

Question #1

Discuss the overall effects of Western civilization on Muslim societies.

Introduction

Allama Iqbal once asserted that, "The East has seen through the West's deceptive charm; its heart is dead, though its face is bright." The Western world has dominated almost all parts of the World through its economic and military prowess during the course of last five centuries. Muslim societies have gradually adapted to the new status quo. The political, cultural, economic, social, legal, and technological systems reflect the western influence. Although these changes have modernized the Islamic societies, they also pose a challenge to the traditional Islamic identity, law, and social structures.

Political and Legal impact of Western Civilization

The most profound impact of western contact was the dismantling of the traditional governance. For instance, the Ottoman Khilafah was transformed into the Republic of Turkey. The traditional setup of Sultanates, Khilafat, and Emirates were turned

into modern nation-states.

1: Centralization of Powers:

Pre-colonial Muslim societies had decentralized systems of governance where Islamic scholars (Ulemas) had significant autonomy. For instance, after the creation of Republic of Turkey, the religious authority of the Ulema was put under the direct control of the federal government.

2: Separation of Mosque and State:

Secularism was a foreign concept to the muslim societies. The western concept, originating from the enlightenment, was integrated into muslim society. The primary objective of the colonial forces was to control the rebellion in the state. Through separating religious affairs from the state, the colonial empires curtailed the ideological opposition that ^{could} ~~might~~ have occurred.

Mawlana Abu al Mawdudi criticized the concept of secularism and asserted that ~~th Islam~~ Islam is not a private religion, but it encompasses all aspects of life.

3: Legal dualism in Muslim societies

Post Colonization, many muslim countries adopted European civil and criminal codes, such as

the common law in Pakistan. Islamic law has been confined to the issues of personal importance, such as marriage, divorce, inheritance. For instance, Pakistan has a dual system where it merges secular laws with Islamic interpretation.

Intellectual, Educational, and ideological shifts

Western influence spread in muslim societies and dismantled traditional educational, ideological, and intellectual basis

1: Educational reforms.

Muslim societies gradually sidelined traditional Madrasa education in favor of Western-style universities. This introduced modern medicine, engineering, and physical sciences. Thus, this resulted in decline of the power and influence of religious and theological thinkers.

2: Pan-Islamic movements^{and} modernism

Jamal al din Afghani argued that science, reason, and Islam were compatible with each other. He also argued that muslims should adopt western technology. He supported the idea that all muslim countries

should unite to compete with the Western civilization. Thinkers and intellectuals like Jamal ud din Afghani often tried to integrate Western ideas with Islamic political framework.

Socio-Cultural impacts on Muslim societies

Globalization and Western media have altered the social fabric of Muslim societies. This transformation has been more prevalent in urban areas of Muslim countries.

1: The new family structure

Traditionally, the households of Muslim societies were based on joint families and extended family systems. Some of the societies were strongly tied to the clan and tribe. For example, the Arabic society was composed of thousands of clans and tribes. Western influence has shifted this trend ~~off~~ toward nuclear family system and individualism. According to the census of 2023 in Pakistan, 30 percent of people now live in nuclear family system.

Allah SWT says in the Holy Quran, "O mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made you into peoples and tribes that you may know one another." (Surah al-Hujurat).

2: Gender Roles shift:

Allah SWT says in the Holy Quran:

فَالرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ

"They are the maintainers of the women."
(Al-Quran)

Quran

The traditional gender roles in Muslim societies has defined the sphere of influence for both men and women. Modernization challenges the division of labor for men and women. Muslim societies has seen more women in the workforce and public life. According to Asian Development Bank, 25 percent of women ^{are} work in the labor force in Pakistan. Globally, 52 percent of women work in either private or public sectors.

3: Languages and lifestyles:

Traditionally, the languages, such as Arabic, Persian or local dialects were used in muslim societies. With the advent of European colonization, the languages of English and French became official languages and markers of status. These languages are now studied in the educational domains of muslim countries. They are also used in public life of muslim societies. For instance, most west African muslim countries have French as their official language. On the other hand, Western fashion, music, art, food, and movies have become prevalent in Islamic society. For example, Valentine's day and Halloween are celebrated in some muslim countries.

Economic Integration and Challenges

Neoliberalism and Capitalism were a direct result of Western colonization of Islamic lands. This resulted in economic exploitation and devastation of economies of muslim countries.

1: Imperialism and Resource Extraction:

The global demand for oil and minerals led to western countries to

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extract resources in Islamic countries, thus making them dependent on western technology. For instance, the American and British companies used Middle Eastern oil resources to fund World War 1 and World War 2.

2: Financial Systems:

Allah SWT says in the Holy Quran:

﴿لَا يَرْبِي الْفَيْسُ﴾

"Allah destroys interest and give increase in charity".

- Al Quran

The western financial system superseded the Islamic financial system. The European system of finance and banking is based on interest (Riba) which has conflicted with Islamic prohibitions. Although some countries have developed Islamic banking to harmonize western financial system with Islamic principles. For instance, Saudi government created the Islamic bank of Al Tazeeera.

Conclusion

Maulana Maududi has often criticized the western integration into muslim society by stating that Islam is not a obscure private

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part of muslim life, but a fundamental and whole concept which encompasses all aspects of life. The Western influence challenges the muslim identity in political, cultural, social, legal, technological domains. It undermines the centuries of Islamic tradition. Muslims can adapt by either integrating the useful aspects of western systems while maintaining the integrity of Islamic identity.