
Social Intolerance in Pakistani Male Youth, its Damages and Solutions in the Light of Islamic Teachings

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Abstract

Islam is a religion of peace and promotes tolerance and encourages believers to interact among themselves in a respectful and compassionate manner. Regarding Sahaba the close fellows Quran says they are harsh against the nonbelievers but merciful among themselves)¹. This article investigates the intricate dynamics of social intolerance within the Pakistani male youth demography, offering insights into its origins, far-reaching consequences, and potential remedies grounded in Islamic teachings. Employing a multidimensional research approach, this study blends sociological, psychological, and religious perspectives to provide a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. Utilizing a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the research seeks to unravel the contributing factors behind the emergence of social intolerance among Pakistani male youth. The article illuminates the diverse damages inflicted by social intolerance, ranging from strained interpersonal relationships to broader societal discord. By examining its repercussions on mental health, community cohesion, and national unity, the research underscores the urgency of addressing this issue for the overall well-being of Pakistani society. In the pursuit of viable solutions, the article turns to Islamic teachings as a guiding framework. These teachings are synthesized into practical strategies and interventions tailored to resonate with the distinctive cultural and religious context of Pakistani male youth to foster tolerance, understanding, and harmony. This, in turn, promises to cultivate a more inclusive and cohesive societal fabric.

Key words: Social intolerance, Islamic teachings, peace, respect, harmony, male youth

Introduction

Social intolerance, a growing concern in the contemporary world, presents a complex challenge that reverberates through the very fabric of societies. In the context of Pakistan, a nation with a rich cultural tapestry, the manifestation of social intolerance, particularly among its male youth, demands careful examination. Pakistani society, like many others, is undergoing transformative shifts influenced by globalization, technological advancements, and socio-political changes. In this dynamic landscape, the emergence of social intolerance among the male youth poses a critical challenge to the nation's social harmony. Understanding the roots and manifestations of this intolerance is imperative for devising effective strategies to mitigate its damages. The study seeks to unearth viable solutions grounded in the profound wisdom of Islamic teachings, aiming to foster a society that cherishes tolerance, empathy, and coexistence.

Significance of the Issue

The significance of this research is underscored by the potential long-term repercussions of social intolerance. Its impact extends beyond mere interpersonal conflicts, reaching into the realms of mental health, societal stability, and national progress. As Pakistani male youth navigate the complexities of modernity, understanding the factors that contribute to intolerance and

¹ Quran 48:29

identifying solutions rooted in cultural and religious contexts are essential for fostering a harmonious future.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on social intolerance by providing an analysis of its prevalence among Pakistani male youth. Through empirical research, this study aims to uncover the damages inflicted at personal, communal, and national levels. Moreover, by exploring solutions grounded in Islamic teachings, we aspire to offer a roadmap for policymakers, educators, and community leaders to address this pressing issue effectively.

Research Question

The central question guiding this research is: What are the manifestations of social intolerance in Pakistani male youth, and how can Islamic teachings provide solutions to mitigate its damages?

Research Objectives

To address this question, the study is guided by the following objectives:

To analyze the dimensions and manifestations of social intolerance among Pakistani male youth.

To assess the damages caused by social intolerance on individual well-being, community cohesion, and national harmony.

To explore the relevance of Islamic teachings in promoting tolerance, empathy, and coexistence.

To propose practical solutions, informed by Islamic principles, for addressing social intolerance among Pakistani male youth.

Understanding Social Intolerance

Social intolerance refers to the unwillingness or refusal to accept, understand, or respect individuals or groups who hold beliefs, engage in practices, or exhibit characteristics that differ from one's own². It manifests in behaviors, attitudes, and policies that marginalize, exclude, or discriminate against individuals or communities based on factors such as religion, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or cultural practices. Understanding the multifaceted dimensions of social intolerance is crucial for identifying its manifestations and devising targeted strategies to address the issue among Pakistani youth. This comprehensive understanding will inform the analysis of damages caused and the development of solutions rooted in Islamic teachings.

