The meaning of the school book project and its religious implication

Jafri mentions correctly that in every society there are myths about women and often they are wishes of the men to restrict and possess women’s sexuality and therefore to keep them under subordination. In her analysis she pointed out some of them:

1. “Women are the weaker sex.
2. They cannot look after and protect themselves without masculine help. In case of crisis they panic and create chaos.
3. Girls and women are less intelligent than boys and men. Girls are fit only for studying a limited range of subjects and following a limited number of professions.
4. They are foolish and ignorant. They can never be made to see reason. According to a popular saying women’s brains are in their ankles.
5. Being intellectually weak, they can neither think logically nor take decisions. They are passive.
6. They act on impulse and are highly emotional.
7. They are superstitious and cowardly. They are afraid even of mice.
8. By nature they are quarrelsome and negative in their attitudes.

²¹ Interview taken with Chaudhary Abdul Aziz, DSP, CIA City Kutwali, Lahore, Pakistan, January 2000.

²² Interview taken with Bashir Ahmad, January 2000.

9. They are coquettish, hypocritical and untrustworthy.
10. They waste a lot of time on their trousseau and can never be punctual.
11. They enjoy scandal mongering and backbiting. Every woman is a bitch.
12. They are sirens who seduce, corrupt and destroy men.
13. It is their duty and purpose of their creation to carry out household chores and to bear and bring up children. These are the only jobs they are fit for.
14. The right place for women is the confines of the four walls of 'home'. The moment they leave these confines, there is trouble.”²³

If we look at the list it seems that there are many points which seem to be not just myths in Pakistan but they are rather international! Jafri mentioned that these myths become “so authentic that people have started interpreting religious laws in the light of these myths. Religion has two aspects: the doctrine and the ritual. Doctrine is difficult to grasp whereas the ritual seems to be easier to follow and most self-satisfying. It is with the ritual that culture comes into the picture and hence the myths. As a result while oppressing women, people are convinced that they are following the dictates of religion. [...] They [the women] are convinced that talking of their rights means defying both the religious and moral order and that it is their religious and moral duty to sacrifice themselves and suffer without complaining.”²⁴ In our talk Jafri told that we have handed over our religion to people who have nothing to do with it. If you want to discuss about a topic then you have to have a specific education. But if it is the question of interpreting the Holy Quran then everybody is good enough. Not only does such a person make an interpretation of the Quran but he even believes that this is the only valid interpretation! If one looks at the people who are doing this, mostly these are persons who didn't find any job, who have no education – they were not even able to become teacher – such a person then become the Imam (leader) of a mosque. This is a big tragedy. We should take the Quran and read it by ourselves. Today the Quran is used just as a slogan.²⁵ Human Rights Commission mentioned in its report that “according to the official data, just over 35 percent of women in the country are literate, while the government accepts the enrolment rates for girls in primary education, standing according to official estimates at 62 percent, remains low. ... [Pakistan] remains amongst the ten lowest-ranking countries of the world in term of education for girls.”²⁶ It is important to see that Pakistan has no money for education. There are not enough schools and there are only rare possibilities for further studies. At the other hand also the tradition plays an important role. Girls are not here to study - they should work at home till they are old enough to marry. Later they have to work in the house of her parents-in-law and be a good mother.²⁷ If we look at the Pakistani constitution it reads as following:

“25. Equality of citizens. --- (1) All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law. (2) There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone.” And
 “34. Full participation of women in national life. – Steps shall be taken to ensure full participation of women in all spheres of national life.”²⁸

That means clearly - according to Jafri - that there should be no gender bias in the prescribed textbooks and the girl child will be given equal representation in illustration as well as contents. Religion plays a big role but we find that religion (Islam, Christianity, Hinduism or Sikhism) plays a very variable role in Pakistani Society. “Religion plays very variable role in Pakistani Society. This role is not constant amongst the various members of the society. On a spectrum, at one end are people who are extremely religious and at the other end there are

²³ Ruquia Jafri, p. 6.

²⁴ Ruquia Jafri, p. 7.

