

## **Panel: Alternative Textbooks for Social and Political Harmony**

Alternative educational material is not a new idea in formal learning at the school level. However, in Pakistani educational system it has yet to be introduced in a proper manner. The educational discourse in Pakistan projects the particularly harmful expression of state's myopic policies, more specifically in the preparation and dispensation of textbooks. Most of these books are replete with hate speech, distortion of historical facts, totalitarian Islamic outlook and omission of pre-Islamic history and non-Muslim communities of Pakistan. The centralized system of formulating education policies and curricula is suitable more for ideological indoctrination than to impart knowledge.

The proposed panel intends to seek new discussion on certain questions such as how and why the voices capable of offering alternative textbooks have been effectively silenced? How to develop alternative textbooks of subjects like social/Pakistan studies, history, language teaching and civics? More importantly, how, these texts are made part of formal educational materials in public instruction? What is the importance of alternative textbooks as extra-curricular and pro-curricular reading stuff? These questions are still to be answered and need a thorough probe. However, to begin with, the panelists may counter these and other new questions to develop a set of a sub themes leading towards an in-depth study on the issue.

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