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# Critical Analysis of Political Security of Christians in Pakistan

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Pakistan's creation in the name of Muslim nationalism have far reaching impacts on the subsequent political, economic and socio-cultural dynamics of state and society. The political construction of the newly born state has taken its main guidelines from Islamic interpretations of the polity. As envisaged in the constitutional debates in Pakistan's history, there have been considerably diverse views on the nature and scope of an Islamic Polity. There have been various political implications of this lack of consensus; most important among them is the position of religious minorities in a proposed Islamic state. Christians, as largest minority in Pakistan, bore the brunt of this confusion. The basic question of this paper is to understand the relationship of state and its construct on provisions of fundamental political security of rights for Christian community in Pakistan. The answer to this question has to be understood in broad debates ranging from constitutional issues to the actual working of state institutions, their composition and exposition. The fundamental argument in this paper is that state of Pakistan has given little consideration to the political security of Christians in Pakistan owing to their meager role in majoritarian democratic norms in Pakistan, coupled with (mis) interpretation of religion.

## **Introduction:**

Pakistan is predominantly a Muslim majority state carved out from India in 1947. However, there was significant number of non-Muslims living in Pakistan, though a fraction of total population. Most of religious minorities (the term itself was controversial in early years of Pakistan's history though and instead term non-Muslims was preferred) lived in East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh). However, since the separation of East Pakistan, percentage of religious minorities in Pakistan has reduced significantly. Pakistan, since its inception has faced multitude of problems to face. One of the major issues confronting the state was to provide a role of religion in statecraft. The policymakers were divided in two main camps:

those who favored a greater role for religion in Pakistan laws and policies. Others believed in largely secular orientation of state. This debate has since been only intensified, though former gain significant control on state narrative since 1980s. The entire debate has had a significant impact on the fate of religious minorities in Pakistan, most of who face a perpetual sense of insecurity at multiple fronts from multiple sources, sometimes from even state. Christian community, the largest community in Pakistan, bears the brunt of this problem.

## **Theoretical Framework**

United Nations Development Program's Human Development Report is the pioneer record in displaying the possibility of Human security as a particular appearance of security digressing from conventional thought of security in mankind's history. Reasonably and operationally, the report categorizes human security in seven main points: Food, Personal, Health, Community, Political, Economic and Environmental security.<sup>1</sup>

Economic security expects occupations to verify a guaranteed essential income. Food security implies that all individuals consistently have both physical and monetary access to fundamental sustenance. Health security is to give sound condition and wellbeing administrations to address the difficulties of poor nourishment, irresistible infections, etc. Environmental security is concerned about absence of access to clean water, deforestation, salinization, air contamination, cataclysmic events, etc. Personal security is to shield human lives from dangers of different sorts of brutality by states and different hostile individuals and groups.<sup>2</sup>Community security is about dangers like harsh practices and ethnic conflicts in customary groups. Political security implies the assurance of human rights and democratization in a given society.

The report, in an extraordinary move, have focused on an individual's security concerns and moved away from traditional notion of state-centric security concerns. Be that as it may, the idea isn't intended to scrap the conventional methodology however it is intended to grow the extent of security and hence enlarge traditional security. The report is based on two basic pillars: "Freedom from fear" and "Freedom from want".<sup>3</sup>

The focus of Human security is to protect and promote the rights and interests of people in a state, which are normally not on the radar of states or international community organizations. It is relevant to make reference to here that the essential purpose behind such an idea is uniform and equivalent treatment of every one of natives' rights with no religious, social, ethnic and racial predisposition. The idea of human security has wide extension. It covers all the customary and non-conventional security difficulties of the considerable number of networks alike. Hence Kofi Annan (2005) has called attention to "the three pillars of this wider

conception of human security: freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom to live in dignity”.

