The Coexistence of Muslims and Christians in Multan: Historical, Social, and Cultural Dynamics

التعايش بين المسلمين والمسيحيين في ملتان: الديناميات التاريخية والاجتماعية والثقافية

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☆ *Saeed Ahmed*   ☆ *Zohaib Ahmad*

Abstract

This study examined how Christian and Muslim communities in Multan city coexist and interact, as well as the factors that contribute to their peaceful religious diversity and social interaction. This study used qualitative methods. All Muslims and Christians were in this study. The qualitative technique had ten (n=10) samples of 25–60-year-olds. Five Christian and five Muslim religious experts, one politician, one doctor, one government officer, one social activist, and a lawyer freely participated in the poll. Qualitative data collection relies on interviews and document analysis. Based on data analysis, both communities must follow constructive discussion and coexistence lessons. Religious influence, indigenous practices, and Christian community activities enable this healthy coexistence. Each of the two communities' religions emphasizes coexistence and livelihood and provides a more complete image of constructive social interaction in all aspects of life. Friendships between different faiths, community celebrations, and activities promote unity. Interfaith festivals unite members of many religions to celebrate religious events, symbolizing inclusion. The data show that Christians and Muslims in Multan live peacefully together. Public awareness efforts and cultural exchanges foster religious literacy.

Keywords: historical, social, and cultural dynamics, Christian, Muslim, Multan.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of Christian-Muslim coexistence arises from situations that occur in society in which we frequently come into contact with individuals who adhere to different religions. The disparities in religions may include individuals who adhere to different faiths or none at all, as well as individuals who belong to distinct religious denominations. The contrasts that an individual possesses with those who adhere to other religions are significant and significant when urbanism is taken into consideration. The field of study known as urbanism examines the ways in which people who live in a town or city interact with the surroundings that are constructed. With around 2.3 billion and 1.8 billion followers, respectively, Christianity and Islam are the two religions that hold the position of being the largest in the overall globe.[1] Both Abrahamic and monotheistic religions have their roots in the Middle East, where they both trace their origins. According to Islamic law, it is obligatory for Muslims and non-Muslims to live together in perfect harmony. In order to establish peaceful

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1 Pew Research Center, "World's Largest Religion by Population Is Still Christianity," April 5, 2017, accessed January 1, 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org.

coexistence, the acceptance of others, and constructive cooperation, Islam took great effort to instill a set of principles, foundations, and general guidelines in the hearts of Muslims.[2] This was accomplished through a number of verses from the Quran and also Hadiths. The following are some of the Islamic tests that provide evidence of the legally mandated requirement of coexistence:

The religion of Islam lauded the divine religions, as well as their prophets and divine texts. And Allah said,

> *"O Children of Israel, remember My favor that I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds."*[3]

It also praised Christians:

> *"You will surely find the most bitter towards the believers to be the Jews and polytheists and the most gracious to be those who call themselves Christian. That is because there are priests and monks among them and because they are not arrogant."*[4]

Islam provided a captivating explanation of the Torah and the Bible. This is how Allah characterized the Bible:

> *"Then in the footsteps of the prophets, we sent Jesus, son of Mary, confirming the Torah revealed before him. And We gave him the Gospel containing guidance and light and confirming what was revealed in the Torah—a guide and a lesson to the God-fearing."*[5]

Islam established the prerequisite for a correct and comprehensive belief, which is to believe in all of the Messengers. His words were:

> *"The Messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in Allah, His angels, His books, and His apostles. "We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His apostles." And they say: "We hear, and we obey: (We seek) Thy forgiveness, our Lord, and to Thee is the end of all journeys."*[6]

The purpose of this condition was to bring Jews and Christians closer to Islam and to keep them at a remove from situations that could be considered disputes. On the other hand, they did not give the contents of the Quran sufficient consideration with regard to past religions, their writings, and their Messengers, as well as what was relevant to the Children of Israel and the Christians. The Islamic religion did not impose its laws on other religions. The fact that the Quran did not spread a general judgment on religions but rather provided a lot of leeway for debate and coexistence with various people is one of the most effective ways to get closer to people.

> *"Not all of them are alike: Of the People of the Book are a portion that stand (For the right): They rehearse the Signs of*

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2 Zafar, Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Impact of Christian Missionary Activities on Muslim Society: A Case Study of Jampur; A Pakistani Community in Socio-Religious Context* (PhD diss., University of Punjab, Lahore, 2000).

3 Al-Baqara, 2:47.

4 Al-Māʾida, 5:82.

5 Al-Māʾida, 5:46.

6 Al-Baqara, 2:285.

Allah all night long, and they prostrate themselves in adoration."[7]

The environment that is created by this verse is one that is conducive to interaction, dialogue, and collaboration. The ban against disobeying those with whom there is a covenant as well as those who are considered to be inferior. According to the Prophet (PBUH),

"Whosoever hurts a dhimmi, or burdens him with the which he cannot manage, or takes his property without his permission, I will dispute with him on the Day of Resurrection."[8]

On the basis of loans, dealing with those who are not Muslims. According to Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, she said:

"The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) died and his shield was pledged to a Jew for thirty sacks of barley."[9]

In spite of the fact that both Christianity and Islam consider their recollections of Jesus' teachings to be gospel and that they share narratives from the first five books of the Old Testament (the Hebrew Bible), the holy book of Christianity also includes the later additions to the Bible, whereas the Quran is the primary sacred text of Islam. Muslims are of the belief that the form of the Christian New Testament was derived from a corrupted or altered version of *al-Injil*. On the other hand, Christians do not have a single, definitive interpretation of the Quran, despite the fact that the majority of them believe that it is a work that is either invented or apocryphal. Despite the fact that there are certain similarities between the two texts, such as narratives of the life and works of Jesus and the virgin birth of Jesus through Mary, there are also some differences between the tales told in the Bible and the Quran about these events.[10]

The Republic of Pakistan was established in 1947 with the purpose of providing Muslims from the Indian subcontinent with a separate state in which they could live according to their religious aspirations while also protecting their economic interests. At this time, Pakistan is a nation that is dominated by Muslims to an overwhelming degree.[11] The census conducted in 1998 revealed that Muslims constitute 96.28 percent of the country's population, while Hindus constitute 1.6% and Christians constitute 1.59% of the population.

According to Malik[12], Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), the leader of the liberation movement in Pakistan, had made it abundantly apparent that minorities will be granted complete religious and cultural liberties along with equal citizenship rights as their Muslim fellow countrymen. In light of this, the constitution of Pakistan guarantees that minorities in

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7 Āl 'Imrān, 3:113.