Factors Contributing to Social Intolerance in Pakistani Male Youth

Understanding the interplay of these factors provides a foundation for examining the roots of social intolerance among Pakistani male youth. This knowledge is essential for developing targeted interventions and solutions that address the specific challenges faced by this demographic.

The following are key contributors to intolerance within this demographic:

Cultural and Societal Norms:

Traditional Hierarchies: Deep-rooted societal structures often perpetuate hierarchical norms, reinforcing divisions based on caste, ethnicity, or class. **Gender Roles:** Traditional expectations regarding gender roles can foster intolerance when individuals deviate from prescribed norms.

Educational Environment:

Curriculum Biases: Educational curricula that lack diversity or propagate biased narratives can contribute to the development of prejudiced attitudes. **Limited Exposure:** Insufficient exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences within educational settings may result in narrow worldviews.

Media Influence:

Stereotyping: Media representations that reinforce stereotypes based on religion, ethnicity, or gender can shape negative perceptions and contribute to intolerance. **Echo Chambers:** Social media algorithms may create echo chambers, reinforcing existing biases and limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints.

Economic Disparities:

Limited Opportunities: Economic inequality and limited access to resources can lead to frustration and scapegoating, contributing to intolerance. **Competition for Resources:** Scarce resources can fuel competition, leading to animosity and intolerance among different groups.

² <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf> accessed on Dec15, 08:05am

Political Landscape:

Polarization: Politically polarized environments can contribute to the adoption of rigid, intolerant stances among youth.

Manipulative Messaging: Politically motivated messaging that exploits existing divisions may exacerbate intolerance.

Religious Influences:

Misinterpretation of Religious Texts: Incorrect interpretations or manipulations of religious teachings can contribute to intolerance.

Lack of Interfaith Understanding: Limited exposure to and understanding of other religious beliefs may foster an environment of mistrust.

Social Pressures:

Peer Pressure: Conformity to peer group attitudes may lead individuals to adopt intolerant views.

Family Expectations: Family expectations regarding cultural or religious practices may contribute to intolerance towards those who deviate from these expectations.

Political and Social Instability:

Economic Instability: Economic uncertainties and lack of opportunities may create an environment where scapegoating and intolerance flourish. **Security Concerns:** Ongoing security issues or political instability can heighten tensions and contribute to intolerance.

Globalization and Modernization:

Cultural Clash: The clash between traditional values and the influence of globalized, modern ideas may lead to intolerance. **Identity Crisis:** Rapid societal changes may contribute to identity crises, prompting some individuals to adopt intolerant attitudes as a form of assertion.

Lack of Critical Thinking and Media Literacy:

Critical Thinking Skills: Insufficient emphasis on critical thinking skills in education may result in a susceptibility to intolerant ideologies. **Media Literacy:** Lack of media literacy can make individuals more susceptible to biased narratives presented in various media.

Damages Caused by Social Intolerance among Pakistani Male Youth

Social intolerance exacts a profound toll on individuals, communities, and the fabric of society. The damages caused by this pervasive issue within the context of Pakistani male youth are multi-faceted and extend across various dimensions:

Psychological Impact on Individuals:

Increased Stress and Anxiety: Pakistani male youth facing social intolerance often experience heightened levels of stress and anxiety due to the emotional strain of discrimination and exclusion. **Erosion of Mental Well-being:** Persistent exposure to intolerant attitudes can contribute to long-term mental health issues, including depression and a diminished sense of self-worth.

Fractured Community Cohesion:

Weakened Social Bonds: Social intolerance fractures the social fabric, eroding trust and cooperation among diverse communities. This weakened cohesion impedes collective progress and development. **Isolation and Alienation:** Individuals who are targets of intolerance may feel isolated and alienated from the broader community, leading to a sense of disconnection and disenfranchisement.

Educational Impacts:

Undermined Learning Environment: Intolerance within educational settings disrupts the learning environment, hindering academic achievement and creating a hostile atmosphere for intellectual growth. **Limited Diversity of Thought:** Intolerant attitudes can stifle the diversity of thought and expression within educational institutions, restricting the exchange of ideas.

