

ISLAMIC STUDIES

(2019)

(Q)

Is extremism a challenge to Islam?
Discuss in context of contemporary
challenges faced by Muslim Ummah.

Introduction:

Extremism is a serious challenge faced by the Muslim Ummah. It has split the Muslims apart and created sentiments of hatred and vengeance among them. There are certain root causes which have given rise to extremism. Alienation, poverty, economic instability etc. are the major causes of extremism in the world. Holy Prophet has rightly said:

كاد الفقر ان يكون
شركاً

"Poverty leads to disbelief."

Resultantly, extremism is a challenge to Islam and the Muslim Ummah as well.

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EXTREMISM: A CHALLENGE TO ISLAM IN CONTEMPORARY WORLD (MUSLIM UMMAH)

Extremism is portraying a bad image
of Muslims:

Unfortunately, Muslims have been labelled as terrorists by the Western world. Therefore, the image of Muslims has been tarnished. According to a Pakistan Islamabad-based think tank, the West has quite frequently used the terminologies like "Islamic Militants", "the Islamic Bombs" etc. However Allah says in Holy Quran:

"Fight them if they fight you, and do not commit aggression".

Extremism is leading towards religious intolerance:

In countries like Pakistan, religious intolerance remains very high. Moreover, there are different "terrorist" organizations as well which sow the seed of intolerance among the Muslims. This religious intolerance is being picked up by the West to undermine the image of Muslims around the globe. Allah says in Holy Quran:

"Hold tight to the rope of Allah and do not be divided."

Extremism is undermining women education in the Muslim world:

Unfortunately, cultural barriers dominate in the Muslim countries. This is undermining women education and there is misinterpretation of Islam. Holy Prophet has rightly said:

"It is incumbent upon

all Muslim men and women to acquire knowledge".

Countries like Afghanistan have been quite adopting strict policies to stop women from acquiring knowledge. This extremism ^{has} ~~can~~ even ^{tried} take the lives of women if they violated the cultural norms.

Extremism has also hindered economic growth in the Muslim world:

Al-Qaeda has used the name of Islam to conduct serious human rights violation around the globe. Wrong interpretation is ~~being~~ of Quran is taking place to kill innocent people. This misinterpretation has led to the ~~development~~ formation of terrorist groups in Pakistan as well. **Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi etc** who want to establish Islamic Shariah by killing people in Pakistan.

According to NACTA, 80,000 people have been killed in Global War on Terror in Pakistan and \$5 billion loss has been done in the country.

Misinterpretation of Islam by Extremists has been a challenge to Muslim Ummah:

The extremists have been interpreting the Quran on the basis of their knowledge and interests. The such interpretation has also tarnished the image of Muslims around the globe. The concept of Martyrdom has been greatly undermined by extremists to fulfil their objectives. Allah has said in the Quran:

“And do not say of what you do not have knowledge”.

A case Study of Balochistan:

There is high level of extremism in Pakistan ~~in~~ Balochistan which has caused serious losses for the economy of Pakistan. Due to alienation, poverty and unemployment, extremism in Balochistan has been rising. According to **Dawn News** reports, there is an increase in youth getting recruited in extremist groups like **Balochistan Liberation Army** and they have been conducting suicide attacks. Thus, Balochistan is a serious issue dividing the Muslims of Pakistan.

Pakistan - Iran Spot (Balochistan versus Baluchistan):

Apart from ~~Pak~~ people getting divided in Pakistan, there are rivalries between Islamic Countries as well. In 2024, Iran and Pakistan got into a conflict in which Iran attacked inside Pakistan's territory to target extremist groups. Similarly, Pakistan retaliated as well by attacking extremists in Iran's Baluchistan region. Thus, extremism is even undermining relations between Muslim countries. Holy Prophet has said:

"One Muslim is brother
of another Muslim"

Conclusion:

Thereby, Muslims need to address the challenges posed by extremist groups to unite the Muslim Ummah and bring back the glorious past of the Muslims. This can be only done through multilateral cooperation and developing policies to listen to the grievances of people. Furthermore, religious scholars should be given

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the responsibility to alleviate
religious intolerance through sermons
and talkshows.

