



**FORMAN  
CHRISTIAN  
COLLEGE**  
(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)



**DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIOLOGY**

**NEWSLETTER 2025**

# Chairperson's Note

I am delighted to present the latest edition of the Department of Sociology Newsletter, highlighting the remarkable achievements, dedication, and collective efforts of our faculty, students, and alumni at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) throughout 2025. This newsletter serves as a testament to our ongoing commitment to academic excellence, social research, and addressing critical issues facing marginalized populations in Pakistan and beyond.

This year has been particularly eventful and inspiring. We successfully organized the 7th Conference on Marginalized Populations, themed "Aging and Gerontology (AGen) in Pakistan: Examining Inequality and Pathways to Inclusion." Inaugurated by our Rector, Dr. Jonathan Addleton, and featuring distinguished speakers such as Prof. Dr. Mohammad Nizamuddin, Prof. Dr. Asghar Zaidi, Prof. Dr. Rubeena Zakar, and others, the conference fostered vital discussions on demographic shifts, social exclusion, healthy aging, and policy imperatives. It brought together scholars from leading institutions across Pakistan and internationally, reinforcing our department's role as a key voice in these conversations.

Our students continued to shine brightly. Undergraduate majors in SOCL 499 presented innovative thesis findings on diverse topics—from challenges faced by male dancers in Lahore and the role of Punjabi oral traditions in resistance, to digital literacy, gender norms in theater, body shaming, and discrimination against Christian communities. MPhil students successfully defended their theses, and many participated in the ORIC Thesis Poster Presentations, gaining valuable feedback and honing their communication skills. Several alumni and students achieved notable publications: Fannie Mehak's work on AI attitudes among university students appeared in an HEC-approved journal. At the same time, Ravail Hassan's co-authored article on women street vendors was published in *Development in Practice* (Taylor & Francis). Our teams also excelled externally, securing 3rd place in the National Policy Making Competition with a focus on housing for women.

Faculty contributions have been equally impressive. We welcomed new colleagues, celebrated promotions (including Dr. Shahid Rasheed to Associate Professor) and marked milestones such as Dr. Aisha Amjad's PhD conferment. Faculty publications spanned high-impact journals on topics such as women's empowerment, religious tolerance, mental health, occupational commitment, cyberbullying, feminism, and populism in Pakistan. Departmental activities—including AI training for faculty, crime mapping projects, educational tours to the Lahore Museum, Punjab Safe Cities Authority, and Aafiat Old Age Home—enriched learning and community engagement. We also strengthened partnerships through an MoU with the Punjab Probation & Parole Service and participated actively in FCCU events like Open House, Advising Fair, and retreats.

Community service remained a priority, with successful plantation and clothes donation drives in collaboration with the Forman Sociology Society and partners like Akhuwat Foundation.

As Chairperson, I am profoundly grateful for the hard work, passion, and resilience displayed by everyone in our department. These accomplishments not only enhance our students' CVs and career prospects but also contribute meaningfully to sociological scholarship and societal betterment in Pakistan. I look forward to building on this momentum in the coming year, fostering more inclusive research, collaborations, and opportunities.

Thank you all for your continued support and dedication. Together, we are making a lasting impact.

Warm regards,  
Dr. Shamaila Athar

Associate Professor & Chairperson Department of Sociology Forman Christian College (A Chartered University)

# Annual Department Conference

The Department of Sociology at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) successfully organized the 7th Conference on Marginalized Populations, with this year's theme, "Aging and Gerontology in Pakistan: Examining Inequality and Pathways to Inclusion."

The conference brought together distinguished scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and students to reflect on the challenges and opportunities associated with aging in Pakistan. The Chief Guest, Dr. Jonathan Addleton, inaugurated the conference, followed by welcome addresses from Dr. Sikandar Hayat (Conference Patron, Distinguished Professor & Dean, School of Social Sciences) and Dr. Shamaila Athar (Conference Chair, Associate Professor & Chairperson, Department of Sociology). A special address was also delivered by Prof. Dr. Mohammad Nizamuddin, a renowned academician and policy expert.

The conference featured multiple thematic sessions and a high-level panel discussion titled "The Looming Silver Tsunami: Navigating Pakistan's Demographic Shift and the Policy Imperative for Healthy Aging." Eminent speakers including Prof. Dr. Mohammad Nizamuddin (Pro-Rector, Superior University, Lahore), Prof. Dr. Asghar Zaidi, (Provost UMT), Prof. Dr. Rubeena Zakar (Prof. of Public Health, Punjab University), Prof. Dr. Saniya Sabazwari (Professor of Family Medicine at the Aga Khan University, Karachi) and Prof. Dr. Grace Clark (FCCU) shared critical insights on the demographic, social, cultural, and policy dimensions of aging.

## Key Speakers

The following is the list of key guest speakers:

- Dr. Nabiha Fatima
- Dr. Abeeha Imran
- Prof. Dr. Grace Clark
- Dr. Laila Khalfan
- Dr. Bilal Ahmed Usmani
- Dr. Sonia Omer
- Dr. Bushra Yasmeen
- Dr. Ifra Iftikhar
- Dr. Mussarat Hussain
- Sadiqa Maqbool
- Dr. Aaqib Shahzad Alvi
- Dr. Aqsa Qandeel



## Key Themes

Aging, Marginalization, and Social Exclusion – examining systemic challenges faced by older adults.

Social Challenges and Elderly Welfare – social and institutional reforms for wellbeing.

Spirituality, Culture, and Narratives of Aging – exploring cultural, spiritual, and literary perspectives.