Impact on National Harmony:

Fragmented National Identity: Social intolerance contributes to the fragmentation of the national identity, fostering divisions along religious, ethnic, and cultural lines. **Political Instability:** The cumulative effect of intolerance can contribute to political instability, as fractured societies struggle to establish inclusive governance structures.

Economic Consequences:

Reduced Economic Productivity: An intolerant society may experience reduced economic productivity due to social divisions that hinder collaborative efforts. **Impaired Innovation:** Intolerance stifles creativity and innovation by limiting the exchange of diverse perspectives necessary for progress.

Erosion of Moral and Ethical Values:

Deterioration of Compassion: Intolerance corrodes the moral fabric of society by diminishing compassion and empathy towards those who are perceived as different. **Erosion of Islamic Values:** Social intolerance among Pakistani male youth may lead to a departure from Islamic teachings that emphasize tolerance, compassion, and justice.

Conflict Escalation:

Potential for Violence: Unchecked social intolerance can escalate into violence, threatening the safety and security of individuals and communities. **Intercommunity Strife:** Intolerance contributes to intercommunity strife, further exacerbating existing tensions and hindering efforts towards peaceful coexistence.

Generational Impacts:

Transmission of Intolerant Views: Social intolerance can be perpetuated through generations as intolerant attitudes are passed down, creating a cycle of discrimination. **Diminished Opportunities for Youth:** Youth facing intolerance may encounter barriers to education, employment, and civic engagement, limiting their potential contributions to society. Understanding the extensive damages caused by social intolerance among Pakistani male youth is imperative for developing targeted interventions and promoting a more inclusive and harmonious society. The subsequent sections of this research will explore potential solutions grounded in Islamic teachings to address these pressing challenges.

Analysis of Social Intolerance in Pakistani Male Youth

The analysis of social intolerance among Pakistani male youth involves a comprehensive exploration of various dimensions, including attitudes, behaviors, and contributing factors. Through this multifaceted analysis, the research aims to create a nuanced understanding of social intolerance among Pakistani male youth. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data will inform evidence-based recommendations for addressing the issue and cultivating a society grounded in Islamic teachings of tolerance, empathy, and coexistence.

Islamic Teachings on Tolerance and Harmony

To mitigate social intolerance among Pakistani male youth, the exploration of Islamic perspectives on tolerance provides a rich and profound framework for fostering tolerance, empathy, and harmonious coexistence within society. Rooted in the Quran and the Hadiths (sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ), these teachings emphasize the principles of justice, compassion, and understanding.

Quranic Verses on Tolerance:

Allah Almighty says in Holy Quran: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted ³. On another occasion Allah says: "There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in Taghut (false gods) and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing ⁴."

Emphasis on Justice and Fairness:

On one occasion Allah says: "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do ⁵." Holy Prophet said: "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is oppressed. People asked, 'O Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him)! It is all right to help him if he is oppressed, but how

³ Quran 49:13

⁴ Quran 2:256

⁵ Quran 4:135

should we help him if he is an oppressor?' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'By preventing him from oppressing others⁶.'

Compassion and Mercy:

Quran says: "Indeed, Allah commands justice, good conduct, and liberality to kith and kin. He forbids all shameful deeds, injustice, and rebellion. And He instructs you, so perhaps you will be reminded⁷." In a Hadith Holy Prophet said: "Allah is merciful only to those of His servants who are merciful to others⁸."

Respect for Diversity

Quran said⁹: "And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed, in that are signs for those of knowledge." Holy Prophet said in a Hadith¹⁰: "The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion, and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever."

Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution:

Allah says in His last Holy book¹¹: "And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly." Hadith says¹²: "The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger."

Personal Responsibility and Accountability:

Holy Quran says¹³: "And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know."

Prophet said¹⁴: "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock."

