

Christian-Muslim Mutual Remedial Activities for Peace Building in Pakistan: Discussions and Findings with Qualitative & Quantitative Study

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KEYWORDS

*Coexistence
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ABSTRACT

Christianity and Islam reflect a deeper sense of identity by revealing a framework of beliefs and principles that shape worldview. Christian and Muslim communities in Muslim majority countries especially in Pakistan have been interacting in all aspects of life. Together with this interaction, conflict has also been part of social development for a long time. This ultimately spreads tensions in the entire community and pollutes its environment. However, both religions escort integrity in a society by establishing peace and reconciliation procedure. Christian-Muslim communities have established the peace and interfaith harmony activities during social interaction especially in modern time. Pakistan is a case study of Christian-Muslim mutual remedial activities for Peace Building. The study is planned to draw a picture of religious harmony and measures of reconciliation mentioning its background reasons and the trends. Such meaningful detailed research work essentially involves ideas which can be ultimately mapped to improve social relationships between both communities. This research is intended to investigate many key questions to address the issue of peace building in a more scientific and professional manner. Likewise: What is theological interaction between Christians and Muslims? What are sociological efforts for peace building in society? The desired study is survey based. Quantitative and qualitative research techniques are used. An analysis of efforts for inter-religious study in modern times will certainly fill the gap in our understanding of contemporary socio-religious movements and will answer several questions which still remain unanswered. Christians and Muslims, being a part of the society in Pakistan, has two backgrounds: religious and social for evaluation of its practices regarding peace building. With the first part, therefore, it is analyzed theologically in following aspects.

Introduction

Christianity and Islam being divine religions are growing all over the world with the passage of time sharing with similarities and commonalities even both have differences. Similarities are listed with detail to express the religious interaction between Christians and Muslims. This is theological perception having divine background with divine words. The impact of religion lies on the social life of religious people because of his effort to perform religious duties according to divine guidance.

Christianity and Islam as Abrahamic Traditions

Abrahamic traditions, established by our study to this point, are scripturally based religious traditions with their religious names; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam had the parental personality of Prophet Abraham that is in Qur'an "*Ibrahim*". Abraham's generations essentially had been honored Prophecy by God with the chain of Prophets (SA) of the monotheistic tradition. The areas where Abraham as Prophet (SA) and his descendants settled came to be called the

Holy Land, where the prophets described in the Biblical and Qur'anic scriptures lived, traveled, and preached. Today, that land includes all or part of several modern countries, including Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and parts of Egypt, Iraq, and Syria. Over time, these lands have been the place of spiritual journeys, settlements and cities, trade, colonies, wars, and empires. They have been lands of human joy and sorrow, conflict and cooperation, and great diversity of thoughts and ideas. During the past four thousand years, the monotheistic tradition has brought forth the world religions called Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Christianity and Islam as Prophetic Traditions

Adam and Eve are the first human beings mentioned in the scriptures as receiving revelation from God declaring Adam as Prophet by Christianity and Islam with the foundation of prophetic tradition. Other prophets included Elijah, Isaiah, Noah, Jonah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon (SA) is common between Christianity and Islam. In the end, Jesus and Muhammad (PBUH), each of them stands as Prophet of God before their nations for their religious guidance. These both were granted revelation with their separate books, Gospel and Qur'an. None of them motivate violence against each other that provides them with basic them to create peace in society.

Christianity and Islam as Monotheistic Religions

Christians and Muslims believe in One God that is monotheistic concept. The identical phenomenon as common and similar recognition was known in Christianity: its faithfulness to the one God, with the exclusion of any other divinity, was the fact

that revealed to the Roman authorities the true nature of Christianity and its adjustment with paganism. The revelation regarding one God provides the true concept of monotheism to Christianity with biblical verses such as: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength.

In such verses, Christianity is considered monotheistic religion with the prophetic and divine order just like Islam is like it

Christianity and Islam as Revealed Religions

Revealed religions are formed with Divine guidance to the humanity for its betterment and on the right path to God. Keeping these views Christians believe that God revealed himself in Jesus Christ, and Muslims believe that the Qur'an is God's true revelation. Christians proclaim that Jesus Christ is the incarnate Word and Muslims stress that this book (Qur'an) was revealed by God to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). According to William Russel, revelation, in the eyes of Islam, was never meant only to make God known in speculative minds as philosophers had wished, but also to provide practical obedience and guidance to humankind. He further states that revelation is guidance and light, not in itself an act of salvation. Here lies the importance of Prophecy.

