



## Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization (JITC)

Volume 9, Issue 2, Fall 2019

pISSN: 2075-0943, eISSN: 2520-0313

Journal DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc>

Issue DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.92>

Homepage: <https://www.umt.edu.pk/jitc/home.aspx>

Journal QR Code:



Article:

### Association of Religious Activities and Social Interaction of Christian and Sikh Minorities with Muslims in Pakistan

Author(s):

Azizullah Jan      Ashfaq U. Rehman  
Ahmad Hassan Khattak      Ihsan Ullah Khan

Published:

Fall 2019

Article DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.92.12>

QR Code:



Azizullah Jan

Jan, Azizullah, Ashfaq U. Rehman, Ahmad Hassan Khattak, and Ihsan Ullah Khan. "Association of religious activities and social interaction of Christian and Sikh minorities with Muslims in Pakistan." *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 9, no. 2 (2019): 233–252.

To cite this article:

[Crossref](https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.92.12)

Copyright Information:

This article is open access and is distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution – Share Alike 4.0 International License

Publisher Information:

Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization,  
School of Social Science and Humanities, University of  
Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan.

Indexing Partners



For more

[please click here](#)

## **Association of Religious Activities and Social Interaction of Christian and Sikh Minorities with Muslims in Pakistan**

**Azizullah Jan**

Department of Sociology  
University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Pakistan

**Ashfaq U. Rehman\***

Department of Political Science  
Women University Swabi, Pakistan

**Ahmad Hassan Khattak**

Center for Arabic and Islamic Studies  
Women University Swabi, Pakistan

**Ihsan Ullah Khan**

Department of Sociology  
FATA University, FR Kohat, Pakistan

### **Abstract**

Faith in any religion takes significant importance in a country where intolerance and extremism are high. Acceptance and tolerance are keys for adjustment in religious activities and are pertinent for smooth running and dynamism. In contrast to it, intolerance and non-acceptance in religious activities is a burning issue with respect to adjustment problems faced by minorities in a country. This study aims to explore the adjustment problems faced by minorities, especially by Christians and Sikhs for the performance of their religious activities in district Peshawar and Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The prime aim and goal of the study is to illustrate the ways minorities are targeted (Christians and Sikhs) and have to adjust with Muslim majorities for the performance of their religious activities, along with making efforts to strengthen various modes of social interaction within themselves in the targeted area. For the measurement of variable, five-level Likert scale was used, and the chi-square test was applied to find out the association level of an independent variable with the dependent variable. Based on the Sekaran table, a total of 372 respondents were selected from the local minorities to analyse the adjustment problems faced by minorities in the performance of their religious activities. The findings of the study reveal that Christians and Sikhs usually

---

\*Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Dr. Ashfaq U. Rehman, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Women University, Swabi, Pakistan at rehman.phd@gmail.com

celebrate their religious festivals and rituals publicly which highlights the strong social interaction between majorities and minorities in the target area. But still, slight issues of disturbances with their religious rituals and festivals were found in some places of the target area.

**Keywords:** religious activities, social interaction, adjustment problem, minorities

### Introduction

Pakistan is a Muslim majority country that is inhabited by almost ninety six percent (96%) Muslims. The rest of the four percent includes subservient religious groups which are Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, and Ahmadis. These subservient groups usually face extreme persecution, brutality and intimidation. Attacks have been made against religious minorities including kidnapping, forcefully conversion of minority women, damage to their place of worship and lynching.<sup>1</sup> This situation has led to uncertainties among religious subordinate groups especially Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs. The saint churches were attacked in Peshawar and led to further difficulties and problems for religious minorities.<sup>2</sup> The current situation highlights that the working conditions for religious minorities are not safe and secure at all.<sup>3</sup> In 2014, a Christian couple, while they were busy working at Brick-Klin in Punjab were burnt alive by a hyperactive Muslim crowd on the alleged claim of blasphemy.<sup>4</sup> This shows the violent behaviour of the majority against the religious minorities. The security and safety issues faced by religious minorities is still a low-key concern and hence the need of the hour is to organize a round table and seek solutions for the problems faced by religious minorities.<sup>5</sup>

The main aim of the study is to address the problems faced by Christians and Sikhs minorities in the performance of their religious activities. The study further

<sup>1</sup>Iftikhar H. Malik, *Religious Minorities in Pakistan* (Vol. 6) (London: Minority Rights Group International, 2002), 188.

<sup>2</sup>Sumaira Shafiq, Ashfaq U. Rehman. "Land, Conflict and Traditional Institutions in the North-West Pakistan: An Appraisal of Hazarkhwani, Peshawar." *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society* 31, no. 1 (2018): 235-246.

<sup>3</sup>Moed Yusuf, "A Society on the Precipice? Examining the Prospects of Youth Radicalisation in Pakistan," *Reaping the Dividend* (2011).

<sup>4</sup>Iffat Tahira and Abdul Qadir Mushtaq, "Protection of Minority Rights: An Analysis of Implementation of Statutes, Policies and Illegalities in Pakistan," *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society* 31, no. 1 (2018): 73-81.

<sup>5</sup>Ahmad Hassan Khattak, Khalid Usman Khattak, and Shamsul Hussain Zaheer, "Security Issues in Pakistan: Its solution in the light of Seerah," *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal* 1, no. 2 (2017): 34-42.

explains the restrictions imposed on the religious rituals and festivals of minorities. This study will also explore how the Christians and Sikhs minorities get affected by the religious celebrations of Muslims majorities. The prime aim of this study is to ascertain the current day security and safety measures employed to protect the places of worship of Christians and Sikhs.

