

Socio-Political Challenges To Religious Minorities In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa A Case Study Of Sikh, Hindu And Christians

Gohar Ali shah¹, Dr. Fakhr-ul-Islam²

*PhD Scholar Pakistan study Centre, University of Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan
Director Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, Pakistan.*

Abstract

The diverse richness of Pakistan is magnificently complemented by its religious minorities, who enjoy equal rights and privileges. A lot of work has been done to overcome the problems faced and to uplift the living standards and participation of minority communities in Pakistan, however the way to justice is quite long and it needs continuous efforts. Steps have been made by the majority and minority stakeholders, as well as the government of Pakistan in eradication of issues within the minority communities. But there is still long journey to incircle the issues and problems of religious minorities in the country. This research is carried out to find the challenges faced by religious minorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Keywords: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, minorities, Sikhs, Hindus, Christian, politics, culture, constitution, and representation

Introduction

The term “Minority” has been defined differently by different scholars and writers.

Panday has defined minority as “a group of people having a sense of separate identity and they are aware of status apart from a larger group of which it forms”. (Panday, 1997). Due to separate identity and lesser in number these people are unable to get their due share and rights owing to it they are found backward and undeveloped. For getting their genuine rights they struggle, strive and crawl on their bellies for their protection in a country. Further, Sen has defined the term religious minority saying: “A group of persons differentiating themselves in religion from majority of the population in a certain country” (Sen, 1940)

Minorities are categorized as religious, linguistic, ethnic etc. The protection of culture and religion of minorities is the responsibility of the state as declared by the international law. For the protection of rights United Nation has adopted the universal declaration of Human Rights 1948 throughout the world without and discrimination.

Basic human rights evolved with the development of human being on the surface of earth. For every human being to live a peaceful life those rights are essential. Due to constant and continuous struggle those rights were incorporated in almost every constitution of the

world. These fundamental rights are of paramount importance to lead a decent and reasonable life. Scholars and thinkers claim that these rights are natural and nature has bestowed it upon every person on the surface of earth without any discrimination. No state, government or religious monarch has devised or originated them; those rights are simply inherited from the nature. (Hamidullah, 1987).

Islam guarantee the rights of an individual keeping the dignity of man on priority. As Islam considered man as the crown of all creations, a number of verses in Quran and sayings of Prophet (PBUH) throw light on the importance and significance of human rights.

Islam is a universal religion which emphasized on equality of rights and shows no discrimination on the basis of colour, language and race. Islam has abolished discrimination among the communities of a society. The religion has given each and every one full freedom to live their lives freely and to practice their religion without any fear and trouble.

Quran says “There is no compulsion in religion.” (Quran, 2: 256).

Furthermore, The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has also preached the equality as he said: “Whoever oppresses a non-Muslim subject or taxed him beyond his capacity, and then I shall be the opposite party to him in the litigation on Doomsday.” (Hamidullah, 1987).

Pakistan was founded on the basis of Islam and majority of the citizens are Muslims but non-Muslims are also there. The religious minorities of Pakistan were anxious about their future in the state which was based on Islam. The founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam was aware of the fact that's way he addressed the First Constituent Assembly with special attention on religious minorities.

“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 this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State”(Burke, 2000).

After becoming an independent state Pakistan adopted the act of 1935 as an interim constitution. The task of framing a new constitution was given to the first constituent assembly. In this regard the constituent assembly framed the first draft in the name of Objective Resolution in 1949. The Objective Resolution was considered as the foundation stone for the future constitution of Pakistan. In objective resolution the fundamental rights and especially the rights of minorities were guaranteed.

The resolution has guaranteed to practices their religious activities and government took the responsibility of their interests and protection. Minorities were also guaranteed to server the state and can enter any services in the country. The processes of designing constitution was started after presenting Objective Resolution. Number of committees was established for the purpose. The most important among them was Basic Principles Committee, consisting of twenty-four members, headed by the then prime minister. Committee for the matters related to minorities and fundamental rights was established on August 12, 1947. The committee proposed the minorities rights which was incorporated in the first constitution of Pakistan. (Hamid khan, 2014)

The Constitution of 1956 guarantees the fundamental rights to every citizen of the state irrespective of religion, cast and colour but in 1958 the constitution was abrogated and a new constitution was enforced in 1962. In the second constitution the fundamental rights were missing later on it was included through amendment. Like 1956 constitution this constitution was also abrogated in 1969. The third constitution that was of 1973 guaranteed all the fundamental rights to the

