

# Pakistani Father of Six Girls Changes Views on Education

*Father's determination to keep his children in schools run by The Citizens Foundation has a happy ending for family*

HOUSTON, TX, USA, April 4, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Amjad Ali and Shahana are parents of six girls and a boy. The father works long hours driving a 3-wheeler auto-rickshaw in the sprawling city of Karachi. He encounters strong opposition from his conservative brothers to his girls getting an education, and though he was not able to continue his own schooling after 4th grade, he is doggedly determined to see all their children—including his six daughters—do well as skilled professionals.



An education success story...Amjad Ali and his 6 daughters

Shahana has 12th-grade schooling and taught at a low-cost private school for a short time before she started a family. Her own parents and family were more open-minded about girls being educated. Over the years, Shahana has convinced Amjad that girls' education is important and both are now equally committed to their children getting the best education possible. With donor-funded support for schools and tuition, [The Citizens Foundation \(TCF\)](#) has made it possible for their children to get a quality 10th-grade education in a neighborhood school, counseling and financial support for college and guidance for professional options.

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*Amjad Ali*

Along the way, Amjad and his family have encountered their biggest financial and family crisis. A bitter feud with his older brother for ownership rights of the home they live in has driven matters to a troublesome court battle. At one point, Amjad's family faced losing their home and

imminent financial ruin. That's when the older girls offered to give up college to find work and help pay off the family debts. But the father stood firm and did not let that happen. Looking back, he is filled with pride when he speaks about their journeys and accomplishments. "I couldn't complete my own education, and that's why I struggle to earn a decent living. But I don't want the same for my daughters. I want them to finish their education. They should have a firm standing in society."

Muskaan, 22, had this to say about the family feud, "Our father had no savings, nothing. To avoid conflict, we moved to a rental house but my father's income was not enough to cover the rent. He would have to borrow money every month. Two of my older sisters and I were in college. None of us were earning anything. It was really a crisis. So, my sisters and I talked it over. We thought we should leave our studies and get jobs in factories to help my parents, pay down the debts and get through this. But my father said that we should not worry about that, just focus on our studies and once we have the power of education, we will be able to overcome these problems."

Amjad Ali had been resisting his brothers to take the girls out of school. But he told his daughters: "I don't want them [the conservative brothers] to win by stopping your education."

Amjad's confidence in his daughters has paid off. For their primary and secondary education, the older girls and their brother have gone to the neighborhood TCF school. The four older girls have pursued a college education in some of Pakistan's finest institutions. In the last year, two of



Muskaan, 22, a graduate of IBA Karachi and now working as a business analyst – with her father Amjad Ali, an auto-rickshaw driver



Amjad Ali with Shahana and their family

the girls have helped to turn things around and now contribute up to 80% of the family's financial needs. Loans are getting paid off and the financial pressures are going away.

Ameena, the oldest at 23, recently finished a 5-year pharmacy program at Dow University of Health Sciences and is lining up job interviews. She is upbeat about her job prospects and currently doing an internship at a multinational pharmaceutical company. Next in line, Armina, 22, completed her bachelor's in business administration from SZABIST, a well-recognized institute of science and technology, and works as an inventory executive for a textile business, Gul Ahmed Industries.

Muskaan, 22, the third oldest, graduated with a bachelor's degree in computer science from the prestigious Institute of Business Administration (IBA) in Karachi and is a business analyst at Systems Ltd. She aspires for a master's degree in business and communications and is also exploring a Fulbright Scholarship to a US university.

Mansha, 19, is a sophomore at IBA in Sukkur, while Jaweria, 16, has taken her 10th-grade exam and is preparing for college, hoping to be accepted at the TCF intermediate college for 11th-12th grades before she starts university. Jaweria's interest is in aviation and her lofty dream is to be a fighter pilot in the air force.

Their brother, Ahmad, 15, is in 10th grade at the neighborhood TCF school. The youngest, 5-year-old Alisha, will be starting at the TCF school in April this year.

"My father used to be very strict about girls' education because his side of the family did not approve of us going to school," said Muskaan. "They just did not want us girls to go to school. My father's older brother told him not to send us to school because it isn't a requirement of life, that we would eventually get married and we'll be managing the household and stuff. So, education is not a requirement. Thankfully, my mother transplanted the idea of girls' education in my father's head since our childhood. And I'm glad that she did."

Amjad and his family live in Korangi, a crowded and largely industrial section of Karachi with poorly planned and congested housing for low-income families. They are among the thousands of underprivileged families in all parts of Pakistan with children attending [one of the 1,687 TCF schools in the country's poorest urban and rural areas](#).

There are 275,000 children in TCF schools at this time—and half of them are girls. To boost girls' enrollment, TCF employs only female teachers and school principals, trains them well, and transports them to and from the schools. The [non-profit is also the largest private employer of women](#) in Pakistan with 13,000 women teachers.

"My parents have given us all the support, but TCF is the bridge that allows us to carry out the entire journey," said Muskaan. "TCF has made everything possible for us."

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