8 Abū Dāwūd, *Al-Sunan*, ed. Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: Maṭba'a Muṣṭafā Muḥammad, n.d.), ḥadīth 3052.

9 Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī bi-Sharḥ al-Fatḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), ḥadīth 2916.

10 Craig, William Lane, "Response to Bridges and Van Inwagen," *Philosophia Christi* 17, no. 2 (2015): 291–297, https://doi.org/10.5840/pc201517225, accessed March 14, 2021.

11 Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, "Population by Religion," n.d., accessed October 10, 2023, http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files//tables/POPULATION%20BY%20RELIGION.pdf.

12 Mālik, Iftikhār Ḥusayn, *Religious Minorities in Pakistan* (London: Minority Rights Group International, 2002), 1–32, https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/469cbfc30.pdf.

the country would be able to proclaim and practice their faith, as well as develop their culture.[13] On the other hand, members of the country's religious minority, particularly the Christian minority, frequently express their dissatisfaction with various forms of discrimination in the areas of politics, the law, and society.

In Pakistan, the position of minority groups is depicted in a number of academic publications and situation reports, and the picture that emerges is rather depressing. One gets the impression from these writings that social interaction between the majority Muslim population of the country and its minority communities would also be quite hostile. This is despite the fact that the majority of these writings discuss the relations between the majority and the minority in the context of wider historical, political, economic, and security parameters.[14] On the other hand, there is a dearth of empirical research studying the social interactions that take place between the many religious communities in Pakistan.[15]

On the east bank of the Chenab River, the city of Multan may be found in the province of Punjab in Pakistan. In addition to being one of the five largest metropolitan areas in Pakistan, it also serves as the administrative hub for the Multan Division. Over the course of the Punjab region, it serves as a significant cultural, religious, and economic center. It is the primary geographic center of Southern Punjab and is situated in the middle of Pakistan. The district has a population of 5.3 million people. The district covers 3,720 square kilometers and has 838 inhabitants per square kilometer. Compared to 1981's population density of 529 persons per square kilometer, the district has grown rapidly. The district had 1,314,748 urban residents, 42.2% of its total population. Urban population growth averaged 2.9 percent from 1981 to 1998, lower than 1972 and 1981's 3.9 percent. Saraiki is spoken by 61.6% of the population, followed by Punjabi (21.6%), Urdu (15.9%), and Pushto (0.6%). Multan's population is mostly Muslim, with smaller percentages of Christian, Sikh, and Hindu populations. Muslims and Christians had different social relationships before and after India's split. Table 1 shows Multan's religiously categorized population throughout multiple decades. The Pakistan Bureau of statistics figures reveal the city's demographics. Multan's population grew significantly from 1951 to 2023, demonstrating its dynamic nature.

Table 1: Population of Multan According to Religions (1951-2023)

Year	Total Population	Muslim	Christion	Others
1951	725,131	698,733 (96.2%)	4,296 (0.6%)	3,350 (0.5%)
1961	264,244	253,531 (95.9%)	6559 (2.5%)	4,154 (1.6.%)
1972	374,701	363,444,859 (96.9%)	8,655 (2,3%)	2,602 (0.77%)
1981	571,811	557,444 (97.5%)	11,941 (2.1%)	3,426 (0.6%)
1998	1,421,746	3,394,884 (98.1%)	21,054 (1.5%)	58,808 (0.4%)
2017	2,309,104	2,273,629 (98.5%)	30,378 (1.3%)	5,097 (0.2 %)
2023	5,340,762	5,295,315 (98.54%)	42,155(1.36%)	1,152(0.2%)

13 Jān, Amjad, "Remembering Peshawar's All Saints Church," *Qissa Khwani* (blog), September 23, 2013, https://qissa-khwani.blogspot.com/2013/09/remembering-peshawars-all-saints-church.html.

14 Yūsufzai, Muṣḥaf, "Suicide Bombers Strike Christian Community near Warsak Dam in Pakistan," *NBC News*, September 2, 2016, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/attackers-strike-government-targets-near-peshawar-pakistan-n641871, accessed December 24, 2019.

15 Rafī', Khān Muḥammad Shafīq, and Ghulām, *Religion, Politics and the Christians of Pakistan: Is KPK a Better Option to Live? Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research* 21, no. 6 (2014): 975–983.

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Multan is one of Pakistan's most culturally and religiously diverse cities, but Christians and Muslims still struggle to integrate. Christian minorities in the city face discrimination, marginalization, and violence, which affects their economic and social well-being and prevents them from building positive relationships with the Muslim majority, according to the literature. The goal of this study is to uncover the reasons of religious tension and find solutions to enhance interfaith harmony, mutual understanding, and respect among Christians and Muslims in Multan. This study examines the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of members of both religious communities to add to the body of knowledge on religious diversity and social integration in Pakistan and help policymakers and civil society create effective policies and interventions to reduce interfaith conflict and promote social harmony.

Research Objectives

- To assess cultural variety and social integration in Multan City's Christian and Muslim groups.
- To compare Christian and Muslim viewpoints on Multan city's historical, social, and cultural dynamics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "coexistence" refers to the coexistence of two or more entities in the same place and time at the same time. When different community groups "live together without one collectively trying to destroy or severely harm the other"[16], this is the least level of coexistence that can be achieved. The peaceful cohabitation of different religious, ethnic, or other cultural groups in a shared social space, the amount of mutual integration between these groups is an important component that signals this harmonious coexistence. Integration, on the other hand, is contingent upon the social interaction that takes place between members of the groups that coexist. Within the realm of micro-sociological research on social processes, the term "interaction" can be described. Face-to-face interactions and the environments in which individuals interact with one another are also components of this phenomenon. It is important to note that social contact encompasses not only verbal communication but also non-verbal communication on the part of individuals.[17]

The way in which individuals relate to one another, carry out a variety of activities, complete tasks, and live their lives.[18] According to Rummel[19], social interactions are defined as the activities that is carried out by an individual in relation to another individual. Furthermore, he asserts that any activity that endeavors to influence the intentions of each other is considered to be a part of social interactions. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that social contact is a social process that involves the actions and reactions of individuals toward one another. In the context of this process, a mutual interaction between two or more individuals

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16 Kriesberg, Louis, "Changing Forms of Coexistence," in *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence: Theory and Practice*, ed. Muḥammad Abū-Nimer (New York: Lexington Books, 2001), 47–64.

