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## Minority Identities, Citizenship, and Social Affiliation in Pakistan

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### Abstract

In terms of religion, Pakistan has followers of different religion and religious beliefs as approximately 5% of its population are associated with religion other than Islam. Reportedly, religious minorities in Pakistan have a mixed of experiences with regard to social adjustment, identity and cultural assimilation with the local majority Muslim population. Various reports and research conducted on religious minorities in Pakistan portray a different story and experiences. The present study focuses on the issues of social adjustment, identity and nationalist tendencies of religious minorities in Pakistan. The objective of this research was to highlight the problems of social adjustment, identity and their social acceptance by the local inhabitants. In order to achieve our research objective and find answers to our research questions, primary sources of information in the form of Semi Structured Interviews (SSI) were designed for data collection.

**Keywords:** *Minority, Identities, Pakistan, Social adjustment*

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## 1. Introduction

Minority is a group of people which co-exists with the larger population in any given area who are viewed as culturally, socially, ethnically and racially distinct from the dominant group. Likewise, religious minority is a group of people who possess and holds different religious beliefs with lower socio-economic position and statistically lesser in number to the larger of the population of the given territory. These minority groups are having a strong sense of solidarity that are also committed to preserve their religious beliefs, cultural values and norms (Bhatti, 2008).

Pakistan is an immensely plural country characterized by religious, sectarian, and ethno-linguistic diversities. It is an overwhelmingly Muslim community with more than 90% of its 142 million inhabitants adhering to Islam, yet they belong to several doctrinal groups. Sunni Muslims is in the ascendant, with Shia Muslims and Zikris facing discrimination. In 1974, the Pakistani National Assembly declared Ahmadis also called Qadianis a non-Muslim minority (Akhtar, 1997).

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Pakistani minorities consist of Ahmadis, Bahais, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Kalasha (of Chitral), Parsis and Sikhs. Except for the Ahmadis, they all agree on their being non-Muslim. Within these communities there are caste-based, class-based and denomination-based divisions, along with age, ethnic, gender, rural and urban distinctions. Any superficial categorization is open to dispute. For example, among the 4% of the Pakistani population who are Christian, there is an almost 50-50 divide between the Catholic and the Protestant denominations. Cities like Peshawar, and areas of Bahawalpur, Hyderabad, Rawalpindi and Quetta, have always had a sizeable number of Christians engaged in various professions in the service sector. The church organization is very similar to other South Asian countries with a definite Pakistani cultural and linguistic embodiment, and there are converts, descendants of converts, Anglo-Indians/-Pakistanis, and Western missionaries. Hindus are equivalent in number to the Christians, with almost 4% of the population. There are several castes among the Hindus, besides ethnic diversity. Over 65% of the minority population are young people, and the average literacy rate in a few cases is higher than the national average; however, the other facts are not so pleasing. As already mentioned, for the smaller religious minority communities including Buddhists and Jains there are no statistics, and little reliable information. They are known to be tiny groups who prefer to remain out of the public eye (Samaddar, 2002).

Ahmadis have been the focus of attention due to the issue of their faith. Inter-marriage and open social interaction remain minimal. Many Ahmadis neither openly profess their identity nor congregate visibly, so as to avoid hostile attention. The Ahmadis are divided into the Lahori and Qadiani groups. Both the leadership London-based—and the elite of the movement are predominantly Punjabi, with smaller communities in other provinces. Most Ahmadis are from central Punjab but are scattered across towns and cities. After their designation as a non-Muslim minority, many moved to Europe and elsewhere, although their cultural, family and language links with the Punjab remain strong. Most of their propagation activities have shifted to the West. Their television programmes, largely beamed from London, in English, German, Urdu and other languages, generally center on religious issues, with Urdu programmers on Muslim Television Ahmadiyyas (MTA) focusing on the leader, Mirza Tahir Ahmad, and his teachings. Their publications view their designation as a minority as politically motivated. However, they do not dispute the claim of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the movement, to be the Messiah/Mahdi or Mehdi-i-Mauood (the promised prophet). Founded in 1889, the movement initially remained confined to the Punjab and some of its leaders, like Sir Zafrullah Khan, played a very important role in the freedom movement, but then the tables were turned on them with the demand to designate them as a minority.