²⁵ Interview taken with Ruquia Jafri, Aurat Foundation, 6.3.1998, Lahore, Pakistan.

²⁶ State of Human Rights in 2000, p. 177.

²⁷ See also: Myron Weiner, Omar Noman, *The Child and the State in Pakistan and India - Child Labor and Education Policies in Comparative Perspective*, Oxford University Press, Karachi/Lahore/Islamabad, 1995.

²⁸ The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, p. 11 and 13.

people, who have no interest in the religion. In my view the majority lies in the middle. Since the creation of this country was on the basis of religion, in times of crisis, we tend to stick to our basic values and this leads us to a clash with our original values and our perceived values about the religion.”²⁹ Minhas has also pointed out that there is a chance in changing the present situation and that religion could play a role: “There is always a chance to change and the reasons are very strong to change. The religion of Islam was not workable for only short period of time. Our scholars have to take a lead and show amendments and allowances in the role of men and women of this century. In a society where it is not possible to rule with authority and vindictiveness, it is all the more important to change with the demands of changing times. If this will not happen, in my view people will slowly and gradually drift towards the other end of spectrum - away from the religion.”³⁰

Not only religion plays a role but also the Government as Jafri told. For her the biggest problem in her work was that the Government did not trust Non-Governmental-Organisations (NGO's) and on the other side had the NGO's not much trust in the Pakistani Government. Many NGO's didn't know how the government is functioning and for them it seems that NGO's just take money from abroad and misuse it. “We decided to use another tactic. We wanted to meet the people from the Government, listen to their problems and to tell them our requests. We also made up our mind to participate at all seminars and meetings which were carried out by them. [...] Therefore we started taking part in them and we tried to bring up our point of gender bias in our society and especially in our schoolbooks. At the beginning nobody noticed us. Time passed by and then suddenly our requests were mentioned in the final text of these meetings – we were accepted or at least noticed by the participants.”³¹ Since societies exist the role of women has undergone changes. Minhas has seen that during the last twenty years the role of Pakistani women kept fluctuating. Some of the women continued to stick to their traditional roles and tend to look after the house and families. Whereas amongst educated women, the role has changed tremendously over the years. These women have Western models and when these models are implemented in a society where the ‘official’ rules have not changes, it results in massive psychological problems.

IV.b. The question of education and the Pakistani School Textbooks

Bashir Ahmad has already mentioned that too little money is allocated to education.

“Universalization of primary education has remained a desired goal of successive government policies and plans. Very little has been done in this regard. The current situation is very grim. Drop out rate is up to 50%. Female participation rate is extremely low; it varies from 8% in Balochistan to 26% in the Punjab. In Sindh only 33 children out of 100 complete primary school. In Balochistan the drop out varies from district to district and is as high as 85% in some districts. In the NWFP [North West Frontier Province], it is 60% for male and 75% for females. The factors affecting the above situation are often listed as property, illness, parents’ attitude and ignorance towards education system, unattractive schools, poor quality of teachers, and involvement of curriculum.”³² Pakistan started with a handicap in the education sector and literacy rate at the time of independence was only 13%. By 1981 it rose to 26%. “While no firm data on literacy rates in Pakistan are available for more recent years, the Government of Pakistan estimates it to be 37.9 per cent in 1995-6”³³ and according to the

²⁹ Interview taken with Freed Aslam Minhas, Professor of Psychiatry, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Sept. 2001.

³⁰ Interview Freed Aslam Minhas, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Sept. 2001.

³¹ Interview taken with Ruquia Jafri, Aurat Foundation, 6.3.1998, Lahore, Pakistan.

³² Qurat-ul-Ain Bakhtari, Community Support in Female Primary Education: The Home School Project in Balochistan, in: Aspects Women Development, Edited by Nighat Said Khan, Rubina Saigol, Afiya Sheherbano Zia, published by ASR Publications, Lahore, Pakistan, 1995, p. 124.

³³ Tariq Banuri, AR Kemal, Khawar Mumtaz, Human Resource Development, in: Just Development – Beyond Adjustment with Human Face, edited by Tariq Banuri, Shahrugh Rafi Khan, Moazam Mahmood, Oxford University Press, Oxford/New York/New Delhi, 1997, p. 46.

