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THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL AND DEMOGRAPHICS FACTORS ON RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE IN PAKISTAN

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Keywords: Religious intolerance; stratified random sampling; Inter and Intra-faith dialogue; Pakistan

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of socio-cultural and demographic factors on religious intolerance in Pakistan. The scale of religious intolerance is determined by the respondents' behavior, perception, willingness, attitude, experience, and variability in social and demographic background. A survey is conducted in the capital cities of Pakistan's four provinces. A stratified random sampling approach is used. A random sample of 350 respondents from the religious figure, media person, youth, and students from universities, colleges, and madrassas is selected from empirical analysis. 62% of respondents are found to be tolerant religiously. They have a positive attitude and perception and are willing to be religiously tolerant. However, they have moderate levels of experience and behavior towards religious tolerance. The 61% respondent believes that dialog between interfaith and intra-faith can be a source of sustainable peace in society. The 16.7 %, 8.7 %, and 31.3 %, respectively, believe that social, cultural, and sectarian factors are obstacles in inter-religious dialogue

Keywords: Religious intolerance; stratified random sampling; InterandIntra-faith dialogue; Pakistan

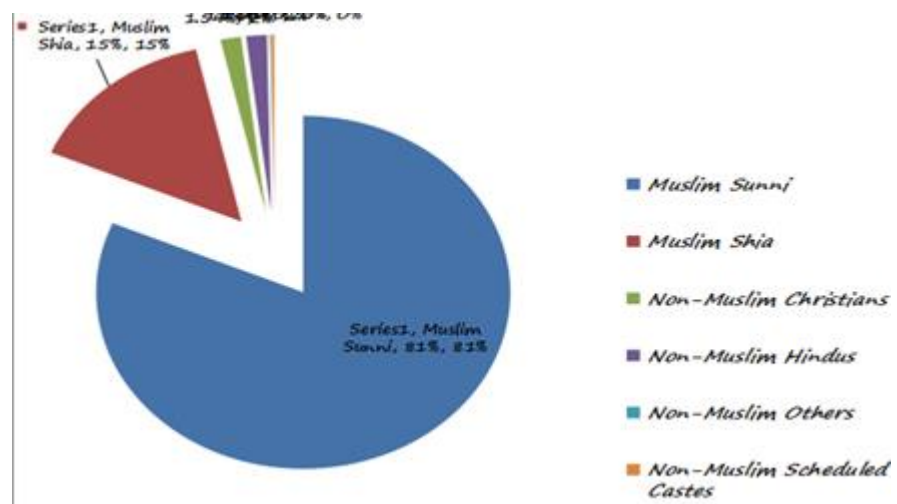
I. INTRODUCTION

All religions provide society with tolerance, harmony, unity, and fraternity (Asmara, 2018). Religious tolerance is critical to understand better other faiths and religions (Rogersv and Konieczny, 2018). To get along within a society is necessary for individuals, mainly when various cultures and people with different religious beliefs live in one community or nation. There are unity and solidity in a society that respects freedom of religion (Sorkin, 2018). Moreover, if governments respect various religions and freedom of religious concepts, societies will be free from religious minority harassment or sectarian violence.

Religious extremism harms a country's society and economy. For example, the Syrian civil war is a source of racial discrimination and division of society and nation that aroused terrorism and bloodshed activities (Apostolov, 2018). Thus it is

essential to allude to the exhilarating traces and psychological traumas that discrimination and intolerance leave the perps targeting the minorities and the people. It seriously affects the overall recruitment process in an economy, with prejudice against employees due to the employer's different faith (Valfort, 2015). Furthermore, based on the World Bank and the general economy's steps competitively ranked by the World Economic Forum, religious diversity is closely affiliated with national productivity, high levels of entrepreneurship, and economic competitiveness (Nikolova and Simroth, 2015). It is also likely that openness to diversity will create economic growth because businesses will attract a broader range of talents across people of different religious beliefs. Still, they are specialists in their work and can facilitate creativity and innovation. 6 Asia Pacific economies, namely Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, China, Vietnam, Hong Kong, and 5 sub-Saharan African economies, namely Guinea - Bissau, Ivory Coast, and Togo Benin, and Mozambique have a very high score on both diversity and economic prosperity. (Alexander, 2018).

