

Title:

Rising Wave of Islamophobia
and challenges to the Muslim
World

Outline:

plz explain in one line what is islamophobia

1. Introduction

Thesis statement: Islamophobia is ~~currently on the rise~~. Anti-Muslim rhetoric of the far-right and online hate speech is targeting Muslims immigrants, discriminating them in corporate settings and bullying the youth. This narrative can be countered with inter-faith dialogue, and leveraging social media to promote True Islamic principles.

2. Understanding the rising wave of Islamophobia in the West

3. Different manifestations of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic practices

a. Politics of the far-right and populist dimension of Islamophobia

b. Online hate towards Islam and Muslims on the pretext of freedom of speech

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c. Misinformation fuels verbal and physical assault of Muslims

d. Defamation of veil, hijab, and burqa in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries

4. Challenges for the Muslim world amid the rising Islamophobia

a. Use of Islamophobia to justify interventions in Muslim countries

b. Lack of acceptance for Muslim immigrants in Europe

c. Discrimination in corporate settings on the basis of religion

d. Victimization of young diaspora in educational settings

e. Difficulty in forming unified stance among Muslim majority countries

5. Impacts of Islamophobia on ^{the} global Muslim identity

a. Effect on religious freedoms of Muslim due to constant surveillance

b. Psychosocial impacts on the youth bulge living in West

6. Strategies to counter false narrative regarding Islam and Muslims

- a. Unity amongst Muslim states to build pro-Islamic narrative
- b. Targeting the Muslim communities living in Europe to advocate for pro-Muslim policies
- c. Promoting inter-faith dialogue to spread true teachings of Islam
- d. Leveraging social media to counter hate speech and misinformation

7. Conclusion

A video circulated on social media, in October 2024, of a man hurling "Islamophobic" slurs and hitting the protective glass of a bus. He was spitting on the Muslim driver and calling "Muslims are terrorist" and "Go back to your country". A glaring picture of a rising wave of Islamophobia can be seen in daily life practices, corporate settings, political activities, and social gatherings. The politics of the far-right is a prime manifestation of Islamophobia in the West.

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Online spaces are filled with anti-Muslim rhetoric, and further fueled by misinformation. Appearance of Muslim women invokes hatred towards them leading to discrimination in corporate sector. West use Islamophobia as a mean to interfere in Muslim countries, and meanwhile, does not give acceptance to Muslims migrating to Europe post western invasion. Muslim youth of Arab origin becomes a victim of bullying due to its religious identity in educational settings. As a whole, Islamophobia poses a major challenge to ^{the} unity among Muslim nations. Resultantly, Muslims fear to practice their religion openly and developing psychosocial problems in normal day routines. Prime strategy to counter Islamophobia in today's age is to ensure unity among Muslim countries, and to target Muslim communities living in Europe to advocate for pro-Muslim policy in the West. Social media can also be used to fight hate speech and misinformation regarding Islam. One may question ^{that} "Is not Islamophobia one of the greatest challenge posed to Muslims

in 21st century?" Furthermore, "Is not religious hatred discriminating Muslims in all walks of life?" Hence, Islamophobia is currently on the rise. Anti-Muslim rhetoric of the far-right and online hate speech is targeting Muslims immigrants, and discriminating them in corporate settings, and bullying the youth. This narrative can be countered with interfaith dialogue, and leveraging social media to promote true Islamic values.

Islamophobia, emerged from the policies of Ottoman empire and rule of Tariq Bin Ziad in Spain. However, it has changed its shape in 21st century and currently visible in all its forms. Khalid Abaydin, an expert on Islamophobia has categorized it as "Individual Islamophobia, Structural Islamophobia, and Dialectic Islamophobia." In individual Islamophobia, far-right politicians and populists spread the fear of Islam and hate towards it. In structural Islamophobia, state policies and laws stem from hate towards Islamic values, principles and practices. Thirdly, in dialectic Islamophobia modern means like social

media is used ~~for~~ against muslims and Islam. Rising Islamophobia revolves around these three forms.

Politics of the far-right and populist dimension of Islamophobia is a prime manifestation of rising hatred towards Islam. Populists are raising the slogans like "They vs. Us" and "In vs. Out" to spread fear regarding Islamisation of the West. Back in 2020, Nusrat Ghani was sacked as a minister by a conservative party's whip in UK on the pretext of her Muslim identity. Later, Ms. Nusrat Ghani narrated the words of the whip on to media "Your Mullimness is creating problems for your colleagues." To simply put, conservative politicians, as well as, the populists from the west are instigating Islamophobia with their anti-Islamic slogans and practices.