Muslims with minorities rights to the non-Muslims. (Hamid khan, 2014)

The constitution of 1973 was enforced on August 14, 1973 having 280 articles and 6 schedules. Fundamental rights were given to the citizen of Pakistan under article 9, 14, 15,16,17,19, and 20 without any discrimination. While article 11, 25, 26, and 27 gives equality to all the citizen of the state before law irrespective of religion, sex, cast and race.” (Gankovsky, Moskalanko, 1978). Article 260 (3) (b) of the 1973 constitution recognized the religious minorities of Pakistan are; Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Ahmadi's, and Bahia's. These minorities are consisting of almost 4 percent of the total population of the state. (2017 census). For the protection of religious minorities “Ministry of Minorities” was established in 2004 and handed over to provincial government after 18th amendment of the constitution. (Children of Minorities..., 2014).

Despite all the insurance to minorities in the country they still face difficulties and issues in everyday life. Some scholars and writers are of the view that minorities are facing issues in educational institutions, their work places, getting jobs and main hurdles in social constraints. Although the constitution has guaranteed the rights of minorities, yet they have to deal with troubles in everyday life due to some loopholes in the constitution and social pressure.

The function of the study is to carry out those loopholes and the social pressure due to which the minorities are facing hurdles in their social and political life in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As minorities in Sind and Punjab are facing force conversion, forced marriages and other issues in their social life.

Conceptual framework

7P's Model of life satisfaction of religious minorities

JAN ALAM (2020) in his article “7P's of life-satisfaction: a social constructionist model for the life satisfaction of religious minority groups in Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan)” had developed a comprehensive model of 7P's for the life satisfaction of religious minorities in district of Kohat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The model of “7P's is adopted in this research for finding the socio-political status of religious minorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa”

Model	Variables	Indicators
7P's of socio- political status of religious Minorities	Peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of violence • Acceptance of others' beliefs • Unity
	Prerogatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberty from oppression • Exemption from subordination • Freedom of choice
	Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Business • Welfare • Education • Religious freedom
	Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational • Economic • Politics
	Positivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation • Participation • Pluralism • Comfort
	Pleasures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratification • Norms
	Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values • Laws • Policing"

A questionnaire based on the above model was distribute among the minorities groups for finding the challenges faced by religious minorities of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa. The correspondent for questionnaire was selected all over the province.

Crosstab									
1 Religious minority are forced to leave their religion and become a Muslim									Total
				Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly disagree	Strongly agreed	
Religion	Christian	Count	2	23	18	36	36	4	119
		% of Total	.6%	6.8%	5.3%	10.6%	10.6%	1.2%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	0	6	51	32	12	10	111
		% of Total	.0%	1.8%	15.0%	9.4%	3.5%	2.9%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	2	12	45	26	23	2	110
		% of Total	.6%	3.5%	13.2%	7.6%	6.8%	.6%	32.4%
Total		Count	4	41	114	94	71	16	340
		% of Total	1.2%	12.1%	33.5%	27.6%	20.9%	4.7%	100.0%

Crosstab								
2 A member of a minority group can openly depict himself/herself as a follower of his/her particular religion in society.								Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly disagree	Strongly agreed	
Religion	Christian	Count	74	16	4	4	21	119
		% of Total	21.8%	4.7%	1.2%	1.2%	6.2%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	50	53	4	2	2	111
		% of Total	14.7%	15.6%	1.2%	.6%	.6%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	47	38	17	2	6	110
		% of Total	13.8%	11.2%	5.0%	.6%	1.8%	32.4%
Total		Count	171	107	25	8	29	340
		% of Total	50.3%	31.5%	7.4%	2.4%	8.5%	100.0%

Crosstab							
"4 Members of a minority group feel threatened while visiting the worship places of their particular faith.							Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly agree	
Religion	Christia n	Count	34	40	19	26	119
		% of Total	10.0%	11.8%	5.6%	7.6%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	38	59	8	6	111
		% of Total	11.2%	17.4%	2.4%	1.8%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	10	61	21	18	110
		% of Total	2.9%	17.9%	6.2%	5.3%	32.4%
Total		Count	82	160	48	50	340
		% of Total	24.1%	47.1%	14.1%	14.7%	100.0%