Islamic teachings emphasize the interconnectedness of individuals within society, promoting values of compassion, justice, and respect for diversity. These and such like other verses and Hadiths lead us to the principles that provide a solid foundation for addressing social intolerance among Pakistani male youth, guiding them towards a path of understanding, tolerance, and harmonious coexistence.

Islamic Principles Promoting Peace and Coexistence

Islamic teachings encapsulate a set of profound principles that emphasize peace, compassion, and harmonious coexistence among diverse individuals and communities. These principles offer a guiding framework for addressing social intolerance among Pakistani male youth, fostering an environment rooted in understanding, tolerance, and empathy.

Concept of Ummah (Community):

The concept of Ummah underscores the unity of the Muslim community, transcending geographic, ethnic, and cultural boundaries. This principle encourages solidarity and mutual support, fostering a sense of shared humanity.

Quranic Emphasis on Justice:

The Quran consistently emphasizes the importance of justice, urging Muslims to be fair and impartial in their dealings with others. Justice is seen as a cornerstone for peaceful coexistence.

Prophet Muhammad's Model of Mercy:

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is described as a mercy to the worlds in the Quran¹⁵. His interactions with people of various backgrounds exemplify compassion, forgiveness, and a commitment to resolving conflicts peacefully.

⁶ Sahih al-Bukhari, Oppressions - كتاب المظالم, Hadith 2444

⁷ Quran 16:90

⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari, kitab al-Tawhid, hadith, Hadith 7448

⁹ Quran 30:22

صحیح مسلم کتاب البر والصلة والأداب باب تراحم المؤمنین وتعاضدهم 2586

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¹¹ Quran 49:9

¹² Sahih al-Bukhari, kitab al-Adab, Hadith 6114

¹³ Quran 3:135

¹⁴ Sahih al-Muslim, book of Government, Hadith 4724

¹⁵ Quran 21:107

Respect for Diversity:

Quranic verses celebrate the diversity of human creation, highlighting that differences in language, color, and culture are signs of Allah's creative power. This principle encourages Muslims to appreciate and respect the diversity within the broader human family.

Teachings on Compassion and Empathy:

Numerous Quranic verses and Hadiths emphasize the importance of compassion and empathy. Muslims are encouraged to understand the struggles of others, show kindness, and help those in need, regardless of their background.

Avoidance of Compulsion in Religion:

The Quran explicitly states, "There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion"¹⁶. This principle upholds the freedom of individuals to choose their faith and discourages the imposition of beliefs on others.

Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation:

Islamic teachings encourage dialogue and cooperation with people of other faiths. The Quran acknowledges the existence of diverse religious communities and emphasizes the commonalities that can serve as a basis for understanding.

Principles of Forgiveness and Reconciliation:

Muslims are encouraged to forgive and reconcile with those who do the wrong. The practice of seeking forgiveness and offering it demonstrates a commitment to resolving conflicts peacefully.

Generosity and Charity:

The concept of Zakat (charitable giving) and acts of kindness are central to Islamic teachings. Muslims are encouraged to be generous and charitable to all, regardless of their religious or social background.

Environmental Stewardship:

Islam places a strong emphasis on the stewardship of the environment. The principles of sustainability and responsible resource use contribute to a harmonious coexistence with the natural world and fellow human beings. By incorporating these Islamic principles into the fabric of society, particularly among Pakistani male youth, there is an opportunity to counteract social intolerance and nurture an environment characterized by peace, understanding, and mutual respect. The application of these principles can serve as a transformative force, guiding individuals towards a path of coexistence and unity.

Solutions in the Light of Islamic Teachings for Social Intolerance in Pakistani Male Youth

Addressing social intolerance among Pakistani male youth requires a holistic approach that aligns with the principles and teachings of Islam. The following solutions draw inspiration from Islamic values, emphasizing tolerance, empathy, and peaceful coexistence to counter the damages caused by social intolerance:

Educational Reforms:

Integration of Islamic Values: Integrate Islamic teachings promoting tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity into the educational curriculum. This includes fostering an appreciation for the historical examples of Islamic societies that celebrated diversity.