## 2. Literature Review

The Constitution of Pakistan grants full security and safety to religious minorities, irrespective of their caste, color and creed. The religious minorities enjoy all sorts of freedom i.e. cultural, religious and legal rights.

**Table 1.** Rights of Religious Minorities in 1973 Pakistani Constitution

Article No.	Statement of the Article
20	Liberty to profess faith and to supervise religious institutions
21	Protection against taxation of religions
22	Protection about education concerning religious liberty
25	Equal opportunity for nationality
36	Security and safety of minorities

Source: (Gregory and Valentine, 2009)

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973 ensures well-defined protection and security to minorities. The articles of the constitution, including 20, 21, 22, 25 and 36 facilitate protection and equals rights to all the citizens of Pakistan.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, minorities across the globe are discriminated and they usually live under tremendous stress. They are not only discriminated on the basis of their social behaviours, but also face economic marginalization and mobility restrictions in relation to the performance of their religious obligations and rituals. Thus, they do not consider themselves a part of the conventional society. The history also reveals that there has been religious intolerance and tyranny from the very beginning. Though minorities are given a distinct identity in Pakistan based on their religion, they still face socio-economic inequality.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Arif Khan, Taj Moharram Khan, and Ashfaq Ur. Rehman, "Government-Opposition Relations amidst the Provincial Autonomy during Bhutto Regime," *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 54, no. 2 (2017): 41-52.

<sup>7</sup>Umer Daraz, Akhlaq Ahmad, and Muhammad Bilal, "Gender Inequality in Education: An Analysis of Socio-Cultural Factors and Impacts on the Economic Development of Malakand," *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal* 2, no. 2 (2018): 50-58.

The state institutions also neglect the religious minorities due to which they are educationally backward and economically disadvantaged, thus forming a poor section of society.<sup>8</sup> They are given jobs which require less skill-proficiency and end up securing jobs at low wages. They face prejudice, discriminatory and substandard treatment at work which also effects their chances of promotion. This targeting makes them feel alienated and ineffective to take remedial measures, improving their living conditions.<sup>9</sup>

Realizing the gravity of the issue, the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam clarified the status of minorities in his first speech, delivered on August 11, 1947. He explained that “there is no restriction over you to go to your places of worship. You are free to go to your Mosques, temples or any other place of worship in this country of Pakistan. You may belong to any faith, dogma or caste that has nothing to do with the State business. The basic principle to be adopted in this country will be that we all have the same rights of a country and the same citizenship of a single country.”<sup>10</sup>

The law of profanity (blasphemy laws) has psychological and social implications for religious subordinated groups. This law exposes them threatening wide-blanket acts that may go down within the deviancy of profanity; contravene of which carries long jail sentences and even death penalty by killing. In this law, the religious minorities especially Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs are targeted.<sup>11</sup> Christians and other religious minorities are repeatedly threatened in various aspects of life and face countless hindrances at market, offices and other working places in Pakistan.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Niaz Ahmad, Abida Bano, and Ashfaq U. Rehman. “Women’s Political Empowerment through Local Government in the Patriarchal Society of Pakistan: A Narrative of Women Councillors,” *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal* 3, no. 1 (2019): 1-58.

<sup>9</sup>Z. Safia and K. Ishfaq, “Socio and Economic Problems of Minorities in Southern Punjab, Pakistan,” Proceedings of Advanced 15<sup>th</sup> International Conference on *Advances in Education and Social Sciences*, 12-14 (Istanbul, Turkey, October 2015)

<sup>10</sup>Noor Ullah Khan and Ashfaq U. Rehman, “National Character and Leadership in Pakistan: Challenges and Response,” *Pakistan Journal of Criminology* 10, no. 2 (2018): 58-71.

<sup>11</sup> Akhlaq Ahmad, Bilal Shaukat, and Muhammad Saeed, “A Survey of Social Exclusion, Media Portrayal, and Services for Christians Minorities in Pakistan,” *Pakistan Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 1, no. 2 (2016): 15-24.

<sup>12</sup>A. Hussain Shamsi, “Social Status and Political Participation of Christian Minority in Pakistan,” (PhD Diss., University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan, 2011).

### 3. Methods and Materials

This study aims to investigate the issues of social adjustment faced by the Christian and Sikh communities in relation to education, social, economic and religious activities. The selected locales for the study included districts Swat and Peshawar, situated in the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, encompassing a higher minority ratio. The estimated population of district Peshawar is around 2.019 million, among which ten thousand are Christians and twenty-five hundred are Sikhs. Furthermore, another selected district i.e., District Swat from Malakand Division of Pakistan hosts two thousand Christians and two thousand Sikhs.<sup>13</sup> The population of Sikhs and Christians in the districts are scattered, and hence it was not possible to cover such a substantial number of individuals. The researchers used stratified random sampling to obtain a suitable number of study participants.<sup>14</sup> The total population is 16500 which are equitably distributed against each category presented in the table, calculated through proportional allocation sampling technique. A sample size of 372 was shortlisted according to the criteria set by the Sekaran table.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 2.** Breakup of the Sample Size

Districts	No of Christian and Sikh		ni		$= \frac{n \times N_i}{N}$
	Christian	Samples	Sikh	Samples	
Peshawar	10000	226	2500	56	282
Swat	2000	45	2000	45	90
Total	12000	271	4500	101	372

Source: Population Data Sheet, Minority Wing, Government of Pakistan, 2007.

