

## ISSUES OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN PAKISTAN (2008-2022)

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### ABSTRACT

Pakistan, as a Muslim-majority country, hosts significant religious minority populations comprising Hindus, Sikhs, Ahmadiyyas, Christians, and others. Despite legislative measures aimed at protecting these minorities, they continue to face marginalization and discrimination across multiple dimensions, including social, political, economic, legislative, and psychological issues. Therefore, this research paper examines the issues of religious minorities in Pakistan from 2008 to 2022. The data of this research is collected from secondary sources which include newspapers, Journals, e-books etc. It analyzes the issues of religious minorities in Pakistan as a human rights issue of significant concern. It explores the factors contributing to the marginalization. The implications of mistreating religious minorities are analyzed both nationally and internationally. To address the issues faced by religious minorities in Pakistan, a multi-faceted approach is recommended.

**Keywords:** *Religious minorities, marginalization, discrimination, human rights, Pakistan, factors, strategies for resolution*

### INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is a State in which the maximum number of people, approximately 96% of the total population lives there are Muslims. Even though, Christianity, Hindus, Sikhs, the Ahmadis, etc exist with diversity. However, equality and freedom of religion are guaranteed by the constitution. These minorities frequently face barriers in the way to utilize their rights. The issues like pride, an unequal approach to opportunity, and Acts (laws) are highlighted by the discrimination of unequal availability of opportunity, and occasional displays of discrimination. Therefore, to promote smooth and peaceful environment within society, it is important to resolve these issues. Over the years, the nation has witnessed an increase in incidents aimed at religious minorities, ranging from physical assaults and demonstrations to forced transformations. In Pakistan, systemic discrimination against religious minorities is a serious crime. In some places, these are treated as they are second-class citizens, with no

or we can say a limited access to basic services, education and services for employment. Also, they face violence, harassment, and threats; this becomes worsen the reality that they do not have equal legal protection and rights.

Between 2008 and 2022, there was concerning rise in the number of forced conversion cases in country; Minor population in the country face yet another difficult barrier due to assault rules and regulations. Unfortunately, the legislations, which forbid insulting the Prophet Muhammad and other Islamic holy figures, have been abused to protect smaller groups from persecution, and the acts of violence. The wrong utilization of those conventions not only jeopardizes the safety and well-being of groups, it raises serious human rights concerns as well. Because of this, it is important to carefully consider and possibly amend these principles in order to build a community that is more inclusive, and equitable.

The Ahmadi community in Pakistan is facing a very challenging circumstance. They are categorized as non-Muslims under the Constitutional law, which leaves them more open to a range of rules including practices. Extremist organizations have attacked on their communities' places of worships, and members. In order to address these challenges and promote an increasingly inclusive and tolerant society, a comprehensive strategy that takes into account multiple aspects, is needed. Pakistani government has taken some steps to address these issues, including passing legislation to protect minorities, and establishing a National Commission for them. However, much more needs to be done to ensure that they are able to enjoy the full range of protections, and integrity guaranteed to them under the Constitution.

### 1. Literature Review

Gregory (2012) worked on historical background of religious minorities in Pakistan and particularly focuses on Christian community by analyzing the assassination of Salmaan Taseer and Shahbaz Bhatti in 2011 including the arrest and conviction of Aasiya Noreen (Bibi). He explored some details of contemporary situation of Christians in Pakistan through the prism of constitution, law, socio-politics and religion. From this analysis, he concluded that situation of Christian minorities in Pakistan stands in contrast with the vision of tolerant Pakistan proclaimed by Muhammad Ali Jinnah at founding of the state. The vision of tolerant Pakistan has been abandoned particularly since late 1970s, as islamically conservative voices has grown stronger in Pakistan. Two external conflicts, Afghan-Soviet war (1979-89) and US post 9/11 war on terror, are major causes of abandoning the concept of tolerant Pakistan. Christians are living a miserable life in Pakistan and this contemporary worsening situation points that Pakistan itself may be moving towards an increasingly conservative Islamist future where islamically tolerant values are being slowly extracted from the public space<sup>1</sup>.

