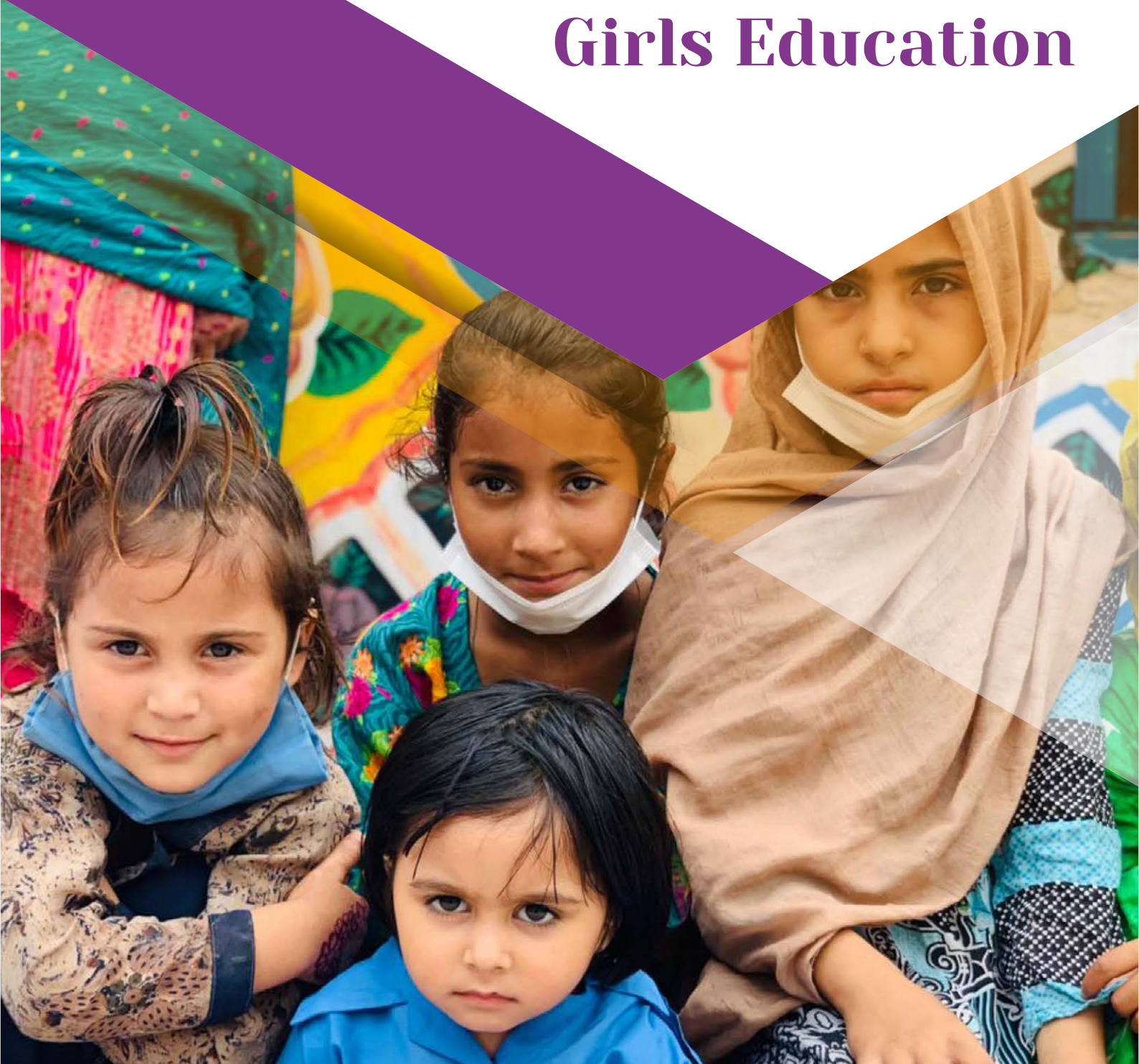


Ulama Ambassadors of Girls Education



Workshop and Launch Report 27th December 2021
Aiwan-e-Sadar



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Introduction

Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education in collaboration with the Council of Islamic Ideology initiated the “Ulama – Ambassadors of Girls Education” campaign which was formally and digitally launched by His Excellency, the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi. The first segment of the launch event consisted of a Workshop with Ulama of all sects from all across Pakistan especially areas with lowest girls engagement in education, to work together and promote girls’ education in their areas through community mosques and madrassah. The purpose of the workshop was to engage Ulama as ambassadors of girls’ education to promote girls’ education in their respective areas.