This hatred is also visible on social media platforms and excused with a right to freedom of speech and expression. Countries like France - a hot spot of Islamophobia, allow online hate by considering it a right of their citizens

to freely express their views. Multiple incidents of burning the Holy Quran are reported every year. A Dutch politician from Netherlands Geert Wilders made some anti-Islamic tweets in 2023 saying "Ramadan is not our history, not our culture, and not our future." and "Say no to Ramadan." Such hate speech, thus is considered right to speech that instigates incidents like ^{the} burning of Holy books.

Along with hate speech, Islam is also targeted with misinformation that fuels verbal and physical assault of muslim. It is a manifestation of adding fuel to the fire. Recently, in Southport UK, a Taylor Swift themed dance party was held, where three girls were repeatedly stabbed with a knife. Soon after the incident, a news broke on social media alleging that a muslim immigrant has stabbed the girls. This piece of misinformation resulted in violent riots across UK putting security of Muslim immigrants at stake. Hence, social media is a hotspot of misinformation successfully fueling to the verbal and physical assault

of Muslims.

Another manifestation of Islamophobia is ~~defaming~~ and ~~targeting~~ the veil, hijab and burqa in both muslim and non-muslim countries. Burqa is a true representation of Islamic teachings, which is ~~counted~~ as ~~submissiveness~~ by the West. ^{and few Islamic countries like Tajikistan} During COVID-19, the compulsory wearing of ~~masks~~ raised similar ~~concerns~~ that it resembles to Islamic values and leads to submissiveness of ~~women~~. Fourteenth report of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, ²⁰²⁰⁻²² on 'Islamophobia' ~~cited~~ that ~~out of six different manifestations of Islamophobia~~ ^{in muslim and non-muslim countries} hijab and burqa has an 21% share. It means that veil and hijab's prohibition is considered as a fearful practice of Islam.

These prominent manifestations of hate towards Islam pose enormous challenges to the muslim world. Western bloc uses it as an excuse to interfere in Muslim countries and with Muslim communities. United States of America invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and fought a ~~twenty-year~~ long war on Terror

- a war against Islam and Muslims. Similarly, ~~China is fighting muslim~~^{with} minorities in Uyghurs, and Myanmar is on war with Rohingyas Muslims. The failure of state policies to protect its territories from "Non-State Actors" results into invasion of muslim territories. Hence, West is using Islam as an excuse to interfere in Muslim countries.

Not only the interference, West also has lack of acceptance for the Muslims migrating to Europe from war torn countries. Either religious or political conflicts in one part of the world force people to migrate to other parts of the world for their safety and wellbeing. However, western policies regarding immigrants are unwelcoming. In 2016, the then presidential candidate Donald Trump revealed his intentions to put a ban on Muslim migration from Syria, Afghanistan, and Yemen to US. Other countries like France also introduce such hostile policies against Muslim migrants from time to time. To conclude, West is completely unwelcoming towards Muslim immigrants.

Those immigrants, who have been living in west from quite sometime, face discrimination in corporate settings. This discrimination is solely due to their religious identity and affiliation. A research study published on Research gate, titled "Impacts of Islamophobia on Economic Conditions of Women in UK: An Analytical Overview" stated that muslim women are relatively more subjected to this discrimination. ~~Their veil and overall appearance highlight them amongst many other workers and end up being discriminated on pay rate and jobs allocation.~~ Therefore, Islamophobia has reached to the daily job markets and hindering the economic development of muslims and women in particular.

In addition to this, young diaspora faces discrimination in educational settings. Education teaches equality, acceptability and inclusion. Unfortunately, hatred towards islam has reached the educational institutions and youth is targeted on the basis of its religious affiliations. A California based research

study revealed that in 2019, 58% school going muslim students highlighted that they have faced religious discrimination and hate in school. Moreover, 28% of the students said that they have skipped school due to discrimination and fear of religious hatred. Thus, young diaspora is also on the hit list of Islamophobic sentiments prevailing in educational institutions.