UNESCO it was 36.4 % in 1993. The reason why girls attend less often schools has to do with three problems according Banuri: 1) There is no public primary school. 2) Boys have access to a primary school at a one-hour distance from their home. 3) Girls' enrolment in an equally distant school is much lower. "Because facilities are low, some households withhold boys and even more households withhold girls."³⁴ How far religion is playing its role can be imagined. Important is also that often social limitations are a much bigger factor than religion. But also tradition contributes to the understanding of the role of women and girls in Pakistani society and many times these traditions are older than Islam – pre-Islamic traditions are very difficult to overcome. Some tribes which have embraced Islam since hundreds of years still keep their traditions and when they have to decide between Islam and the traditions of their forefathers, they tend to decide according to the ancient rules. Only in this sense one can understand the phenomenon of "killing in the name of honour" which has nothing to do with Islam.

What is the role of school textbooks in the Pakistani society? Of course one can say: Not much because only a few people go to school at all. On the other hand, those who go to school are influenced immensely by the ideas which are given in schoolbooks. Jafri said that a lot of information is hidden in the text. "We find verbal and non-verbal communication within the text. For example we expect girls to behave this way and boys in that way. Girls play with dolls, boys ask clever questions. The expectations which are embedded in the text disturbed us. One example is that women and girls are not visible. If one can see them then only as marginal figures or even in negative roles. Women have the less good jobs which are also paid less. Men have a better earning. Men do not accept work which is done by women. It happens, that the mother is saying something in the text and the son is correcting her. Within the interaction in the family the mother is not playing any role. She is not mentioned and if then she is the person who is bringing the tea and is just sitting and listening to what the others say. If one (the husband) is speaking to her then the topic is for how many people she has to prepare tea or how many are taking part in dinner. Women do not exist in history. If they are at all mentioned then only because they are the wife of XY. [...] It is also interesting that the same women are again and again mentioned in the schoolbooks. Very often they don't even have a name. They are the wives, sisters or daughters of XY."³⁵ In a similar way Cherly Mary Anato writes: "While women form over fifty percent of the population of Pakistan, less than a quarter of the meagre resources allotted to the education sector are spent on female education. History taught in schools highlights the achievement of men, and women are identified in support roles rather than for their individual efforts and achievements. One example is of the invaluable contributions of Fatima Jinnah [sister of the founder of Pakistan] and Ra'an Liaqat Ali Khan [...], who are identified by the famous personalities they were associated with rather than as major historical figures in their own right, who have significantly contributed to the development of the country."³⁶

If a child and here especially a girl child is conditioned in such a way it will start believing in what is repeated again and again in the schoolbooks. From the psychiatric view point Minhas says: "These are the propagated role models that we present to our young children. Obviously these are in contradiction to what the realities are at present. These form the attitudes of our children and these issues and when these young souls experience the difficulties in their practical life they get into conflicts. In my view these should change in accordance to what is happening in our society."³⁷ The school curriculum is a manifestation of the ideology of every state. The little money which is allocated to education and again to the education of

³⁴ Tariq Banuri, *Just Development*, p.163.

³⁵ Interview taken with Ruquia Jafri, Aurat Foundation, 6.3.1998, Lahore, Pakistan.

³⁶ Cherly Mary Anato, *Voices of women from religious minorities*, in: *Unveiling the Issues*, edited by Nighat Said Khan & Afiya Shehrbano Zia, ASR Publications, Lahore, Pakistan, 1995, p. 126.

