

Religious Diversity And Social Integration In Pakistan

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Abstract

Religion is an essential part of every human's belief, behavior, ethics, and culture. It helps them to cope with adversity and tragedy and provides hope that things will get better. Many cross-cultural studies have revealed that religion performs different important functions in human society, including explanatory, emotional, social, and ecological functions. Religious commitment is a comprehensive sociological term that can be defined as the quality of being religious. It is closely connected with both the belief and conduct and is intimately related to life's moral, political, and aesthetic dimensions. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan occupies a unique position among Muslim states, insofar so that it was founded primarily for religious considerations. The population of Pakistan is religiously diverse, as its citizens adhere to different religions like Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Ahmadis, scheduled casts, and other religions like Zoroastrianism (Parsis), Sikhism, Bahaim, Zikri's, and Shaman traditions of Himalaya. Pakistanis are sensitive in keeping to themselves their religious identities. It is thus significant to study the religious commitment of different religious communities in Pakistan.

Religious Diversity

Religious diversity in some contexts means an informed, tolerant, and appreciative or sympathetic view of the various religions. Religious diversity is also an attitude or policy regarding the diversity of the religious belief system co-existing in society. The term diversity means the state of having people who are of different races or who have different cultures in a group or organization.¹

The primary sources that guide Islam, namely Quran and Hadiths, promote the fundamental right to practice an individual's belief, even though it may be a false belief.² The acceptability of religious pluralism within Islam remains a topic of active debate, however, the vast majority of Islamic scholars and historical shreds of evidence reveal Islam's commitment to no coercion in religion, supporting pluralism in the context of relative toleration.³ Hamed Kazem Zadeh, a pluralist orientalist argues

that cultural absolutism of ours is, of course, today under heavy pressure, a double pressure of defining and semi-bankrupt imperialism and surprisingly strong counter assertive challenge that changed the mentality of Muslims to have a pluralist identity.⁴ Then he highlights the policy method of Islam Messenger in the early Islamic civilization toward other religions.

Social integration

The term social integration means the process by which separate groups are combined into a unified society, especially when this is pursued as a deliberate policy. It implies a coming together based on individual acceptance of the members of other groups.⁵ The founder of modern sociology Emile Durkheim, who one of the first to explore the concept in his book.⁶ Durkheim considered society to be the collective consciousness of people. In other words, the way we think, feel, and behave is influenced by society in a major way. Durkheim produced a couple of different types of social integration, which he referred to as kinds of solidarity.

Firstly, mechanical solidarity is what binds more primitive, or smaller, societies together. In this kind of solidarity, it's things like kinship and shared beliefs that hold us together.⁷ We're integrated because we're all pretty similar. In more advanced societies, we see the emergence of organic solidarity. In a more complex society, a complex division of labor requires us to rely on each other more. This kind of interdependence creates increased social integration, instead of simply our similarities. But what if we don't achieve this integration? In Durkheim's view, this leads to a problem known as anomie or a sense of feeling very disconnected from others and from our community.⁸

Social integration is the blending and unifying of social groups, most commonly seen in the desegregation of races throughout history. Integration in sociology and other social sciences is more precisely the movement of minority groups such as ethnic minorities, refugees and underprivileged sections of a society into the mainstream of societies. Social integration requires proficiency in an accepted common language of the society, acceptance of the laws of the society and adoption of a common set of values of the society. It does not require assimilation and it does not require persons to give up all of their cultures, but it may require to forgo some aspects of their culture which are inconsistent with the laws and values of the society. Intolerant and open societies, members of minority groups can often use social integration to gain full access to the opportunities, rights, and services available to the members of the mainstream of society.⁹

The role of religion has been majorly highlighted as a contributory factor to the wellbeing of individuals, especially in the current era when there is a surge in international migration. As a result, of increased migration, people have moved more from different parts of the world to other parts.¹⁰ Religion and religious beliefs have also been diversified that today in the world there exists thousands of deities affiliated to different people.¹¹

Religious Diversity and social integration in Pakistan

Many scholars in sociological sciences have written about the influence of religion as a factor of social integration, with many citing the positive effects of religion. Pakistan can be recognized as a pluralistic country consisting of diverse religious, sectarian and ethnic linguistic groups. The country has most Muslims, which is 96.47%

of its 207.7% million inhabitants.¹² However, the Muslim population belongs to many ideological groups. Muslims are belonging to different sects like Sunni, Shia, Deoband, Salafi and Zikri and Sunnis are the majority among other all sects. In 1974, the National

Assembly of Pakistan declared Ahmadis (also known as Radian's) as a non-Muslim minority. There are many Christian sects, Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindus, Jains, Kalasha, Parsis, Sikhs, and schedule casts identified as non-Muslim Pakistanis.¹³

Religion	Total	All Areas %
Muslim	200,362,718	96.47
Christian	2,642,048	1.27
Hindu	3,595,256	1.73
Qadiani/Ahmadi	191,737	0.09
Schedule Cast	849,614	0.41
Others	43,253	0.02
Total	207,684,626	100