Another ~~well researched connect~~ major challenge of anti Islamic sentiments is a difficulty in forming unified stance amongst the Muslim majority countries. Muslims are divided on the basis of sects and different cultural practices. Xenophobic forces fuel such divisions and extract desired results out of it. For instance, Iran vs. Saudi Arabia is a clash of Islamic sects, which opens a way for US and Russia to extract personal interests by ~~fueling~~ ^{write short sentences} sectarian divisions. A recent example is of Tajikistan, which introduced a policy to not wear hijab, veil and burqa while serving on official posts - a reflection of division over Islamic teachings, stem^{ed} from xenophobic attitudes. Hence,

Islamophobia is a stumbling block on the way of Islamic and muslim unity. These challenges, subsequently, have major impacts on the global Muslim identity. Particularly, it affects the religious freedoms of Muslims due to constant surveillance. Muslim communities living in Western countries cannot freely perform congregational prayers, visit mosques, and perform religious traditions. In 2001 New York Police Department launched "Muslim Surveillance and Monitoring Programme" and deployed spies in mosques, muslim communities, and muslim business markets. This spying continued from 2001 to 2014 making muslims fearful while performing religious tasks. To simply put, Islamophobia affects the religious freedoms of muslims.

Similarly, it has psychosocial impacts on the youth bulge living in the West. A young person, who faces discrimination and exclusion, develops low self-esteem and lacks interpersonal skills. A clinical psychologist and professor from Stanford University, Ms. Rania Award commented that "a person

exposed to religious discrimination develops a continuous perception of hatred and discrimination towards his religion. Victims of religious discrimination, thus, develop psychosocial issues hindering their overall growth in a society.

The rising wave of Islamophobia needs to be tackled immediately using far-reaching strategies like promoting unity amongst muslim communities. It will give an idea to the anti-Islamic forces that muslim nations are not divided on the basis of sects, cultures and personal preferences. Allama Muhammad Iqbal gave a similar lesson to the muslims of sub-continent, which can be perfectly employed even today. He said in one of his poetry "Muslims must unite to watch over the shrine (Haram), from the banks of the Nile to the deserts of Kashgar." Therefore, only the unity amongst muslims can develop a pro-Islamic narrative for the West.

Secondly, muslims living in european countries can help in removing structural Islamophobia. They can advocate for pro-Islamic laws and policies in the

West. Ms. Noz Shah, a politician from UK wrote in Euronews, titled "ways to tackle Islamophobia" that advocacy by muslim communities on post-muslims legislation and policy making is a pre-requisite to curb Islamophobia.

Thirdly, ~~true Islamic values~~ can be promoted with the help of interfaith dialogue. Communication and dialogue is a key to solve any global issue and same goes for Islamophobia. In 2016, Ex-President Barack Obama advocated for interfaith dialogues, discussion on religious differences, and acceptability over all techniques to link the paragraphs are fine of different religious ideologies to ensure world's peace. It implies that muslim communities need to foster interfaith and intra faith dialogue to disseminate information regarding true Islamic teachings and to listen the stance of other religions as well.

Fourthly, muslim nations need to leverage social media to counter hate speech and misinformation. This is a world of digital revolution and the control over digital means guarantees a win. According to Digital Rights Global

Digital India, by October 2024 around 5.22 bn people use social media, equaling to 63.8% of the world population. So, OIC has also recommended in its 14th report on Islamophobia that hate speech and misinformation through the wise use of social media by muslim communities and nations. They can run campaigns on Quranic verses like "Do not transgress" and "Allah does not like the transgressors" (Surah maldah). These strategies are a right approach to counter ^{the} rising Islamophobia.

To sum up the discussion on the topic, it is evident that one of the global challenges faced by muslim countries is a rising wave of anti-Jehmic and anti-muslim sentiments and practices. This wave is apparent in the form of structural, individual and dialectic Islamophobia. Far-right politicians and populists fuel anti-muslim rhetoric, anti-Islamic groups spread hate speech and irrational fear of Islam, and see veil as a sign of submissiveness. As a result of which muslims have to face western invasion, discrimination

argumenative skills
are strong
godd keep it up

across all sectors, and a fear of constant surveillance. Due to which, muslims cannot exercise their "right to practice religion" freely and young diaspora is developing psychosocial issues. The best way to cope this wave is ^{by} ensuring unity amongst muslims, advocating for pro-muslim legislations and by leveraging social media to cut down misinformation and hate speech. A strong, steady, cohesive and unanimous approach by the muslim world can successfully develop a pro-Islamic narrative for the non-muslim world. In the words of a famous Theologian, Hans King:

"No peace can be achieved among nations without peace among religions, and no peace between religions can be achieved without dialogue between religions."