The Sikhs are again mostly Punjabis with smaller traditional communities in Karachi and NWFP, present Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There are a few Sikhs in the tribal areas who are bilingual and have a close relationship with Sikhs in Afghanistan. During the Taliban's ascendancy, many Afghani Sikhs migrated abroad, with just a small number coming to Pakistan. The Sikhs remain reasonably secure compared with other religious communities, as most popular resentment is reserved for Christians and Hindus. Parsis are strictly an urban and entrepreneurial community based in Karachi and Lahore, with a few families in other major cities. Due to their strong commercial links, the non-evangelical nature of their faith and a steady outward migration to North America, the Parsis remain 'less visible' in Pakistan, and there are no reports of harassment or anger specifically directed against them. Some Parsis, like Bahram Avari, Bapsi Sidhwa, the Dinshaws, the Markers and the well-known columnist, Ardeshir Cowasjee, are national role models. The Bahais are, in general, converts and middle-class urbanites who publish magazines and books but keep a very low profile. The Bahai religion began in Iran (Persia) in the nineteenth century before spreading to South Asia. So far, they have escaped any collective anger from other majority communities due to their small number and limited activities.

The Kalasha of Chitral is an old community, who have always held a romantic fascination for the British and Pakistani popular media, and also for present-day anthropologists. There are various myths about their origins, including some regarding Greek ancestry. In the past they ruled Chitral, although now they live in three small, land-locked hamlets and are extremely poor. Since the late nineteenth century, Kalasha (locally called 'Kafirs' as well), have been under great pressure to convert to Islam. Their division by the Durand Line—the Pakistan-Afghan border—did not help. In the 1890s, Amir Abdur Rahman, the religious King of Kabul, forcibly converted many of the Afghan Kalasha to Islam. Some of them sought protection on the Pakistani side of the Line. Their isolated, mountainous region and way of life has protected them from outside influences. Their ever-dwindling number is around 3,000 and even national statistics tend to ignore them. However, the

tourist attraction of their valleys in the Hindu Kush, their gender-based equality and a growing accent on Islamic activism since the 1970s have put these small communities under a spotlight. The uniform school syllabus, and emphasis on Urdu and Arabic in the official schools in the valleys are barriers to Kalasha maintaining their own cultural identity. There have been reports of Kalasha women being kidnapped, and of forcible conversions (Malik, 2002).

Christians and Sikhs live predominantly in Punjab—just under 50% of Christians live in urban areas—and Hindus live mostly in rural Sindh, with smaller communities elsewhere. Many of the other smaller groups live in Karachi and Makran, although the Zikris, for example, are predominantly in south-western Balochistan where their spiritual centre, Koh-i-Murad, is located. However, they are becoming less visible, fearing that they will also be designated a ‘minority’, against their will. The Zikris of Balochistan a predominantly Baloch ethnic group in Makran and the adjoining areas—fear they will suffer the fate of the Ahmadis, as there are demands from certain groups for their designation as a non-Muslim minority. The Zikris are an under-researched community. However, many Baloch nationalist leaders and writers have expressed solidarity with the Zikris, considering them the ‘archetypal Baloch (Robertson, 1997).

The Zikris have generally subscribed to the idea of a revealed imam Mahdi (promised Messiah) and, while believing in all the basic tenets of Islam, they consider Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri, a contemporary of the Mughal Emperor Akbar in the sixteenth century, to be their Mahdi. According to them, the imam appeared on Koh-i-Murad, an arid hilltop near Turbat in Balochistan, where he performed religious and spiritual rites before disappearing in Afghanistan. Towards the end of Ramadhan (month of fasting), a huge assembly takes place at this hilltop to commemorate the occasion. This assembly is not a substitute for Hajj (Muslim pilgrimage to Arabia), and commercial and other activities are conducted in a traditional manner. They are called Zikris because they remember and constantly recite the names and attributes of God, either on an individual basis or collectively (Sisson and Rose, 1990).