## **POLITICAL SECURITY**

UN report on Human Development of 1994, laid down the basic criteria to define political security in a very brief worded sentence. It was characterized as the counteractive action of government restraint, orderly infringement of human rights and dangers from militarization. This was expected to build up a plan that would ensure individuals against states that kept on repeating political suppressions, orderly torment, abuse and vanishing. However, the idea of political security has since been developed in both theory and practice.<sup>4</sup> This has been done through a continuous discussion, which has been done mainly due to international crisis and rapidly changing geo-strategic environment rather than the parameters set out in the 1994 HDR report.<sup>5</sup> By and by, accomplishing the desire of the political security motivation has turned out to be attached to inquiries of compassionate help and mediation. This was barely translated all through the 1990s as a discussion encompassing the nature and authenticity of compassionate intercession. During the 2000s, this was regulated into a Responsibility to Protect (R2P) motivation, just to see the second decade of the twenty-first century uncover the requirement for an undeniably progressively intricate and nuanced discussion about how this ought to be done.

The connection between human security and political security is, in theory, a fairly straightforward explanation. Quoting the UN report on Human Development “One of the most important aspects of human security is that people should be able to live in a society that honours their basic human rights”.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, while it is gotten insight in security thinks about that the idea of human security is hard to characterize, its subcategory of political security has come to mean, at a fundamental dimension, the aversion of government constraint, methodical infringement of human rights and dangers from militarization. The report was generally positive about the advancement that had been made in such manner all through the 1980s – a “decade of democratic transition – as many military dictatorships ceded power to civilian administrations and one-party states opened themselves up to multi-party elections’. However, as the report made clear, there was still ‘a long way to go in protecting people against state repression’.<sup>7</sup> The report indicated a 1993 overview by Amnesty International featuring 110 nations that still did political suppression, methodical torment, abuse and vanishing. It additionally attracted consideration regarding the frequent infringement of human rights executed in the midst of political distress.

For more than 20 years since the arrival of the 1994 HDR unmistakably government suppression, methodical human rights misuse and militarization continue unabated. All things considered, the archives require an emphasis on

political security stays relevant in the present universal society. However, the nature of that debate in both hypothetical and solid terms has been modified by occasions and the universal condition.

Since the mid 1990s unmistakably the post-cold war conditions opened up the likelihood for a developing hypothesis and routine with regards to political security to rise. Under this specific circumstance, the 1994 UNHDR is critical for adding to the more extensive talk about philanthropic mediation and Right to Protection. With expanding dangers to political security obvious, from Rwanda through to Syria, the universal network has endeavored to at any rate manage the hypothetical and practical challenges. The present discussion for those conveying forward a political security motivation does not encompass whether there is a R2P, yet rather who can authentically approve intercession and in what conditions. It is inside this setting of political security, philanthropic intercession and R2P have progressed toward becoming piece of a talk and routine with regards to the global network. In any case, there is still contestation over what precisely this implies. The 'new legislative issues of insurance' is loaded with contradiction over the privilege to mediation, how and when this ought to be practiced and under whose expert.

### **Literature Review:**

An intriguing and an exhaustive work on the issue is that of Mr. A.D. Asimi's book *The Christian Minority in Pakistan: Problems and Prospects*.<sup>8</sup> The book is an incredible record of Christian community in Pakistan. Indeed, this is the first inside and investigative work on any minority network in Pakistan and is genuinely spearheading effort. The book smoothly exhibits the instance and issues of concern by religious group in Pakistan. It gives three classifications of issues looked by Christians in Pakistan. From the beginning, the book provides an explanation of divide between Catholic and Protestant school of thoughts in Christianity. Also, they come up short on any political and common top bound together authority that can lead them and help them voice their worries to the political echelons and Muslim-dominated society. In conclusion, there is detectable estrangement of Christians in financial and political scene of Pakistan. The social, financial and seclusion of Christians, brought about by numerous variables, created a parallel society not the same as lion's share and subsequently an unmistakable separate between standard social orders.

Theodore Gabriel's masterpiece *Christian Citizens in an Islamic State: The Pakistan Experience* is an insightful and comprehensive work on the issues and challenges faced by Christians in Pakistan.<sup>9</sup> The book gives an exhaustive, methodical and inside analysis of role and place of Christians in Pakistan. The book goes for investigating the endogenous and exogenous components for the issues faced by Christians in Pakistan. The cause of miseries of Christians in Pakistan and their flat and vertical relations with Pakistani state and society is very

much clarified and investigated. The author contends that Pakistani state's treatment of Christian people group is an experiment of its general relations with religious network in Pakistan.