The campaign seeks to create a network of Ulama at the national level to promote girls’ education and discuss challenges and solutions for girls’ education in their communities. This is a fact that Islam does not forbid girls from getting an education, instead, it insists on education. However, gaps in policies, culture, political interests, patriarchy, and media role affected the interpretation of Islamic teachings. The discussion aimed to address issues like girls’ education and to recommend ways to address the above question. In Islam, knowledge, its acquisition, and application are fundamental requirements for all Muslims to enable them to believe, think, and act according to the principles of the religion.



Challenges of Girls Education in Pakistan

The gender gaps in Pakistan are prominent in the education sector where according to Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement 2019-20 only 50% of females have ever attended school in comparison to 70% males. Pakistan has the second-highest number of out-of-school children in the world out of which 62% are girls. The dismal state of education can be witnessed in the form of Net Enrolment Ratio (NER), the number of schools available, Out of School Children, presence of basic facilities, etc. All of this reveals that education in general but especially for girls has taken a back seat since the very first day.

To this poor state of girls’ education, several factors contribute such as poverty, child labor, education not perceived to be useful, negative attitude of parents, high cost

of education, lack of transportation facilities, involvement in household chores, etc. However, one factor that has remained unchanged, which has existed all across the country and that which negatively impacted girls’ education throughout Pakistan is the wrong interpretation of Islamic teachings related to education and their development opportunities.

The common belief of Pakistani society towards female education is that it is a cause of instigating immorality (society believes that girls can learn western fashions and trends from school etc.) but also cultivating un-Islamic practices. Due to the same, girls in most areas of the country are believed to be functioning within the principles set by Islam only if they are stay-home wives/daughters/sisters.

Purpose of the Workshop

The purpose of the workshop is to identify challenges to Girls Education from social, cultural, and specifically religious perspectives by bringing Ulama of key sects together. It was agreed between Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education and Council of Islamic Ideology that it is imperative to engage Ulama at the national level for the promotion of girls' education and to end the disparities that exist in the education sector. Following this motive, engagement workshop was conducted with the Ulama through which they had the opportunity to voice the issues that existed in their local communities, the suggested solutions, and the methods by which they wish to materialize those solutions.

Solutions, recommendations, and suggestions by the Ulama shall then be channeled into effective and credible mechanisms for amplification to policymaking forums within Islamic & Quran perspectives through both CII and PAGE platforms.



Points Under Discussion

- Contemporary challenges and role of girls' education and their elucidation in the light of Seerah.
- Do you think 'the idea of educating girls' is well understood and appreciated in our society? If not, what are the possible reasons?
- What are the additional challenges in female education?
- Increase technical capacity for the outreach of importance of girls' education delivery with the help of local Ulama.
- How do the societies, cultural barriers, social norms, religious misinterpretations, and underdevelopment infrastructure lead to physical and security constraints all affect educational opportunities for girls and boys?
- Development of national and international advocacy capacity and emphasizing the positive role of Islam and girls' education.
- An analysis of current and previous policies of the Government for girls' education, and how we can Ulama best adapt these policies in their respective areas for the betterment of girls' education.
- The development of international advocacy capacity and emphasizing the positive role of Islam and girls' education through Ulama.
- Ulama to play their due role for dissemination of Islam's message of harmony and peace by becoming an advocate of education especially girls.
- Development of solutions, dialogues, strategies to engage Ulama in national education policies.

Structure of the Workshop

The workshop started with the welcome remarks by Executive Director Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education, Ms. Fajer Rabia Pasha, and proceeded with opening remarks by Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology, Dr. Qibla Ayaz. The one-of-a-kind workshop was strategized to be an open discussion where the Ulama were given a platform to share their point of view in terms of Girls Education. Key Ulama from all the sects discussed the hurdles in girls' education in their respective regions, gave recommendations and presented solutions. The workshop was moderated by Executive Director Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education, Ms. Fajer Rabia Pasha, and Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology, Dr. Qibla Ayaz.



Feedback Questionnaire:

A short questionnaire was shared with the Ulama, to collect their inputs and commitment to girls' education. It ensured that their opinions, suggestions, and input in the form of responses had been accumulated.

