Media-tic challenges for inter-faith harmony in Pakistan and Pragmatic social egalitarianism

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ABSTRACT
Pakistan being multi-religious country has diverse religious communities which have been living as friends for centuries. In the recent past, few incidents of targeting the minorities were reported which labeled Pakistan as a locus of intolerance, extremism and terrorism. As matters of fact, all these troublemakers were funded by some specific international groups and prorogated illicitly by some media groups otherwise the same religious communities have been living in the same land for centuries as brothers and friends.

The research is comprises a survey study about the role of Pakistani media for promotion and observing inter-faith harmony among different religious communities in Pakistan. Media has a crucial part in maintain the social pulse especially on inter-faith harmony platform. Nationally and internationally, the wave of creditability is more recognized than the quickness of media so it is pertinent to understand to regularize the media of Pakistan that they should first recheck the news and incidents through the concerned professors of the area and the government officials then break a comprehensive report to stable the creditability of their channel and paint a positive image of Pakistan all over the world. It is also found that Pakistani media is not sufficiently covering the scholars of different religions other than Islam on social life topics and on harmonic points of their religions also.

Keywords: Media-tic Challenges, Inter-Faith Harmony in Pakistan, Religious Communities in Pakistan, Pragmatic Pakistan, Social Egalitarianism
Introduction
Mohinjo Daro and Harappa are the oldest reported civilizations of the land of Pakistan\(^1\) which are prominent due to their peaceful culture\(^2\) and progressive governance\(^3\) in the history of human being. Archeologists admit that there was no iron weapon discovered from these cities\(^4\). History is evident that it was invaders Aryans who started wars and continued non-peaceful atmosphere in this land\(^5\). It was Aryans who distributed the human beings into casts and humiliated discriminations\(^6\) and later recognized with the term of Hindus.
Peacefulness is the most powerful element of human being\(^7\) which is integrated with nature so the study of governing history of this land is witnessed that the peaceful communities remain prevalent in the same land\(^8\) and the cruel or non-peaceful human beings had to travelled towards new areas of this land and they had to colonize the eastern part of this land.
Peaceful people of this land are still in this land of Pakistan. They had not faced a single war in the name of religion in this region. They even did not fought with each other but some outsiders and greedy groups of natural sources of this peaceful land tried to sabotage the peace of this land\(^9\) but the learned minds of this land, Pakistan, once again replied with the manifestation of Pegham-e-Pakistan program\(^10\) and blocked their ill targets.\(^11\)
Pakistan has multi-religious and diverse religious communities\(^12\) which have been living as

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\(^2\) Ibid, p.111


\(^11\) Ibid, p.20

friends for centuries. In the recent past, few incidents of targeting the minorities were reported which labeled Pakistan as a locus of intolerance, extremism and terrorism. As matters of fact, all these troublemakers were funded by some specific international groups and prorogated illicitly by some media groups otherwise the same religious communities have been living in the same land for centuries as brothers and friends.

The study investigated the challenges of inter-faith harmony in Pakistan and found that “media in promoting interfaith work in all of cases is very important” and “Media can play positive and negative both roles also”. In the same patter, it can be said that media can play a key role to build or destruct the inter-faith harmony in Pakistan. It is decided to conduct an empirical study in this concern and investigate the influential aspects of media in the promotion of Interfaith harmony among Muslim, Christian, Hindus, Sikh, Bahai, Noor Bakhshi, Ismaili, Bohra, Zikri and other religious communities in Pakistan.

**Importance of the Study**

- Media role and Inter-faith harmony during New Reporting is a neglected area so no particular research has been done.
- This is the duty of the Pakistani media to keep in view the inter-faith harmony during New Reporting to eliminate the label of extremism painted on Pakistan.
- In the universities of Pakistan, a course entitled ‘Inter-faith Harmony and New Editing or Presentation’ is needed to be taught but it lacks information about these areas so this study will fill this gap also.
- Islam has given the equal rights to all mankind so this study will highlight the importance of New Reporting in context with Inter-faith harmony in Pakistan.
- The study has especial focused on future News Reporting about Inter-faith harmony incidents and suggested a code of conduct regarding creditability or quickness of news channels.

