

**Navigating Pluralism: Reassessing Pakistan's State-Society Nexus
in the Quest for Tolerance, with Insights from Indonesia**

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the factors contributing to growing intolerance in Pakistan. It analyzes the role of key socio-economic, political, and cultural causes. Using a qualitative research methodology and comparative analysis, the study examines what are the major drivers of intolerance in Pakistan, and how can they be effectively addressed. It also examines Indonesia's 'Unity in Diversity' model as a successful example of promoting tolerance. Theoretically, phenomenon of intolerance has been analyzed under the framework of constructivism. Conceptions of constructivism; cognitive constructivism and socio constructivism have been utilized based on the work of Jean Piaget and Vygotsky. The findings suggest that several factors such as economic inequality, youth frustration, political polarization, and religious divisions significantly contribute to the problem, further intensified by weak education systems and poor governance. The study recommends that a comprehensive approach involving educational reforms, legal measures, interfaith dialogue, and civil society participation is essential to foster a more inclusive, peaceful, and cohesive society in Pakistan.

Keywords: Pakistan, Indonesia, pluralism, ethnic diversity, religious intolerance, social harmony

INTRODUCTION

Intolerance refers to a lack of respect in thoughts and actions toward others. It involves the inability to accept individuals who hold different perceptions, diverse ideologies, and distinct identities. On the other hand, it has emerged as a powerful influence on individuals, alongside family and educational institutions. In the digital age, social media increasingly shapes the behavior and attitudes of younger generations, often replacing traditional sources of guidance such as parents and community elders. Due to busy lifestyles, many individuals are unable to effectively supervise the educational and social development of their children. As a result, social media has become a dominant platform for interaction, allowing people to communicate beyond spatial and temporal limitations.

The core argument of this study is that religious and ethnic intolerance has become a growing concern in Pakistan, hindering progress toward peace, harmony, and development. This research aims to address the question: how can the measures adopted by the Indonesian government to

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prevent religious and ethnic intolerance serve as lessons for Pakistan? The study also addresses a key gap in the existing literature. While substantial research has examined the causes of intolerance in Pakistan, most studies focus on isolated socio-economic, political, or psychological factors. There is a lack of comparative research exploring how successful international models, such as Indonesia's "Unity in Diversity," can be applied in the Pakistani context. Furthermore, there is a need for integrated frameworks that combine structural, institutional, and societal approaches to address intolerance comprehensively.

By adopting a comparative perspective, this study provides deeper insights into the complexities of intolerance and offers practical strategies for addressing it. Drawing on the Indonesian model, the research proposes effective measures to promote social cohesion, tolerance, and harmony in Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on intolerance can be broadly categorized into several thematic areas, including conceptual definitions, psychological explanations, religious intolerance, and the role of digital media. The Cambridge Dictionary defines intolerance as the refusal to accept ideas, beliefs, or behaviors that differ from one's own (Cambridge Dictionary). Building on this, scholars have examined intolerance as a cognitive and social phenomenon characterized by rigidity and resistance to alternative viewpoints. Research in psychology highlights that intolerance is often associated with cognitive closure and limited openness, emphasizing the need to promote tolerance and mutual understanding within societies (Greene, 2023).

This rigidity is particularly evident in communities with deeply embedded religious, cultural, and political identities. Individuals strongly aligned with ideological positions often demonstrate resistance to opposing perspectives, reinforcing divisions within society.

Religious intolerance has been widely discussed in the literature. Nussbaum (2004) argues that intolerance intensifies when individuals perceive their religion as the sole source of truth while delegitimizing others. Historically, intolerance has been linked to limited knowledge and communication; however, in the contemporary era, it is deeply institutionalized and often manifests in sudden and violent forms.

The role of social media in shaping intolerance has also received increasing scholarly attention. While digital platforms provide opportunities for civic engagement and amplifying marginalized voices (Michaelsen, 2011), they simultaneously facilitate the spread of extremist ideologies and hate speech. Individuals experiencing social isolation are particularly vulnerable to such influences, further exacerbating intolerance (Nussbaum, 2004). The rapid expansion of social media has made it a central arena for social interaction, particularly in developing societies such as Pakistan.

In the Pakistani context, intolerance is reflected in discrimination and marginalization based on religious and ethnic identities. Studies indicate that such patterns are rooted in

historical and socio-political structures, contributing to systemic inequalities (Dimensions of Racism, 2003). Religious minorities, including Shia Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and Ahmadis, frequently face social exclusion and violence. Similarly, ethnic groups such as Pashtuns, Baloch, and Sindhis encounter disparities in political and economic opportunities (Ahmad, 1996). These dynamics undermine social cohesion and pose challenges to national stability.

In contrast, Indonesia has adopted various policy and institutional measures to promote tolerance, including legal reforms, interfaith dialogue, and educational initiatives. These efforts highlight the role of state and societal mechanisms in fostering inclusivity and social harmony.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative and comparative approach to examine intolerance in Pakistan and Indonesia, with a particular focus on the role of state and society in shaping attitudes toward religious and ethnic diversity.