In Pakistan, a Pakistani citizen's social identity depends on religion, province, tribe, or caste. Among these, it seems that the religious divide has done the most significant damage to the social order and the social development process. Two hundred million people of Pakistan are divided on a religious basis as follows: 96.28% Muslim, including 81% Sunni (Deobandi, Bareilvi, Ahle-Hadith) and 15% Shia, 1.5% Christians, 1.6% Hindus, 0.25% from scheduled castes, and 0.07% from other religions including Sikhs, Baha'i, Parsi and Ahmadi.



Unfortunately, Pakistan is the third least tolerant country globally in terms of social affirmation of religious diversity (Rahman, 2013). Minorities in Pakistan are the targets of both legal and social discrimination. Over the past two decades, sectarian violence in Pakistan has killed more than 4,000 people (Majeed and Hashmi, 2014). Shias have been subjected to 67 attacks over eighteen months covering 2012 and part of 2013, including terrorist suicide attacks during Shia religious observances. In addition, during that period, 54 lethal attacks were also inflicted on Ahmadis, 37 on Christians, 16 on Hindus, and three on Sikhs. In Pakistani society, both the traditional ulema and the Islamists want religion to be the primary and crucial self-defining characteristic and hence the "other" boundary marker. The hostile struggle of nationalism is associated with the certainty of faith in "imagining" a Muslim "millat" (nation) in which disparities do not happen as diversity or pluralism but as dissent and even blasphemy (Kaker,

2014). As a result, intolerance in society is rising, creating adverse working conditions for religious minorities. One of the main reasons behind these cases is the promotion by religious leaders of exclusive and sectarian religions, particularly among youth, which threatens the region's stability and peace.

Young people are the heart of any nation. But what could be intended of them when the entire nation experiences violence and religious extremism (Sattar, 2014)? These situations drive young people away from positive mobilization, constructive thinking, and global competition, pushing them toward violence, aggression, extremism, and intolerance. In their attempt to alter the system, aggression increases among youth, and failure of expected outcomes converts from time to time into intolerance. Thus, intolerance is now Pakistani youth's most significant social problem (Mushtaq and Munir, 2013). To improve social and economic conditions, these issues need to be addressed.

This study attempts to assess religious intolerance domains and levels of perception, attitude, willingness, experience, and behavior and to identify disparities in socio-demographic backgrounds to examine the level of religious intolerance in Pakistan using survey data.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used cross-sectional data for the period 2018 from various social groups. A cross-sectional study design is appropriate for the present study as it can measure attitude, belief, opinion, or practice at a time. This study has enacted a quantitative approach to distributing survey forms as it is easier to gain coordination from participants, and more reception will be gathered.

2.1. SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

A sample of 350 respondents from four provinces of Pakistan's capital city i.e. Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, and Quetta are selected due to their diversity of residing multiple major ethnic groups. The age of most respondents is 15 to 24 years. The stratified sampling approach is used. And the sample consists of 20 religious figures from at least five faiths (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Christian, and Bhai), eight media individuals (50 percent female), 161 youth from different religious communities (40 percent female), and 161 students from universities/colleges/ Madrassas (50 percent female).

2.2. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument was divided into two parts. Part A is religious intolerance (consisting of perception, attitude, willingness, behavior, and religious tolerance). Part B is the socio-culture and demography of the respondents.

There are two parts of the research instrument. In the first part, religious intolerance is determined by using perception, willingness, attitude, experience, and behavior. There are five items in each proxy of religious intolerance and five points Likert scale for each item, i.e., strongly agree to disagree strongly. The reliability of the questionnaires is checked by using Cronbach's alpha. The result of Cronbach's alpha is given in Table 1. The value of alpha is more significant than 0.6, it means all items should be included.