With these historical and divine acquaintances, both communities can further uphold activities and techniques to enhance reconciliation and peace among societies. That closes the way of conflict and violence against each other. Above mentioned similarities are key to near both traditions and create a balanced way among followers of Christianity and Islam with

communication of these common grounds holding different meetings in Pakistan as well as all over the world commonly.

Social Ethics of Christians-Muslims for Peacebuilding in Pakistan

Morals and social ethics might be defined with “Ethical Egoism” that to bring about the best for everyone. According to Micah Newman, Ethical Egoism is argued with two opinions: first, the supreme good for each person is whatever is best for that person and second, for each person, the person who is best looking after that person’s interests is that person. Therefore, being a part of society, every person expects good dealing with him from any other who concerns him. Social ethics and morality gain importance in the boundary of religion and faith that calls the people to goodness and betterment of humanity. People worship God because God represents perfect goodness. In this case, religion provides guidelines of social ethics to the religious people applying it in society.

Keeping the view, Christian and Muslim societies both have strong interaction and coexistence of religious and social bases in an entire history among communities to follow up religious teachings regarding social ethics. But there are some social values and ethics exist in each society which is followed to get higher status in society. Regarding the coexistence of two or more religious or traditional communities, these ethics come near opposite creed and keep strong harmony and caring as a social partner of the same society upholding peace and reconciliation.

Social Ethics in a Residential Area for Peacebuilding

Social Ethics is a set of rules and values that apply in order to control relationships with others because of this good interaction can be developed in society. Such development in society provides seeding for human creations and is created with the aim of preserving good community relations and harmony. Peacebuilding is ultimately part of that enlargement, especially in religious pluralistic society. Social ethics are relevant with values of interaction in the society of multiple cultural communities that depend upon the culture and custom promotes in areas where community resides. Then the culture and local customs are still influenced more by the approach of the local community as well as the location and geographical conditions in which communities live and rely on a broad sense.

The social structure of Christian-Muslim community in forces itself to keep close relation with each other even from the existence of religious diversity. That is happening commonly in all over Punjab. Social ethics between Christians and Muslims generates harmony and tolerance which come to near and know each other serving good communication leads to peace and sincerity. Therefore, it is required in each community to raise peace and mutual cooperative atmosphere among society.

The situation of peace and harmony during applying social ethics in Christian-Muslim community has been being evaluated and analyzed with social techniques and methods by conducting survey.

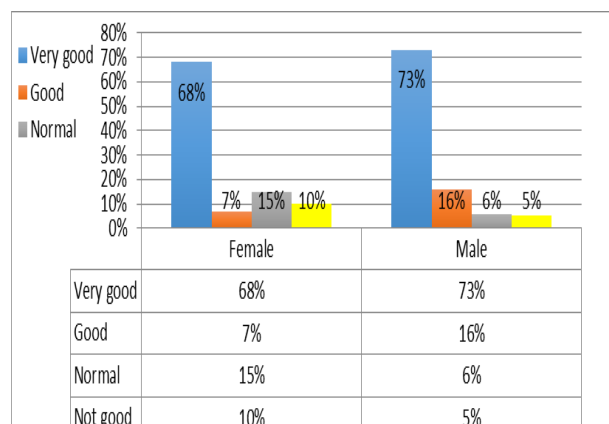
Social Ethics in a Residential Area in the Past

Answers from both communities regarding relations were put according to their minds.

Firstly, Muslim respondents are analyzed with their answers and secondly Christian.

Muslim Response:

How were your relations with Christian community in previous two decades?