The feedback Questionnaire consists of the following questions:

1. Which area are you from?
2. Is education in your area being continued as usual?
3. What is the common attitude towards female education in your area?
4. Are there any hurdles or challenges towards female education in your area?
5. Are there any people against female education in your area?
6. According to you, is female education beneficial?
7. According to your point of view, how does Islam promote female education?
8. Do you take any steps to promote female education in your area?
9. Are there any initiatives taken for the betterment of girls and women education in your area?
10. What can you do to improve the female education in your area?
11. Are there any suggestions that according to you can contribute to promote and improve girls and women education?



Feedback Questionnaire:

A total of 35 Ulama from different regions filled out the questionnaire. The major takeaways from the responses are as follow:

Common Attitude towards Girls Education: The Ulama responded that the common attitude towards women and girls' education is positive, however, in destitute regions such as Kohistan and Southern Punjab, the culture and mindset of the people contribute to a negative attitude towards female education. The elderly believe that the education will make females westernized and they will learn immoral practices.

Challenges of Women and Girls Education: Some of the major challenges shared by the Ulama include:

Poverty

One of the major challenges to women and girls' education is poverty. Parents cannot afford to send their daughters to schools.

Lack of Schools

There is a lack of schools in destitute areas and the girls remain uneducated.

Co-Education System

The existing private schools typically have a co-education



People against Girls Education: Ulama in majority shared that there are not any people who are against girls' education. However, the concept of co-education is disliked. Ulama belonging from regions including Azad Jammu Kashmir, Chilas, and Kohistan shared that due to cultural hurdles, there are people who are against girls' education. The elderly and political influencers resist girls' education.

Significance of Girls Education: All the Ulama stressed upon the fact that girls' education is not only beneficial

system which is why, parents refrain from sending their daughters to school.

Lack of Facilities

The government schools have missing facilities such as toilets, boundary walls, water, main gate etc which prevent the parents from sending their daughters to school.

Cultural Issues

Some cultures have a narrow mindset with the believe that education is beneficial.

Security Issues

Security of the daughters is a major concern for parents. They don't send their daughters to school as they may not be safe.

Lack of awareness

The parents of the girls are unaware of the significance of education, due to this, the girls remain involved in child labor or household chores instead of getting education.

Political Influence

In areas such as Kohistan, political influence is a hurdle in girls' education.



but it is also essential for a prosperous and developed society. Majority of them mentioned that educating a girl is equivalent to educating a generation.

Girls' Education in Perspective of Islam: All the Ulama mentioned that Islam promotes the acquisition of education for both men and women equally. They also quoted various Hadith and Quranic verses where Islam promotes education. Ulama also quoted that learning is a continuous process that starts from mother's lap and ends with death. They also

stressed on the fact that there is no disagreement found within Islam on the acquisition of education for both men and women and all sects have the same opinion on this.

Steps taken by Ulama for promotion of Girls Education:

The Ulama shared that they promote girls’ and women education in their family. They encourage the girls of their families to get higher education even. They raise awareness of the significance of girls’ education through their lectures.

A few Ulama have even created private schools where the religious and scientific knowledge is being imparted to girls and boys both.

Initiatives to Improve Girls Education in Respective Areas:

Some Ulama pointed out that there are no initiatives run by government or other organizations to promote girls’ education. However, some mentioned that there are initiatives but did not specify them.

Current Contribution of Ulama to improve Girls Education:

Following are the ways through which the Ulama promote Girls Education:

1. Awareness raising on the significance of girls’ education
2. Providing religious education, the girls’

Suggestions of Ulama for improving Girls Education

Following are the suggestions of Ulama for improving Girls Education in Pakistan:

1. Creation of schools exclusively for girls, specially in impoverished and destitute areas
2. Primary education should be mandatory for all
3. Community centers with the collaboration of Government and NGOs should be created to provide education and technical skills to girls and women
4. Ulama should be involved in the policy process for improving status of girls’ education
5. The local culture should not be targeted while imparting education
6. Specific dress codes that do not align with the local culture should not be enforced
7. With the cooperation of ulama of mosques, the schools should be monitored at the local level
8. The topic of women and girls’ education should be included in sermons in mosques
9. Model schools for girl should be established
10. Highly-qualified women should run girls’ education campaigns on television in a decent manner
11. To overcome religious hurdles Ulama should play an important role in changing mindsets
12. Technological knowledge/computer studies should be included in the syllabus
13. Large school networks should help the smaller schools to improve girls’ education
14. Safeguarding of girls should be made a priority
15. Awareness raising at local, provincial and national level should took place