Jan (2013) studied that how the negative portrayal of minorities in media can impact their safety and public perception. Religious extremism is a threat to

countries like Pakistan and can only be countered by understanding the extremist mindset, which can be analyzed through their publications. The easy availability of extremist publications suggests their role in creating a negative perception of minorities. Few studies had been conducted on extremist media in Pakistan, with limited understanding of how these publications create a negative perception of minorities.

The study aimed to fill that gap by comparing the tolerance and trust levels of those who read extremist publications versus those who read mainstream press towards religious minorities. The article outlined the media system in Pakistan, the emergence of jihadi publications, and the methods used for conducting a field survey, sampling, measurement scales, findings, and discussion on the survey's outcome<sup>2</sup>.

Ali (2015) identified the case of Religious Minorities in Pakistan that how the increasing religious intolerance and persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan had become a threat to its democracy and the safety of millions of its citizens. Islamic extremism and militancy in Pakistan posed a severe threat to human security, particularly for religious minorities, who make up about 20% of the population. This paper used a critical framework to examine the root causes of discrimination, insecurity, and political marginalization of these minorities, by tracing the rise of Islamism in Pakistan and analyzing the securitization of laws and constitutional amendments. The post-secular approach is used to address the identity-based insecurity of religious minorities in Pakistan, and to

<sup>1</sup> Gregory, Shaun. "Under the shadow of Islam: The plight of the Christian minority in Pakistan." In *Pakistan in National and Regional Change*, pp. 23-40. Routledge, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Jan, Faizullah. "Jihadi Publications in Pakistan and Public Perception of Religious Minorities." *Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities (1994-7046)* 21, no. 2 (2013).

engage with Islamic history and theology to alleviate their concerns in a modern Islamic state<sup>3</sup>.

Julius (2016) tested the argument, put forward by the supporters of Blasphemy law of Pakistan, under the experience of religious minorities. He focused on two religious minorities: Christians and Ahmadis who mostly become the victim of blasphemy law. Human right activists repeatedly assert that blasphemy laws of Pakistan are discriminatory and violates the human rights guarantees by both International treaties and constitution of Pakistan. But there are certain supporters of Blasphemy laws of Pakistan and to prove their narrative they present 4 major arguments. (1) Blasphemy laws are not discriminatory (2) Blasphemy Laws prevent people taking the law into their hands (3) No one yet been executed under these laws (4) Minorities will be unsafe in the absence of these laws. He tested all these 4 arguments under the experience of religious minorities in Pakistan and concluded that these arguments are not justified by the facts and blasphemy laws of Pakistan are discriminatory and are misused against religious minorities. Therefore, State is in dire need to amend these laws in order to stop this discrimination and victimization<sup>4</sup>.

Tahir and Phil, (2016) studied the issues faced by Pakistan's religious minorities. Pakistan had a sizable proportion of non-Muslim residents despite having a majority-Muslim population. No matter their region, gender, color, or language, Pakistani people were guaranteed equal rights under the country's constitution. However, these assurances had not always been kept, and religious minority struggled to uphold their rights and engaged in unrestricted religious practice. This study looked at how well these rights are being upheld and shed light on the challenges faced by Pakistan's religious minority. Additionally, it examined and evaluated the laws and changes passed to safeguard these minorities' rights<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Ali, Zaheer, and Utsa Mukherjee. "“We are not equal citizens in any respect”: citizenship education and the routinization of violence in the everyday lives of religious minority youth in Pakistan." *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education* 16, no. 4 (2022): 246-258.

<sup>4</sup> Ali, Zaheer, and Utsa Mukherjee. "“We are not equal citizens in any respect”: citizenship education and the routinization of violence in the everyday lives of religious minority youth in Pakistan." *Diaspora,*

Yousaf (2016) worked on the plight of Religious Minorities in Pakistan. The history of religious minorities in Pakistan is explored in this study, beginning with the country's founding in 1947. In spite of the constitution's guaranteed equality and freedom of expression, religion, and life, the state had not done enough to safeguard and assist its minority community. In actuality, the situation had gotten worse over time, especially under the Bhutto and Zia governments, which saw an increase in religious fanaticism and extremism. As a result, minorities, such as Ahmadis, Shias, Ismailia Muslims, Christians, and Hindus, frequently faced threats from extremist groups and were attacked.

