

PAKISTANI COMMUNITY IN NORTH TEXAS

QUICK OBSERVATIONS

Country/Region of origin	Pakistan
Population (community leaders)	50,000
Population (Census 2000)	8,964
Main reasons for migration	Economic hardship, political instability, came to study and stayed, religious intolerance
Years in this region	10-20-years
Primary areas of residence	Dallas, Plano, Richardson, Carrollton, Arlington, Irving, Hurst, Euless, Bedford
General level of education	Graduate school, technical school
Employment	Professional, health care, management, retail trade
Principal religions	Islam
Languages	Urdu
Media (newspaper or radio)	
Community newsletter	None
Cultural organizations	none

The exodus from Pakistan began in the 70's, with many Pakistanis drawn to the U.S. by its excellent institutions of higher education. Upwardly mobile residents of Pakistan's major cities, and sacrificing limited family resources to educate their children, many of who had completed their university studies in the U.S. were drawn to this region by the strong job market. Internal migration from other cities in the U.S. to the DFW metroplex is common. Political instability and religious unrest in their country of origin were additional motivations.

According to a recent poll, 60% of Pakistani immigrants to the U.S. are college graduates, and many are physicians, accountants, computer scientists and engineers. Ismaeli Pakistanis (followers of the Agha Khan) are overwhelming owners of small businesses, dominating the import centers located at Harry Hines and Royal. Many have business partners back home and travel back and forth regularly. This community has significant economic power and contributes about \$800,000 each year toward the Agha Kahn Foundation's development and educational projects in Asia.

When family resources are pooled to send one child abroad to study, it is usually a male that is selected. As in similar Middle eastern immigrant communities, the result is an excess of young men with a shortage of young women from whom to select a marriage partner. As relations with the extended family 'back home' are very close and constant, relatives back home or friends living in the Diasporas bring frequently young people together. Arranged marriages, with the bride being selected by the groom's family in Pakistan, are not uncommon.

As it is the son's responsibility to care for his elderly parents, the older generation frequently follows forming an extended household. Even when the grandparents spend only part of the year with their son or daughter, they maintain traditions in the home and connect their U.S. born grandchildren with their language, religion and heritage. Even though they may not speak English, they are respected and consulted and their influence somewhat balances the lack of child-centered religious or cultural activities within the Pakistani community. It is a better financial investment to bring one or more parents for an extended visit in the U.S. than to purchase tickets for the nuclear family residing here. Nevertheless, most Pakistani children spend the summers or holiday break with their extended families every two to five years.

Most Pakistani immigrants are Muslim, and it is they who provide considerable leadership to the diverse north Texas Muslim community. Pakistanis spearheaded the building of the Islamic Association of North

Texas in Richardson, the first mosque in the region, and ore recently, the mosques in Carrollton and Plano, and the expansion of the Richardson center. The first and only Muslim social service center was established by a Pakistani physician, as was the weekend medical clinic for indigent Muslims. Several times Pakistani Muslim women attempted to initiate youth programs, efforts opposed and ultimately squelched by more conservative Arab Muslims. Selected wealthy individuals from the original wave of immigration have now begun organizing support for political candidates through fundraising dinners and voter's forums.

In view of the previous information, it is striking that cultural and social activities within the Pakistani community are limited and that there is little cohesion among its members. The American-born second generation blends easily with its peers and is markedly successful in school.

A small portion of the Pakistani-American population is undocumented. These individuals who have overstayed their tourist visas hope to re-stabilize their legal status.

OTHER SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Age Distribution	Primarily middle-aged
Percentage of men and women	50% men, 50% women
Ties to country or origin	Nuclear family remains, send money back regularly, phone relatives
Frequency of travel to country of origin	2-5 years
Estimated of undocumented	

Material Source: DFW International
aweiss@airmail.net

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Medical Clinics

Make friendships

Become informed about issues impacting the Pakistani people, i.e. new immigration guide lines

Partner together for humanitarian ministries

HOW DO YOU OPEN THE DOOR TO CONVERSATIONS ABOUT FAITH?

Share your everyday relationship with God...answered prayers, Scriptures that comfort

Ask about how needs are met through their faith...loneliness, courage, direction

Offer to pray for their needs

Give books/videos that tell a faith story

Discover their interests and find Christians in that field to share their story

Look for Bible stories or principles that teach a value they respect.