Comparative and Community Perspectives on Healthy Aging – presenting research from across Pakistan

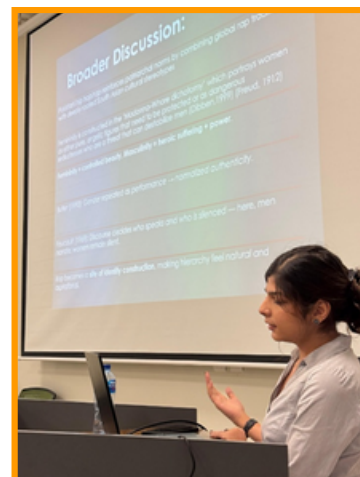
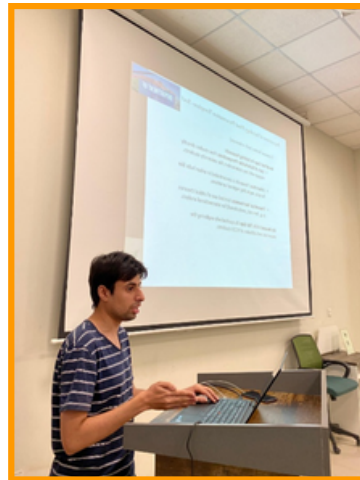
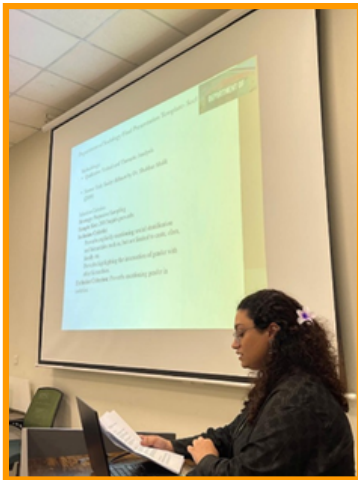
*The conference stands as a testimony to the Department of Sociology's commitment to marginalized populations. It emphasized that healthy aging must be prioritized as a policy imperative in Pakistan, calling for stronger community support systems, robust social protection, and inclusive practices to ensure dignity in later life.*

# Thesis Achievements

## Sociology Undergraduate Majors Present Final Findings for Thesis Review

The Department of Sociology is pleased to share that their majors (Fall 2025, SOCL 499 Thesis Group) presented their final findings and concluding recommendations to the faculty and peers for final feedback as they prepare their final thesis files for submission to the controller's office and external review.

The topics range from the challenges faced by male dancers in Pakistan to the role of Punjabi Oral tradition in resistance. The students demonstrated successful application of both quantitative and qualitative methods of social research. The final theses can be found online on the department thesis repository <https://www.fccollege.edu.pk/department-of-sociology/>



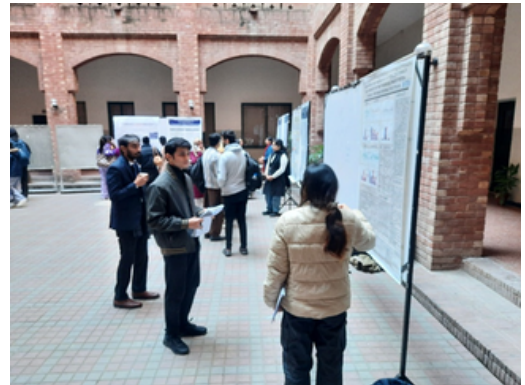
## Oric Thesis Poster Presentations

On *Wednesday, January 8, 2025*, the Department of Sociology's undergraduate and MPhil students presented their thesis posters in E Square to faculty, peers, and external evaluators.

They were lucky to discuss and present their work to many visitors, which gave them a chance to develop their communication skills and also gain constructive feedback.

We thank everyone who came and supported the students, appreciated their work, and contributed to the research culture at FCCU.

Forman Sociology Society hosted the event under the supervision of the department faculty and did an excellent job covering the event and managing logistics.



## External Review of Undergraduate Theses

The Department of Sociology is proud to announce that the final-year students of our Independent Research Project (SOCL 499) successfully presented their thesis work before the FCC community and external examiners on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

Their presentations reflected months of hard work, rigorous inquiry, and academic dedication. The session encouraged meaningful discussions and provided valuable feedback to support students in preparing their final submissions.

We are extremely grateful to the following respected Professors for being external thesis examiners and providing their valuable time and feedback to improve the students' work:

- Dr. Rahla Rahat (Associate Professor, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, University of the Punjab)
- Dr. Noveeda Noreen (Assistant Professor, University of Management and Technology)
- Dr. Muhammad Ramzan (Professor, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, University of the Punjab)
- Dr. Irum Rubab (Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Gender Studies, University of Home Economics, Lahore)



## External Thesis Examiners for Undergraduate Students



## External Review of Postgraduate Theses

The MPhil batch of the Department of Sociology successfully defended their theses before external evaluators on May 21st, 2025.

A heartfelt thank you to the field experts for their time and invaluable feedback to the students. We look forward to sharing more updates on our students' academic journal publications and job placements soon.



## Successful Submissions of Undergraduate Thesis Majors

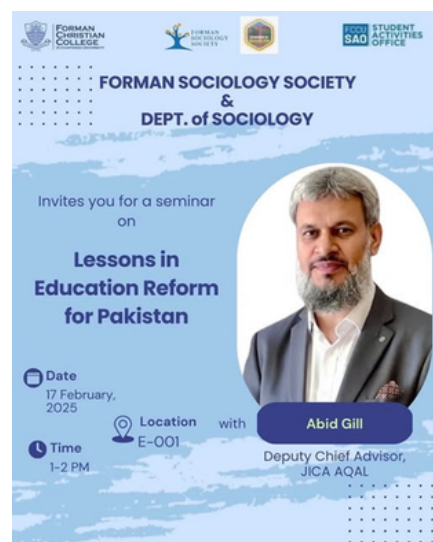
The Undergraduate majors of the Department of Sociology have successfully completed their thesis journey, presenting insightful research findings on a variety of critical social issues in Pakistan. The external reviewers contributed towards the refinement of the final theses of the students. This diverse body of work reflects the proficiency of our emerging sociologists in applying sociological perspectives to analyze a broad spectrum of contemporary social contexts. All the theses have been uploaded on the Department's Thesis Repository, which can be accessed using the following link:  
<https://www.fccollege.edu.pk/department-of-sociology/>

