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Religio-Cultural Homogeneity and National Interest in Solidarity

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ABSTRACT

Judaism, Christianity and Islam all the three religion are the followers of the divine books (Tura, Old Testament) Bible and Holy Quran the origin of these three religions is the divinity and the sovereignty of Allah and that he sends his Apostles time and again to establish stronger norms and principles of civilization, good citizenship and humanity at large. Tura by Musa is the most ancient divine book and is very much a part of Holy Bible similarly both the Tora and Bible provide foundation to Quran and that Islam and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has been cited in Bible and Tura repeatedly. All the three religions have similarities and assimilation in culture and religion. The mechanism of life, birth childhood rights of children and women the youth and the old are interconnected on many principles however there are some differences as well and it is more due to the time gaps the geographical factors the economy the language, food and dress historical traditions the events of war and peace and also largely the interest of the ruling class and the clergy. This paper deals with the Religio Cultural Homogeneity and National Interest in Solidarity.

Keywords: Holy Quran, Cultural Homogeneity, National Interest, Solidarity, Mechanism

General Culture Patterns

Marriage has been an agreement between two families and it cannot be simply termed as a romantic relationship between two persons. Traditionally, there was no lower or upper age limit for consideration of marriage of a future couple. The tradition of seeking the consent of bride and groom was brought into the Subcontinent when Islam came to Indo-Pak. Before Islam, marriage was a simple decision of the parents alone; neither the boy nor the girl had any say in this regard. These are, as per today's terminology, known as arrange marriages. It has been a sacred contract which brings the couple into an eternal rhythm of the cosmic order. Marriage is usually formed by a regular betrothal agreement between the two parties i.e. the family of the boy and the family of the girl. The engagement had no direct relation with the age of either the boy or the girl; it would range between infancy to

old age. Match making process was initiated by the father of the bride; he would send the Naito the boy's family with the sweet gift of chhohara. In presence of the boy's relatives, the boy was greeted with the chhohara; it was actually forced into his mouth by the relatives. Gifts were given to the poor and needy as a charitable deed and for good omens. The lag is returned with the gifts of money, clothes and pagris. Then the engagement was publicly pronounced by the parents of the girl's family.

The years of arranging their children's marriages are the years of 'tying the knot'. It is quite similar to the vatasata marriages by which the families literally exchange a boy and a girl; it means one boy and one girl from each family get married to the girl and boy in the other family. This system was often adopted as a means to ensure that their daughters don't remain unmarried. The marriage rule of our people fall somewhere between the Hindu "Spinda rule". They changed their system of marriage under the Islamic customs. Mussallis and Islamized chuhras, who moved to the Chenab colony, changed their customs only in the last century while in the past they constricting marriage with descendants from

either from their father's or their mother gotra. It is the addition of this progress that has enhanced the marriage performance in the present day; even for the Christian descendants of those people, marriages between first cousins are, by no means, rare. Christianity has been unable to manipulate this.

The poverty of our people in the days gone by can be surmised by means of the details of a gathering which is a custom called Lagi: a short visit was paid to the future groom and his family by a person also called Lagi. Different sets of amounts were placed before the groom. These could range from five, ten or even more. The groom was to select at least one amount from the ones placed before him. The boy's financial status would be ascertained from the amount he picks. He then returned to the girl's house, giving a detailed explanation of the boy, specifically describing his financial conditions. A lagi then came from the boy's to the girl's house. Women used to sing lively songs. The compulsory step before reaching the agreement of the marriage was performed by honouring the lagi with a pagri before eyewitnesses. The boy and girl were then considered to be properly engaged. If the engagement were to be cancelled, the panchyat would determine the amount to be paid in compensation.

After some years, the girl's parents would send the lagi with the message that it was time for the marriage. The symbol of contract was performed by sending three pairs of cloth, one each to the marasi, to the nai and one to the man who lit the traditional fire. Gur was divided among the girls that sang the songs of marriage. The lagi, the person collecting money for his services, would arrive with the news that the bahocha had been received. Then a trousseau of seven pairs of cloth, called a trewar, was sent from the girl's house. These incorporated a white embroidered shawl, a red cotton shawl, a white silk hem, a bodice, a curta, a narrow silk cloth, a petticoat and a chadar. These were sent to the boy's house and complimentary actions were accorded on the part of the boy's family. Sweets were also presented with a rupee as ropna. Then the day of marriage was proclaimed as agreed by the two parties. (John, 2006).