The research is primarily based on secondary data, drawing upon existing literature, academic studies, and reports to analyze patterns of intolerance and policy responses in both countries. Relevant scholarly works have been used to understand the psychological, social, and political dimensions of intolerance. The study further utilizes a thematic analytical method, through which different dimensions of intolerance such as religious intolerance, social media influence, and minority marginalization are examined and categorized into key themes. These themes are then comparatively analyzed to identify differences and similarities between Pakistan and Indonesia.

A comparative research design is employed to highlight how different state structures, legal frameworks, and societal dynamics influence the prevalence and management of intolerance. Pakistan is analyzed as a case where intolerance is deeply embedded in socio-political structures, whereas Indonesia is examined as a relatively more tolerant model with institutional mechanisms promoting diversity and inclusion. The research is guided by the theoretical lens of social constructivism, which explains how intolerance is shaped through social interaction, cultural norms, and learned behavior over time.

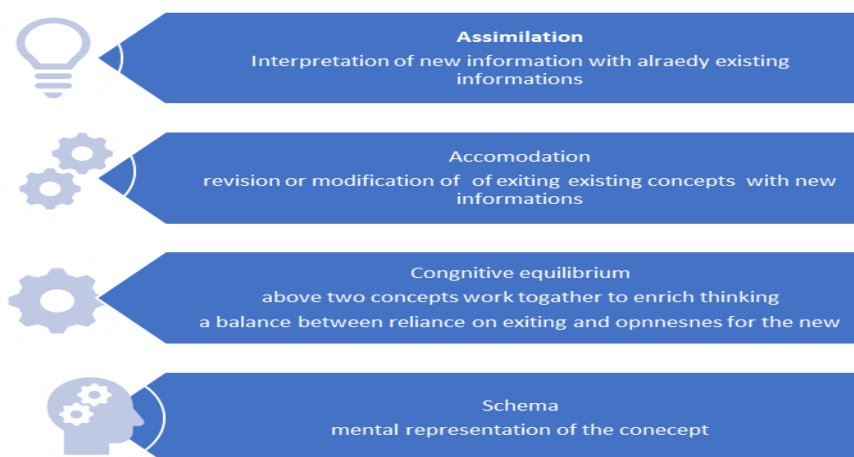
THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Theoretically, phenomenon of intolerance has been analysed under the framework of constructivism. Jerome Bruner introduced constructivism theory in 1966. According to this conceptual principle, individuals create their own knowledge and understanding of the world on the basis of already existing experiences and events (Bruner, 1966). Conceptions of constructivism; cognitive constructivism and socio constructivism have been utilised based on the work of Jean Piaget and of Vygotsky having a deeper insight of the phenomenon.

Cognitive constructivism (Piaget, 1962) is a theory of assimilation and accommodation; Cognitive constructivism means how people makes sense of their experience using their own mind. Now here

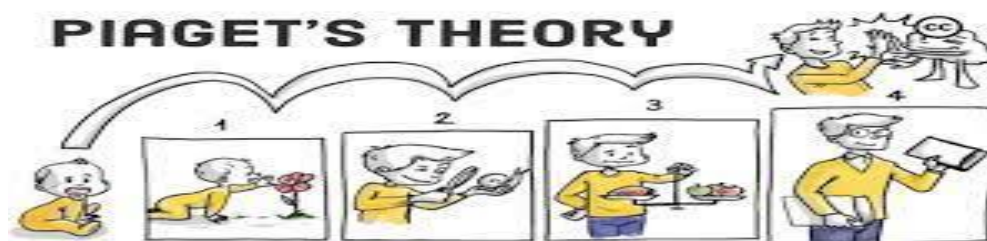
comes how one's mind is groomed. You may look older but your cognitive approach is not matured. Therefore, learning is relative to their stage of cognitive development. Furthermore, a number of cognitive sociology literature suggests that attitudes and actions of religious intolerance are formed socio mentally by dominating majority groups as society follow them thinking them on right track against minority groups as majority groups play their role in cognitive constructivist the argument, influenced by the thoughts of communities.

Figure 1: Cognitive Constructivism



Source: Based on Piaget theory of cognitive constructivism

Figure 2: Piaget Description of cognitive constructivism



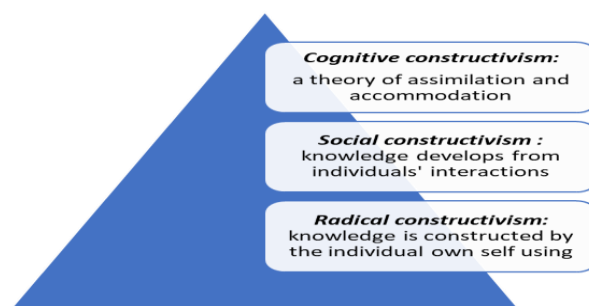
Source: Piaget Description of cognitive constructivism based on age group

Vygotsky believed that language and culture were fundamental to human intellectual growth as well as to how people saw the outside world. This means that language is used to convey concepts, which are then interpreted and understood via experience and interactions in a cultural context. Knowledge is therefore not only socially built but also produced together as it requires a group of individuals to have language and culture in order to form cognitive structures. (Vygotsky, 1978)

The notion of *radical constructivism* was developed by Ernst von Glasersfeld (1974) (Glasersfeld, 1984) and it states that all knowledge is constructed by the individual own self using his own mind, emotions, feelings, inner self analysis rather than perceived through senses. There is no one to teach, there is no text to follow. Learners have to construct new knowledge on the foundations and footprints of their existing knowledge. However, radical constructivism also states that the knowledge being created by the individuals tells us nothing about reality or things on actual grounds and only

helps us to function in self-created nutshell environment. Thus, knowledge is invented not discovered. Hence, knowledge is a created factor, it needs not to be a 'true picture' of the reality.