First-hand statistical data was collected through a questionnaire set on a five-point Likert scale for educated respondents, while interviews were conducted for illiterate respondents. The tool of pretesting was used to find out the applicability of questions and their suitability and reliability included in the interview schedule. After the reliability test of the tool, data was collected from 372 respondents with interviewer-administered questionnaire. The collected data was analyzed through

<sup>13</sup> Ashfaq U. Rehman, Asghar Khan, and Shughla Ashfaq, "Role of Civilian Governments in the Implementation of Local Government System in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," *J. App. Environ. Bio. Sci.* 5, no. 10 (2015): 382-389.

<sup>14</sup> Enrique Baraona Bailey, "Dimensional Sampling and the Variation of Purposive Sampling," *Journal and Scientific Research* 7, no. 5 (1987): 865-871.

<sup>15</sup> Uma Sekaran and Roger Bougie. *Research Methods for Business, A Skill Building Approach* (New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 2003).

statistical techniques at univariate and bi-variate level. Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test was conducted to find out the association between dependent variables i.e. social interaction and independent variable i.e. religious activities.

#### 4. Results and Discussions

Religion is a strong source of social integration among its followers and believers. However, risks are associated with societal disintegration, if conflicting beliefs and practices exist. There is also a culture of non-acceptance to views of different religious groups. The harmonious coexistence of different religious groups promotes societal development across societies. However, lack of harmony among different religious sects may lead to conflict and societal disruption.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, religious tolerance in a pluralistic society plays a vital role in the promotion of harmony and adjustment with minority groups. Responses of the respondents concerning the religious activities of both the majority and minority groups are given in Table-1 and explained below:

**Table 3.** Showing response categories about religious activities

No.	Statement	Total	SA	A	U	SA	D
1	The rituals/ festivals of minorities are celebrated in Pakistan.	372 (100)	171 (46)	174 (46.8)	10 (2.7)	11 (3.0)	6 (1.6)
2	Christians and Sikhs take part in Muslim religious rituals and festivals.	372	5 (1.3)	6 (1.6)	10 (2.7)	137 (36.8)	214 (57.5)
3	The religious rituals/festivals celebrations of minorities are permissible and acceptable in Muslims society?	372	25 (6.7)	55 (14.8)	17 (4.6)	109 (29.3)	166 (44.6)
4	Muslims celebrations and activities affect minorities' routine life.	372	8 (2.2)	17 (4.6)	16 (4.3)	139 (37.4)	192 (51.6)
5	Minorities have a positive approach towards Muslim festivals.	372	186 (50)	165 (44.4)	6 (1.6)	5 (1.3)	10 (2.7)
6	There are restrictions on religious rituals celebration of minorities.	372	81 (21.8)	138 (37.1)	71 (19.1)	5 (1.3)	77 (20.7)
7	There is freedom for minorities to construct religious buildings.	372	14 (3.8)	39 (10.5)	24 (6.5)	155 (41.7)	140 (37.6)
8	Worship places of minorities are secured in Pakistan.	372	13 (3.5)	23 (6.2)	20 (5.4)	159 (42.7)	157 (42.2)
9	Security guards are needed in the worship places of minorities.	372	120 (32.3)	78 (21.0)	13 (3.5)	89 (23.9)	72 (19.4)

<sup>16</sup>Asghar Khan, Ashfaq U. Rehman, and Shughla Ashfaq, "Center-Periphery Relations and Governance Gap: The Role of Local Government in Post-Conflict North-Western Pakistan," *J. App. Environ. Bio. Sci.* 6, no. 3 (2016): 186-193.



*Table values in each cell show frequency while the value of parenthesis showed percentage.*

**Note:** SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, Un=Uncertain, DA = Disagree, SDA = Strongly Disagree

The above mentioned table highlights that 46.0% of respondents strongly agreed with the view that religious minorities are freely celebrating their rituals in Pakistan and 46.8% of the respondents (simply) agreed to this statement. However, 2.7% of respondents also expressed uncertain responses about religious rituals' and their celebration, 3.0% strongly disagreed and 1.6% of the respondents (simply) disagreed with the statement. The Constitution of Pakistan and other laws, rules, and regulations ensure equitable human rights, allowing and helping minorities to celebrate their religious and cultural festivals and ceremonies. The majority of such events are celebrated by the non-Muslim minorities in their respective religious places or indoor areas without any external interference.<sup>17</sup> These results show that Pakistan has turned into a volatile place, where religious minorities are maltreated in all aspects of life. The analysis of the data shows a major proportion of minority groups celebrate religious festivals in their respective areas, where there is no outside interference and therefore remain peaceful.

Analysis of the data also shows that only 1.3% of the interviewees responded with strongly agreed response regarding their participation of Muslim religious rituals and festivals. Also, 1.6% (simply) agreed to participate in Muslim religious rituals and 2.7% of respondents expressed uncertain response. The analysis shows that 36.8% of respondents strongly disagreed in response to the question of their participation with Muslims in religious activities, while 57.5% (simply) disagreed. Plurality of societies depicts that people from diverse cultures and different religious backgrounds live together and take participation in each other's festivals and ceremonies. Due to lack of confidence among religious groups in the target areas, minorities are reluctant to participate in ceremonies and religious festivals of the majority religious groups. The US war on terror after 9/11 in Afghanistan and its negative impact on the region further aggravated the situation, especially redefining the notions of religious tolerance and harmony.<sup>18</sup> Now, these festivals have become dull, non-attractive and life-threatening for the locals especially the

<sup>17</sup>Manzoor Ahmad Naazer, Amna Mahmood, and Shughla Ashfaq, "Political Rights Situation during Musharraf Era: 1999-2004." *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal* 1, no. 1 (2017): 20-31.