Name	Topic
Fatima Alvi	Digital Literacy Among Students Of FCCU
Samuel Arif Prince	Performing Masculinity: Challenges, Identity Negotiation, and Career Trajectories of Male Dancers in Lahore, Pakistan.
Talha Manzoor	Strangers in the City: Cultural and Academic Challenges of Saraiki Students in the Universities of Lahore
Mughees Ahmad	Theater as a Medium for Rethinking Gender Norms
Roha Waqas	The Role of Punjabi Oral Traditions: Analyzing Proverbs in The Context of Resistance
Sania Sohail	Negotiating Dual Spheres: Work-Home Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of Lower-Class Married Women
Zainab Bilal	Stigma and self-worth: Sociological impact of body shaming on the self-esteem of FCCU female students?
Sheema Ahmed	Gender Ideologies Across Academic Disciplines: The Role of Educational Socialization in FCCU
Malaika Nisar	The Influence of social media on the Purchasing Behavior of FCCU Students
Dua Syed	Rapping Gender: A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of Gender Representation in Contemporary Pakistani Hip Hop
Noor Fatimah	Discrimination faced by Christians in Lahore: impediments to socioeconomic integration
Saliha Bibi	Exploring the Cultural Barriers Faced by Working Women in Quetta, Pakistan
Furqan Orakzai	Awareness of University Students Regarding Juvenile Delinquency

# Seminars and Talks

## 1. Seminar on Lessons in Education Reform for Pakistan

On 17th February 2025, the Forman Sociology Society and the Department of Sociology hosted an insightful seminar, "Lesson in Education Reform for Pakistan", with Mr. Abid Gill, Deputy Chief Advisor at JICA AQAL. Participants got the opportunity to learn from the esteemed alumnus with years of experience in the field as he shared valuable perspectives on education reform.



## 2. Guest Lecture by Dr. Muhammad Kavesh on Rethinking Ethnographic and Social Theories from a Grounded Perspective

The Department of Sociology, in collaboration with the Forman Sociology Society (FSS), hosted a guest lecture titled: "Rethinking Ethnographic and Social Theories from a Grounded Perspective."

Dr. Muhammad Kavesh is an Associate Professor of Anthropology and Director of the South Asia Research Institute (SARI) at the Australian National University (ANU), Australia



A leading anthropologist and current DECRA fellow, Dr. Kavesh's research explored themes such as multispecies anthropology, traditional medicine, decolonization, and South Asian vernacular life worlds. He is the author of *Animal Enthusiasms* and the editor of *Nurturing Alternative Futures*, with numerous open-access publications examining how human and more-than-human lives are deeply entangled. The session was moderated by Ammar Yasir, Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at FCCU.

### 3. Menstrual Health Awareness Session

The then-president of Forman Sociology Society, Ayesha Jillani, led an impactful awareness session focused on menstrual health and hygiene, addressing long-standing taboos surrounding menstruation. The session highlighted the importance of open conversations around reproductive health and emphasized menstruation as a natural and essential aspect of human well-being.



She also introduced @mahwarijusticeofficial, an active initiative dedicated to eradicating period poverty and promoting Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHM). The initiative works toward integrating menstrual health education into school curricula and has been actively involved in providing support and donations to flood-affected areas. Through this session, students were encouraged to support such initiatives and contribute toward creating a more informed and inclusive society.

## Department Activities

### Department of Sociology AI Training

On January 29, 2025, the Department of Sociology hosted an insightful AI training session exclusively for our faculty, led by Dr. Shamaila Athar (Associate Professor) and Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree (Associate Professor). This engaging session focused on the role of AI in social research and analysis, providing our faculty with essential tools and knowledge to integrate technology into sociological studies. It was a valuable opportunity to explore the intersection of technology and social sciences.



## Student Project: Crime Mapping

The Criminology class under the guidance of Dr. Shamaila Athar recently took on an exciting challenge: Collaboratively analyzing crime patterns in our area and presenting findings using a crime map. Students worked together, identifying key crime hotspots and patterns, and visualized their insights through interactive maps. The results offer valuable perspectives on local crime trends, highlighting important areas of concern and possible solutions.



## FCCU Open House 2025

The Sociology Department was pleased to participate in the FCCU Open House on February 20, 2025. It was a valuable opportunity to engage with prospective students, introduce our BS and MPhil programs, and discuss the significance of sociology in understanding society.



## Advising Fair 2025

The Department of Sociology successfully participated in the Advising Fair 2025 on February 26 and 27, providing students with guidance on course selection and academic planning. Faculty and advisors actively engaged with students, answering their queries.



## External Review Meeting for the Self-Assessment Report



The Department of Sociology at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) had the privilege of hosting Dr. Rahla Rahat as the external reviewer for the Self-Assessment Report (SAR). Her critical evaluation and constructive feedback were invaluable to our ongoing efforts to ensure academic excellence, enhance program quality, and align with institutional standards of continuous improvement.

## Assessment Team Findings & Corrective Action Plan Discussion

The faculty of the Department of Sociology participated in the Assessment Team Findings Presentation and Corrective Action Plan discussion as part of the SAR Cycle (2023–2024) on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Engaging in this reflective process helped the faculty to continue strengthening our academic standards and program outcomes.



## Team Building Luncheon

Faculty members of the Department of Sociology got together for a team-building lunch, which provided an engaging opportunity to connect and strengthen our professional ties.



# Student Project: Contemporary concerns related to religion in Pakistani society.

The Department of Sociology is happy to share that the MPhil class studying 'Religion in the Postmodern World' (SOCL 522; Instructor Dr Sara Rizvi Jafree) has worked on a final project to identify contemporary concerns related to religion in Pakistani society to present policy recommendations for improved religious harmony in the country. They have also presented their papers as posters. The level of student engagement and growing critical insight in understanding the complexities of religion in contemporary society, and the students' efforts to inform practical approaches to fostering religious coexistence in Pakistan, is commendable.

### How does Hindutva, as an extremist religious movement, influence India's hegemonic and aggressive political stance towards Pakistan?

**1 RESEARCH QUESTION**

Jose Casanova – *Public Religions in the Modern World* (1894)

**2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Casanova critiques the classical secularization thesis by arguing that religion has not disappeared but as transformed. He highlights how religion continues to influence politics and civil society in modern societies.