The book in any case, neglects to give any experimental premise of the contention exhibited and depends on minor hypothetical investigation. The work, then again won't just investigate the writing yet additionally base the contention on observational proof. Furthermore, the book covers the financial and political issues of Christian community and neglects to see them in a broader general human security issues in Pakistan.

In an interesting article *Structural Violence and Christian Minority in Pakistan: The monolithic Image to be blamed* by M. Riaz and M. Wakil Khan,<sup>10</sup> the authors had thoroughly talked about and explained the issues faced by Christians in Pakistan. The writers have had thoroughly investigated the treatment of religious minorities specifically by various governments. It is contended that distinctive military and some regular citizen governments have utilized religion and religious estimations for their vested political, security and monetary interests. General Zia ulHaq specifically is in charge of Islamization drive that prompted the underestimation of and savagery against Christians in all walks of life. From that point forward, religious minorities faced all sort of issues from physical harms to institutional biases in Pakistan. The authors additionally recommend a few measures to correct this issue toward the end.

The writer, regardless of covering wide-ranging issues described in the article, overlooks the legal and political parts of issues faced by Christians in Pakistan. In spite of the fact that he touches upon the issue of isolated and joint electorate for minorities, the issues of political portrayal of minorities as a rule and that of Christians specifically have to a great extent been missing from discourse.

A standout amongst the most extensive literature on Christian community in Pakistan is a report titled 'Review of Christians in Pakistan: Promoting change for the future' by Jubilee campaign in collaboration with Pakistan Christian Political Foundation.<sup>11</sup> The report is an in depth and detailed study of Christians in Pakistan, their known inception, and their contemporary profile in Pakistan. The report gives a definite record of reasons for the issues weathered by Christians in Pakistan in contemporary times.

Regardless of the exhaustive subtleties, the report needs investigation and gives progressively spellbinding in nature. The report is additionally more a stubborn bit of composing because of absence of references for a great deal of subtleties given.

## **Profile of Christians in Pakistan (References)**

An exact Christian populace in contemporary Pakistan is hard to establish. According to the official government figures dependent on a 1998 statistics, Pakistan has about 2.1 million Christians; comprising some 1.6 percent of the all out population.<sup>12</sup> The figures discharged by the United States Central Intelligence Agency in 2013, be that as it may, set Pakistan's Christians at 3.5 million or 1.8 percent of the complete offer of population. Of these, 60 percent are Catholics and the rest of the 40 percent have a place with different Protestant sections.<sup>13</sup> Their geographic spread is countrywide. They live in little pockets from the Punjab in the East to Baluchistan in the West, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the North to Sind in the South. Their greatest fixation, be that as it may, is in the area of Punjab.

There are 54 Christian towns in Punjab, and four in Sindh that are managed by some of the Christian organizations. As indicated by information given by the Ministry to National Harmony, there are 500 houses of worship for Christians in Pakistan, 65 of which are in Lahore.

## **State of Christians in Pakistan**

Christians in Pakistan are living under steady dread, vulnerability and with an extraordinary agony of minimization in their very own property. They are being mistreated and victimized intrinsically, socially, culturally, and financially ... Protected and lawful issues [are] connected to the negative frames of mind of government, police, legal executive, and [the] neighborhood dominant part of Muslims towards Christians and other minority gatherings. Such gatherings are viewed as badly arranged to Islamic standard instead of as full residents offering upgrade of open life.<sup>14</sup> Police and neighborhood populations are tormenting Christians, more often. Places of worship are being contaminated and land is being taken from Christians who are then crashed into constrained work.

In Pakistan, religious minorities are confronting social marginalization as well. Since its origin they have been prime casualty of religious scorn, destitution, lack of education and against poor financial strategies of the state.<sup>15</sup> The social seclusion process was hastened with the incorporation of a new Separate Electorate System General Zia ul Haq regime. This system has not only marginalized religious minorities in political sphere, it also weakened the already fragile political party structures for them. The liberal political parties like PPP were adversely affected by this new system. The religious plan forced by Zia made religious minorities a simple prey to the religious radicals.