<sup>18</sup>Ashfaq U. Rehman, Bakht Rahman, and Tariq Ali, "US War on Terror: Portrayal through Caricatures in Selected Newspapers of Pakistan," *Pakistan Journal of Criminology* 10, no. 3 (2018): 43-63.



minorities feel fearful take part in these events, further reducing proximity among majority and minority religious groups. The escalating levels of religious radicalism has resulted into discrimination, uncertainty, and proliferation of terror in Pakistan. As a result, minority groups faced exclusion and hatred.<sup>19</sup>

The results also indicate that only 6.7% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement about the permissibility of minority religious rituals, while 14.8% of respondents agreed to it. Also, 4.6% of respondents were uncertain about the acceptance of minorities' religious activities. Almost, 29.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, while a staggering 44.6% participants disagreed that there is acceptability and permissibility of minority's religious rituals and festivals among Muslims majority. The development of ethnocentric views is part of the socialization process in every culture. Every member of a group is trained to believe his religious views are superior to others. However, extremism starts when there is no room for acceptance of religious views of others, hence leading to the forcing of one's own views on others. This religious intolerance is a weapon used by extremists to instigate the religious sentiments for their personal political and financial gains. These actions, however, are illegal under the Constitution, as according to Article-2, people who fit into whichever sort of subordinate group have the right to get pleasure from their way of life, to run through their faith, to utilize their source of communication in personal and in community openly and without any sort of bigotry.<sup>20</sup> Congenial, harmonious, and pleasant contact and relations between the majority and minority religious groups is necessary for overall national development.<sup>21</sup> In a peaceful society, the majority (Muslims) and minority live in closer proximity to one another in small towns, houses, families, and communities. They interact with each other at institutions such as school, busy centers of the city such as market and at weddings and funerals, along with social, cultural, and religious activities. Therefore, such intimate relations are described as congenial, reciprocal, and peaceful.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup>Tahmina Rashid, "Radicalisation of Civil Society: A Case Study of Pakistan," *South Asia: Envisioning a Regional Future* (2011): 149.

<sup>20</sup>Aida Kozar, "The Media and Cultural Rights of Ethnic Minorities," Paper presented at the Eighth International Seminar Democracy and Human Rights in Multi-ethnic Societies (2005).

<sup>21</sup>Johnson Apenad Mbillah, "The Causes of Present-day Muslim Unrest in Ghana," (PhD Dissertation, The University of Birmingham, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> Ishtiaq Hussain, "Religious Minorities in Pakistan: Mapping Sindh and Balochistan," *Living on the Margins-Minorities in South Asia* (2008): 50: <http://fhrp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/RELIGIOUSMINORITIESinPAKISTAN.pdf>

Similarly, while responding to the impact of Muslim celebrations upon minority's routine life 37.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, while 51.6% of respondents disagreed with this view. Also, 2.2% of the respondents strongly agreed, while 4.6% agreed in terms of having an impact on their routine life. Only 4.3% of respondents were uncertain. Moreover, 50% of respondents strongly agreed, whereas 44.4% agreed that minorities have a positive approach towards Muslims festivals, with only 1.6% respondents showing uncertain attitude. Almost, 1.3% of respondents strongly disagreed, while 2.7% disagreed with the statement that minorities' have a positive approach towards Muslim religious festivals. Muslims and non-Muslims living in the study area have centuries-old mutual coexistence. It was not long ago when all religious groups took part and expressed their goodwill. These feelings have not diluted as reciprocal goodwill is shared among friends from diverse groups, who exchange gifts and verbal greetings on such occasion to each other. In Eid-ul-Azha, for instance, the Muslims are encouraged to share their sacrifices with the poor irrespective of their religious belongingness. The feeling of mutual acceptance and respect is the outcome of such positive interactions among Muslim and non-Muslim groups. Minorities are an integral part of any society which makes society heterogeneous and multi-cultural. Strong social, political, and economic ties of a minority with the majority in any given territory can guarantee peace and development not only in that area alone, but also in the country. Understanding, tolerance and the spirit of coexistence are key factors that lead in the direction of prosperity and growth in society.<sup>23</sup>

Asking about restriction on minorities' religious rituals, 21.8% of respondents strongly agreed, and 37.1% agreed that they felt restrictions over minority festivals. Also, 19.1% of respondents were uncertain, 1.3% of respondents showed strongly disagreed with the statement, while 20.7% of respondents disagreed that there are restriction upon minorities' religious rituals. In addition, 3.8% strongly agreed and 10.5% agreed about freedom in the construction of the religious buildings. Conversely, 41.7% of respondents strongly disagreed, whereas 37.6% disagreed with the statement that the construction of the religious buildings are allowed. Not only this, 6.5% of respondents showed an uncertain attitude towards the statement. Pakistan has remained a peaceful country until recent past. However, it fell victim and became a toy at the hands of international power politics, particularly when Russia invaded Afghanistan and America attacked with

---

<sup>23</sup>George F. Fry, "World Religions in War and Peace in Conflict and Concord," In *Forum on Public Policy: A Journal of the Oxford Round Table* (Forum on Public Policy, 2008).