**3 THEORETICAL LINK**

Hindutva movement in today's times aligns with Casanova's concept, where religion ore enters the public and political spheres rather than remaining privatized. Hindutva, as an ideological movement rooted in Hindu nationalism, exemplifies religion operating publicly, shaping state narratives, foreign policy, and national identity,estgially regarding Pakistan as the religious other, especially Pakistan

**4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- The government should enforce existing laws that ban religious campaigning in politics and regulate hate speech, particularly by political and spiritual leaders.
- Government officials should plan to invest in grassroots interfaith programs and media literacy campaigns to build social cohesion and counter extremist narratives.

Noor-Ul-Sehar      Muqaddas Majed

### "Navigating Faith Beyond Institutions: Exploring the Maintenance of Religious Identity Among Non-Practicing Youth"

**1 RESEARCH QUESTION**

How is religious identity maintained among young people who do not actively participate in religious institutions?

**2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

According to Davies theory of "Believing without belonging" traditional religious participation has declined, but private religious beliefs remain strong.

**3 Argument**

- Although many young people still believe in religion today, they often do not attend traditional places of worship like mosques, churches, or temples.
- Many individuals now choose to express their faith through private practices such as praying at home, reading holy texts, or joining spiritual discussions online.
- Social media, YouTube sermons, and religious influencers have become important in shaping religious identity, offering connection without needing physical attendance.
- This shift is influenced by modern individualism, fast-paced lifestyles, and a growing distance or disengagement with religious authorities, leading people to explore spirituality on their own terms.

**4 POLICY RECOMMENDATION**

- Promote Flexible Worship Spaces
- Support and Regulate Digital Religious Engagement:
- Train Imams and Scholars in Youth Engagement and Digital Literacy
- Encourage Family-Based Faith Dialogue
- Recognize and Publicly Validate Private and Personal Religious Practices

Firzah Sumbal (263196170)  
Kanoul Eman (263199568)

### "The Role of Religion in Shaping Youth Values in Pakistan"

**1 Research Question**

What is the role of religion in shaping the values and beliefs of young people in Pakistan's evolving society?

**2 Theoretical Framework**

We can use the theory of José Casanova's of Public religion, he challenges the secularization thesis, arguing that religion has not disappeared in modern societies but has transformed.

**3 Argument**

Religion remains an active force in shaping the values and beliefs of young people, even in modernizing societies. Casanova's theory helps explain how religious traditions adapt rather than decline. Young people do not necessarily reject religion but reinterpret it in ways that fit with contemporary challenges. Rather than seeing modernity as a threat to religion, young people in Pakistan may negotiate between religious beliefs and global influences. This aligns with Casanova's idea of public religion.

**4 Policy Recommendations**

- Integrate modern religious education into school curricula that encourages peace, respect, and critical thinking.
- Promote inclusive media content that highlights the positive role of religion in supporting harmony and equality.
- Engage religious scholars and leaders in youth awareness programs to guide young people in understanding faith in an open-minded and thoughtful way.
- Organize national dialogue forums where youth can discuss the role of religion in addressing current social issues.
- Support community-based initiatives that connect religious teachings with challenges faced by young people in the modern world.
- Encourage research and publications that explore adaptive and progressive interpretations of religion relevant to youth.

Aliyya Zainab

### The Influence of Religious Affiliation on Social Attitudes Toward Gender Roles in Contemporary Society

**Research Question**

How does religious affiliation influence social attitudes toward gender roles, and what are its implications for gender equality in contemporary societies, particularly in Pakistan?

**Theoretical Framework**

Woodhead's Dual-Axis Model of Religion and Gender:

- Mainstream-Marginal: Religion's societal position
- Confirmatory-Challenging: Stance on gender hierarchies
- Religion and gender are seen as systems of power; religious doctrines and practices shape gender norms through sacred texts, community structures, and symbolic authority.

**Key Argument**

- Higher religiosity = more traditional gender attitudes, across all major religions
- Religions transmit gender norms via theology, rituals, and community expectations
- Women often adopt gender-conservative faiths for identity, stability, and moral clarity
- Internal variation within religions allows for both patriarchal and progressive interpretations

**Policy Recommendations for Pakistan**

- Promote gender-sensitive religious education in schools and madaris
- Support female religious scholars and their public leadership
- Engage religious leaders in gender equality campaigns
- Use media to highlight egalitarian religious messages
- Incorporate faith-based NGOs in women's empowerment initiatives

**Author:**  
Babar Lal, Muhammad Farhan Khan

## Departmental Meeting for Mid-Year Assessment & Future Planning

The faculty members of the Department of Sociology got together for reflection on the previous semester and planning for the upcoming one. Important schedules were finalized, and responsibilities were delegated for future events.



## Advising Training Session



The Sociology Department proudly supports FCCU's mission of effective academic advising. As part of this commitment, our faculty actively participated in the advising training session held for FCCU faculty.

## Dept. of Sociology at Faculty Retreat 2025

The Sociology Department was delighted to attend the Faculty Retreat 2025, organized by CLT. The retreat was thoughtfully designed around faculty feedback, offering a day of interactive panels, meaningful learning, and engaging conversations in a relaxed and collaborative environment. From discussions on Academia-Workplace Linkages to Reimagining Organizational Rigor and Reclaiming Balance, the panels brought together leading experts and sparked insightful dialogue



## Leadership Retreat 2025



Dr. Shamaila Athar, Chairperson Department of Sociology, joined fellow academic leaders at FCCU's Leadership Retreat 2025 under the theme "Only Connect." The retreat offered a day of collaboration, reflection, and shaping the future of higher education

## Academia Industry Linkages

On 15th September 2025, Forman Christian College University (FCCU) and Punjab Probation & Parole Service (PP&PS), with facilitation by the Sociology Department, signed an MoU to collaborate on research, training, rehabilitation, and reducing recidivism. This partnership will create opportunities for internships, joint research, policy development, and community engagement.



## Enhancing Student Support Systems

The faculty of the Department of Sociology attended an insightful session conducted by Dr. Atiq ur Rehman, focused on enhancing student support systems. The session aimed to deepen our understanding of how Notifications and Alerts contribute to student success and explored how effective Counseling practices can better guide our advisees. By strengthening these mechanisms, we aim to help our students make responsible decisions, stay on track with their courses and requirements, and ultimately graduate on time—empowered to achieve their goals.



