

QUESTION # 05

Islamophobia is a sign of extremism.

Give suggestions for its remedy.

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Is Islamophobia a sign of extremism?

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'Welcome Brother!' were the words of a seventy-one year old grandfather to a seventeen year old who killed that grandfather along with many others at Christchurch mosque, New Zealand, while live streaming the massacre to social media. The boy wrote in his agenda that he wanted to send a message to the world that no foreign culture especially Islamic culture is allowed in his beloved country. Such kinds of acts of violence are increasing against Muslims are increasing, around the globe, even in the peaceful countries. Violence emerges when tolerance for conflicting ideas dies. Extremism in the ideas of people is a reason that Islamophobia is on the rise and ethnic cleansing is appearing in the twenty first century. The largest democracy of the world is also an example of this Islamophobia. It is now that efforts should be made to curb this Islamophobia or it would be late. Curbing Islamophobia would not be an easy task today either, and a collective efforts approach

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would be required ^{involving} including the global platform along with leaders of both muslim majority and muslim minority states.

What is Extremism

Conflicting ideas in a society shows the growth of society, but sticking to one idea and being intolerant to other ideas causes the degradation of the society. One's idea can be right and can be wrong, but not accepting the ideas of other and imposing one's own idea through all means is extremism. Being intolerant is against the norms of democracy as democracy promotes moderation of idea along with freedom of choices. Thus it promotes the choices freedom as a norm that should be respected.

Extremism within a society is undemocratic yet quite prevalent within democracies.

Extremism in any form is evil and it should be countered.

Defining Islamophobia

Islamophobia is a word made up of 'islam' and 'phobia'. Phobia is a greek word which means 'fear'. Thus islamophobia in its literal meaning describe 'fear of islam'.

The term islamophobia was used first time in 1910, but the recent events have triggered and impacted world hugely. In order to describe the phenomenon many widely recognized institutions have tried to define it. Oxford dictionary has also put islamophobia in its list. It has defined islamophobia as: 'Intense dislike or fear of Islam especially as a political force; hostility and prejudice towards the Muslims'. Many other institutions have defined and also called islamophobia as a fear of islam.

ISLAMOPHOBIA: A SIGN OF Extremism

Islamophobia: an embodiment of extremism :-

Islam, a monolithic religion, is different than many religions in its essence. The idea of different ideology has raised fear and suspicion among many religions and people. The fear of Islam being different was used and shaped by the media narratives. Media shaped the narrative for its rating and build a community with the extreme view ^{regarding} Islam. Islam became synonymous of terrorism to many people. Islam being an influential and endemocratic ideology caught up in the mainstream. Political leaders took this extreme narrative and used it to get power. Once the extreme narratives regarding Islam get/find political cover, they spread like fire. Fear of Muslims emerged and spread throughout the world taking many lives in the process and violating human rights. Extremist ideologies were the one who shape and raised Islamophobia.

MODIFICATION of India : extremist political Hindutva ideology and rise of islamophobia :-

India is on the news, around the globe, for its discriminatory legislation and policies regarding muslim community. Hindu-muslim divide is engraved in history of subcontinent, but it has become evident from 2002 when three thousand muslims were killed in street crimes by the Hindu mobs. Authorities, instead of stopping the violence, enraged the people more through their words. The violence was one side of the coin, discriminatory policies becomes the trade-mark of Modi government as Modi took the charge of country as prime minister. Modi advocated muslim genocide and his ministers followed him and pitched in. Slowly yet in fast pace, democratic norms were tarnished in the world's largest democracy as islamophobia rises in the country.

Clash of Civilization through lens of western extremist media policy and impacts on islamophobia :-

Western media had adopted the policy of blaming every bad thing happening in the universe on islam rather than criminals. This policy has supported the extremist rhetoric regarding islam and proved that it is true that next clash would be among civilization especially world vs islam. Showing a particular picture of islam and blaming islam along with distorting islam's real face has done no good to anybody, but ^{it has} proved deadly to muslims. This media policy to distort islam had fueled extremist views of people and raise islamophobia to new peaks.

Gaining vote at the expense of muslims : Rightwing parties and islamophobia

Right wing parties are also participating towards extremist views of people regarding islam. Right wing parties

use anti-islamic narrative to gain more votes. This political addition to extremist views regarding islam is providing cover to violence against muslims. Trumpism was completely anti-islamic ideology directed against Barack Hussein Obama, but this ideology provided/fueled the anti-islamic narrative across America and rise in violence against muslims was evident from the violent activities in the first half of 2017. Muslim travel ban also focussed and supported islamophobia. Many right wing parties won election in Europe on the narrative of expelling muslim refugees after Syria war. Gaining vote and popularity should not come at the cost of muslim or anyone's life. By doing so, islamophobia has seen tremendous rise in the recent century.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REMEDY OF Islamophobia

Slowly and gradually, islamophobia deepened its roots, but

now these roots are so intertwined that multi-level efforts would be needed to curb this disease.

Sell out soft image of Islam; a global media effort

Media has done so much harm to Islam by promoting islamophobic narratives and building islamophobic narrow sentiments. It is time to undo the harm by showing the soft side of Islam. Islam is a religion of peace that spread peaceful sentiments and teach tolerance. If the real picture of Islam is portrayed to people, the fear of muslim planet would deescalate. Media should play its important part by promoting the real face of Islam to world. Real teachings of Islam, real ideology of Islam and muslim as normal show people should appear to the world rather than promoting terrorism to the world and blaming Islam for what individual criminal behaviour is.

Propagate islamic literature to counter islamophobic content :-

There is so much islamophobic content in the world. Social media and such other platforms are spreading this content and shaping people's narrative against islam. There should be efforts regarding the promotion of real islamic literature that could answer the islamophobic content. Islamophobia is a war against all muslim community. Scholars should keep their differences aside and sit together to counter the literature that is islamophobic.

Protect muslim minorities : a state level efforts

Islamophobia has spread like virus among societies. Efforts of only muslim community will not bear any fruit. Non-muslim leaders should make some efforts to curb the disease too. States where muslims are in minority should make such rules and regulations that provide safety to

muslim minorities. The interest of muslim minorities should be safeguarded by the governing bodies of state. It would make people trust muslims and their government trust them. These efforts would help to minimize the islamophobic sentiments of people.

Islam as a religion of tolerance, not terrorism; a leadership challenge :-

Today, islam is being promoted as a religion of terrorism. Any terrorist activity around the globe is blamed on islam. In today's environment, it has become a challenge for muslim leadership to prove that islam is a peaceful religion who teaches tolerance. Leaders of muslim world should stand together to prove and promote the tolerant values of islam.

Spreading awareness through social media :-

Social media has been

used against muslims. Many social media platform have been found involved in anti-muslim or hate speech. Social media should be used to promote idea of tolerance regarding islam. Hate speech should be answer in a peaceful and logical way. By using social media platform to curb islamophobia would help reaching big audience. Islamophobia can be cured by the right use of social media.

Drawing visible line between freedom of speech and respect for religious sentiments :-

Many events had been reported that involved the disrespecting muslim religious sentiments on the name of freedom of speech and freedom of expression. There should be a visible line drawn to differentiate between freedom of speech respect for religious sentiments. One should know that one's right to spread arms stop where the nose of others begin.

Promoting multiculturalism at UN level

In order to fight islamophobia, collective efforts are required. Muslim, non-muslim leadership should work together with international organizations to fight islamophobia. United nations should promote multicultural ideology over nationalist views. Multiculturalism should be promoted along with tolerance values. It would help fight islamophobia.

Conclusion :-