Wedding General Pattern

Some time back in the past, just before the marriage, gana of fleece were attached to the wrist of the boy and the girl respectively. These were made of iron ring and a small bag with the pieces of barley. An analogous symbol is used between some castes as a proclamation cum invitation to a marriage. It is possibly related to an earlier fruitfulness sign. The whole rite was called ‘‘ maiyan pauna. One day before marriage ceremony, mehndi was rubbed onto the palms and the soles of the bride. On the day of marriage, barat, the relatives of the boy would arrive and pay the salami in terms of cash amount to the groom. In most cases, there was a ceremony before going away to the girl’s home, of visiting all the female relatives and being given gift. This was known as salanti. The marriage party composed of the boy’s family members, friends and some hanger-on, then started out, as a rule of travelling by night. The custom also sheds light on the conventional avoidance of day travel in order to evade paying tolls.

Marriage Songs

Twenty-four songs were usually sung of the many stages of marriage ceremony. The first song is sung at this time when marriage date is announced. The song is jointly sung by the bride groom’s sister and his mother: ‘‘ghoriTerivemallasohni’’ they sing for the bride, they sing to the bride groom that he has been sacred, that God has filled his wishes. Although these poem, the different names for God are simply exchangeable. Eight days before the marriage wheat is given to the boy for the giving out to his friends and he is anointed with oil the songs ask God to bless him. His sister has a particular song while giving him the marriage clothes. An interesting progress in the poem, usually with an Islamic influence centres on the turban which is attractive. While the bride is being dressed, the song her friends sing for her is very subduing. She herself remains silent.

As the marriage party proceeds it is representatively blocked with a stick, placed across the way. Reward is sought for letting the barat proceed; they are stopped again at a gate formed by a red cloth, it is held by the women, called chunni. In the duration of dinner, the women of the marriage party sing. The bridegroom and friend sarbhala enter the house of the bride during the meal. The bride’s friends come with a handful of oil and gur clenched firmly. The son-in-law comes; he will clean rice when the marriage is over. The Muklava dates back to the time when child marriage was contracted. In this situation the couple visibly did not live together for the considerable time after the marriage. When the girl was mature there was the function called Muklava which is the final fetch home of the bride. This was considered less pretentious than the marriage and the bride’s father was expected to spend only half as much on it.

Particular Practices

The bride first pays her first after marriage visit to her father’s. Maybe after some time she would return to her husband’s house. In the meantime, she takes a suit of clothes for her husband, and for his parents. She will get these as gifts when she returns to live in her husband’s house. Christians used to bury their dead before they began to burn their dead. Possibly, this was due to the era of strong Hindu influence on their social life and culture. The religious blend was due, perhaps, owing to the existence of several religions side by side. In few cases, they were known to lift the

dying person to the ground and this practice was called sathar. In time of antiquity, the upper class always insisted, either compulsory or by force, Christians buried face downwards as a way of barring comeback of the ghost and to stop the invitation of sickness. In the past, the Christians of Mirzapur buried the dead bodies and filled the grave with thorns and stones. The dead body of a chuhra was treated with a blend of contempt and fear. One evidence is a case in Muzaffargarh with the biradheri force on burying a dead body in a suitable way.

Resultantly, riots broke out and the issue, at last, came before the courts. Between some Gotra there was the practice of singe the face and hand before funeral most probably with the intension of making it impossible for the deceased to return as a ghost. Basically, a funeral on the same day, both for men and women, may be broken down into five parts i.e. laying out the dead body, removal to the graveyard, interment divided of flowers and exorcism of the spirit in memorial gatherings after three or forty days (John, 2006).