Crosstab							
5 The government caters to your needs as much as they do to followers of other religions.							Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly agree	
Religion	Christian	Count	61	22	15	21	119
		% of Total	17.9%	6.5%	4.4%	6.2%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	65	27	13	6	111
		% of Total	19.1%	7.9%	3.8%	1.8%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	47	36	11	16	110
		% of Total	13.8%	10.6%	3.2%	4.7%	32.4%
Total		Count	173	85	39	43	340
		% of Total	50.9%	25.0%	11.5%	12.6%	100.0%

Crosstab							
6. The perception that minorities face faith-based persecution in day-to-day life is correct.							Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly agree	
Religion	Christian	Count	41	25	12	41	119
		% of Total	12.1%	7.4%	3.5%	12.1%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	4	80	19	8	111
		% of Total	1.2%	23.5%	5.6%	2.4%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	22	53	19	16	110
		% of Total	6.5%	15.6%	5.6%	4.7%	32.4%
Total		Count	67	158	50	65	340
		% of Total	19.7%	46.5%	14.7%	19.1%	100.0%

Crosstab								
7 Minorities can easily participate in weddings or other family functions of followers of other religions in their locality, and vice versa.								Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly Disagree	Strongly agree	
Religion	Christian	Count	61	10	15	2	31	119
		% of Total	17.9%	2.9%	4.4%	.6%	9.1%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	82	0	10	6	13	111
		% of Total	24.1%	.0%	2.9%	1.8%	3.8%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	48	26	6	2	28	110
		% of Total	14.1%	7.6%	1.8%	.6%	8.2%	32.4%
Total		Count	191	36	31	10	72	340
		% of Total	56.2%	10.6%	9.1%	2.9%	21.2%	100.0%

Crosstab								
9. As a member of a minority group, you face some particular social, economic, and political problems which followers of other religions in your neighborhood do not face.								Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	
Religion	Christian	Count	59	30	14	6	10	119
		% of Total	17.4%	8.8%	4.1%	1.8%	2.9%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	36	61	6	2	6	111
		% of Total	10.6%	17.9%	1.8%	.6%	1.8%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	38	12	40	4	16	110
		% of Total	11.2%	3.5%	11.8%	1.2%	4.7%	32.4%
Total		Count	133	103	60	12	32	340
		% of Total	39.1%	30.3%	17.6%	3.5%	9.4%	100.0%

Crosstab							
10. The opinion of a minority group gets weightage in political issues.							Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly agree	
Religion	Christian	Count	61	33	11	14	119
		% of Total	17.9%	9.7%	3.2%	4.1%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	57	42	10	2	111
		% of Total	16.8%	12.4%	2.9%	.6%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	31	28	12	39	110
		% of Total	9.1%	8.2%	3.5%	11.5%	32.4%
Total		Count	149	103	33	55	340
		% of Total	43.8%	30.3%	9.7%	16.2%	100.0%

Crosstab							
12 For minorities, the education curriculum is fair and provides an accurate account of the history of followers of all faiths							Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Op	Strongly agree	
Religion	Christian	Count	41	29	35	14	119
		% of Total	12.1%	8.5%	10.3%	4.1%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	19	31	42	19	111
		% of Total	5.6%	9.1%	12.4%	5.6%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	48	21	25	16	110
		% of Total	14.1%	6.2%	7.4%	4.7%	32.4%
Total		Count	108	81	102	49	340
		% of Total	31.8%	23.8%	30.0%	14.4%	100.0%

Crosstab								
15. Minorities are satisfied with the behavior of police in the police station								Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	
Religion	Christian	Count	30	20	51	6	12	119
		% of Total	8.8%	5.9%	15.0%	1.8%	3.5%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	68	20	4	2	17	111
		% of Total	20.0%	5.9%	1.2%	.6%	5.0%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	29	16	10	22	33	110
		% of Total	8.5%	4.7%	2.9%	6.5%	9.7%	32.4%
Total		Count	127	56	65	30	62	340
		% of Total	37.4%	16.5%	19.1%	8.8%	18.2%	100.0%