The country's minority communities and its diversity were seriously threatened by the country's current trend towards a puritanical and radical religious narrative. Minorities would be disproportionately affected by this trend and would also lose their freedom to practice their religion and live as they like if this trend continues<sup>6</sup>.

(Curtis, 2016) researched on the problems of religious intolerance and persecution against religious minorities in Pakistan, which was undermining democracy and putting millions of lives in danger. The rise of Sunni Islamist militant groups, discriminatory laws, and a flawed education system that promoted Muslim identity over respect for diversity, had contributed to this issue. This had led to extremist ideologies taking hold and leaving religious minorities, including Shia Muslims, Ahmadis, Christians, Sikhs, and Hindus, facing many injustices and the constant threat of violence. That problem had its roots in the complex history of South Asia, including the traumatic experience of partition in 1947, which led to massive communal violence. However, signs of hopes were emerging, as the government under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had committed to making changes to uproot extremism,

*Indigenous, and Minority Education* 16, no. 4 (2022): 246-258.

<sup>5</sup> Tahir, Huma, and Iffat Tahira. "Freedom of Religion and Status of Religious Minorities in Pakistan." *International Journal of Management Sciences and Business Research* 5, no. 12 (2016).

<sup>6</sup> Yousaf, Farooq. "The plight of Religious Minorities in Pakistan." *South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF)*, 2016

and protect minorities. These changes include amending discriminatory laws, strengthening the civilian court system, and reforming the education curriculum to promote tolerance and pluralism. The US must also make protecting Pakistan's religious minorities a priority in its dialogue with the country, and press for improved ties with India, since regional tensions are exploited by extremist groups. Until all Islamist militant groups are comprehensively shut down, the threat to religious minorities in Pakistan will remain<sup>7</sup>.

Khalid and Rashid (2019) explored socio-political status of minorities in Pakistan. Minorities, defined as groups of individuals who are less in number than the majority in a state, had historically resided in Pakistan and contributed to the development of the nation in sectors like education and healthcare. These minority groups had nevertheless experienced unfair treatment, discrimination, and even persecution from the state and society despite being law-abiding citizens. They had experienced discrimination, especially with regard to their right to practice their religion, in sectors like work and education. In particular, Christians had expressed worries about their safety and had been singled out by the Blasphemy Law, which had occasionally been abused to resolve interpersonal disagreements and theological disputes. Pakistani society was moderate. It was essential that the government act right away to address these problems and advanced a moderate and inclusive society in Pakistan<sup>8</sup>.

Joshua and Zia (2020) worked on role of media related to religious minorities in Pakistan. The media had been covering the problems encountered by Punjabi Christians, which had gotten worse in recent years. The media strived to cover minority issues while adhering to guidelines and practices that are

favorable to everybody. The policies of electronic media organizations and regulatory agencies regarding the coverage of Christian concerns were examined in his research work. The regulating organization had set policies to prevent reporting that incites hatred or terror among individuals, according to policymakers interviewed for this article. The report also explores the unwritten media norms, procedures, and objectives for covering problems pertaining to Pakistan's Christian minority<sup>9</sup>.

Fuchs and Fuchs (2020) studied the Religious Minorities in Pakistan besides their Identities, Citizenship and Social Belonging. The introduction to the "religious minorities in Pakistan" section of the South Asia Journal of South Asian Studies examined the current literature on the subject and identifies areas in need of further research. The article also critiques commonly held beliefs about religious minorities and attempts to provide a clear definition of the term. It highlighted the connection between religious minorities and the caste system, which was a unique characteristic in South Asia, and placed the discussion of religious minorities in the larger context of post-colonial state-building, sectarianism, religious authority disputes, and the search for a unified political and cultural identity in Pakistan, which was the world's second-largest Muslim country<sup>10</sup>.