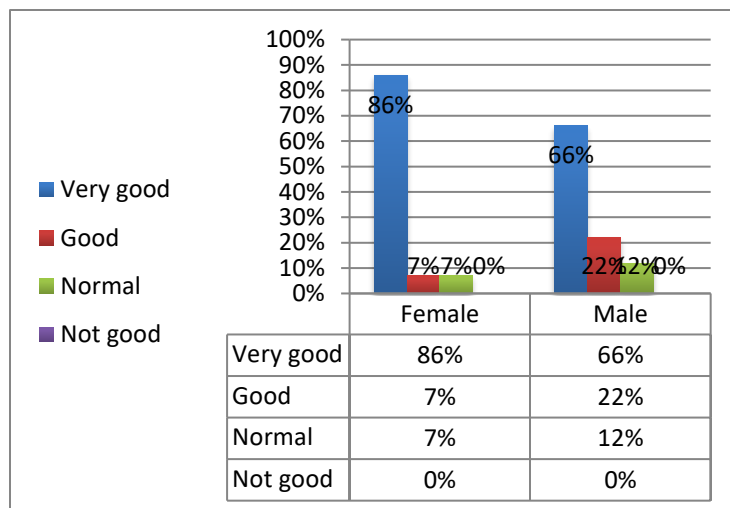
With the critical situation of the Christian-Muslim community, there is amazing response regarding social ethics and relations by Muslims in Pakistan. Almost 70% of each sex of Muslims agreed upon very good relations with Christians before the incident. Therefore, with the collection of “very good” and “good” options by male respondents, the ratio has been increased to 89% that is a huge amount of people had exchanged interaction with good social ethics and values to promote peacebuilding in the society. There might be certain reasons with an analytical approach. First, people were a joint society in an area without touching faith and keeping social preferences with needs by both sides of any region. Second, people honored humanity in the first step then they believed personal faith in the second step that teaches the lesson of good wishes to the humanity. Third, people enjoyed by each other for laboring needs and it's against financial benefits for labor community. Fourth, the social culture was strongly applied to each

community member, and no one could be violating that social custom such as the authority of elder people and their follow up. Fifth, Muslim community did not leave their practical religious teachings to promote true humble and tolerance in the society.

To become part of the negative sense of the society with ignoring social ethics, there is very low ratio commented from male and female of the Muslim community in bad exchange of social values between Christians and Muslims. 5% male and 10% female agreed that there were not good relations in the past between Christians and Muslims. Such ratio is ultimately found in every society they have different views than the majority of the community.

Christian Response

How were your relations with Muslim community in previous two decades?



The same question was put to Christian residents of the country to collect data regarding relations and exchange of social ethics with Muslims was being utilized before the incident. The data expressed peacebuilding situation by Christian was better in the society from both communities. Christian's male and female,

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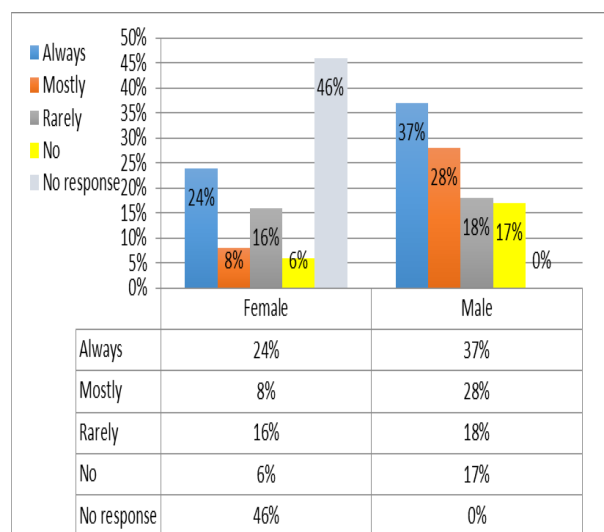
almost 90% from each part of the community, commented good relations with Muslims that displays the best position of social ethics and values between both communities. The seasons were mentioned above because of positive Muslim responses that could be followed here as satisfied answer by the Christian community. Social inconsistency draws different waves in society which changes human thoughts in short and long-term playing a dreadful role with the destruction of humanity. It does not only destroy the human body but also seeds the heated and impassioned against each other in the social hall of humanity. Then they forget their social interaction, ethics and values with each other before that destruction because of its fast attack on humanity such happened in an incident 2009 in Gojra. This incident is the main key to change the views and attitude of both communities, Christians and Muslims. The current situation analytically damaged all components and apparatus of the social ethics and all its settings in the society that was shown in the data of following lines. Now it is explored the position of after incident.

Social Ethics in a Residential Area in Contemporary Time

Aggression and violence come with hate and instability in society not to irrigate peace and humble by any member of society. Moreover, social values and ethics are neglected by harming to another part of society.

Muslim Response

Do you participate with Christian in sociological needs and cultural activities?



Before few years, the situation was developed in peace and harmony to deal other community members and answers hold “good and very good” relations were in about 90% of male and female separately. As mentioned in Table 1, that is an overview of the social encounter of Muslims with Christians. The highest ratio of upper two options which express “always” and “mostly” collectively in Muslim participation with Christian social needs and cultural activities are 65% by male and 32% by a female. The ratio because of happening incident comparatively has decreased from 90% to 65% by a male, the difference is 25%. By a female that has decreased from 75% to 32% and the difference is the 43%.