Funeral Songs

The first song in the mourning is sung for a young man. His foot grip of the bed allocates neither discourse nor breathing. "Lain and dendisahkarnnadendi gal," the young man should have been allocating to enjoy happiness first" man marinchhej," the washing of the dead body must be done stringently according to regulation. "shirtannalnahaiyo," Death is like a dark night in the forest from which there is no come back. "jangalai rat," osanderinajaiyeo, phirnaheana ho ga" Constant with their own religious customs, both the decisiveness and singularity of death is accentuated. Death comes but once. " ikkoanganmaut da," Those who have gone are in the presence of Dargah; " ohadhordargahve," the wife would utter her sorrowful situation and smash her marriage bracelet. " churabhanpalag di chahval, mirzamariya; lahsiron je shor je shorn a hove, mirzamariya." What will become of the children?" terebachchean da kihal?" no one approaches for dread. "othedarda koi nacharha." The poem, evidently, shows that it is a kind of ritualizing of the sorrows in particular of the widow. By declaiming what she may be expected to feel, it assists a kind of catharsis.

Religious Customs

Although Christians have many religious customs and festivals but some prominent festivals are celebrated with great enthusiasm. These are

Christmas Day

This festival is celebrated to remember and rejoice on the birthday of Jesus on 25th December every year. The maiden Holy Merry gave birth to Jesus as per God's will to save the people/ world from sins. So this day is celebrated as Jesus Christ Day, called Christmas.

Easter

It is the Celebration of the rebirth of Jesus Christ on the third day after he was crucified at Calvary; this refers to the account of Christ as per New Testament. Easter may well be said to be the height of the Passion of Christ. Lent, a forty-day period of fasting, prayer, and penance, comes prior to Easter; the last week is the Holy Week as well as includes Good Friday. These are in remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Eid – e- Saud

According to Christian's belief Jesus Christ was lifted to the sky/ heaven so this festival is celebrated in its memory.

EID-E- NAZOOL

This religious festival is celebrated after ten days of Saud festival. Christians believe that Jesus Christ was revealed to his pupils and followers on that day. They got power by this revelation and spread Christianity in the world.

Shahiyat Masih

This religious festival is celebrated in consideration of Jesus Christ as king. This festival is celebrated on the last Sunday of October.

Eid Zahoor –ul- Masih

This festival is celebrated on 6th January every year. When Christians came from East, they prostrated Jesus Christ and presented gold, Myrrh and Loban. Gold means becoming of king, Myrrh (mar) means devotions of human beings for the sake of Jesus Christ and Laban represented his becoming of Prophet.

Muqaddaseen Day

This day is celebrated on 1st November every year. All Christian martyrs are remembered on that day. This day is in reminiscence of all those sacrifices that those martyrs presented for the sake of their religion.

Sacraments

There are two sacraments in Christianity.

Baptismal

Baptismal is given to the new born babies on the name of Jesus Christ. Cross sign is made on kid's foreheads Baptismal sacrament is held on 13th January of every year.

Esha- e-Rubbani

(Teacher evening meal) Esha-e- Rubbani is the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Esha-e- Rubbani sacrament is held on Thursday night of the Holy week at 7 O' clock.

First Day of Sunday

Christians worship and pray in congregation on every Sunday in the memory of Jesus Christ getting alive. First fast is always on Wednesday. Forty days and nights are there to keep fast for Christians. According to Jews calendar the next day starts at 5 p.m.

Roman Catholic

Many customs are celebrated in this sect. Sisters and Fathers don't marry. The biggest sect of Christianity is Catholicism. Roman Catholics prevail in France, Italy and Belgium.

Protestant

Protestants are part of Roman Catholic but they believe in specific customs which the Catholics don't. Protestant are not subordinate to Roman Catholic Church. So it's wrong to say that Christianity is not divided into sects. There are dozens of sects in Christianity which have different beliefs. Protestant prevails in Church of England and America (Siddiq, 2000).

Social Life

For hundreds of years, peoples with different faiths, cultures, languages and altogether different outlooks of life have been inhabiting the Subcontinent while the British and the Europeans brought with them social & economic uplift as well as the system of justice which not only positively influenced the people here but also the already submerged Indian people to yet another intercultural and socio-political amalgamation of trends. For the Indians, politically divided into smaller states and socially weakened for caste system, were first dominated by the Muslim rulers and later by the French and the British. It must also be mentioned that the Muslim rulers themselves belonged to different communities and spoke different languages: Muhammad Bin Qasim attacked from Baghdad while Mehmood Ghaznavi came all the way from Turkey etc. One may well imagine the split and multi-culture Indian people at the time of partition of India and Pakistan.