Rehman (2021) researched on the topic "Attitudes towards Religious Minorities in Pakistan: Gaps in the Literature and Future Directions". Through a content analysis of literary works published after 2011, the study's main objective was to investigate how Pakistan's Muslim majority regards religious minorities. The study's conclusions showed that there is broad consensus among experts regarding the country's negative sentiments towards religious

<sup>7</sup> Curtis, Lisa. "Religious freedom in Pakistan: Glimmers of light on a darkening horizon." *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 14, no. 2 (2016): 23-30.

<sup>8</sup> Khalid, Iram, and Muhammad Rashid. "A Socio Political Status of Minorities in Pakistan." *Journal of Political Studies* 26, no. 1 (2019).

<sup>9</sup> Joshua, R. A., and A. Zia. "Exploring the Policies for Coverage of Minorities' Issues in

Pakistani." *Global Social Sciences Review* 5, no. 2 (2020): 106-114.

<sup>10</sup> Fuchs, Maria-Magdalena, and Simon Wolfgang Fuchs. "Religious minorities in Pakistan: Identities, citizenship and social belonging." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 43, no. 1 (2020): 52- 67.

minorities, which had a substantial impact on their lives. The article identified the shortcomings in the existing literature and made the case that filling in the gaps could result in fresh insights into the subject<sup>11</sup>.

Mehfooz (2021) had studied religious minorities in Pakistan. Pakistan, a multi-racial and multi-religious nation with Muslims constituting the majority, had constitutionally guaranteed religious freedom to all religious minorities, including Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs. That was due to the fact that Islam itself was founded on principles of religious tolerance and inclusivity. However, certain Muslim clerics were trying to deprive religious minorities of their right to practice their faith in Pakistan. His research paper delved into the Islamic principles that advocate religious freedom and critiques the mistreatment of religious minorities in Pakistan. The paper analyzed both arguments for and against religious freedom in Pakistan and assessed the religious rights and freedoms of non-Muslim minorities from an Islamic perspective. The methodology utilized is critical analysis, which leads to the conclusion that the Constitution of Pakistan and Islam both guarantee religious freedom to the country's religious minorities. Finally, the paper recommended practical mechanisms for fostering reconciliation among different religious groups in Pakistan<sup>12</sup>.

Ali and Mukherjee (2022) examined the experiences of religious minority youth in Pakistan and how citizenship education is linked to religious exclusion. The article used interviews with Hindu, Sikh, and Christian youth from Punjab province to show how the educational curriculum creates routine violence against minorities through sectarian interpretations of national history and lack of positive representation. That created an environment where discrimination

and prejudice against minorities were justified. However, the youth also used institutional mechanisms to challenge this violence and support an inclusive Pakistani identity. The article called for reforms in citizenship education to promote inclusivity and address these concerns. The findings were situated in the context of Pakistan's history and the growing trend of exclusionary religious nationalism in South Asia<sup>13</sup>.

## 2. Research Questions

RQ1. Why religious minorities in Pakistan are being marginalized?

RQ2. What are the issues faced by religious minorities in the country?

RQ3. What are the implications of this inhumane treatment to religious minorities for the State of Pakistan?

RQ4. How issues of religious minorities can be resolved?

### 3.1 Objectives of the study

The objective of the study are;

- To examine the causes of marginalization of religious minorities in Pakistan.
- To study about increased issues of religious minorities from 2008-2022.
- To study the intense implications of these religious activities for Pakistan.
- To find a reliable solution to the issues faced by religious minorities in the State.
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### 3.2 Research Methodology

In this study, analytical, descriptive, exploratory, and qualitative research is used to explore the issues of religious minorities in Pakistan, the reasons of those issues and the ways to solve those issues. Moreover, secondary source of data has been used which

<sup>11</sup> Rahman, Khaista. "Attitudes towards Religious minorities in Pakistan: Gaps in the literature and future directions." *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review* 5, no. 2 (2021): 345-359.

<sup>12</sup> Mehfooz, Musferah. "Religious freedom in Pakistan: A case study of religious minorities." *Religions* 12, no. 1 (2021): 51.