Crosstab								
16 Minorities experience problems in business and other transactions with followers of other religions.								Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	
Religion	Christian	Count	33	57	2	4	23	119
		% of Total	9.7%	16.8%	.6%	1.2%	6.8%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	58	33	12	2	6	111
		% of Total	17.1%	9.7%	3.5%	.6%	1.8%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	10	43	6	20	31	110
		% of Total	2.9%	12.6%	1.8%	5.9%	9.1%	32.4%
Total		Count	101	133	20	26	60	340
		% of Total	29.7%	39.1%	5.9%	7.6%	17.6%	100.0%

Crosstab								
17., you see yourself as a subordinate to the majority in society								Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opini	Strongly agree		
Religion	Christian	Count	65	32	8	14	119	
		% of Total	19.1%	9.4%	2.4%	4.1%	35.0%	
	Hindu	Count	43	43	13	12	111	
		% of Total	12.6%	12.6%	3.8%	3.5%	32.6%	
	Sikh	Count	60	12	34	4	110	
		% of Total	17.6%	3.5%	10.0%	1.2%	32.4%	
Total		Count	168	87	55	30	340	
		% of Total	49.4%	25.6%	16.2%	8.8%	100.0%	

Crosstab								
18 Minorities can openly celebrate their cultural and religious festivities without any hindrance being caused by the larger cultural stream								Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	
Religion	Christian	Count	53	4	13	0	49	119
		% of Total	15.6%	1.2%	3.8%	.0%	14.4%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	55	11	2	4	39	111
		% of Total	16.2%	3.2%	.6%	1.2%	11.5%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	41	8	4	14	43	110
		% of Total	12.1%	2.4%	1.2%	4.1%	12.6%	32.4%
Total		Count	149	23	19	18	131	340
		% of Total	43.8%	6.8%	5.6%	5.3%	38.5%	100.0%

Crosstab								
"20 Minorities face some particular security and terrorism threats								Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	
Religion	Christian	Count	51	29	17	10	12	119
		% of Total	15.0%	8.5%	5.0%	2.9%	3.5%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	20	59	11	13	8	111
		% of Total	5.9%	17.4%	3.2%	3.8%	2.4%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	24	34	16	10	26	110
		% of Total	7.1%	10.0%	4.7%	2.9%	7.6%	32.4%
Total		Count	95	122	44	33	46	340
		% of Total	27.9%	35.9%	12.9%	9.7%	13.5%	100.0%

Crosstab								
21. There is a general perception that Being a minority, you face violence/trouble from the majority group.								Total
			Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	
Religion	Christian	Count	10	41	31	10	27	119
		% of Total	2.9%	12.1%	9.1 %	2.9%	7.9%	35.0%
	Hindu	Count	12	52	13	17	17	111
		% of Total	3.5%	15.3%	3.8%	5.0%	5.0%	32.6%
	Sikh	Count	14	54	8	2	32	110
		% of Total	4.1%	15.9%	2.4%	.6%	9.4%	32.4%
Total		Count	36	147	52	29	76	340
		% of Total	10.6%	43.2%	15.3%	8.5%	22.4%	100.0%

The above tables indicate that minorities in KP are very much satisfied from the behaviour of the Muslims. They face challenges in their day-to-day life but cannot confine to minorities. The Muslims too are facing a number of problems like terrorist activities, kidnapping etc.

From the above results it is clear that up to some extent the minorities are facing terrorism threats. Most of them are businessmen and government employees. Which leads to their weak economic status. 40% of the minorities are of the opinion that they are facing security and terrorist threats while the remaining are not agreed with statement and called them as a national issue not religious.

In addition to conducting a questionnaire, interviews were conducted with members of minority communities to identify the challenges they face in their daily lives. Representatives from the Sikh, Christian, and Hindu communities were interviewed to gain insight into their experiences and difficulties.

A number of Sikh and Hindu families living all over the province. The life style of the non-Muslims is quite different from that of Muslims.

The Sikh community living in the province are mostly engaged in small businesses, selling cosmetics, clothes, and computer and mobile phone accessories. Some Sikhs are also associated with Hikmat and Tibb, the traditional method of treating illnesses that they inherited from their forefathers.

Known for being extremely honest in their dealings, the Sikh businessmen have generally enjoyed the trust of the Muslims, even after the creation of Pakistan. However, according to Sardar Charanjeet Singh, a businessman and Sikh community leader, times are changing and now they are finding it hard to run their businesses. (Yusufzai, 2014)

“Many of us have had to change our business timings,” he explains. “We cannot open our shops at the regular hours like the others due to the fear of attacks. We open late and close early.”