Most Zikris are poor peasants or nomads who enjoy coming to Koh-i-Murad as others elsewhere enjoy visiting shrines. The number of Zikris is not known since they identify themselves as Muslims. It is estimated that there are several million living in Pakistan, India and Iran (the 4 million-strong Mahdawis in India are also deemed members of the Zikri community). In addition, there are huge Zikri communities in Karachi, Las Bela and Quetta. There are more Zikri Baloch in Karachi than anywhere else, but many have recently migrated for economic reasons, while staying in touch with their native Makran. The cultural and commercial significance of the Zikri festivals is considerable. Zikri intellectuals challenge Sunnis’ and others’ claims regarding their faith. However, their religious leaders – Malais—believe that the Zikri prayer is ‘a bit different than the others (Badalkhan, 2008).

## 2. Statistical profile of Minorities of Pakistan

Pakistan’s population is generally estimated to be c. 142 million, although according to the official census reports it is c. 137 million. According to the census of 1981, out of a total of 84,253,644, Muslims accounted for 81,450,057; followed by 1,310,426 Christians; and 1,276,116 Hindus. Ahmadis accounted for 104,244; Parsis 7,007; Buddhists 2,639; Sikhs 2,146; and ‘others’ 101,009. Because of a de-emphasis on family planning, and the arrival of millions of Afghans and some Iranian refugees, population growth within the country has been immense. In 1990, it was estimated that the minorities were 3.1% of the total population. According to these estimates, there were 1,769,582 Christians in Pakistan; 1,723,251 Hindus; 9,462 Parsis; 3,564 Buddhists; and 2,898 Sikhs, while the ‘others’ collectively were estimated to be 13,640. The total figure for the minority population was c. 3,663,167. Two years later, the aggregate figure stood at 4,267,463; with Christians and Hindus almost equal at 2,061,306 and 2,007,743, respectively. The Ahmadis, Parsis, Buddhists, Sikhs and others were estimated to be 163,982; 11,021; 4,150; 3,374; and 15,888, respectively (Abd al-Qader and Katz, 2018).

As per population census of 1998, the total population of Pakistan was 137 million. The Muslims were about 96%, while religious minorities were 4% of the total population. It is further divided in 1.69% Christians, but the number was debatable as Catholic Church of Pakistan has the record of birth contains higher than in the census, the figure by the Church normally quoted the Christian population in Pakistan as 2.5% to 3%. After the first 24 years of independence, the religious minorities in Pakistan constituted around 10% of the population

but after the separation of East Pakistan, the non-Muslim population reduced to less than 4% of the whole population of the country (Jivan and Jacob, 2012).

It is interesting to note that even the Parsis, despite some outward migration, had registered a slight increase. The census of 1998 showed the minorities nearing 11-13 million. Ahmadis, Christians, and Hindus claim to have a population of 4 million each. It is crucial, however, to note that, given the disadvantages and stigmatization, communities do not like to be identified as minorities so the above-mentioned figures may be an under-estimate, as some people may not have chosen to identify their ethnic or religious background. There are generally no population figures available for Pakistan's smaller minority communities.