<sup>13</sup> Ali, Zaheer, and Utsa Mukherjee. "'We are not equal citizens in any respect': citizenship education and the routinization of violence in the everyday lives of religious minority youth in Pakistan." *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education* 16, no. 4 (2022): 246-258.

includes, e-books, journals, conferences, reports, website and newspaper for literature review and further research.

### 3.3 Significance of the study

The study of issues faced by minorities in country is crucial for the protection of humans. Pakistan is a signatory to various international treaties, and conventions. It includes the Universal Declaration of individual's. This guarantees the right to freedom of religion. Understanding the challenges faced by the nations can help to identify gaps in the protection, and provide recommendations to improve the situation. Fostering mutual respect and empathy amongst diverse communities can be effectively achieved through studying small groups. It draws attention to nation's rich cultural diversity and promotes an accepting society where everyone is respected and upheld, regardless to religion.

A detailed examination of the difficulties faced by smaller communities is necessary in order to pinpoint the policy gaps that result in their marginalization. The outcomes of this type of study can help stakeholders, civil society, and policymakers to develop more effective policies, and programs to deal with the intricate issues faced by offering evidence-based recommendations. Providing the justice to the population which is limited in number is essential to preserving a robust democratic society. This study can help to identify the root causes of this extremism and help develop strategies to address it. Moreover, it can support the better security in Pakistan.

### 3. Religious Minorities in Pakistan

In Pakistan, people who practice or hold beliefs other than Islam (which is the majority in the nation) are called as minorities. Pakistan is an Islamic republic, and acknowledges Islam as the official religion. The nation does, however, also recognize religious diversity, and provide specific rights to them. Pakistan is home to a number of different indigenous, and ethnic communities which comprise Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis (Zoroastrians), Ahmadis, and others. These groups often face unique challenges, and discrimination due to their religious affiliations. It can manifest in various forms, such as social exclusion, limited access to opportunities, and incidents of violence and persecution.

#### 4.1 Major Issues Faced by Religious Minorities in Pakistan

##### 4.1.1 Social Issues Faced by Religious Minorities in Pakistan:

Religious minorities in Pakistan face several social issues that can be attributed to a range of factors, including societal attitudes, discriminatory laws, and instances of violence. Following are the core social issues faced by religious minorities in Pakistan.<sup>14</sup>

##### **Blasphemy Laws and Religious Discrimination:**

Blasphemy is a big social issue faced by religious minorities in Pakistan. Around 1500 Pakistanis have been charged with blasphemy over the past 3 decades. Pakistan's blasphemy laws are often misused against religious minorities, resulting in legal and social persecution. These laws, particularly Sections 298, 295-A, section 295-B and 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code, impose strict punishments, including life imprisonment and the death penalty, for offenses related to insulting Islam or the Prophet Muhammad.

**Section 295-A:** This subsection specifically targets deliberate and malicious acts aimed at outraging religious sentiments or insulting religious beliefs. It criminalizes actions, words, or representations performed with the explicit intention of hurting religious feelings.

**Section 295-B:** This section focuses on the destruction of the Quran, which is considered the sacred book of Islam. It states that anyone found to

<sup>14</sup> Khalid, Iram, and Muhammad Rashid. "A Socio-Political Status of Minorities in

Pakistan." *Journal of Political Studies* 26, no. 1 (2019).

have purposefully damaged, defiled, or desecrated an original of the Quran could be imprisoned for life.

**Section 295-C:** This subsection addresses the act of making disparaging statements against Prophet Muhammad. It is quite clear that the death penalty or life in jail will be applied to anyone who insults or makes disparaging remarks about Prophet Muhammad, whether in writing, speech, or visual media.

**Section 298:** Offenses against the Ahmadiyyas group, a minority Islamic minority in Pakistan, are particularly covered in this section. Since it views some of the religious statements and practices of the Ahmadiyyas as incongruous with mainstream Islamic beliefs. It imposes limitations on them. Regrettably, accusations of blasphemy directed at this community have led to incidents of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and mob violence, which has disproportionately affected religious minorities. These problems have strong effect on communities of religious minorities. They find it very difficult to lead normal lives due to these negatively effecting features. Many people and families never stop being afraid, which makes it difficult for them to freely practice their religion or participate in societal activities.