³⁷ Interview Freed Aslam Minhas, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Sept. 2001.

girls shows the state ideology of Pakistan.³⁸ For Jafri schoolbooks are not a model for girls. She found in all the books she examined only one girl who was shown as a person who had a university degree. Otherwise no girls are seen with an adequate education. Also a factor which should not be forgotten is the poverty of a country. In my own analysis I have seen that there is a big discrepancy between the rich and the poor. Often the rich people can't even imagine the situation the poor who are living next to them. If you go to eat in a McDonald's in Lahore you easily pay a few hundred Rupies (Pakistani currency). At the same time a woman who was not able to send her child to school complained that she can't afford to pay the schoolbooks which cost her Rs. 120. Her husband died and the in-laws had taken away the land. She had only a one-room house left. In order to survive she sends her elder son to take care of the water buffalos of a neighbour – that means she had to take him also out of school! The director of the Insan Foundation wrote in his report: "Violation of human rights are on the rise. Disadvantaged and marginalized sections of society see no policies for any change in their favour. Rural migrant and other jobless people send their children to work and do not find it immoral or against the law. With the education system outdated and out of touch with the needs of people, the students are unwilling to attend school and the teachers in government schools least interested in imparting knowledge. The pathetic side of the story is that there are thousands of ghost schools existing in the country [Pakistan] and many of the school buildings in rural areas are being used as shelters for livestock or they are in personal use of the influential of the area."³⁹

IV.c. Islam in Pakistani textbooks

Martin Sökefeld has done a research work on the following topic: "Teaching the values of nation and Islam in Pakistani textbooks"⁴⁰ Sökefeld has analysed 1st-8th grad textbooks published by the Punjab Textbook Board in the years 1992-1993. He came to the conclusion that "values postulated by this text are service to God and the Prophet, sympathy and mercy towards people and living beings, the equality of mankind, purity and simple living, industry and prayer [...] Various texts deal with the disciples of the Prophet, the *sahaba*. The postulation of one value is central to these texts: total service to the community of Moslems and to the cause of Islam [...] [and] the equality (*musawat*) of Moslems".⁴¹ Interesting in this result is - as also Sökefeld points out and which can be seen if one visits Pakistan – that "the image of Islam presented in these books hardly reflects the orthodox variant of the religion which is the basis of the current policy of Islamisation in Pakistan".⁴² Now, in the year 2002 the situation has changed dramatically with the incidents of 11th September 2001. But still the religious leaders do have power and influence on the society. It will take very long till the opening of the society will be reflected in the books. Another example is the stories of the Islamic warriors (mujahiddin) who are fighting for Pakistan and die for the country. None who is killed is a dead but a shaheed (martyr) for Islam and Pakistan. Seen in this way of course it is difficult for Musharraf to make suddenly to the Pakistani people clear that all these mujahiddin groups which are/were fighting against the Indian army in Kashmir are now no more mujahiddin but terrorists whose activities can't be tolerated. This shows the tension in which the Pakistani society and the politic are at the moment.

V.a. Portrayal of girls and women in Pakistani textbooks

³⁸ See also: Rubina Saigol, *The Boundaries of Consciousness: Interface Between the Curriculum, Gender and Nationalism*, in: *Locating the Self: Perspectives on Women and Multiple Identities*, edited by N.S. Kahn, R. Saigol and A.S. Zia, ASR Publication, Lahore, Pakistan, 1994.

³⁹ Mohammad Mushtaq, Director of Insan Foundation, Insan Foundation Report, www.worldaccord.org, 2001.

⁴⁰ Martin Sökefeld. "Teaching the values of nation and Islam in Pakistani textbooks." *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 18 (1996), p. 289-306, Frankfurt 1996, Diesterweg.

⁴¹ Martin Sökefeld. "Teaching the values of nation and Islam in Pakistani textbooks", p.294-295.

⁴² "Teaching the values of nation and Islam in Pakistani textbooks", p.296.

Jafri pointed out that school textbooks reflect myths not reality. This has also to do with the fact that there are very few women among the authors, editors and supervisors of existing textbooks.⁴³

Some facts found by Jafri:

