

INTOLERANCE - CAUSES AND WAY FORWARD

OUTLINE

A. Introduction

B. Causes of Intolerance:

i. Political politisation and politics of propaganda give rise to divisions among multiple factions of society which are hostile and aggressive towards each other.

(9-May Attacks)

ii. Policies of government aimed to achieve short-term goals also induce the atmosphere of intolerance by sowing the seeds of hatred and prejudice.

(Islamisation of Zia-ul-Haq)

iii. Sectarianism fuelled by religious clerics polarises the population on sectarian faultlines which triggers intolerance.

(Kuwam violence, 2024)

iv. Curriculum bias shapes the perception of people and ignites prejudice and intolerance towards certain groups.

(Vande-Matavam in curriculum)

v. Poverty and economic recession compel people to fulfill their survival needs at the stake of others which prompts intolerance.

(Case study of Syria)

vi. Illiteracy and backwardness drives intolerance when people blindly follow the footsteps of extremist leaders.

(Abdul Godeer Khan quote)

vii. Algorithmic bias in social

media platforms bombards the users with a specific content which creates an atmosphere of echochambers, biasness and intolerance.

(Capitol Attack, USA)

C. Way Forward to Eradicate Intolerance :

- i. Ending political polarisation by utilising diplomatic tools and soft-power means can ultimately scale down intolerance.

(Reforms after Civil Rights Movement)

- ii. Making inclusive and pluralistic policies to incorporate all sections of society eradicates the dominance of majority section.

(Rwanda Reconciliation Efforts)

- iii. Encouraging religious clerics to promote inter-faith harmony, pluralism and tolerance.

(Sufism in Ottoman Empire)

iv. Overhauling the entire curriculum to inculcate the shared values of all groups, races, religions and minorities to develop veneration and collective goals.

(Finland Anti-bias curriculum)

v. ~~Introducing~~ economic reforms for poverty eradication and poverty-induced crimes and intolerance.

(Brazil Reform)

vi. Running awareness and conscious raising campaigns on the imperils of hate crimes and intolerance.

(The End of Bias by Jessica Nordell)

vii. Devising protocols of social media platforms to filter out the biased content and extreme narratives.

(EU Digital Services Act)

D. Conclusion

The lynching of 49-year old **Priyantha Kumara**, a **Srilankan manager**, by angry mob in **Sialkot, Punjab** sent shockwaves across country. In fact, it is not an isolated case of mob-violence in Pakistan. Angry mob and its ruthless actions serve as a reflection of growing violence, intolerance and indifference in society. Intolerance, ^{a pervasive evil} in any society, stems from multifarious factors. These involve political polarisation and propagandist politics to fuel hatred and intolerance. Similarly, the ^{policies of} government focusing on the interests of majority and powerful section instill marginalisation, disintegration and prejudice. Additionally, sectarianism promotes religious intolerance and violence. Moreover, curriculum bias

illiteracy and backwardness generate systematic intolerance. Furthermore, poverty and social-media bias are significant contributors of intolerance in society. Despite the multifaceted nature of intolerance, it can be eliminated by taking various measures. They range from ending political polarisation by the policy of dialogue to devising inclusive and pluralistic policies.

Next to it, removing curriculum bias ^{alongside other measures} can promote harmony and mutual respect. In brief, intolerance is caused by multitudinous factors of political, economic and religious nature and eroding them at every level can significantly reduce intolerance in society.

The foremost cause of intolerance is political

polarisation and dominance of interest groups vying for power. Influential and powerful politicians sway public opinion and spread unrest in society to defame their opponents and strengthen their own position. They call for public protests, vandalism and boycott to heighten their popularity. Resultantly, public blindly acts upon their call for action and target the opponent parties and groups. Violence and mayhem spread like wildfire and public becomes hostile and aggressive. The riots of 9 May in Pakistan present a grim picture of political polarisation and political intolerance in society. Therefore, political polarisation is a root cause of intolerance.