Figure 3: Conceptual development of the learning process



Source: derived from multiple datasets

Along with the theoretical underpinnings, there are other types of explanations for studying intolerance particularly growing intolerance in Pakistan, out of those psychological reasons are significant too which are given to explain the intolerance which includes prejudicial, intuitive, and deliberative.

Prejudicial Reasons

Prejudicial reasons can further be explained in the ways of rigid forms of thinking, difficulty accepting different views, beliefs, and practices and narrow-minded. First, we understand what prejudice is; A prejudice is usually a negative perception or judgment, we tend to establish in our minds about other people or matter without really knowing the true facts. Here comes a similar phenomenon to prejudice is stereotypes; prejudices are learned as part of our socialisation process. But, the obvious difference between a stereotype and a prejudice is that when enough information is readily available about an individual, matter or a particular situation, stereotypes that are set in our mind can be broken on the basis of information which pull the minds from ambiguity into reality and as a result, we do away with our stereotypes. But, prejudice on the other hand rather works like a wind screen through which we are looking and we tend to perceive in the way we want to be. Thus, denying any given piece of reality as mind is filled with pessimism so, information alone usually is not qualified enough to get rid of a prejudice structure. Prejudices alter our perceptions towards reality and our focus still based on fake deceptions; we tend to keep our information processed that confirms our prejudice. This implies that prejudices are therefore, very difficult to overcome as we are trapped inside the barrier of our own. Instead of considering the facts we'd rather deny the facts than question the prejudice (Greene, 2013).

Intuitive Reasons

Intuitive reasons can be explained that moral responses are guided by intuitions, people who hold a strong conviction, are strong in cultural or religion beliefs, decreased reflective reasoning and people made their responses based on their first instincts. According to dual-process theories of moral judgment (Greene, 2013), peoples have different mind-sets so their moral responses can be determined by their immediate intuitions of their minds. They tend to make responses to any information gathered and analyse it onto their typical mind-sets and then strict to it as they are done

with analysis; further convert these intuitions into emotions and feelings as opposed to rational, effortful and logical reasoning. Intuitive intolerance also means that people may have a double standard to their mind-sets. For example, by accepting practices of one majority religious and ethnic group but not of a minority group engaging in similar practices (Verkuyten, Yogeeswaran, Adelman, 2019). It becomes intolerance when one does not recognize and appreciate the right of others to dissent from one's own strong views with supportive arguments and justifications to their own cases. Thereby, applying a double standard to their views that limits their equal rights and freedoms as well. This lack of recognition implies an incomplete consideration of others treated as being equals whether autonomous person or citizen with the same rights and privileges to live the life that they want for themselves. Research has also found, for example, that the disapproval and negation of others' beliefs and practices goes side by side with tolerance based on respect for others as equal fellow citizens regardless of their belongings (Verkuyten, Yogeeswaran, Adelman, 2020).

Deliberative Reasons

Deliberative reasons are the moral judgments are either processed emotionally or rationally, competing considerations between rejection or acceptance. In case of rejections, reasons of rejection are more important as they have high impact on decision making resulting in intolerant behaviour. Any good reasons to reduce intolerance will depend on social, cultural, and historical factors. Although intolerance has a negative connotation by itself as roots for synthesis are negative. Thus, no individual or group can be tolerant of everything, therefore, intolerance always exists to some extent somehow. Here, it is very interesting and ironical to know that intolerance of drinking and driving is not considered a vice but a virtue as it exists in majority of society. People tend to drive rash as they have high speed vehicles putting the accidents on speed but not who is speeding and in the same way they love to drink as it pleased their instincts. In the classical understanding, intolerance also implies that specific practices and beliefs are considered to deviate in an unacceptable way from a presupposed norm (Verkuyten, Adelman & Yogeeswaran, 2020). This intolerance has less to do with the out-group per se or with people's immediate intuitions but rather with reflecting on the perceived normative deviance of particular practices and beliefs.

Table 1: Different Dimension and Types of Intolerance

Dimension	Prejudicial Intolerance	Intuitive Intolerance	Deliberative Intolerance
Affective State	Negative feelings, emotions (antipathy, hatred)	Disapproval of out-group practices as different	Disapproval of specific practices as being harmful and unfair
Psychological process	Rigidity, Closed mindedness,	Immediate intuitions and emotions	Weighing contrasting moral reasons
Behavioural outcome	In-group superiority and out-group discrimination	Intergroup differentiation with double standards	In-group protection and rejection of practices regardless of actor

Source: (Maykel Verkuyten)

RISE OF INTOLERANCE IN PAKISTAN

The day by day an increase in ethnic and religious intolerance is sign of overall societal intolerance with maximum number of reported cases either in the name of religion or superior culture (Human Rights First, 2012).

