

Q1.

(1) Introduction: Rights of minorities in Islam and their status in Pakistan

Minorities are considered zimmi in Islam which means they are responsible in an Islamic society. Islam is a religion of harmony and moderation. It assures protection of minorities. Islam has granted right to life, property and inheritance. Minorities are equal citizens in Islam. They are treated with justice, tolerance, and part of society. Prophet (PBUH) himself promoted pluralism in Madinah. In Pakistan, minorities have special status. The constitution of Pakistan guarantees protection of basic rights of minorities. The laws grant them reserved seats in national assembly, special job quota and legal rights as well.

(2) What are minorities; United Nations definition

According to United Nations (UN), minorities are the group of people in a society which are numerically inferior, having different religion, ethnicity, language, or culture. For instance, **Kalash people** residing in northern Pakistan have distinct culture,

hence, they are minorities in Pakistan.

(3) Minorities: Zimmi in Islam

In Islam minorities are considered zimmi means responsibility. Minorities in an Islamic state are responsibility of Muslims. They are bound to protect their life, property, honour and deal with them justly. In Islamic states, they are free to choose their religion. Violence and coercion are strictly prohibited in Islam.

(4) Rights of minorities in Islam

(a) Right to life, property and honour;

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that

Verily! your blood, your property,
and your honour are sacred,
as this day and as this month

(Farewell Sermon)

Hence, Islam respects right to life and property without any biasness of region. Every life is precious irrespective of colour, religion or ethnicity in an Islamic society.

(b) Freedom of religion;

Islam states that religion is a personal

perspective of every man. It is followed through spiritual inclination and inner complacency.

Therefore, coercion in religion can not produce fruitful outcomes. Islam grants freedom to everyone to choose their religion. Minorities are independent in this regard in Islam. As Allah mentioned in Holy Quran that,

There is no compulsion
in the choice of religion
(Surah Al-Baqarah)

(C) Right to justice in the society

Justice (Adal) is the right of everyone in an Islamic state without any discrimination. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions pursued social justice and equality. Allah Almighty mentioned in Holy Quran that,

O people who believe, stand
out firmly for justice even
if it is against yourselves,
your parents or relatives

(Surah Al-Maida)

(d) Protection of religious sites of minorities

Allah Almighty has ordained in
Surah Al-Hajj to protect all worship places not

~~just~~ just mosque. Hence, Islam promotes inter-faith coexistence. This illustrates that minorities are important party of Islamic society.

(e) Political rights of minorities in Islam

In Islam, minorities are equal citizens of society. They are ~~into~~ included in decision-making authorities, consulted in every matter especially related to their community. Minorities have right to represent their community and voice their lawful concerns. They are entitled to participate in every matter like Muslims in any society.

(f) Financial rights of minorities in Islam

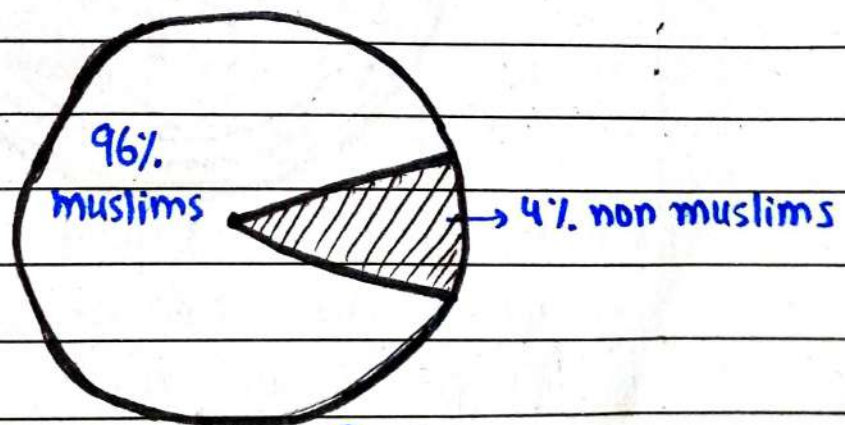
Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) conducted business, trade and deals with non-Muslims like Jews, and Christians. Islam allows to conduct trade with them. Additionally, minorities are entitled to hold property, assets in an Islamic state. They are equal beings as Muslim. However, they are exempted from Zakat. In place of Zakat, minorities are bound to pay Jizya. Hence, they are free to trade independently through lawful means.

(9) Right to equality for minorities in islam

Minorities are equal in islamic society as other religions. Allah mentions in Holy Quran that all mankind are created from single pair of male and female. Today, all differences are man-made. In islam, minorities are equal beings with equal right to justice, fair trial, and rule of law.

(5) Status of minorities in Pakistan

According to 2023 census, 96% of people in Pakistan are muslims and 4% are non-muslims



2023 census of Pakistan

In 4% minorities, 2% are christians, 1.4% hindus and 0.6% are remaining minorities.

(a) Religious rights of minorities in Pakistan

Pakistan is an islamic state. The constitution of Pakistan grants religious freedom to

everyone. Minorities can practise their traditions, rituals and practices freely but within their territorial boundaries. However, minorities are not allowed to give hate speech against any other religion.

(b) Political rights of minorities in Pakistan

Minorities have been granted with privileges in political sphere. They are reserved seats in National Assembly of Pakistan. Additionally, the government of Pakistan has granted special quota of jobs for non-muslims. This reflects special protection of minorities in Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

(c) Financial rights of non-muslims in Pakistan

In Islamabad, non-muslims can freely run businesses, conduct trade, get jobs at special positions and earn freely without any interference. They are allowed to earn and spend in lawful means.

(d) Legal rights of non-muslims in Pakistan

Undoubtedly, Islam protects minorities but it doesn't allow a non-muslim to become a ruler or judge in an Islamic state. Contrarily, Pakistan grants ~~the~~ special legal rights to

minorities. They can be judges, and it is evident in history that two non-muslim judges i.e. Chief Justice Bhagwandas and Chief Justice Corlioneus in Pakistan.

(6) Conclusion

To sum up, non-muslims have been responsibility of muslims in islamic state. Islam ensures protection of their life, property, honour. It considers them equal citizens and grants freedom of religion. Pakistan being an islamic country protect their political, religious, economic, and legal rights. Therefore, giving them special status that accomplishes islamic guidance regarding minorities.