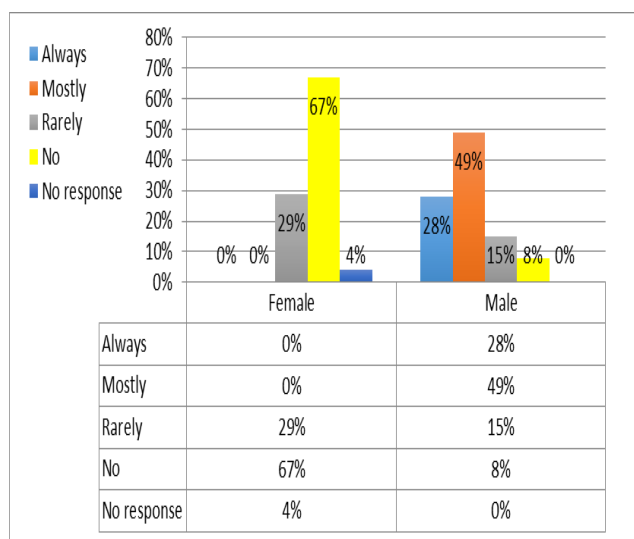
An action and reaction phenomenon might be involved in destruction of social encounters from both communities. This is a reason that aggression has been running at a higher level. The answers by female might be analyzed to demonstrate with the critical situation when 46% did not put any option from given. There can be reserve the image of social ethics and values, they do not want to express their views regarding fulfillment of sociological needs and cultural participation with Christians. While before the incident the situation was preferably

good because 64% female accepted the very good situation.

Regarding with these views, now Muslim female is also under presser of the reaction waves by national and international NGOs or Government security agencies. The Christian community was considered as an affected community by Muslim extremists in different incidents of the country. The strict action was taken against Muslims they were living in the affected area. All these procedures created high aggression especially in the mind of Muslim women because 46% neither put any response nor take any interest in Christian-Muslim relations in the society.

Christian Response

Do you participate with Muslims in sociological needs and cultural activities?



If the incident emerges between Christians and Muslims, the Christians think that the members from Muslim community were directly involved in the attack on Christian community. The emerging of reaction had ultimately natural sense with the hate and aggression by Christian

community against Muslims. By the above-mentioned table and graph, this reaction emerged by female Christian respondents compared with a male of the same community. There is 67% female they refused any social and cultural interaction with Muslims. Nobody from female responded at 'always' and 'mostly' interaction with Muslims because of two reasons may apply in this sense: the first female is more aggressive than male by any incident and they do not forget the dreadful situation created by Muslim community. They think about the cause of that incident accordingly. The Christian female has not dealt any social matter with Muslims so they are presenting their right views regarding interaction. While some of the Christian male respondents have been putting 'always' and 'mostly' options due to some social and financial matters with the Muslim community. They realize their position in Muslim majority country and the need of social and cultural interaction with Muslims, so they did not miss this option and 28% said always they participate with Muslims in social activities with presenting social ethics while 49% said they mostly do interaction with Muslims. The situation does clear with the option NO because 4% male respondents agreed on 'No' social interaction.

Conclusion

The fear of majority power is going on between both communities. After happening any incident with the attack of Muslim community on the Christians the fear becomes part of the society. It resolves gradually and social ethics promotes itself with the interaction of both community members with the passage of time. This is a reason that male and female respondents by Christians community differed in putting options of one question and they vary

regarding their social interaction with Muslim community members enhancing social ethics and morality in the society.

The state of peace building may differ in the working place than residential area because people try to get their financial benefit with their need bases and do not create a disturbance in their business deal. They always try to live and work with ethics being calm and smooth in society.

Mutual remedial activities are part of society for the existence of both communities. Although that is a natural part of society that nobody can live without social interaction being human. It is necessary for the community members to raise mutual work and supportive activities for peace building. This research highlights Christian-Muslim relation in the sights of religion and society with the case study, Pakistan. There are few religious similarities between Christianity and Islam by which interaction has been developing among members of Christian-Muslim communities. The theological similarities may create peace among both communities if the religious scholars highlight those commonalities in the society. Religious and social functions are part of the daily life of each person, but it needs to call the people to mutually remedial activities for peace building. That will help to create humbleness and tolerance among the Christian-Muslim community members.

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