## Informal Meet-up with Dr. Sikandar Hayat

The Department of Sociology is pleased to share that an informal meet-up session was organized by the Dean of Social Sciences, Dr. Sikandar Hayat, with the Sociology faculty. It was a warm and engaging interaction where a range of important academic and departmental matters were discussed in a relaxed and open environment.





The session provided an excellent opportunity for faculty members to connect, share ideas, and reflect on future goals and collaborative initiatives. We appreciate the Dean's time, guidance, and continued support for strengthening our academic community.

## Student Project: Models of Ideal Cities

Under the guidance of Mr. Ammar Yasir, the class of 'SOCL 390: Cities and Urban Lives' presented thoughtful models of their ideal cities. From Green City and Green Haven City to Delta City and Bindaspur, each city design addressed key urban issues with clarity, imagination, and insight.



# Educational Tours

## Lahore Museum



The Department of Sociology, in collaboration with the Career Services and Internships Department (CSID) at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), organized a field visit to the Lahore Museum as part of experiential learning for Sociology students.

This initiative aimed to bridge academic theory with real-world cultural and historical contexts. Students engaged deeply with museum exhibits, exploring themes such as heritage, social transformation, identity, and collective memory. The visit included students from Ms. Sana Shahid's Socio and Cultural Anthropology class and Ms. Tehniyat Fatima's Sociology of Art and Culture class.

## PSCA Office



Our SOCL/CRIM 220 students, from the classes of Mr. Athar Azeem and Dr. Shamaila Athar, visited the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) office today – an exciting and insightful experience. Students learned about PSCA's key initiatives. The visit helped students connect classroom concepts with real-world policing, technology, and public safety practices.

## Aafiat Old Age Home



Students of SOCL 435: Aging and Social Policy visited Aafiat Old Age Home on 25th November 2025, along with the instructor Dr. Aaisha Amjad. A visit to an old-age home held significant value for sociology students studying Aging and Social Policy, as it provided them with a direct, experiential understanding of the lives of older adults. This hands-on experience enhanced empathy, critical thinking, and the ability to design or evaluate age-related policies effectively, making their learning more holistic and grounded in real-world contexts.

## Muqaddas Majeed



We are glad to share that the third book of our M.Phil. student Muqaddas Majeed, which is the translation of 'The Man Titanic Left Behind', just been published!

This book is a compilation of writings, love letters, and thoughtful contributions of a scholar and an adventurous traveler, Howard Irwin whose leather bag was discovered from the depths of the ocean after decades of the Titanic tragedy. His found luggage and writings were showcased in multiple exhibitions in Canada, the USA, and the UK. Later on, his contributions were compiled by Dr. Khalid Sohail and Howard Irwin's grandnephew, Claud Irwin.

## Fannie Mehak

The Department of Sociology is happy to share that UG major Ms. Fannie Mehak has published her thesis in an HEC-approved academic journal, titled: Bridging the Digital Divide: Predictors of Positive Attitudes and Functional Use of AI among university students in Pakistan.

The study concludes that the integration of AI-related content into Pakistan's education sector is crucial to enhance understanding and reduce skepticism, with a focus on improving AI literacy, accessibility, and engagement for rural students, females, and those from lower-income backgrounds.

In addition, collaborative efforts between academia, industry, and government, along with investments in infrastructure, teacher training, and continuous assessment, are essential to bridge the digital divide and prepare students for future job market demands.

The complete study can be read online: <https://sss.org.pk/sss/article/view/237>

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Check for updates

**Bridging the Digital Divide: Predictors of Positive Attitudes and Functional Use of AI Among University Students in Pakistan**

Fannie Mehak, Research Assistant, Department of Sociology, Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), Punjab, Pakistan  
Correspondence: [amberhajra68@gmail.com](mailto:amberhajra68@gmail.com)

Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), Punjab, Pakistan  
Email: [sarajafree@fccollege.edu.pk](mailto:sarajafree@fccollege.edu.pk)

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<https://doi.org/10.71085/sss.04.01.237>

**Abstract**  
Positive attitudes for generative artificial intelligence (AI) and functional use of AI are both essential for the youth of Pakistan, as they can improve student learning and skills for the job market. This study aimed to identify predictors of positive attitudes for AI and functional use of AI, and compare mean scores for attitudes, use, access, and literacy of AI with respect to student socio-demographic characteristics. A standardized survey was used to sample 171 students from universities of Pakistan. We found that positive attitudes for AI and greater use of AI are predicted by better availability and higher AI literacy, along with male gender, urban belonging, and higher wealth status. We conclude that the integration of AI-related content into Pakistan's education sector is crucial to enhance understanding and reduce skepticism, with a focus on improving AI literacy, accessibility, and engagement for rural students, females, and those from lower-income backgrounds. Collaborative efforts between academia, industry, and government, along with investments in infrastructure, teacher training, and continuous assessment, are essential to bridge the digital divide and prepare students for future job market demands.

**Keywords:** AI Attitudes, Digital Divide, Higher Education, Pakistan, Socio-Demographic Disparities.

## Ms. Ravail Hassan



Our MPhil graduate, Ms. Ravail Hassan, has published her research in the esteemed international journal *Development in Practice* (Taylor & Francis Group), co-authored with Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree.

The study is titled "Empowered by Survival: Women Street Vendors in Pakistan's Informal Patriarchal Economy" and presents an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of women street vendors who function at the margins of Pakistan's informal economy."

These women operate without legal recognition, health insurance, or state protection, and yet persist as key economic providers for their families in the face of severe gendered and systemic barriers.

The 17 key challenges identified in the study are grouped under five thematic domains: Financial instability; Unsafe and unhygienic work environments; Safety and harassment issues; Work-family conflict; and Health vulnerabilities.

The authors propose actionable policy recommendations, including rental caps, subsidized stalls, deployment of female security personnel, childcare support, and gender-responsive urban planning. This research not only adds to inclusive development discourse but also calls for urgent interventions to support women in Pakistan's informal workforce.

Ms. Ravail Hassan dedicates this achievement to the loving memory of her late father, whose unwavering support and belief in her potential were a constant source of strength throughout her academic journey. Though no longer with her, his guidance and values continue to inspire her work and commitment to social justice.