Table 1: Statistics of Religious Minorities in Pakistan (2017 Census)

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, while addressing the First Constituent Assembly of Pakistan said:

“You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in the State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State. Now, I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not so in the religious sense because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state”.¹⁴

Jinnah enthusiastically started building infrastructure for the new country. Although Pakistan was made especially for Muslims, Jinnah continued to declare tolerance for all religions. This pluralistic

sentiment was recognized in the 1949 "Resolution of Objectives" designed to guide drafts of Pakistan's first constitution. Being a state Pakistan has a long history of constitutional development. Religious minorities within Pakistan's territory have always been promised fortification with equal fundamental rights guaranteed, whether it is resolution objectives (1949) or the three following constitutions (1956, 1962, and 1973).¹⁵

One of the important aspects of this religious and cultural and historical background of Pakistan is that for all these reasons, some people belonging to minority religions also joined Muslims. After the becoming of Pakistan, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Bahais and other religions played an extraordinary role in the stability of this state. In the construction and development of Pakistan, religious minorities

are walking shoulder to shoulder with the majority of Muslims. Pakistan is a unique country in terms of the statistical division of believers of different religions. That is why Pakistan is the most suitable and ideal country for religious diversity and social integration. But sometimes hear some complaints about extremist elements. Sometimes places of worship are attacked, religious prejudices are displayed, misunderstandings about other religions are met with irresponsible reactions, which must be controlled.

Religious Freedom Under Pakistan's Penal Code

Pakistan's Penal Code has several sections that relate to this debate.¹⁶ The original Penal Code, which was prepared by the British, had four sections (articles 295 to 298) relating to religious freedom.¹⁷ The remaining parts were incorporated by the amendment in the military tenure of General Zia in the 1980s. These parts added through November 1985 were included during the martial law period, while the other parts were later introduced by the civilian government which later came into existence during the same General Zia era. Before examining these varied provisions, it is useful to explain what they include:

Article 295. To harm or defile places of worship with the intention of insulting the religion of any class and to punish two years.

Article 295A. Intentional/malicious acts that provoke the religious sentiments of others to the punishment of ten years.

Section 295B. Desecration of Holy Quran: to

Punishment of life imprisonment-

Section 295C. Use of derogatory words regarding the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) to Punishment for death or life imprisonment.

Section 296. Disturbing religious gathering to Punishment of one year.

Section 297. Desecration or disrespect at burial sites to Punishment of one year.

Section 298. Speaking of words that hurt religious sentiments to punishment of one year.

Article 298A. Use of derogatory remarks about holy beings to the punishment of three years.

298B article. Misuse of the al-qa'baat or al-qa'baat of the holy people to punishment of Three years.

Section 298C. Qadiani (Ahmadi) group who claim to be Muslims to Sentence of three years.

In Article 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan (1973) discussed: " all citizens are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection of the law." As per Article 26 discussed that (1) 'No citizen shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, caste, sex, residence etc. In connection with access to public places or resorts. Similarly, In Article 27 discusses that (1) provides protection against discrimination based on religion. On appointment to the service of Pakistan

if it is otherwise eligible". In Article 36 of the Constitution protects minorities and says that "The state will protect the legitimate rights and interests of minorities, including their proper representation in federal and provincial services'.

The minority-majority relationship in Pakistan can be seen in two ways. First, the majority want to integrate minorities on their own terms, while on the contrary minorities want to maintain their cultural, religious and racial uniqueness. Also, historical heritage is still important because Muslim-Christian relations are made up of two stories. One is related to the concepts of Christians in Islam and the other to the perseverance of caste biases in Pakistan which are linked to the pre-partition caste structure.¹⁸

Muslims will be able to organize their lives individually and collectively according to the teachings and requirements of Islam, as described in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, and appropriate arrangements will be made for minorities to freely claim and practice and develop their religion. Their cultures. Article 20 of the 1973 Constitution contains the following important provision on religious freedom: "Subject

to law, public order and ethics, (a) every citizen shall have the right to claim, practice and preach his religion. And (b) every religious sect. And this sect will have the right to establish, maintain and manage their religious institutions.¹⁹

Conclusion:

This constitutional fortification covers all the practices that a certain religious class considers to be part of their faith. With facts about religious freedom that have been discussed, there are generally many insights about Pakistan's level of religious freedom. First, many believe that Pakistan is a country that has sharia supremacy because Pakistan was created for Muslims of the subcontinent and because Pakistan is constitutionally declared as an Islamic state. This belief is erroneous. Despite recent judicial efforts to make Pakistan Islamic, Pakistan is basically "secular" in character. This only strong feeling constantly forces the religious political parties of the country to insist that the government is not taking adequate steps to achieve the goal of making Pakistan Islamic.²⁰

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