



A Peek Into PAKISTAN



Weigh In

1. The Indus River is a large river in Pakistan measuring 3,610 kilometres in length. The areas surrounding this great river are the most populous in the country. Throughout history, many civilizations built their empires around the Indus River.

2. There are over 80 languages spoken in Pakistan, including those that are unique to each specific region. The country's official languages are Urdu and English. However, only seven percent of the population can speak Urdu, and even less than that know English.

3. "Bonded labour" occurs when a person borrows money, but can't pay it back. As a result, the debtor becomes a long-term slave. Often, people spend their entire lives attempting to repay this debt, which is then passed down to their children.

4. The blasphemy law states that anyone who insults the Islamic prophet Muhammad or the Quran must be severely punished. This infamous law commonly results in lifetime imprisonment or the death penalty. Extremists often use it to falsely accuse innocent people.

1. The Indus River has been vital for the survival of human life for thousands of years. This river provides many resources that make it ideal for settlement – water being chief among them. Why do you think numerous civilizations, both modern and ancient, have settled in regions surrounding rivers?

2. With Pakistan's many languages, it can be difficult for citizens to communicate with those of other regions, especially if they speak only one language. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages when a country is rigidly divided by languages? Would this have any impact on potential Bible translation work?

3. People in the poorest communities, being predominantly Christian, are most at risk of becoming "bonded labourers." Imagine your family being stuck in the bonded labour system. How would this impact your hopes, dreams, goals and perception of life?

4. Recently, two Christians in Pakistan were falsely accused of blasphemy. This accusation was the impetus for massive destruction in their community. Should blasphemy laws silence the witness of Pakistani Christians? What does the Bible teach about civil decrees that directly conflict with God's Word?



One Way

Islamic Conduct with Neighbours

The Quran is clear that a servant's faith journey is all about conformity. Being a follower of Allah requires being a friend of *his* friends and an enemy of *his* enemies. There are many Quranic verses emphasizing mercy and kindness, but they contain conditions that apply only to like-minded Muslims, and thus they remain within defined limits.

Biblical Conduct with Neighbours

Jesus states in Matthew 5:43-48 that we are to love our neighbours *and* our enemies. We are to bless those who curse us and do good to those who hate us. We are to pray for those who persecute us. Romans 12:17-21 says, "*Repay no one evil for evil.... If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. '...if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink....' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*"

Way Out

Many Christian women are evicted from their homes due to their newfound faith in Christ. Often, they lack the necessary skills to make a livable income. To help these persecuted sisters in Christ, VOMC partners with a sewing centre project in Pakistan that's designed to teach Christian women of all ages how to sew. These women are also provided sewing machines, so they can generate incomes to support their families. Additionally, ministry workers at the centre disciple the women using God's Word, so they will remain strong in their faith amid a hostile environment. For more about VOMC's international projects, or to donate to our *Women's Ministry Fund*, please visit vomcanada.com.

Recommended Reads

The Despicable Missionary by Annie Bradley and Julie Dass (Teen)
Hearts of Fire by The Voice of the Martyrs (Adult)

Sources:

<https://labour.punjab.gov.pk/bonded-labour>
<https://operationworld.org/locations/pakistan/>
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/pakistan/>
Understanding the Times – A Survey of Competing Worldviews by Dr. Jeff Myers and Dr. David A. Noebel.



Picture This! Answer Phrase (of National Anthem): "Blessed be the sacred land, happy be the bounteous realm, thou symbol of high resolve, O land of Pakistan! Blessed be the citadel of faith."