## Ayesha Jilani, Noor Fatimah, Shahar Bano, and Talha Manzoor



Congratulations to our undergraduate sociology majors, Ayesha Jilani, Noor Fatimah, Shahar Bano, and Talha Manzoor, who participated in and won 3rd place in the 1st National Policy Making Competition hosted by YPDC FCCU. As students of SOCL 103, Introduction to Social Policy, Team Mission: Possible took part in the module 'Social Safety Nets and Poverty' and focused on an area often overlooked when talking about poverty alleviation and social welfare: housing, especially for women.

They discussed existing literature in Pakistan regarding housing social policy and the shortcomings of current schemes, and outlined policy interventions such as:

- Free land grants and subsidized housing loans for ownership and maintenance for women
- Mandating female names on housing loan applications
- Increasing housing and legal literacy by holding "Housing Hakoq Camps" where women can learn about title deeds, and maintenance
- Creating gated communities and safe residential areas for women in urban areas. In their own words, "This was a great opportunity to discuss how to practically apply what we learned in class. Huge thanks to Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree for what we learned in her class and her book 'Social Policy for Women', from which we cited amply."

# Ms. Beenish Fatima





**SDSU**  
College of Arts and Letters  
Political Science

**Department of Political Science**  
College of Arts and Letters  
San Diego State University  
5200 Compadre Drive  
San Diego, CA 92182-1127  
Tel: 619 594-6214

March 26, 2025

Beenish Fatima  
beenishfatima63@gmail.com  
134183657

Re: Application to San Diego State University M.A. in Political Science

Dear Beenish Fatima,

Congratulations! On behalf of the admissions committee for the M.A. in Political Science, I am happy to inform you that we have recommended that you be admitted for a Fall 2025 start date. We had an especially outstanding applicant pool this year, so you are to be commended on your academic record and promise as a scholar.

We are incredibly proud to share the outstanding achievement of our alumna, Ms. Beenish Fatima, who has been selected for the MA in Political Science program at San Diego State University, USA.

What makes this accomplishment even more special is that Ms. Beenish has also been offered the position of Teaching Assistant (TA) in her very first semester—an opportunity rarely extended to new students. This well-deserved recognition is a reflection of her exceptional academic record, dedication, and excellence throughout her time at FCCU. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Ms. Beenish and wish her continued success in this exciting new chapter. She continues to make us proud and inspire our students and alumni alike.

# Ms. Amber Bajwa





**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ON MINORITY AND GROUP RIGHTS**  
(IJMGR) 7 (1)

**Christian Religious Minorities of Pakistan and their Satisfaction with Higher Education and Mental Wellbeing**

**Ambir Bajwa**  
Research Assistant, Department of Sociology, Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), Lahore, Pakistan  
Corresponding author  
ambirbajwa@gmail.com

**Sara Rizvi Jafree**  
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Forman Christian College, Lahore, Pakistan  
sarpjafree@forman.edu.pk

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**Abstract**

The presence of the Christian religious minorities in Pakistan has implications on inclusion based in higher educational institutes and mental wellbeing, which ultimately may prevent Christian growth agency. This is one of the first studies in the country that aimed to investigate the relationship between satisfaction with higher education and mental health of Christian students (N = 400) from a large urban city. Mean comparisons suggest that females, those attending public sector institutes, and nonemployed Christian students have lower satisfaction with higher education institutes and lower mental wellbeing. Multiple linear regression reveals that mental health is predicted by two domains of satisfaction with higher education: (i) teaching and learning (β = .164, p = .014) and (ii) student management and guidance by administrators. Our study concludes that Christian minorities with intersectional disadvantages who are dissatisfied with higher education face more mental health issues and need targeted interventions to improve educational inequalities and mental wellbeing.

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We are happy to share that our MPhil graduate, Ms. Amber Bajwa, has published her research in an international journal of repute (International Journal on Minority and Group Rights), titled: Christian Religious Minorities of Pakistan and their Satisfaction with Higher Education and Mental Wellbeing.

# Khadija Mazher





**Journal of Educational Psychology and Pedagogical Sciences (JEPS)**  
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**Occupational Commitment Among Women Clinical Educators in Pakistan: The Impact of Social Status and Work-Family Interference**

**Khadija Mazher\* and Sara Rizvi Jafree\*\***

\*Research Assistant, Department of Sociology, Forman Christian College University, Lahore. Email: kma1022@gmail.com (ORCID: 0009-0008-6318-1271)  
\*\*Corresponding Author, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Forman Christian College University, Lahore. Email: sarpjafree@forman.edu.pk (ORCID: 0000-0001-5141-1107)

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**ABSTRACT**

Women clinical educators play a vital role in strengthening a nation's healthcare system by training future doctors and healthcare professionals. Despite the fact that more than 80% of medical graduates are females, less than 50% are practicing clinicians, and even less are engaged in clinical education. In complicated matters, the retention of women clinical educators in the health sector and their occupational commitment is also low, due to challenges such as low social status and work interference with family. The aim of this research was to identify the relationship between social status and occupational commitment in women clinical educators, and also to identify the influence of work interference with family on social status and occupational commitment. A survey was administered to 200 currently working women clinical educators from three cities through a purposive sampling technique. Multiple linear regression results revealed that (i) the higher social status, the higher the occupational commitment (β (1), 196) = 4.181, p (0.000); (ii) the higher the work interference with family, the lower the social status (β (1), 196) = -5.830, p (0.000); and (iii) the higher the work interference with family, the lower the occupational commitment (β (1), 195) = -2.263, p (0.000). Pakistan is in dire need to increase and retain women clinical educators in the health sector. This is possible if policies are launched to support improved social status and work-family balance for women clinical educators in the country. Improvement in occupational commitment of women clinical educators will have wider implications on job satisfaction, patient safety practices, teaching quality, family quality of life, and the quality of care provided to patients and family attendants.

**Keywords:** Social status, Occupational commitment, Women clinical educators, Role burden, Work interference with family.

**OPEN ACCESS**

We are happy to share that our MPhil graduate Ms. Khadija Mazhar, has published her research in an HEC-approved journal, Journal of Educational Psychology and Pedagogical Sciences. The study is titled: Occupational Commitment Among Women Clinical Educators in Pakistan: The Impact of Social Status and Work-Family Interference.