Detail of some of incidents of the violent intolerance concerning the different minority communities in Pakistan in the recent years are presented here:

On October 11, 2012, a mob of Islamic clerics and their follower raided the house of a Christian teenager in port city of Karachi and burned furniture because the boy was blamed for spreading blasphemous content.

A bus carrying followers of the minority Ismaili sect in Karachi was attacked on May 13, 2015. More than 40 people of them were killed and at least 13 injured in this gun attack.

On March 18, 2019, two Ahmadi doctors were abducted first and after few days their bodies were recovered near Fateh Jang city of Punjab.

On March 19, 2019, a college professor namely Khalid Hameed was killed by his own student in Bahawalpur, Punjab province because he (the professor) allowed a mixed gathering of male and female students for welcoming newly enrolled students.

On November 09, 2021, a 40-year-old Ahmadi namely Kamran Ahmad was shot dead by an unknown attacker in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

On December 3, 2021, a Sri-Lankan manager of a factory in Sialkot, Punjab province was killed and burnt by a mob allegedly blaming him desecrating posters bearing the name of Prophet of Islam.

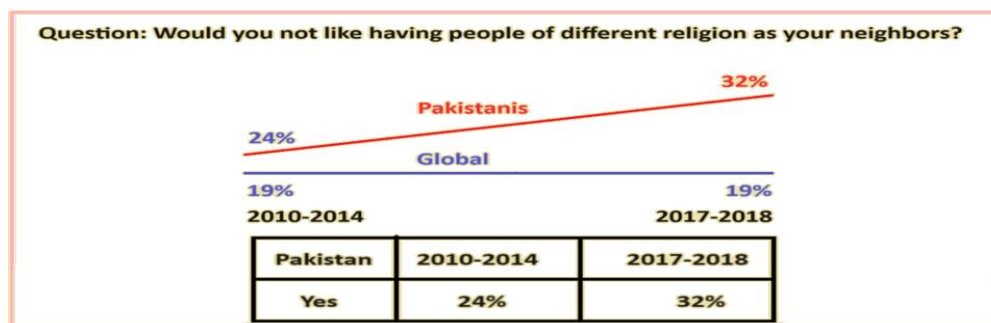
On February 11, 2023, a group of the people attacked on a police station in the city of Nankana Sahib, Punjab and killed a person detained in a Qur'an desecration case.

When a generation grows it finds huge gaps between previous generation. There have been dynamic transforms in cultural standards, values and social composition (Willett, 2013). This gap is widening instead of filling. One core reason is process of thinking and conceiving, the way young generation looks is different than the previous generation. Older generation perceive on the basis of their experiences while younger generation perceives on the bases of new beginnings. Due to these current circumstances, society in Pakistan is in the phase of paradigm shift. Further another factor is older generation live their life on principle of simplicity as there are less technology investment while new generation was born in modern era of science and technology, therefore, life leads by older generations is impossible for younger generation.

This is reason, they do not listen to elders. Being unheard by elders creates family level intolerance. Now, if we look at the societal level, it is viewed that the apparent acts of protectiveness as they are deprived of basic necessities due to unemployment, revenge towards those who have all these luxuries not they earned it but mainly come from inheritance and no self-achievements, other factors are lesser opportunities and social injustice, this creates frustration, depression and rejection as they don't find room to flourish in the society are common. These are the gateways to intolerance. Violent, hostile and biased behaviour is repeatedly experienced among the masses including in the markets and workplaces (Willett, 2013). Specifically, youth can be observed moving in different areas with an aggressive attitude. There is a fear any incident in which they can take part is going to be violent that shows the level of increased intolerance. Now this youth's hostile behaviour is becoming a leading social problem in the Pakistani society. Special care should be made in this regard as a large population of Pakistan are youth. Rising intolerance in Pakistan can be understood by assessing a survey report based on a question from Pakistanis, "would you not like to have people of

a different religion as your neighbours?" About 24% answers were "Yes" to this question during the years 2010-2014 but this ratio increased to 32% during 2017-2018 (Gallup History Project, 2020).

Figure 4: Gallup Surveys regarding Intolerance



Source: (Nussbaum, 2004)

Causes of Intolerance in Pakistan

The youth which is 63 percent population (Unleashing the potential of a young Pakistan, July 24, 2018) of the country, kept away from the road of progress to success and are being used as a tool by different political and social circles for their purposes. Pakistani society is going through great socio-cultural changes such as revenge, jealousy, competition for material attainment and lack of opportunities for growth almost near to one million people flew abroad due to political turmoil going in the country in one and half year time period which is a sad dilemma for the country (Saeed, 2017). The grievances start among minorities when they were denied access of their basic rights promised in the constitution of Pakistan (Suleman, 2020). The apparent reasons of intolerance in the country are socio-economic, politico religious and socio-cultural factors.