the cover of 'War on Terror.' Besides financial and life losses, the social integration of the society was highly shattered and religious-based violence and conflict were instigated. The confidence built among religious groups after centuries of living together was moved to dust in years. The result was hatred and distrust among these groups.<sup>24</sup> The initiatives by the government to control the situation and protect diverse groups included measures such as restricting the festivals inside a limited boundary and seeking permission before organizing such events for security provisions. Besides, freedom in the construction of religious places was also restricted in the name of security. These acts, although in goodwill, increased resentment among minority groups. The government agencies are required to take measures to protect the minorities, for the time being, however, these are not right set of solutions. A strong policy needs to be implemented for curbing the evils in the society and overcoming international interferences.<sup>25</sup>

The results further highlight that 3.5% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement that good security measures were employed at worship places of minorities in Pakistan. Almost, 6.2% of respondents agreed, whereas 5.4% were uncertain. Contrarily, 42.7% of respondents strongly disagreed, while 42.2% of respondents disagreed about the security of minorities in worship places in Pakistan. Also, while asking about the requirement of a security guard at the worship places, 32.3% of respondents strongly agreed, while 21.0% agreed with it. Also, 3.5% of respondents were uncertain. Not only this, 23.9% strongly disagreed with it, while 19.4% disagreed with the statement. It is obvious from these results that the security situation at worship places is not up to the mark. In the recent past, there have been security lapses at worship places of minorities', raising questions on the efficiency of security agencies in the country. The minorities, therefore, are not satisfied with the security provided to them and demand more measures to safeguard them at worship places. According to the Human Rights Watch, the religious places of religious minorities are under threat in Pakistan. There is a need for strengthening conventional security measures at worship places, along with provision of modern equipment, as means to prevent any potential catastrophe.

---

<sup>24</sup> Syed Wasif Azim, Wajid Mehmood, and Sajjad Hussain, "Swat Conflict in Retrospect: Violence and Jarga among the Swat Pakhtuns in Pakistan," *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal* 2, no. 1 (2018): 37-48.

<sup>25</sup>R. S. Gregory and R. S. Valentine, *The Situation of Religious Minorities*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Status Determination and Protection Information Section (Islamabad: Pakistan 2009).

**Table 4.** Association between religious activities and social interaction

Religious Activities	Perce	Social Interaction										Total		Chi-	(P-
		SA		A		U		SDA		D		OV	%V		
		OV	%V	OV	%V	OV	%V	OV	%V	OV	%V				
The rituals/festivals of minorities are celebrated in Pakistan.	SA	25	6.7	11	30.1	27	7.3	4	1.1	3	0.8	171	46.0	$\chi^2 = 23.742$	P=0.095
	A	34	9.1	94	25.3	27	7.3	11	3.0	8	2.2	174	46.8		
	U	3	0.8	2	0.5	3	0.8	1	0.3	1	0.3	10	2.7		
	SD	1	0.3	7	1.9	2	0.5	1	0.3	0	0	11	3.0		
	D	2	0.5	1	0.3	3	0.8	0	0	0	0	6	1.6		
Christians and Sikhs take part in Muslim religious rituals and festivals.	SA	1	0.3	2	0.5	2	0.5	0	0	0	0	5	1.3	$\chi^2 = 28.428$	P=0.028
	A	0	0	2	0.5	2	0.5	2	0.5	0	0	6	1.6		
	U	1	0.3	6	1.6	1	0.3	0	0	2	0.5	10	2.7		
	SD	25	6.7	79	21.2	26	7.0	4	1.1	3	0.8	137	36.8		
	D	38	10.2	127	34.1	31	8.3	11	3.0	7	1.9	214	57.5		
The religious rituals/festivals celebrations of minorities are permissible and acceptable in Muslims society?	SA	9	2.4	11	3.0	4	1.1	0	0	1	0.3	25	6.7	$\chi^2 = 41.388$	P=0.000
	A	5	1.3	42	11.3	4	1.1	3	0.8	1	0.3	55	14.8		
	U	3	0.8	7	1.9	4	1.1	0	0	3	0.8	17	4.6		
	SD	19	5.1	53	14.2	28	7.5	8	2.2	1	0.3	109	29.3		
	D	29	7.8	103	27.7	22	5.9	6	1.6	6	1.6	166	44.6		
Muslims celebrations and activities affect minorities' routine life.	SA	2	0.5	4	1.1	2	0.5	0	0	0	0	8	2.2	$\chi^2 = 11.681$	P=0.766
	A	5	1.3	8	2.2	3	0.8	0	0	1	0.3	17	4.6		
	U	2	0.5	12	3.2	2	0.5	0	0	0	0	16	4.3		
	SD	20	20	80	21.5	26	7.0	10	2.7	3	0.8	139	37.4		
	D	36	36	112	30.1	29	7.8	7	1.9	8	2.2	192	51.6		