“In primary school Urdu textbooks, there are 39,13% illustrations of boys/men and 7,06% illustrations of girl/women” (page 11). In new school books and English language textbooks the portrayal of girls/women is more generous but still not in equal number. That means the research work of Jafri and others had some influence on the authors, editors and supervisors. The change also reflects the change within the society - Minhas has formulated in his view that there should be a change in accordance to what is happening in our society. But each change needs a lot of time till it is really effecting a big part of the population and not only the elite. The change of schoolbooks even takes more time. From this point of view the little change which is now happening is surely a positive start and it means also that the responsible persons are now aware of this matter. A similar result was found by Hwa Soo Chung in her analysis: "Despite these differences, there are significant commonalities in the Korean and Mexican textbooks as far as the representation of women and girls are concerned. In the language textbooks, women still figure significantly less prominently than men as characters in lessons and in illustrations and text, and in similar vis-à-vis men/boys. Women appear primarily in the role of homemaker and mother, and when they are depicted as working outside the home, tend to occupy traditional female jobs. Women/girls tend to be portrayed as passive and dependent, with their emotional sensibilities emphasized, while men/boys are shown as more intellectually inclined, active, adventurous, and forward-looking. In the Mexican books,, girls appear more often in fantasy situations than boys, who tend to be found in concrete, often public-oriented situations." ⁴⁴

“In textbooks villages always belong to some boys, whether Aslam or Dara. There is no reference to the girl child or the rural woman who are the backbone of rural life” (page 11). This example shows very nicely how reality is misinterpreted in the schoolbooks. If one visits a village the women are working also on the fields. Many men have left for work in cities or went even abroad. Therefore the women have to look after the land. In rural area the work of women is not just restricted to the house but also field work is done by them. On the other hand many women have started to work in offices in cities. This fact is also not considered in the textbooks.

“Schools are for boys. Teachers are men” (page 11). This fact is reflecting the day by day situation in the Pakistani society. Again, teacher is a job which is accepted for women but even in this matter it is not mentioned. Still many think that Islam is not allowing girls to attend school, that it is seen as something negative or useless for girls and women. New women's organisations have started to use the same weapon to defend themselves and their rights which are given by Islam and Quran but taken by backward and ignorant Mullahs. We read concerning this matter in the Quran:

"O my Lord, increase me in knowledge" (Sura 16, verse 115).

"He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted abundant good; and none would be reminded except those endowed with understanding" (Sura 2, verse 270).

"Are those who know equal to those who know not? Verily, only those endowed with understanding will take heed" (Sura 39, verse 10).

"Only boys pray. During a trip to Zirat three girls have been mentioned in the beginning. Then they disappear. It is only at the end that a woman appears, not as an individual but as somebody who will supply food" (page. 11). This is a very important fact - also in religion

⁴³ Ruquia Jafri, p. 11. All references to Jafri only the page will be mentioned.

⁴⁴ Hwa Soo Chung, "Women's Roles and Gender Issues in Primary School Textbooks: Korea and Mexico", p. 30.

women are not given their rights. It seems to be forgotten that most of the Hadith - the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sws) have been preserved by women. Muslims say that the Quran is the theory of Islam and the Hadith the praxis. If all the parts of Hadith would be taken out which have been given on by women not much would be left. Only this fact shows the importance of women in Islam. It shouldn't be forgotten that Hazrat Aisha (asw), the wife of Muhammad (sws), was teaching Islam to men! Again it is the backward interpretation of the Mullahs of Islam which has shut the way to women and it is not a surprise that these religious leaders had such a big influence on different Pakistani governments and politicians who misused Islam and the Mullahs for their own purpose - only to find out later that they had sold themselves to the fundamentalists. One Hadith reads as such: "Paradise is under the feet of your mother". That means that one has to obey the mother and through a correct behaviour towards your mother God will grant you paradise. The father is not mentioned!

"In textbooks the expression 'Pakistani Children' has been used exclusively for boys" (p. 12). This fact shows how much our society is male orientated. The Holy Prophet in Islam said: "If you have a girl and you give her good education you are half in paradise. If you have two daughters and you give them both good education you will be in paradise with me as near as the forefinger and the middle finger." It was tradition in the time of Muhammad (sws) to bury a girl alive if she was the first born. It was Islam which changed this cruel habit.