Socio-Economic Factors

Social factors are inequality; middle class is pushed further into lower class due to poor economic conditions. There is a lack of support to poor families by the Government (Nawaz, 2023). Constantly, the worsened economy performance pushes middle class to go below the line of poverty. All is creating a socially disconnected society and this gap is rising further. People are least concerned with neighbourhoods or even have no knowledge who is living around in posh area. There is depletion to vanishing moral values, inaccessibility to services, weak communal leadership who is unable to solve minor issues, poor parenting, neglected children and overlooked individual level of well-being for their children. There is an over exposure to internet, social media and cable media. No-body knows what his/her kid is surfing and as a result no one can predict what a child is going to be when grown up. The social and community environments are not under any check and balance by the parents. It is observed that in Pakistani society ego among majority of youth is at its peak as they find themselves far behind as compared to elite class. They sometime considered themselves being neglected part of the society. Therefore, their intolerance level is very high as society is constructing new standards of respect and social status according to their power, money, connections and relationships for them (Saeed, 2017).

There are the issues like lack of earnings, inequality in getting income, rising poverty, unemployment, and dismal social and political conditions of the society. Those with higher socio-economic Status

attached more importance to identities that are indicative of their socio-economic status position, but less importance on identities that are rooted in basic demographics or related to their sociocultural orientation (and vice versa), (Manstead, 2018). The economic reasons for intolerance in Pakistan are multifaceted and deeply rooted in the country's socio-economic structure. High levels of poverty and unemployment create a breeding ground for frustration and resentment, particularly among disenfranchised groups who compete for limited resources (Rehman, et. al., 2022). Economic disparity between different regions and communities exacerbates feelings of injustice and marginalization. For example, underdeveloped areas such as Balochistan and parts of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa often feel neglected compared to the more prosperous Punjab region, fuelling ethnic and provincial tensions. A large number of frustrated and unemployed youth join the religious extremism groups or are being inspired by other militant groups. The literature verified, "Underemployed young men with frustrated aspirations and a limited stake in society are particularly susceptible to radicalization" (Allan, et. al, 2015). Such trends are being specially increased in the Southern areas of Punjab province and remote areas of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

Politico Religious Factors

Political and Religious affiliations are playing vital role as basic motivations for changing behaviour among youth. The scholarly work does not answer about the volume of impact of religious and political connections on youth but argues that religion has been the foundation of so many institutions such as education, politics, science among many others and can therefore not be underestimated when analyzing youth's world views (Odhiambo, 2021). It has been seen that political and religious associations of people changed the cultural norms and values of society. Moreover, these affiliations are driving youth in specific and society in general towards emotional behaviours and thus resulting in increasing intolerance. Discussing on the major reasons of intolerance among youth in Pakistani society, religious attachments and sentimental behaviour were on the top of list of causes, political activities and issues were at second level as causes of intolerance among youth. In Pakistan, a Pakistani citizen's social identity depends on religion, the most; then sect of the religion, person tribe, or caste; he is born with and even province, city and place of living as well are important in society. Among these, it is observed that the religious divide has done the most significant damage to the social order and the social development process. Above two hundred million people of Pakistan (total population of the country) are divided into religious basis as follows: 96.28% Muslim, including 81% Sunni (Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahle-Hadith) and 15% Shia and rest is the minority comprises 1.5% Christians, 1.6% Hindus, 0.25% from scheduled castes, and 0.07% from other religions including Sikhs, Baha'i, Parsi and Ahmadi (Batoool & Nazly, 2020).

Although rise in intolerance in Pakistan is not a new issue, the whereabouts in which it is escalating so speedy that is really mystifying and alarming. People just wanted to tune in on the statement of their will and choice only. Problem is that they are unwilling and lack of the courage to listen to something beyond the bounds of a specific religious sect or peculiar political party. A piece of Pakistanis literature asserts, "Our society is currently facing political polarization, not among supporters but also among politicians. During talk shows, interviews, and on social media, they are largely involved in mudslinging hardly anyone cares to listen to others' opinions" (Fahim & Junaid, 2023). In educational environments, there is a deviant behaviour of children and youths towards

education due to lack of interest of parents results in huge number of not school going young people. The reason seen for this is ridiculous as parents just claim that they cannot afford fees and lack of commitment in academic activities is widespread. One wonder what would be the career of these children with no education in the environment that encompasses lack of cohesion in the society, disorganisation and negligence especially for youth, easy availability of drugs in colleges and universities, high population turnover (excessive number of children), corrupted and compromised organisation structure of law enforcement agencies. So that social bonds, social values, care, respect of elders and love with youngers are in fading now-a-days.