17 Elliott, Anthony, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, ed. Bryan S. Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

18 Yūsuf, Najīma Muḥammad, "Pattern of Social Interaction between Different Ethnic Groups in Malaysian Secondary Schools," *Jurnal Pendidik dan Pendidikan* 21 (2006): 149–164, http://web.usm.my/apjee/APJEE_21_2006/10%20najeemah(149-165).pdf.

19 Rummel, Rudolph, *Understanding Conflict and War: The Conflict Helix*, vol. 2 (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1976), https://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/TCH.CHAP9.HTM.

or groups is a representation of the process. As a result, we may say that two people, groups, or communities are engaging with each other if they are discussing, conversing, communicating, or celebrating with one another on a particular subject, issue, or event, regardless of whether it is political, religious, or social in nature. Having social touch with one another and communicating with one another are the two primary aspects that constitute social interaction. When this occurs, social interaction can either be beneficial or detrimental.[20]

The situation of religious minorities in Pakistan is often portrayed in a negative light, since they are seen to be inferior in comparison to the Muslim majority of the country. There is a large body of literature that can be found on the subject of the state of minorities in Pakistan. For instance, Rainaa puts forth the following statement:

> *"Pakistan's minorities are woefully small and politically powerless... Minority representation is small, qualitatively poor, and structurally tied to the largesse of the majority."*[21]

In his book Akbar Zaidi discusses the ongoing threat of violence that the minority groups in Pakistan are forced to endure.[22] Roger Ballard paints an even more bleak image of their current situation, and he employs the term "ethnic cleansing" to describe the way in which the majority of the population in Pakistan interacts with the religious minorities. In his own words:

> *"The formal institutions of the state are both unable and unwilling to offer significant protection to those who find their lives threatened by an ever more powerful collection of neo-fundamentalist non-state actors who are ready and willing to teach their chosen targets amongst Pakistan's religious minorities (and now those who speak up for their rights as well) a lesson: namely that their only proper fate is to be subjected to ethnic and religious cleansing."*[23]

Rehman and Zia, examine a range of educational practices in Pakistan and discover that certain rules pose challenges for the religious minorities who reside inside the country.[24] Textbooks of social and Pakistan studies contribute to the unfavorable and antagonistic

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20 Mondal, Puja, "Social Interaction: What Is Social Interaction?" *Your Article Library*, n.d., http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/social-interaction/social-interaction-what-is-social-interaction/31278, accessed October 10, 2023.

21 Rainā, Anīl Kumar, "Minorities and Representation in a Plural Society: The Case of the Christians of Pakistan," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 37, no. 4 (2014): 684–699.

22 Zaidī, Sayyid Sibt-i-Aṣghar, "Religious Minorities in Pakistan Today," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 18, no. 4 (1988): 444–457.

23 Ballard, Roger, *The Christians of Pakistan: A Historical Overview and an Assessment of Their Current Position* (Manchester: Centre for Applied South Asian Studies, 2015), 1–28.

24 Zia, Saeed-ur-Raḥmān, and Amjad Sābir, "The Impact of Educational Policies on Religious Minorities of Pakistan: 1947–2010," *South Asia Forum for Human Rights* (January 2010): 1–48.

portrayal of the religious minorities that exist within the country.[25] The media in Pakistan is also playing a little bit biased role in the reporting of issues related to religious minorities.[26] The marginalization of minority groups is present across the entirety of the political and social system. As a result, these works provide the idea that minorities in Pakistan are subjected to discrimination, mistreatment, and threats in every region of the country, and that the general public is to blame for the unfortunate state of circumstances that they are in.[27]

Gabriel analyzes the legal, religious, security, educational, and other challenges that Christians in Pakistan confront.[28] He focuses primarily on the Christian minority in Pakistan. After analyzing the situation, he comes to the conclusion that the "state of Christian-Muslim relations in Pakistan seems to present a stark picture." Gregory[29] contends that the persecution and slaughter of Christians in Pakistan gained momentum after the events of September 11, 2001. He maintains that a significant number of Christians have been murdered as a result of this occurrence. He goes on to say that thirty to fifty Christians are killed every year because of their religious beliefs at the hands of the government. In addition to killing, he asserts that the Muslim community is exerting a great deal of pressure and tyranny on thousands of Christians. Gregory arrives at the conclusion that Christians are being persecuted throughout the entirety of Pakistan, including Peshawar, Multan, Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi, by providing some statistics on the purported persecution of Christians from the year 2001 until the year 2008. In addition to this, he believes that the state, both on the national and local levels, is sometimes complicit in the violence that is committed against Christians.

Misra makes a connection between the perceived persecution of the Christian minority in Pakistan and the ideology of extreme Islamism.[30] The Pakistan Christian Post recently released an interview with a Christian woman in December of 2015. In the interview, the woman is quoted as saying,

25 Ghāzī, Shāhzāda Rafīq, Gul Shāhzāda, Isḥāq Khān, Muḥammad Nā'īm Shabīr, and Muḥammad Ṭāhir Shāh, "Content Analysis of Textbooks of Social and Pakistan Studies for Religious Tolerance in Pakistan," *Asian Social Science* 7, no. 5 (2011): 145–150.

26 Shāhzād, Shumaila, and Ḥasan Amīr, "Minority Rights as Human Rights: Hegemonic Media Representation of Minority Groups in Pakistan," *The International Asian Research Journal* 7, no. 1 (2014): 28–35.

27 National Commission for Justice and Peace, *A Report on Religious Minorities in Pakistan* (Lahore: National Commission for Justice and Peace, 2011).

28 Gabriel, Theodore, *Christian Citizens in an Islamic State: The Experience of Pakistan* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007).

29 Gregory, Shaun, "The Christian Minority in Pakistan: Issues and Options," *Pakistan Security Research Unit (PSRU)*, no. 37 (July 17, 2008): 1–18.

30 Misra, Amalendu, "Life in Brackets: Minority Christians and Hegemonic Violence in Pakistan," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 22, no. 2 (2015): 157–181.

"Life for Christians in Pakistan is now worse than it has ever been: we are attacked daily and treated worse than rats."[31]

We are not wanted as neighbors by Muslims because they believe that we are wicked and suffer from diseases that are associated with the devil. Studies have been conducted that specifically focus on the connection between Christians and Muslims in Pakistan as well as the social position of Christians. One such study is a report that was published by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada[32], asserts that the general Muslim opinion toward Christians is unfavorable, and that Muslims believe Christians to be untouchables because of their lowest social level and backward caste prior to their conversion to Christianity.