Minorities have a positive approach towards Muslim festivals.	SA	31	31	112	30.1	31	8.3	8	2.2	4	1.1	186	50.0	$\chi^2 = 14.154$ P=0.587
	A	30	8.1	95	25.5	23	6.2	9	2.4	8	2.2	165	44.4	
	U	1	0.3	3	0.8	2	0.5	0	0	0	0	6	1.6	
	SD	1	0.3	3	0.8	1	0.3	0	0	0	0	5	1.3	
	D	2	0.5	3	0.8	5	1.3	0	0	0	0	10	2.7	
There are restrictions on religious rituals celebration of minorities.	SA	17	4.6	40	10.8	19	5.1	3	0.8	2	0.5	81	21.8	$\chi^2 = 29.526$ P=0.021
	A	23	6.2	86	23.1	20	5.4	3	0.8	6	1.6	138	37.1	
	U	20	5.4	32	8.6	12	3.2	6	1.6	1	0.3	71	19.1	
	SD	0	0	3	0.8	2	0.5	0	0	0	0	5	1.3	
	D	5	1.3	55	14.8	9	2.4	5	1.3	3	0.8	77	20.7	
There is freedom for minorities to construct religious building.	SA	9	2.4	4	1.1	1	0.3	0	0	0	0	14	3.8	$\chi^2 = 35.779$ P=0.003
	A	4	1.1	25	6.7	7	1.9	3	0.8	0	0	39	10.5	
	U	2	0.5	19	5.1	2	0.5	1	0.3	0	0	24	6.5	
	SD	26	7.0	83	22.3	31	8.3	6	1.6	9	2.4	155	41.7	
	D	24	6.5	85	22.8	21	5.6	7	1.9	3	0.5	140	37.6	
Worship places of minorities are secured in Pakistan.	SA	9	2.4	3	0.8	1	0.3	0	0	0	0	13	3.5	$\chi^2 = 41.093$ P=0.001
	A	1	0.3	16	4.3	4	1.1	2	0.5	0	0	23	6.2	
	U	2	0.5	17	4.6	1	0.3	0	0	0	0	20	5.4	
	SD	26	7.0	85	22.8	32	8.6	7	1.9	9	2.4	159	42.7	
	D	27	7.3	95	25.5	24	6.5	8	2.2	3	0.8	157	42.2	
Security guards are needed in the worship places of minorities.	SA	14	3.8	68	23.7	11	3.0	4	1.1	3	0.8	120	32.3	$\chi^2 = 48.515$ P=0.000
	A	16	4.3	39	10.5	14	3.8	6	1.6	3	0.8	78	21.0	
	U	0	0	11	3.0	1	0.3	1	0.3	0	0	13	3.5	
	SD	13	3.5	38	10.2	27	7.3	6	1.6	5	1.3	89	23.9	
	D	22	5.9	40	10.8	9	2.4	0	0	1	0.3	72	19.4	

Table values in each cell show frequency while the value of parenthesis showed percentage

Muslims and non-Muslim have historic coexistence in Pakistan. The national constitution, law, and the political vision of the founder of the nation stand for freedom of minorities in all fields of life. In recent past, the harmony among religious groups was disturbed due to terrorism and international political interferences to destabilize Pakistan. The religious groups, once free to take part and work together were separated from each other on religious grounds. The sense of insecurity crept up and the confidence was changed to distrust. Terrorist attacks on mosques, temples, and churches increased the sense of insecurity for which the religious groups blamed each other. As a result, the religious activities, once performed openly, were restricted to boundaries and under the shade of security guns. The security lapses shattered the trust in security agencies and the demand for higher security further parted the groups apart, hence restricting their chances of free cordial interaction.

Religion enhances the cohesive force that binds its followers together. During the socialization process, the religious beliefs are internalized to the extent that the individual's psychological system is controlled by these beliefs. The stronger the sentimental attachment with the religion, the stronger are adhesions to the religious practices. It is therefore believed that more intense conflicts arise in the religious groups that have strong religious attachments. Political government therefore needs to take measures that can help in promoting harmonious coexistence in various religious groups for greater societal development. Lack of religion-based harmony may lead to divergence, rupturing the society apart into disputed groups. Society with harmonious religious groups are likely to show intimate interactions with each other, while a society divided into religion-based conflicting groups lead to negative social interaction and disintegration of the society.<sup>26</sup> To assess the association of the religious activities with social interaction the perception of social interaction was limited to a few perception statements as given in table and explained below.

The participation levels of minorities taking part in Muslim rituals and festivals was significant ( $P=0.028$ ) and indicated significant levels of social interaction as well. Furthermore, the result showed that the association of social interaction was highly significant ( $P=0.000$ ) with religious rituals and festivals celebration of minorities are permissible and acceptable in Pakistan (Muslims society). The dimensions and extent of social interaction among different societal groups vary from group to group. Minority groups enjoy a greater degree of freedom in the participation of festivals of majority groups. Furthermore, the

---

<sup>26</sup>Manzoor Ahmad Naazer, "Islamic Universalism and the Nation State," *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal* 2, no. 2 (2018): 29-41.

majority are in greater control of societal events. Permission from the majority group in exercising religious festivals provides greater freedom to the minorities to enjoy their religious festivals. It is evident from the significant level of association, as given in the above results that due to access to festivals of the majority Muslim group and freedom to exercise religious rituals and festivals, the non-Muslim minorities are more likely to be satisfied with their social interaction in society. There existed a mutual correlation between the maltreatment of religious minorities in various aspects of their social life and their social interaction. According to Amnesty International, the ascending religious radicalism promote discrimination, uncertainty, and terror amidst the vulnerable. Whenever the minority groups face exclusion and hatred, they are subjected to limited social interaction with the majority groups. Therefore, the suggested solution for the problem is to enhance the positive social interaction among the majority and minority groups to ensure its facilitation among these groups.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, a significant ( $P=0.021$ ) association was found between the restrictions placed on minority rituals and religious practices and social interaction. Besides, a significant ( $P=0.003$ ) association was found in respect to freedom given to minorities to construct religious buildings publicly and social interaction. Similarly, a significant ( $P=0.001$ ) association was found between the worship places of minorities that are fully secured in Pakistan and social interaction. Religious harmony among Muslim and non-Muslim religious groups was threatened when mosques, churches, and temples were attacked by terrorists, as these were soft targets for attack. Also, terrorists targeted outdoor religious activities to actualize their terror-based agenda. As a reaction, there was a rise in the state of distrust among religious groups and they blamed each other and state for the terrorist acts. In the state of such confrontation, the government intervened and implemented interventions for short, medium, and long-term deterrence to terrorism and reinstating harmony among groups. These interventions included restricting the religious ceremonies indoor, under strict security measures. The benefit of such actions was the reduction in terrorist acts, at the cost of reduced social interaction among groups. Furthermore, the policy was devised for the construction of worship places where construction of such places required government approval for security reasons. Restrictions so implemented led to reduced social interaction among groups which is quite clear from the meaningful results of the study. Kozar's findings are in support to these results that people who fit into whichever sort of subordinate group have the right to get pleasure from