It is a historical fact that the majority Muslim community often unanimously agreed to allow the government to award permits to sell essential food items to Sikh and Hindu shopkeepers at times of rationing in places like Battagram, as they could be trusted.

And yet, the Sikhs and Hindus continue to face harassment on religious grounds and other major problems. For example, in many instances their properties and places of worship have forcibly been seized. (Bakhtiar, 2021)

Rawail Chand Kakar, a Sikh businessman in Mardan, complained that a carpenter-cum-self-proclaimed religious preacher would pass insidious remarks whenever he walked past the shops owned by Sikhs. (Chand, 2022)

A local Sikh businessman Harmeet Singh told that a number of their relatives and family members are leaving the city to settle in Punjab “I know people who are preparing to shift their families and businesses to Punjab, as our community does not feel safe in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa anymore,” (Sing, 2022)

Some of the Minorities belonging to Sikhs community have left the province and have started their businesses in Rawalpindi and other cities of Punjab.

A number of well-off Hindus and Sikhs with professional skills are exploring the possibility of migrating to Canada and some to European countries. Dr Suresh Rajpal, a well-known orthopedic surgeon from Mardan moved to Canada.

A member of a Sikh family, who recently moved his family to Hassanabdal, where the Gurdwara Panja Sahib is located, told Newline that moving out of their ancestral city, Peshawar, was a difficult decision.

“Our women and children have already shifted to Hassanabdal with other family members,” he said on condition of anonymity. “We will also leave Peshawar once we have found a way of sorting out our businesses and property.” (Mahindarpal, 2022)

When Rawinder Singh a mobile shop keeper was asked about the shifting of their community to other city he replied that he and his family members don't feel any type of treats not their family had experienced such thing. Although some of them have faced such threats but it not because of religion and belief but because of their personal grudges with the Muslims and other communities. He said that a number of our Muslims brother also facing security threats. (Rawinder, 2023)

An interview with Rafial Yousef (Christian) told that my great father shifted to Peshawar back in 1951. From that date till now we have not experienced any experience

of threat nor any member of our family have faced any discrimination being minorities. (Yousaf, 2023)

Javeria Javid Masih, Javid Masih, Ravinder sing, Jaspreet khor, Imran Danish and Harleen Tabassum were of the view that we have not faced such situation in our life. The Muslims of the province give respect to all the minorities. Although some of our relatives and friends are leaving the country not because of force conversion or violence on the basis of particular religion. the main reason of leaving the country is economy and low income of the people. (Javeria, 2022)

The interview with Kuldeep Singh sheds light on the challenges faced by the Sikh community in KP, particularly in relation to terrorism, targeted killings, and restrictions on carrying the kirpan. (a ceremonial steel sword). (Sing k. , 2022)

It is indeed distressing to hear that members of the Sikh community have been victims of violence, and that the perpetrators have not been apprehended thus far. The government's failure to develop a viable strategy for the protection of Sikh community members is a serious concern. Ensuring the safety and security of all citizens, regardless of their religious or ethnic background, is a fundamental responsibility of the government. (Sing k. , 2022)

Regarding the issue of carrying the kirpan, it is an important article of faith for Sikhs and holds great religious significance. However, it is understandable that there may be security concerns in certain environments, such as government offices and other public places. Balancing religious freedom and security measures can be a complex task, requiring careful consideration of various factors. (Harpreth, 2022)

To address these issues, it is crucial for the Sikh community to engage in dialogue with the government and relevant authorities. They should highlight the challenges they face, including the specter of terrorism and targeted killings, while also expressing their religious obligations and the importance of carrying the kirpan. (Rajinder, 2022)

Graveyard for minorities

One of the main issues in minority communities of the province is the of lack of graveyards for some communities. The lack of graveyards for certain minority communities in Peshawar is indeed a significant issue that needs to be addressed. Despite the government's allocation of funds in the Annual

Development Program (ADP) over the past few years, the problem still persists. Hindu and Sikh communities have been forced to perform their funeral ceremonies in Attock, which is a considerable distance from Peshawar, resulting in financial burdens for the families.