Then, the policies of sitting government aimed at short-term goals of power consolidation and ^{gaining} political legitimacy bring about intolerance. Government is a representative of ^{both} majority and minority sections of country. However, the myopic policies and controversial legislation marginalise the vulnerable groups in society. They feel abandoned by central government on account of favouring the rich, dominant and mainstreamed community. Subsequently, they turn to violence and anti-state ^{acts} to safeguard their due rights. The Islamisation policies of Zia-ul-Haq resulted in Shia-Sunni violence, gender-based violence and intolerant culture in urban and rural settlements. Hence, ^{narrow} governmental policies eradicate tolerance and forbearance

gion society. ~~in the~~ ~~set~~

Moreover, religious clerics also play a critical role in fueling sectarianism and religiously-motivated-violent extremism.

As people hold religious values sacred, they lose sanity at the slightest flicker of desecration and blasphemy. Violence and hate crimes become legit and normalised when religious leaders motivate and provide religious justification for extra-judicial killings and mob-violence. Furthermore, seminars and speeches of these clerics, highlighting the sectarian and inter-faith divergences, reduce the notion of pluralism and harmony in society. **Case in view is the horrible Kurrum violence which**

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54 people
killed ~~n~~ travelling in a convoy
from Shia - Muslim community

Therefore, it is clear that
religious clerics denouncing
the value of inter-faith harm
bring about intolerance in
society.

Similarly, biased
curriculum also shapes the
opinion and perception of students
in favour of or against any
racial, ethnic or religious community.
Curriculum works as a mental
template for the attitude and
feelings of students in any
society. Addition of extreme
content based on over-glorification
of heroes and history of
dominant group - hurts the
sentiments of minorities. As a

result, they feel abandoned, suppressed and alienated. Moreover, it triggers radicalisation and ethnic violence. Vaide Matarom as part of Wardha Scheme in schools played a central role in eroding Hindu-Muslim Unity. Likewise, Hindutva Ideology of Modi and alteration of history in schools is engendering anti-Muslim hatred in India. These patterns clearly illustrate the imperils of biased curriculum in the form of intolerance and extremism.

Next to it, poverty breeds intolerance in society when people lose compassion and empathy for the pursuit of bread. Tolerance is a norm in developed, harmonised and

progressive societies. In contrast countries where corruption is endemic and ^{majority of} poor strata does not have access to basic needs of life, street crimes, drug-retails, robbery, rape, abduction and smuggling become ubiquitous. Moreover, that society gets divided deeply owing to fractures in social integration. Consequently, mafia-culture prevails over in such society. **Case in view is Syria where social and economic regression gave rise to fragmentation of Syrian society and prevalence of extreme, intolerant and terrorist groups.** Hence, economic depravity lies at the core of intolerance in ^{poor} societies.

In the similar fashion, illiteracy and backwardness make people gullible to believe, share and follow the extreme ideologies propagated by radicalised leaders. In societies where the culture of research and double-check is absent, people tend to act upon impulsively and irrationally. Violent emotions inculcated by leaders stir-up the public to breach the rule of law. As a result, they forsake moral values and principles of harmony and tolerance. Such societies become the furnaces of violent extremism, mob-violence, lynching and murders. As Abdul Qadeer Khan rightly mentioned, "Hatred, intolerance, poor hygienic conditions and violence all have

roots in illiteracy." Therefore, illiteracy and backwardness are drivers of intolerance and extremism.

Additionally, algorithmic bias in social-media applications bring about intolerance, racism and radicalisation. In modern times, people rely excessively on social-media for national and international news updates. The problem with this approach is that there is a paucity of regulatory authority to streamline information. As a result, algorithms search and present ^{such} information which aligns with the ideology, interest and inclination of users. This bombardment of one-sided content

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hides the perspective of other side. Consequently, the user accepts his own ^{views,} party and group as credible, fair and just. This creates an atmosphere of echo-chamber and biasness for opposing ideology. People ^{also} blindly follow the generated content of algorithms based on falsehood, propaganda, negativity and intolerance.

Case in view is Capitol Attack in USA, ⁱⁿ which the followers of Donald Trump stormed the Capitol building after acting upon the social-media misinformation. Hence, algorithms and their unfiltered results cultivate intolerance in modern societies.

Above discourse employed the causes of intolerance.

Solutions to end intolerance will be described in the following discourse.