---

<sup>27</sup>Aziz Ullah Jan and Ashfaq U. Rehman, "Assessment of Interfaith Harmony between Muslims and Hindus in Socio-Cultural Activities in Swat," *Burjis* 6, no. 1 (2019): 75-84.



their way of life, to run according to their faith, and to utilize their source of communication in person and in community openly, without any sort of bigotry.<sup>28</sup> Congenial, harmonious, and pleasant contact and relation on daily basis between majority and minority religious groups is necessary for overall national development. Such relations are possible through open and cordial social interaction among groups.<sup>29</sup> Also, acts of restricting religious places, even though in goodwill, increase resentment among minority groups. The protective actions by the government agencies is to protect the minorities, for the time being, however, these are not viable solutions and some strong policy is needed to deal with the issue at hand.

The study further highlighted a highly significant association ( $P=0.000$ ) between security guards at the worship places of minorities and social interaction. Security measures and social interaction are contrasting with each other. An increase in security measures at religious places reduces the chances of seeing and understanding activities of one another and hence reduces the overall interaction among the groups. On the other hand, government inability to provide security at worship place means exposure of the minorities to terrorist attacks which create resentment in minority groups against the government. That is why the association of social interaction is highly significant with security guard requirements at worship places. Findings of the Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor highlights how the religious minorities believe that the government does not spend enough funds for the protection and maintenance of their worship places, hence exposing them to open disasters. Like above, (Gregory & Valentine) reported that religious minorities in Pakistan face insecurity threats at their worship places. Hence, there is a need for strengthening conventional security measures at worship places and provision of modern equipment for prevention of such events to happen.<sup>30</sup>

The previously mentioned table highlights that the association of social interaction was non-significant ( $P=0.095$ ) with the opinion of the rituals and festivals of minorities celebrated in Pakistan. Similarly, the association of social interaction and the Muslims celebration and activities' effect on minorities' routine life was non-significant ( $P=0.766$ ). The study further reveals the non-significant ( $P=0.587$ ) association of the minorities that they have positive approach towards Muslim festivals. Freedom of celebrating the festivals is a confidence-building

---

<sup>28</sup>Aida Kozar, "The Media and Cultural Rights of Ethnic Minorities," 2005.

<sup>29</sup>Johnson Apenad Mbillah, "The Causes of Present-day Muslim unrest in Ghana," 1999.

<sup>30</sup>R. S. Gregory and R. S. Valentine, *The Situation of Religious Minorities*, 2009.

measure among minorities group and they feel that are a part of the mainstream society. However, in the current study, its association with social interaction was non-significant. Reciprocally, the importance of minorities' participation and being affected by Muslim's festivals was found non-significant with social interaction. These findings negate the statement of Parliamentary Human Rights Group that the religious minorities in Pakistan are under threat and they have no freedom to practice their religion.<sup>31</sup> Minorities are an integral part of any society which makes society heterogeneous and multi-cultural. Strong social, political, and economic ties of a minority with the majority in any given territory can guarantee peace and development in that nation. Understanding, tolerance and the spirit of coexistence are the key factors leading towards prosperity and growth of society.<sup>32</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

Freedom of religious and ethnic minorities is the basic pillar of human rights. Ensuring respect for religious views and practices, along with participation of both the groups in the religious festivals of each other can open avenues for increased social interaction. It is concluded that in recent times, due to terrorist threats, the celebration of religious festivals in open is restricted. Similarly, the construction of new religious buildings is also exposed to restrictions due to security threats. However, the religious festivals are restricted because of limited security measures and security personnel provided to deal with the threat of terrorist attacks. The aggravated state of freedom in performing religious activities has limited the chances of social interaction among the majority (Muslims) and minority (non-Muslim) groups.

## Bibliography

- Ahmad, Akhlaq., Bilal Shaukat, and Muhammad Saeed. "A Survey of Social Exclusion, Media Portrayal, and Services for Christians Minorities in Pakistan." *Pakistan Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 1, no. 2 (2016): 15-24.
- Ahmad, Niaz., Abida Bano., and Ashfaq, U. Rehman. "Women's Political Empowerment through Local Government in the Patriarchal Society of Pakistan: A Narrative of Women Councillors." *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal* 3, no. 1 (2019): 1-58.

---

<sup>31</sup> Ishtiaq Hussain, "Religious Minorities in Pakistan: Mapping Sindh and Balochistan," 2005.

<sup>32</sup>George F. Fry, "World Religions in War and Peace in Conflict and Concord," 2008.