Haroon Kumar, a Hindu businessman, told that it is a religious obligation for children below the age of 15 to be buried like Muslims. In order to fulfill this religious requirement, the Hindu community requires a dedicated graveyard. It is unfortunate that despite a meeting between one of the community leaders and the relevant officials, no action has been taken to address this issue thus far. (Haroon, 2022)

Similarly, the Christian, Rajpoot Society, and Balmekee communities are also demanding a separate graveyard. The existing graveyards are insufficient, and there are concerns about maintenance and security. While the local government has made efforts to purchase land for new graveyards, it is challenging to find suitable locations within residential areas due to security reasons and the need for privacy during funeral ceremonies.

Filmily Law

During an interview with Akash Kumar the member of Hindu community said that the constitution has provided rights for minorities; however, certain minority groups, such as Hindus, still face a lack of fundamental rights. Specifically, there is no specific marriage law catering to the needs of Hindus in Pakistan. As a result, they continue to follow their traditional customs for marriage and divorce. To address this issue within the community, customary law has been practiced, but efforts have been made by inter-community groups to legislate marriage and divorce laws. Unfortunately, no tangible progress has been achieved thus far in resolving these problems. To bring about lasting change and ensure legal recognition among the Hindu community, an inclusive intra-community dialogue is necessary. Additionally, legislation should be promptly enacted to devise a mechanism for marriage registration, without any further delay. (Akash, 2023)

Blasphemy law

Interviewing a religious scholar from minority (not showing his name) told that Pakistan's blasphemy laws have been a subject of concern when it comes to their impact on religious minorities in the country. The blasphemy laws in Pakistan, criminalize acts or

statements deemed blasphemous, with severe penalties including imprisonment and, in some cases, the death penalty. These laws have often been criticized for being misused to target religious minorities, particularly Christians, Sikh, and Hindus. False accusations or the mere perception of blasphemy can lead to mob violence, vigilante justice, and persecution against individuals belonging to minority communities.

Religious minorities in Pakistan often face the risk of being accused of blasphemy due to personal disputes, property disputes, or as a result of religious intolerance. The laws are seen as a tool for settling personal vendettas or inciting violence against minority groups.

The consequences for those accused of blasphemy can be severe. Even if acquitted by the courts, individuals may still face threats, social ostracism, and violence from extremist elements in society. In some cases, those accused of blasphemy have been killed extrajudicially, either by mobs or by individuals taking the law into their own hands. (Anonymous, 2023)

Gender Balance Representation

Equality between the rights of women and men is an aspect of human reality and not just a condition to be achieved for the common good. The province of KPK as per its culture has been supporting less participation of women in every field of community life. And this fact cannot be denied that in every society minority community always gets affected by the way of living and priorities of majority population. While analyzing the role of women in the upliftment and progress of the community life, results are not very positive and women participation is very low. Minority women are mostly high school graduates or bachelor degree holders; whereas very few of them opt for higher studies. This reality contributes to the fact that majority of women in Minority Communities avail the jobs of teaching, working in parlors, and nursing in hospitals; where they feel more secure from harassment at work place and the fear of forced conversion. Despite the fact that during last few years many young girls are trained and encouraged by some stakeholders to participate in decision making process and represent their communities at different platforms, so they may be able to avail other fields of job opportunities; yet there is no political representation in KP government and presence of women in policy making procedure is nil

Limited access to perfectional education

Members of the minority community told the minority Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and others have very limited

access to medical and engineering universities and colleges of the province and government jobs. Jamat-e-Islami (JI) provincial wing minority General Secretary (GS) Javed Gill told this scribe that the provincial government should have proper resolution on the floor of the provincial assembly, raised the decade long one per cent quota to at least five per cent if not more in the “Naya Khyber Pakhtunkhwa” at all professional and vocational training institutes and all government sector jobs in KP. (Khan J. , 2018)

“It is the need of the hour that a minority commission constituted in KP which shall undertake the challenges and hardships faced by the minorities across the province. This commission should also fight the legal battle of the Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and other minorities,” (Gill, 2022)

Niqash Bhatti, a lecturer at the Government Commerce College Kohat said that education department had announced more than 300 Senior School Teacher (SST) vacancies in the province but not a single seat was reserved for the minorities under the current one percent quota.

“Even according to the insufficient one per cent quota, at least three senior school teachers should be employed from the minority community. However, none of the 300 advertised posts were reserved for minorities,” (Bhatti, 2023).