Case study of Asia Bibi

The Christian woman, Asiya Bibi is a well-known illustration of how Pakistan's blasphemy laws impact religious minorities. Her narratives lightened on the challenges faced by the country's religious minorities. This case study investigates the discrimination that Asiya Bibi looking at the episodes, legal proceedings, and responses throughout the world, related to her situation.<sup>15</sup>

### **Background:**

Asiya Bibi worked as a laborer in farm and lived in a small town in Punjab, Pakistan. In June 2009, she and a few Muslim women got into a field while picking berries. The Muslim ladies became increasingly agitated and accused her of blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), which is punishable by death in Pakistan.

### **Legal Proceedings:**

<sup>15</sup>Kazim, H. wikipedia. Retrieved from [www.wikipedia.org.com](http://www.wikipedia.org.com):

**Arrest and Conviction:** According to Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-C, Asiya Bibi was arrested in June 2009 as discussed above. A Punjabi trial court later found her guilty and sentenced her to death in November 2010.

**2. High Court Appeal:** Following considerable international attention to her case.

### **International Response:**

- 1. Advocacy and Support:** Following the international attention that her case received, governments, religious authorities, and human rights organizations. All expressed support for her. Many firms and individuals who called attention to the unfairness of the state's defamation legislation vigorously fought for her freedom.
- 2. Diplomatic Pressure:** To guarantee her safety and release, a number of nations, most notably the US and the EU, put diplomatic pressure on the country. In order to raise awareness of the issue and put pressure on the government to act against persecution, this diplomatic move was crucial. She was held in protective custody for several months before being allowed to leave the state and apply for asylum abroad.
- 3. Consequences and Aftermath:**

**Persistent Threats:** Bibi even after finding innocent she with her family continually receive threats from larger groups. These circumstances putting her life in danger day by day.

**Global Discussion:** The case generated a global conversation, and the inappropriate enforcement of blasphemy rules. It brought attention to the urgent need for both legislative changes and strengthened protections for people facing oppression regarding religion.

### **Increased Scrutiny:**

In reaction to this case, which garnered not only international attention but also widespread condemnation from human liberty. A desire for reform and more scrutiny stemmed from the international pressure Pakistan faced to reevaluate its rules and regulations. These discussions are causing

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia\\_Bibi\\_blasphemy\\_case](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia_Bibi_blasphemy_case). (2010, November 19).

its implementation and social impact to be examined more closely. It underlined the necessity of thorough revisions to stop these rights from being abused. However, in the wake of her case, laws had not undergone any notable changes. The case attracted a lot of attention and prompted discussions on the need to change. Therefore, securing legislative amendments have proved difficult because of how delicate and divisive the topic is in society.

### 3. *Discrimination in Employment and Education:*

Following are the main causes of these discriminations:

- a) **Limited representation:** Religious minorities are underrepresented in a number of fields, especially the military, judiciary, and political organizations. Examples of these include Christianity, Sikhs and Hindus.
- b) **Vocational Segregation:** As a result of occupational segregation, religious minorities are frequently restricted to unqualified, low-paying jobs. Since they are typically prohibited entry to higher-level professions, they are frequently forced into low-paying positions like street sweepers, janitors, and sanitation workers.
- a) **Prejudice in the Public Sphere:** Whenever they apply for positions in the private sector, members of religious minorities encounter discrimination in the civil service, government-owned businesses, and schools and universities. Restricted chances in the private sector: Minorities who practice different religions also face unequal chances for employment in the private sector.
- b) **Threat and Intimidation:** Smaller religious groups face severe limitations on their work opportunities due to threats from groups. It is more difficult for them to obtain and maintain employment because of these fears. People sometimes have to leave particular careers, which makes it very difficult for them to find work.
- c) **Blasphemy laws:** Pakistan have been affected by blasphemy, which have resulted in discrimination and limited employment possibilities. In these circumstances, the minor communities may falsely accused not only their own safety but also their

ability to obtain occupation.