There has been an overall improvement in the relations between Christians and Muslims since the events of September 11, 2001. The media is the factor that prevents people from seeing development in the relationship between Christians and Muslims.[33] Their assertion is that journalists have a tendency to pick and choose which incidents to report on, and sometimes they even put such events in a different context, with the intention of fostering a negative perception of Christians among the general public. They do report violent attacks that have been committed against Christian minorities in some Muslim countries; however, according to them, such crimes occur everywhere, including in the most liberal societies such as the United States of America, where Muslims are confronted with increased prejudice and aggression from a specific segment of the American population. As a summary, they assert that the overall relationship between Christians and Muslims is steadily getting better.

After doing research on the inter-group perceptions of Christians and Muslims in Pakistan, Khalid and Tarar came to the conclusion that, in addition to religious status, social standing also plays a role in influencing their opinions of one another.[34] Shamsi has produced a Ph.D. thesis on the Social Status of Christians in Pakistan, in which he comes to the conclusion that: *"Pakistan's overwhelming majority is tolerant and in favor of giving equal rights to minorities and women".*[35]

Unfortunately, the study does not address the day-to-day and neighborhood interactions that take place between Pakistan's small Christian population and the overwhelming Muslim population of the country. When it comes to the portrayal of Christians in the media in

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31 Smith, Samuel, "Muslim Mob Tries to Lynch Christian Family," *The Christian Post*, October 12, 2015, https://www.christianpost.com/news/muslim-mob-lynch-christian-family-father-accused-blasphemy.html.

32 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "Situation of Christians in Pakistan, Including Social and Government Attitudes, Treatment and Rights (2010–2012)," January 14, 2013, https://www.refworld.org/docid/510f8dbd2.html.

33 Carl, Michael, R. Love, and J. Micheli, "Have Muslim-Christian Relations Improved Since 9/11?" *Christianity Today*, September 6, 2011, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/september/muslim-christian-relations.html.

34 Tarar, Rukhī, and Amjad Khān, "Effects of Cross Categorization on Inter-Group Perception of Muslims and Christians in Pakistan," *Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 2, no. 1 (2004): 3–16, https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2007-13362-001.

35 Shamsī, Amjad Ḥusayn, *Social Status and Political Participation of Christian Minority in Pakistan* (PhD diss., University of the Punjab, Quaid-e-Azam Campus, Center for South Asian Studies, Lahore, 2011).

Pakistan, the media is biased against Christians and airs biased news against them, which makes it equally accountable for aiding and abetting in the persecution of Christians.[36] Mubeen and Qusien contend that Pakistani television networks have achieved success in bringing the rights of minorities to the attention of the general public and effectively highlighting the difficulties that they face through their objective analysis.[37]

Ambreen research on English print media reaches the conclusion that newspapers like Daily Dawn, The News, and The Nation provide favorable coverage to problems that are relevant to minority groups.[38] Against the backdrop of these kinds of investigations, Khan and Rafi[39] bring up an intriguing point approaching it from a different perspective. The argument that they are making is that Pakistani society should not be considered a single entity. As a result, they assert that Christians in Multan are able to experience greater tranquility in comparison to Christians in other areas of the country, such as Islamabad, Faisalabad, Lahore etc. The predicament of minorities in Pakistan is the same everywhere in the country, it highlights the demographic variations and maintains that Punjab is more radicalized than Sindh.[40]

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Albert Bandura was born in a northern Alberta town on December 4, 1925. He created the Social Learning Theory, originally Social Cognitive Theory. He studied how people see and learn by engaging with their environment and acting in different ways. His 1961 Bobo doll experiment in Stanford University's Nursery School revealed this idea.[41] The Social Cognitive Theory views the observer as fully integrated into the observation and learning environment. Cognitive reactions, attitudes, and surroundings work together to promote learning. Looking at models and completing the task yourself gives observers confidence that they can do it. Self-efficacy and confidence are built on observers' understanding of why learning something is useful and their belief in their ability to learn. The observer improved their observation skills and became more proactive in gaining experience.[42]

36 Seiler, Rachel, *Christian Persecution in Pakistan: An Examination of Life in the Midst of Violence* (Senior honors thesis, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, 2014), https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1492&context=honors.

37 Qusien, and Ambarīn Muḥammad Rizā, "Minorities in Pakistan: Role of Pakistani Private TV Channels in Highlighting Minorities' Rights," *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies* 7, no. 2 (2017): 96–113, https://doi.org/10.29333/ojcmt/2593.

38 Ambrīn, Qudsiyya, "Representation of Religious Minorities in Pakistani Print Media: A Study of Daily Dawn, the News and the Nation," *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 4, no. 1 (2014): 140–156, http://www.aijcrnet.com/journals/Vol_4_No_1_January_2014/15.pdf.

39 Rafīʿ, Khān Muḥammad Shafīq, and Ghulām, *Religion, Politics and the Christians of Pakistan: Is KPK a Better Option to Live?* 975–983.

40 Yūsuf, Farzana, *SADF Focus: The Plight of Religious Minorities in Pakistan* (Brussels: South Asian Democratic Forum, 2016), https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.17953.92000.

41 Nabavi, Razieh Tadayon, "Bandura's Social Learning Theory & Social Cognitive Learning Theory," *Theory of Developmental Psychology* 1, no. 1 (2012): 3–5.

42 Inman, John, *Social Cognitive Theory, A Synthesis* (Corvallis: Oregon State University, Department of Education Graduate School, Masters in Adult Education Cohort, n.d.), 2.

The bodies in our environment are called models. Modern children have many role models to learn from. Family members in retirement, TV characters, students, housemates, and teachers are examples. Each model provides diverse behaviors to examine and mimic. Children study these models' acts and encode their own behaviors to replicate them. They may mimic the model's actions regardless of gender, but many circumstances make it more probable that a model imitated the firm they want to work for.

First, observers are more likely to emulate those they see. Thus, it is more likely to act like a same-gender human. Second, depending on their behavior, the observer received favorable or negative environmental responses. A child is inclined to repeat a model's actions if they have beneficial results. If a parent praises a child for eating well, it motivates her to do it again. This increased her chances of a good response from the parent. She was encouraged and supported to this point.[43]

Regardless of the type, extrinsic and intrinsic reinforcement can be positive or negative. Fulfilling a child's desire to please their elders or peers is an extrinsic reinforcement, whereas enjoying delight is an intrinsic reinforcement. A child modeled their behavior after the one they were almost sure would appeal to their parents. Whether positive or negative, reinforcement was ineffective if it didn't satisfy an individual's needs. This applies even if the person is rewarded for good behavior. Not if the reinforcement is positive or negative, what matters is that it changes behavior.