### 3. Minorities in Pakistan

#### 3.1. Ahmadiyyas

Ahmadiyyas who claim to be Muslims are a relatively new religious minority. Mainstream Muslims—both Shia and Sunni—do not accept Ahmadiyyas within the fold of Islam. The controversy over the Ahmadiyya sect is about one hundred years old. At the turn of the twentieth century, Muslim cleric Mirza Ghulam Ahmad from Qadian in Punjab declared himself a new prophet of Islam. He made many other controversial assertions, such as the claim that he was Jesus Christ re-sent to reform the world. People generally regarded Ahmad as an insane person and ignored him. When the ranks of his followers began to swell in numbers, mainly after his death, the leaders of Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Hind (Association of Islamic Religious Scholars of India) took serious notice of the new prophet from Punjab. Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, a noted religious scholar, wrote one of the first comprehensive theses against the Ahmadiyyas sect in 1935. He declared Mirza Ghulam Ahmad a false prophet and an apostate and said any person who accepted him as a prophet, or even as a religious scholar, was a heretic liable to be stoned to death. After his decree a number of Ahmadiyyas were stoned to death in the NWFP. The Deobandi *ulema* (religious forefathers of the Taliban) launched a nationwide movement against the Ahmadiyyas by declaring them non-Muslims and barring them from using Islamic symbols.

After the creation of Pakistan, the anti-Ahmadiyyas push led by the Deobandi *ulema* built up a considerable head of steam, particularly in Punjab which had begun to emerge as the centre of Ahmadiyyas preaching. The Majlis-i-Ahrar (Council for Liberation) and the Majlis e Khatme Nabuwat (Council for the Finality of Prophethood) were at the forefront of this movement. They put forward three demands to the government in 1951 when the constitution of the country was being debated: that Ahmadiyyas be declared as non-Muslims in Pakistan's constitution; that Sir Zafarullah Khan, the first foreign minister of Pakistan, be removed from his position because he was an Ahmadiyyas; and that no Ahmadiyyas be allowed to retain any key position in the country because Pakistan is an Islamic state. So strong was the movement by this time that Mumtaz Daultana, a Muslim League leader and chief minister of Punjab, lent his patronage. Nevertheless, the central government remained unwilling to accede to its demands. Accordingly, the anti-Ahmadiyyas groups began to agitate in the streets of Lahore. The state of lawlessness and violence in 1953 provoked the first post-Independence imposition of martial law in the city, which curbed the movement's program for a time.

However, a more violent form of the controversy revisited the country in the early 1970s. Among the many controversies created by the Bhutto government, one of the most crippling was the move to declare the Ahmadiyyas sect 'non-Muslims' via constitutional amendment, which sparked pogroms in cities, towns, and villages across the country. Prominent Ahmadiyyas families were pounced on, their houses and places of business attacked. Suspected Ahmadiyyas were harassed and physically beaten; eventually some thousands were killed. Far from impeding this terror campaign, the government condoned it, and afterwards legitimated it by the Constitutional amendment by ordering the Ahmadiyyas' mosques to be closed, and by debarring them from holding congregational prayers and from worshipping in the Sunni manner. Finally, the government added the Ahmadiyyas to the list of official minorities along with Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs. This change required them henceforth to declare their status as 'Ahmadiyyas' in all official and legal documents.

These measures marked the beginning of official religious intolerance. Persecution of religious minorities—particularly against Ahmadiyyas—increased with the late General Zia ul-Haq's Islamisation project. A pervading sense of Islamic revival in the country fuelled to another anti-Ahmadiyyas wave around 1984. To

placate the religious Right of the country and keep them on his side of the country's political divide, Zia further amended the Pakistan Penal Code by adding sections 298-B and 298-C, which made it a criminal offence for Ahmadiyyas to pose as Muslims, to preach or propagate by words (either spoken or written) and to use Islamic terminology or Muslim practices of worship. Once again, the state took the lead in implementing the political agenda of the religious political parties. In doing so, Pakistan has ignored its commitments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and violated its social contract with the minorities that supported the Pakistan movement.

The wave of religious bigotry and extremism began with Zia courting the religious constituency for political support and legitimacy. The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan and the *mujahedeen* resistance based in Pakistan were also factors that influenced the growth of religious militancy. The flow of arms and money from the oil-rich Middle Eastern countries to the Islamic *madrassa* (religious school) network further contributed to the power and influence of religious organizations. Beyond that, the rise in Islamic radicalism has produced a widespread sense of exclusion, inferiority, discrimination and above all, insecurity and fear. Although, as noted above, Ahmadiyyas have faced hostility and exclusion for a long time, never were they subjected to mass killings until their declaration as non-Muslims in the early 1970s. And even after that brief but troublesome period, most Ahmadiyyas continued to live in harmony with their neighbors. Only in recent years has the plight of the Ahmadiyyas community become extreme (Mehmood, 2017).