# Community Service

## Tree Donation & Plantation Drive



The Department of Sociology successfully organized a plantation drive on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025, as part of its commitment to a greener future. This initiative was conducted in collaboration with the Forman Sociology Society and was primarily an activity of SOCL 101: Introduction to Social Work. The drive was led by Mr. Athar Azeem, with the esteemed presence of our Chairperson, Dr. Shumaila Athar, and Mr. Ammar Yasir

## Clothes Donation Drive



Dr. Shamaila Athar's Introduction to Social Work class and Mr. Athar Azeem's Introduction to Sociology class joined hands for a cloth donation drive in collaboration with Akhuwat Foundation!

With the spirit of social responsibility, our students collected and donated clothing to support underprivileged communities, aligning with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1: No Poverty. This initiative reflects the values of empathy, solidarity, and service—core principles of both sociology and social work.

## Books Donation Drive



In addition to the ongoing initiatives, the Forman Sociology Society organized an additional book donation drive to support deserving students at Light of School Hope. Members actively contributed academic and general reading books to help promote access to education and learning resources for underprivileged students. This drive reflected our collective commitment to educational equity and social responsibility.

# Faculty Updates



## Dr. Shamaila Athar

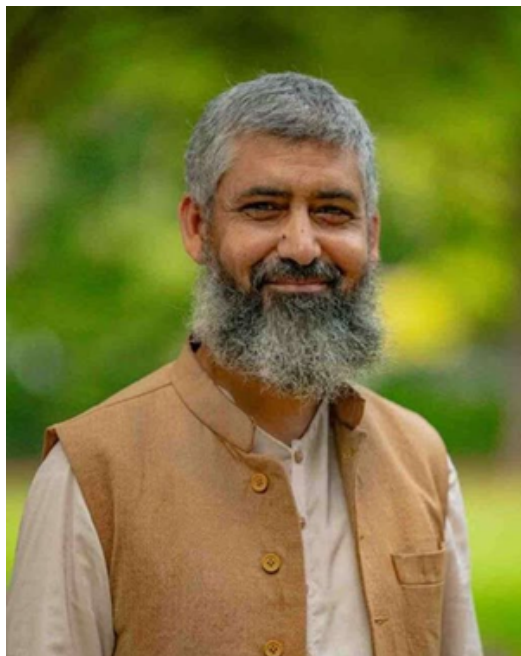
We are thrilled to announce that Dr. Shamaila Athar has been appointed as the new Chair of the Sociology Department! Her leadership and vision promise to take our department to new heights.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Sara Rizvi for her outstanding service and dedication during her tenure as Chair. Her contributions have significantly enriched our community, and we appreciate all that she has done.

Additionally, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) has recently updated the curricula for Sociology degree programs across Pakistan, and we're thrilled to highlight the invaluable contribution of Dr. Shamaila Athar as a member of the National Curriculum Review Committee (NCRC). This two-day meeting took place at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, where the committee worked diligently to develop comprehensive curricula for the associate degree, Bachelor of Science, and Master of Philosophy in Sociology, ensuring alignment with national and international academic standards.



Dr. Shamaila also contributed to the roundtable discussion hosted by Pink Ribbon Pakistan on July 24, 2025. The conversation emphasized the critical role of academic institutions in raising awareness and advocating for practical, community-based solutions that promote early diagnosis and provide sustained support for patients and survivors.



## Dr. Shahid Rasheed

We are delighted to announce the promotion of Dr. Shahid Rasheed to the position of Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology. Dr. Shahid Rasheed brings a rich and interdisciplinary background to his academic role. He holds degrees in Electrical Engineering from UET Lahore, LL.B. from Punjab University, and an M.Sc. in Sociology from the University of Oxford. He earned his PhD in Sociology from UMT, Lahore. We congratulate Dr. Shahid Rasheed on this well-deserved recognition and look forward to his continued contributions to teaching, research, and community engagement.

## Welcome to Dr. Sarosh Iqbal



Dr. Sarosh Iqbal is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the Forman Christian College (A Chartered University)'s School of Social Science. She has extensive experience of more than two decades in research and teaching. Her research interests include the Sociology of Health & Illness – particularly women's and adolescent health, Sociology of Family, and Digital Sociology. She has experience in managing research projects in collaboration with international development partners, e.g., World Bank, USAID, World Health Organization, DFID/UKHSA, and UN agencies. She has authored multiple research manuscripts published in high-impact factor, Scopus-indexed, and HEC-recognized journals.

She participated as an invited external university member in the launch ceremony of the new postgraduate program – MS in Higher Education Leadership and Management (HELM) – at Dr. Hasan Murad School of Management, University of Management and Technology (UMT), Lahore. This timely and much-needed initiative marks a significant step toward strengthening the leadership capacity and strategic direction of academic institutions across Pakistan. It was an honor to witness and support this progressive move towards nurturing future-ready higher education leaders.

# Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree



Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, actively contributed to numerous academic and public forums throughout 2025, beginning with her role as a panelist on the generation divide and the impact of technology on socialization and family ties in a discussion hosted by Kinnaird and the PM Youth Program on 14th January.

She was subsequently invited to speak at the 2nd International Conference on Sociology at the University of Management and Technology on healthcare inequalities and marginalities, attended a book talk on social policy for women in Pakistan at Government College University Lahore, and participated in a LUMS panel on empowering women in STEM.

On International Women's Day, she addressed the University of Education Lahore on women's achievements and gender advocacy, moderated a session on students' roles in quality assurance at the PNQAHE conference, and chaired discussions on women's empowerment, cultural barriers, and social policy at FCCU's CPPG conference.

Her engagements continued with a Habib University panel on work, health, and belonging for women in Pakistan, a seminar on protective policies for environmental change and disasters, participation in an interfaith dialogue session at ICWR 2025, and a youth expo-conference on WASH and menstrual hygiene with WaterAid Pakistan. Concluding the year, she delivered a TED Talk titled "Connecting Generations Through Intergenerational Learning," highlighting systemic challenges faced by the elderly and proposing solutions through intergenerational activities, internships, and curriculum integration.