Socio-Cultural Factors

Finally, structure of a family which is basic unite of the society builds on a very strange idea of having greater number of children who be working for livelihood of the parents instead of parents themselves. This led to cruelty of parents who produced children just for the purpose of begging as this is happening in Pakistani families who lived below poverty lines. Also, poor parental supervision of child, parents' negligence on moral and ethical issues, harsh treatment from parents is another factor contributing to intolerance. Low family income and poor grooming causes that children are deprived of the basic childhood needs. There is lack of communication between children and parents as they don't bother their queries and concerns that creates lack of respect and responsibility amongst family members, child abuse, and family breakup are other factors of intolerance. A report of Harvard University illustrates that studies on children in a variety of settings show that "severe deprivation or neglect disrupts the ways in which children's brains develop and process information, increasing the risk for attentional, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural disorders" (Neglect, n.d.).

Not only the children, but the socio-cultural factors also greatly induce intolerance at all levels of the society as the cultural aspect encompasses ideas, beliefs, behaviour, respect etc. An article defines intolerance as "Intolerance is the fact of refusing to accept ideas, beliefs, or behaviour that are different from your own" (Discrimination and Intolerance, n.d.). The history of denying others' ideas, beliefs or behaviour is usual and long-lasting thing in Pakistan. In most cases denying is not only the factor, though having any verbal quarrel people go far behind and things gone in action state which could be violent. One notable incident highlighting social-cultural factors contributing to intolerance in Pakistan is the case of Rimsha Masih, a Christian girl who faced accusations of blasphemy in 2012 but later acquitted and declared not guilty by a local court (Rowland, 2012). Rimsha was detained by police from a locality in Pakistani capital, Islamabad, after a furious crowd demanded her arrest and punishment. The charge of blasphemy against the religion is often enough to provoke violence and mob justice in Pakistan, reflecting the intolerance particularly towards religious minorities and the influence of social norms that favour conformity to the religious views of the influential sect.

Government's Role in Combating Intolerance

The government's role is the most effective role in reducing intolerance. The state can do anything what it wants. State has high resources to counteract this issue. In fact, the state should come forward and play its pivotal role in this regard. Being a Muslim state country, it is a religion that gives religious freedom and protects the fundamental rights which are indeed human rights. Even the fundamental rights are protected in the constitution of Pakistan (Fundamental Rights, n.d.) The government may take the following steps to eliminate intolerance:

Necessary Reforms

It was duty of the state to build curriculum of Madras as the way they have done for schools, so that it seeks the broader narrative of the religion of Islam i.e., there is no extremism in Islam, but unfortunately the religious extremists are being produced by some of the Islamic madrassas. Some of so-called Mullas (religious clerics) of some of the sects who by their specific narrative produce a great division in society, threaten to stability of the state and according to a research report, “In Pakistan, religious extremism threatens social cohesion and feeds into terrorism” (Pakistan’s Counter Extremism , 2021). If only the religious extremism is controlled by the government, half of the intolerance can be reduced.

The Pakistan government should sit with all the sects’ representatives on one table, try to bring consensus among all sects and do legal reforms and implement these reforms. Provide society with an environment conducive for people to freely express their religious beliefs in such a way that no element of harm to other sect is produced by observing the principle of “not leaving your sect and by not interfering other sect views”, will eliminate intolerance among sects (Dont Leave Your Sect and Dont Harm Other Sect, 2021). There must be punishments on religious violence. The civilian courts also need to be strengthened and any kind of religious violence occurred in the country must be phished exemplary, so that religious extremist must not be able to sway court opinions and judgments in favour of them.

The Pakistan’s government on priority bases resolve the issue of intolerance by educating its youth through educational reforms. Such kind of curricula should be developed in which no traces of extremism found. This is very important as it results in ending of the roots of religious intolerance and pluralism. Pakistan, a country with high percentage of the population come under the age bracket of 25 years, the state must not waste any further time and immediately start educating its youth on grass root level, so it could produce a good civilized society. “The education system must teach about the immense ethnic, religious, and cultural diversities in Pakistan” (Pakistan’s Counter Extremism , 2021). As for other soft actions, the government has to initiate, implement youth programs nationwide with the aid of all sects and keep monitoring and evaluating outcome of these youth initiatives by using electronic and social media. It is necessary to promote tolerance and beneficial modernization of society.

Role of Security Agencies

As for hard actions, the government should launch some comprehensive operations like Zarbe Azab and Radul fasaad (Dar, 2019) conducted in recent past against religious militants and extremists and must not allow any militant group to operate from its territory. Religious minorities will remain under threat, if these violent extremists are not properly handled; Pakistan’s future as a cohesive and stable nation will hang in the balance.

Countering violent religious and ethnic intolerance in Pakistani society requires a multi-pronged strategy that calls for strong action by both the police and the military. The police and military institutions also need to take strong measures to deal with religious and ethnic intolerance, which has become a complex and deep-rooted problem in the country. According to Pakistan is not only witnessing extreme intolerance towards religious and national minorities but has become a toxic society in this regard (Baloch, 2023). The police can play an important role in investigating and

arresting perpetrators of intolerance-based violence, while the military can control hard-line extremist groups that adhere to the ideology of intolerance and spread terrorism in society.