Today our society is confronted with social conflicts, which subsist at diverse levels, linguistic, political and economic. Culture is a method of life which is exactly related to the civilization construction of a society. The concern and purpose of any civilization is to work together making it polite and easy for the members of that society. It is involving social as well as individual relations and the institutions are elevated to recognize the social purpose of the people set for themselves. Culture deals with the individual relationships in relation to of man's outlook of the universe and his experience in daily life as well as old tradition and meetings related to the new condition. Artist formation, methodical research, social work in rites and ritual as well as social elegance are frequently said to compose culture (Yousaf, 2000).

Problems

Social Problem

In the past years, several governments have completed their terms with promises and claims for the Christians but there was no concrete success in developing a society free from social discrimination and religious persecution in 1999. The attitude of deliberately negligence of non-privatization also not only continued but it is getting even strengthened. In a city, a plate fixed on a barber's shop reads "Here is no work for a non-Muslim". It is written in a tea shop "non-Muslim people should have recognized themselves before taking tea.

It is evident by such examples how much religious non-privatization is existent in different segments of life. Law of Pakistan does not directly lead to forming of any social attitude to the Christians; moreover, the government is not discouraging the social discrimination and such things. There seems certain appreciation from few groups which leads to the existence of such people and their discrimination. In April 1999, a young man aimed at the head of Rev. Ijaz Masih of Narowal and killed him.

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Ijaz Masih was shot at such a time while he was returning to his door after hearing voice of knowing. Rev. Ijaz Masih was dead on the spot.

The Chuhras

The chuhras, among the most miserable classes in the province of Punjab, were considered the lowest and the most loathed of all groups living in Pakistan. Many chuhras worked as landless drudge, but others play those duties and jobs which Muslims and Hindus deem most hateful. These jobs include removing the dead bodies of cows and other animals from countryside premises, scraping the bodies of these animals, cleaning the bodies of dead who have no relatives to pay attention of them, cleaning up and removing excreta from washroom, gater and the places of public relaxation.

They have been surviving upon the flesh of dead bodies of birds and animals and eating by extra food from the tables of others. Countryside chuhras were paid only harvest time, getting a small quantity of the wheat, cotton, rice, sugar or other crop. The chuhras are free they were expected to subsist on daily contribution of food from their owner. Habitually these were extra. The sweepers of the city were also given cooked food not needed by their owners. This is in addition to their scanty wages. There is naught more shameful in the eyes of Hindu civilization than the eating of mixed leavings of the food of others.

Nationality and Recognition

Biggest issues of Christians are said to exist in Pakistan alone. This, perhaps, refers to the religious as well as political recognition of the Christians in Pakistan. Quite often we see such columns are published in Pakistani newspapers which portray as if Pakistani nationality and nationals have only one religious element i.e. Islam. Those people who provoke such type of explanation they are not sincere with Pakistan. On 11th September in 1947, Quaid-e- Azam, while addressing the first constituent assembly that ‘according to my thinking Hindu will not remain a Hindu, Muslim will not remain a Muslim, it is not religiousness however this discrimination will be finished being personal of any person. Politics of Pakistan is currently running on such ways and gestures which seem to shun the very existence of minorities; however, the case of Christians, while comparing them to other minorities, is rather softly taken up by the authorities here. Christians repeatedly complain of being ignored during allotment of plots and loan facilities by the government. They also complain of the avoidance and partiality of the local Muslims towards the Christian community.

Issues of Higher Education

There is a policy of merit based admissions in all the professional colleges and universities: on paper it seems perfect but perhaps reality is a bit too bitter to chew at. There is a question which comes to the mind. Why Pakistan was created? It was created to seek rights on equality. It was sought because Muslims were backward while Hindus were educated and far ahead of the Muslims. Muslims could not compete the Hindus in any field. Therefore, they sought their share in jobs and all other things with respect to their proportion in the Indian population. The case of Christians is no different from that of the Indian Muslims. Therefore, forcing the backward and living from hand to mouth Christian students to follow merit based

policy would be no less than injustice to them. Similarly, there must be quota for the non-Muslims in HEC in all fields.