Welcome Remarks by Executive Director Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education, Ms. Fajer Rabia Pasha

Ms Fajer Rabia Pasha welcomed the Ulama by expressing gratitude and added that she is extremely proud to be launching the National Campaign Launch “Ulama – Ambassadors of Girls Education” in collaboration with Council of Islamic Ideology. She then added that the mission of PAGE is to aid those girls who do not have access to education due to reasons such as financial issues, especially in areas where there is a lack of educational facilities, such as Baluchistan and as well the northern areas. She affirmed that the support and commitment from the Ulama will be a step forward to improve the status of Girls Education in Pakistan and to change the perceptions. She thanked Ulama for joining the important launch event and representing girls’ education as ambassadors. She emphasized that this is a historical event and she is grateful to Dr. Qiblya Ayaz and the President of Pakistan.



She also shared the programs running by Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education to promote girls’ education in Pakistan.

Introductory Remarks by Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology, Dr. Qibla Ayaz

Dr. Qibla Ayaz stated the impact of educating women, is not only imperative in a civilized society, but is clearly stated in our religion as well. Islam teaches us that education is an obligation upon both men and women, equally.

Honorable Chairman further talked about the significance of literate women. He stated that literate women can raise an educated, well-mannered, and intellectually developed generation, which ensures a secure future for the whole nation. Equal opportunities for women in all sectors of education should be available as they are for men.

He concluded his opening remarks by adding that access to education was limited to the common people in the olden days. He further said, “presently, we are doing whatever we can to further the spread of education to every corner of the country, including the less privileged and privileged areas alike. Moreover, the support, contribution, and commitment of Ulama is the backbone of our initiatives”.



Open Discussion during the Workshop – Feedback Generated from the Ulama

During the workshop, Ulama belonging from different regions and sects were given the opportunity to discuss the current status of girls' education in their respective regions and then suggest solutions.

Dr. Syed Bacha Agha from Baluchistan identified challenges of girls' education and said that there are areas in Baluchistan where even boys do not have any access to education, let alone the girls. In terms of development, Baluchistan was and is still behind. Hence, progress in the development of the education sector within the province is essential.

He further added, one of the reasons for the low literacy rate amongst the female population in Baluchistan and other underdeveloped areas is the backward mentality of the society. Narrow-mindedness and lack of Islamic education keep the girls from progressing and educating in this society. They get left behind because the close-minded side of our society does not let them step a foot outside their homes. He also stressed the fact that there is a lack of educational institutions in Baluchistan due to which the girls are unable to acquire education.

While representing Allama Iqbal Open university **Dr. Tahir Islam Zuberi**, stated that in Quetta, there is a village with a hundred percent literacy rate and has more than a hundred

girls who go there to gain a proper education. While on the contrary, there are some most destitute areas where there is not even one school. To increase the literacy rate in remote areas and to promote education, Allama Iqbal Open University provides free education to girls up to matriculation. Education is free for prisoners as well.

From the religious perspective he added, girls are unable to get an education because people believe that they must only be taught Islamic teachings. The main cause for concern for those who do not permit their girls to get an education is that they believe doing so will lead them astray. Whereas, religiously, the importance of education for everyone, including women, is stated repeatedly and clearly.

He exclaimed that if enough zakat can be accumulated to provide education to a single girl from one mosque for higher education, that will be called progress in girls education.

Peer Syed Shafat Rasool from Lahore suggested that we need to pinpoint the issues and then actively work to resolve them. A common issue amongst all the cities is insufficient financial resources of the parents to educate their children. Education needs to be easily accessible to all, regardless of their income status. Girls being forced to stay at home because of backward thinking needs to be resolved by bringing awareness. Ignorance in underdeveloped areas is



a leading cause of the low literacy rate. We as a nation must understand the imperativeness of educating our girls and allowing them to have a career and independence, both financial and individuality-wise.

Maulana Shams-ud-Din from Kohistan in his talk, talked about the local culture being a barrier to girls' education. He said that we need to change the mindset in our country regarding educating the female population. The culture that has been instilled in us since forever, needs to be reset. The utmost should be done to spread the message of literacy and its benefits so that our country can develop. He also added that ghost schools and ghost teachers are common in Kohistan.