Ideological Factor

Saudi Arabian and Iranian grievances are also an important factor in accelerating religious intolerance among the different sects in Pakistan. What an irony of the situation, people of different Islamic sects don't come to each other's mosques because of religious differences, yet nobody cares about this trend among the masses in the country, which has been experiencing sectarian clashes for many years (Abbot and Khan, 2013). Ending the old grievances between Saudi Arabia and Iran and promoting their mutual relations will help, to a large extent, control the problem of sectarian violence in Pakistan as well. Similarly, the same applies in the case of Pak-India relations. Though both were worst enemy countries to each other in the past, there have been many wars fought between the two countries. But one should keep in mind that there is more Muslim population in India than in Pakistan. Any state conflict has adverse effects on the Muslim population there. Sustained Pakistani-Indian dialogue would help diminish this hanging sword of war over the two nations. One can explore more trade outcomes that bring the two countries together. If trade volumes are the biggest, it will end any kind of militant escalations, and no extremist group from either side will provoke religious intolerance.

Role of Civil Society

The civil society, which acts as a link between the state and society, can handle societal issues wisely. Islam which is official religion of Pakistan, offers great importance to human dignity and civil society based on rule of law (Sajid, 2004). Thus, beside the government, the civil society has also an important role to address the intolerance among the masses. On the government level, there must be initiatives for the people to keep them busy through different programs for their own betterment like skill development programs. Similarly, civic sense program should be arranged countrywide for youth. On society level, parents' supervision and control over their children should be friendly and firm. Prominent personalities and social groups and educational institutions can play vital role in making the society better. They can focus on better and quality education and focus on high ground moral values and positive character-building sense among the youth specially the students.

They should be told to give respect to others first regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliations. This will have a healthy impact on the person whom at a point realize how self-respect is given to him and definitely this will payback and that particular person will listen to other perspective and thus tolerance to be prevailed. For this, a joint collaborative effort should be put together by all social components to start a drive "Pehly Aap" means "You First" to induce society to show a patient character, especially by youth. Civil Society should use the concept of constructivism by engaging youth into different social and economic activities keeping them busy as there is saying an empty mind is devil's workshop (Robinson, 2020).

Role of Religious Scholars

No-body can ignore the role of the religious leaders in a society like Pakistan, the leading Muslim country in the world. According to the literature, "because of their revered position, religious leaders play a pivotal role in influencing people in their day-to-day affairs (Rehman, 2023). Hence, the

religious scholars should avoid where conflict is implied. They should rely on the basics, interpret the religion in strengthening the society, more research is made to deescalate point of conflicts among different sects. It is very easy for religious scholars to tell their disciples don't leave your sect and don't interfere other sect. This will eliminate intolerance greatly. They should also come up with the modern society and put their efforts in research in religious matters so that they all move forward in positive direction. Religious scholars should be discouraged in making speeches of hatred.

A uniform speech system at mosques should be adopted throughout the country as in case of Kingdom of Saudia Arabia. Civil society should help the government in reforming the religious madrassas syllabus. The civilian figures can play important role in implementation of the parameters and guidelines concerning tolerance introduced by the government for the different sects. The society should discourage the hatred speech and prevent the speaker who promotes sectarian discrimination. Media should stop propagating any hatred materials. NGOs also join hand in hand with the society and play their part in creating awareness launching media campaigns in highlighting the issue of intolerance and how to control.

Lessons from Indonesia

Indonesia, is the largest Muslim populated country of more than 279 million people in the world. It comprises of 18,000 islands, 1300 ethnic groups, and a country with over 740 languages, (CIA Factbook, 2024) built itself as an independent nation-state grounded on a commitment to "Unity in Diversity". It was Soekarno, the first President of Indonesia, who suggested this idea of 'Bhinneka Tunggal Ika' or 'Unity upon the country's independence'. Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) is an idea that encompasses tolerance for physical, cultural, linguistic, political, and intellectual differences in addition to religious ones. Indonesia emphasizes the subject of "Pancasila in United Action for Resilient Indonesia (Pancasila dalam Tindakan Bersatu untuk Indonesia Tangguh)" in honor of Pancasila's birthday, which falls on June 1. Pancasila, which also spelled Pantjasila, is the legal governing ideology of Indonesia.

The acceptance of many religions in Indonesia serves as a metaphor for religious tolerance in Unity in Diversity. Despite having the greatest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia's constitution protects everyone's right to practice their religion. Indonesia is home to followers of at least six major global faiths, including Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Hinduism. The physical representation of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is also seen in architectural arts found in houses of worship, including mosques, churches, Hindu and Buddha temples, in addition to its diversity. The Indonesian people have traditionally used these facilities for a variety of purposes, including worship, discussion, and other social gatherings. The physical designs of cemeteries, palaces, and mosques have long been influenced by Hindu architecture. Furthermore, in Indonesian Islamic mosque construction, acculturation has taken center stage (Bridging diversity the Indonesian way, 2021).

Figure 5: Its "Unity in Diversity" is based on five principles of;



Source: Indonesia's Pancasila (Factsheet: Indonesia's Pancasila, March 2021).