Using the process of Islamaization by General Zia ulHaq and others for vested political interests, the agonies of the Christian in Pakistan are tremendous and obvious all over the place and at each dimension. Despite the fact that the founder

of the country had said on August 11, 1947, "The religion has nothing to do with state affairs" however at this point the religion of Islam has a commanding status in the constitutionalized political, legal, social, social and administrative frameworks.<sup>16</sup> Pakistan's polity declared Islam to be the state religion for Pakistan. Being upheld as the incomparable tradition that must be adhered to be the Islamic Shariah.

The political and constitutional structures under Zia ul Haq's regime, religious minorities have clearly discriminated the citizens on the basis of religion and non-Muslims have clear disadvantaged position in social, political and day to day life. This is in spite of the fact that Christians accept and think about themselves to be first residents of Pakistan. The present framework rates the Christians as peasants and is essentially at the most minimal dimension. Logical consequence of these developments is that top political institutions were inaccessible for Christians politically and legally.<sup>17</sup>

Constitution provides for reservation of seats for non-Muslims in the parliament of Pakistan. The number of seats reserved for Christians in the senate of Pakistan stands at 6, however, in any elections we have little to no Christian presence in parliament of Pakistan. Legally and officially, there are 5% reserved seats for all the government jobs in Pakistan, however practically this is non-existent.

In 1971, with dismemberment of Pakistan with separation of East Pakistan, a major chunk of non-Muslims including Christians were no longer part of Pakistan's polity. Pakistan turned into a socially solid, progressively Islamic state with fewer religious minorities than ever. With the legislatures of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq, all the more stringently Islamic laws changed Pakistan's polity and thus society.<sup>18</sup>

The administration conveys some verbal commitments and statements for the protection of religious minorities in general and Christians in particular often during or before any foreign dignitary visits the country or political leaderships go abroad. These announcements are just verbally expressed words noticeable all around.

There are some grave accusations from some Christian right groups that official census is often manipulated to show reduced Christian population in order to give them little or no space in political and administrative positions under the guard of democratic majoritarianism. It is an interesting fact that there were four Christian members in the first constituent assembly of Pakistan at the eve of Independence. 1973 constitution have reserved only six seats for Christians in the national assembly. However, this number was decreased to four in national elections of 1985 in a house of 217 members. In national general elections of 2002 the all out house comprised of 342 however Christian seats stayed four. It is a clear irony that

successive governments have believed in official rhetoric that while Muslim population was expanding exponentially, Christian population decreased or remained stagnant.

## **Constitutional Status of Christians in Pakistan**

### **Constitution of 1956**

Pakistan was able to draft and enforced its first constitution in 1956. The constitution was framed by the constituent assembly consisting of total of 80 members. It was second such assembly after first one was dissolved in 1954. There were nine Christian member of this assembly: seven of these members from taken from East Pakistan while one each was taken from Sindh and Punjab.

Under the constitution adult suffrage was adopted as principle of electorate with minimum age to vote to be 21 years. Though constitution didn't envisage any discrimination in Pakistan on the basis of religion, there were several provisions of the constitution that were interpreted in a way that it seems that minorities were marginalized by this constitutional setup.<sup>19</sup> One of the major complains by minority rights groups have been the denial of joint electorate facility that would have brought them at par with Muslims co-citizens. That would mean that there were two types of citizens in Pakistan: Muslims and non-Muslims having unequal opportunities, thus beginning of discrimination and a direct contradiction to the principles of democracy and the Jinnah's vision as explained by him in August 11, 1947 speech to constituent assembly.<sup>20</sup>

One of the most important provision of the constitution was that no laws shall be made against the teachings of Islam as explained in Holy Quran and Sunnah. Under this provision various laws were promulgated that prohibited different things drinking alcohol, gambling etc. it was stated that the purpose was to enable Muslims to live their lives in accordance with their religious beliefs. However, the constitution also guaranteed that it should not affect the rights of non-Muslims.

There are few provisions that directly limited the scope of political participation for non-Muslims, including Christians in Pakistan. One of the major one was putting a condition that only Muslims have the right to become President and Prime Minister of Pakistan. So no matter how patriotic or capable non-Muslims can be, is not eligible to reach to highest political office.<sup>21</sup>

To sum up, the constitution though clearly talks about protecting the rights of minorities, but the very creation of the idea of 'minority' was something that created a sense of deprivation and discrimination in the hearts and minds of non-Muslims. The most part of the constitution seems to be addressing only to Muslims and creates an impression that only real citizens in Pakistan or specially Muslims



and others either shouldn't exist or too little to be ignored. It was for this reason that non-Muslims community inside and outside the legislature, in particular Christians, has vehemently opposed the anti-non-Muslim provisions of the constitution.