Lastly, everyone has their perspective and opinion, which leads to disagreement. Having an opinion is every individual's right, but when it comes to education, this opinion can be an obstacle. Therefore, eradicating ignorance and empowering our young girls is necessary.

Mufti Mehfooz ur Rehman from Chilas enlightened the audience about the situation of Girls Education. He stated that in areas such as Chilas, the literacy rate is only forty percent. He said that it is typically understood that Ulama prohibit girls' education. However, the truth is that the Ulama impart the message of education and do not prohibit education for girls. The actual reason for the lack of girls' education is the poor education system, as not enough is being done to ensure that education is available to everyone in the area. Therefore, what may appear to be a religious and cultural issue, is the lack of action in the development and progress of girls' education.

He suggested that the areas that have a low literacy rate, need to be visited and inspected carefully. Then the practical steps should be applied to resolve the numerous issues present in those underdeveloped areas.

He further added that education can still be imparted to girls without there being a religious concern. Therefore, religious people should not let it be a reason to hold their girls back from progressing and moving forward in this world. More educational institutes should be built and awareness sessions must be carried out for people to realize the significance of educating their girls. The importance of education should be preached regularly in mosques to raise awareness amongst those who believe they cannot send their girls to schools. We need to stop using religion as an excuse not to educate our girls when our religion tells us all to get an education.

He concluded by saying that on the daily basis, children, especially girls, face obstacles in the way of them gaining an education. All these issues that have been brought to light today, can be resolved if we make it our priority to provide education to everyone in every remote area of our country. Hopefully, we can make a difference and provide the children of our nation the quality of education that they deserve so that future generations are well off.

Maulana Ata-ur-Rehman from Kohistan mentioned that in places that have plenty of educational institutes, there are internal issues such as political influence that prevent the literacy rate from increasing. On the daily basis, children, especially girls, face obstacles in the way of them gaining a proper education. All these issues that have been brought to light today, can be resolved if we make it our priority to provide education to everyone in every remote area of our country. Maulana Ata-ur-Rehman suggested that a voluntary committee must be created for the safeguarding of female students.

He concluded by saying that hopefully with joint effort, we can make a difference and provide the children of our nation the quality of education that they deserve so that future generations are well off.

Maulana Malik Ijaz ul Haq from Kohistan added that girls do not have any access to education. Kohistan has only 4 schools with no basic educational facilities however, ghost schools do exist where teachers are being paid but no child is being educated. He further added that nevertheless, culture is the biggest hurdle therefore people of Kohistan requested PAGE to organize different seminars in Kohistan with Ulama to overcome the situation. Hence, progress in the development of the education sector within the province is crucial.

Mufti Muhammad Zubair contributed to the discussion by adding that the children of Southern Punjab faced different stumbling blocks in the path of getting an education. The longer distance between the school and home was one of the most problematic issues faced by children of Southern Punjab. He said it could be summarized that due to health issues, the education of the children of Southern Punjab is suffering. Lastly, he recommended that Ulama must be a part of the Educational Policy and Curriculum Policy.

Launch of Campaign “Ulama - Ambassadors of Girls Education”

The launch event started off with the recitation of Holy Quran followed by the welcoming remarks from Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology, Dr Qibla Ayaz. Dr Qibla Ayaz, thanked his excellency, the President of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi for launching the campaign and for supporting and promoting girls’ education in Pakistan. Being voice of the Ulama, Dr Qibla Ayaz stated that the Ulama are very much in favour of girls’ education across Pakistan and they will continue to promote girls’ education in their respective areas and regions with the aim to empower girls of Pakistan. Honorable Chairman CII, also shed light on the fact that the excellence of knowledge has been highlighted both directly and indirectly in Islam and that Islam does not give the message of opposing acquisition of education for girls but it promotes education of men and women equally.

The launch event proceeded with Executive Director, Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education, Fajer Rabia Pasha’s speech. Ms Fajer Rabia Pasha opened the speech by expressing that she is extremely proud to be leading the National Campaign Launch “Ulama – Ambassadors of Girls Education”. She added that the current situation demands a special focus on girls’ education, particularly improving their access to quality education facilities through creating an affable conducive environment for girls that tackles the social religious and socio-economic barriers, typically faced by the Pakistani girls. This is where the collaboration with Council of Islamic Ideology can make visible impact. Ms

Fajer thanked the Ulama for their invaluable contribution and commitment for the promotion of girls’ education and for changing perceptions of the people about girls’ education in Pakistan.