Table 1: The reliability of research instrument

Part: Religious tolerance	Perception	Attitude	Willingness	Behavior	Experience
α	0.84	0.719	0.768	0.64	0.872

Source: Authors' calculation

2.3. DATA ANALYSIS

SPSS software is used for the analysis of data. In order to assess the disparities between the two and more than two groups, the T - test and ANOVA analysis were carried out.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the collected data, the level of religious intolerance (tolerance) in all the respondents are found to be 32% (68%). It means there is a higher level of religious tolerance in Pakistan. The high religious intolerance is found in Lahore (Punjab), followed by Karachi (Sindh), Peshawar (KP), and Quetta (Balochistan). At the same time, high religious tolerance is found in Christian and Sikh, 30.3 %. The level of religious tolerance is found very low in Muslims.

Table 2: Religious tolerance level

	Perception	Attitude	Willingness	Experience	Behavior	religious tolerance
Mean	4.06	3.92	3.994	3.398	3.399	3.754
SD	0.772	0.751	0.793	0.945	1.004	0.689
Level	High	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	High

Source: Authors' calculation

Table 3 below shows the result of differences in religious tolerance across background groups. On the gender group, the T - testis computed. In all background groups other than the gender group, the ANOVA test is calculated. Empirical results explain insignificant effect of gender differences on religious tolerance among youth. This implies that the gender factor did not affect the respondents ' level of religious tolerance. On the other hand, variables such as ethnicity, religion, and occupation showed significant differences.

Table3: The differences in religious tolerance across demographic background group

		Mean	SD	p	
Gender	Female	2.184	1.177	0.4341	
	Male	1.848	1.829		
AGE	Below20 years	3.673	2.738	0.4263	
	21-30 years	2.716	1.629		
	31-50 years	3.198	2.017		
	Above50 years	4.289	2.956		
Area	Urban	2.187	1.353	0.3054	
	Semi-Urban	3.281	1.936		
Sects	Ahl-e-Sunnat	Deobund	4.298	2.836	0.0027
		Bravely	2.975	1.286	
		Ahl-e-Hadid	3.030	1.963	
	Ahl-e-Tashi	2.839	1.027		
Ethnicity	Christian	3.893	2.016	0.000	
	Hindu	3.278	1.028		
	Bhaie	4.028	2.967		
	Sikh	3.928	1.927		
	Muslim	3.515	2.108		
Occupation	Students/Youth	3.193	1.928	0.0074	
	ReligiousLeader	2.893	1.728		
	MediaPerson	4.289	2.917		

Authors' calculation

Religious tolerance in Deobandi is found to be higher than Bravelly, Ahl-e-Hadis, and Ahl-e- Tashi. 67.7 % of respondents are in favor of Inter and Intra-faith Dialogue. It is also found that religious intolerance is higher in religious leaders than student and media people. Among the respondents, 61 % viewed that Inter and Intra-faith dialogue can be a source for sustainable peace in the society. The respondent view that the factors are given in Table 4 stop the intra-faith dialogue.

Table4:ReligiousintoleranceIncreasing factors

Factors	Respondent
Social	8.7%
Sectarian	31.3%
Cultural	16.7%
Other	5.3%

IV. CONCLUSION

The level of religious tolerance as a whole is high among respondents. The types of religious tolerance comprise five, and the construct of perception, attitude, and willingness to religious tolerance is also at a high level. Simultaneously, the construct of experience and behavior towards religious tolerance is at a moderate level. The level of religious tolerance in this research shows no significant difference in the gender category. The significant differences are found in ethnic groups, religion, and type of occupation. Bhai, Christians, and Sikh have the highest level of tolerance compared to other ethnicities and religions. The level of religious tolerance is found at 62%. At the same time, a higher level of intolerance is found in the Muslim community. Furthermore, Deobund and Ahl-e-Tasheh also have high levels of intolerance.

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