Thirdly, the observer may see how others reacted to this activity and decide whether to do it. A person learns by witnessing another model's results. If a younger brother sees an older brother being praised and rewarded for good behavior, he may follow suit. This is vicarious reinforcement. A drive to connect with rewarding models. Many models are provided for spectators to identify with. These may be parents or elder siblings for children or public figures like politicians or TV celebrities for TV viewers. A person identified with a model because it possessed a quality, they wished they had.[44]

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative approach was used in this study. Qualitative research gathers information about subjective experiences, perspectives, and behaviors to understand them. This type of research can be done on individuals or organizations. Men made up 2,435,195 of the district's 4,746,166 population in 2017, while women made up 2,310,408. Muslims made up 99.37% (4,720,537) of the population in the 2017 census. Only 0.54% (25,629) were Christians. All Muslims and Christians were in this study. The qualitative technique had ten (n=10) samples of 25–60-year-olds. Five Christian and five Muslim religious experts, one politician, one doctor, one government officer, one social activist, and a lawyer freely participated in the poll. These persons represented Multan's three Christian denominations: St. Mary's Cathedral Qasim Road, Cathedral of the Holy Redeemer, and Christ Church LMQ Road.

Qualitative data is collected through interviews and document analysis. A review of the relevant literature, an application of the proposed theory, respondents' responses, the researchers' personal observations, and chronologically based narratives in both communities about each other led to three questions and two two-word themes. Sub-themes were created to answer the research's qualitative questions. These qualitative questions and their themes and sub-themes gave the study's primary researchers the data they needed to answer their

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43 Inman, John, *Social Cognitive Theory, A Synthesis*, 21.

44 Bandura, Albert, *Social Learning Theory* (New York: General Learning Press, 1979), 3–5.

queries. The researcher manually transcribed interview audio. All pertinent primary research data was translated into English and entered into Microsoft Word.

RESULTS

Qualitative research participants' demographics are in Table 2. Only men participated in this qualitative investigation. Responders ranged in age from 32 to 49. This study includes Christians and Muslims. The responses are doctors, politicians, lawyers, government officials, social activists, and religious scholars.

Table 2: Qualitative Study Respondents

Sr. No.	Respondent ID	Gender	Age (Year)	Religion	Profession
1	R1	Male	32	Muslim	Doctor
2	R2	Male	39	Muslim	Politician
3	R3	Male	41	Muslim	Lawyer
4	R4	Male	37	Muslim	Govt. Officer
5	R5	Male	49	Muslim	Social Activist
6	R6	Male	41	Christianity	Religious Scholar
7	R7	Male	37	Christianity	Religious Scholar
8	R8	Male	46	Christianity	Religious Scholar
9	R9	Male	42	Christianity	Religious Scholar
10	R10	Male	34	Christianity	Religious Scholar

The qualitative method let researchers comprehend the experiences and perspectives of Multan City's Christian and Muslim communities on religious diversity and social integration. Table 3 lists three qualitative questions (each with two sub-questions), themes and sub-themes.

Table 3: Qualitative Questions (Themes)

Sr.	Questions	Theme
1	What is the nature of religious harmony and Christian-Muslim relations in Multan City?	Religious Harmony
2	Do you have to face any religious hatred from Muslims / Christians?	Religious Hatred
3	Are you satisfied with the concept of your religion that is presented in Christian media/institutions?	Media Representation
4	What would you say about Muslim-Christian social relationships, such as socializing, visiting homes, sharing each other's joys and sorrows, eating and befriending them, etc.?	Social Relationships
5	Do you invite Muslims to your religious festivals and vice versa?	Interfaith Festivals
6	It is permissible in Islam to marry the People of the Book. How do you view this ruling?	Interfaith Marriages
7	Does the Christian community face difficulties in professional life, such as political representation, employment, and business?	Professional Challenges
8	Considering the Christian-Muslim relations in Multan City, what suggestions and recommendations would you like to make in this regard?	Recommendations
9	Describe those factors which gifted peaceful interaction among Christians and Muslims to Multan city?	Peaceful Interaction
10	What are the contributions of the Christian community to the society in Multan city.	Community Contribution

Theme 1: Religious Harmony

The word cloud implies that Multan City's Muslim-Christian cooperation is serene. Both faiths appreciate each other's religious practices and live together in religious harmony. This equilibrium is essential for citywide unity and social cohesion. Due to the city's extensive history, which dates back to ancient civilizations, many religious and cultural influences have mixed, resulting in religious harmony. One reason Multan is noted for its diversity is that the Muslim and Christian communities contribute to its unique tapestry of religions and nations.

To achieve religious concord, people of both faiths must be tolerant and respectful. Multan City residents have learned that peaceful coexistence is necessary. Talking to individuals of various religions, cooperating on community projects, and enjoying cultural activities together are crucial. Mosques and churches coexist and are often close. To show solidarity, people of both faiths often attend the other's religious gatherings. Local leaders and renowned religious figures also help promote religious harmony. They promote Christian and Islamic compassion, peace, and social justice. These values are in both religions. They highlight shared ideals to foster respect and understanding amongst faiths.

Theme 2: Religious Hatred

Although unpleasant, religious enmity is possible in any multicultural and multireligious community, including Multan City. The word tree map shows this. It refers to religious-based hatred, bigotry, or prejudice. In Multan City, it's crucial to determine if Muslims or Christians face such persecution. Religious hatred can take many forms. It can include verbal or physical abuse, religious institution damage, or job, education, or other discrimination. These events can leave enduring scars on victims and communities.   To combat religious intolerance, community leaders, religious leaders, and local authorities must condemn the actions. Like every varied metropolis, Multan metropolis has had religious conflict, but it has primarily been isolated incidents. Most folks work to promote peace and tolerance among different faiths. Religion-based intolerance can be defeated with education. Educational and institutional settings can foster interfaith tolerance and dialogue. Encourage kids to learn about different religions, their beliefs, and their values to build a more accepting and harmonious environment. Government policies and legislation can also affect. In Multan City and Pakistan, the Constitution guarantees religious freedom and equal rights to all citizens. These legal protections are essential to end religious intolerance. Public order officials must also investigate and prosecute hate crimes. Interfaith organizations and dialogue are crucial to fighting religious prejudice. They host open discussions to resolve common issues and build bridges amongst groups. Promotion of these activities can reduce religious hatred and promote peaceful coexistence.