### 3.2. Christian

Overall, minorities represent 8% of the total population. Pakistani minorities consist of Ahmadis, Bahais, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Kalasha (of Chitral), Parsis and Sikhs. Except for the Ahmadis, they all agree on their being non-Muslim. Within these communities there are caste-based, class-based and denomination based divisions; along with age, ethnic, gender, rural and urban distinctions. Any superficial categorization is open to dispute. For example, among the 4% of the Pakistani population who are Christian, there is an almost 50-50 divide between the Catholic and the Protestant denominations.

Cities like Peshawar and areas of Bahawalpur, Hyderabad, Rawalpindi and Quetta, have always had a sizeable number of Christians engaged in various professions in the service sector. The church organization is very similar to other South Asian countries with a definite Pakistani cultural and linguistic embodiment, and there are converts, descendants of converts, Anglo-Indians/-Pakistanis, and Western missionaries. Hindus are equivalent in number to the Christians, with almost 4% of the population. There are several castes among the Hindus, besides ethnic diversity. Over 65% of the minority population is young people, and the average literacy rate in a few cases is higher than the national average; however, the other facts are not so pleasing.

No other non-Muslim religious community has contributed more to the social sector development of Pakistan than the Christians have. Both missionaries and local members of the Christian community have built splendid educational institutions, hospitals and health facilities throughout the country. And they have remained peaceful even in the face of severe provocation, and have endured social discrimination and humiliation with grace and patience. But this stance has not brought them respite. Christians are the new target of terrorism in Pakistan. Lashkar-i-Jhangvi terrorists attacked a Sunday Mass service in the Dominican Church in Bahawalpur on 28 October 2001 and massacred twenty-nine worshippers. In February 2002 terrorists attacked a church mostly attended by foreigners in the diplomatic enclave in Islamabad. On 5 August 2002 militants attacked a Christian school in the Murree Hills, killing six teachers and students.

The state's declining capacity is part of the problem; while religious bigots have been preaching hatred and violence against minorities, the state has remained silent. Participatory politics and civic culture with a focus on citizenship rights have suffered gravely due to the repeated failure of the democratic process in Pakistan. In this democratic vacuum, religious extremism—riding on the wave of *jihād* in Afghanistan and with transnational connections with similar groups—has taken strong root in society. The war against the Taliban and al-Qaeda, along with President Pervez Musharraf's policies to root out religious extremism, have produced a new wave of anti-Western feelings. This sentiment, however, is not new. Thinkers such as Maulana Maududi and Sayyid Qutb of Egypt, the two most powerful Muslim ideologues of the late twentieth century, linked the cause of Islamic revival to the historical grievances of Muslims against Western colonialism and the need to cleanse the world of Western 'degeneracy' and 'barbarism'. This ugly and quixotic mission, most infamously

manifested in the killings of thousands of innocent people in New York and Washington DC on 11 September 2001 has, in Pakistan, underpinned attacks against foreigners and local Christians who are regarded by the extremists as an extension of Western religious influence (Mirza, 2021).

### 3.3. Sikhs and Hindus

The Sikhs are again mostly Punjabis with smaller traditional communities in Karachi and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There are a few Sikhs in the tribal areas who are bilingual and have a close relationship with Sikhs in Afghanistan. During the Taliban's ascendancy, many Afghani Sikhs migrated abroad, with just a small number coming to Pakistan. The Sikhs remain reasonably secure compared with other religious communities, as most popular resentment is reserved for Christians and Hindus. The presence of Hindus and Sikhs conjures the troubling history of violence connected with the communal 'cleansing' before, during and immediately after Partition. However, their presence also points to the deep and lasting spiritual and historical connections between local Hindu, Sikh and Sufi practices which evolved over centuries and still persist in today's Pakistan.