Issues of Property of National School and Colleges

Supreme Court declared that property of nationalized schools and colleges is the ownership of owners not government. It is neither maintained in the revenue records, and nor national Administration is helping on such matter.

Census Problem

Interestingly, the government of Pakistan has had no census since 1998 though it was their constitutional responsibility. The Christians as well as other minorities smell something odd in the avoidance of Census; they claim that the population of Christians has considerably increased in Pakistan and the government does not want to surface the fact. This is purposely done so as to cut down the actual share of the Christians in the national political and economic system. Some Christians even go on charging the state with the blame that actual population of the Christians was not recorded in the 1998 and 1991 Census.

Problem of Villages

For many years, Christians living in rural areas are residing on the lands of government; prices of lands of villages are increasing. The poor and helpless Christians are expelled from the lands of government because some chaudhry of the village get the allotment of government's land on his name. Lands of the government should also be allotted to homeless Christians of villages and it is their right because they are also Pakistanis.

Islam by Enforcement

This issue prevails both in the cities and villages. It has been in the reports that influential Muslim groups kidnap young Christian girls and they are forcibly married to Muslim boys; they are also forced to accept Islam.

Religious Education

Religious education is the right of every child. In the government schools Islamic study is taught to the Muslim children but there is no such system of education for Christian children. Christian students have to opt either for Islamic studies or for ethics because Christian education is not included in the course. Once a committee was instituted by the then cabinet to resolve this issue, Bishop Anthony Lolo and Rev. Aslam Barkat both was member of this committee. Only two meetings were held of this committee and assembly was dissolved and after this there is no existence of status of this committee. There is no any system of religious education for Christian children's in the government schools of Narowal and Zafarwal.

Problem of Welfare Fund

Where welfare fund is discussed nothing was given to poor Christians from Zokat fund this is very sorrowful thing. Poor and helpless Christian patients are not helped in expenses of treatment because they are Christians. The reason cited by the authorities is that Christians don't deserve Zaka.

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The same attitude was adopted while helping the flood affected as well as during rehabilitation of the Kashmir Earthquake. There is a strong fear that due to the strong cultural influence as well as the socio-political circumstances, a vast majority of the Christians would be forced to change either their religion or their land.

Sectarianism

Christians are facing problems of sectarianism. Though security is provided to them in the constitution of the country yet practically they have none. Everyone has religious freedom and can preach for his religion but to force others is not constitutional and is not admirable in the eye of religion. Allah does not enforce his will on humans but he rather gave freedom to humans that they may choose the path to goodness by his own will. God is to judge the freedom of man with his deeds. Man is responsible for his deeds. Allah is the creator and lord of the whole universe. He does not enforce his will by force on human and then way we do to enforce education of our sect sectarianism is condemnable weather it is on the base of language and on tribe or on the base of province. It is the constitutional right of Christians that they can preach their religion.

Low Standard of Education

The Christian community, suffering from social injustice and fighting for economic viability, years for quality education where it has no chance to: it is the right of every Pakistani to get educated but the quality of education has really degraded. Since the system is being run by the Muslims, hence, the non-Muslims find it rightful to complain against an inefficient and corruptible education system. There must to be a Shortage of Skills Education Plan with special incentives and encouragement of the enrolled students. This would create opportunities for the weaker students to come forward and gain their part of the share from the national economy. This is the demand of the Christian minority and it, if common sense prevails, should be the demand of every Pakistani. We have had enough of political jeopardy which is not acceptable any more under the changing scenarios of the world order (Barkat, 2002).

Increasing Difference Between Rich and Poor

In Pakistan difference between the rich and the poor is increasing day by day. The poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer. Richer have all facilities. If the same situation of continues we might have to face situation like French Revolution.