**Religious Communities in Pakistan**

Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Bahai, Zikri, Bohra, Ismaeli, Kelashi, Jude and Noor Bakhshi along with many others are community members in Pakistan. They

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1. Ibid, p.142
are mainly concentrated in Islamabad, Lahore, Multan, Jamshoro and Karachi. They are all officially registered as a different and independent entity so enjoy all facilities being the citizens of Pakistan. These religious communities have the rights to get education in any institution of Pakistan. They can start business in any area of Pakistan as Muslims can do. They can buy the properties and moveable properties in any area of Pakistan. These communities are free to move any area of Pakistan so these have complete official freedom and respectable free status by the government of Pakistan. These community members have social free and respectable status also all over the Pakistan. All community members of Pakistan behave with each other positively and help at needy time without any discrimination. Muslims and other religious members take part in others ceremonies. Qadianis cannot call themselves or pose to be Muslim and the community people have also same facilities and status except they cannot preach their religion outside their own religious places.

Commonly it is understood that in Pakistan, there are only Shia and Sunni which remain mostly at quarreling situation. Historically and religiously, this concept is wrong. Pakistan, in south Asia region, has the most peaceful and liberal land. Pakistan has diverse religions and cultures and all the communities have been living here peacefully for a long time. Pakistan has many minor religious communities also like, Bahai, Noor Bakhshi, Bohra, Ismaili, Kailash and Zikri and all of these are living with full social status. This is the land where Gandhara and Indus civilizations had been flourished and up till now, not a single heavy weapon was found during the excavation which verifies that this is the land of peace.

Media Role in Coverage of Scholar other than Islamic

As far as various sects of Islam are concerned, it is found a variety of programs which give representation to these sects especially on special occasions like Muharram, Eid Milad un Nabi and the program like ‘Alim on line’ provides different angels of different Muslim sects on a matter under discussion. It is also found that there are rules approved by PEMRA that no program can be online if it “contains derogatory remarks against any religion, sect or community”. But it is

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2 Ibid, p.45
Sources of Sīrah & historical quests

seldom found representation of other non-Islamic religious factions of Pakistan. At times, Christians are consulted occasionally but Pakistan is a host of several different religion, no other religious faction is given media coverage. Unless there is some mishap to some religious group, they are given some coverage, but there is no policy found in any channel of media to give some room to other religious factions living in Pakistan as officially sound citizen.

Survey Study
An empirical Survey Study was planned with the civil members of Rawalpindi Society. A questionnaire was prepared and personally got filled by the protestors through the author and research assistants. The questionnaire had two parts, i.e. first about to collect data regarding effects of mob psychology and second regarding effects of media interpretation during News presentation about the incident.

Population of the Survey
The population of the survey was randomly selected from Quaid-e-Azam University students, advocates from district courts Rawalpindi, patients, staff and doctors of Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology, traders, shopkeepers and buyers from markets of Saddar Rawalpindi and drivers of public conveyance of Rawalpindi. The questionnaire was in Urdu language for an easy understanding of the respondents and later it was translated into English language for an easy interpretation of the article. The questionnaires were filled and collected by the 100 respondents from different areas of Rawalpindi. The data collected through questionnaire was tabulated and analyzed through SPSS program for creditable results.

Data Collected
The data was collected in the form of close ended questionnaire format i.e. Yes / No. Data was collected without the personal information of the respondents so that they can easily express their real understanding and researcher can collect the real facts about the research.

The data was tabulated in the following format:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Do you watch TV or read any Newspaper daily?</th>
<th>YES</th>
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<th>Do you try to watch religious programs on TV or read any religious article in Newspaper daily?</th>
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<th>What do you think that TV channels are giving proper or sufficient time to the religious programs?</th>
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| 4. | What do you think that Newspapers give proper and sufficient 
coverage to the religious articles and news? |   |     |     | YES |   |     |   |
|   |   | 15  | 85  | 15% | 85 | 85% |
| 5. | Do you know that people of other religions like Christianity, Hinduism, 
Sikhism, Bahai, Noor Bakhshi, Bohra, Zikri, Ismaili, Ahmadi and others 
are also citizen of Pakistan? |   |     |     | YES |   |     |   |
|   |   | 98  | 2   | 98% | 2  | 2%  |
| 6. | What do you think that TV channels calls the representatives of 
others religions also in their religious programs? |   |     |     | YES |   |     |   |
|   |   | 00  | 100 | 00% | 100| 100%|
| 7. | What do you think that Newspapers publish the religious articles and 
news of others religious representatives in their newspapers also? |   |     |     | YES |   |     |   |
|   |   | 5   | 95  | 5%  | 95 | 95% |
| 8. | What do you think that Pakistani Media is fulfilling the responsibilities 
regarding inter-faith harmony in Pakistan? |   |     |     | YES |   |     |   |
|   |   | 5   | 95  | 5%  | 95 | 95% |
| 9. | Do you like to watch the program of other religious representatives 
talking about truthfulness, theft, adultery, rewards by God and other 
social matters? |   |     |     | YES |   |     |   |
|   |   | 65  | 35  | 65% | 35 | 35% |
| 10. | Do you want to read the articles and news of others religious 
representatives about social matters in context of their religious |   |     |     | YES |   |     |   |
|   |   |     |     |     | No. | %   | No. | %   |