Muslim reformers since the colonial period have often attempted to 'purify' these practices and recover an 'original' and 'undiluted' Sufism which they see as being closer to its Islamic 'origin'. The presence of Hindus as guardians of Muslim shrines, and the joint celebrations of Hindus and Muslims who collectively participate in Sufi rituals and festivals at Sehwan Sharif in Sindh, for instance, resist such easy categorizations and challenge reformist impulses. As Jurgen Schaflechner elaborates in his article, Hindus in Pakistan display a firm grasp of their precarious situation in Pakistan. Attempting not to 'rock the boat' while also not being relegated to a status of passivity, they react to it through carefully calibrated 'wary and aware' practices. Beyond being an (uncomfortable) reminder of a shared past, or alternative possibilities of shared spaces, Christians, Hindus and Sikhs notwithstanding their small number constitute a further challenge. They symbolize the category of 'enemies from without' who present a threat of other allegiances towards the central idea around which Pakistan is constructed, such as a tenuous suppressed memory of colonialism and imperialism (in the case of Christians) or communalism (in the case of Sikhs and Hindus). Their continued existence could thus be seen as an 'intolerable deficit in the purity of the national whole' that has the potential to elicit the Muslim majority's 'rage'. This is the case because non-Muslim minorities frustrate the desire of Muslims in Pakistan to perceive themselves as 'a whole and uncontested ethnos' (Rai, 2021).

## 4. Issues Facing by Minorities in Pakistan

Despite the assurance of complete equal rights of minorities in Pakistan, they still face major issues in all walks of life. These minorities face tough issues to get a job, in educational institutions and face social constraints. Following are the major issues; minorities are facing in Pakistan.

### 4.1. Identity and Social Adjustment of Minorities

An individual's social identity indicates who they are in terms of the groups to which they belong. Social identity groups are usually defined by some physical, social, and mental characteristics of individuals. Examples of social identities are race/ethnicity, gender, social class/socioeconomic status, sexual orientation (dis) abilities, and religion/religious beliefs. Identity seems to play an important role in the lives of ethnic minority youth. A strong ethnic identity can function as a protective factor against discrimination and stigmatization. In a study with almost 8000 immigrants and national adolescents of 13 different countries, Phinney and Ong (2006) concluded that "adolescents with the integration profile show the most positive psychological and socio-cultural adaptation". Nevertheless, Gregory and Valentine (2009) quoted several studies showing no relation between the integration profile and several adaptation measures, such as marginality, school performance, self-esteem or depression, and cites other studies that show how assimilation or separation can be more beneficial than integration to immigrants and their children.

Phinney *et al.* (2001) pointed out that "school adjustment is regarded as the primary socio cultural and developmental task for children and adolescents," as immigrant families see schools "as avenues to future equal opportunities and mobility." There are several aspects of school life that may serve as indicators of adaptation levels to the host society among which school achievement is clearly a key variable. In addition,

Pfafferott and Brown (2006) showed how differences between attitudes held by minority adolescents and those perceived as held by the majority group were negatively correlated with various aspects of social adjustment like life satisfaction, perceived quality of intergroup relations or tolerance. On the theoretical level there are several potentially satisfactory explanations for minority underrepresentation in higher education. Structural theories, particularly those that posit an intricate relationship between education and the economy, argue that educational institutions serve to reproduce the existing social hierarchy. Far from being agents of "upward mobility," schools are instead gatekeepers of the status quo. For these theorists, the education that children receive corresponds to the work roles they will be assigned to perform as adults (Bowles and Gintis, 1976).

Working class children are taught different attitudes, values, and behavioral patterns than middle class children so as to prepare them for their different work roles. Minorities, being concentrated on the lower rungs of the social order, are not successful in higher education because their secondary school experiences were not those which instill the independence, autonomy, self-direction, abstract rewards, and tolerance of ambiguity taught in middle-class high schools that are necessary for successful functioning in the university. The actual process is rooted in the class-based structure of American education, where differential curricula, school quality and milieu, teacher quality and experience, residential segregation, standardized testing, tracking, and teacher expectations are all seen as working in conjunction with the hierarchical social relations of the classroom to insure that a stratified education is meted out (Dutot, 2013).