religious	multan	aspects	essential	promoting	reduce	rights			teachings	action	active	additio
		behaviors	important	address	authorit	beliefs	bridges	building	christ	christia	citizens	coexist
	christian			address	combat	cordial	create	crimes	critical	custom	declare	destroy
		blasphemy	incidents	affected	commu	dialogu	diversit	drinking	employ	encour	encour	enforce
	communities	christians	individuals	agencie	confide	dialogu	entirety	families	figures	forbid	fosterin	freedom
hatred				another	conflicts	differen	environ	fundam	groups	guarant	harmon	hinduis
	discrimination	constitution	institutions	antinar	contain	discuss	ethics	general	hostility	inclusiv	initiativ	instanc
		different	interfaith	aspect	content	dispellin	examin	generos	identity	insulting	invest	involve
pakistan	society			attacks	context	diverse	facing	governr	includin	interacti		
		education	minority									isolated

Theme 3: Media Representation

According to the word cloud, the media's portrayal of Christianity is crucial to shaping perceptions. Additionally, it examines whether such depictions are accurate and fair. In Multan City, as in many other cities and towns, Christian-owned media may strive to portray their community and faith positively. These media channels often promote Christian religious events, community initiatives, and values, which help educate the public about Christianity. They might also utilize the media to emphasize Christian-Muslim collaboration and shared values to heal religious divides. The effects of these portrayals on Muslims vary. Some may find them helpful in dispelling Christian myths. However, mistakes and misinterpretations are possible. Christian media must strive to foster understanding and respect among all religions. However, mainstream media, which may reach more Muslims than Christian media, can influence Muslim views of Christians. Due to biases, preconceptions, or media depictions of Christians, Muslims may misunderstand and even hate Christians. This emphasizes the need for interfaith dialogue, education, and accurate media depiction.

Theme 4: Social Relationships

The word cloud implies that Multan City Muslims and Christians must interact socially to promote understanding, tolerance, and partnership. These relationships involve going out, visiting each other's houses, discussing happy and sorrowful occurrences, and becoming friends. Many Multan City residents from both communities engage in these social interactions. They visit each other's festivals, exchange their cultures, and support each other throughout life milestones. These relationships foster community and strengthen the city's social fabric. Social ties can reduce misunderstandings and stereotyping. People of different religions often find they have more in common than they anticipated when they get to know each other. This could reduce barriers and improve coexistence. Christian weddings and Eid celebrations with Muslim friends and neighbors are common in Multan City. These practises

are frequent. These gestures demonstrate actual community relationships. They demonstrate that individuals of different religions can still be friends and get along. These relationships go beyond individuals. Many social and community groups in Multan City promote interfaith understanding through cultural and social events. These organizations help Christians and Muslims socialize and form bonds.
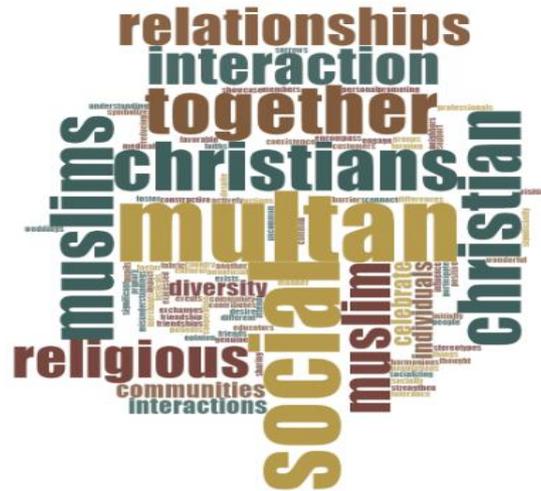

Theme 5: Interfaith Festivals

The word cloud implies that interfaith festivals involve inviting members of other faiths to celebrate together. This issue investigates how Multan City celebrates interfaith holidays and their impact on community openness and inclusivity. Multifaith festivals can symbolize unity and respect. It shows that Multan City's religious communities are open to sharing their ideas and customs. Muslims may invite Christians to Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Adha, just as Christians can invite Muslims to Christmas or Easter. Participants from different religions will have the rare opportunity to learn about one other's rituals and observances. Celebrations of major religious festivals can bring people together and foster understanding. Interfaith celebrations in Multan City strengthen community relationships and demonstrate the people that diversity is strong and worth celebrating. Diversity is why there are so many religions and beliefs. It shows that the city values its diverse religions and promotes peace. Multifaith festivals can improve understanding, empathy, and admiration for each other's religions. It helps individuals see the commonalities in other religions' teachings and ideals and reminds them of their shared humanity.
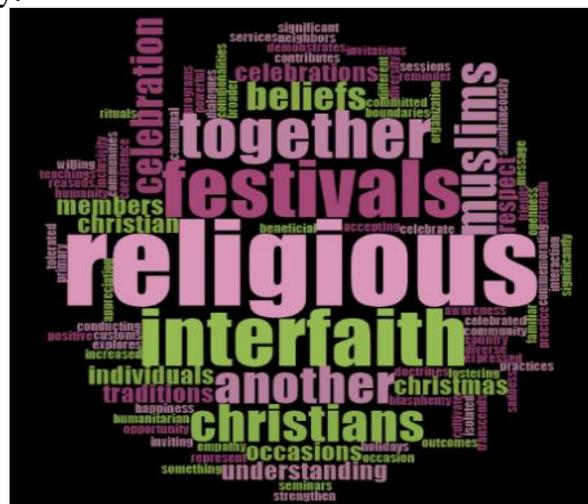
Theme 6: Interfaith Marriage