85
Data Analysis

1. Maximum numbers of Respondents watch TV programs or any read newspaper on daily basis.
2. A great number of respondents try to watch religious programs on TV or read religious articles on daily basis.
3. A great number of respondents opinioned that TV channels do not give proper coverage to religious programs or news.
4. A great number of respondents opinioned that newspapers do not give proper coverage to religious programs or news.
5. Maximum numbers of respondents know that Pakistan has other religious followers like, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, Bahai, Bohra, Noor Bakhshi, Zikri, Ismaili, Ahmedi and others as citizen of Pakistan.
6. All respondents opinioned that no TV channels call religious representatives of other religions in religious programs on social issues.
7. Maximum numbers of respondents said that newspapers do not publish religious manuscripts of other religious communities of Pakistan.
8. Maximum numbers of the respondents opinioned that Pakistani media is fulfilling its responsibilities regarding to promote or flourish inter-faith harmony in Pakistan.
9. A good number of respondents want to watch on TV religious representatives of other religions talking on social issues and matters to develop inter-faith harmony in their lives.
10. A good number of respondents want to read in newspapers religious representatives of other religions talking on social issues and matters to develop the inter-faith harmony in their lives.

Result Summary

The respondents, whose are from the city Rawalpindi, are habitual to watch TV or read newspaper daily whatever the ratio of time they spent for this watching or reading. Many of the respondents want to watch and read religious programs or writings but they responded that TV channels and newspapers give lest time and space to the religious programs and news. They also explained that the ratio of participation other than Muslim scholars or programs is very minor so the contribution of TV channels and newspapers in interfaith harmony is very little.

The TV channels and newspapers are contributing to interfaith harmony to some extent, but the representation of different religious factions is not proportional. Newspapers mostly do not publish opinions of the religious groups other than Islamic ones. Respondents incorporated their opinion that TV channels and newspapers cover the Intra-faith harmony and give time and space to different scholars from sects of Islam but they are giving time to the scholars of Christian, Hindus, Shikh, Bahai, Noor Bakhshi or others about even social issues and preaching. The
explanation of this point is this that other religions than Islam also gives same preaching about ethics of life so if there would be talks among all religions in Pakistan also then it will be a good inter-faith harmony symbol of Pakistan.

The respondents opinioned that TV channels are not calling the community members and scholars of other than Islamic religion and newspapers are also not publishing religious articles of scholars or writers of different other religions. In connection of these responses, it is looking like the demand of respondents that the media of Pakistan should cover the community members of other than Islamic religions in their religious issues and matters.

**Conclusion**

In view of above literature review and Survey study, it found that Pakistan has multiple religious communities. They are living peacefully in this land for centuries and contributing their share for the progress of Pakistan. Members of religious communities have official and social status. The quarrelsome nature people were Aryan who had been shifted towards the present Indian parts beyond the Punjab land. The remaining communities of this Land, Pakistan, are peaceful and tolerant peoples.

Pakistani media is observing the religious rights of all sects of Muslims and obeying PEMRA rules. It is making their parts to promote intra-faith harmony in Pakistan. It is also found by the results of survey study that Pakistani media is not giving sufficient coverage to the scholars of other religious communities than Muslim communities.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that Pakistani Media should call the scholars of other religions i.e. Christianity, Hindu, Sikh, Bohra, Bahai, Noor Bakhshi, Ismaili, Zikri and other to discuss the Ethical issues of life and about harmonic topics of religious versions also.
Sources of Sīrah & historical quests

**MEDIA-TIC CHALLENGES FOR INTER-FAITH HARMONY IN PAKISTAN QUESTIONNAIRE**

Protestors at Faizabad Islamabad on Evacuation of Aasia Bibi

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