#### **4.2. Employment Issues**

Under the law and Constitution of Pakistan, getting employment in both public and private sectors is the basic right of every citizen, if they meet the merit. Although the Christians hold equal rights to apply for any job but the minority group thinks that are not being entertained because of their religious beliefs. One of the Christian respondents told the researcher that: "I applied for a job meeting the requirements and passed the written test but during interview, I was rejected just because I belonged to religious minority." According to Trim (2012), non-Muslims in Pakistan face structural obstacles and socio-political issues while seeking job. Although the Government of Pakistan has increased the non-Muslim quota up to 5% in jobs for educated religious minorities, but on many occasions they are exploited mainly due to smaller number of seats (Sheikh, 2010). Religious minorities in Pakistan are mostly employed in the brick, glass, fishing, carpet industries and agriculture (Singh, 2007).

#### **4.3. Social Exclusion**

The people belonging to religious minorities especially the Christians suffer social and economic exclusion, on the basis of "who you are". They are often treated as second class citizens as majority of the people of these minorities are considered as untouchables. This marginalization of these minorities in superior services also exists in the country (Khan, 2009). The Christian population is usually engaged in sanitary field including collecting the garbage and waste from homes and around the towns. The Christian sweepers are considered to be 'Polluted' and usually are called "Chura" means impure which is a major stigmatization in itself (Beall and Restall, 2000). Further, there are provocative posters in the markets, streets and shops against the religious minorities across the country (Malik, 2014).

#### **4.4. Religious Discrimination**

The minorities in Pakistan think that they have been severely discriminated and humiliated on base of their religious beliefs. As mentioned earlier, they are called 'Esai' and 'Chura' by the Muslim population which means polluted and impure and they are treated as lower class citizens. In his book Nazir S. Bhatti wrote: "The Christian leaders, the politicians and common are time and again attacked even killed by the religious extremist Muslims. Bishop John Joseph was killed because of his religious beliefs (Bhatti, 2007).

#### **4.5. Family and Personal Laws**

Still a Dream Theoretically, under the law and constitution of Pakistan all the citizens enjoy universal equal rights irrespective of their religion, language, gender or caste but practically specific personal and family laws for minorities in Pakistan are still a farfetched dream. Current, family laws about marriage and divorce for

Christians in Pakistan are not compatible with the present circumstances. The basic purpose of developing personal laws is to create a smooth and hormonal environment for all the religious minorities to follow and exercise their religious rituals and cultural practices. For the new law for the Christians in Pakistan, Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace (CCJP) has taken up the task to draft the family laws for the Christian community and to amend the current laws for minorities. In order to draft a law, CCJP has held focus group discussion to point out the thematic areas and finalize the articles of the laws. These focus groups comprise people from different fields of society including social activists, judges, lawyers, experts, scholars, community representatives and parliamentarians. The participants have emphasized on judicial process for the laws to be rapid, registration of the minority children, forced marriages, the age of marriage, religion to be taken as secular law. A committee of different religious scholars be formed and strong base for data collection of cases of minority rights violations should be maintained. Furthermore, the discussion for separate electorate has also been once again discussed by the minority groups. While talking at Karachi Press Club, the representative of Minorities Alliance Pakistan, Javaid Shameem, said: "We have been sidelined politically for a long time. We demand for a separate electorate for true representation in the Parliament".