As the foundation of the state, Pancasila serves as both the foundation and the guide for state management. Thus, Pancasila serves as the foundation and a benchmark for all state laws and regulations, in addition to numerous more rules controlling social culture, politics, economics, and defense and security, among other domains of life (Morfit, 1981).

Acculturation is a term with a deeper meaning than rectification; it refers to the upholding and application of ideals in their proper context. Teaching everyone the values that are important to know and the different issues that might come up when putting these values into practice—values that are so essential to the existence of society, the country, and the state—is known as cultivation.

Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and modern European values gave a synthesis of Islam with other cultures. Indonesia has also witnessed the early display of secularist thought since the time of Islam. Suharto adopted new order in response of voices of Islam. Due to adaptation of Pancasila as a state ideology, certain people love to call it secular. However, Indonesia is neither a secular, nor a theocratic state. Pew (2008) that 80% Indonesians offer their five-time prayers a day while 59% in Egypt, 46% in Pakistan and 34% in Turkey. However, it is both secular as well as non- secular at the same time (The Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2008). The Indonesian government has undertaken several measures to address religious and ethnic intolerance, including legislative reforms, educational initiatives, and interfaith dialogues in the recent years ("Indonesia Committed to Combating," 2023).

How Indonesia Religious Synthesis is Significant for Pakistan?

The legal reforms including modifications in the relevant rules and regulations and steps for promotion of social and cultural combination played important role in national integration. If we comparatively study of Pakistan's circumstances, this country can implement the measures as Indonesia took actions for maintaining religious and ethnic tolerance in its society. Like Indonesia, Pakistan is also one of the countries having large Muslim population in the world. Pakistan's constitution also protects everyone right to practice their religion as the country is home of followers of various religions particularly Islam, Christianity, Hinduism. Even a devotion to creating an economic, political, social, cultural and legal setting will enable people to achieve social development (Creating an Inclusive Society, 2009). Additionally, activities for interfaith harmony and initiatives at educational institutions fostered tolerance and making better understanding among the different

communities. As the Indonesian laws protect religious and ethnic minorities, Pakistan can similarly improve its legal system for offering protection to its ethnic and religious minorities against violence and biasness existed in its society. Indonesia's policy of regionalization has transferred the power to the gross root level, permitting the people representatives to resolve their problems in the remote areas. Acculturation has more motor subtleties than more remedial cognitive and emotional domains. There are calls for its cultivation in the correctional facility as well, but it seems that both the institutionalization of society and this culture's direction. Pakistan can also improve provincial and regional autonomy and ensure local bodies are addressing the needs of miscellaneous segments of the society (Maulida et. al, 2023)

Sufficiently representation of the ethnic and religious minorities in political processes specially all national and provincial parliaments and local councils' elections can help address concerns and grievances of different oppressed and deprived groups in the society. Like Indonesia, Pakistan can also initiate dialogue process to promote understanding and cooperation among the ethnic and religious groups. As role of civil society is very equally essential, Pakistan can mediate conflicts, promote tolerance, and restore peace and harmony through empowerment of the civil society. Reforms in the education system can counteract religious and ethnic intolerance and biasness. Off course, the effective measures in the field of education can combat discriminations and ethnic intolerance and to promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among the masses (Guidelines for Educators, 2011). Besides, economic reforms can reduce the social and economic inequalities. Specially, such reforms can encourage the local and foreign investments which reduce the frustration of masses particularly youth in the Pakistani society. Media should promote positives stories of interethnic and interreligious cooperation while should stop provoking sensationalism among the masses. In addition, Pakistan can further learn from Indonesia, by upholding accountability of responsible for acts of violence and biased behavior on religious and ethnic bases. As according to a report, the violence based on religious and ethnic intolerance "can create—as an erosion of human rights, as a feature of mass atrocities, as a threat to governance, sovereignty, and the rule of law, and as a risk factor in violent conflict" (Gorur & Gregory, 2021). Pakistan needs to initiate comprehensive efforts like Indonesian advancement towards tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for all segments of the society in entire state.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that intolerance in Pakistan is a multidimensional issue rooted in socio-economic inequality, political polarization, religious extremism, and socio-cultural weaknesses. The findings reveal that economic hardship, unemployment, and lack of opportunities particularly among youth create frustration that is often exploited by political and religious actors. Additionally, weak educational systems, poor governance, declining moral values, and limited parental and societal guidance further intensify intolerant attitudes.

The study also finds that intolerance is reinforced by institutional gaps, including ineffective law enforcement, biased narratives, and lack of inclusive policies for minorities. A key finding is that intolerance is not caused by a single factor but emerges from the interaction of multiple structural and social elements. By comparing Pakistan with Indonesia, the study highlights that tolerance can be strengthened through inclusive national ideologies, legal protections, interfaith harmony, and education reforms. The Indonesian model demonstrates that diversity can be managed positively

through unity-driven policies and strong institutional frameworks. In light of these findings, the study emphasizes that reducing intolerance in Pakistan requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving government reforms, educational restructuring, promotion of interfaith dialogue, and active engagement of civil society. Such measures can help build a more inclusive, peaceful, and cohesive society.

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Date of Publication

May 30, 2026