The word cloud implies that Multan City's Muslim and Christian communities disagree on the Islamic decision to allow marriages between Muslims and non-Muslims of the Book, including Christians. Interfaith marriage is a complicated issue that affects both cultures. Marriages between various faiths can be understood differently. They may represent religious tolerance and community unity to some. Diverse religious couples marry to honor and value their faiths equally. It can be seen as a sign of love across religions. Interfaith weddings can be complicated due to varied religious traditions, beliefs, and expectations. Religious, family, and childrearing issues might be difficult to balance, but couples may need to do so to raise children. Multan City, like many other places, has diverse views on weddings between different religions. Some may consider them as a step toward religious harmony, while others may support traditional marriage bans. Society must recognize people's marriage choices and provide the support and resources needed to make it work. Society must also support and fund these unions. Religious leaders and organizations can help interfaith couples. They offer couples counseling and education to help them navigate religious differences. Multan City's experience with interfaith weddings illustrates the world's wide range of opinions, thus its communities must have an open and respectful dialogue about them.
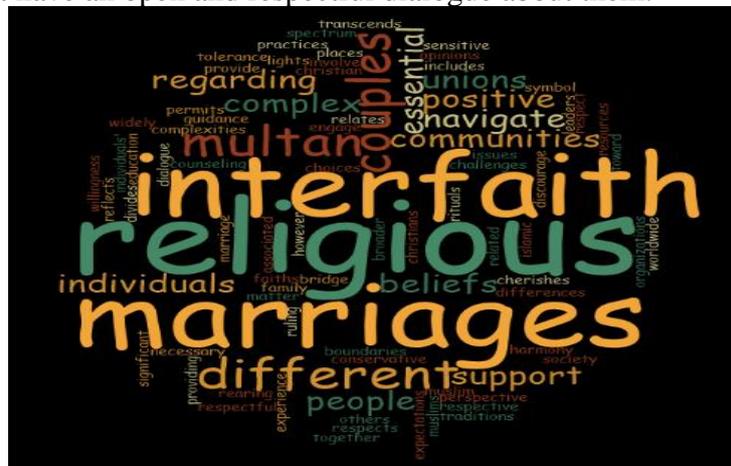
Theme 7: Professional Challenges

This table shows interviewees' responses to the question of whether Multan City's Christian community faces professional challenges due to their religious identity in areas like political representation, employment, and business opportunities. Religious identity is one of several factors that affect employment, business, and politics in varied societies. Several factors can alter these dynamics. Religion-based discrimination in employment, promotions, and business dealings is unethical and can have long-term negative impacts on individuals and society. Religious discrimination in the workplace has plagued Multan City, as it does elsewhere. Christians make significant contributions to education, healthcare, and social services despite their tiny demographic share. This community has faced workplace discrimination and limited opportunities. Community leaders, government officials, and organizations in Multan City must work together to guarantee that all individuals, regardless of religion, have equal chances to overcome these challenges. This includes enforcing anti-discrimination legislation and promoting diversity and inclusion. Providing Christian community members with educational and career opportunities can also help them overcome professional challenges. Because of this, individuals may be able to take on greater responsibility and contribute more to the city's social and economic development. Political representation is crucial to this problem. To foster inclusivity and satisfy Christian community needs, the Christian community must be fairly represented in local government and politics. Diverse perspectives in decision-making can lead to laws and practices that

benefit all inhabitants, regardless of religion. The Christian community's contributions to the city should be honored, and they should have the same political and professional possibilities as other residents.

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
christian	9	8	2.67
community	9	8	2.67
opportunities	13	8	2.67
religious	9	7	2.33
professional	12	6	2.00
challenges	10	5	1.67
political	9	5	1.67
members	7	4	1.33
multan	6	4	1.33
representation	14	4	1.33
business	8	3	1.00
discrimination	14	3	1.00
education	9	3	1.00

Theme 8: Recommendations

The word cloud implies that Multan City Christian-Muslim relations require advice to improve understanding, cooperation, and harmony. These proposals can guide local governments, religious leaders, and other community members as they work together to overcome obstacles and build a more inclusive society. Regular interfaith dialogues and discussion forums should allow Christians and Muslims to share their perspectives, build bridges of understanding, and find common ground on various themes. Establish early childhood education programs in schools to promote religious tolerance and understanding. Make sure instructional materials accurately reflect the city's religious communities and their contributions. In Multan City, promote diverse media that accurately portrays Christians. Encourage the creation of information about Christians and Muslims' shared beliefs and successful collaboration. Implement and enforce laws that prohibit religion discrimination in employment, housing, and public services. Allow discrimination complaints and investigate and prosecute them. It is important to promote the observance of interfaith festivals, which are gatherings of people of different religious traditions who come together to celebrate. Promote these events to celebrate diversity and community solidarity. Develop networks of therapy and other resources to help couples from diverse religious backgrounds navigate their religious differences. Ensure that Christians are fairly represented in local government and that their perspectives are considered when making decisions. Political participation should be encouraged for Christians. Create community outreach programs that allow Christian and Muslim groups to collaborate on philanthropic, community, and social cohesion projects. These programs should enable combined charitable, community, and initiative efforts. Religious leaders from both communities should work together to promote peace, harmony, and partnership. These leaders can inspire their congregations. Develop and promote effective conflict resolution methods to resolve religious differences. Public awareness campaigns in Multan should promote diversity, religious tolerance, and unity. These actions could change public opinion and promote tolerance. These ideals are essential to building an inclusive and peaceful Multan City where Christians and Muslims can live, work, and interact. All stakeholders must try to implement these suggestions and foster a culture of acceptance and cooperation.

Theme 9: Peaceful Interaction

The Multan City word tree map shows what has helped Christians and Muslims get along. As a consequence, peaceful relationship is the result of these elements. The peaceful connection between these communities is a testament to their shared principles, mutual respect, and dedication to coexistence. Multan City has historically harbored people of numerous cultures and religions without violence. This heritage has shaped the local community, fostering unity and respect among individuals of different religions. Both Christianity and Islam value compassion, fairness, and charity. The two communities have been able to speak amicably with one another as a result of the acknowledgment and focus placed on these shared beliefs. Peaceful contact has relied on interfaith organizations and initiatives that promote understanding and collaboration. These groups organize lectures, activities, and discussions to bring Christians and Muslims together. Local religious leaders of both communities' help foster harmony. They often work together to promote interfaith dialogue, resolve misconceptions, and emphasize cohabitation. Programs have been formed in Multan City's schools and other educational institutions to educate youngsters about the history, beliefs, and practices of a range of religious faiths. This teaching technique fosters a more tolerant and understanding generation. Multan's Christian and Muslim communities are involved in community outreach and participation. This includes participating in the other party's cultural events, religious celebrations, and community projects coordinated by both parties. Legal protections and government initiatives that promote religious freedom and equal rights have created a calm society. These policies deter hate crimes. Economic partnership between individuals and businesses from both communities enhances their amicable connection. Economic cooperation between Christians and Muslims creates opportunities to work together and establish trust. Multan has a rich tradition of interfaith cultural exchange. We celebrate music, art, food, and other cultural expressions together. Understanding and respecting one other's cultures improves with these opportunities. Multan City has a calm culture due to these factors. Christians and Muslims may cohabit in the city, learn from each other, and contribute to the town's well-being thanks to this culture. This healthy interaction can inspire other multi-cultural towns and areas.

