

Islamic StudiesQ4- Introduction

Islam has been derived from the word 'SLM' which means peace. An important aspect of peace in Islam is the provision of rights to minorities. These rights include but are not limited to right of life, religion, property, dignity and protection. Although the constitution of Pakistan guarantees rights for 'Dhimmis', the reality has painted a different picture. Incidents like mob violence on the pretext of blasphemy, forced conversion and discrimination persists in the social fabric of the country. However, minority do enjoy the quota system that enable sufficient representations of their community. Despite the Islamic provision of rights to minorities, Pakistan continues to face challenges in applying these values, hindering the element of Islamic true spirit.

Rights of minorities in Islam

Right to life:

Islam advocates for the security of dhimmis life. It has ordained it upon the Muslims to ensure that the minority non-Muslim live peacefully and have a sense of safety and security. Strict condemnation is provided against those who harm the minorities. The Prophet (S.A.W) said,

"Those who suppressed dhimmis ... he and I will be adversary on the day of judgement." (Abu Dawud)

Freedom of worship and religion:

Prophet (S.A.W) advocated for the freedom of worship even if they non-Muslim continue idol worshipping. During the time of Huzrat

Umar (R.A)'s caliphate, churches and other places of worship were respected. He forbade the destruction of place of worships. It was during the conquest of Jerusalem when Jews were allowed to worship and enter the city during the caliphate of Hazrat Umar (R.A). Prophet (SAW) allowed Jews of Khaybar and Christians of Najran to freely practice their religions. Hence, Muslims cannot force people to convert into Islam, as Quran states in Surah-e-Kahf,

"To you is your religion and to me is mine."

Exemption from military:

Islam has made Jihad compulsory on Muslims but not on non-Muslim minorities living in Islamic territory. Instead, they are required to pay Jizya. Therefore, they

enjoy the privilege of exemption from war.

Charter of Madina - a case study:

Charter of Madina is the first written constitution devised by Prophet (S.A.W), as the head of the state, after migration to Madina. The charter codified the rights of Muslims (Ansar and Muhajireen), Jews and Polytheists. It made the inhabitants of Madina as a single entity. An attack against the one will be considered attack against all. Every party could freely worship and enjoy all the rights. Thus, this historic charter is a true Islamic legacy on the subjects of minority rights.

~~Status of minorities in Pakistan~~

Legal rights of minorities:

The Constitution of 1973 has stimulated

a number of rights for minorities. These rights include right of life, religion, property, marriage and political representation. For instance, Sikh marriage Act covers social and legal loopholes pertaining to marriages.

Limitations:

Although constitution provides rights for minorities, the implementation remains weak. This is due to ingrained cultural oppression, weak institutional capacity, paucity of political back lash. This results in under reporting, low conviction and deprivation of fundamental rights for minorities.

Political representation and quota system:

Minorities of Pakistan, comprising mainly of Hindus, Christians and Sikhs, enjoy some political representation on both National and

Provincial Assemblies. This enable them to politically address the concerns of their communities and advocate for their development. They usually secure the position through Pakistani quota system. Similarly, quota system is also present for many government vacancies which give minority the opportunity to become part of government.

Limitation:

Pakistan provides sufficient representation to minorities. However, gap persist in the level of their influence. They may not be able to forward many pro-minority agendas if they belonged to a party. For legislation changes, they heavily depend on Muslim parliamentarians who constitute majority. Also, they cannot become the head of the state or Prime Minister.

Social freedom and right to worship:

Minorities in Pakistan enjoy social harmony with Muslims to some extent. They spend their lives as ordinary citizens with rights to education, employment, and property. They have freedom to worship and their places of worship are protected by the state.

Limitation:

Minorities in Islam has been enduring the face of extremism prevailing in Pakistan. Mob violence on the pretext of blasphemy have threatened their basic rights of life, dignity and property several times. One prominent example is Taranwala incident. A Christian community was attacked by extremist Muslims on allegations of blasphemy, resulting in destruction and looting of their homes and churches. However, strict measures

were taken by government in response to hold the perpetrators accountable.