- Azim, Syed Wasif., Wajid Mehmood, and Sajjad Hussain. "Swat Conflict in Retrospect: Violence and Jarga among the Swat Pakhtuns in Pakistan." *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal* 2, no. 1 (2018): 37-48.
- Bailey, Enrique Baraona. "Dimensional Sampling and the Variation of Purposive Sampling." *Journal and Scientific Research* 7, no. 5 (1987): 865-871.
- Daraz, Umer., Akhlaq Ahmad, and Muhammad Bilal. "Gender Inequality in Education: An Analysis of Socio-Cultural Factors and Impacts on the Economic Development of Malakand." *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal* 2, no. 2 (2018): 50-58.
- Fry, George F. "World Religions in War and Peace in Conflict and Concord." In *Forum on Public Policy: A Journal of the Oxford Round Table*. Forum on Public Policy, 2008.
- Gregory, R. S., and R. S. Valentine. *The Situation of Religious Minorities*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Status Determination and Protection Information Section. Islamabad, Pakistan, 2009.
- Hussain, Ishtiaq. "Religious Minorities in Pakistan: Mapping Sindh and Balochistan." *Living on the Margins. Minorities in South Asia*, 2008. <http://fhrp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/RELIGIOUS-MINORITIES-in-PAKISTAN.pdf>
- Jan, Aziz Ullah., and Ashfaq U. Rehman. "Assessment of Interfaith Harmony between Muslims and Hindus in Socio-Cultural Activities in Swat." *Burjis* 6, no. 1 (2019): 75-84.
- Khan, Asghar, Ashfaq U. Rehman, and Shughla Ashfaq. "Center-Periphery Relations and Governance Gap: The Role of Local Government in Post-Conflict North-Western Pakistan." *J. App. Environ. Bio. Sci.* 6, no. 3 (2016): 186-193.
- Khan, Arif., Taj Moharram Khan, and Ashfaq U. Rehman. "Government-Opposition Relations amidst the Provincial Autonomy during Bhutto Regime." *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 54, no. 2 (2017): 41-52.
- Khan, Noor Ullah., and Ashfaq U. Rehman. "National Character and Leadership in Pakistan: Challenges and Response." *Pakistan Journal of Criminology* 10, no. 2 (2018): 58-71.
- Khattak, Ahmad Hassan., Khalid Usman Khattak, and Shamsul Hussain Zaheer. "Security Issues in Pakistan: its Solution in the Light of *Seerah*." *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal* 1, no. 2 (2017): 34-42.

- Kozar, Aida. "The Media and Cultural Rights of Ethnic Minorities." Paper presented at the Eighth International Seminar Democracy and Human Rights in Multi-ethnic Societies, 2005.
- Malik, Iftikhar H. *Religious Minorities in Pakistan* (Vol. 6). London: Minority Rights Group International, 2002.  
<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/469cbfc30.pdf>
- Mbillah, Johnson Apenad. "The Causes of Present-day Muslim Unrest in Ghana." PhD Dissertation, The University of Birmingham, 1999.
- Naveed, Fouzia., Maryam Munir, and Yasir Saeed. "Unveiling the Situation of Religious Minorities: A Case Study of Marginalized Groups Living in Lahore." *International Journal of Asian Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2014): 41-50.
- Naazer, Manzoor Ahmad. "Islamic Universalism and the Nation State." *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal* 2, no. 2 (2018): 29-41.
- Naazer, Manzoor Ahmad, Amna Mahmood, and Shughla Ashfaq. "Political Rights Situation during Musharraf Era: 1999-2004." *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal* 1, no. 1 (2017): 20-31.
- Rashid, Tahmina. "Radicalisation of Civil Society: A Case Study of Pakistan." *South Asia: Envisioning a Regional Future*, 2011.
- Rehman, Ashfaq U., Asghar Khan, and Shughla Ashfaq. "Role of Civilian Governments in the Implementation of Local Government System in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." *J. App. Environ. Bio. Sci.* 5, no. 10 (2015): 382-389.
- Rehman, Ashfaq U., Bakht Rahman, and Tariq Ali. "US War on Terror: Portrayal through Caricatures in Selected Newspapers of Pakistan." *Pakistan Journal of Criminology* 10, no. 3 (2018): 43-63.
- Safia, Z., and K. Ishfaq. "Socio and Economic Problems of Minorities in Southern Punjab, Pakistan." Proceedings of Advanced 15<sup>th</sup> International Conference on *Advances in Education and Social Sciences* 12-14 October 2015, Istanbul, Turkey.
- Sekaran, Uma., and Roger Bougie. *Research Methods for Business, A Skill Building Approach*. New York: John Willey and Sons Inc., 2003.
- Shafiq, Sumaira., Ashfaq U. Rehman. "Land, Conflict and Traditional Institutions in the North-West Pakistan: An Appraisal of Hazarkhwani, Peshawar." *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society* 31, no. 1 (2018): 235-246.

- Shah, Hassan., Ashfaq U. Rehman, Sajjad Hussain, and Shughla Ashfaq. "The Role of Social Networks in Democratisation: An Assessment of Family Socialisation and Voting Behaviour in Pakistan." *International Journal for Social Studies* 4, no. 9 (2018): 108-118.
- Shamsi, A. Hussain. "Social Status and Political Participation of Christian Minority in Pakistan." PhD diss., University of the Punjab, Quaid-e-Azam Campus, Lahore, Pakistan, 2011.
- Tahira, Iffat., and Abdul Qadir Mushtaq. "Protection of Minority Rights: An Analysis of Implementation of Statutes, Policies and Illegalities in Pakistan." *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society* 31, no. 1 (2018): 73-81.
- Yusuf, Moeed. "A Society on the Precipice? Examining the Prospects of Youth Radicalisation in Pakistan." *Reaping the Dividend*, 2011. [https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/06/10\\_pakistan\\_yusuf.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/06/10_pakistan_yusuf.pdf)