### **Constitution of 1962**

When the 1956 constitution was abrogated and General Ayub Khan imposed Martial Law, he initiated a process of instituting a new constitutional setup in Pakistan. A one-man constitution was thus promulgated in Pakistan in 1962 that clearly lacked public backing at any level in any way. This constitution has dealt with the issue of non-Muslims with more or less similar way as was done by the previous constitution.<sup>22</sup> Two main striking aspects of this constitution were promising the protection of all type of rights for non-Muslims community on the one hand, while clearly barring them into national mainstream by limiting their political choices at various levels on the other hand.<sup>23</sup>

### **Constitution of 1973**

1973 constitution was framed by the elected assembly of Pakistan under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, leader of majority Pakistan People's Party in national assembly of Pakistan at that time.

As had become a ritual in Pakistan's constitutional history, there was a similar claim of providing adequate constitutional safeguards for the rights of non-Muslims in a predominantly Muslim state where Islam was adopted as official religion. Everything considered, the probability of a non-Muslim being picked president or official does not rise, in light of the way that the substance of the promise for two working environments can't plainly be for non-Muslim. Although there is no constitutional bar for any non-Muslim to be elected as a member of Pakistan's legislature, none of them could ever do so from 1973 since the inception of the constitution to 1999. One can understand how impossible is for any non-Muslim to hold any key position in the parliament of Pakistan.

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In Pakistan, religious minorities are confronting social seclusion since the

beginning of their journey in Pakistan. They have been prime casualty of religious disdain, destitution, absence of education and hostile to poor money related arrangements of the state. The social seclusion was expedited with the presentation of isolated race framework in Zia time.

## **Conclusion**

Pakistan's political history is ripe with grievances by different groups on the basis of language, representation, resources, ethnicities etc. Political system's response to these challenges has largely been to correct itself and sometimes using coercion that backfired. However, there is one issue that has largely been ignored by state, issue of political security of religious minorities in general and that of Christians in particular. Almost half of Pakistan's modern political history has been military rule. The non-Muslim minorities have to bear all types of trouble and problems during civil and military rules alike, more or less.

Religious minorities have to face all sorts of problems during civilian and military governments alike. Use of religion by different groups and state institutions have posed enormous challenges for socio-economic and political challenges to Christian minority in Pakistan. They have not only been victims of misuse of some of religious laws, they also have little or no role in the law-making process that influences them. System of electorate has undermined their status as equal citizens of Pakistan. Their seclusion from national mainstream and resultant political and social insecurity has worsened over the period of time that needs an immediate attention by policy makers to make Pakistan an inclusive pluralistic democracy as envisioned by the founders of Pakistan.

## Notes and References

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- <sup>2</sup> Yu-tai Tsai, The Emergence of Human Security: A Constructivist View, (International Journal of Peace Studies, Volume 14, Number 2, Autumn/Winter 2009), p. 21
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28
- <sup>5</sup> UNDP, *Op. Cite*. P. 26
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29
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- <sup>12</sup> Iftikhar H. Malik, Religious Minorities in Pakistan. (London, UK: MRG, 2005)
- <sup>13</sup> MirjamBos, *Op. Cit*. p. 23.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24
- <sup>15</sup> Iftikhar H Malik, *Op. Cit*. p. 11
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid*. p. 12
- <sup>17</sup> MirjamBos, *Op. Cit*. p. 19.
- <sup>18</sup> Iftikhar H Malik, *Op. Cit*. p. 13
- <sup>19</sup> Tariq Rahman, Pakistan's policies and practices towards the religious minorities. (South Asian History and Culture, 3(2), 2012), p. 304.
- <sup>20</sup> Hamid Khan, Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017). P. 230.
- <sup>21</sup> Tariq Rehman, *Op. Cit*. p. 306.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid*. p. 310.
- <sup>23</sup> Hamid Khan, *Op. Cit*. p. 310.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid*. p. 311