Standard of Justice

In the government schools and colleges there is Islamic education system for Muslim children. But there is not for Christians. Why there is such type of difference that Muslim women do not taste food of Christian girls' in housekeeping. Twenty additional marks are given to Hafiz-e- Quran and Christians are not be Hafiz-e-Quran in this way they become deprive by these numbers. Ministry of religious and minority acts should consider on such problem that's why there should be no Motto of equal right. Government should stop saying motto of equal rights. Last year, in Shanty Nagar a mob of Muslims burnt thousands of books of Holy Bible; for several days' pages of Holy Bible lay scattered in the streets. No one has arrested in this crime till to date because it was done by Muslims.

Difference of Racism

Racism is considered a bad act in all religions. But it is also increasing in Pakistan. In Pakistan Christians are not treated well. In the hotels, even their basins are put separate. In the saloons, there are separate tools for them. Their kneaded flour is not cooked on public ovens. The situation has deteriorated to such an extent that every black person is consider a Christian. Discrimination is neither allowed in any other religion nor in Islam; moreover, is it strictly forbidden by all human rights laws. A special clause has been entered in the charter of human rights by UNO. After hearing the name of Christian, he is rejected from job that's why many Christians change their names and this act is sometimes considered equal to surrendering one's religion.

Negligence from Social Issues of Christians

Unless social problems of minorities are solved, their hearts cannot be won. Christians are present in all province of Pakistan. There is a huge population of Christians in Punjab. On 14 August 1947, at the time of creation of Pakistan, Hindus and Sikhs considered necessary to leave it. Christian minority preferred to live in Pakistan. Government should solve the social problems of Christians. There is no any educational and training system for Christian children. The administrative control of the Christian schools has been taken by the government; for Christian children there should be Bible course in place of Islamic Studies. There is a problem of admission for Christian students for medical colleges. Christians are not representative in any field of national life. There should be census board, industrial board or committee of political acts. This is shameful for the Christians in the boards of educational institutions, in the list of jail visitors or in self-committees (Barkat, 2002).

Political Problems

System of Election

A separate system was given to the Christians in the constitution 1973 but it was again changed under the influence of Zia's Islamization in 1985. Eighth amendment was accepted with many things became part of our constitution without discussion. Joint and separate elections are alive in the minds of people. No doubt there is no source for them to express their views that are in the favour of joint election system. It is said that they have separated from national circle and are converted into citizens of 2nd grade. In all the constitutions of Pakistan i.e. 1956, 1962, 1973, a joint election system was given to the minorities. Secondly, separate system of election has removed the harmony in different groups and castes; due to this inclination sectarianism is getting strengthened. This is not, at any cost, reasonable for the progress and peace of Pakistan. Restoration of the 1973 constitution in its original shape may be a reasonable solution, where is also a joint election system and there are specific seats for minorities in national assembly and these are chosen by national assembly. No any Christian lawyer can appear before Shria court, because he is not Muslim.

Economic Problems

Developing countries are facing economic problems. Pakistan is also a developing country and is facing economic problems too. Economic condition of Pakistan is not

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such that it may come in the list of developing countries. There is shortage of electricity, gas, patrol and water in our country. Pakistan is in the grip of martial law. Taxation policy is not acceptable for the public. The poor cannot pay taxes. On the other side, our country is facing many problems due to martial laws. Honesty has vanished. Officers don't work without bribe. In this way, people cannot fulfil their needs. Increasing population is leading to economic problems. Pakistan is not in the condition of constructing dams and starts the project for the progress of the country. If Pakistan becomes economically strong, then it will have good relations with other countries. Population of Pakistan is increasing day by day and employment sources are decreasing. If all these problems will not be resolved, Pakistan will be in great trouble in future (Frederick & Stock, 1975).

Conclusion

After having a detailed discussion, we find that there are many grounds where these major global religions can come closer to each other. It is not only a question of religious and cultural tolerance but human acceptance for the humanity, solidarity, consolidation and global peace it is worth mentioning here that the nations the nation states of spending a lot of money human and natural resources on destruction and war. If the intelligences play a positive role the members of the family of nations can come to closer to each other and these resources can be used for the welfare of people, elimination of poverty, sickness, devastation and all of us can walk in hand to hand with each other for a good civilization and humanity.

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