The launch event concluded with the keynote address from his excellency, the President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi. His excellency in his keynote address acknowledged and commended the efforts of Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education and Council of Islamic Ideology for promoting Girls Education across Pakistan by involving Ulama from all sects for advocacy. He further added that Islam has been accused of gender inequality a number of times, and the disparity in educational opportunities between men and women in many Muslim countries is often cited as a primary example. Islam was built upon one of the most important pillars of knowledge, which is why this is a sad reflection on Muslims and societies. There is no disagreement found within Islam on the acquisition of knowledge being obligatory and binding. He recognized that the promotion and betterment of status of Girl’s Education cannot take place without the support of Ulama. His excellency, also added that including the promotion of Girls Education in Friday Sermons and utilizing mosques to educate the out of school children can contribute to the betterment of the overall status of Girls Education in Pakistan.

The event was concluded with the digital formal launch of the campaign, Ulama – Ambassadors of Girls Education.

Way Forward:

The consultations between PAGE and the Ulama that shall take place periodically will not only provide Ulama with the necessary assistance/guidance that they may require in their communities but also to establish a system of

monitoring and evaluation. Such a process would provide both, useful insights on the status of such a social intervention and direct/guide any further action that may be needed.



List of Ulama who Participated in the Workshop

Sr.	Name	Region
1	Ali Tariq	Islamabad
2	Mufti Muhammad Iqbal Naeemi	Islamabad
3	Mufti Muhammad Imran	Islamabad
4	Maulana Sajjad Hussain Naqvi	Islamabad
5	Muhammad Hafeez ur Rehman Siyalvi	Islamabad
6	Maulana Muhammad Shareef Hazarvi	Islamabad
7	Maulana Salah-ud-din	Islamabad
8	Mufti Zameer Ahmed Sajid	Islamabad
9	Professor Tahir Islam Askari	Islamabad
10	Maulana Muhammad Mumtaz Ahmed Zia	Islamabad
11	Maulana Muhammad Aslam Ziyai	Islamabad
12	Maulana Tanveer Ahmed Alvi	Islamabad
13	Mufti Shakeel Ahmed	Islamabad
14	Mufti Raheem Ullah	Islamabad
15	Dr. Zafar Iqbal Jalali	Islamabad
16	Allama Muhammad Maroof	Islamabad
17	Allama Saqib Akbar	Islamabad
18	Professor Khurshid Ahmed Saeedi	Islamabad
19	Allama Syed Aqeel Kazmi	Islamabad
20	Syed Muhammad bin Ahmed Shah	Islamabad
21	Professor Doctor Imtiaz Ahmed	Islamabad
22	Dr. Muhammad Qasim	Islamabad
23	Dr. SameeUllah Zuberi	Islamabad
24	Qari Tassawar Hussain	Islamabad
25	Maulana Mir Ishtiaq Ahmed	Islamabad
26	Maulana Ishaq Zafar	Rawalpindi
27	Professor Taj Ahmed	Swat
28	Mufti Ahmed Ali	Kohistan Lower
29	Maulana Shams ud Din	Kohistan Upper
30	Maulana Ata ur Rehman	Kohistan Upper
31	Maulana Malik Ijaz ul Haq	Kohistan Lower
32	Maulana Abdullah Farooqi	Islamabad
33	Maulana Riyasat Shah	Islamabad
34	Doctor Tahir Mehmood	Islamabad
35	Peer Hassan Haseeb ur Rehman	Rawalpindi
36	Dr. Sahibzada Sajid ur Rehman	Rawalpindi
37	Dr. Abzahir Khan	Mardan
38	Maulana Sohaib Ali Shah	Islamabad
39	Dr. Asghar Shehzad	Islamabad
40	Dr. Sohail Khan	Islamabad

41	Mufti Muhammad Tufail	Islamabad
42	Maulana Gulzar Hussain Naeemi	Islamabad
43	Dr. Gul Zameer Shah	Islamabad
44	Allama Alla-ud-Din	Islamabad
45	Mufti Abdur Rasheed	Division Tangeer
46	Mufti Mehfooz ur Rehman	Chilas
47	Mufti Muhammad Zubair	Karachi
48	Maulana Dr Abdur Rehman Khalil	Peshawar
49	Allama Peer Shafaat Rasool	Lahore
50	Dr. Syed Bacha Agha	Quetta

Picture Gallery





















Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education