# Dr. Aaisha Ahmed

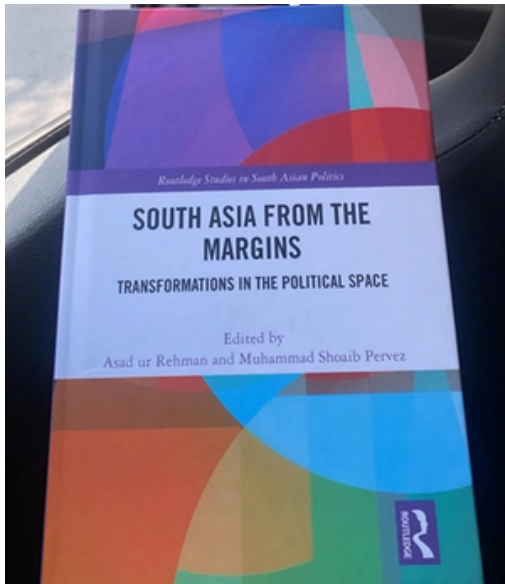


We are delighted to share that our Assistant Professor, Dr. Aaisha Amjad, has been awarded a PhD degree in Sociology at the 134th Convocation of the University of the Punjab, Lahore, held on February 24, 2025. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Aaisha Amjad and wish her continued success in her academic journey. Her achievement reflects her commitment to academic excellence, and we look forward to her future research and contributions to the department.



Dr. Aaisha also contributed to the roundtable discussion hosted by Pink Ribbon Pakistan on July 24, 2025. The event brought together leading academics and sociologists to explore how societal norms, patriarchal structures, and cultural stigmas shape the breast cancer experience for women in Pakistan.

# Mr. Ammar Yasir



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We are pleased to share the recent publication of our faculty member, Mr. Ammar Yasir in *South Asia from the Margins: Transformations in the Political Space* by Routledge, which includes his chapter. His chapter presents a comparative analysis of populism in Pakistan, examining Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the People's Rights Movement in AJK.



Mr. Ammar Yasir also represented the Department of Sociology, FCCU, at Habib University in a scholarly dialogue on "The Politics of Margins and Marginality in South Asia." Mr. Ammar Yasir, Lecturer in Sociology, joined the panel in connection with his authored chapter in the newly published volume South Asia from the Margins: Transformations in the Political Space. His participation reflected the department's ongoing commitment to critical inquiry and regional academic engagement.

Additionally, he led a session of "The Rays of Hikma: A Readers' Club in Social Thought" at the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, University of the Punjab. The discussion engaged critically with Kohei Saito's book 'Marx in the Anthropocene' and opened an enriching conversation on ecology, political economy, and contemporary social thought. We congratulate the organizers and participants for fostering a vibrant intellectual community.



# Faculty Publications

## Dr. Shamaila Athar

·Fatima, B., & Athar, S. (2025). Women's empowerment: A qualitative study of structural barriers and changing societal attitudes. *Sociological Research and Innovation*, 3(1), 100–119.

## Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree

·Rizvi Jafree, S., Calib. G., Burhan SK., & Fatima, T. (2025) The Relationship between Religious Text, Religious Tolerance, and Mental Health in different Religious Groups of Pakistan: An Exploratory Mixed Methods Study. *J Religion and Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-025-02520-2>

·Rizvi Jafree, S., Naveed, A., Ahsan, H. et al. (2025) Predictors of health-seeking behavior in patients with chronic liver disease and a comparison of health-seeking based on patient-type. *BMC Gastroenterology* 25, 642. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12876-025-04235-w>

·Mazher, K., & Rizvi Jafree, S. (2025) Occupational Commitment Among Women Clinical Educators in Pakistan: The Impact of Social Status and Work-Family Interference. *Journal of Educational Psychology and Pedagogical Sciences (JEPPS)*, Vol.5, No. 1, p.1-14 [https://jepps.su.edu.pk/uploads/journals/JEPPS\\_107-5i0125-p\\_1-14.pdf](https://jepps.su.edu.pk/uploads/journals/JEPPS_107-5i0125-p_1-14.pdf)

·Hassan, R. & Rizvi Jafree, S. (2025): Empowered by survival: women street vendors in Pakistan's informal patriarchal economy, *Development in Practice*, DOI: 10.1080/09614524.2025.2515217

·Rizvi Jafree, S. & Mubasher, M. M. (2025). Predicting high risk pregnancies in Pakistan-a demographic assessment using predictive machine learning. *Quality & Quantity*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-025-02210-x>

·Bajwa, A., & Rizvi Jafree, S. (2025). Christian Religious Minorities of Pakistan and their Satisfaction with Higher Education and Mental Wellbeing. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 1(aop), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718115-bja10216>

·Mehak, F & Rizvi Jafree, S. (2025). Bridging the digital divide: Predictors of positive attitudes and functional use of AI among university students in Pakistan. *Social Sciences Spectrum*, 4(1), 617-632. <https://doi.org/10.71085/sss.04.01.237>

## Dr. Sarosh Iqbal

·Khan, N. A., & Iqbal, S. (2026). Review of effective communication strategies and employee's performance at workplace, Lahore, Pakistan. *The Regional Tribune*, 4(1), 138–149.

·Bhatti, B., Ishfaq, Z., & Iqbal, S. (2025). Experience of physical violence faced by ever-married women in rural areas of Pakistan: An insight from the Demographic and Health Survey (2017–18). *Journal of Women, Peace & Security*, 2(1), 1–30.

## Ammar Yasir

·Baloch, M., Yasir, A., & Hassan, A. A. ul. (2025). Cyberbullying and feminism in Pakistan: The stories of feminist activists in Lahore. *Feminist Media Studies*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2025.2468916>

·Yasir, A. (2025). Populism in Pakistan. In A. Rehman & M. S. Pervez (Eds.), *South Asia from the Margins: Transformations in Political Space* (pp. 93-113). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003529750-6>

## Tehniyat Fatima

·Rizvi Jafree, S., Calib. G., Burhan SK., & Fatima, T. (2025) The Relationship between Religious Text, Religious Tolerance, and Mental Health in different Religious Groups of Pakistan: An Exploratory Mixed Methods Study. *J Religion and Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-025-02520-2>