First of all, eradication of political polarisation is required by means of diplomatic tools and dialogue. Multiple parties operating in a country should do away with the politics of narrow interest for the greater good of society. They should inculcate the mutual feelings of respect and tolerance in their followers for other parties. This will invite a reciprocal approach of acceptance and tolerance.

In USA, people and distinctive groups got united after the horrors of Civil Rights Movement.

for equality and freedom.

Hence, party-leaders can remarkably induce an environment of tolerance and harmony in a society.

In the similar manner, inclusive and pluralistic policies of government are great impetus to generate tolerance in a society. This involve providing equal rights, devising similar policies and extending the same opportunities towards all the sections of society. As a result, ^{vulnerable} people feel connected, equal and secure. Moreover, this aggrieved section gets pacified which assists in eliminating its intolerant and violent views.

The Rwanda's Reconciliation Efforts after Civil War is an excellent example of mitigating intolerance in society by the efforts of a responsible government.

Therefore, government can play a remarkable part in eradicating intolerance through its ^{impartial} policies.

Furthermore, religious leaders are pivotal to eradicate intolerance from a society. When they utilise their religious position to enlighten their followers on the principles of harmony, multiculturalism and tolerance, violent ideologies take a back seat and ultimately vanish. The followers

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implement those principles in their daily life and tolerate ^{other} religious and sectarian minorities. Subsequently, a moderate and pluralistic society is founded having inter-faith harmony. The works of Sufis in Ottoman empire stands as a shining example as it promoted tolerance and acceptance among divergent religious groups. Clearly, religious clerics can dismantle intolerance through their efforts.

Additionally, introducing economic reforms to facilitate the lower strata of society is a gateway to a peaceful and moderate society. This can be ensured through rehabilitation programmes, social securities fund and job provision

to marginalised factions. For this, ^{both} government and private stakeholders can play their part to mainstream the overlooked communities by poverty eradication programmes.

In this regard, Brazil reduced extremism by a combination of economic reforms like Bolsa Familia (direct monetary assistance), and social inclusion programmes.

Therefore, the role of economic progress is crucial for the erosion of extremism and intolerance.

Moreover, awareness campaigns on the catastrophic implications of intolerance can raise consciousness of people to stand against intolerance.

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This involves disseminating literature, online-content, talk-shows and TV programmes which promote diverse and pluralistic perspectives. Alongside, students, social-workers and professors are paramount to ^{such} run campaigns against hate-crimes and violent extremism. Jessica Nordell in her book "The End of Bias" explores the importance of community role in making people aware of their inherent biases and ultimately eroding them. Hence, these campaigns can be pivotal to eliminate intolerance.

Lastly, devising protocols of social media

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platforms is the need of an how to address the challenges of misinformation and online violent content.

This include legislative measures and policy frameworks to make the owners of online platforms responsible and accountable.

As a result, government can exercise control on the hateful and racist profiles. This will ultimately prevent the widespread of online extremism and intolerance.

European Union's Digital Services Act, 2024 is groundbreaking to prevent the spread of unfiltered and extreme content on social media. Therefore, social media regulation is a

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cornerstone of eroding
intolerance.

In conclusion,
intolerance is fuelled by a
myriad of social, economic and
political factors and its
solution lies in dismantling
them. These factors involve
polarised politics, unfair
policies of government and
religious sectarianism.
Moreover, curriculum bias
instills intolerance by implanting
hatred and disharmony.

In addition to this, poverty
also make people intolerant
and violent. Furthermore,
illiteracy and backwardness
root out the elements of
acceptances, pluralism and

tolerance from society. Next to it, algorithmic bias, generating misinformation and prejudice, causes intolerance. However, taking ^{positive} steps like ending political polarisation and introducing pluralistic policies can eradicate intolerance. Religious clerics can ^{also} play their constructive role in binding ^{all} people on common grounds of humanity and empathy. Alongside, equal economic opportunities can mainstream the extremist groups. Lastly, awareness campaigns and social media regulation can recreate a society on the principles of tolerance and mutual respect. ^{briefly, a} collective will is required ^{against intolerance} as Angela Merkel remarked, "Hatred, racism, and extremism have no place in this country."