"Working women are totally excluded from the world of textbooks, giving the girls the impression that professions are not meant for them. In a lesson about occupation it is clearly stated by a boy that a girl can not be an engineer and the girl gives in. However she is allowed to be a nurse, a teacher or a doctor" (page 12). The influence of ideas promoted in schoolbooks have a big impact on the psycho of children. Still it is difficult in Pakistan to find a woman who is running her own business. But if we look at the situation in Europe it was also not long ago that women had the chance to do so. Recent developments have changed the society. Only thirty years ago in Switzerland women were not allowed to take money from their own account unless the husband would give her the written permission. Again in Switzerland in the canton of Appenzell thirty years ago women were not allowed to vote!

"Men are identified by their jobs or profession e.g. Doctor, Engineer, Carpenter, Washerman, Potter, Farmer, Postman etc. An entirely different reference system has been invented for women. They are always the daughters, sisters, wives or mothers of some male member. They don't exist in their own right as individuals. More than often they don't have any name. They are just Mr. Karim's wife or Mrs. Asad" (p. 12-13). Interesting is that women always played an important role in Islam and also in the creation of Pakistan. Miss Fatima Jinnah is just known as the sister of the Founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The credit for winning the election of Benazir Bhutto has to do with the fact that she is the daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, former ruler of Pakistan. Also in the field of religion Jafri states that "Hazrat Fatima the daughter of the Holy Prophet has been applauded as a daughter, wife and mother. Her household work has been emphasised. Not even one textbook tells us anything about her as an individual: she was a great scholar and a poet, her prose hymns are known for their beauty and profundity, she had a perfect knowledge of Sharia [Islamic Law], she is one of the Ravian-e-Hadith... [narrator of Hadith; that what the Prophet, sws, has said]" (page 13). "It is interesting to note that Imam Hussain's lineage [especially important for the Shia Muslims] has been traced to the male members of his family. Only his relationship to his mother has been forgotten" (p. 13). Important is the fact that the mother is the daughter of Muhammad (sws)!

"Negative portrayal of women is quite common" (page 13). Women are ignorant and have an illogical attitude. These are characters which we have seen in the list under IV. a. But we have similar ideas which are known also in Europe such as "a beautiful girl is mostly stupid" or "she was really beautiful till she opened her mouth". We have also a lot of jokes about blond

girls - very often it is understood that a girl with blond hair is stupid. On the other hand blond girls are known as the sex symbol in Europe.

"The adjectives assigned to boys explicitly or implicitly are interesting: active, creative, energetic, wild, lazy, naughty, 'aggressive', curious, angry, helpful etc. On the other hand girls can be sweet, docile, quiet, tearful, angry, frightened, afraid, obedient, horrid etc. Boys of the textbooks are always superior, cleverer and more intelligent than girls. It is always they who ask questions that only fathers can answer. In absence of their fathers, brothers can also answer questions" (p. 14). The same was already said also by Chung that women/girls tend to be portrayed as passive and dependent, with their emotional sensibilities emphasised, while men/boys are shown as more intellectually inclined, active, adventurous, and forward-looking. It seems that these characters are international!

V.b. Conclusion of the textbook analysis and suggested measures

The conclusion of Jafri is that the "portrayal is unrealistic, unjust and harmful for both the individual and national character. First of all, talking of Islam, a Muslim woman is expected to be strong, courageous and independent, someone fully aware of her rights and duties, not to be a clay doll as portrayed in our textbooks." (page 15) Jafri points out that in our society we bestow a great honour and responsibility of motherhood on the woman, on the other hand we treat her as somebody inferior, totally ignoring the fact that being a mother is not merely a biological factor. "This distorted picture of reality is equally bad for both boys and girls. Boys, who are the men of the future may become self-centred and inconsiderate to women, taking them for granted as unimportant and inferior beings." (page 16). "Yet it is the girl child who suffers the most. First of all she finds it hard and at times impossible to relate to the world of textbooks from where she is mostly absent, and if at all portrayed, is portrayed in an inferior and subordinate role. There are strong reasons to believe that to a great extent the drop-out rate and ultimately illiteracy rate among girls are directly related to the portrayal of girls and women in textbooks" (page 16). "If we want to build a healthy society, based on the principle of justice and equality, in which every individual has a positive and constructive role, we must impart to our school children a vision of life and human relationship that is just, complete and positive, not biased, fragmentary and distorted. [...] If children are provided proper education, there are more chances of their growing up as useful and responsible members of the community, capable of loving and respecting human beings for what they are and do, not for the gender, class, race or ethnic groups they represent" (page 18). Jafri was confronted with the fact that we live in a corrupt Pakistani society. Therefore also the religion has been corrupted. How is it then possible to build up a healthy society? She thinks that religion is a social system which leads the deeds of many. Each religion wants only one - to improve the individual person. According Jafri the majority of Pakistanis is not corrupt but just too weak, it has no more power to fight against corruption.