#### **4.6. Social Integration of Minorities**

Ethnic minorities' social contacts with natives are thought to help them to integrate successfully into the host society both economically and culturally, and in terms of their acceptance (Heath *et al.*, 2008). These contacts can contribute to economic integration, for example, because natives are more likely to have the relevant resources with which to help ethnic minorities find a (better) job. In addition, social contact with natives provides opportunities to learn the host language. Finally, these social contacts help to increase tolerance and reduce prejudice which in turn facilitate a stronger sense of belonging to the host society. Given the importance of social contacts between ethnic minorities and natives, they have received a good deal of attention both from academics and in government policy. Many studies have also analyzed the determinants of these contacts. However, the general trend in social contacts between ethnic minorities and natives in the Netherlands over an extended period has been studied in less depth. While it is known that these contacts increase with the length of residence in the host country, it remains unclear whether they in general also increase over time. Classic assimilation theories and intergenerational cycle models stressed that integration is a time-consuming process that requires several generations. Ethnic minority groups will gradually become part of the host society, resulting in an increase in social contacts with natives.

Studies have repeatedly found evidence for this reasoning, showing that second-generation ethnic minorities and ethnic minorities who have spent longer in the host country had more social contacts with natives than those of the first generation or those who had lived in the host society for a shorter. If we relate these results to the increased share of second-generation ethnic minorities in the Netherlands, we may expect that ethnic minorities' social contacts with natives increase over time. Other individual factors that are thought to be important for the social contacts of ethnic minorities with natives are education level and labor market position. It is reasoned that, as ethnic minorities attain a higher level of education and a better labor market position, they gradually enter the social structure of the host society and thus have increasing social contact with natives. Over the last decade there has indeed been a notable improvement in the education level and labor market position of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. Although the market downturn in the early years of the twenty-first century impeded their labor market position, the share of ethnic minorities with a job is still greater than ten years ago and a substantial middle class has developed (Fielding and Hornsey, 2016).

### **5. Problems (Political Participation) Faced and Violation Against Minorities**

Women as a political minority in Pakistan also face more cultural barriers and restrictions that hinder their ability to step into the political arena, whether to exercise their fundamental right to vote and/or represent their countrymen and women. A very prominent belief in Pakistani society with regard to women is that of chadar aur chardivari. This phrase signifies place of honor is inside the four walls of home (chardivari); and when she must go out, she has to be wrapped from head to foot in a sort of winding sheet (chadar). The Aurat Foundation, following a series of workshops with women representatives in local constituencies, reported that some women faced resistance from their family members and acquaintances when considering participating in the local elections and training programmes. Moreover, even securing a seat in the local government was

not enough to guarantee a voice. The literacy rate for women in Pakistan stands a little over 36%. Many women who are elected to fill the 33% reserved seats at the local municipal level do not have sufficient educational skills to negotiate legislative procedures or analyze the annual budget, for example. Hence, a very serious obstacle to women with regard to the electoral process is the unequal access to education.

## 6. Conclusion

Pakistan is home to a wide variety of religions from throughout the world. Despite Pakistan's cosmopolitan heritage, cultural and religious diversity should not be a source of conflict amongst the country's various communities or religions. There is a dearth of religious tolerance in Pakistan today. Although Muhammad Ali Jinnah set the standard for Pakistan's founding, his vision of an inclusive nation stands in stark contrast to the country's contemporary reality. Extremism by extremist groups is exploiting minorities, and some members of society show enmity to religious minorities because of their religion.

Majority of the answers resulted that they do not face any problem; they are free to celebrate their festival and free to perform their religious obligations. The Muslim community treats them as part of their own community. The researcher asked question about Jobs opportunities, they replied that they are also getting into government job on special minorities quota easily.

This study concludes that although there are certain issues surrounding religious minorities in Pakistan however Islam's commitment to equality and fair treatment of minorities must be central to the lives of the Muslim majority. Diversity of religious belief and practice is a necessity in multicultural society. Some people may be more receptive to other religions' points of view if they've been introduced to them through other religious organizations. There is no community or government that has the right to restrict someone's freedom to practice their religion, which is an inalienable human right. Although minorities have few issues to be solve but still they are surviving in a good and peaceful way, if the government of Pakistan took attention towards their problem and tries to resolve them, there would be another kind of peace prevailing in the state.

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