He added that the Public Service Commission advertised multiple vacancies but again the percentage of minorities is 3 % which is increased to 5% for the minorities. “Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan all have given five per cent representation to minority communities in government jobs except KP. This gives a clear impression of biasness against the minorities in the province,” the lecturer said.

He said that successive governments at central and provincial levels never raised their voices for the rights of the minorities and at times they tried to be usurpers for the lesser groups of population against their rightful quota. (Bhatti, 2023)

Another Christian representative, Atif Bhatti shared that around 50 missionary schools of the province provided standard education to the youth of KP but it was difficult for students coming from the minority sections to get higher education from well reputed professional institutes like the Khyber Medical College (KMC) and University of Engineering and Technology (UET) as

they were put against an overwhelming majority when it came to the limited number of seats in such institutions. (Atif, 2023)

“There should be a quota system for the minority students, under which they could join well known educational institutes with relative ease. The minority students should be allowed to compete among themselves for a bigger number of seats under a new quota system instead of the current one per cent system,” Jacob added. He also revealed that KP Assembly has no representation of minority women which indicate the suffering of the community in government institutes and jobs.

“There are 50,000 registered minority voters in the province but they have no adequate representation in the provincial assembly. (Jacob, 2022)

Conclusion

After the creation of Pakistan, it was believed that the fate of minorities in new state will be at worst position. Although minorities in the state were secured with their rights in the constitution but still, they are facing some issues. Off all the provinces KP is considered as the hippest and safe area for the minorities. Though there are some issues faced by the Minorites in political representation, educational instruction, jobs opportunities. but the positive point is that a number of minorities are happy and satisfied with the behaviour of Muslims. No non-Muslim in the province is forced to convert to Islam nor any female is forced to marry Muslim. Politically minority are at low level it because of its number. All most everywhere politicians focused majority for their popular votes keeping aside the minority. Now it's the duty of government to facilitate the minorities in every field of life and also to restore the joint electorate of minorities so that they can enjoy their political position and values.

Bibliography

Akash. (2023, april 11). socio political status of religious minorities in KP. (g. a. shah, Interviewer)

Alam, j. (2020). 7P's of life-satisfaction: a social constructionist. HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES COMMUNICATIONS, 5.

Anonymous. (2022, february 16). challanges to religious minorities in KP. (G. A. Shah, Interviewer)

Bakhtiar, M. (2021). Mardan city a happy pocket for religious minorities. Peshawar.

Burke, S. (2000). Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-1948. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Chand, R. (2022, december 29). socio political challanges to religious minorities in Kp. (g. a. shah, Interviewer)

Constitution. (1973). The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Islamabad.

Hamidullah, M. (1987). Muslim Conduct of State. Lahore: Noor sons Publishers.

Haroon, K. (2022, march 22). socio political status of religious minorities in KP. (g. a. shah, Interviewer)

Harpreth. (2022, june 10). socio political challanges to religious minorities in KP. (G. a. shah, Interviewer)

Javid, J. M. (2023, march 27). socio political challanges to religious minorities in KP. (G. a. shah, Interviewer)

Khan, H. (2014.). Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Kor, K. (2021). Minorities Challenged Way Forward. Peshawar: Khwendo Kor.

Mahindarpal. (2022, March 19). challanges to religious minorities in KP. (G. A. Shah, Interviewer)

Pandey, R. (1997). Minorities in India-protection and welfare. New Delhi: APH Publication Corporation.

Rajinder. (2022, december 22). challanges to religious minorities. (g. a. shah, Interviewer)

Sen, D. (1940). The Problem of Minorities. Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press.

- Sing, H. (2022, march 18). challanges to religious minorities in KP. (G. A. Shah, Interviewer)
- Sing, k. (2022, march 17). socio political status of religious minorities in KP. (g. a. shah, Interviewer)
- Yousaf, R. (2023, february 12). socio political status of religious minorities in KP. (g. a. shah, Interviewer)
- Yusufzai, A. (2014, october). Minorities in KP: State of Fear. Retrieved from newslinemagazine: <https://newslinemagazine.com/magazine/minorities-in-kp-state-of-fear/>
- Zaigham, N. (2009). Report on issues faced by minorities in Pakistan. Islamabad: South Asians for