Conclusion

Islam provides rights to minorities living in Islamic territories. Few such rights are ~~there~~ the protection of their life, property and dignity. They are granted the freedom to worship and exempted from mandatory military services. The Charter of Madinah is a prominent example in which Prophet (SAW) brought harmony among Muslims, Jews and Polytheist, stressing the right of non-Muslims. Pakistan provides legal protection to minorities but gap persist in its implementation. Moreover, minorities enjoy the privilege of quota system in political and government spheres. However, they have limited influence. Lastly, minorities enjoy some social freedom. Unfortunately, the extremist tendencies in Pakistan has threatened their rights frequently.

Q2. Introduction

Mankind is a special creation of Allah. It excels the other creations due to its privilege of free will. Even the angels were commanded to prostrate before Hazrat Adam (A.S) according to Quran. With such a dignified position, man has been given certain responsibilities through guidance in the form of prophets and revelations. These responsibilities are ~~given~~ present in Quran ^{and} Sunnah.

Status of mankind in Islam

The Last Sermon of Prophet (S.A.W):

During Hajj, Prophet (S.A.W) stood on the mount of Arafat and performed his Last sermon, covering many aspects on the status of mankind. Following are few

of these points:

- ↳ Right to life, property and dignity

Right to life

Prophet (SAW), in his sermon, highlighted the importance of sanctity of human life. He abolished all the bloodshed revenge among the Muslims. During conquest of Makkah, he announced general amnesty for his enemies. Hence, human life, an amanah to Allah, should be protected.

Therby, discouraging ruthless killings in wars, spite, revenge, etc.

Right to property

Prophet (SAW) has voiced for the protection of property and stipulated rights for inheritance. Islam discourages violation of property's sanctity through theft, destruction or exploitation. In addition, Quran has mandated

own property and inheritance rights for both men and women.

Right to dignity

Islam provides every individual the right to dignity. During a funeral procession of Jew passing by, Prophet (SAW) stood out of respect. In the battle of Trench, a dead body of the enemies were given without any exchange for money. Rules of war forbade the killing or oppression of women, children, the weak and non-combatants. Hence, Islam maintains the dignity of every individual.

2. Equality and universal brotherhood among Muslims

Equality regardless of race, ethnicity and status

The prophet (SAW) designated all Muslims to be equal to each other. He said that neither an Arab is superior to non-Arabs ~~nor~~ and vice versa ~~nor~~ a white is superior over a black. The only status of superiority is driven by piety. Similarly, Quran Islam states that all mankind ~~is~~ has originated from a single soul.

Universal brotherhood among all Muslims

The Prophet (SAW) declared Muslims to be brothers of each other. Hence, differences could not exist based on one's ethnicity, race, colour, cast, status. This is evident in daily 5 times congregational prayer where Muslims stand shoulder to shoulder with each other to pray. Islam is a complete code of life. Following Islamic values, therefore, makes Muslims ideological brothers.

Rights of women:

Pre-Islamic Arabia viewed women as second class. Women were denied of property rights, right to life and dignity. Islam provided women with equal rights to men. A man was given a degree above due to his responsibility & provision protection.

It does not make man superior over women.

For daughters, prophet (SAW) said that if a person raises two daughters till maturity, he will be with him (SAW) together on the day of judgement. Regarding mother, he (SAW) mentioned her rights three times before the father. During his sermon, he highlighted the rights of wives. Islam stipulates the right to education, employment, profession and marriage.

Rights of minorities:

Islam provides certain rights for minorities.

Minorities have the right to life, dignity, property, religion and employment. Jews & Christians of Makkah were given the freedom to worship freely. Charter of Madinah was devised by Prophet (SAW) for collective protection and preservation of rights of all those living in Makkah.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Islam has exalted the status of mankind. Not only has it commanded for the protection and right of life, dignity and property but has also declared equality and universal brotherhood among Muslims.

Back when Women were deprived of basic rights, Islam raised their status equal to men. For minorities, it ensured dignity, protection and freedom.