### **Employment Opportunities:**

Pakistani religious minorities face important challenges. Many factors contributed to these issues including prejudices in society, discrimination based on religion, a lack of representation, and differences in wealth. They frequently encounter discrimination in the hiring process, unequal pay scales, and limited job advancement for job seekers.<sup>16</sup>

### **Legal Framework:**

In order to reduce the inequalities, the government has put affirmative action programs in place, including as quotas for public sector employment and reserved seats in educational institutions.

### **Public Sector Employment:**

While small population is able to find work in the country's public sector, their participation is encouraged by quotas. These obstacles, a small number of members have succeeded in obtaining positions in government.

### **Private Sector Employment:**

In Pakistan, employment comes primarily from the private sector. Despite, these are no mandated quotas or designated slots for minorities. However, some businesses and associations actively promote tolerance and diversity. Candidates having their diversified backgrounds often face prejudices and prejudices throughout the recruiting process, which might hinder their career prospects even with these efforts. Programs that emphasize education, training, and networking can be very helpful in increasing the competitive edge in the commercial sector.

### **Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment:**

Religious minority can effectively manage job problems through alternative channels such as self-employment and entrepreneurship. Numerous individuals representing christian minority communities have efficiently developed their enterprises, making significant contributions to the marketplace and generating employment

<sup>16</sup> Shah, A. R., and B. Nawaz. "Issues and state of religious minorities in Pakistan: A systematic

literature review." *Pakistan Social Sciences Review* 5, no. 3 (2021): 70-88.



possibilities for others in the community. However, starting a business requires having access to resources, money, and a supportive network—all of which can be limited for some of them because of the social and economic climate in which they now live.

#### **Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society:**

They play an important role for advancing Pakistan's minority' development and rights. Certain organizations move towards offering, developing skills, and job instruction to people. Through building programs, these efforts help religious minorities and improve their job prospects.

#### **4. Forced Marriages and Abductions:**

Forced marriages is a brutal issue which affect religious minority females. Christian and Hindu women going through, the reports of , forced conversions to Islam, kidnappings and marriages against their wills.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Blasphemy law in Pakistan were established in 1980's to protect Islamic values with the passage of time, these rules got developed and strengthened. However these legislation have been misapplied to pick out religion minorities. The people who were the targets often face persecution and marginalization. One of the most important factor in this regard is deep rooted religious intolerance within certain segments of society. This intolerance is further charged extremist ideologies and prejudices that consider non-Muslims as inferior creature. The minorities in our state are facing numerous social inequalities, and discrimination. In this they are being refused to access equal education, employment and public services. This prohibits them to be fully participate in society. Another important factor Are the laws that favor majority of Muslims in the state which is known as systematic marginalization of smaller religious groups of society. They have limited representation in political institutions. Due to this limited access they are sometimes unable to protect their legal rights.

The mistreatment of minorities affects Pakistan's reputation in international organizations as well and entities that support religious freedom and rights is also impacted by the oppression.

In addition, the security and stability of the region are threatened by the ill treatment of the minor population. It may intensify hostilities between various ethnic and communities regarding religious,

resulting in sectarian warfare. Such volatility may have a domino effect, destabilising other nations and impeding attempts to promote harmony and collaboration inside the state.

The state needs to maintain and strengthen current legislation, such as the Protection of Act and the Constitution that safeguard the rights of limited community. The government should also take action against the abuse of principles, which are frequently used as a tool to persecute smaller groups.. Ensuring equal protection and liberty for all citizens can be facilitated by reforming such regulations.

The state ought to guarantee that tasked with enforcing thoroughly look into cases of discrimination. Judicial changes should be implemented to expedite the legal process and prevent needless delays. Furthermore, it is crucial that those victimized have enough protection in order to inspire people who were harmed, as well as their families, to come forward and seek justice. International pressure can be used to hold the government accountable for protecting the rights of people living in small groups and influencing policy changes.

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