Not only Jafri but also other educationalists have pointed out that our Pakistani schoolbooks do not educate the children. I myself had the pleasure to read some of these books in my youth - I remember the time with a smile and at the same time with horror! It has been suggested that more positive thinking should be given to the children through our books. Important is also the fact that most of the books are full of antic thinking. Modern thoughts and development should also be embedded. Compared with Europe in Pakistan still only very little women are in the boards in which schoolbooks are written. If almost no woman is representing their gender in the teams of writers, it is clear that the text will be biased. Another fact is that in Europe most of the writers are themselves teachers and know what is going on in the class rooms. In Pakistan many who write schoolbooks are not teachers. For Jafri this situation is changing, but just slowly. "There is a need for the governments ... to make women more visible in the textbooks, and represent them in a greater variety of settings, activities, and roles, as so as to least better reflect current circumstances. [...] and their

participation in the economy and public life should be depicted more accurately." ⁴⁵ This is a demand which is not only asked in Mexico or Korea but also in Pakistan. "The change is going to be very slow, but it has to come. We must remember that if we sleep over the issue and accept myths without challenging them, we are going to be shaken by the bitter reality of tomorrow" (Jafri, page 19). The Mullahs have perverted religion to serve their purpose. It is time that religion gets its original meaning back. Only religious arguments can be used to expose the weapons of the Pakistani fundamentalists - and this, women have understood and have started to use - with success.

Dr. Yahya Hassan Bajwa is a Swiss-Pakistani national who has worked for the Teachers Publishing House in Zürich/Switzerland (Zürcher Lehrmittel Verlag) and has written the chapters on Islam for several publications which are today in the school curriculum. The book "God has many faces/ Gott hat viele Gesichter" was awarded the Silver award 1996 by the Worlddidac Foundation, Basel, Switzerland. In 2001 the book "Humans live in Religions and Cultures/ Menschen leben in Religionen und Kulturen" was chosen as the third best Schoolbook in the competition "Best European Schoolbook" at the Book exhibition in Frankfurt, Germany.

Appendix:

The following books have been taken under consideration for the book research by Ruquia Jafri:

Text Book Class 1, Urdu Quida, North West Frontier Province (NWFP)
Text Book Class 1, Urdu ki Pheli Kitab, Pashto Medium (NWFP)
Text Book Class 1, Primary Stage Darsi Book Urdu (NWFP)
Text Book Class 2, Urdu ki Doosri Kitab, Pashto Medium (NWFP)
Text Book Class 2, Darsi Book Urdu (NWFP)
Text Book Class 3, Urdu (NWFP)
Text Book Class 4, Urdu (NWFP)
Text Book Class 5, Urdu (NWFP)
My Picture Reader, English Book 1, Class 2, Urdu/Pashto Medium Schools (NWFP)
My Picture Reader, English Book 2, Class 3, Urdu/Pashto Medium Schools, English Medium Schools Class 2 (NWFP)
My Picture Reader, English Book 3 (English), Class 3 and 4 (NWFP)
Middle Stage English Book 1, Class 6 (NWFP)
Text Book of English, Class 6, Punjab
Middle Stage English Book 1, Class 6, Balochistan
Text Book of English, Class 7, Punjab
Middle Stage English, Book 3, Class 8 (NWFP)
Text Book of English, Class 8, Punjab
Middle Stage English Book 3, Class 8, Balochistan
Haydn Richards Junior English 1
Haydn Richards Junior English 2
New Expressway English 2

⁴⁵ Hwa Soo Chung, p. 31.