christians	religious	islam	commu	cultivate	educatio	educatoi	encompa	engagem	ethnic	familiar	groups
		attitude	commu	cultivati	harmon	ideal	initiative	interactio	interactio	joint	maintain
muslims	another	awareness	connect	custome	heritage	manner	occasion	occur	organiza	patients	peace
			connect	doctrine	hinduisr	marketed	people	professi	professi	program	propaga
	committees	become				medical	permits	pupils	schools	sectors	session
christian		beliefs	consist	drinking	historica	members	practices	reasons	significant	spiritua	teachir
	happy	christianity									
			contribu	easter	holidays	merchant	prayer	respect	simultane		whoev	wonde
muslim	interfaith	christmas									
		commemo	coopera	econom	humani	multan	private	revoked	socially		

Theme 10: Community Contributions

The word cloud suggests that Multan City's social, cultural, and economic fabric has been greatly enriched by the Christian community's contributions. These donors care profoundly about community wellbeing, regardless of religion. Christian schools have been crucial to intellectual development and high-quality education. They have produced highly trained professionals who have contributed to several fields. Christian healthcare organizations have improved Multan City residents' health. They provide medical care at hospitals, clinics, and other humanitarian facilities. Christian groups and individuals have historically provided social services, including care for vulnerable populations, orphanages, and aid to the needy. Christian artists and musicians have organized cultural events and displayed artwork. The city's cultural tapestry has been boosted by these contributions. Christian leaders have often led ecumenical projects to promote religious tolerance and understanding. Christians in Multan City contribute to the city's commercial community and job economy. These celebrations boost the local economy and encourage teamwork. Christian charity and organizations have helped Multan City residents in need throughout difficult times. Several Christian groups have provided scholarships and other educational opportunities to impoverished city youths, increasing access to high-quality education. Christians in Multan City actively participate in cultural exchanges. They share their culture, music, and cuisine with the community, increasing the city's cultural richness.

DISCUSSION

Differentiating between good and evil, as well as between merit and demerit, has been emphasized by religion. A society's basic social systems can soon disintegrate if its religious institutions are destroyed. Because there are so many mosques, churches, religious seminaries, and other religious institutions in the city, Multan has a very strong religious

atmosphere.[45] There have been several religious and political revolutions in that area, and each one has significantly influenced the social interaction and religious variation among Muslims and Christians in Multan city.

Multan serves as both the provincial capital and a vital part of Punjab, which is predominantly a residential province. The Pashtoon and Punjabi are two major castes that have lived in that area for many years, along with a large number of other people. These people have many good qualities, such as being hospitable to guests, safeguarding those in need, defending one's own honor, being kind, and being honest.[46] A number of well-known traditions, like as the Hall, the Bijar, the Jirga, and others, are also in charge of fostering a welcoming atmosphere in the communities in which people live. One of the most crucial ways for a society to learn is through education. The Christian community has been actively involved in the development of education since the turn of the 20th century. The excellent quality of education that Sacred Heart School Multan provides to the community at large is demonstrated in action. In Multan city, Christian physicians and nurses are well-known for their work in both the public and private sectors, demonstrating how education is produced in the health sector.

The state has a duty to defend the rights of all members of minority groups in the state, as each member is a citizen with equal rights. The Supreme Court's ruling in the Suo moto case led to the creation of the National Council for Minorities and the offering of a five percent employment quota. All around the nation, these announcements should be implemented immediately. Muslims should not be nominated to posts that are currently occupied by underrepresented minorities. It is not appropriate to apply the Blasphemy Law in a biased way. The holy books, prophets, and religious customs of every religion should all be treated with the same dignity. Not a single religion gives its followers the authority to denigrate the gods, prophets, or sacred texts of others. The Election Commission of Pakistan is in charge of making sure that minorities are given one of three rights: the opportunity to vote in a dual voting system like the one that Kashmiris enjoy, the right to vote directly, or the right to participate in a separate voting system.

CONCLUSION

Muslim-Christian interactions in Multan City reveal a complicated web of interfaith contacts, challenges, and opportunities. Multan City represents the global endeavor to promote religious harmony and understanding because to its long history and diverse culture. Religious harmony is a symbol of the city's long history of peaceful coexistence, as Muslim and Christian communities cohabit in the same location with respect for each other's faiths and goals. Religious hatred generally exists in a small minority of the people and does not define the city. In this situation, strong community leaders, legal protections, and education are necessary. Media portrayals can influence how others view something. Christian and mainstream media must accurately reflect Multan City's Christian community. Social ties provide a solid foundation for understanding. Friendships between different faiths, community celebrations, and activities promote unity. Interfaith festivals unite members of many religions to celebrate religious events, symbolizing inclusion.[47]

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45 Yūsuf, Farzana, *SADF Focus: The Plight of Religious Minorities in Pakistan*.

46 Yūsuf, Najīma Muḥammad, "Pattern of Social Interaction between Different Ethnic Groups in Malaysian Secondary Schools," 149–164.

47 Rummel, Rudolph, *Understanding Conflict and War: The Conflict Helix*.

Interfaith marriage remains complex and multifaceted. Society should respect individual choices and help couples navigate religious differences. These issues are being addressed to ensure equal opportunities in employment, business, and politics. Despite professional hurdles, progress is being made.[48] The ideas emphasize education, dialogue, legal protections, and community engagement to create a more peaceful and inclusive Multan City. Historical context, shared beliefs, interfaith groups, and community engagement may promote peace. These promote interfaith understanding and harmony. Multan City's education, healthcare, social services, cultural institutions, and economy have benefited from the Christian community's efforts. Their contributions assist the entire community because they are not religiously constrained.[49] Multan shows how a mixed religious population may enrich a community rather than cause conflict. The discussions illuminated Muslim-Christian reconciliation efforts. Despite challenges and misunderstandings, this dynamic and multicultural city is working to foster peace, harmony, and cooperation.

RECOMMENDATION

* Building community engagement activities that foster connections between Muslim and Christian groups is crucial. The survey found that these programs should be flexible enough to accommodate respondents' levels of association, from "absolutely not" to "completely."
* Policymakers should prioritize initiatives promoting economic growth, job creation, and equitable resource access for all faith communities.
* Due to the significant educational disparity among religious factions. Increasing awareness of these discrepancies and encouraging knowledge on all fronts can help build bridges and promote inclusiveness.
* Because it can enhance existing social connectedness among groups. By participating in each other's holidays and celebrations, people of different faiths can build community.
* Community-based conflict resolution methods and forums are essential for handling concerns.
* Activities like public awareness campaigns and cultural exchange programs help enhance religious literacy and understanding.

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