Interfaith Dialogue Programs:

Promotion of Understanding: Facilitate interfaith dialogue programs that bring together individuals from different religious backgrounds. These initiatives can provide a platform for open discussions, dispelling misconceptions, and promoting understanding.

Community Engagement Initiatives:

Encouraging Collaboration: Develop community engagement programs that encourage collaboration among diverse groups. This can include joint projects, events, and activities that foster a sense of shared responsibility and unity.

Leadership in Promoting Tolerance:

Role of Religious Leaders: Empower religious leaders to promote messages of tolerance and inclusivity. Sermons and religious teachings should emphasize the principles of justice, compassion, and coexistence found in Islamic teachings.

¹⁶ Quran 2:256

Media Literacy Programs:

Critical Thinking Skills: Implement media literacy programs that equip youth with critical thinking skills to discern and challenge intolerant narratives. This aligns with the Islamic value of seeking knowledge and understanding.

Conflict Resolution Training:

Islamic Principles in Conflict Resolution: Provide training on conflict resolution based on Islamic principles. Emphasize forgiveness, reconciliation, and dialogue as ways to address conflicts peacefully.

Civic Education and Awareness:

Rights and Responsibilities: Promote civic education emphasizing the rights and responsibilities of individuals within a diverse society. Understanding and respecting the rights of others is in line with Islamic teachings.

Youth Empowerment Programs:

Leadership Opportunities: Create opportunities for youth leadership in community projects. Empowered youth can become advocates for tolerance, leading by example and influencing their peers positively.

Online Platforms for Positive Discourse:

Promoting Positive Narratives: Encourage the use of online platforms for positive discourse. Islamic principles of good character and ethical behavior can guide online interactions, fostering a more constructive digital environment.

Mentorship Programs:

Guidance from Role Models: Establish mentorship programs where experienced individuals, including religious leaders, guide and support young individuals. These programs can instill Islamic values and provide positive role models.

Government Policies Supporting Inclusivity:

Inclusive Policies: Advocate for government policies that promote inclusivity and address systemic issues contributing to social intolerance. This may include anti-discrimination measures and initiatives to bridge economic disparities.

Promoting Islamic Art and Culture:

Cultural Expression: Celebrate Islamic art and culture as a means of fostering appreciation for diversity. Cultural festivals, exhibitions, and artistic endeavors can provide a platform for expression and understanding. By incorporating these solutions rooted in Islamic teachings, there is a potential to transform the social landscape among Pakistani male youth. Through a concerted effort that engages educational institutions, religious leaders, community organizations, and policymakers, it is possible to cultivate a society where tolerance, empathy, and harmonious coexistence prevail.

Conclusion and the Path Forward:

In conclusion, addressing social intolerance among Pakistani male youth requires a concerted effort from multiple stakeholders, including educational institutions, religious leaders, community organizations, and policymakers. The transformative power of Islamic teachings offers a profound framework for guiding individuals toward a path of coexistence, understanding, and unity. As we navigate the complex terrain of social intolerance, it is essential to recognize that change is a gradual process. The proposed solutions, inspired by Islamic principles, are not mere theoretical constructs but practical steps towards a more tolerant and compassionate society. By instilling these values in the hearts and minds of the youth, we can pave the way for a future where diversity is celebrated, and unity prevails. Drawing inspiration from Islamic teachings, the proposed solutions offer a roadmap for cultivating a culture of tolerance, empathy, and coexistence. The Quranic emphasis on justice, compassion, and the avoidance of compulsion in religion provides a solid foundation for addressing the root causes of social intolerance. The principles of respect for diversity, reconciliation, and community engagement align with the essence of Islamic teachings that transcend sectarian, ethnic, and cultural boundaries. In the light of Islamic teachings, let us strive together to build a society where social intolerance becomes a relic of the past, and the youth emerge as ambassadors of peace, understanding, and goodwill.

Through collective efforts grounded in compassion and justice, we can shape a future where the damages caused by social intolerance are replaced by the healing balm of tolerance, creating a more resilient and harmonious Pakistan.